

Analysis of Findings from the Post-War Reconstruction Campaigns at Basrah and Fao, Iraq.

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This analysis of findings is from a case study which examines the reconstruction campaigns of the southern cities of Basrah, the second largest city after the capital, Baghdad, and Fao, carried out by the Iraqi government following their devastation during the eight-year war with Iran (1980-1988).*

The author visited the war-damaged areas of Basrah soon after the cease-fire in August 1988. Later, in November 1989, he was invited by the Iraqi Government to participate in the 'First International Symposium of Post-war Reconstruction in Basrah and Fao' and conducted his second field visit. The third field visit took place in April 1991 following the announcement of a cease-fire between the Allied and the Iraqi forces. The reconstruction campaigns were completed in record time, based on a predetermined time-table, despite having to work in adverse weather conditions and the remoteness from the points of supply. Basrah's reconstruction was started in February, following a two month campaign of rubble clearing, and lasted until June 1989, when the work on Fao started. This city was rebuilt in a surprisingly short time of 114 days. While reconstruction in Basrah did not go beyond repair of the infrastructure and street beautification, Fao was totally rebuilt according to a new city plan.

The study sets out to examine the reconstruction approach and the effects of policies on implementation. Besides displaying many of the dilemmas of reconstruction after war, it sets out to test the author's main hypothesis that 'Settlement reconstruction should be an integral part of a nation-wide development,....., reconstruction that takes the form of a series of centralised projects (infrastructure, housing and public buildings) is unlikely to be resource efficient or culturally sensitive'.

This last section examines the findings of the field visits. It attempts to highlight some of the successes and failures of the reconstruction campaigns of Basrah and Fao. It also investigates if there has been a change in attitude towards reconstruction following the Allied Iraqi war (1991). In order to accomplish this, the *11 Underlying Principles for Reconstruction after War*, derived by participants at the Second York Workshop on Settlement Reconstruction, held in May 1989 (edited by Davis, 1989b) are used as a general framework to evaluate the Iraqi experience. It is also seen as an opportunity to review the Principles in order to develop PWRD's own reconstruction recommendations.

The main outcome of the Second York Workshop on Settlement Reconstruction after War, held in York, 16-18 May 1989, has been the introduction of a set of 11 Principles directed to authorities responsible for the reconstruction of towns and cities devastated by war. The Principles embodied 63 Guidelines. A draft of these was produced by the participants including the author and a final version was edited by Dr. Ian Davis, Director of the Disaster Management Centre at Oxford Brookes University. This effort resulted from an attempt to fill a gap and to produce practical advice on the nature and the priorities of reconstruction after war.

Naturally, it was felt that because of the wide range of countries involved in war, and because of the different types of wars, some of these guidelines were bound to be less relevant to some situations. Thus, they were produced in the hope that '...officials will be cautious in the way they make use of this material, since local needs will always have to be assessed in accordance with their own unique characteristics'. (Davis, 1989b:6).

The Guidelines had the following aims, (Davis, 1989b:7):

1. To provide a framework for the reconstruction planning process.
2. To stimulate a range of actions that go beyond the conventional wisdom, or the obvious immediate needs of damage clearance and new planning and building

construction.

3. To encourage local officials to produce their own guidelines or recovery plan, that adapt these issues in the light of prevailing conditions in a given area.

The prime *focus* of these Principles was on the physical planning and the rebuilding of urban settlements devastated by war in developing countries. The same principle is the focus of this study, as it deals with the reconstruction of the cities of Basrah and Fao. Thus, this section will start by introducing the 11 principles and then examining them in the light of the Iraqi experience. It concludes with a number of observations of the success or otherwise of the Iraqi reconstruction effort and on the content of the Principles. The 11 principles are:

1. It is vital to maximise locally available resources.
2. Effective reconstruction will only occur when it is comprehensive in its scope.
3. The timing of actions is critical.
4. Do not wait for political and economic reform.
5. There are limited opportunities to reform the design of buildings and settlement patterns in reconstruction.
6. It is vital to preserve the cultural heritage in reconstruction.
7. It is essential to introduce safety measures in reconstruction.
8. It may be possible to adapt sections of the war economy to reconstruction.
9. The needs of all handicapped people must be catered for.
10. Reconstruction should be regarded as therapy.
11. Knowledge needs to be documented and disseminated.

We shall now attempt to relate these Principles to the specific context of the Iraqi reconstruction effort. It is important that the reader should have read the full text of the 11 Principles.

Principle 1

It is vital to maximise locally available resources.

Based on the assumption that for an exhausted post-war economy to recover and to reduce the costs of imported goods and services, the country should maximise the use of locally available resources. These resources include skilled labour; building materials; institutions and leadership.

However, reading through the Guidelines one becomes confused over a number of issues. Firstly, the context in which the words 'local resources' are employed. Do they mean immediate 'local resources'? or regional? or even national 'local resources'? Secondly, does the principle of 'maximising', imply compulsory exploitation? Thirdly, *the relationship between the scale of war and that of reconstruction*, indicates that 'Normally the State wages war, but the affected communities are often left to recover and in some instances rebuild on their own. Therefore the character and scale of war needs to be met with a matching character and scale of reconstruction'. (Davis, 1989b:11).

