

**C.V. Starr Lecture**  
**The Shaping of Iraqi State Media Policy**  
**April 6, 2005**

On April 6, 2005, Professor Monroe E. Price – who is Director of the Howard M. Squadron Program in Law, Media and Society, at Cardozo School of Law – spoke about the efforts undertaken by the new Iraqi government in creating a state media policy during a C.V. Starr Lecture.

Under Saddam Hussein, all media in Iraq – including news agencies, radio, and television broadcasters – were controlled by the regime and its Ministry of Information. Freedom of the press did not exist, and dissent was punished severely. After April 2003, following the invasion by the United States and its coalition partners, Iraq saw the proliferation of newspapers, magazines, and new radio and television operations.

Price said that, almost immediately, the new government had to decide what regulatory entity should be established and what standards set for media licensing and similar governmental responsibilities in a conflict environment. He noted that concerns began to grow as some partisan media outlets began to publish unsubstantiated and sensational news reports which were later blamed for causing riots, sectarian violence, and even inciting attacks against coalition forces which had ousted the former regime.

He described how the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) – which was the governing authority in Iraq – implemented several regulations in an effort to establish the foundation for an Iraqi media policy and also to help stabilize the country for national elections. CPA Order 14, for example, prohibited certain activities such as broadcasting or publishing material that “incites civil disorder, rioting or damage to property.” Order 65 established the National Communications and Media Commission, which has had responsibility for licensing and regulating the media in that country. (In part, Price said that the Commission was modeled on the Federal Communications Commission.)

In addition to its regulatory duties, Price noted that the Commission also issued a voluntary “Code of Practices” whose guidelines included providing accuracy and fairness in news programming, setting editorial standards for radio and television program content, and restricting the broadcast of materials which carry the risk of inciting imminent violence. Order 66 created the Iraqi Media Network as the public service broadcaster in Iraq.

Despite these advances, Price – who served as an informal advisor to the Media Development Team, which worked with the CPA and the Iraqi interim government on the shaping of internal media policy – said that the establishment of an independent Iraqi media still faced many obstacles, including the lack of experienced journalists, an unreliable communications system, and political and economic instability. He noted the near absence of active civil society groups such as Iraqi journalism and media associations, which he attributed to restrictions set by the previous dictatorship and the current security situation.