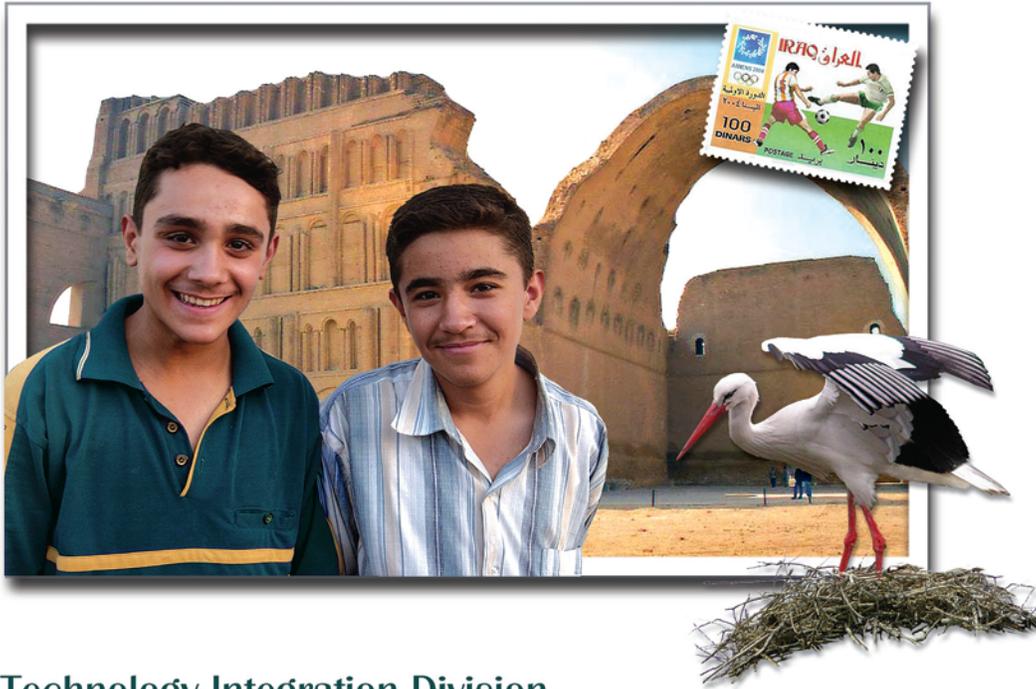


IRAQ in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



Technology Integration Division
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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

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Chapter 1 Geography

Introduction

Desert dominates Iraq's topography. The nation's tracts of fertile land are mostly located between its two main rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.¹ In antiquity, the region was called Mesopotamia, which means "land between the rivers" in Greek. This fertile area historically defined the boundaries for settled farming and is where most Iraqi people live today. Much of western and southern Iraq outside the Tigris–Euphrates Basin is dry, hot, and sparsely populated. Except in the northeastern highlands, there are almost no significant Iraqi cities more than 50 km (31 mi) from either the Tigris or Euphrates. This highly concentrated demographic distribution has had implications for military operations and relief efforts.²



© Ken & Nyetta / flickr.com
Central Iraq

Geographic Divisions

Iraq can be divided into four major geographic regions: stony and sandy mixed desert in the west and southwest; rolling upland between the upper Tigris and Euphrates rivers, starting about 120 km (75 mi) north of Baghdad; mountainous highlands in the north and northeast; and alluvial plains to the south.³



© Jayel Aheram
Iraq Desert

Desert

Much of Iraq southwest of the Euphrates River consists of rocky desert lands. The western portion of this region is an extension of the Syrian Desert. To the southeast, along the Saudi Arabian border, lie two lower-elevation deserts. The Al-Hajarah is the more western and consists of stony terrain marked by ridges, depressions, and *wadis* (dry riverbeds).⁴ Southeast of it, the Al-Dibdibah is a gravelly plain with scrub vegetation that extends eastward into Kuwait and southward into Saudi Arabia.



© Shay Haas
Euphrates sunset

Upper Tigris and Euphrates Upland

The Al-Jazirah Plateau is the cardinal feature in this region between the upper stretches of the Tigris and Euphrates. Although primarily flat, this arid region contains deep river valleys, the

¹ Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations, "Geography," n.d., <http://www.iraqunmission.org/node/26>

² National Geographic, "Geography Shapes Nature of War in Iraq," March 2003, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/03/0327_030327_wargeography_2.html

³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Deserts," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22926/Iraq>

watershed of the two rivers, and some scattered highlands. The most prominent of these are the Jabal Sinjar (Sinjar Mountains), from which emerges the region's most significant watercourse, the Wadi al-Tharthar.⁵



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Zagros Mountains from space

Northeast Highlands

This region runs northwest to southeast, in the northernmost region of Iraq. Near and across the Iraqi border with Iran sit the Zagros Mountains, while to the north in Turkey are the Taurus Mountains. River basins between these ranges provide habitable areas, and are mostly populated by ethnic Kurds and Turkmen. Moving southwest from the mountainous areas are hill regions that gradually become plains. In this area of the northeast are found the larger cities, such as Kirkuk and Arbil. The southwestern edge of the Northeast Highlands is marked by the Jabal Hamrin, a low-elevation ridge through which the Tigris River flows.

Alluvial Plains

The central and southern parts of the Euphrates–Tigris drainage basin, from Al-Ramadi on the Euphrates and Balad on the Tigris south to the Persian Gulf, are low-elevation plains subject to poor drainage and seasonal floods. Baghdad and Basrah, Iraq's two largest cities, are in this region. Numerous marshlands and lakes are found here; the largest is Hawr al-Hammar, south of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. This marshy lake was once known as the home of many of Iraq's *Ma'dan* (Marsh Arabs), but most moved out of the area when much of the lake was drained following the 1991 Gulf War.⁶



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Iraqi Ma'dan

Climate

As part of a continental landmass, Iraq's climate ranges from temperate in the north to subtropical in the south. The mountainous area in the north has cool summers and cold winters, but in the south and central areas the summer is long and hot, and the winter is short and cool. The temperature in Baghdad ranges from 2 to 15°C (35 to 60°F) in January. The highest temperature recorded in the city was 51°C (123°F) in July, although the average daytime temperature in Baghdad during July and August is 35°C (95°F).⁷

Iraq depends on water from the Tigris and Euphrates because rainfall is insufficient. River water has been used extensively for irrigation, supporting the agricultural foundation of one of the first civilizations. Iraq's northern highlands receive considerable

⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Al Jazirah," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-232255/Iraq>

⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Lake Hammar," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9039053/Lake-Hammar>

⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Climate," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22930>

rainfall and even snow from November to April, in some places totaling 1,000 mm (39 in). Average annual precipitation in the northern foothills is 300–560 mm (12–22 in), dropping to 100–180 mm (4–7 in) in the central and southern alluvial plain.⁸

Dust storms and sandstorms occur because of the *sharqi* winds from the south and southeast and the *shamal* winds from the northwest. These storms can occur any time of year, but the season's peak is July.⁹



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Dust storm

Major Rivers

Tigris River

The Tigris River, 1,840 km (1,143 mi) in length, is the easternmost of Mesopotamia's two great rivers.¹⁰ It originates in the Taurus Mountains of Turkey and forms part of the Turkish–Syrian border before flowing into Iraq. Two of modern Iraq's largest cities—Baghdad and Mosul—lie on the Tigris, as did several of the most famous cities of antiquity, including Nineveh, Calah, and Ashur, the three capitals of ancient Assyria.¹¹

The Tigris gains substantial flow after the Nahr Diyala (Diyala River) joins it just south of Baghdad. Baghdad and its immediate outskirts are protected from flooding by a series of embankments. From south of Baghdad downstream to the city of Al-Kut, the river has frequently flooded, and over time has built high natural levees of silt deposits that make it impossible to tap the river for irrigation.¹²



© tommigodwin / flickr.com
Tigris River

⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: Climate,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22930>

⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: Climate,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22930>

¹⁰ J. Donald Hughes, “6. Contemporary Trends and Concerns (1960–2004).” in *The Mediterranean: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 169.

¹¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Tigris-Euphrates River System: Physiography of the Tigris,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-48097/Tigris-Euphrates-river-system>

¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Tigris-Euphrates River System: Physical Features,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9110543/Tigris-Euphrates-river-system>

Euphrates River

The Euphrates River is the longest in southwestern Asia. It traverses about 2,700 km (1,678 mi) from its origins in the highlands of eastern Turkey before emptying into the Persian Gulf.¹³ The river enters Iraq from Syria at the southern edge of Al-Jazirah Plateau and then flows southeast toward Baghdad. The Euphrates passes only about 50 km (30 mi) from Baghdad; before dams were built, floodwaters were known to reach the city.¹⁴ Because the Euphrates' riverbed is higher above the alluvial plain than that of the Tigris, it has long been the primary irrigation source for the Mesopotamia region.¹⁵



© Jayel Aheram
Euphrates River

None of Iraq's large cities lies along the Euphrates (unlike the Tigris), although several medium-size provincial capitals are located on it. These include Al-Armada (Al-Anbar Province), Nasariyah (Dhi Qar Province), and Al-Samawah (Al-Muthanna Province).

Shatt al-Arab

The Shatt al-Arab, or *Arvand Rud*, formed by the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates, flows southeastward for 193 km (120 mi) and constitutes the Iraq–Iran border as it flows to the Persian Gulf.¹⁶ This tidal river is also a primary source of water for southern Iraq as well as Kuwait. Before flowing into the Persian Gulf, the Shatt al-Arab becomes a swampy marshland that opens up enough for shallow-draft oceangoing vessels to travel to Basrah, Iraq's main river port. But frequent dredging is required to keep the channel navigable.



© David Axe
Boating on Shatt al-Arab

Major Cities

Baghdad

Baghdad is known as the “Round City” due to its circular style of development (the circle being an Islamic symbol of eternity) and the defensive wall encircling it. Founded in 762 C.E. by the second Abbasid caliph, Abu Jafar al-Mansur, the city remained the seat of power of the caliphate from the 9th through the 13th centuries. During this period,

¹³ Tevfik Emin Kor, “Tigris-Euphrates River Dispute,” The Inventory of Conflict and Environment Case Studies, American University, November 1997, <http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/tigris.htm>

¹⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Tigris-Euphrates River System: Physical Features,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9110543/Tigris-Euphrates-river-system>

¹⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Tigris-Euphrates River System: Physical Features,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9110543/Tigris-Euphrates-river-system>

¹⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Shatt al-Arab,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9005317/Shatt-Al-Arab>

Baghdad achieved stature as a cultural center and commercial hub reflecting the ascendance of Arab civilization. Under the Ottomans in later centuries, the city also functioned as a Sunni buffer against the Shi'ite Persian Safavid Empire.¹⁷ After independence, the city became the country's educational center and focal point for its transportation network and industrial development.



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Baghdad Convoy

In the 1970s, Baghdad saw rapid economic growth due to the dramatic increase in the price of oil that resulted from the Arab-Israeli War in 1973. The government invested in infrastructure modernization and education, and the literacy rate of residents showed significant gains.¹⁸ The Iraq-Iran War (1980–1988) caused a shift in spending priorities and Baghdad fell into disrepair. Coalition air bombardments in 1991, the subsequent UN trade embargo, and the liberation of Iraq in 2003 further damaged the city's infrastructure.¹⁹ Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's government, economic development has been stymied by deadly violence. Ironically, Baghdad has become a city of walls again as neighborhoods have been extensively partitioned to reduce ethnic genocide and to enhance security.²⁰ (Population: 5,402,500)²¹

Commonly referred to as “The Great Wall of Iraq,” security barriers called “T-Walls” (because they are shaped like an inverted “T”) are abundant in urban areas of the country. Even after the coalition pulls out of an area, one sees the T-Walls remain. Many Iraqis use them to provide a blast shield and security perimeter for their homes and businesses. In addition, the Iraqi security forces use them to protect government buildings and important infrastructure sites.

Basrah

Al-Basrah, commonly known as Basrah, is the largest city of southern Iraq and an important port. It is also the capital of Al-Basrah Province. The local populace primarily consists of Shi'ite Muslims. Close to 80% of Iraq's proven oil reserves are nearby, and oil pipelines are scattered throughout the region, running from the oil fields to the city's refinery and to oil terminals on the Persian Gulf.^{22, 23} In addition to being the center of the

¹⁷ Sunni and Shi'a are the two major sects of Islam.

¹⁸ Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, State University of New York at Stony Brook, “Central EHERC, Baghdad,” n.d., <http://www.uhmc.sunysb.edu/prevmed/ocmed/baghdad.htm>

¹⁹ GlobalSecurity.org, “Baghdad,” c. 2000–2009, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/baghdad.htm>

²⁰ David Enders, “Behind the Wall: Inside Baghdad's Sadr City,” Virginia Quarterly Review, Summer 2009, <http://www.vqronline.org/articles/2009/summer/enders-sadr-city/>

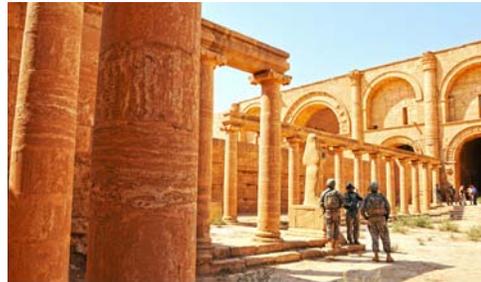
²¹ All population figures are 2010 estimates. World Gazetteer, “Iraq: Metropolitan Areas,” n.d., <http://www.world-gazetteer.com/wg.php?x=1230855970&men=gcis&lng=en&des=wg&geo=-3&srt=npan&col=adhoc&msz=1500&geo=-105>

²² Ben Lando, “Analysis: Oil Flows in Basra Power Vacuum,” United Press International, 16 August 2007, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Energy/Analysis/2007/08/16/analysis_oil_flows_in_basra_power_vacuum/5416/

southern Iraqi oil industry, Basrah serves as an agricultural center for the region, producing wool, grain, and dates.²⁴ (Population: 1,914,200)

Mosul (Al-Mawsil)

Mosul (Al-Mawsil) is the capital of the northern province of Ninawa and the principal city in northern Iraq. The city's older part lies on the west bank of the Tigris River. "Older" is often a relative term in Iraq, however, because the river's left bank features the partially excavated ruins of the ancient Assyrian capital of Ninevah, where the Nahr al-Khawsar (Khawsar River) flows into the Tigris.



© United States Forces Iraq / flickr.com
Al-Hatra, near Mosul

Mosul has played an important part in Iraq's oil industry. Oil fields are nearby, and roads and pipelines are used to transport the oil to ports on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. A rehabilitated refinery, damaged during the Iran-Iraq war, is located about one hour's drive south of the city in the town of Al-Qayyarah.²⁵

Northwest of Mosul on the Tigris River is Mosul Dam, the largest dam in Iraq and an important part of the country's national power grid. Unfortunately, there have been warnings about the safety of this dam, which was built on deposits of gypsum, a mineral that dissolves over time when it contacts water.²⁶ An assessment by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers states that "[D]ue to fundamental and irreversible flaws existing in the dam's foundation, [we] believe that the safety of the Mosul Dam against a potential catastrophic failure cannot be guaranteed."²⁷ An ad hoc committee investigating the dam's safety in 2007 recommended that it be drained.²⁸ The Iraq government plans to offer tenders for the repair of cracks in the water dam so that minimum water levels can be reached for much needed electricity generation.²⁹ (Population: 2,882,400)

²³ Newsmax.com, "Oil Above \$107," 27 March 2008,

http://www.newsmax.com/money/Oil_Above_107_dollars_/2008/03/27/83398.html

²⁴ Tore Kjeilen, "Basra," LexicOrient, Encyclopaedia of the Orient, 2009,

<http://lexicorient.com/e.o/basra.htm>

²⁵ American Forces Press Service, "Officials Report on Rebuilding Progress in Iraq," U.S. Department of Defense, 7 August 2004, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=25567>

²⁶ Amit Paley, "Iraq Dam Seen in Danger of Deadly Collapse," *Washington Post*, 30 October 2007,

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/29/AR2007102902193.html>

²⁷ Patrick Cockburn, "Disaster Looms as 'Saddam Dam' Struggles to Hold Back the Tigris," *Independent*, 8 August 2007, http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article2843961.ece

²⁸ Voice of Iraq, "Possible Dam Collapse Overshadows Mosul Residents," Iraq Updates, 5 September 2007,

http://www.iraquupdates.com/p_articles.php/article/21429

²⁹ Iraq Business News, "Tenders Soon for Repair of Mosul Dam," 4 September 2010, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/09/04/tenders-soon-for-repair-of-mosul-dam/>

Kirkuk

Kirkuk is the center of Iraq's northern oil fields, some of the most productive in the country. Approximately 30% of Iraq's oil production and 30% of its natural gas reserves are in the Kirkuk region.³⁰ Prior to the emergence of the oil industry, the city was a regional trading center for agricultural and livestock products, as well as host to a small textile industry.^{31, 32} The modern city is located on the site of the ancient city of Arrapha, an important Assyrian city during the 10th and 11th centuries B.C.E.³³