Although this recommendation is generally valid, in the sense that it emphasises the responsibility of the State, it allows officials to assume that they have to rebuild in the same manner in which they conducted the war, i.e. from the centre.

In what is normally a strong centralised planning system, such as in Iraq, *local* is certainly understood as national, and such a widely cast Guideline could be interpreted as an invitation for a full-scale central government reconstruction. In our review of the reconstruction of Fao and Basrah, we found that one of the aims of the reconstruction campaign was to emphasise the strength of the country by depending on local skills and resources. Nevertheless, the employment of national 'local' resources organised from the Centre did not always allow local i.e. district economies to recover through the participation of the local people.

This leads us to the other important issue discussed within this Principle: the issue of *Centralisation, top-down management and the local community involvement*. Where it argues that 'Whilst the centre will have a key role to fulfil in reconstruction planning, it is important to note the dangers of over-centralisation of power and decision-making' (Davis, 1989b:10). By now it is obvious that Basrah and Fao are true cases of reconstruction by a *Central Government*. Even from the beginning, four military divisions were used to clear the city of rubble, a step which can probably be considered as exceptional in its thoroughness.¹ In addition, reconstruction plans were drawn up in Baghdad. Similarly, when it came to implementation, skills, resources and materials were brought in from the centre and Ministries executed the work, using imported labour (mostly Egyptian).

In Iraq, faced with the problem of rebuilding their shattered cities, planners have a chance to learn from other nations' experiences. It is evident that no matter how well intentioned the plan, as long as it is exclusively the 'authorised' version, there will be clashes between those who believe in it and the masses who know little or nothing about it. Consequently, the plan and its execution will come into conflict with democracy. In our view, there are many lessons to be learned from the momentous events taking place in the world outside. In Gorbachov's USSR, with its pursuit of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', freedom and restructuring, President Gorbachov has admitted that to build without the active participation of the people is bad economics. Today, Mr. Yuri Murzin, Chief of the Architectural Department at the Central Scientific Research and Design Institute in Moscow says '... for decades we have been ignoring people's opinion and forcing our ideal dreams on them, and for decades we have been faced with continuous failures'².

Thus, the issue of *public participation* becomes very critical. Within this Principle, public participation is recommended as a 'tool' to maximise local resources. However, in the case of Basrah and Fao there has been no participation of the local people in the rebuilding process, nor in the decision-making. The professional attitude has been '... we are dealing only with empty sites and rubble'. (Adel Said, city planner). A great emphasis in the Principle



Fig. 1. The devastation of the Corniche Area of Shatt-al-Arab, Basrah - 1989

is placed upon the role of women, identified as '... a decisive factor in the mobilisation of local resources for reconstruction'. (Davis, 1989b: 13). It is true that women traditionally played an important role in the provision and maintenance of housing in many countries, and that their role would be further emphasised due to the war. Still, citing the role of women in construction as a general guideline undermines a number of local cultures, which does not see the role of women in the same perspective as that of the Guidelines.

Another aspect of maximising local resources in reconstruction concerns *building materials, skills and techniques*, which involves the level of skills, as well as the type of technology, that should be used in reconstruction. Accordingly, it is a relief to discover that prefabrication systems were not widely used in Al-Fao (they were only used in the Festival Square). However, some housing apartment blocks in Basrah were constructed with pre-cast concrete panel systems. Are they repeating the mistakes of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies?. A careful look at previous similar projects built in Basrah makes it quite clear that such building materials and techniques are not appropriate either to the local environment or to the social and cultural values of its people. Nevertheless, in the reconstruction of Fao as a symbol of the government's glory, advanced and 'impressive' construction technologies were used, such as inflatable structures (Adnan Mosque).

Another important factor that should be considered, especially with such rapid reconstruction that must have affected building quality, is the repair and maintenance factor. It is strongly believed that by the time Al-Fao becomes an inhabited city, all of the previously mentioned buildings will start to need maintenance. Actually, some signs of deterioration are visible now. We should be aware of the fact that, reconstruction and repair work in many developing, war devastated countries occupies a considerable space in their development plans. Yet at the same time their reconstruction is challenged by additional factors, including continuous population growth, political instability, internal strife, natural disasters, along with the continuous challenge to improve living and working conditions.

Principle 2

Effective reconstruction will only occur when it is comprehensive in its scope.

'The planning process will need to be wide-ranging, covering such issues as: immediate post-war planning activities; the assessment of needs and damage; the planning process; private and public roles in reconstruction; implementation of reconstruction and long-term planning considerations'. (Davis, 1989b:14). The Iraqi experience was far from being comprehensive in terms of planning and implementation. What has so far been achieved is more akin to *reconstruction on a project basis*. Following the war with Iran there has been no *public emergency action*



Fig. 2. The total destruction of the city of Fao - 1989

programme to return settlements to normality as quickly as possible.

This principle calls for a comprehensive assessment of needs and damage, based on a full appraisal of the affected population and a survey of the physical damage sustained in buildings and infrastructure, prior to the planning and implementation of any reconstruction programme. Following the war, each Ministry was responsible for the assessment of damage inflicted on its own sector. Thus, this exercise was limited to publicly-owned buildings, infrastructure and industries. Private properties and residential areas were not covered in the exercise. Interestingly enough, the same approach was again implemented following the 1991 war.

