

From: Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>
To: Diana Villabon <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Ltr. from Dr. Henry Jarecki 08.16.10
Date: Mon, 16 Aug 2010 21:37:51 +0000

thank you for sending me such interesting reading. I have yet to see any major contribution by any of the scholars rescued QUite unlike , in fact nothing like the quality of the scientists rescued.

On Mon, Aug 16, 2010 at 2:56 PM, Diana Villabon <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I don't know if this was already sent to you but in case it was not, please see below or attached.

August 6, 2010

Mr. Jeffrey Epstein

457 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor

New York, NY 10022

Dear Jeffrey:

Not one to give up easily, I continue to write to you about Scholar Rescue Fund and in particular to share information about what our grantees are doing to advance knowledge and help the world. Accordingly, I am pleased to send you this letter that describes the growth and accomplishments of our Iraq Project over the past three years. Attached you will find both our latest Global and Iraq reports. I am nothing if not persistent.

We held our most recent Scholar Rescue Fund Global Selection Committee meeting on June 29. This was one of three meetings over the past year to consider cases of threatened scholars from any country of the world, except one. Iraq, as you well know, has its own Selection Committee due to the special nature of our Iraq Project and its aim to help preserve the intellectual capital of that country. Interestingly, our recent Global meeting was dominated by an influx of cases of threatened scholars from another single country – Iran. Out of six new cases we chose to fund, all of them are from Iran.

This particular meeting, as well as your gifts to the Scholar Rescue Fund, made me think of the seminal role that you and your philanthropy have played in our ability to get to the point where we have been able to rescue over 200 of Iraq's most senior, most threatened scholars from harm. I am writing today not only to say thank you, but also to tell the story of how all of this happened and to explain our results to date. Of course, this narrative is not yet finished, and we are not certain when it will be. And we may well need to follow our Iraq model again soon, given the growing crisis in Iran.

First, let me give you an update on SRF in general. A program of the Institute of International Education (IIE), SRF provides safe haven to scholars threatened or persecuted worldwide. We do this through fellowships that support visiting academic positions at safe universities and colleges anywhere in the world. Scholars from any country and any discipline may qualify. The purpose is to save lives and knowledge, with the hope that scholars continue to make valuable contributions through their work until conditions in their home countries improve enough to permit their safe return.

Since the program's inception in 2002, we have, with your help, rescued 360 senior scholars from 43 countries. These scholars were selected from the more than 2,000 requests for assistance that the program has received from individuals from over 100 countries. More than 200 universities and institutions in 39 countries have joined us by providing environments in which the academic work of these scholars can flourish in freedom and safety.

Beginning in 2005, we began to receive a large volume of requests for emergency aid from Iraqi scholars. An increasing number of scholars there from all disciplines appeared to be victims of systematic attempts from multiple sources to eradicate the country's educators, the more experienced and distinguished the better. International monitoring agencies have since corroborated these accounts, documenting the targeted killings of a thousand or more of Iraq's most senior academics. It is estimated that thousands more scholars have fled the country fearing for their lives.

In the spring of 2007, applications from Iraqi scholars began to overwhelm our Selection Committee's caseload. Furthermore, the quality of Iraqi scholars was so high that the cases from other parts of the world seemed not as compelling in comparison. I remember in particular one Selection Meeting in May 2007 at which we considered 15 or 20 cases from Iraq and just two or three from Africa and Asia. The contrast was startling and alarming. In Iraq, we were seeing very senior academics – deans and presidents of universities, scholars with 30 years of teaching experience and more than 50 publications – who had been kidnapped and tortured or who had seen their homes and families blown up by bombs. As evidence of the threats they were facing, scholars showed us letters from terrorist groups with bullets in them threatening scholars and their families with imminent assassination. Even more difficult for us to see in the case reports were the photographs substantiating the torture undergone by scholars who had been kidnapped and held for ransom. While the cases of the African scholar who had been dismissed from his university position and the Asian scholar who was under government surveillance were important, it quickly became clear that in Iraq we were dealing with an academic emergency of an entirely different caliber.