© Marco Leitão Silva
Children in Kirkuk

The city is one of the most ethnically mixed in Iraq, with Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen well represented in and around the city. Kirkuk is a Kurdish ancestral home, and the majority of the population has traditionally been Kurdish. During Saddam Hussein's regime, up to 100,000 Kurds in the area were involuntarily relocated and replaced by Arabs as a means to weaken Kurdish control of the city (a practice known as "Arabization").³⁴ Since Hussein's overthrow, however, many Kurds have returned, producing tensions about who will control the oil-rich region and how the revenues will be divided.³⁵ Smaller populations of Assyrians and Armenians also live in the area.³⁶ (Population: 864,400)

Arbil

Arbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government, is one of the world's oldest sites of continuous human habitation.³⁷ Control of Arbil was the cause of imperial battles over the course of history. A rail terminus, Arbil is linked by road to Turkey. The city is not as tied to the northern Iraq oil industry as Kirkuk to the south, but the recent development of the Taq Taq oil field, 80



© Goya Bauwens
Arbil, Kurdistan

³⁰ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Iraq Country Profile," September 2010, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IZ>

³¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Kirkuk," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9045628/Kirkuk>

³² Tore Kjeilen, "Kirkuk," *LexicOrient*, *Encyclopaedia of the Orient*, c. 1996–2009, <http://lexicorient.com/e.o/kirkuk.htm>

³³ The History Files, "Hurrian Kingdom of Arrapha/Arrapkha," c. 1999–2009, <http://www.historyfiles.co.uk/KingListsMiddEast/AnatoliaHurrianArrapha.htm>

³⁴ Lionel Beehner, "The Challenge in Iraq's Other Cities: Kirkuk," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 30 June 2006, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11036/>

³⁵ BBC News, "Kirkuk's Incendiary City," 16 March 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2871775.stm

³⁶ Kirkuk Business Center, "About Kirkuk," 2005, <http://kbciraq.org/>

³⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Irbil," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/293739/Irbil>

km (50 mi) southeast of Arbil, may change this situation.³⁸ Historically, the city has been the center of the agricultural region surrounding it. After the overthrow of Hussein, Arbil remained stable and, as a result, has a thriving local economy. (Population: 1,293,800)

Natural Hazards

Wind and water are the cause of Iraq's most frequently occurring natural hazards: dust storms, sandstorms, and floods. Iraq experiences two types of wind patterns that trigger dust storms and sandstorms. From mid-June to mid-September, dry air masses from the Mediterranean are funneled between Saudi Arabia's high plateau and the mountain ranges north and west of Iraq. The resultant northwesterly winds (called *shamals*) intensify as the summer progresses and the ground continues to heat. From April to mid-June and again from mid-September to November, the wind pattern changes from southerly to southeasterly. Known as *sharqis*, these currents produce winds that in general are gustier than but not as persistent as the summer *shamals*.³⁹ The resulting wind storms are sometimes interchangeably referred to as "sandstorms" or "dust storms," but technically the two are different. Because of its smaller size, dust can be lifted hundreds of meters into the air. In contrast, sand can be lifted only about 15 m (49 ft). Thus, the wind storms that produce dramatic, towering walls of uplifted fine particles are dust storms.⁴⁰



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Flooded Neighborhood

Iraq's other major hazard is flooding. Most of the population is situated near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which have flooded periodically throughout recorded history. Numerous dams and canals linked to overflow basins have been built to mitigate the damage during periods of heavy rain and springtime snowmelt in the northern mountains.⁴¹ In addition, numerous water projects on the two rivers upstream in Syria and Turkey have led to an overall reduction in river flow and a lowered threat of catastrophic flooding.

Environmental Concerns

Some of the most serious environmental hazards in central Iraq come from oil well fires. The plumes of smoke from these fires contain several dangerous particles linked to cancer.⁴² In addition, oil spills from pipelines, refineries, and other oil infrastructure have led to groundwater contamination in areas near structures. Aging and war-damaged

³⁸ Michael Howard, "The Struggle for Iraq's Oil Flares Up as Kurds Open Doors to Foreign Investors," Guardian, 8 August 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,2143141,00.html>

³⁹ Jan Null, "Climate of Iraq," Golden Gate Weather Services, 2003, <http://ggweather.com/iraq.htm>

⁴⁰ National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Dust Storms, Sand Storms and Related NOAA Activities in the Middle East," 28 October 2004, <http://www.magazine.noaa.gov/stories/mag86.htm>

⁴¹ MSN Encarta, "Iraq. II. Land and Resources. B3. Drainage Issues," 2009, http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761567303_3/Iraq.html

⁴² Alex Kirby, "Baghdad's Oil Fires 'Serious Health Hazard,'" BBC News, 28 March 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2892875.stm>

infrastructure has greatly increased the number of Iraqis who lack access to safe drinking water. The destruction of military and industrial facilities has led to significant contamination of heavy metals into groundwater, soil, and the air. In addition to pollution, land mines and unexploded ordnance have injured or killed tens of thousands of Iraqis.⁴³



© MATEUS 27:24&25 / flickr.com
Oil Fire

Iraq also suffers from some environmental problems unrelated to warfare or its aftereffects. Soils of the alluvial plain, which suffer poor drainage in general, have become salt laden because of irrigation and flooding, making them increasingly unproductive for agriculture. Desertification and erosion have also decreased arable land.⁴⁴

One of the worst legacies of the Hussein era is the destruction of the marshlands of southern Iraq, near the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and the Shatt al-Arab. The Saddam government effectively drained these marshes by constructing diversion canals after the 1991 Gulf War. This action came as part of a concentrated assault on the Marsh Arabs within this swampy region, who were regarded as rebels by the government.⁴⁵ Reclamation of the marshes, which support a unique ecosystem, was accorded high priority after the fall of Hussein's government. Yet this has been complicated by a combination of drought, dam construction, and the expansion of upstream irrigation systems.⁴⁶

⁴³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

⁴⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, "The Iraqi Government Assault on the Marsh Arabs," January 2003, <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/mena/marsharabs1.htm>

⁴⁶ Jim Muir, "Iraq Marshes Face Grave New Threat," BBC News, 24 February 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7906512.stm

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The Tigris is the longest river in southwestern Asia.
False
Iraq depends on water from both the Euphrates, which is the longest river in southwestern Asia, and the Tigris.
2. Arbil is one of the world's oldest sites of continuous human habitation.
True
Arbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government, is one of the world's oldest sites of continuous human habitation.
3. Baghdad remains extensively partitioned in order to afford residents security.
True
Certain areas of Baghdad have been increasingly partitioned with walls to reduce ethnic genocide and to enhance security in neighborhoods.
4. Approximately 30% of Iraq's oil is produced in the region around Kirkuk.
True
Kirkuk is the center of Iraq's northern oil fields. As much as 30% of Iraq's oil is produced in the region.
5. Iraq's marshlands have been completely reclaimed and rehabilitated in recent years.
False
After the 1991 Gulf War, the Hussein government effectively drained the marshlands of southern Iraq, which support a unique ecosystem. Reclamation of the marshes was accorded high priority after the fall of Hussein's government, yet progress has been complicated by a combination of drought, dam construction, and the expansion of upstream irrigation systems.

Chapter 2 History

Introduction

The early history of the Iraq region includes the development of some of the ancient world's fabled civilizations. The Mesopotamian cultures of Sumer and Babylonia are associated with several of humankind's earliest advancements. Many centuries later, Baghdad, on the Iraqi plains near the closest approach of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, became the center of the Islamic world. After several centuries of intermittent Ottoman control, Iraq became a British-administered territory in the wake of World War I. The nation became an independent kingdom in 1932, but remained under British influence until 1958, when the monarchy was overthrown by one of several military coups in the modern era.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Ishtar Gate

In the 1960s, the Ba'ath Party assumed power, ultimately consolidating its authority under Saddam Hussein, who brutally suppressed internal opposition. After oil revenues funded the country's development in the 1970s, Hussein embroiled his nation in two costly conflicts, the Iraq–Iran War (1980–1988) and first Persian Gulf War (1990–1991). As a result of the first Persian Gulf War, Iraq was subject to international sanctions until Hussein was removed from power by a U.S.-led coalition of forces in 2003. Iraq's long-standing ethnic and sectarian divisions, which reflect a complex history of relations, remain prominent in the post-Hussein era.

Ancient Cultures of Mesopotamia

Iraq constitutes an area once known as Mesopotamia (“land between the rivers”) that spawned numerous ancient civilizations of considerable complexity.⁴⁷ The name refers to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which enter northwestern Iraq and flow southeast toward the Persian Gulf. These river systems and their fertile floodplains fostered the emergence of civilization in a region where human settlement began before 6000 B.C.E.^{48, 49} A vital early achievement in Mesopotamia was the development of agriculture, which involved constructing and maintaining irrigation infrastructure on the flood-prone Mesopotamian plain.⁵⁰ Farmers built some of the region's first dikes and canals around 5000 B.C.E., and wetlands in other areas were drained.⁵¹ Supported by the development of advanced agricultural systems, a rural-to-urban migration occurred, which paved the way for the

⁴⁷ Gareth Stansfield, “Chapter 1: Legacies of Civilizations and Empires,” in *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 10.

⁴⁸ Geoff Simons, “Chapter 2: The Ancient Crucible,” in *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 114.

⁴⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Iraq,” August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

⁵⁰ Gareth Stansfield, “Chapter 1: Legacies of Civilizations and Empires,” in *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 10.

⁵¹ Geoff Simons, “Chapter 2: The Ancient Crucible,” in *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 114.

eventual growth of city-states.⁵² Four major cultures emerged during the early development of Mesopotamia: the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians.

Sumerian society emerged in southern Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium B.C.E. Major Sumerian achievements include the plow and cuneiform script, the first system of writing.^{53, 54, 55} The Akkadians of northern Mesopotamia were a Semitic people who laid the foundation for the unification of several Mesopotamian cultures under the later Babylonian Kingdom.^{56, 57}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Babylonian Marriage Market

Babylonian power waxed and waned over centuries until finally losing its foothold when Alexander the Great invaded in 331 B.C.E.⁵⁸ During much of Babylon's existence it competed with the Assyrians, a northern Mesopotamian power. At the height of its influence, Assyrian authority reached from southern Turkey all the way to Egypt.^{59, 60}

After the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided among several commanders. Mesopotamia fell under the Greek general Selucus. In 141 B.C.E. Seleucid Mesopotamia fell to the Parthians of northeastern Iran.⁶¹ This event once again brought Mesopotamia under Persian rule (Persians had made progress during the Babylonian period under Cyrus the Great). During the Parthian era, the western and northern Mesopotamian kingdoms were often at war with the armies of Rome. In the third century C.E., another Persian dynasty arose—this time from southwestern Persia. The Sassanid (Sasanian) dynasty defeated the last Parthian ruler in 224 C.E. Over

⁵² Gareth Stansfield, "Chapter 1: Legacies of Civilizations and Empires," in *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 10.

⁵³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

⁵⁴ Geoff Simons, "Chapter 2: The Ancient Crucible," in *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 116–117.

⁵⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Babylonia," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/47586/Babylonia>

⁵⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Babylonia," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/47586/Babylonia>

⁵⁷ The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed., "Sargon," Encyclopædia.com, 2008, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Sargon.aspx>

⁵⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "History of Mesopotamia: Mesopotamia to the End of the Old Babylonian Period: The Old Babylonian Empire: Political Fortunes," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55497>

⁵⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "History of Mesopotamia: Mesopotamia to the End of the Achaemenian Period: The Neo-Assyrian Empire (746–609): Sennacherib," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55459>

⁶⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "History of Mesopotamia: Mesopotamia to the End of the Achaemenian Period: The Neo-Assyrian Empire (746–609): Sennacherib," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55459>

⁶¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Ctesiphon," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9028099>

the next several centuries, the Sassanid armies continued to battle Rome, and later Byzantium.⁶²

Spread of Islam

At the time of the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 C.E., Islam had become the dominant religious and political force in Arabia.⁶³ Abu Bakr, Muhammad's close adviser and father-in-law, was chosen by a Muslim council to be the first caliph, or successor to the prophet. This decision remains controversial in the Islamic world, particularly in Iraq, where the Muslim community today is split between Shi'a and Sunni branches. Shi'ite Muslims believe that the caliphate should have passed to a blood relation of Muhammad, particularly his cousin and son-in-law Ali. As a result, Shi'ites, unlike Sunni Muslims, do not recognize the legitimacy of Abu Bakr or the next two caliphs who succeeded him. (Ali, the fourth caliph, is recognized by Shi'ites.) Sunni Muslims, on the other hand, recognize the legitimacy of all of the first four caliphs, whom they collectively describe as the *Rashidun* ("Rightly Guided") caliphate. These differences have created both a religious and political divide between the two groups.⁶⁴



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Abu Bakr

Abu Bakr was caliph for only two years, but during that time he quelled an incipient rebellion within the Muslim tribal alliance and initiated the expansion of Islam to adjacent regions of the Middle East.⁶⁵ Under Abu Bakr's successor, Umar, the Arab armies dealt a crushing defeat to the Sassanid forces at the Battle of Qadisiyah (637 C.E.), and shortly thereafter they took control of the Sassanid capital of Ctesiphon.⁶⁶ The Umayyad dynasty was the first dynastic Islamic caliphate, ruling from 661 to 750 C.E. in Damascus, Syria.⁶⁷ The Umayyad rulers broadened their empire through the early eighth century, expanding throughout northern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and as far east as China and northern India.⁶⁸

The Abbasid dynasty, which overthrew the Umayyads in 750, governed from Baghdad, a city founded by Al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliphate, in 762. During the period of 786–833, Baghdad evolved into one of the world's grandest cities, becoming a

⁶² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "History of Mesopotamia: Mesopotamia from c. 320 BC to c. AD 620: The Seleucid Period," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55441>

⁶³ Gareth Stansfield, "Chapter 1: Legacies of Civilizations and Empires," in *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 19.

⁶⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Rashidun," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9062732>

⁶⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Abu Bakr," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9003420>

⁶⁶ Oxford Islamic Studies Online, "The Spread of Islam," *Atlas of the World's Religions*, 2nd ed., 2007–2009, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t253/e17>

⁶⁷ Geoff Simons, "Chapter 3: The Arabs, Islam and the Caliphate," in *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 150.

⁶⁸ Tore Kjeilen, "Umayyad," *LexicOrient, Encyclopaedia of the Orient*, n.d., <http://i-cias.com/e.o/umayyad.htm>

cosmopolitan center of power, wealth, and religious study.⁶⁹ It was during this time that the famed *Bayt al-Hikma* (House of Wisdom), a center of learning, was founded.⁷⁰ The dynasty ultimately fell in the mid-13th century during the Mongol onslaught.^{71, 72}

Ottoman and Safavid Conflict

Led by Hulagu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, the invasion of the Mongols destroyed the Abbasid caliphate in 1258. The Mongols' attack came as part of their Asian offensive, which was motivated in part by a desire to expand their nomadic herding economy. The Abbasids' urban cultural achievements were of little value to the Mongols, who massacred the inhabitants and destroyed urban structures and irrigation systems.⁷³

The fall of the Abbasid dynasty ushered in a host of invaders from Mongolia, Turkey, and Persia, with two especially notable competitors: the Shi'ite Safavids of Persia (Iran) and the Sunni Ottomans of Anatolia (Turkey). The Safavids emerged from Azerbaijan in the 14th century, and took Baghdad and then Mosul in 1508. Their military conquests culminated in a battle between the Safavids and Ottomans in 1514, with the Ottomans taking northern Iraq shortly thereafter.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Siege at Baghdad

The Ottomans did not capture Baghdad until 1534 when Suleiman the Magnificent reached the city. The political and economic disorder that had characterized the region in the post-Abbasid period would finally begin to stabilize somewhat during the nearly 400-year rule of the Sunni Ottomans.⁷⁴

The competition for supremacy between the Safavids and the Ottomans was a protracted affair. The Safavids, who practiced Shi'a Islam, looked to Iraq to further expand the Shi'a realm. Much of Safavid interest in its western neighbor was because of the special religious importance that the Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala held for the Shi'ites. The Ottomans, on the other hand, feared an increasing Shi'a influence in their Anatolian heartland, and saw Iraq as a buffer between them and the Safavids.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Geoff Simons, "Chapter 3: The Arabs, Islam and the Caliphate," in *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 155.

⁷⁰ William Ochsenswald and Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East: A History*, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004).

⁷¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mamluk," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9050404>

⁷² Peter Batke, "Abbasids (750–1517)," Princeton University, n.d., <http://www.princeton.edu/~batke/itl/denise/abbasids.htm>

⁷³ William Polk, "Chapter 2: Islamic Iraq," in *Understanding Iraq* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 56–58.

⁷⁴ Gareth Stansfield, "Chapter 1: Legacies of Civilizations and Empires," in *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 24.