In terms of *planning process* this principle indicates that there has to be an *overall* and *flexible* planning approach, which can make use of *military* as well as civilian skills and expertise. Certainly, the planning for Fao was far from being integral, in fact it was a publicity hype in support of the Government that took no consideration of the social and economic future of the city. To make it even easier to implement, issues of land ownership were eliminated by the government taking over the whole city.

However, *Long Term Planning Considerations*, were given more thought during the preparation for the reconstruction of Basrah. Commenting on the reconstruction planning in Iraq in general, Dr. Talal Muhammad³ said that, 'You cannot say there is a certain policy to follow, but we

have thought of different policies for different areas in Iraq according to the different economic, technical and security considerations'. He also implied that they are at the stage of looking for a wide ranging framework of policies and plans which will be followed by more detailed and specialised studies.

Dr. Muhammad's claim was supported by Mozafar Al-Yamori⁴, when he said that, '... a decision was taken in August 1998 to limit the size of Basrah to the existing city's boundary and only to develop new zones within this as and when needed'. This decision resulted from a study conducted by the Urban and Regional Planning Team at the Ministry of Local Government, 'The Basic Design of Basrah the City, 1985', as part of the process of reconsidering the original development plan already done by Llewelyn-Davies Planning Office (1973), which ensured that the study was updated in harmony with the emerging political and economic situation. This is an important point which is often forgotten: the conflict interrupted and severely retarded pre-war development plans and projects. Thus it is essential for reconstruction to '... pick up the pieces of such discarded plans and may incorporate those which remain relevant into reconstruction plans'. (Davis, 1989b:21).

The decentralised policy in terms of the built settlements was also emphasised by the Mayor of Basrah, Mr. Abdel-Wahed Al-Qarnawi:

A general decentralisation policy is to be pursued within

the coming five years, a new satellite town (Saddam'iat al-Basrah) is to be built 90km north-west of Basrah city. Another four satellite settlements are to be constructed around the Al-Fao city, each of 1000 housing units⁵.

Hamid Turki spoke about the priority of rebuilding the industrial sector. While bearing in mind the pursuit of a policy to decentralise in the southern region, the plan will emphasise the role of existing cities such as Al-Fao, Qurna and Zubair and create new secure cities, such as Saddam'iat Al-Basrah to the north-west of Basrah City. Finally, we ought to emphasise the importance of Shatt-ai-Basrah (Shatt-al-Basrah is the new canal, in place of Shatt-al-Arab, to connect the Euphrates river to the Arab Gulf, just next to the Kuwaiti border. It will also contribute to the doubtful benefit of reclaiming the Marsh lands).

The author believes that the Iraqis had the right priorities, for implementation of reconstruction for Basrah: rubble-clearing was followed by replanning and rebuilding the infrastructure; streets, bridges, water supply, electricity, net-phones and opening and clearing rivers. This operation lasted for 4 months and encouraged the city's inhabitants to return, rebuild or repair their houses and restart their pre war life. However, Fao was different, perhaps because of the scale of devastation and the previously mentioned moral, economic and political reasons.

The use of the military to reduce the time to clear the city, prevented the participation of the people, a factor that has often been said to be of some importance to the recovery of morale.

Principle 3

The timing of actions is critical.

This principle clearly states that 'There are critical timing consideration in reconstruction that relate to the priority or sequence of required actions'. (Davis, 1989b:22). When to reconstruct? In the Iraqi case reconstruction started, it seems only, after the cease fire. There seems to have been no planning for reconstruction during the war. In January 1989, the author met Mr. Adel Said, Chief Architect at the Department of Local and Regional Planning in the Ministry of Local Government, Baghdad, who claimed, 'You cannot say that we are pursuing a certain time-planned policy of reconstruction at the national or regional level, but we do deal with each case separately according to the scale of damage. That is because it was very difficult to think or operate reconstruction during the war, especially when the site is indefensible, like the city of Halabja, ... since the war did not come to an end, we are having only a cease-fire and as long as there is no peace agreement, we cannot start rebuilding, at least not in the border sites'. His claim represented the attitude at that time (January 1989), which has dramatically changed since. For political reasons, when no lasting peace was forthcoming, the plans for Fao were made ready in 45 days and the reconstruction took 114 days. This may come to be seen as a mistaken intervention. Such haste resulted in the following negative results:

1. Construction and maintenance operations elsewhere in Iraq were frozen to allow the construction activities

of the Ministries of Local Government, Housing and Construction, Irrigation and Agriculture, Transport and Communication to meet the dead line.

2. Very high labour costs, caused by competition between the different Ministries to attract man power, particularly from abroad.
3. For the same reasons building materials, plant and equipment were at a premium.
4. Confusion between the different authorities caused a huge waste of building materials.
5. Consequently, it was very difficult to control the supply and storage of these materials.
6. Ministries were obliged to provide extra equipment and vehicles, to replace broken ones, because there was no time to repair them. This doubled the cost along with the need to use expensive and advanced building materials and techniques, instead of conventional ones, in order to finish the work on time.

This Principle recommends relating the timing of reconstruction to when people have returned to their locality. It also recommends offering incentives for families to return. In the case of Basrah this is what actually happened. The campaign began six months after the cease-fire, which allowed time for people to return.

