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Recasting the Iraqi Bureaucracy in the US Image: The Case of the Ministry of Oil

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For a variety of reasons, the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime has ushered in a new era in the management of Iraq's most important ministry. Needless to say, the temptation to introduce advanced management techniques and practices similar to those in operation in the US requires greater deliberation than is publicly admitted. This article probes and assesses the empirical context of the US administrative control of Iraq's Ministry of Oil. Additionally, a series of implications that might guide future empirical investigations and help managers strengthen administrative capacity are put forward. The article is structured around four major topics: (1) An overview of the Iraqi state, (2) Strategic and critical tasks in the Ministry of Oil, (3) the Bush administration's oversight, and (4) Possible pitfalls to be avoided. The authors conclude that progress toward building Iraqi bureaucratic capacity is more likely to be attained if the new administrators are careful to avoid time tested mistakes.

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