⁷⁵ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Ottoman Period 1534–1918," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0018\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0018))

Ultimately, this conflict widened the Shi'a–Sunni divide because the Safavids and Ottomans used periods of occupation in Iraq to reward their supporters and punish their enemies. For example, during a brief interval of Safavid control of central Iraq (1623–1638), some Sunni mosques were destroyed and a portion of the Sunni populace was enslaved. After the Ottomans returned to power in 1639, many Shi'ites lost their lives.^{76, 77}

The Ottoman Era

During the 17th century, Ottoman control over Iraqi regions deteriorated because Arab and Kurdish tribal fighting caused political instability. The situation temporarily improved during the early 18th century when the Mamluks established independent rule over much of the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. The Mamluks maintained this position until 1831, when a huge flood and subsequent plague in Baghdad provided the opportunity for the Ottomans to reassert their authority.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, Ottoman control in Iraq remained tenuous well into the 19th century. In 1869, an Ottoman governor named Midhat Pasha arrived in Baghdad and initiated a number of administrative and educational reforms designed to modernize the region. One of his initiatives intended to move the balance of power in Iraq from the rural tribes toward the urban areas. To this end, Midhat Pasha applied an 1858 Ottoman land law meant to replace the feudal system of land ownership with a more modern distribution of land titles to individuals. But in practice, the land reform measure unintentionally resulted in the accumulation of large swaths of Iraqi land by tribal sheikhs, urban merchants, and former tax farmers (land speculators), rather than rural tribespeople.^{79, 80}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Midhat Pasha

In 1908, a group of reformers dubbed the Young Turks came to power in Istanbul and eventually brought about the restoration of constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire. (An attempt in 1876 to establish an Ottoman constitutional monarchy lasted only briefly.) The Young Turks pursued a series of modernizing measures that included industrialization, secularization of the legal system, and expansion of education for

⁷⁶ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Ottoman Period 1534–1918," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0018\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0018))

⁷⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Ottoman Iraq (1534–1918): The Local Despotisms in the 17th Century," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22895>

⁷⁸ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Ottoman Period 1534–1918," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0018\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0018))

⁷⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Ottoman Iraq (1534–1918): The Governorship of Midhat Pasa," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22899>

⁸⁰ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Ottoman Period 1534–1918," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0018\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0018))

women.⁸¹ They also introduced nationalist “Turkification” policies, which alienated Arab intellectuals in Iraq and other Ottoman-controlled territories of the Middle East. An Arab nationalist movement emerged, with Basrah the center of such activities in Iraq. But Iraq remained dominated by autonomous and frequently rebellious tribal communities, which were only loosely controlled by Ottoman central authority. As such, it was ill-prepared during the early decades of the 20th century for the establishment of a modern nation-state.⁸²

World War I and the British Mandate

At the dawn of the 20th century, there was a growing demand for oil around the world. Iraq’s vast oil reserves, first discovered in the 1870s, drew increased interest to the region. At first the British considered Iraq as a trade corridor to their colonial holdings in India. The discovery of oil further motivated their designs for a sphere of influence in Iraq. The Germans, under Kaiser Wilhelm II, were equally attracted to the region’s oil. When the Ottoman government granted



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Fall of Baghdad

Germany a concession to build a railroad from Anatolia to Baghdad, including oil exploration rights along the proposed route, the British strongly objected. In 1912, a consortium of British, Dutch, and German oil companies and investors established the Turkish Petroleum Company; by 1914, they had received the oil concessions to Iraq from the Ottoman Grand Vizier. This occurred the same day as the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, which set off the events that soon led to World War I.⁸³

The Ottoman Empire allied itself with the Germans and the Central Powers during World War I. A British expeditionary force soon established itself at Basrah, but they were unable to dislodge the Ottoman army from Baghdad until March 1917. In November 1918, British forces took control of Mosul a few days after signing an armistice with the Ottomans.⁸⁴

At the conclusion of World War I, the League of Nations was established to administer the former territories (now referred to as mandates) of Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The Iraqi mandate was entrusted to British administration under the notion that it was not ready for self-government. For the Iraqi nationalists, Sunnis and Shi’ites alike, the British mandate was a rejection of their calls for independence; instead, it seemed like another form of colonialism. In a region characterized by tribal, regional (urban-rural), and

⁸¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Young Turks,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9078078>

⁸² Mark Lewis, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Ottoman Period 1534–1918,” in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0018\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0018))

⁸³ Daniel Yergin, “Opening the Door on the Middle East: The Turkish Petroleum Company.” in *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 171–172.

⁸⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: Ottoman Iraq (1534–1918): The End of Ottoman Rule,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22900>

sectarian (Sunni–Shi’a) divisions, resistance to the British mandate briefly unified the Iraqi people as no other issue could. The result was the Great Iraqi Rebellion of 1920, which the British suppressed after waging a costly, 3-month counter-rebellion that required British reinforcements from India and Iran.⁸⁵

Faisal I and the Hashemite Kingdom

Following the 1920 rebellion, the British proposed the establishment of a monarchy in Iraq. Faisal I, who had been a leading figure in the 1916 Arab Revolt against Ottoman forces, would occupy the throne. Faisal was a Sunni from the Hashemite clan, who traced their ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad. Faisal had briefly reigned as the King of Syria following World War I until he was deposed by the French, who had been awarded oversight of the Syrian mandate. The 1921 conference in Cairo in which Faisal was anointed as the Iraqi king also produced an Anglo–Iraqi treaty. This agreement assured Britain’s continued influence in Iraqi affairs; it also initiated the establishment of the Iraqi military. As a legacy of the Sunni-dominated Ottoman era, the officers in the Iraqi armed forces were Sunni, while Shi’ites were the majority of the lower ranks.⁸⁶



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Faisal I of Iraq

After the establishment of the Iraqi Hashemite kingdom, another pressing question was the status of the kingdom’s borders, particularly in the north. In this region, the former Ottoman *wilayah*, or province, of Mosul contained large deposits of oil. Meanwhile, the local Kurdish majority was seeking independence. The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres—between the former Ottoman Empire and the Allied forces—called for the establishment of a Kurdish autonomous region that the Kurds of Mosul Province could choose to join. Because of Turkey’s military revival this treaty was never ratified, and in 1923 it was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne. This agreement made no mention of a separate Kurdish region. Instead, it left the province’s fate to the League of Nations, which in 1925 voted to incorporate the province into Iraq. In 1926, the Treaty of Ankara—signed by Turkey, Iraq, and Great Britain—solidified this decision.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Mark Lewis, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: World War I and the British Mandate,” in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0019\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0019))

⁸⁶ Mark Lewis, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: World War I and the British Mandate,” in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0019\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0019))

⁸⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Kurdistan,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9046469>

Independence and World War II

Iraq's independence came on 3 October 1932, when it was admitted to the League of Nations as a sovereign state. Prior to independence, the primary objective of Iraq's political leaders was to end the British mandate of Iraq. But little attention was given to the complex policies needed to govern an independent state, and power struggles among the country's many factions soon emerged. In 1933, the Iraqi army's massacre of Christian Assyrian villagers in Mosul Province

demonstrated the deep ethnic fissures in Iraq, particularly in the northern areas.⁸⁸ King Faisal, in poor health, died soon after the Assyrian massacre, in September 1933, and was succeeded by his 21-year-old son, Ghazi I.⁸⁹



Courtesy of Wikipedia
British entering Baghdad, 1941

Ghazi's reign was short—he died in an automobile accident in 1939—and mostly ineffectual. His government suffered Iraq's first military coup in 1936, when General Bakr Sidqi brought down the sitting government and supported a regime led by Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman. In reality, power remained in the hands of the military, even after Sidqi's assassination by a dissident military faction in 1937.⁹⁰

As World War II began in Europe, Iraq initially took a formal stance of nonbelligerency. But at that time, many Iraqi military and political leaders were pan-Arab nationalists who generally viewed Britain negatively because of its past influence in Iraqi affairs and its continued presence in the Palestine and Transjordan mandates. Four of the pan-Arab military leaders, known as the "Golden Square," staged a coup in April 1941. This group reinstated nationalist politician Rashid Ali as prime minister several months after his forced resignation. For the British government, Rashid Ali had become the symbol of Iraqi anti-British (and, therefore, potentially pro-Axis) sentiments, so they viewed his government as a threat to British war efforts in the Middle East. As a result, British forces entered Iraq only a few days later from the south, triggering a confrontation with the Iraqi government that quickly escalated into a brief war.^{91, 92}

⁸⁸ Phebe Marr, "Chapter 3: The Erosion of the British Legacy, 1932–1945," in *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 39.

⁸⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Iraq Until the 1958 Revolution: Independence, 1932–39," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22903>

⁹⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Iraq Until the 1958 Revolution: Independence, 1932–39," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22903>

⁹¹ Charles Tripp, "The Hashemite Monarchy 1932–41" in *A History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 100–103.

⁹² Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Iraq As an Independent Monarchy," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0020\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0020))

Within a month, the British military forced the Iraqi army to surrender, and Rashid Ali and the members of the Golden Square went into exile.^{93, 94}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Faisal II with Elizabeth II

Post-World War II

In the decade following World War II, the country was beset with numerous socioeconomic problems, including increasing political and social unrest. Iraq's government leaders and the representatives of the monarchy often found themselves on the wrong side of public opinion, which forced them to publicly backpedal on certain policy decisions. One example was the Portsmouth Treaty, negotiated by the Iraqi Prime Minister Salih Jabr in 1948 to replace the nearly 20-year-old Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. The new treaty contained British concessions for the use of air bases in Iraq and was much more equitable in defining the scope of the relationship between Iraq and Britain. But by this time, many Iraqis did not wish any sort of alliance with Britain. A series of street demonstrations, known as the "Wathbah," (*uprising*) grew in intensity, precipitating a governmental. Deteriorating economic conditions and the government's failure to hold elections sparked additional protests in 1952, resulting in several months of martial law.⁹⁵

Foreign policy decisions that often seemed to align Iraq's interests with those of Western powers (such as the United States and Britain) rather than other Arab states also contributed to internal dissent. The most notable of these was the 1955 Baghdad Pact, a defense agreement that aligned Iraq with Britain, Pakistan, and Iran, ostensibly to provide a security bulwark against Soviet expansion into these nations. But in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East, the Pact was widely viewed as a countermeasure to help isolate pan-Arabic Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had come to power in a 1952 coup that toppled the Egyptian monarchy.⁹⁶ Iraqi King Faisal II, who ascended the throne upon reaching age 18 in 1953, felt threatened by the Nasser government, which espoused a pan-Arab nationalism that did not retain a role for monarchies. When Egypt and Syria joined political forces as the United Arab Republic in February 1958, the King's response was to hastily confederate his Hashemite Kingdom with that of Jordan, creating the short-lived "pan-Arabic" monarchy known as the Arab Federation.

The Fall of the Hashemite Monarchy

The Hashemite monarchy ended on 14 July 1958, nearly 37 years after King Faisal I took the throne. A swift, early morning coup was led by Brigadier General Abd al-Karim

⁹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Iraq Until the 1958 Revolution: World War II and British Intervention, 1939–45," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22904>

⁹⁴ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Iraq As an Independent Monarchy," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0020\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0020))

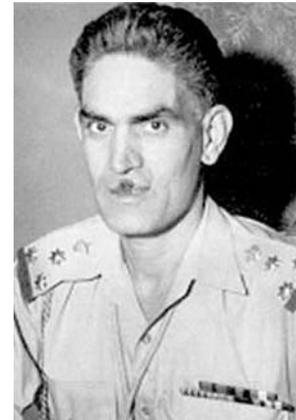
⁹⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: Iraq Until the 1958 Revolution: Postwar Reconstruction and Social Upheavals, 1945–58," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22905>

⁹⁶ Kevin W. Martin, "Baghdad Pact," in *Encyclopedia of the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 56–57.

Qasim, the highest ranking conspirator, and Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif. Their actions met virtually no resistance. After the revolutionary forces captured the palace, the king and the rest of his family were killed. Nuri al-Said, a veteran Iraqi politician and prime minister of the Arab Federation at the time, was killed the next day after trying to escape disguised with a woman's veil.⁹⁷

The Qasim Regime

General Qasim headed the republic formed after the coup. He held the position of minister of defense and served as commander of the armed forces. Arif became minister of the interior and took the position of deputy commander of the armed forces. But conflicts began to surface between the two men. Arif supported the pan-Arab unification movement led by Nasser, and thus favored Iraq's unification with Egypt. Qasim, with the backing of communists and Kurds, argued against Arab unity (especially under Egyptian leadership). Instead, he emphasized an Iraqi nationalism based on the unity of the country's diverse ethnic and religious groups.⁹⁸ Qasim, the more politically seasoned of the two, quickly outmaneuvered his rival. Arif was ousted from power in October 1958, just 3 months after the revolution.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Abd al-Karim Qasim

Other, more formidable rivals to Qasim soon materialized. His links to communists and his lack of support for pan-Arab nationalism produced many enemies among conservative, Sunni military officers and members of Arab nationalist groups—most notably, the Arab Socialist Renaissance (“Ba’ath”) Party. Several unsuccessful assassination attempts occurred, including one by a young Ba’ath Party member named Saddam Hussein, who was wounded during the attempt but managed to escape to Syria.⁹⁹



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Iraq flag during Qasim Regime

During Qasim's time in power, some clear gains were made in transforming Iraq into a more egalitarian state, including reforms in land tenure, oil resource rights, and access to education.¹⁰⁰ For these reasons, he is still remembered fondly by many Iraqis.¹⁰¹ But over time, Qasim lost the support of most of his other political bases, including the communists and Kurds. Domestically, he became politically isolated, drawing support

⁹⁷ *Time*, “Iraq: In One Swift Hour,” 28 July 1958,

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,810425,00.html>

⁹⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: The 1958 Revolution and Its Aftermath,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22906>

⁹⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: The 1958 Revolution and Its Aftermath,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22906>

¹⁰⁰ Phebe Marr, “Chapter 5: The Qasim Era, 1958–1963,” in *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004) 111–112.

¹⁰¹ Hussein Ali, “Iraqis Recall Golden Age,” Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 21 February 2005, http://www.iwpr.net/?p=icr&s=f&o=167565&apc_state=heniicr2004

from only the poorer classes and some army factions. Externally, his regime's relations with other Arab states and Iran also deteriorated.¹⁰² Qasim was ultimately removed from power in a February 1963 coup, led by a military faction in collusion with the Ba'ath Party.¹⁰³ After the coup, Qasim was shot and his body dumped in a field north of Baghdad.¹⁰⁴

The Arif Brothers and the Ba'athists

After the 1963 coup, Abd al-Salam Arif, Qasim's old political rival, was selected by the Ba'ath Party leadership to be Iraq's president. Arif was not a Ba'ath Party member, unlike Colonel Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, who was tapped to be the prime minister. The Ba'ath leadership proved unable to establish broad support within or outside the country. The Ba'athists lacked a strong base of support within the army and thus relied heavily on the paramilitary National Guard, generating further friction with the military leadership.¹⁰⁵



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr

After 10 months of Ba'ath rule, Arif organized a bloodless countercoup and removed all Ba'ath members from the government. Over the next few years, Arif pursued socialist policies, hoping to ease the process of political and economic integration with Egypt. By 1965, he began to reverse course, and the pro-union Nasserites within the government and military were ousted. Arif died in a helicopter crash in April 1966 and a military regime again took control, with Arif's elder brother, Colonel Abd al-Rahman Arif, replacing him as Iraq's president.¹⁰⁶

On 17 July 1968, after another relatively nonviolent coup, Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and the Ba'athists assumed power again. Although the elder Arif's regime had suffered several foreign policy blunders and an ongoing Kurdish rebellion in the north, his major weakness was his lack of a political base. The absence of popular elections meant that Arif governed without even a veneer of legitimacy. With no party structure or other form of popular support, Arif depended completely on the highly factionalized military to

¹⁰² Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Republican Iraq," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0021\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0021))

¹⁰³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: The 1958 Revolution and Its Aftermath," 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-22906>

¹⁰⁴ Hussein Ali, "Iraqis Recall Golden Age," Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 20 July 2004, http://www.iwpr.net/?p=icr&s=f&o=167565&apc_state=heniicr2004

¹⁰⁵ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Coups, Coup Attempts, and Foreign Policy," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0022\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0022))

¹⁰⁶ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Coups, Coup Attempts, and Foreign Policy," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0022\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0022))

sustain his power, and eventually the Ba'athists convinced one group of officers to support their efforts to remove him.¹⁰⁷

Al-Bakr assumed the leadership role as president and chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). During the first two years, various government and military personnel were purged, to remove anyone opposed to the Ba'ath Party. By September 1968, an interim constitution had been introduced, establishing the government and the process by which RCC members were nominated or elected. The strategy behind this move was to allow the civilian political party, under the *de facto* control of Vice President Saddam Hussein, to get rid of the military element within the party in order to bolster its own power.¹⁰⁸

The Rise of Saddam Hussein

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Ba'ath Party in Iraq grew from a small political party (5,000 members in 1968) to a large political organization (30,000 full party members and nearly 1.5 million supporters).^{109, 110, 111} As the party grew, so did its hold on the nation's social, economic, and security institutions. The party's growth helped Saddam Hussein, the leading Ba'ath Party official, to consolidate his power.



© Amir Farshad Ebrahimi
Saddam Hussein

From the early 1970s on, Vice President Hussein was the “strongman” within the Iraqi government. President al-Bakr suffered a heart attack in 1976, and thereafter his administrative powers diminished.¹¹² On 16 July 1979, al-Bakr resigned, ceding control to Saddam Hussein. Once in charge of the government, Hussein quickly secured his position through various tactics, including a massive purge of real and potential rivals within the Ba'ath Party, the security forces, and the military.¹¹³

Hussein tightened his grip on power as he worked to elevate Iraq's regional and international status. He understood that for Iraq to play a key role in the global community, especially the Middle East, the country needed to develop rapidly. Using

¹⁰⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: The Revolution of 1968,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232289>

¹⁰⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: The Revolution of 1968,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232289>

¹⁰⁹ Michael Eppel, “Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime,” in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 254.