The last issue explored pertaining to this principle concerned phases of shelter reconstruction (tents or temporary shelter, prefabricated and permanent) and rapid reconstruction. In both Basrah and Fao tents and prefabricated houses were avoided. Limited public housing was provided during and after the war, mostly for government officials and military officers.

However, during the 1991 war, thinking about reconstruction started before the bombardment (16 January 1991). Mitigating measures were taken including the removal of equipment from telephone exchanges and power stations. This time the Supreme Committee for Reconstruction was re-established *during* the war. Damage assessments and reconstruction priorities were established immediately after the cease-fire.

Principle 4

Do not wait for political and economic reforms.

This principle can be summarised in the following sentences of Otto Koenigsberger: 'Waiting for — or linking resettlement with major economic or political reforms, such as legislative changes in land tenure, taxation or local democracy means losing the impetus for change which exists in the immediate post-disaster period'. This principle is structured in a very confusing way, in that it reviews the different areas that need adjustment before starting reconstruction, while recommending commencement of reconstruction without waiting for change to happen. It considers legislation and continues to include expropriation; compensation; agencies to manage reconstruction; efficiency versus equity; cash resources, and ends up discussing economic factors.

Apparently, the Iraqi Government agreed with this

principle, in the sense that it did not wait for change to occur, neither did it encourage any attempt to develop post-war legislation, administration, etc. In fact, it is obvious that it does not expect change to happen. Whatever legislation was employed before the war will no doubt continue to be in use after the war.

Nevertheless, some measures regarding compensation were approved. It was reported by the 'Guardian' (August 15, 1989) that in Basrah, 'Compensation of about 1,000 Dinar per family [\$2,800 at the official rate] is being paid to cover the cost of repairing houses, replacing furniture and dead animals'. In the same article it was claimed that '... thousands of poor people were given free parcels of land on which to build homes'.

Principle 5

There are limited opportunities to reform the design of buildings and settlement patterns in reconstruction.

Unique opportunities for reform will arise due to war damage. Nevertheless the central planners should be cautious about 1) raising into settlement relocation and 2) raising utopian expectations.

In terms of settlement relocation, the Iraqis luckily decided to rebuild Fao on the same site, more as a political symbol of victory than for social considerations. In other cases such as Halabja in the north of Iraq, a decision was taken to relocate the city at a more secure site. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Fao had to leave their homes for more than 4 years, and then return to a city that no longer belonged to them, which reflects the same insensitive social discontinuity; loss of existing investments in settlements and land ownership.

The Iraqi government's heavy handed approach to urban reconstruction of Fao may have avoided land speculation. It unfortunately reinforced centralised planning and denied the people any role.

The reconstruction of Basrah and Fao raises the issue of pathological monumentalism in architecture and town planning. In Basrah, in a green park on the bank of the Corniche facing the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, stand 99 lifelike bronze sculptures on stone platforms, of officers and commanders who fell in the battles of Basrah (49 platforms on land and 50 in water). 'This was a priority project in the frenzied post-war rush to rebuild virtually from scratch the pulverised cities of Basrah and Fao. Made from real family snapshots by a collective of Iraqi sculptors, they depict those heroes in a variety of forms of dress, in combat gear or without. Only one thing is common to all: every man's gaze is sternly fixed on the Iranian shore across the Shatt, and each has an arm accusingly stretched out pointing in the same direction'. (Al-Khalil, 1991:29)

Obviously, with the rebuilding of Fao, Iraq followed in the steps of some other so called Socialist countries; planning by decree, assumed needs and resources and denial of the participation of the users. This strategy failed in Europe as it will surely fail in Iraq.

Principle 6

It is vital to preserve the cultural heritage in reconstruction.

This principle asserts that in order to '...re-establish the community's identity and provide cultural continuity, it is imperative to preserve or rebuild selected damaged or destroyed cultural landmarks'. (Davis, 1989b:28). Further, this principle promotes the point of view of the community, while the government's concern is only with economic and political aspects of conservation, often only with physical structures. Therefore, one feels the need to balance this with cultural aspects that go beyond built structures.

'The conservation of the traditional areas is a very important issue, the government is giving it its careful attention. But at the same time it proved to be very expensive and without any economical yield'. With these words Abdel-Wahed Al-Qarnawi, the Mayor of Basrah, replied the author's question about the priority of conservation. As for the conservation policies that would be applied during the reconstruction phase, Namir Zenal⁶ said that:

"The government is no longer ready to spend the amount of money that it used to do in the past. Conservation of architectural heritage is still considered a political commitment, but the post-war economic situation does not allow running large scale conservation policies. Nevertheless, there is a strong desire to reflect the Islamic and Arabic identity in the newly designed areas".

The fact that the traditional areas of Basrah have suffered great devastation due to the war, did not trigger any governmental interest in their conservation. On the contrary, it has been seen as an opportunity for reforming the traditional areas and 'modernising' them.

The traditional areas are mainly within the Central Corridor, which includes the Al-Ashar area on Shatt-al-Arab side and Old Basrah, especially on both sides of Al-Ashar water way. Iuad Sami⁷ emphasised what was mentioned in the Llewelyn-Davies Report (1973):

"The blight in Basrah started long ago before the war, because of different factors. It was characterised by the deterioration of the physical conditions, obsolescence, substandard buildings, high incidence of vacancy and stagnation of economic activity. All these factors impair values and prevent the normal development of property".

