

Sir John Chilcot  
Chair,  
The Iraq Inquiry,  
35 Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3BQ

4 August 2009

Dear Sir John,

We are very pleased that the Government has decided to establish an independent Committee of Inquiry into events in Iraq covering the period 2001-2009.

We fully understand that the work of your Committee will concern a wide range of political and military issues. We do, however, urge you to investigate the problems faced by British forces with respect to safeguarding the cultural heritage in Iraq. These problems were of course shared with other coalition forces. Among the matters which concern us are the damage and loss at the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad and other museums, libraries and archives, the looting of archaeological sites, and the damage to historic monuments. We would hope that such consideration would address the extent of provision of generic and theatre-specific cultural property awareness training for the armed forces; and the pressing issue that the United Kingdom has not yet ratified the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999. (We note that the United States ratified the 1954 Convention on 13 March 2009.)

We should, of course, be available and willing to provide briefings and evidence to your Committee as necessary.

Correspondence can be sent to UK National Commission for UNESCO, 3 Whitehall Court, London, SW1A 2EL/020 77663460.

Yours sincerely,



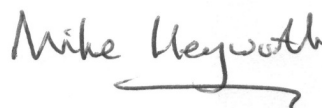
Professor Alec Boksenberg CBE FRS  
Chair,  
UK National Commission for UNESCO



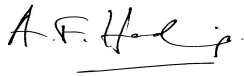
Sir Adam Roberts  
President,  
British Academy



Professor Roger Matthews  
Chairman of Council,  
British Institute for the Study of Iraq



Dr Mike Heyworth MBE  
Director,  
Council for British Archaeology



Professor Anthony Harding  
President,  
European Association of Archaeologists



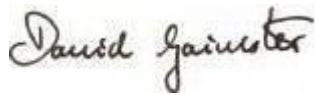
Peter Hinton  
Director,  
Institute for Archaeologists



Michael Houlihan  
Chairman,  
International Council of Museums UK



Mark Taylor  
Director  
Museums Association



Dr David Gaimster FSA FMA  
General Secretary and CEO,  
Society of Antiquaries of London



Sue Cole  
Secretary,  
UK & Ireland Committee of the Blue Shield

Cc: Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport  
Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth MP, Secretary of State for Defence  
Peter Landymore, Ambassador and UK Permanent Delegate to UNESCO  
Margaret Aldred CB CBE, Secretary to the Iraq Inquiry