¹¹⁰ Con Coughlin, “Chapter 4: The Avenger,” in *Saddam: His Rise and Fall* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 74.

¹¹¹ Eric Hooglund, “Chapter 4: Government and Politics: Politics, The Baath Party,” in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988,

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0077\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0077))

¹¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9011880>

¹¹³ Michael Eppel, “Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime,” in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 257.

some of Iraq's oil revenues, which had quadrupled during the early 1970s, Hussein implemented several far-reaching socioeconomic policies. His government collectivized the agricultural sector, expanded industry, and invested in the educational system, especially at the secondary level.¹¹⁴

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Ba'ath Party's ideological emphasis shifted to redefine pan-Arabism in terms of Iraqi national interests. In language that echoed a famous statement made by a General Motors executive, Hussein stated, "What is good for Iraq is good for the Arabs."¹¹⁵ This theme evolved to equate Iraqi national identity with the country's strong tribal (or "Arab") traditions. Hussein rewarded loyal tribal sheikhs and their tribes with governmental spoils, whereas tribes considered less trustworthy became the victims of state oppression.^{116, 117} No tribe benefited more under the regimes of al-Bakr and Hussein than their own al-Bu Nasir tribe, around the city of Tikrit in the northern part of the so-called Sunni Triangle.¹¹⁸ Other Tikriti and nearby tribes were often favored by the Hussein regime.¹¹⁹

Kurdish Push for Autonomy

Iraqi Kurds have pursued some form of autonomous rule since Iraq became an independent nation in 1932. During the 1960s, numerous confrontations took place between the Iraqi army and Kurdish guerrillas in the north. After the Ba'ath Party came to power in July 1968, these violent clashes continued until a respite in 1970. In March, the Ba'athists and the Kurds reached an agreement that promised to create, over a 4-year period, a Kurdish autonomous region that encompassed the three Kurdish-majority governorates of Dahuk, Arbil, and Al-Sulaymaniyah.¹²⁰

Negotiations between the Iraqi government and Kurds broke down, however, and full-scale conflict erupted in 1974, with the Kurds receiving military support from Iran. This support ended in 1975 when Hussein brokered a deal with Iran's Shah. The Iraqi army then forced the majority of Kurdish troops to surrender or take refuge in nearby Iran. Kurdish guerrilla attacks on the government resumed, while disagreements



© Adam Jones
Guard in Arbil, Kurdistan

¹¹⁴ Michael Eppel, "Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime," in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 255.

¹¹⁵ Amatzia Baram, "Mesopotamian Identity in Ba'athi Iraq," in *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 19, 1983 (Cited in Michael Eppel, "Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime," in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004], 255.

¹¹⁶ Charles Tripp, "The Ba'ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein," in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 265–269.

¹¹⁷ Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Tribes and the Post-Saddam System," Brookings Institution, 8 July 2003, http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/0708iraq_baram.aspx

¹¹⁸ Eppel, Michael. "Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime," in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 258.

¹¹⁹ Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Tribes and the Post-Saddam System," Brookings Institution, 8 July 2003, http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/0708iraq_baram.aspx

¹²⁰ John Pike, "Kurdistan-Iraq," Global Security, June 2008, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kurdistan-iraq.htm>

caused a rift in the Kurdish political elite. Infighting between the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which had previously negotiated with the central government, and the newly formed opposition party, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), stifled Kurdish independence efforts through the end of the decade.¹²¹

The Iran–Iraq War

In 1980, Iraq attacked Iran, launching an 8-year war that resulted in large-scale loss of life, massive structural damage, and a near collapse of both countries' economies. For Iraq, fatalities numbered from 150,000 to 350,000, and economic damage was estimated at nearly USD 160 billion.¹²² Although a territorial dispute over the Shatt al-Arab waterway is sometimes cited as the war's primary cause, there were numerous contributing factors. (The Shatt al-Arab issue dated to the Peace Treaty of 1639 between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, which created an ill-defined border predicated primarily upon tribal loyalties.)¹²³



© Matthew Winterburn
Khomeini on Iranian war shrine

Iran's influence over Iraqi Shi'ites posed a significant threat to Iraq and its power position in the region. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran also ushered in new dynamics that deeply divided the Kurds along national lines.¹²⁴ Iran and Iraq each sought to champion those factions that opposed the other country's government. Hussein perceived that Iran's revolution, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, had greatly undermined the strength of the state, especially its military ranks. These circumstances motivated Hussein to take control of the Shatt al-Arab.¹²⁵ The war ended in 1988, essentially as a stalemate with no definitive victor.¹²⁶

During the Iran–Iraq war, the two rival Kurdish groups—the KDP and the PUK—carried out guerrilla activities against the government. Baghdad did not counter these aggressions because it did not want a two-front conflict.¹²⁷ By late 1986, much of northern Iraq was

¹²¹ Mark Lewis, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Emergence of Saddam Hussein, 1968–79," in *A Country Study: Iraq*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0023\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0023))

¹²² Michael Eppel, "Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime," in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 263.

¹²³ Brad Martsching, "Iran-Iraq War and Waterways Claims," Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE), School of International Service, American University, May 1998, <http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/iraniraq.htm>

¹²⁴ Charles Tripp, "The Ba'ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein," in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 229–230.

¹²⁵ Michael Eppel, "Chapter 11: The Rise of Saddam Husayn's Regime," in *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 263.

¹²⁶ Brad Martsching, "Iraq-Iraq War and Waterways Claims," Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE), School of International Service, American University, May 1998, <http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/iraniraq.htm>

¹²⁷ John Pike, "Kurdistan-Iraq," *Global Security*, June 2008, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kurdistan-iraq.htm>

under the control of Kurdish separatists.¹²⁸ In early 1988, as the Iran–Iraq war came to an end, Hussein turned his attention northward where he unleashed a violent campaign known as *al-Anfal* (“the spoils of war”) against the Kurdish resistance. The operation was carried out by Hussein’s cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, the Ba’ath Party secretary-general of Iraq’s northern regions. During the *al-Anfal* campaign, poison gas attacks destroyed entire villages of Kurdish civilians. These attacks gained for al-Majid the nickname “Chemical Ali.”¹²⁹

The First Persian Gulf War

At the end of the Iran–Iraq war, Iraq’s economy was mired in debt (much of which was owed to its Persian Gulf neighbors) and the nation was in dire need of new infrastructure.¹³⁰ Hussein tried to pressure neighboring Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to forgive Iraq’s war debts. He also encouraged them to use their influence within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to help raise worldwide oil prices by limiting OPEC quotas. Neither country proved responsive to Hussein’s requests, agreeing only to provide limited amounts of aid. By early 1990, Hussein’s appeals for assistance transformed into thinly veiled threats that the Iraqi government was prepared to take action to extricate itself from its economic bind.¹³¹ The small, oil-rich country of Kuwait, whose territory had been claimed by Iraqi-based powers as far back as 1871, soon became the focus of these threats.^{132, 133}

On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi military invaded Kuwait, an action immediately condemned by the United Nations (UN). Several days later, the UN Security Council imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. Saddam Hussein’s response 2 days later was to declare Kuwait to be Iraq’s 19th province.¹³⁴ In return, the U.S. and a coalition of forces from 28 countries launched a military operation to enforce the sanctions and compel Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait by 15 January 1991. Iraq failed to comply.



DoD Image
Iraq-Kuwait Highway

By 17 January 1991, coalition air attacks began, and full ground operations commenced 5 weeks later. Within 1 week of combat, the Iraqi forces were forced to retreat from

¹²⁸ Charles Tripp, “The Ba’ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein,” in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 244.

¹²⁹ Con Coughlin. “Chapter 9: The Victor,” in *Saddam: His Rise and Fall* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 224.

¹³⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: Causes,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232296>

¹³¹ Charles Tripp, “The Ba’ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein,” in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 247–248.

¹³² Charles Tripp, “The Ba’ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein,” in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 252.

¹³³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: Causes,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232296>

¹³⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: The Invasion,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232297>

Kuwait, while the Hussein government was compelled to accept the UN Security Council resolutions.

Sanctions

For Iraq, the consequences of the 1991 Gulf War were far-reaching. It destroyed much of the country's urban infrastructure, and also led to the development of an essentially independent Kurdish region. In the wake of the war, Iraqi forces had suppressed a Kurdish rebellion in the north, and over 1 million Kurds had fled to nearby countries. Shortly thereafter, the United States, Britain, and France created a safety zone that shielded the Kurdish-majority region from Hussein's military forces, allowing many Kurdish refugees to return.¹³⁵ But the Kurdish region soon suffered from internal conflict. In late 1993, a violent power struggle erupted between the KDP and the PUK (the Kurdish Civil War). As the battle intensified, the two groups looked for outside assistance. In 1996, the PUK brought troops from Iran into the Kurdish region and seized the capital of Arbil. The KDP then forged a military alliance of convenience with the Hussein government, thus providing Iraqi troops the opportunity to enter Arbil in 1996 and push the Iranian-backed PUK into Sulemanina Province.¹³⁶



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Iraq No-Fly Zone Map

UN sanctions on Iraq continued for more than a decade. In December 1996, with Iraq near economic collapse and Iraqis suffering from shortages of food and medicine, Iraqi oil exports were officially resumed as part of a UN-sponsored “oil-for-food” program. (This program came under criticism because of charges of corruption and ineffectiveness.) Meanwhile, the embargo weakened as some countries pursued “black market” trade for Iraqi oil.¹³⁷

Weapons Inspections

As part of sanctions after the Gulf War, the UN Security Council authorized routine weapons inspections in Iraq to ensure that the nation was not developing chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. Iraq consistently obstructed UN weapons inspectors' efforts to determine Iraqi compliance with the UN-imposed ban on weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In 1998, frustrated by Iraq's defiant stance toward weapons inspections, the U.S. Congress passed an act authorizing the president to deliver nearly USD 100 million in military materials and services to opposition groups, to support regime change in Iraq.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: The Invasion,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232297>

¹³⁶ Charles Tripp, “The Ba’ath and the Rule of Saddam Hussein,” in *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 273

¹³⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: The UN Embargo and the Oil for Food Program,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232298>

¹³⁸ Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security,” Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 3, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 initiated a series of events that culminated in the invasion of Iraq a little over a year and a half later. Although no direct connection was established between the Iraqi government and the al-Qaeda operatives responsible for the 9/11 attacks, the administration of President George W. Bush pressed the case that the attacks exemplified U.S. exposure to state-sponsored terrorism.¹³⁹ The U.S. and its allies (most notably, the United Kingdom), subsequently heightened their efforts to confront Iraq about its ties to terrorist groups and its pursuit of WMD. In September 2002, President Bush addressed the UN General Assembly, urging it to pressure the Hussein regime by enforcing previous resolutions regarding Iraq's WMD program. On 8 November 2002, the UN Security Council directed Iraq, through Resolution 1441, to allow arms inspectors to return to continue their inspections.¹⁴⁰



© United Nations Photo / flickr.com
Weapons Inspections

During this new round of weapons inspections, the issue of Iraqi cooperation became a source of international debate. The United States and the United Kingdom insisted that Iraq was impeding the inspections by hiding material. France, Germany, and Russia wanted to give Iraq more time to comply with the inspectors. The UN Security Council did not pass a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. But the U.S. moved forward in its confrontation with Iraq, on the basis of an earlier Congressional bill (passed in October 2002) that authorized the president to use military force “to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.”¹⁴¹

Invasion and Subsequent Iraqi Governance

The U.S. and its coalition partners suspended further diplomatic negotiations with Iraq on 17 March 2003 and initiated their air campaign against Iraq 3 days later. By 9 April, U.S. forces had entered Baghdad while British forces had entered Basrah. Other major urban centers fell days later. Although major combat operations ceased in April, the war entered a new phase of rampant violence by sectarian militias and guerrilla insurgency groups using terrorist methods. Prominent among the militias was the Mahdi Army, formed by Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The most highly publicized of the terrorist insurgency groups was al-Qaeda in Iraq, an organization composed of Sunni fighters from Iraq and other Islamic nations; this group was initially led by the Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Coalition soldiers, Iraqi police forces, and Shi'ite and Sunni civilians became targets in a wave of terrorist bombings and other attacks by these insurgents and other groups.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Mike Mount, “Hussein’s Iraq and Al Qaeda Not Linked, Pentagon Says,” CNN, 13 March 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/03/13/alqaeda.saddam/>

¹⁴⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: The Iraq War,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232299>

¹⁴¹ Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security,” Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 8, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

¹⁴² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: History: The Republic of Iraq: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein: The Persian Gulf War: The Iraq War,” 2009, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-232299>

Saddam Hussein was eventually captured by U.S. forces in Tikrit in December 2003 and executed by Iraqi authorities in December 2006. After the abrupt fall of the Hussein government in March 2003, some of the most urgent tasks were to restore Iraqi governmental authority and rebuild its internal security forces, such as the army and the police. The “postwar” reconstruction of Iraq came under much criticism for mistakes made in carrying out these critical operations—including a lack of prewar planning and miscalculations about the level of security and the social environment that would prevail after Hussein’s downfall.¹⁴³



DoD Image
US and Iraqi officials meet

The creation of a new draft Iraqi constitution and the subsequent parliamentary elections of December 2005 were significant positive developments in the 2 years following the invasion. The parliamentary elections were the first since the era of the Hashemite monarchy (1921–1958).¹⁴⁴

Following the December 2005 elections, an alliance of Shi’ite parties held the highest percentage of seats in the new Iraqi assembly (largely because of a Sunni boycott of the elections), but they were well short of the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally form a government. After several months of negotiations between the Shi’ite alliance and Kurdish, Sunni, secular, and Shi’ite splinter parties, Nuri al-Maliki was selected as Iraq’s prime minister in April 2006.

Security Efforts

Early in al-Maliki’s administration, Iraq continued to be plagued by rampant violence. One turning point came in August 2006, when Sunni tribal members in Anbar Province, site of some of the heaviest fighting since the war began and a stronghold of al-Qaeda in Iraq, agreed to an alliance with coalition forces to combat the operations of al-Qaeda in Iraq. The “Awakening” (*Al-Sawaha*), as this movement came to be known, was further supported by a 2007 “troop surge” of U.S. military forces.¹⁴⁵ Working with Awakening leaders, U.S. commanders contracted nearly 100,000 former insurgents (mostly Sunnis) to assist in providing informal security in some of the most violent areas. This “Sons of Iraq” program caused the al-Maliki government to be concerned that Sunni militias could develop



DoD Image
Iraqi Police

¹⁴³ Andrew Rathmell, et al., “Developing Iraq’s Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority’s Experience,” RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2005, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG365.pdf

¹⁴⁴ Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security,” Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 1, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security,” Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 26, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

within Iraq's Internal Security Forces (ISF), if the Sons of Iraq were eventually integrated into the ISF.

Violence in southern Iraq mostly occurred between rival Shi'ite militias, who were vying for control of the lucrative oil trade in the Basrah region.¹⁴⁶ Prominent among these was Sadr's Mahdi Army, which came under attack from Iraqi government forces (which were dominated by members of the Badr Forces, another Shi'ite militia) in March 2008.¹⁴⁷ Though the Mahdi Army appeared successful in the initial fighting, subsequent 2008 campaigns by the Iraqi governmental forces (with U.S. and British assistance) eventually loosened the Mahdi Army's hold on Basrah and other southern Iraqi cities.^{148, 149}

Recent Events

In 2009, Iraq held its first provincial elections since 2005. (The three provinces of the KRG did not participate; rather, they held elections in conjunction with the National Election on 7 March 2010.) The election process was conducted with little or no violence and saw the participation of Sunnis, who had boycotted the elections in 2005. The result was a large shift in the distribution of power and authority within the provincial governments of Iraq. The unrepresentative numbers of Shi'a and Kurdish elected officials, who were the product of the Sunni boycott in 2005, were replaced by more representative distribution including a significantly larger number of Sunni political parties.



DOD Image
Iraqi Voter

In addition, the provincial elections removed many Shi'ite clerics from political office. These religious leaders were elected in large numbers in 2005, but rejected in the provincial elections of 2009 because of their perceived ineffectiveness and their perceived ties to the ayatollahs in Iran. Voters replaced them with a slate of "technocrats" in the hope that these career politicians could improve services and limit the crippling corruption impeding the country's progress in postwar reconstruction.

On March 7, 2010, Iraqi national (parliamentary) elections were held with more than 60% of eligible Iraqis turning out to vote. The open-list elections set the stage for the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces by August 2010, and raised hopes that a democratic

¹⁴⁶ Patrick Cockburn, "Violence Erupts in Basra as Iraqi Forces Battle Mehdi Army," *Independent*, 26 March 2008, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/violence-erupts-in-basra-as-iraqi-forces-battle-mehdi-army-800588.html>

¹⁴⁷ Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security," Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 30, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security," Congressional Research Service, 8 June 2009, 30, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/125947.pdf>

¹⁴⁹ James Glanz and Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraqi Army Takes Last Basra Areas From Sadr Force," *New York Times*, 20 April 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/20/world/middleeast/20iraq.html?pagewanted=all>

Iraq can evolve into a peaceful, multiethnic society.¹⁵⁰ But final official results indicated that no single party had won a majority of seats in the 325-member Iraqi Parliament, and negotiations to form a coalition government became lengthy and arduous.¹⁵¹ After 9 months of bargaining, President Jalal Talabani was reelected on 11 November 2010 and Nuri al-Malaki was reelected as prime minister with the cleric's support on 21 December 2010.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ In open-list systems of election, voters select individual candidates affiliated with political parties and alliances. In closed systems, voters choose political parties or alliances rather than individuals.