In 1978 the Ministry of Tourism began restoring five houses and this process is still not finished. Another house on the south bank of Al-Ashar Creek was restored in 1972 and is used as a museum. At that time the houses needed minor repairs.

In the Al-Ashar traditional area at the riverside, according to Hamid Turki⁸, a new development scheme will begin in the near future. The whole area is now government property and is badly damaged in some places. The government has already decided to conserve 20 traditional structures out of hundreds and to replace the rest with new modern structures, in order to enhance the value of the land in that location, since Al-Ashar is considered the best commercial spot in Basrah City.

On the other hand, with more than 6,000 Iraqi sites listed in official records of antiquities, Iraq has always given special attention to the archaeological sites. The most recent

example has been the controversial reconstruction of the ancient site of Babylon, which was carried out during the war with Iran and cost the Iraqi budget millions of dollars.

Another aspect is the preservation of monuments and remains of buildings as a memorial of war. This task was performed in Fao, where the only surviving structure (a mosque) was preserved in its state of damage, surrounded by a round-about. It is important to make it clear that the aim should not be to preserve buildings as dead memorials, but rather to have a 'culturally oriented' approach for reconstruction. Whatever survived of buildings with cultural values, could be rebuilt to appear as before if necessary, and even used as a source of inspiration for the newly designed settlement.

Principle 7

It is essential to introduce safety measures in reconstruction.

When considering this principle, one can sense the influence which the studies of natural disasters have had on the development of these principles. This is not to say that this principle is not relevant. It is important to note that mitigation in the case of natural disasters is dependent on a cycle of events, which is not necessarily, always the case in war. It seems important to distinguish mitigation during war from that after war. Normally, following war only few countries would have reason to continue feeling threatened. These countries, such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel would continue to provide for and consider the threat of a future war in their settlement planning and housing design.

The author, accompanied by Dr. Fu'ad Al-Mu'amin, visited Baghdad in 1989 and saw the nuclear shelter (above the ground) at the Technical University. Dr. Fu'ad Al-Mu'amin claimed that it can provide a safe shelter for 40% of the students and staff in case of nuclear attack. He also mentioned that there is one in every University or College in Baghdad. Two years later, a similar shelter (Al-Amiria) was destroyed during the American bombardment of Baghdad in January 1991, with a specially designed bomb. This experience reinforces the view that '... apart from some elements of dispersal planning and the overall location of settlements in particularly vulnerable border situations, there is not a great deal that can be done to plan a city against attack from modern weapon systems'. (Zargar, 1989).

In Basrah, underground shelters were provided for the public in the main open areas in Old Basrah Market and in Suq Al-Ashar. Massive concrete barriers were placed in the streets and around the main public places during the war. Basrah was surrounded with very strong fortifications as well as an advanced anti-aircraft missile net. All of these measures were provided during the war. Following the end of the war, Mr. Al-Qarnawi claimed:

Some housing projects on the way to the new airport of Basrah, were constructed with individual air-raid shelter, as well as some community underground shelters part of which were designed as nuclear shelters.

In Fao, mitigation was not an issue at all, despite the fact that Fao is located in one of the most threatened zones.

