



# CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION



The **CONVENTION ON CULTURAL PROPERTY IMPLEMENTATION ACT** enables the U.S. to participate in the 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. The Act allows the U.S. to impose import restrictions on archaeological or ethnological material when pillage of these materials places the nation’s cultural heritage in jeopardy. If the U.S. makes certain determinations, including that the cultural heritage of a requesting state is in jeopardy from pillage of archaeological or ethnological material, it may impose import restrictions on such material.

**THE IMPACT OF PILLAGE** Pillage of archaeological and ethnological materials deprives a nation of its cultural heritage. On archaeological sites, pillage involves unscientific digging to retrieve those items that are valuable to the art market. Consequently, pillagers destroy the context in which all archaeological materials are found. Without the proper scientific recording of context and materials from a site, it is impossible to reconstruct or understand the culture that produced it. The ultimate result is the irretrievable loss of historical information.

### GOALS

- Reduce the incentive for further pillage.
- Help countries protect their cultural heritage from pillage by encouraging the development of appropriate policies; inventories; management plans; training for museum professionals, customs, and law enforcement officers; public education; and, cultural tourism and other sustainable and appropriate economic activities.
- Increase lawful access to cultural property by encouraging interchange of materials for scientific, cultural, and educational purposes.

### THE CULTURAL PROPERTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

appointed by the President, is comprised of eleven private citizens who are expert in archaeology and anthropology;

expert in the international sale of cultural property; and who represent the interests of museums and the general public. The Committee conducts a review and investigation of each foreign government request. It submits its findings and recommendations to the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs who makes final determinations.

THE BUREAU FOR EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS (ECA) carries out the Department’s responsibilities under this Act, in consultation with the Department’s geographic bureaus and the Department of Homeland Security. ECA also provides technical and administrative support to the committee.

**CULTURAL PROPERTY AGREEMENTS** BELIZE, BOLIVIA, BULGARIA, CAMBODIA, CANADA (expired), CHINA, COLOMBIA, CYPRUS, EL SALVADOR, GREECE, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, IRAQ\*, ITALY, MALI, NICARAGUA, and PERU. Restricted objects from these countries may enter the U.S. if they are accompanied by an export permit issued by the country of origin, or documentation demonstrating that they left the country of origin prior to the effective date of the import restriction.

\*Iraq’s cultural property protection is pursuant to special congressional action

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