¹⁵¹ BBC News, "Guide to Political Groups in Iraq," 11 November 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11730332>

¹⁵² BBC News, "Iraq Shia Cleric Moqtada Sadr Urges Iraqis to Unite," 8 January 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12141874>

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The Iraqi parliamentary elections in 2005 were the first since the Hashemite era.
True
The parliamentary elections of December 2005 were significant, in part, because they were the first since the era of the Hashemite monarchy (1921–1958).
2. Iraq’s failure to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1441 was the trigger for U.S. military engagement.
True
On 8 November 2002, the UN Security Council directed Iraq, through Resolution 1441, to allow arms inspectors to return to continue their inspections. The issue of Iraqi cooperation became a source of international debate. The UN Security Council did not pass a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. But the U.S. moved forward in its confrontation with Iraq on the basis of an earlier Congressional bill that authorized the president to use military force to defend U.S. national security against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.
3. In 1990, Saddam Hussein declared Kuwait to be part of Iraq.
True
On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi military invaded Kuwait. Two days later, Saddam Hussein declared Kuwait to be Iraq’s 19th province.
4. After the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq was able to successfully circumvent sanctions for years.
False
The Iraqi economy suffered from sanctions for years after the 1991 Gulf War and was nearly brought to collapse. In 1996, the UN instituted the “oil-for-food” program, which relieved some impacts of the sanctions. (Charges of corruption and ineffectiveness arose after the program was closed.)
5. “Chemical Ali” was the mastermind of Iraq’s chemical weapons program.
False
Hussein’s cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, the Ba’ath Party secretary-general of Iraq’s northern regions, carried out deadly poison gas attacks on entire villages of Kurdish civilians—earning him the nickname “Chemical Ali.”

Chapter 3 Economy

Introduction

Iraq's abundant hydrocarbon deposits (proven oil reserves), the world's fourth largest behind those of Saudi Arabia, Canada, and Iran, made the development of a single-commodity economy almost inevitable after the discovery of oil in 1927.¹⁵³ Following Iraq's independence in 1932, successive governments focused on maximizing oil revenues. These energy profits were more equitably distributed than in some of Iraq's neighbors, thus allowing for the development of an Iraqi educated middle class. The prosperity of the 1970s was created by the high price of oil, which caused Iraq's revenues to jump from USD 1 billion in 1972 to USD 26 billion in 1979.¹⁵⁴



© William John Gauthier
Oil well on fire, Kirkuk

Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, beginning an 8-year war that diverted resources into the military. During this time, the Iraqi economy suffered as the price of oil dropped and the country lost markets for its petroleum exports. In 1990, Saddam Hussein ordered an ill-advised invasion of Kuwait—undertaken partly to replenish Iraq's depleted treasury by seizing Kuwait's wealth.¹⁵⁵ After a U.S.-led UN coalition defeated Iraqi forces, sanctions imposed under UN Security Council Resolution 661 virtually shut down Iraqi oil exports. The sanctions also restricted Iraqi imports; under these conditions, the Iraqi economy (and society) became a shadow of what it had been in the prosperous 1970s. Thereafter, the Iraqi people subsisted on the UN equivalent of welfare until the Hussein government was overthrown in 2003.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ U.S. Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "2009 World Proved Reserves," n.d., <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/index.cfm?view=reserves>

¹⁵⁴ Eric Davis, "Chapter 9: The Persian Gulf War: Myths and Realities," in *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Hooshang Amirahmadi, ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 265.

¹⁵⁵ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, "Chapter 10: Against the World," in *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: Grove Press, 2002), 225.

¹⁵⁶ Anthony Shadid, "Lives of Desperation in Iraq," *Boston Globe*, 29 October 2002, http://www.boston.com/news/world/articles/2002/10/29/lives_of_desperation_in_iraq/

The Development of Iraq's Economy

After independence in 1932, the Iraqi government was characterized by personalized rule and patronage networks that were maintained and expanded through control of oil revenues.¹⁵⁷ Iraq developed into a “rentier” state, in which the government relies on income from commodity sales, rather than taxation, to finance its priorities. Iraq had no need to develop a robust private economy because oil revenues provided its operating funds.¹⁵⁸ By the late 1970s, this enabled Saddam Hussein to eliminate political opposition without fear of public backlash, and to dole out public-sector jobs to cronies and supporters.



© HYAKUNEKO / flickr.com
Iraqi Dinar

The oil industry currently accounts for about 90% of Iraq's government revenue and 80% of foreign exchange earnings.¹⁵⁹ Heavy reliance on a single commodity, however, creates boom and bust cycles in the economy. When the price of the commodity (in this case, oil) is high, revenues flow in and the government can spend lavishly. When the price drops, the government has difficulty meeting the financial obligations it undertook during the boom period. This creates an incentive to print money, which contributes to inflation.

In the post-Hussein era, the public sector continues to dominate the economy, with the Ministry of the Interior serving as the country's largest employer. But a hiring freeze was enacted in the wake of plummeting oil prices in 2009.¹⁶⁰ The freeze has delayed the expansion and modernization of security forces and cost the government some of its credibility.^{161, 162, 163} As of June 2010, the freeze was still in effect, a situation that underscores the need for Iraq to diversify its economy.

Agriculture

¹⁵⁷ Rolf Schwarz, “Rentier States and War-Making: The United Arab Emirates and Iraq in Comparative Perspective,” in *Extractive Economies and Conflicts in the Global South*, ed. Kenneth Omeje (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 215.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Mandelbaum, “Chapter 5: The Future of Democracy Promotion,” in *Democracy's Good Name: The Rise and Risks of the World's Most Popular Form of Government* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 230.

¹⁵⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Iraq: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

¹⁶⁰ Lourdes Garcia-Navarro, “Cash-Strapped Iraq Faces Growing Unemployment,” National Public Radio, 14 April 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102827342>

¹⁶¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, Charles Loi, and Adam Mausner, “Iraq's Coming National Challenges: Transition Amid Uncertainty,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5 January 2011, 36, http://csis.org/files/publication/110105_Iraq_1-Introduction.pdf

¹⁶² Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq: Patterns of Violence, Casualty Trends and Emerging Security Threats,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 9 February 2011, 23, http://csis.org/files/publication/110209_Iraq-PattofViolence.pdf

¹⁶³ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 59 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

Producing aromatic amber rice and nearly 500 types of dates, Iraq's agricultural sector was once the envy of its arid neighbors. Today, the nation imports most of its food because decades of neglect, international sanctions, and sectarian violence have taken their toll on domestic production.^{164, 165} Under the Hussein government, the Ba'athist policy of draining the southern marshes—the traditional home of the Marsh Arabs—destroyed one of Iraq's historic food-growing regions.¹⁶⁶ By 2002, Iraq already relied heavily on imports for food staples, including wheat, rice, and sugar.¹⁶⁷ Even today, agricultural subsidies from Iran, Syria, and Jordan continue to undermine Iraq's efforts to rebuild its once thriving agricultural sector.¹⁶⁸



© Penn State / flickr.com
Rural residence

A number of factors within Iraq have negatively affected agricultural production. Recurrent drought has reduced the amount of water available to farmers. Further, reliable electricity is needed to pump water through canal systems, but power generation problems have impaired such efforts. Because power remains unreliable, farmers must purchase gasoline to run generators. Bribes (*baksheesh*) are needed to get good seeds. All these costs must be passed on to the Iraqi consumer, who typically opts to buy cheaper imported fare. Other obstacles include lack of access to modern technology and equipment, and scarcity in credit and private capital.¹⁶⁹

Agriculture contributes only a small portion of GDP and employs only 21% of the population.¹⁷⁰ Most of Iraq's arable land is located in the north and northeast where irrigation is rain-fed, while the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers require year-round irrigation.¹⁷¹ Iraqi agriculturalists mainly produce rice, barley, wheat, cotton, dates, and vegetables as well as cattle, sheep, and poultry. Yet the meager returns from farming have caused a steady exodus to the cities, which are ill-prepared to employ unskilled laborers seeking off-farm work.

¹⁶⁴ Mike Tharp, "Once World's Breadbasket, Iraq Now a Farming Basket Case," McClatchy, 17 July 2009, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/226/story/72051.html>

¹⁶⁵ Reuters, "Iraq's Ailing Farm Sector More Crucial than Ever," 28 February 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-GCA-iraq/idUSTRE51R0IE20090228>

¹⁶⁶ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Iraq," February 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6804.htm#econ>

¹⁶⁷ Randy Schnepf, "CRS Report for Congress: Iraq's Agriculture: Background and Status," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 13 May 2003, <http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/assets/crs/RS21516.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ USAID Iraq, "Fruits and Vegetables Value Chain," 2010, https://www.inma-iraq.com/?pname=fruits_veg

¹⁶⁹ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Iraq," 2 May 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6804.htm#econ>

¹⁷⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

¹⁷¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Iraq: Economy," 2010, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/293631/Iraq>

Industry

After rapidly expanding in the 1970s, the Iraqi manufacturing sector declined in the wake of the Iraq–Iran and Persian Gulf wars; the latter subjected the country to severe economic sanctions.¹⁷² Even before these events, Iraq’s largely state-run manufacturing sector suffered from inefficiencies, and government subsidies served to prop up unproductive operations and maintain jobs.¹⁷³ After Hussein’s removal, efforts to revive destroyed or decaying manufacturing facilities were hindered by security concerns and a lack of resources, including electricity.¹⁷⁴ Other factories were looted or languished in militant-controlled areas.¹⁷⁵



© BBC World Service / flickr.com
Woman working at Iraqi factory

By 2009, Iraq had nearly 70 state-owned enterprises and 240 factories, each of which employed anywhere from 100 to 4,000 workers.¹⁷⁶ Though certain industries, such as water, electricity, and cigarettes, are not expected to be privatized, stake sales of other state industries may take place in the near future. Meanwhile, Iraq has focused on production-sharing deals and public-private partnerships. Iraq has made deals with German automaker Daimler and Swedish truck company Scania for vehicle assembly and with France and Japan for cement factories.¹⁷⁷ Iraq plans to spend USD 680 million in 2011 to restore and renovate its factories.¹⁷⁸ Iraq’s current industrial products include petroleum, chemicals, textiles, leather, construction materials, food processing, fertilizer, and metal fabrication/processing.¹⁷⁹

Services

The service sector employs about 60% of Iraqis and contributes nearly 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).¹⁸⁰ The service economy suffered during the international embargo of 1990–2003. Unemployment and the low value of the dinar contributed to declines in retail sales as people’s spending shifted to basic needs. Only the construction industry saw consistent growth as a result of infrastructure and housing projects plus

¹⁷² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Iraq: Economy: Manufacturing,” 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22936>

¹⁷³ Mohammed Abbas, “Iraq Starts Privatization Drive, but Progress Slow,” Reuters, 28 July 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsMaps/idUSTRE56R2HV20090728?sp=true>

¹⁷⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Iraq,” August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ Aseel Kami, “Lack of Iraq Government Seen Frustrating Foreign Investors,” Reuters, 17 August 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/08/17/us-iraq-investment-interview-idUSTRE67G3KW20100817>

¹⁷⁶ Mohammad Abbas, “Iraq Starts Privatization Drive, but Progress Slow,” Reuters, 28 July 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/07/28/us-iraq-privitisation-interview-sb-idUSTRE56R2HV20090728>

¹⁷⁷ Daimler, “Daimler Signs Partnership Agreement in Iraq,” 1 February 2010, <http://www.daimler.com/dcmmedia/0-921-656186-1-1269721-1-0-0-0-1-11701-614240-0-1-0-0-0-0.html>

¹⁷⁸ Aseel Kami, “Iraq to Restore War-Battered Factories,” Reuters, 18 October 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/10/18/us-mideast-summit-iraq-idUSTRE69H3X120101018>

¹⁷⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Iraq: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

¹⁸⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, “Iraq: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

repair of monuments and palaces.¹⁸¹ Since the fall of Saddam, the security services industry has also prospered because of the country's ongoing insurgency.¹⁸² Banking and tourism are two other sources of potential growth in the service sector.

Banking

At one time the Iraqi banking system set the gold standard for the Muslim Middle East. Its cadre of well-educated civil servants helped other countries, such as Jordan, establish their central banks. In the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's government, two of Iraq's major banks suffered heavy losses when their vaults were looted.¹⁸³ Other banks were damaged by sanctions.¹⁸⁴ In the post-Hussein era, reconstruction of the banking system was essential to revitalizing the economy.¹⁸⁵ Not only were banks needed to allocate capital, they were necessary for the government to pay civil servants.¹⁸⁶ Further, in a situation of poor security, people do not want to carry significant amounts of cash.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Central Bank of Iraq

As of mid-2011, however, Iraq is still a cash-based economy and does not have a fully functioning financial system, since its banking system still lacks the necessary infrastructure and institutional and legal framework.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, both the stock exchange and banking system are modernized and running. The Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) conducts the country's monetary policy and operates independently of the government. The state does own seven banks, three of which (Rafidain Bank, Rasheed Bank, and Trade Bank of Iraq) make up 95% of all banking assets.¹⁸⁸ More than 30 private banks (with over 600 branches) and 11 foreign banks operate in the country.^{189, 190}

¹⁸¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Iraq: Economy," 2010,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/293631/Iraq>

¹⁸² Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq: Economy," August 2006, 11,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

¹⁸³ David Munro, "Overview of the Iraq Banking System: The State-Owned Banks" Iraq IZDIHAR,

USAID, 9 November 2003 (Revised 21 March 2007), [http://www.izdihar-](http://www.izdihar.com/resources/bankingconf07/bankconf_pdfs/ref_ses5_munro_overview_iraqi_bankg_soes_032107.pdf)

[http://www.izdihar-](http://www.izdihar.com/resources/bankingconf07/bankconf_pdfs/ref_ses5_munro_overview_iraqi_bankg_soes_032107.pdf)

[df](http://www.izdihar.com/resources/bankingconf07/bankconf_pdfs/ref_ses5_munro_overview_iraqi_bankg_soes_032107.pdf)

¹⁸⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq: Economy," August 2006, 11,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ Robert Looney, "A Monetary/Exchange Rate Strategy for the Reconstruction of Iraq," *Strategic Insights* (Center on Contemporary Conflict, Naval Postgraduate School) 2, no. 5 (May 2003),

<http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/may03/middleEast.asp>

¹⁸⁶ Bathsheba Crocker, "Reconstructing Iraq's Economy," *The Washington Quarterly* (Center of Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) 27, no. 4 (Autumn 2004), 73–93,

http://www.twq.com/04autumn/docs/04autumn_crocker.pdf

¹⁸⁷ Heritage Foundation, "2010 Index of Economic Freedom: Iraq," 2010,

<http://www.heritage.org/index/Country/Iraq>

¹⁸⁸ Bureau of Economy, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq," March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

¹⁸⁹ Iraq Business News, "Iraqi Banking Sector Flourishes," 10 April 2010, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/04/10/iraq-banking-sector-flourishes/>

Inter-bank transfers became possible in 2009.¹⁹¹ Private banks continue to provide financial transfers as their main activity rather than lending. In June 2011, the government announced that major state-owned banks such as Rafidain and Al-Rasheed banks will also begin providing Islamic banking services: transactions without payment of interest.¹⁹²

The introduction of a new currency occurred without major setbacks. The New Iraqi Dinar (NID) became legal tender in January 2004 after a 3-month exchange period. In contrast to the cheaply printed Saddam dinars, the NID are made of higher-quality paper and are more difficult to counterfeit. Moreover, the currency has appreciated in value. The possibility of stoking Iraqi nationalism was avoided by not “dollarizing” the economy (either pegging the dinar’s value to or converting to the U.S. dollar), as some had recommended.¹⁹³

Tourism

The collapse of the Hussein regime created the expectation that tourism would flourish in the region. But security concerns quickly dimmed any optimism that tourism would play a role in Iraq’s economic recovery. Tourist activity, aside from regional religious pilgrimages, virtually ceased after the war began in 2003. Only in 2009 did the country begin to see growth in tourism, which increased 98% during the first 9 months.^{194, 195} Visitors gave positive reviews despite some spending as much as half the day at checkpoints.¹⁹⁶ Iraq had 1.3 million visitors in 2009 and the new provision of comprehensive travel insurance in 2010 was expected to boost sector growth.^{197, 198}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Iman Ali Mosque, Najaf

Religious tourism in particular has potential for substantial near-term growth. Pilgrims come to Iraq to see many of Islam’s most revered holy sites, including the Shi’a shrines

¹⁹⁰ Bureau of Economy, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq,” March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

¹⁹¹ APS Review Downstream Trends, “Iraq—Rafidain Bank Reaches a Milestone,” All Business, 25 May 2009, <http://www.allbusiness.com/banking-finance/banking-lending-credit-services/12365152-1.html>

¹⁹² Iraq Business News, “Iraq to Provide Islamic Banking Services,” 8 June 2011, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/06/08/iraq-to-provide-islamic-banking-services/>