Fig. 3. An example of Basrah's traditional architecture



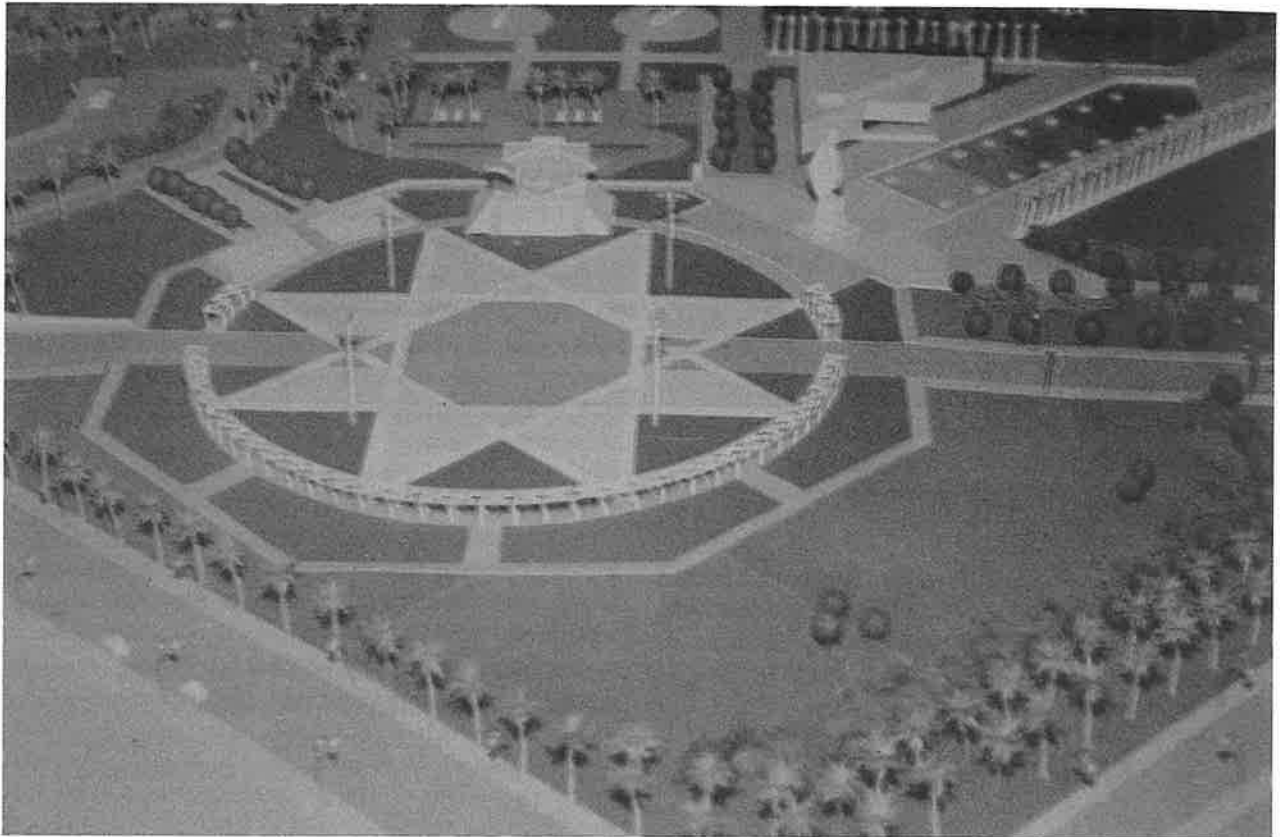


Fig. 4. The 'Festival Square' in Al-Fao - 1989.

That may be because it was never meant to be inhabited! This principle also calls for the incorporation of safety measures against natural hazards and fire.

In short, it seems more sensible to invest in non structural safety measures: civil defence planning, social preparedness and to try and reduce social and cultural vulnerability (in the case of civil war) as well as economic and political ones.

Principle 8

It may be possible to adapt sections of the war economy to reconstruction.

It is argued that the technology as well as the production capability of the 'war economy' can be adapted into one that could produce essential building or infrastructure components needed in reconstruction. Two direct benefits can be achieved in such a case: 1) badly needed building materials and components and; 2) avoiding unemployment. This is of course, if the end of the war meant the closure of the military industry. To our mind, this Principle is too idealistic. For developing countries such as Iraq and Iran, who have invested so much in their military industry during the war, it is very difficult to suddenly transfer their industry. What is more likely to happen is that, such countries will follow the lead of the developed nations and expand their industries to be able to export their products to the rest of the Third World. In fact, this has been the Iraqi strategy since the end of its war with Iran. Iraq held its First International Arms Fair in October 1989, where it announced its production capability and identified its marketing opportunities. Iraqi officials argue that investing in arms

industry although in the short-term diverts what would normally have been available for reconstruction to defence, would generate in the long run hard currency that is badly needed as well as regional political influence.

Nevertheless, and as we noted in the previous sections the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization played an essential role in the reconstruction campaigns of Basrah and Fao, where it supplied electricity generating units, medium and high voltage networks and street lighting networks in a rather efficient way.

However, it is important to mention that following the Iraqi retreat from Kuwait in February 1991, and its acceptance of the United Nations resolutions, the Security Council refused to allow Iraq to adapt its military manufacturing capabilities to civilian use. Furthermore, it insisted that all factories have to be demolished, a process that is still going on until today (July 1992).

Principle 9

The need for handicapped people must be catered for.

This principle calls for special attention during rebuilding to satisfy the specific needs of those who have become mentally or physically disabled due to the war, and also the need for rehabilitation programmes that eventually would allow the disabled people to function as well as the disability may allow. This principle is well acknowledged in Iraq, partly because most of the visibly disabled are ex-service men, and caring for the disabled is seen as a political commitment towards those who defended the nation. It has been claimed that during 1989-1990, 25 Technical Training Institutions have been altered to make them accessible to

the disabled (Ghazala, 1989)⁹. Still, more effort is needed to providing care, treatment and training for the disabled as well as working opportunities. Additional facilities must also accommodate those suffering from post-war psychological trauma.

Principle 10

Reconstruction should be regarded as therapy.

This principle illustrates that 'It is vital to recognise the therapeutic need to closely involve war survivors in rebuilding activities wherever this is possible. They should be regarded as active participants in the planning and implementation of reconstruction rather than being mere spectators of other's actions'. (Davis, 1989b:33). This issue relates directly to the issue of 'public participation', which has been discussed as part of *Principle 1*. However, it became evident that the authorities and the planners (in the case of both Basrah and Fao) were not aware of the role that participation can play in the therapeutic readjustment of the affected communities. Even if they were aware, the high speed in which they were required to reconstruct made it impossible to involve the people in any degree.

To support this Principle, the Guidelines quote George Atkinson who said 'Too often it happens, especially in poorer countries, that large numbers of able-bodied men stand idle, living on relief, while outsiders get busy on reconstruction. Not only is such a happening demoralising to the able-bodied, but it wastes much needed resources'. (in Davis, 1989b:33).

Principle 11

Knowledge needs to be documented and disseminated.

This principle calls for action in three areas: 1) Education, training and public awareness. 2) Evaluation of reconstruction and dissemination of knowledge. 3) The documentation of survival and coping abilities.