At that meeting, I recall being overwhelmed not only by the enormity and terrible nature of the problem but also by our lack of funds to address it. At first, our discussion centered around the idea that the situation in Iraq was at least in part political and the responsibility of the American government. Should a private program such as SRF get involved? At this point, George Rupp said to us all: "There are really only two questions to ask ourselves with respect to the Iraqi cases: Are they scholars? And, are they at risk?"

With the answer to both questions a resounding yes, we began to deliberate about what to do next. We decided that, while the academic crisis in Iraq was bad news, there was some good news in this picture: over the past several years, SRF had developed and refined the methodology to identify, select, and place threatened scholars at safe host institutions. While it was true that we lacked the funds to address the current flood of applications from Iraq, this

shouldn't stop us from trying to help. We knew better than anyone how to do this work, and so we should just forge ahead and try.

And so we did. Inspired by this discussion, by a dramatic letter from the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education encouraging us to rescue Iraqi scholars, and by a trip to Jordan to seek the advice and patronage of the Royal Family, we set out to raise funds. By mid-July, we had a commitment of \$5 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This in itself was a tremendous victory for us because the Foundation made the bold decision to step far past their traditional boundaries of typical giving to support SRF in this emergency. By late September, we had a matching commitment of \$5 million from the U.S. Department of State. This U.S. government support was thereafter followed in 2009 by an additional \$10 million, \$5 million of which is in the form of a contingency fund.

Thanks to this generous support, as well as key assistance from Princess Ghida and Prince Talal of Jordan and other private donors, SRF officially launched the Iraq Scholar Rescue Project in June of 2007. The prospect of needing to help hundreds of scholars required us establish the Iraq Project as somewhat of a separate enterprise. In relatively short order, we recruited a specialized staff, developed emergency procedures to deal with selection, and refined our processes and procedures to manage the placement of large numbers of scholars within a particular region, many of whom had been cut off from the outside world for a decade or more. Through two-year academic grants, university placement within the MENA region, professional skills training, and a unique e-lecture series, our Iraq Project allows scholars to continue their academic work, build linkages with academics around the world, and strengthen their credentials in safety – all while continuing to contribute to higher education in Iraq and the region, no matter their location.

The attached "Iraq Quick Facts" reports on our progress as of July, 2010. As an interesting and remarkable contrast, I have attached the first "Iraq Quick Facts" which is dated May 14, 2007. Over-all, more than 1,250 Iraqi scholars have asked us for help and 670 of them completed the full application process. Of those, 430 scholars were identified for further vetting – based on their academic achievements and the level and nature of the threat they were facing – and underwent the full process for fellowship consideration. As of this month, the SRF Selection Committee has awarded 206 fellowships to senior Iraqi professors and scientists. These individuals have suffered from targeted death threats, suicide bombing attempts, kidnappings, and violent attacks on their families and close colleagues. I have no doubt that, without our assistance, many of them and their loved ones would have ended up dead.

Scholars selected thus far represent all academic disciplines: nearly half (102) are scholars working in the physical sciences; 46 in the food and medical sciences; 40 in the social sciences; and 18 scholars in the humanities. The most represented home institutions of selected scholars are Baghdad University, the University of Technology, Al-Mustansiriyah University, Al-Nahrain University, the University of Mosul, and Basra University. Baghdad University leads as the home institution for approximately one quarter of all SRF scholars. We have provided SRF fellowships to scholars from every ethnic and religious group present in Iraq – Sunni, Shi'a, Christian, Yezidi, Chaldean, Mandaean, and several others – and 19% of the Iraqi scholars selected for fellowship are women.

Many academic institutions have opened their doors to Iraqi scholars and contributed significant financial and in-kind support. We have tried to place scholars in the MENA region, keeping them as close to Iraq as possible: Jordan, Syria, Iraq-Kurdistan, Lebanon, Egypt, Oman, Bahrain, and the UAE. Outside of the region, Iraqi scholars have been placed in the U.S., the U.K., Malaysia, Australia, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey.

While on fellowship, Iraqi scholars have undertaken innovative research, presented at numerous international scientific conferences, filed patents, taught thousands of students, and published peer-reviewed research papers in some of the world's leading academic journals.