¹⁹³ Sergei Danilochkin, “Iraq: New Money but Dollars, Euros, or Dinars?” Global Security, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 3 October 2003, http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2003/10/031003_2003163154.htm

¹⁹⁴ Tamsyn Kent, “Is Iraq the Next Holiday Hotspot,” BBC News Magazine, 11 November 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/8352234.stm

¹⁹⁵ Gloria Riviera, “Tourism Slowly Returns to Iraq,” ABC News, 9 November 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Travel/tourism-slowly-returns-iraq/story?id=9014710>

¹⁹⁶ BBC News, “No Frills Tourism—in Iraq,” 22 March 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7957974.stm

¹⁹⁷ Lonely Planet, “Travel News Wrap: Iraq Tourism, Staying with Local, A380 Update,” 11 November 2010, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-city/travel-tips-and-articles/76213>

¹⁹⁸ Iraq Business News, “Iraq Tourism Receives Added Boost,” 8 November 2010, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/11/08/iraq-tourism-receives-added-boost/>

to the Imam Husayn in Karbala and shrines to the Imam Ali in Najaf. The security situation has not deterred religious pilgrims, who were prevented from visiting during the Hussein era. They immediately welcomed the opportunity to visit even under adverse circumstances.¹⁹⁹ Conditions have vastly improved with the opening of an airport in Najaf in 2008.²⁰⁰ Unlike Baghdad's aging and dismal departure hall, the compact terminal in Najaf is light and airy, evoking the optimism of the booming holy city it serves. Well-heeled visitors from the Gulf traverse the terminal's polished stone floor. And surprisingly, a new ATM (a rare sight in Iraq) awaits travelers.²⁰¹

Energy

Oil

Iraq has proven oil reserves of 115 billion barrels (bbl), the fourth-largest reserves in the world.²⁰² The largest concentration of super giant oil fields (over 5 billion bbls) in the world is in southeastern Iraq, around Basrah. Because several areas have yet to be explored and many deposits remain relatively unexploited, experts believe the country may possess an additional 45–100 billion bbl of recoverable reserves.²⁰³ If these known and



© Dave Chung
Iraq Oil

potential reserves were fully exploited, Iraq could put an additional 6 to 8 million barrels per day on the market.²⁰⁴ (This output would delay the onset of “peak oil”—the point at which global supplies will begin to contract and the price will rise.²⁰⁵) Oil accounts for the majority of Iraq's economic output, with oil exports responsible for more than 75% of GDP and over 90% of government revenues in 2011.^{206, 207}

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth Dickinson, “Memo to Iraq, From Colombia,” *Foreign Policy*, February 2009, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4715&page=0

²⁰⁰ Seth Robson, “Tourism Industry Thriving in Iraq,” *Stars and Stripes*, 5 July 2009, <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?article=63592§ion=104>

²⁰¹ The Peninsula (Qatar), “Najaf Airport Tussle Shows Risks of Investing in Iraq,” 23 February 2010, http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display_news.asp?section=business_news&subsection=market+news&month=February2010&file=Business_News2010022391217.xml

²⁰² Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, “Iraq Country Profile: Analysis,” September 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IZ>

²⁰³ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, “Iraq Country Profile: Analysis,” September 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IZ>

²⁰⁴ Michael Klare, “Iraq, the World's Oil Pump,” *Salon*, 17 July 2009, <http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2009/07/17/klare/index.html>

²⁰⁵ “The rate of oil ‘production,’ meaning extraction and refining (currently about 84 million barrels/day), has grown almost every year of the last century. Once we have used up about half of the original reserves, oil production becomes ever more likely [to] stop growing and begin a terminal decline, hence ‘peak.’ The peak in oil production does not signify ‘running out of oil,’ but it does mean the end of cheap oil, as we switch from a buyers’ to a sellers’ market.” Bart Anderson, “Peak Oil Primer,” *Energy Bulletin*, 16 June 2009, <http://www.energybulletin.net/primer>

²⁰⁶ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, “Iraq Country Profile: Analysis,” September 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IZ>

²⁰⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, “Iraq: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

Iraq's sectarian conflict hindered development of oil production, because oil deposits are not evenly distributed across ethno-religious demographic lines. The majority of the proven reserves are in the Shi'a-dominated south and the Kurdish north. In February 2011, after a shutdown of about a year-and-a-half, Iraq began exporting oil from its Kurdish regions after the government partly resolved its dispute with the Kurdish people about the legality of Kurdish contracts awarded to foreign firms. The majority of Iraqi oil deals were made with Russian, Chinese, and other firms; these deals may be renegotiated soon. In 2008, national production averaged 2.4 million barrels per day (bbl/d); this level has risen in the last few years.²⁰⁸ Iraq currently produces 2.7 million barrels of oil per day. The government had plans to increase production to 12 million bbl/d by 2017 but may cut that goal because of infrastructure constraints.²⁰⁹

Natural Gas

Iraq has proven natural gas reserves of 3.17 trillion cubic meters (112 trillion cubic feet), the 10th-largest supply in the world.²¹⁰ If measurements were updated, some sources suggest that the reserves (including suspected deposits) may be much larger—in the range of 7.78–8.49 trillion cubic m (275–300 trillion cubic ft). Two-thirds of the proven gas reserves are associated resources, meaning they are found alongside oil reserves. In 2008, a large share (40%) of this associated supply was flared (burned off) during petroleum production because of a lack of processing and delivery infrastructure.²¹¹ But the government-owned South Gas Company recently signed a long-term partnership with Shell, in an effort to capture and deliver flared gas for domestic use.



DoD Image
Repairing natural gas pipeline

Although production levels are up from 2003, in 2009 (the most recent year with available data) they remained significantly below their high in 1989. After two licensing rounds for the development of oil, a third round specifically for gas was held in late 2010. As of mid-2011, Iraq has made 15 gas and oil deals since 2003.²¹² A fourth licensing round is scheduled for November 2011.^{213, 214} Various proposals have been made to

²⁰⁸ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Country Analysis Brief: Iraq: Oil," June 2009, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iraq/Oil.html>

²⁰⁹ Alex Lawler and Rania El Gamal, "Update 2—Iraq May Cut Oil Output Capacity Goal—Minister," Reuters, 7 June 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/07/iraq-oil-idUSLDE7561LU20110607>

²¹⁰ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Iraq Energy Profile," 15 May 2009, http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=IZ

²¹¹ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Country Analysis Brief: Iraq: Oil," June 2009, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iraq/Oil.html>

²¹² Kadhim Ajrash and Nayla Razzouk, "Iraq Signs for Gas Fields with Kogas, Turkiye, Kuwait Energy," Bloomberg, 5 June 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-05/iraq-signs-for-gas-fields-with-kogas-turkiye-kuwait-energy-1-.html>

²¹³ Reuters, "Iraq to Hold 4th Gas Bidding Round in Nov—Minister," 22 March 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/22/iraq-gas-auction-idUSLDE72L1DQ20110322>

export natural gas to neighboring countries, mainly Syria and Turkey, where it could then be delivered to Western markets.²¹⁵

Electricity

Iraq's already deteriorating power grid became a target for insurgents after Hussein's fall, leaving Baghdad residents with less electricity than before. Accordingly, restoring the power grid became one of the highest priorities for reconstruction teams.²¹⁶

The situation improved somewhat as violence decreased and some infrastructure was restored. But electrical power generation is only meeting just over half of total demand.²¹⁷ Despite the billions of dollars spent on repairing power grids, Iraqis receive less electricity than during the Hussein era.^{218, 219} Iraq produced more electricity in 2009 than before the war in 2003, but higher demand meant that most Iraqis received only several hours of electricity per day.²²⁰ Low levels of electricity were initially blamed on frequent insurgent attacks on electrical grids, the priority given to the oil industry, and increased demand, but now construction time has also been blamed.²²¹ Protests against power shortages in June 2010 resulted in the deaths of two demonstrators.²²² Today, rationing remains in place as a result of ongoing shortages and blackouts.^{223, 224}



© PBS NewsHour / flickr.com
Electric Wires, Baghdad

²¹⁴ Ersoy Ercan and Nayla Razzouk, "Iraq Sets Natural-Gas Field Bidding for Oct. 1, Scraps Signature Bonus," Bloomberg, 2 August 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-08-02/iraq-delays-bidding-round-for-three-natural-gas-fields-oil-ministry-says.html>

²¹⁵ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Country Analysis Brief: Iraq: Natural Gas," June 2009, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iraq/NaturalGas.html>

²¹⁶ Cayle Murphy and Bassam Sebti, "Power Grid in Iraq Far from Fixed," *Washington Post*, 1 May 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/04/30/AR2005043001121.html>

²¹⁷ Aseel Kami, "Analysis—Power Protests Threaten Iraq Government," Reuters, 18 May 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/18/uk-iraq-politics-electricity-idUKTRE74H2YR20110518>

²¹⁸ UPI, "Iraq Drives to Boost Oil Infrastructure," 24 June 2010, http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/06/24/Iraq-drives-to-boost-oil-infrastructure/UPI-39191277398727/

²¹⁹ BBC News, "Life in Iraq: Reconstruction," n.d., http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/post_saddam_iraq/html/1.stm

²²⁰ Aseel Kami, "Analysis—Power Protests Threaten Iraq Government," Reuters, 18 May 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/18/uk-iraq-politics-electricity-idUKTRE74H2YR20110518>

²²¹ UPI, "Iraq Drives to Boost Oil Infrastructure," 24 June 2010, http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/06/24/Iraq-drives-to-boost-oil-infrastructure/UPI-39191277398727/

²²² BBC News, "Iraq Electricity Minister Resigns After Deadly Protests," 11 June 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10371581>

²²³ Reuters Africa, "Update 1—Iraq Govt Struggles to Cool Anger Over Daily Woes," 8 June 2011, <http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFLDE75723920110608?sp=true>

²²⁴ PBS Newshour, "In Iraq, Electricity Remains Daily Struggle for Families, Businesses," 3 September 2011, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/july-dec10/iraq_09-03.html

Trade

Iraq exported grains and cereals as early as the mid-1800s.²²⁵ By the 1930s, oil was already its major export. Over the last two decades, the production and export of its primary commodity has been disrupted by war, economic sanctions, political instability, and mismanagement. But Iraq is slowly reestablishing trade relations with various members of the global community. In February 2004, Iraq received observer status at the World Trade Organization (WTO), and its WTO accession process began in December 2004. Iraq passed the first two rounds of WTO review in 2007 and 2008; the third round is scheduled for 2011.²²⁶



© Daniel Fog / flickr.com
Oil Drilling Rig

Crude oil and related raw materials account for the vast majority of Iraq's exports, while imports consist primarily of manufactured goods and agricultural products.²²⁷ The United States is one of Iraq's leading trade partners, particularly for Iraqi exports. Other major export partners include India, Italy, and South Korea. Major import partners include Turkey (which accounted for 24% of all imports in 2009), Syria, the United States, and China.²²⁸

Standard of Living

Iraq's oil wealth has the potential to provide a high standard of living to its citizens. In the 1970s, proceeds from the oil industry were invested in infrastructure and education, which benefited the general public. During the 8-year conflict with Iran, the Hussein government gave priority to defense expenditures.²²⁹ In the 1990s, the imposition of sanctions plunged many Iraqis into poverty. The UN Oil-for-Food Program, established in 1997, was intended to relieve their suffering, but it did not make a substantive difference. Socio-economic indicators remain poor. According to 2008 estimates, 25% of the population live in poverty and 15% are unemployed.²³⁰ In 2010, fewer than 70% of Iraqis outside Baghdad had access to potable water, dropping to under 50% in rural areas. Less than 8% of Iraqi homes outside of Baghdad were connected to a sewer system.²³¹

²²⁵ Vivian C. Jones, "CRS Report for Congress: Iraq's Trade with the World: Data and Analysis," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 23 September 2004, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/39314.pdf>

²²⁶ [Iraq Business News](http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/02/01/iraq-seeks-permanent-membership-of-wto/), "Iraq Seeks Permanent Membership of WTO," 1 February 2011, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/02/01/iraq-seeks-permanent-membership-of-wto/>

²²⁷ World Trade Organization, "Country Profile: Iraq," March 2011, <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=E&Country=IQ>

²²⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

²²⁹ Eric Davis, "Chapter 9: The Persian Gulf War: Myths and Realities," in *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Hooshang Amirahmadi, ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 265.

²³⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

²³¹ World Bank, "Iraq: A Project to Address the Shortage in Potable Water Supply," February 2010, <http://go.worldbank.org/B6ALZWAKM0>

Iraq's national healthcare system was once among the best in the Middle East, and students from surrounding countries attended Iraqi medical schools. The economic sanctions introduced in 1991, however, devastated the quality of health care. The consequences were especially dire in the south, where water-borne diseases and malnutrition contributed to an increase in child mortality rates.²³² After the Hussein regime ended, rebuilding the healthcare system proved more challenging than anticipated.²³³



© PBS NewsHour / flickr.com
Doctor examining baby

Prior to 1991, the Iraqi educational system was a regional model (particularly for access and gender equality) that yielded one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world.²³⁴ But misrule, sanctions, and war caused literacy to plummet; current estimates place the adult literacy rate at 74%.²³⁵

Most housing is privately owned in Iraq. During the Hussein regime, many neighborhoods had Sunni and Shi'ite residents. After Hussein's removal, members of one group were forced by the other to leave without any compensation for their homes (their primary asset, if they had owned it). Squatters from the remaining ethnic group would immediately move into the abandoned homes. Resettling the more than 4 million Iraqis displaced by violence remains an important part of stabilization efforts.²³⁶ The rate of housing development has been slow and current estimates of the housing shortfall stand at 2 to 3 million units.²³⁷

Transportation

Iraq's transportation system includes ancient and modern means. From camels, donkeys, and horses in the mountain and desert regions, to rivers, lakes, and channels, to railways and airports: the transportation standard is high compared to other countries in the region.²³⁸



© Austin King
Donkey pulling cart

²³² Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

²³³ One doctor who opted to stay is profiled in Laura Poitras' 2006 documentary, "My Country, My Country." <http://www.mycountrymycountry.com/>

²³⁴ United States Institute of Peace, "Iraq's Education Sector: Building the Future on Common Ground," 2009, <http://www.usip.org/in-the-field/iraqs-education-sector-building-the-future-common-ground>

²³⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

²³⁶ Refugees International, "The Return and Resettlement of Displaced Iraqis," 31 March 2009, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/testimony/return-and-resettlement-displaced-iraqis>

²³⁷ Aseel Kami, "Iraq Needs Billions to Meet Growing Housing Shortage," Reuters, 12 January 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/12/us-iraq-economy-housing-idUSTRE70B40820110112>

²³⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Transportation and Telecommunications," 2007, www.britannica.com/eb/article-22931

Iraq is connected to Turkey and Europe by rail with connections through Syria.²³⁹ As of 2008, there were 2,272 km (1,411 mi) of standard gauge track.²⁴⁰ Tracks were poorly maintained, and lacked signals. Of the country's 44,900 km (27,899 mi) of roads, 84% are paved.²⁴¹ The condition of roads is generally good but some roads are in poor condition because of war damage and lack of maintenance.²⁴²

New international airports have recently been built in Iraq in addition to the two major ones in Baghdad and Başrah. Two of the new international airports were established in Kurdistan in Erbil and Sulaimaniyah, while a third was built in the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf.^{243, 244} The old airport in Mosul was rebuilt, and reopened in 2007.²⁴⁵ There are over 100 airports in Iraq; however, only 75 have paved runways. All the airports need modernizing, including the installation of security and air traffic control equipment.

Investment Climate

In December 2008, the cancellation of the final USD 7.8 billion of Iraq's debt to the Paris Club (an informal group of creditors representing 19 nations) vastly improved the country's investment prospects outside the energy sector.²⁴⁶ Since then, Iraq has taken a number of steps to encourage investment, such as amending its National Investment Law to allow for limited land ownership by foreign firms, creating "one-stop shop" provisional investment commissions, and establishing a commercial court specifically for foreign investment disputes. By 2010, more than 350 firms, mainly foreign investors, had filed for licenses in Iraq.²⁴⁷ About half the licenses were filed in 2010 at a value of USD 10.5 billion. Over 100 licenses were filed in Kurdistan in 2010, potentially worth USD 4.7 billion. Most licenses are filed in the real estate sector, followed by oil,



© Adam Jones
Shopping mall

²³⁹ Jonathan Head, "Iraq-Turkey Railway Link Re-Opens," BBC News, 16 February 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8518109.stm

²⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

²⁴¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

²⁴² Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Iraq 2010 Crime and Safety Report," 7 April 2010, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=9212>

²⁴³ Azworldairports, "Iraq Airports," 2010, <http://www.azworldairports.com/azworld/p1780.cfm>

²⁴⁴ Khaled Farhan, "Iraq Hopes New Najaf Airport Heralds Tourism Boom," Reuters, 20 July 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSANS84004720080720>

²⁴⁵ Public Affairs Office, United States Forces—Iraq, "Mosul Airport Reopens for Commercial Flights after 14 Years; Religious Pilgrims Board Iraqi Airplane," (press release), 4 December 2007, http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=15615&Itemid=21

²⁴⁶ Office of Secretary-General, UN, "Secretary-General Welcomes Paris Club's Cancellation of Remaining Iraqi Debt," 24 December 2008, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sgsm12020.doc.htm>

²⁴⁷ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq," March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

transportation infrastructure, electricity, and industry. But foreign investment in Iraq is hampered by unclear policy, budget restrictions, bureaucracy, and corruption.²⁴⁸

Though privatization of state-run industry has been pushed as a means to promote efficiency, it risks enabling government officials to personally benefit from arrangements they oversee.²⁴⁹ This is more likely in an institutional culture in which rules regarding conflict of interest do not exist. Further, under a 1971 law, prosecution for corruption is contingent upon approval from the head of the involved government department—a stipulation that allows individuals to simply dismiss cases.²⁵⁰ Such loopholes allow rampant corruption among Iraq's public sector workforce. Moreover, some corruption results in a threat to public safety, such as infrastructure made from sub-standard materials.²⁵¹

Business Outlook

The 2004 inauguration of the post-Hussein Iraqi stock exchange (which introduced electronic trading in 2009) was greeted with some skepticism in the West, but generated excitement within Iraq. Its value has as much to do with creating a sense of ownership of the post-Hussein economic reforms as with capital allocation. Most notably, it enables the Iraqis to invest in their country's economic future.²⁵²



© Michele Molinari
Selling sweets

Nevertheless, it will take more than a few changes to return Iraq's economy to pre-1980 levels, when it was the second-largest in the Arab world after Saudi Arabia.²⁵³ Economic growth is inhibited by not only widespread corruption and high unemployment, but also insufficient basic services, inadequate infrastructure, and outdated commercial laws and regulations. Furthermore, the Iraqi government has yet to turn oil profits into a higher standard of living for its citizens. Structuring banks and developing the private sector will be keys to Iraq's economic growth.

