

### **Relations between Archaeologists and the Military in the Case of Iraq**

#### **Foreword**

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The complex and emotive issues surrounding “engagement” by archaeologists with the military have been recently and vocally aired in a number of different professional forums and media. The PIA Forum Editor felt that this topic deserved greater illustration – for and by some of the archaeologists involved – as there has been a series of strongly voiced opinions – some informed and some less so – expressed on the open weblist of the World Archaeological Council (WAC).

Dr John Curtis, Keeper of the Department of the Middle East at the British Museum, was approached and kindly agreed to be the PIA Forum Primary Correspondent, as despite both public and vocal opposition to military action in Iraq prior to the recent invasion, he found himself and his institution playing an active role in attempting to ameliorate the situation regarding further destruction to Iraq’s cultural heritage and heritage institutions and working with and alongside the British Military in his efforts to do so. Three of the Forum Correspondents were approached and agreed to discuss the issues raised by Dr Curtis on the basis of their own recent experiences in working with either the UK or US military, both inside and outside of Iraq. The final Correspondent was approached and agreed to respond to Dr Curtis’ lead article both as a non-archaeologist and a representative voice for those many academics without direct personal experience of working with the military in any professional capacity, but whom nonetheless have very strongly held and voiced opinions on the subject.

The Forum Editor would like to reiterate that there is still no consensus by archaeologists and heritage professionals on this complex topic and although a number of the most vocal opponents of any engagement by archaeologists with the military from the WAC weblist were approached to be Correspondents, all, unfortunately, equally refused to be directly engaged by Dr John Curtis. The following articles are the respective authors’ personal opinions and do not necessarily represent their respective institutions’ views on the recent invasion and subsequent conflict within Iraq.

The PIA Forum Editor deeply thanks the Correspondents for their time and hopes that the following articles stimulate further constructive discussion on this contentious subject and that PIA’s readership finds the following articles informative.