Scholars on fellowship have expanded their academic reach, not only for their own professional advancement but also for the development of numerous programs and initiatives in their host countries and beyond. A number of SRF Iraqi scholars are contributing to the creation of new colleges and departments and establishing postgraduate programs at host institutions, such as at Al-Zaytoonah Private University and Philadelphia University in Jordan. Other scholars have engaged with colleagues at host institutions in collaborative projects that link the scholars' faculty colleagues and former students in Iraq with those of the host institution.

For example, one such current project led by an SRF scholar examines the impact of depleted uranium munitions from the two Gulf Wars and the environmental threats from the use of depleted uranium in shrapnel on Iraq's civil society. Another example of scientific achievement is one scholar's cancer research related to the "molecular analysis of RAPD-PCR genomic pattern in acute myeloid leukemia," which, she believes, could have a great impact in helping to cure patients in Iraq suffering from leukemia due to the health issues created by three decades of war.

Also notable are contributions by scholars in fields such as agriculture. For example, one SRF grantee who is spending his fellowship at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Syria has developed four transgenic lines of Kabuli-chickpea while on fellowship. The scholar joined ICARDA's legume transformation project to develop transgenic chickpea and fava bean lines that are tolerant to biotic and abiotic stresses; so far, he has developed the four new lines and established a protocol for fava bean transformation to develop a new and effective technique for embryo regeneration from immature embryos. While seeming esoteric to us, this scientific research on staples of the Middle Eastern diet could make a critical difference to many people in the region.

To date, SRF Iraqi scholars have collectively published more than 100 articles and applied for 10 patents while on the fellowship. For example, one scholar's research has yielded two papers that were accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals: "Nanoceria have no Genotoxic Effect on Human Lens Epithelial Cells" in *Nanotechnology* and "CeO₂ nanoparticles have no detrimental effect on eye lens proteins" in the journal *Current Analytical Chemistry*. This scholar, on fellowship at the University of Ulster in the United Kingdom, is currently acting as the principal researcher on a study examining scientific methods of using nanotechnology in the eye. A colleague and professor of the scholar from the same research team reported that their group is "the first group in the world that may have found a nano-particle that could help with treating cataract non-surgically." Other recent highlights of SRF scholar publications include an article entitled "The Potential Uses of Melia Azedarach L. as Pesticidal and Medicinal Plant, Review" written by a professor of entomology and toxicology and published in the January-April 2010 issue of the *American-Eurasian Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, and research on "Analysis of Forced Convection Currents in a High Pressure Processing Unit using Computational Fluid Dynamics" written by a scholar of chemical engineering accepted for publication in the UK journal *PHOENICS Chronicle of CHAM* (Concentration Heat and Momentum Ltd).

Scholars have also participated in more than 25 international scientific conferences during their fellowships, often presenting their own original research. With SRF support, one scholar was able to make his first trip to Europe since 1986 to participate in the 6th NIZO Dairy Conference in the Netherlands, where he presented a poster on "Proteolysis of Bifidobacterium Spp. in Monterey cheese." Other scholars have attended conferences as varied as their diverse academic backgrounds. An SRF Iraqi scholar of polymer science and technology attended both the "World Refining Technology Summit" in Vienna, Austria and the "Iraq Petroleum 2009 Conference" in London, United Kingdom. A scholar of medicine attended the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Dead Sea International Conference on "Advances in Cancer Research: From the Laboratory to the Clinic" and presented a poster entitled "Genomic DNA Methylation Analysis of Chronic Myeloid Leukemia." Another SRF grantee currently working at the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics at the University of Adelaide in Australia participated in the "1st International Plant Phenomics Symposium: From Gene to Form and Function" in Canberra, where she presented a poster session on "The Linkage between Na⁺ exclusion and flowering time genes in barley chromosome 7H: Genotyping and Phenotyping."

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The program has also matured beyond its formative goal of simple "rescue" and grown to incorporate an element of "regeneration." After successfully identifying threatened Iraqi scholars and helping to preserve their safety and scholarship through the SRF fellowship, the Iraq Project has made a commitment to contribute to the continuing professional development and capacity-building of Iraqi scholars, many of whom lost access to emerging technologies and academic networks in the aftermath of sanctions and the two Gulf Wars. In addition to aiding scholars through fellowships and academic placements, SRF provides enrichment and programs that enable them to attend national and international academic conferences, enroll in English language courses, and subscribe to international journals.