In terms of *education, training and public awareness* at the different issues of post-war reconstruction, Iraq has done very little and reconstruction has always been a predominantly governmental concern; an exclusive task for the government's officials and professionals. There appears to be little or no public knowledge about the research into post-war reconstruction. There is no published literature about post-war reconstruction plans. The impression given is that the government's attitude to research into reconstruction is to consider that it is private. The author believes that more research should be done on developing manpower resources, building materials, supplies and techniques, private sector investment and the general refurbishment of the built environment, due to the trauma of the war and its economic, social and demographic consequences.

Even in institutions of higher education, the fact that there have been a number of wars and urgent needs for reconstruction has hardly affected the education and training programmes offered. In 1989, Dr. Al-Bayati¹⁰ claimed that from the five centres of post-graduate planning studies, in Iraq, there is not one student who is involved in the subject of post-war reconstruction. This failure is mainly due to the lack of encouragement as well as lack of information. The

author asked Ms. Nasreen Ghazala, an architect, from the Council of Technical Institutes, Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, Baghdad, about the role of the architectural and planning students, both undergraduate and post-graduate, in the process of reconstruction¹¹. She claimed that:

"We have enough experienced planners, to conduct the reconstruction process, thus there is no need to bother the architectural students with the problems and constraints of post-war reconstruction".

Obviously, there are a lot of obstacles facing any researcher in this field. The most important of which, after lack of encouragement, is the lack of information due to governmental secrecy concerning anything that has to do with the subject. As it is evidenced, during the three field visits to Iraq, it was very difficult to obtain any maps. In order to get them, one has to address a request to the Military Survey Unit and this procedure will take at least three weeks, but it is unlikely to agree to give away maps or aerial views because of security.

It is almost as if the government has something to hide; that decisions about reconstruction like those about the war, are only the province of officials under orders from their political masters. More open encouragement and support should be given to the young researchers, because the first step in solving any problem is to admit its existence and then search for a solution.

Iran, contrary to the Iraqi attitude, has published a vast amount of information and data that has enabled its researchers to proceed with their studies and to develop the policies and programmes of reconstruction, concerned with physical, social and economic issues.

Having said that, a change can be detected in the Iraqi Government's attitude following the 1991 war, when it announced its agreement on the establishment of a Post-war Reconstruction Study Centre at the University of Baghdad, which will undertake research and documentation on the subject. (Al-Zubaidi, 1991)¹². It is still to be seen whether this is a 'genuine' change.

Evaluation of reconstruction and dissemination of knowledge has recently been taken seriously following the reconstruction drives of Basrah and Fao. The evaluation studies that have been carried out and announced during the First International Symposium catered only for efficiency as it is typically understood by a central government, in terms of figures and quantities, rather than qualities and people's reaction to the reconstructed environment. The same symposium has been seen as a tool to disseminate the Iraqi experience as evaluated by the Iraqi officials. Nevertheless, these evaluations produced a number of publications by the Ministry of Culture and Information which documented the reconstruction process. (see bibliography). However, nothing has been done on the documentation of damage, and on research.

Finally, in relation to the last action area of this principle (i.e. documentation of survival and coping abilities), it is very difficult to imagine the government (any government) giving any priority whatsoever to such recording. No matter

how valuable the insight on the way individuals and communities coped or survived the war, it seems to be an area of pure academic interest and anthropological excitement. In fact, the author wonders whether this Guideline should be omitted from the Principle.

Summary and Conclusion

This case study was seen as an opportunity to review the Principles themselves. The conclusions will be grouped under two headings.

- a. *Observations concerning Iraqi centralised reconstruction; and*
- b. *Observations concerning the format and the content of the Guidelines.*

Observations concerning post-war reconstruction in Iraq.