²⁴⁸ Heritage Foundation, "2010 Index of Economic Freedom: Iraq," 2010, <http://www.heritage.org/index/Country/Iraq>

²⁴⁹ Brian Dominick, *NewStandard*, "US Forgives Iraq Debt to Clear Way for IMF Reforms," Global Policy Forum, 19 December 2004, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168/37201.html>

²⁵⁰ Bruno Silvestre, "Fighting Corruption in Iraq—An Uphill Battle," World Blog, NBC News, 9 March 2007, <http://worldblog.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2007/03/09/85910.aspx>

²⁵¹ World Focus, "Corruption, Deprivation and Faulty Infrastructure Plague Iraq," 26 February 2009, <http://worldfocus.org/blog/2009/02/26/corruption-deprivation-and-faulty-infrastructure-plague-iraq/4209/>

²⁵² Center for Global Development, "The Iraq Stock Exchange," 29 June 2004, <http://www.cgdev.org/content/article/detail/3338/>

²⁵³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Plant and Animal Life," 2007, www.britannica.com/eb/article-22931

Chapter 3 Assessment

1. The Iran–Iraq War boosted the flailing Iraqi economy.
False
Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, beginning an 8-year war that diverted resources—causing the Iraqi economy to suffer as oil prices dropped and the country lost petroleum export markets.
2. UN Security Council Resolution 661 virtually shut down Iraqi oil exports after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.
True
In 1990, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait caused a U.S.-led UN coalition to defeat Iraqi forces. Under the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 661, sanctions were imposed that virtually shut down Iraqi oil exports. The sanctions also restricted Iraqi imports.
3. Established in 1997, the UN Oil-for-Food Program made a major economic difference in Iraq.
False
The UN Oil-for-Food Program, established in 1997, was intended to relieve Iraqi suffering, but it did not make a substantive difference in people’s standard of living.
4. Under Saddam Hussein’s regime, housing was privately owned in Iraq.
True
For many Iraqis, their privately owned house was also their primary asset. After Hussein’s removal, Sunni-Shi’ite tensions forced Sunni or Shi’ite residents to leave mixed neighborhoods without any compensation for their homes.
5. In the post-Hussein era, reconstruction of the banking system was essential to revitalizing the economy.
True
Banking system reconstruction has been necessary in the post-Hussein era to allocate capital and to pay civil servants. The stock exchange and banking system are modernized and running.

Chapter 4 Society

Introduction

Iraqi society is marked by deep ethnic and sectarian divisions. Prior to 2003, the country's major groups—the Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurds—were nominally held together under the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party. But Hussein's policies—ranging from politically marginalizing the Shi'a to using chemical weapons on the Kurds—compounded the tensions between these groups. After Hussein was removed and the central government's authority was weakened, Iraq's ethnic and sectarian divisions broke into sustained inter-communal violence. This conflict and other security issues caused a massive shift in population.²⁵⁴ Between 2003 and 2008, an estimated 2.3 to 2.5 million Iraqis, most of them Sunni, fled to neighboring countries—mainly Syria and Jordan. Another 2.8 million Iraqis, most of them Shi'ite, were thought to be internally displaced as of 2008.²⁵⁵ As violence has receded, political reconciliation and the resettlement of displaced Iraqis are major factors in ongoing stabilization efforts.²⁵⁶



© Bob Coleman
Sunni men celebrating

Religion and Ethnicity

Religion

Religion and ethnicity, along with tribal affiliation, shape the social and political groups in Iraq. Islam is the dominant religion, with an estimated 97% of Iraqis identifying as Muslim. As in many Muslim countries, Islam is accorded special status in Iraq's constitution. The Muslim community is divided into two major groups that correspond to the main schools of Islam: Shi'a and Sunni. Dating to the seventh century C.E., these two Muslim traditions and their historical and practical differences have often caused conflict and social tension within the Muslim community in Iraq and the greater Muslim world. The Shi'a branch of Islam is observed by 60–65% of the Iraqi population; followers of the Sunni make up 32–37% of the populace.²⁵⁷



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Shi'ite Al-Askari Mosque

²⁵⁴ Maggie Fox, "Satellite Images Show Ethnic Cleanout in Iraq," Reuters, 19 September 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSN1953066020080919>

²⁵⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Iraq," in *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom*, September 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108483.htm>

²⁵⁶ Rhoda Margesson, Andorra Bruno, and Jeremy M. Sharp, "CRS Report for Congress: Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Deepening Humanitarian Crisis," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 13 February 2009, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33936.pdf>

²⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq," in *The World Factbook*, 21 July 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

The global Sunni population is much larger than that of the Shi'a, who have often been marginalized or repressed in Sunni-dominated Muslim countries.²⁵⁸ Such was the case while Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated Ba'ath regime was in power.²⁵⁹ Since Hussein's removal, the Shi'a–Sunni divide, which is the source of much sectarian violence, continues to play a significant role in Iraqi politics.

Alongside the Muslim majority, the remaining 3% of Iraqis are followers of Christianity or other religions. Chaldeans, who practice an eastern rite of the Catholic Church, make up roughly two-thirds of the Christian population. The remaining third consists mostly of Assyrians, who belong to the Church of the East. Other, smaller Christian groups include Armenians (Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) and Syriacs (Eastern Orthodox). Baghdad and the northern cities of Mosul, Arbil, Dohuk, and Kirkuk are home to a large percentage of the Iraqi Christians. Other small religious groups include the Yezidis, Shabaks, and Sabean-Mandeans.²⁶⁰

Ethnicity

Arabs are the dominant ethnic group in the country, and account for an estimated 75–80% of the total population. Kurds form the second-largest group, making up roughly 15–20% of the populace. The remaining 5% or less of Iraqis includes Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenians, and other minority groups.²⁶¹ Arabs are dominant in central and southern Iraq, where the population is concentrated in the east—away from the southwestern deserts. Kurds are dominant in the highlands of the north, where their ethnic affiliations extend into northeastern Syria, eastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and southern Armenia.²⁶² In some northern areas, Arabs and Kurds live in ethnically mixed communities; the north is also home to concentrated populations of Turkmen. The other minority groups are distributed mainly across northern and central Iraq, especially in the diverse urban centers of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Baghdad.²⁶³



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Local Iraqi men

The Iraqi Shi'a community is predominantly Arab, with small numbers of Turkmen and Faili Kurds. Shi'ite Arabs are concentrated in the south and east, whereas Sunni Arabs

²⁵⁸ Tony Karon, "Understanding Iraq's Ethnic and Religious Divisions," *Time*, 24 February 2006, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1167476,00.html>

²⁵⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

²⁶⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Iraq," in *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom*, September 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108483.htm>

²⁶¹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

²⁶² Tony Karon, "Understanding Iraq's Ethnic and Religious Divisions," *Time*, 24 February 2006, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1167476,00.html>

²⁶³ David M. Walker, "Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the Security Situation," U.S. Government Accountability Office, 11 September 2006, 12–13, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d061094t.pdf>

live mainly in central, western, and northern Iraq. Both groups live in the area surrounding Baghdad, while the city has a Shi'ite majority.²⁶⁴ Most Kurds and Turkmen are Sunni, following the general pattern of the northern half of the country.²⁶⁵ But the Kurds' ethnic differences with Sunni Arabs trump their nominal religious affiliation.²⁶⁶ The Kurds' long-running efforts to establish an independent Kurdish state are rooted in (and continue to highlight) such differences. For much of the Hussein era, their efforts were met with severe resistance and suppression by the Arab-dominated central government.²⁶⁷

Languages

Iraq's constitution (2005) recognizes Arabic and Kurdish as the country's official languages; the latter language is official in the Kurdish-dominated north. Likewise, Turkmen and Assyrian Neo-Aramaic have official status in regions where they are used (also primarily in the north). Arabic, which is spoken by more than three-fourths of the population, is the most widely used language in Iraq. Several different dialects are spoken, the most common of which are Mesopotamian and North Mesopotamian Arabic.²⁶⁸ Additional dialects include Gulf Arabic (spoken in the southeast, near the Persian Gulf) and Najdi Arabic (spoken in the southwest).²⁶⁹ Though some dialects may be mutually intelligible, variations among these and other regional dialects may cause confusion between Arabic speakers. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the formal, foundational version of Arabic that is taught in schools and used in media and official communication.²⁷⁰ MSA is generally understood among the Arab-speaking community, but regional dialects are more widely used and understood, particularly among those who lack a formal education. Educated Iraqis are generally proficient in MSA and their spoken dialect.



© nathanm / flickr.com
Sign marking ancient palace

Spoken as a first language among the Kurds, Kurdish has three major dialects in Iraq: Northern (also known as Kurmanji), Central (Sorani or Kurdi), and Southern Kurdish.²⁷¹ Languages associated with minority ethnic groups include Chaldean Neo-Aramaic,

²⁶⁴ David M. Walker, "Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the Security Situation," U.S. Government Accountability Office, 11 September 2006, 12–13, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d061094t.pdf>

²⁶⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Iraq," in *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom*, September 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108483.htm>

²⁶⁶ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

²⁶⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: People: Ethnic Groups: Kurds," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22936>

²⁶⁸ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Iraq," August 2006, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iraq.pdf>

²⁶⁹ M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Language Maps of Iraq," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_map.asp?name=IQ&seq=10

²⁷⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: People: Languages," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22936>

²⁷¹ M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Language Maps of Iraq," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_map.asp?name=IQ&seq=10

Armenian, and Syriac, in addition to Turkmen and Assyrian Neo-Aramaic.²⁷² Many ethnic minorities may speak or understand Arabic in addition to their first language. English is the most widely spoken Western language, particularly in commerce.²⁷³

Gender Issues

Prior to 2003, Iraq was known for its progressive policies toward the status of women.²⁷⁴ Educated females held important posts in government and academia under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party regime. After that government was ousted and the secular legal system quickly ceased to function, Iraqis relied more on conservative, tribal forms of justice. Moreover, freedom of religion exposed some worshippers to clerics who preached that it was a man's duty to maintain his family's honor.²⁷⁵



© PBS NewsHour / flickr.com
Iraqi woman

Since the fall of Hussein, a type of marital union practiced by the Shi'a known as temporary marriage (*mutaa*) has increased.²⁷⁶ *Mutaa* is an informal marriage contract that can last a few hours, days, months, or years. *Mutaa* was outlawed under the Hussein regime, and it is condemned by Sunnis. *Mutaa*'s revival in Iraq stems partly from difficult economic conditions and the rising political and religious influence of the Shi'a, who permit *mutaa*. Also, the war and subsequent sectarian violence have left more war widows; *mutaa* offers them and their children a better alternative for survival than begging. To put food on the table, some widows go from one *mutaa* marriage to the next. Most unions are clandestine, particularly if the man has a permanent wife. Men are obligated to support a *mutaa* wife only for the marital contract's duration, which can be as short as a few hours. This has led to criticism that the arrangement is simply a cover for prostitution.

Article 41 of the interim constitution (approved in 2005) provides religious sects with jurisdiction in matters that affect women—such as marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance.²⁷⁷ As the security situation deteriorated, Iraqis were more receptive to religious political parties promising to restore order through the strict enforcement of

²⁷² M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Languages of Iraq," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=IQ

²⁷³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: People: Languages," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22936>

²⁷⁴ Aaron D. Pina, "CRS Report for Congress: Women in Iraq: Background and Issues for U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 13 March 2006, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL32376.pdf>

²⁷⁵ Yifat Sussking, "The Murder of Du'a Aswad," *Common Dreams*, 17 May 2007, <http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/05/17/1269>

²⁷⁶ Nancy Trejos, "Temporary 'Enjoyment' Marriages in Vogue Among Some Iraqis," *Washington Post*, 20 January 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/19/AR2007011901850.html>

²⁷⁷ Dominique Soquel, "Iraqi Reporters Run Risks to Cover Women's Angle," *Women's eNews*, 1 November 2007, <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/3369>

shari'a law. Some assume that these are male-dominated religious groups that will restrict women's rights. Yet these parties appear to have as many female supporters as males. In the same way, simply creating a quota for female members of parliament will not automatically result in progressive legislation.²⁷⁸

Honor Killings

Family honor may be besmirched if a woman is even suspected of adultery, or if a teenage girl simply shows an interest in a boy who has not met parental approval. In such circumstances, her husband, father, brother, or another male relative might either burn her (not always fatally) or stone her to death, to remove the taint of her transgression from the family's reputation. This punishment, called "honor killing," may be inflicted even if she has been raped. Khanim



© PBS NewsHour / flickr.com
Women's rights activist

Rahim Latif, manager of the Kurdistan-based organization *Asuda* that works with abused women, says, "Just here in Sulaimaniyah (Iraq Kurdistan), there were 400 cases of the burning of women last year [2006]."²⁷⁹ In response to these numbers, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has outlawed honor killing, though it remains legal in the rest of the country.²⁸⁰ Nevertheless, such killings are usually not treated as homicides by the police, but as family matters.²⁸¹

Cuisine

Iraqi cuisine consists of traditional Arab food with influences from Iran and Turkey. The Muslim tradition of avoiding pork and pork products is widely observed; the Muslim prohibition on alcohol is publicly recognized but not universally followed. Broadly, a typical Iraqi meal consists of a meat or fish

course, rice (amber rice is a popular, aromatic variety), and flatbread, such as *samoon*. Depending upon a family's means, they may also serve appetizers, salad, and soup. Fruits, especially raisins, are often ingredients in main courses, and are commonly served as dessert. Dates are one of Iraq's most characteristic food products, although the recent agricultural sector decline has limited domestic production of them



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Pre-Ramadan feast

²⁷⁸ Islamic Law in Our Times, "Women in the New Iraq," 10 July 2009,

<http://muslimlawprof.org/2009/07/10/women-in-the-new-iraq.aspx>

²⁷⁹ Mark Lattimer, "Freedom Lost," *Guardian*, 13 December 2007,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,2226600,00.html>

²⁸⁰ Barry Newhouse, "Honor Killings Fuel Tensions in Iraq's Kurdish North," *Voice of America*, 8 May 2007, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2007/05/iraq-070508-voa02.htm>

²⁸¹ Iran Legal Project, "The Status of Women in Iraq: An Assessment of Iraq's De Jure and De Facto Compliance with International Legal Standards," July 2005,

http://www.abanet.org/rol/publications/iraq_status_of_women_2005_english.pdf

and most other staples.²⁸²

Lamb, mutton, goat, chicken, and beef are the most popular meats. *Dolma* consists of ground meat (usually lamb) mixed with rice and chopped peppers, all wrapped in a grape leaf or stuffed in vegetables. Other meat dishes include *quzi* (boiled lamb shank stuffed with rice and vegetables), *kebabs* (cubed meat grilled on skewers), and *kubba* (spiced minced meat mixed with raisins and nuts). Another characteristic dish is *masgouf*: a grilled, seasoned fish, which traditionally was caught in the Tigris River. *Turshi*, a popular side dish, is made with various pickled vegetables.²⁸³

Desserts, pastries, and candies are popular in Iraq, especially as snacks. Traditional favorites include pumpkin pudding (*shirini*), rice pudding, and *lokum*, a confection of starch and sugar that is usually flavored with rosewater or lemon. Another popular dessert is *baklava*, in which thin sheets of dough are layered with honey, rosewater, and pistachios or walnuts. After-dinner desserts primarily consist of fruit. Examples include candied lemon, grapefruit, and orange peels (*g'shur purtaghal*). Dates are also popular.

