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**PRESIDENT SIGNS EMERGENCY PROTECTION FOR IRAQI ANTIQUITIES ACT**

President Bush has signed into law the "Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultural Antiquities Act of 2004." This grants to the President the authority to impose import restrictions on any cultural materials illegally removed from Iraq, continuing a restriction on the import of such materials that has been in place since August 1990.

With this legislation the President may exercise his authority under the Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA), the U.S.'s legislation implementing the 1970 UNESCO Convention, without the need for Iraq to bring a request to the U.S. for import restrictions. The legislation also defines the materials that may be protected more broadly than the CPIA normally does and includes all materials of "archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific or religious importance". Senator Charles Grassley originally introduced this legislation in June 2003 in reaction to the looting of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad and the subsequent and ongoing massive pillage of archaeological sites, primarily of the Sumerian period, throughout southern Iraq. The legislation tracks United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483, which requires all members of the United Nations to prevent trade in cultural materials illegally removed from museums and other locations in Iraq.

In Senator Grassley's introduction to the bill, he stated: "I believe it is very important that we in Congress remain mindful of the need to take steps to protect Iraq's cultural heritage. Our bill will ensure that going forward we continue to adhere to the full spirit of Resolution 1483 and avoid any break in the protections afforded to Iraqi antiquities. Our bill also provides an important signal of our commitment to preserving Iraq's resources for the benefit of the Iraqi people."

Passage of this legislation was actively supported by many archaeological organizations including the Archaeological Institute of America, The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII) (formerly American Association for Research in Baghdad), the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Society for American Archaeology, the American Anthropological Association and the College Art Association.