- i. The absence of a national reconstruction strategy following the Iran-Iraq war was the main handicap for the reconstruction effort, resulting in limited reconstruction drives being carried out in two or three cities, mostly serving political aims.
- ii. The closest the Government has been to establish a national strategy was after the 1991 Allied bombardment, in which:
 - Power was given to a Supreme Committee to take and implement urgent decisions needed to remove bottle necks on a national scale.
 - An attempt was made to readjust pre-war development (reconstruction) policies, rather than formulating new ones.
 - National damage assessment was carried out in which each ministry surveyed its own sector, and at the same time estimated their own undamaged resources.
 - Action priorities were drawn.
- iii. The Iraqi case study highlighted the extent to which reconstruction after war can be constrained by international alliances and relations as well as by the continuation of war.
- iv. This case study showed how reconstruction can be used politically and how communities can be manipulated. Reconstruction was far from being comprehensive to tackle social, and economic issues. Instead it was purely physical and symbolic.
- v. The urgent need for an internationally respected philosophy of reconstruction is one of the main conclusions to come out of our study of reconstruction in Iraq. Such a philosophy should define the State's responsibility and the rights of the people.
- vi. The reconstruction campaigns of Basrah and Fao did not have any realistic appreciation of the dynamics of reconstruction. Plans were drawn up in Baghdad, they lacked flexibility and did not allow for feedback.
- vii. The result was total alienation of the local population; their real needs and ambitions were never understood.
- viii. During eight years of war, thinking of and planning for reconstruction was discouraged, mainly because the government did not want to admit damage and destruction.
 - The issues of war-damage and reconstruction were, and probably still are considered highly political and no doubt controversial and can only be addressed and discussed by Iraqi officials.
 - As a consequence the chance was missed of involving the public in discussions over the form and priorities of reconstruction and of having ready plans for implementation following the cease fire, thus delaying the return of the displaced people.
- ix. In Fao no attempt was made to achieve a balance, between retaining some of the city's features and modernising it. The city was totally cleared out by the army; people were not allowed to salvage their belongings, and a totally new, unrecognisable city was built.
- x. The rural settlements surrounding the cities of Basrah and Fao were ignored in reconstruction, an attitude that did not appreciate the fragile link between rural and urban centres.
- xi. The rebuilding of Basrah and Fao is an extreme example of reconstruction by central government. This approach has been basically a reflection of the pre-war planning pattern further reinforced by eight years of war and military rule.
- xii. The organisational pattern of the planning and implementation machinery followed closely what has been identified in Barakat (1993) as Model 5. However, in this case planning decisions were made by the Ministry of Local Government. The task of implementation was shared between different ministries. Although not establishing a specialised ministry for reconstruction, seemed to be a sensible decision, the Iraqi experience lacked co-ordination.
- xiii. However, the response following the 1991 war was totally different, partly because the Ministry of Local Government was bombed and all the records were lost. Although a Reconstruction Supreme Committee was established, the whole Cabinet was announced as a Reconstruction Government and each ministry was ordered to plan and implement its own reconstruction programmes.
- xiv. The 'local' construction industry was not given the chance to develop itself due to ministries stepping in to implement the reconstruction plans.
- xv. Following its war with Iran, Iraq set aside hundreds of millions of dollars for reconstruction that were readily available. This meant that importing machinery, labour and building materials was not an obstacle to achieve reconstruction in 90 days, and we saw the result of that: wastage, top-down approaches, etc. While following the allied bombing in 1991, the lack of

financial resources and the trade embargo meant that the Iraqis had to depend totally on their local labour and building materials: thus debris were carefully cleared and recycled.

xvi. The Iraqi experience was characterised for its overlaid compensations. At the very beginning of the war compensation was given according to the scale of damage, especially in important urban centres such as Baghdad and Basrah. As the war spread and the damage was extended it became more and more difficult to handle such a system of compensation. Thus a standard payment was made, and not to all families.

- This method proved to have its own shortcomings due to inflation and lack of building materials. Very few people invested their money in reconstruction.
- The provision of land in rural areas proved to be the most successful way of compensation.

Observations on the Reconstruction Principles.

In this study we have commented on the content of each Principle separately highlighting its value and its shortcomings. However, the following general observations can be made:

i. Obviously there is a case for having a set of reconstruction Guidelines. However it might be more appropriate to have them written in the form of 'recommendations', as 'guidelines' imply that if they

were followed they would produce good results; something that is not certain.

- ii. Somehow, there is a need to distance reconstruction recommendations after natural disasters from those after war.
- iii. Any recommendation have to be based on certain moral principles. In the case of war, this has to be the eventual benefit of the war suffering people. Thus the guidelines should have the courage to spell out this fact. One way of doing that could be by relating the recommendations to already established international human rights and settlement declarations.
- iv. It is important to understand how much of these recommendations are for the sake of the people and how much for the sake of research development.
- v. In general, the set of Principles are too idealistic, especially when it comes to considering reconstruction politics.
- vi. There is a need for a summarised version of these recommendations to be widely disseminated.
- vii. In some aspects of reconstruction, caution should be exercised when it comes to cross-cultural generalisations. For instance, the role of women and people participation in reconstruction.
- viii. There is a need for such Guidelines to be tested in the field and in different countries, in order to highlight those issues that are relevant across countries.

* *Post-war Reconstruction in Iraq. The case-study of Basrah and Fao by Sultan Barakat. Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York (Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit) July 1993.*

¹ *Warsaw may be another exception.*

² *From a personal discussion with the author during a meeting in Sofia, November 1989.*

³ *Chairman of the Centre of Advanced Urban and Regional Planning Studies, at the University of Baghdad.*

⁴ *A Senior planner at the Ministry of Local Government, Baghdad. He proposed the structural plan of the new city of Al-Fao, which was selected by the Al-Fao Reconstruction Committee to be carried out in the near future.*

⁵ *This was also mentioned in a statement given by Mr. Adnan Salman, The Minister of Local Government, on 20 October 1988, to AL-Jomhoria Iraqi newspaper.*

⁶ *Chairman of the Regional and Urban Planning Department, in the Ministry of Local Government, Baghdad.*

⁷ *Resident architect at the conservation site in Old Basrah,*

Ministry of Culture and Information.

⁸ *The Head of the Planning Division at the Governorate of Basrah.*

⁹ *Physical disability is the most common followed by hearing disability.*

¹⁰ *Professor at the Department of Architecture at the University of Baghdad.*

¹¹ *This question was addressed to her at the Second York Workshop, on Settlement Reconstruction after War, 16-18 May 1989. At the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York.*

¹² *In a letter addressed to the author, 29 November 1991. Mr. Al-Zubaidi is the General Director of the IDRISI Centre for Engineering Consultancy in Baghdad.*