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Richard Hooper, 40, of the U.N., Expert in Politics of the Mideast

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Richard M. Hooper, an American official of the United Nations who specialized in the Middle East, died in the bomb attack last Tuesday on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, the United Nations said on Friday. He was 40.

Mr. Hooper was on a short assignment in Iraq. Since 2001 he had served as special assistant to Sir Kieran Prendergast, the United Nations under secretary general for political affairs. In 1995 and 1996 and again from 1999 to 2001, he worked as special assistant to Terje Roed-Larsen of Norway, the United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Hooper first joined the United Nations in 1990 as a refugee affairs officer in Gaza with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. He later served as a research officer and as assistant chief of staff to the agency's commissioner general at its Vienna headquarters.

Mr. Hooper had a long association with the Norwegian Institute for Applied Social Sciences and helped establish its Program for International Cooperation and Conflict Resolution. He served as senior adviser to the program from 1998 to 2000.

He was also founding director of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum in New York.

Richard Marshall Hooper was born on Sept. 23, 1962, in Alameda, Calif. He graduated with a degree in politics from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1985 and received a master's in Arab studies from Georgetown University in 1990. He studied Arabic on a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Damascus in 1985 and 1986 and then at the American University of Cairo in 1987 and 1988.

He is survived by his father, Christopher Hooper of Stanley, Idaho; his mother, Betty Peak of Mountain View, Calif.; a brother, Drake of Boise, Idaho; and a sister, Jennifer of Denver.