

COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY
BAGHDAD

August 17, 2003

FOR: THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
FROM: THE ADMINISTRATOR, Ambassador Paul Bremer III
SUBJECT: The Iraqi Flag

The design of an Iraqi flag is for the people of Iraq to decide. I understand that the adoption of a new Iraqi flag is a sensitive issue that ideally would wait until after the referendum on a new constitution. However, the Governing Council may wish either address the issue directly or search for an interim solution, as there are several pending events where it would be very beneficial for Iraq to display its new colors:

- The opening of diplomatic liaison offices in Washington and London will likely take place in late August or early September. Iraq is moving to re-establish diplomatic ties with its Arab neighbors as well;
- The next Arab League Ministerial will take place on September 9;
- The United Nations General Assembly will meet in September, providing the opportunity for a delegation to represent Iraq's interests;
- The first 850-man battalion of the New Iraqi Army will graduate in October and begin preparations to join Coalition Forces in securing Iraq.

Iraqis are likely to want to display a flag at each of these events. Your diplomatic representatives will need to distinguish themselves in international fora; your soldiers and officers will need colors to salute and display on their uniforms.

There are at least two approaches the GC could adopt to address the issue of the flag:

- 1) The GC could appoint a commission as soon as possible to propose a design for a new Iraqi flag. This commission would make a recommendation that the GC could adopt.
- 2) The GC could endorse an interim measure – such as the current flag without the Arabic writing or the current flag with the Arabic in a standard calligraphy – to serve as Iraq's flag until a new, sovereign Iraqi government can adopt a new flag.

I suggest that the GC take action to ensure that in the coming months an accepted flag is flown behind Iraqi diplomats and soldiers.