Furthermore, beginning in December 2008, SRF has conducted intensive semi-annual weeklong training workshops in Jordan aimed at developing scholars' capacities in such areas as professional and academic writing, use of information and communication technology, e-learning capabilities, proposal writing, tools and methodologies for research, pedagogy and curriculum best practices, leadership understanding and development, presentation training, and understanding and engaging in post-conflict development in higher education.

In the year and a half that has elapsed since the first SRF professional development workshop, these events have expanded in size and scope. Over 85 Iraqi scholar-grantees attended the latest workshop in Amman from 22-24 June 2010. Current SRF grantees on fellowship and program alumni traveled from Bahrain, Egypt, Syria, Iraq (including Kurdistan), the United Arab Emirates, and the United States to take part in the June workshops; participants have also traveled from Lebanon and Sudan in the past. In addition to invited scholars, SRF welcomed key strategic partners to the workshops, including members of the Jordanian Royal Family, representatives of the Ministries of Higher Education in Baghdad and Kurdistan, and several Middle East/ North Africa (MENA) university presidents and deans. The successes of past training workshops have proven SRF's important role in the Diaspora Iraqi academic community, and, increasingly, in the rebuilding of the academic community in Iraq. An extra benefit of these gatherings is that these senior Iraqi professionals have come to know- on a personal basis- the leadership and staff of IIE and SRF, and these relationships have allowed the future academic and civil society leaders of Iraq to have a more positive impression of our program.

In an on-going effort to return scholarship and scientific knowledge to Iraq and to mitigate a drain on the country of its intellectual capital, SRF assists Iraqi scholars to contribute to learning in Iraq through a distance education program. For the benefit of thousands of Iraqi students and faculty, SRF provides essential resources and logistical support to film and produce a series of academic lectures by Iraqi scholars outside the country, and, through a consultant and project office in Baghdad, facilitates the distribution of the lectures to Iraq's higher education

institutions. In May 2010, for example, e-lectures were shown at 11 universities within Iraq, pairing SRF Iraqi scholars at their host universities with professors within Iraq who will show these lectures to their students.

To further encourage information-sharing, the Iraqi scholars who are part of SRF's program have formed an informal association. Scholars meet on a regular basis in Jordan, liaising by videoconference with SRF Board Members and staff in New York and DC. These meetings provide an important forum to disseminate information on resources available to scholars and to discuss ideas. Thank you for the role you have played in helping the SRF Board and staff to plan and execute these very important "regeneration" activities, in particular your strategic guidance and the model you have established with several projects of the Hite Chair.

So, as you can see, your efforts to launch the Iraq Project are paying handsome dividends. First, we have the satisfaction of saying that we have saved over 200 of the most senior, most threatened Iraqi scholars. Second, we can say that, through their academic work and e-learning, they are continuing to contribute in a very valuable way to knowledge in the world and in particular in their region and country. And, third, it is clear that, in dealing with Iraq, we have at least somewhat developed a methodology for addressing large-scale crises among academics in a relatively short period of time. For example, I am sure that the lessons we have learned in Iraq are at least in part applicable to other areas of the world, including Africa and Iran – two areas where I know your support and advice are helping advance our efforts.

Jeffrey, once again I would like to say thank you for all you have done to help the Scholar Rescue Fund. We appreciate your support, your wisdom, even your constant criticism. While I can't say that it has always been constructive, please know that it is always appreciated. Thanks to your efforts, we have launched the largest rescue of academics in IIE's history, larger, I might say, than the work we did for the Nazi-rescued German professoriate. Thanks also to your efforts, we have developed both an endowment and a methodology in case we need to do it again. With the way our numbers are looking in certain areas of the world, such as Iran, I have no doubt that we will need these invaluable resources again in the future, perhaps much sooner than we would have liked. Thanks to you, we will have them.

With warmest regards,

Diana Villabon

Chairman's Assistant

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