

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 113

Urging all governments involved in the military action against Iraq to work to take all reasonable measures to avoid damage to the cultural antiquities in Iraq until hostilities have ceased.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2003

Mr. ENGLISH submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging all governments involved in the military action against Iraq to work to take all reasonable measures to avoid damage to the cultural antiquities in Iraq until hostilities have ceased.

Whereas the United States has assembled and deployed an allied military coalition to apply pressure on the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq to comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq;

Whereas military operations often result in the destruction and permanent damage of irreplaceable cultural property;

Whereas cultural property is defined by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict as “any moveable or immoveable

property of great importance to the cultural heritage of all people, such as monuments of architecture or history, archaeological sites, works of art, books or any building whose main and effective purpose is to contain cultural property”;

Whereas the region of present day Iraq, located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, is known as the “Cradle of Civilization”, the birthplace of varied societies that moved civilization from prehistory to history, and the native land of many Biblical and Koranic events;

Whereas the cities and rural areas of Iraq are home to some of the oldest human settlements in the world as well as more than 10,000 identified archaeological sites of cultural and historical importance and tens of thousands of other unexcavated sites;

Whereas Iraq continues to serve as one of the prime centers of Islamic art and culture;

Whereas in the 4th millennium B.C., long before the emergence of Egyptian, Greek, or Roman culture, the Sumerian culture flourished in the region of present day Iraq, inventing the wheel, the first plow, the first ever sophisticated irrigation system, the earliest form of writing (cuneiform), the first used calendar, and the first written alphabet;

Whereas southern Iraq is home to the site of the ancient Sumerian city of Uruk, known to many as the first true civilized city and home to the legendary King Gilgamesh who built the city’s famous great wall;

Whereas the Iraqi city of Ur, which flourished in the 3rd millennium B.C., is known as the birthplace of Abraham and is said to be the possible location of the Garden of Eden;

Whereas the city of Ur holds one of the world's oldest and most important ziggurats, a high rising temple of sun-baked brick with outside staircases leading to the shrine on top, partially excavated but yet to be completely uncovered;

Whereas the city of Ur is the location of one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century, a cemetery in which ancient Sumerian royalty were buried along with their servants and extravagant treasures;

Whereas near the city of Ur is the archaeological site of Tel Al-Ubaid, where ancient terra-cotta pottery and sculptures dating back to 4,500 B.C. were unearthed;

Whereas the Akkadian people briefly ruled the region of present day Iraq in the 2nd millennium B.C. and developed the capital city of Babylon which became the commercial and cultural center of the Middle East for 2,000 years;

Whereas the city of Babylon, flourishing from approximately 1700 to the 6th century B.C., was the center of operations for historical leaders such as Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar, and Alexander the Great;

Whereas Babylon was home to the captive Israelites in the Biblical book of Exodus and the location of great archaeological finds including the Ishtar Gate, an enormous brick entryway into the ancient city, and tentatively named as the site for the Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and the Biblically-referenced Tower of Babel;

Whereas the site of Nippur, approximately 100 miles south of Babylon, has yielded a vast collection of pre-Islamic

pottery and the oldest known record of a murder trial, chronicled on a clay tablet dating back to 1850 B.C.;

Whereas in 762 B.C., the city of Baghdad, founded under the rule of Abo al Abbas, the first caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, was the central commercial, cultural, philosophical, and intellectual capital of the world during the Middle Ages and was seen by many as the Islamic capital of the world during the 10th century;

Whereas the city of Baghdad contains the Kadhimain mosque and shrine, many medieval buildings, including other tombs, mosques, minarets, and the 13th century Mustansiriya;

Whereas located sixty miles east of Baghdad is the modern city of Samarra, the home to the famous Great Mosque, which among other things, is the tomb of Imam Ali and his son Husein, the founders of the Shiite branch of Islam;

Whereas located in Iraq's third largest city, Mosul, are the ruins of Nimrud, including a Great Mosque, dating from 172 A.D., and an ancient leaning brick minaret, dating from 640 A.D.;

Whereas near the city of Mosul is located the site of the ancient city of Nineveh, referenced by Biblical prophet Zephaniah and the site of the prophet Jonah's sermons, including royal Assyrian palaces and more than 20,000 cuneiform tablets from King Ashurbanipal's library;

Whereas the site of the ancient city of Hatra, located near Mosul, is known as the "City of the Sun" which holds many archaeological remains because it served as a trade and military route along the Tigris river;

Whereas located at the site of the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon, 20 miles southeast of Baghdad, are the remains of a gigantic vaulted hall, the Taq Kisra, which has one of the largest single-span brick arches in the world and was damaged by shock from explosions in the 1991 Persian Gulf War;

Whereas the modern city of Khorsabad stands on the ruins of an ancient city called Dur-Sharrukin, where among many other priceless treasures, fragments of a colossal human-headed winged bull was found;

Whereas the Iraqi city of Assur holds great works of art from the royal Assyrian workshops of the 13th century B.C., residences of merchants from the 18th century B.C., and temples built before the 21st century B.C.;

Whereas it should be recognized that the aforementioned Iraqi cities and archaeological sites comprises an extensive list of endangered cultural antiquities, but the list is not a comprehensive list;

Whereas it is understood that the success of a United States-led military campaign will require military contingencies to consider all strategic options and compelling concerns in the formulation of operational plans; and

Whereas Congress has expressed the support and appreciation of the Nation for the President and the members of the Armed Forces who are participating in “Operation Iraqi Freedom”: Now, therefore, be it

- 1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring)*, That, recognizing the paramount importance
- 3 of accomplishing the goals of the United States and allied
- 4 countries currently engaged in hostilities against Iraq and

1 protecting the lives of members of the United States  
2 Armed Forces, members of the armed forces of our allies,  
3 and civilians in Iraq, Congress urges all governments in-  
4 volved in the military action against Iraq to work to take  
5 all reasonable measures to avoid damage to the cultural  
6 antiquities in Iraq until hostilities have ceased.

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