Arabica coffee and tea are the most common beverages; they are typically consumed before and after a meal. Tea is traditionally poured into small glasses and served sweetened, without milk. Yogurt (diluted with water) is another popular drink, especially during the summer months; soft drinks and fruit juices are also common.²⁸⁴

Traditional Dress

Traditional dress is more often seen in rural areas than in urban centers, where Western-style clothing is relatively common. In any case, Iraqis tend to dress conservatively and avoid tight-fitting or revealing clothing. Traditionally, Arab Iraqi men wear the *dishdasha*, or *thawb*, a white, loose-fitting tunic that reaches to the ankles.²⁸⁵ This garment is typically paired with an undershirt and trousers. In cooler weather, men may wear an *aba*, which resembles a long cloak; these are often tan or neutral in color. Men may also wear a *keffiyeh*, a scarf that is draped over the head, with a white skullcap underneath. A black rope or cord, called an *agal*, secures the *keffiyeh* to the head. For footwear, men often wear sandals.

Arab Iraqi women traditionally wear the abaya, a long, loose-fitting black cloak that covers the entire body except the face, hands, and feet. This garment accords with the Muslim practice of hijab, in which women keep covered in public out



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Woman wearing abaya

²⁸² Mike Tharp, "Once World's Bread Basket, Iraq Now a Farming Basket Case," McClatchy, 17 July 2009, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2009/07/17/72051/once-worlds-bread-basket-iraq.html>

²⁸³ Cultural Profiles Project, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Iraq: A Cultural Profile: Eating the Iraqi Way," 2002, 10, http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/iraq/iraq_eng.pdf

²⁸⁴ Food in Every Country, "Food in Iraq," 2007, <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Germany-to-Japan/Iraq.html>

²⁸⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Iraq: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-22936>

of modesty and morality. The abaya is typically worn over a dress, or a blouse and baggy pants. Women also generally wear a black headscarf called an *asha*. Sandals are common footwear. Jewelry such as ankle bracelets, earrings, and pendants may also be worn.²⁸⁶

The Kurds and Turkmen typically follow a different pattern of dress than the Arab community, although it is similarly conservative. Men generally wear long-sleeve shirts with a jacket and baggy trousers. They also often wear a turban over a skullcap. Kurdish and Turkmen women wear long dresses with jackets or vests and baggy pants. They may also wear headscarves. Their clothing is typically colorful, in contrast to the traditionally black abaya.²⁸⁷

The Arts

Saddam Hussein maintained a “cult of personality” leadership style that relied on Iraqi artists to create visual representations of him, which could be found everywhere. One artist even arranged to fulfill his military service obligation by painting. He went AWOL out of boredom, however, and the unit commander called his home in a panic: His painting-in-progress had left Saddam clad in a half-done uniform and without his trademark mustache—a serious insult in the Arab world.²⁸⁸

Painters are no longer restricted in subject, and other types of art have flourished since 2003. A traditional Arab dance, the *hacha'a*, is popular with Iraqis. The female dancers do not cover their heads, since the dancer must swing her long locks to the music. Singing is part of daily life in Kurdistan; one form of music, *gourani*, is often accompanied by dancing at rites of passage. Children’s *gourani* are based on poems and have simple rhythms. Women sing *gourani* during their daily chores, in groups or solo. During Ramadan, a *gourani* signals the start of the daily fast.²⁸⁹



© Salam Pax
Ashura celebration in Baghdad

²⁸⁶ *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, “Traditional Clothing: Iraq,” 2001–2006, <http://www.bookrags.com/research/clothing-traditionaliraq-ema-02/>

²⁸⁷ Byron Augustin and Jake Kubena, “Chapter 10: Hope for the Future,” in *Iraq: Enchantment of the World* (New York: Children’s Press, 2006), 122.

²⁸⁸ Andrew Chang, “With Saddam Gone, Where Will Iraqi Art Go?” ABC News, 28 April 2003, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=79510&page=1>

²⁸⁹ April Fast, “Music, dance and theatre,” in *Iraq: The Culture* (New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2005), 16–17.

Sports

Soccer, known elsewhere as football, is the most popular sport in Iraq. Besides league play, it can be played on makeshift fields by those with limited means because it requires only a soccer ball (or its equivalent). As a spectator sport, it has served as a unifying force in a nation prone to sectarian and ethnic conflict. Iraq's national team, with Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurdish players, draws support across the country. Known as the Lions of the Two Rivers (after the Tigris and Euphrates), the team earned international recognition in 2007 for winning its first Asian Cup; it defeated neighboring Saudi Arabia 1–0 in the final. Many Iraqis viewed the victory as a symbol of national pride, unity, and resilience in the face of adversity. One Iraqi citizen stated after the victory: “The win is a bandage healing [Iraq's] wounds. It's a lesson to politicians that Iraqis can be one. We were all supporting our team—none of us was saying this player is a Sunni, a Shi'ite, or Kurd.”²⁹⁰ In July 2009, the team played its first international match on Iraqi soil since 2003, when the war and subsequent security concerns had forced the team to play outside the country.²⁹¹



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Iraq team at Asian Cup

While political and logistical issues continue to affect Iraqi sports, these recent events represent important steps in Iraqi sports culture.²⁹² During the Hussein era, Iraqi athletes faced intimidation and brutal punishment for underperforming in international events. For nearly two decades, Saddam's son Uday chaired the Iraqi National Olympic Committee and the Iraqi Football Federation. Uday's reign is known for the torture and murder of athletes who “embarrassed” the nation by failing to win in competition. In this environment, participation on national teams lagged because of fear of abuse.²⁹³ After the Hussein government fell, many athletes were targeted for kidnapping and murder by extremists, terrorists, and sectarian militias.^{294, 295} This was the backdrop for the diverse national soccer team's Asian Cup victory, amid the height of sectarian violence. The following year, a small team of four athletes traveled to Beijing to compete in the 2008 Olympic Games, after political issues almost prevented Iraq's participation.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁰ Molly Hennessy-Fiske, “The Conflict in Iraq: Sports Euphoria; Reconstruction Update,” *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2007, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/30/world/fg-iraq30>

²⁹¹ Neil Arun, “When Football Came Home to Iraq,” BBC News, 11 July 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8146125.stm

²⁹² Stuart Condie, “Soccer and National Pride Go Hand-in-Hand for Iraq,” Associated Press, 13 June 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/sports/soccer/2009-06-13-1870197409_x.htm

²⁹³ Don Yaeger, “Son of Saddam,” *Sports Illustrated*, 24 March 2003, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/si_online/news/2003/03/24/son_of_saddam/

²⁹⁴ IRIN, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Iraq: Athletes Targeted for Sectarian, Religious Reasons,” 8 June 2006, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=26984>

²⁹⁵ Michael Howard, “The Beautiful Game Turns Nasty as Sectarian Feud Spreads to Sport,” *Guardian*, 5 September 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/sep/05/iraq.topstories3>

²⁹⁶ *New York Times*, “Iraqi Olympic Team, All 4 of Them, Arrive in Beijing,” 4 August 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/04/sports/04iht-4oly.14997764.html>

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. The Iraq war and other security issues caused a major population emigration.

True

Between 2003 and 2008, an estimated 2.3 to 2.5 million Iraqis, most of them Sunni, fled to neighboring countries. Another 2.8 million Iraqis, most of them Shi'ite, were thought to be internally displaced as of 2008.

2. At over 60% of Iraq's population, the Sunni Muslim community runs the country.

False

Although Sunnis significantly outnumber Shi'ites globally, Shi'ite Muslims constitute 60–65% of the Iraqi population. Neighboring Iran also has a Shi'ite majority.

3. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has outlawed honor killing.

True

Though honor killing remains legal in the rest of the country, the Kurdistan Regional Government outlawed it in response to 400 burnings (not all were fatal) in the region in 2006.

4. In a nation prone to sectarian and ethnic conflict, soccer has served as a unifying force.

True

Soccer is the most popular sport in Iraq. As a spectator sport, it has served as a unifying force. The national team draws support across the country and earned international recognition in 2007 for winning its first Asian Cup. Many Iraqis viewed the victory as a symbol of national pride, unity, and resilience in the face of adversity.

5. Much like Saudi Arabia, Iraq strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol.

True

The Muslim tradition of avoiding pork and pork products is widely observed; the Muslim prohibition on alcohol is publicly recognized but not universally followed.

Chapter 5 Security

Introduction

With deep ethnic and sectarian divisions and strong tribal traditions, Iraq has faced many challenges to establish a democratic central government that preserves the rights and respects the needs of all its people. Iraq's recent history has not provided a roadmap for reaching political consensus. Since Iraq became independent in 1932, its government leaders have frequently emerged via military-led coups. The continued rule of these leaders often depended on suppressing any opposition—real or potential. Because Iraq's economy featured a large public sector, most Iraqis worked for the government and had incentive to remain in its good graces. When independent groups emerged on the post-Hussein landscape, they were often manifestations of “uncivil society.” These included followers of radical Muslim clergy (in particular, Muqtada al-Sadr), sectarian militias, criminal gangs, and death squads.



© Salam Pax
Iraqi election ballot sheet

The initial Iraqi election of January 2005 was heralded as a great step forward. But power sharing proved problematic, and compromise—essential for consensus—was an even bigger hurdle. The Sunni Arabs, who had dominated national politics since the British had carved Iraq out of three former provinces of the Ottoman Empire in 1921, largely boycotted the elections, and from their ranks emerged a bloody insurgency against the U.S. occupation and the Shi'a-dominated government that came to power. Over time, divisions also appeared in the majority Shi'a community. In the ethnically homogenous region around the southern city of Basrah, violence broke out as Shi'a factions vied for control of the local oil economy. The country's third major group, the Kurds, had in effect governed themselves since 1991, when the United States, Britain, and France deployed military forces to protect them from Saddam Hussein's army. Given the oil reserves in their historic homeland, they had little reason to compromise their autonomy. The nature of the Iraqi body politic and the relationships among different regions and groups have yet to be fully institutionalized.²⁹⁷

United States–Iraq Relations

The United States has worked closely with the current and previous interim Iraqi governments to establish a secure, constitutional government that respects the rights of all citizens. Another goal has been to ensure that Iraq's security forces are capable of maintaining order and stifling terrorist activity. The challenges in achieving these goals have been widely reported, but gains have clearly been achieved in recent years.

²⁹⁷ Michael Mandelbaum, “Chapter 5: The Future of Democracy,” in *Democracy's Good Name: The Rise and Risks of the World's Most Popular Form of Government* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2007), 228–232.

Since mid-2007, Iraq has seen a reduction in violence, and its security forces have taken a lead role in maintaining security throughout the nation. As sectarian and insurgent violence declined, the outgoing Bush administration, under deadline pressure from an expiring UN security mandate, negotiated an agreement to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraqi cities, towns, and villages by 30 June 2009, and all troops by 31 December 2011.²⁹⁸



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Meeting with local leaders

The continued role of the United States within Iraq remains uncharted, but the relationship will remain close for the foreseeable future. The decreased U.S. military presence in populated areas since mid-2009 and the withdrawal scheduled for 2011 have changed the relationship's dynamics. As a result, Prime Minister Maliki has a somewhat freer hand to sculpt his government's relations with Washington, without the Iraqi public perceiving him as being too tied to the U.S.²⁹⁹

The U.S. may still be an important mediator for the volatile issue of the status of oil-rich Kirkuk, which is contested by Iraqi Kurds and Arabs. Many Iraq observers fear this region could be a tinderbox for future internal conflict if no agreement is reached on the Arab-Kurd boundaries in Iraq.^{300, 301}

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Iran

Like Iraq, Iran is a country with a Shi'a-majority population. Relations between the two nations were mostly adversarial when Iraq was controlled by the Sunni Ba'ath Party of Saddam Hussein. In the 1980s, they were at war for 8 years. Complicated trilateral relations between the two countries and the U.S. have since emerged. Since the Shi'a-dominated democratically elected government has taken power in Baghdad, there has been much suspicion and debate about Iran's



© Hamed Saber
Soldiers near Iran-Iraq border

²⁹⁸ Phyllis Bennis, "Tenuous Agreement on Maintaining U.S. Troops in Iraq," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 28 October 2008, <http://www.fpif.org/fpifxt/5624>

²⁹⁹ Karen DeYoung and Nada Bakri, "Specter of Give-and-Take Looms over Maliki's Visit," *Washington Post*, 22 July 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/21/AR2009072103303.html>

³⁰⁰ Gabriel Gatehouse, "Kirkuk Ethnic Tensions Scupper Iraq Census," *BBC News*, 6 December 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11925686>

³⁰¹ Dan Senor, "The Kurdish Issue Flares Up in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 July 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203946904574302134125195684.html>

influence in the affairs of the Iraqi government and the Shi'a militias. Before the violence subsided, Washington accused Tehran of supporting militia activities in Iraq through weapons shipments and training.^{302, 303}

These accusations frequently focused on the Quds Force, a unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards involved in military training and support for international revolutionary and terrorist movements.³⁰⁴ Tehran has denied these charges.³⁰⁵ As authority for security was transferred to the Iraqi government in 2009, the U.S. began to release suspected Quds and Hezbollah agents, simply because it lost the authority to detain them.³⁰⁶ Still, Iran continues its efforts to influence developments in Iraq, according to the U.S. military.³⁰⁷ Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki has asserted that he wants to chart a course independent of all foreign government interference, while Iran's leaders have realized that their best chance of getting an Iran-friendly government is to rely on "soft power" to influence Iraqi voters.^{308, 309}

Syria

Syrian and Iraqi diplomatic ties were severed in 1982 during the Iran-Iraq war (in which Syria supported Iran). Relations were not restored until November 2006.³¹⁰ Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the countries have been divided by Iraq's perception that Syria was turning a "blind eye" to the infiltration of insurgents and arms across the border. Syria has denied any such policy; instead, it has claimed that the long, isolated border between the countries was impossible to fully



© AudreyH / flickr.com
Road near Syria - Iraq border

³⁰² Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, "Iran Training Iraqi Insurgent Groups, General Says," 3 July 2007, <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/July/20070703102256dmslahrellek0.3060114.html>

³⁰³ David Shelby, "Iran Should Reconcile Actions With Talk, U.S. Iraq Envoy Says," Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, 24 July 2007, <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/July/20070724113305ndyblehs0.2337915.html>

³⁰⁴ James Glanz and Sabrina Tavernise, "U.S. is Holding Iranians Seized in Iraq," *New York Times*, 25 December 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/world/middleeast/25iraq.html?ei=5090&en=d7bbb4578e61b6da&ex=1324702800&pagewanted=print>

³⁰⁵ Golnaz Esfandiari, "Iran: Ahmadinejad Declares Ties With Iraq 'Excellent,'" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 12 September 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/09/e10dfd4e-ceee-4934-a96e-38dd2813f25f.html>

³⁰⁶ Bill Roggio, "U.S. Releases Iranian Qods Force Agents," Long War Journal, 9 July 2009, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/07/us_releases_iranian.php

³⁰⁷ Kenneth Katzman, "Iran-Iraq Relations," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 13 August 2010, <http://www.fas.org/srg/crs/mideast/RS22323.pdf>

³⁰⁸ Associated Press, "U.S. General: Iran Changing Tactics in Iraq," *Globe and Mail*, 29 July 2009, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/us-general-says-iran-changing-tactics-in-iraq/article1234045/>

³⁰⁹ Michael Eisenstadt, "The Limits of Iran's Soft Power," United States Institute of Peace, 22 March 2011, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2011/mar/22/limits-iran%E2%80%99s-soft-power>

³¹⁰ BBC News, "Iraq and Syria Restore Relations," 21 November 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6167968.stm

police without assistance.³¹¹ Since the restoration of diplomatic ties, the two countries have agreed to cooperate on security issues, and infiltration from Syria to Iraq has decreased, according to Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Babakir Zebari.^{312, 313}

Another cross-border issue is the large number of Iraqis who moved to Syria to escape sectarian violence and insurgent activity. At one point, there were 1.2–1.4 million Iraqi refugees in Syria, with nearly 40,000 new refugees arriving monthly. Iraqis needed only to present themselves at the border to receive a 6-month visa. Subsequent 6-month extensions required only a day trip across the border. The large influx of Iraqis severely strained the Syrian state-run economy's infrastructure and capacity to absorb them.³¹⁴ In 2007, Syria tightened entry requirements to discourage further arrivals.³¹⁵ Yet even today, Syria has “one of the largest urban refugee populations in the world,” according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.³¹⁶ Syria currently contains hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and about 500,000 Palestinian refugees.

But their shared border is also a commercial asset. Syria is Iraq's major trading partner. Overland transit through Syria offers a faster route to and from the Mediterranean than the Suez Canal. As a result, freight train service between the two countries was expanded in 2009. Syrian oil production has peaked, making Iraqi imports even more important to balance payments. In return, Baghdad has become a market for consumer goods imported from or through Syria. Potentially more lucrative is a possible natural gas pipeline to Europe that would traverse Syria.^{317, 318} In January 2011, both countries agreed on a number of projects—in the trade, roads, oil and gas, railway, and road sectors—to deepen and strengthen relations.³¹⁹

³¹¹ CNN.com, “Syrian Leader Denies Role in Lebanon Death,” 12 October 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/10/12/assad.interview/index.html>

³¹² Edward Yeranian, “Iraq Prime Minister Holds High-Level Talks in Syria,” VOA News, 21 August 2007, <http://voanews.com/english/2007-08-21-voa15.cfm>

³¹³ Basil Adas, “Al Maliki Keen on Syrian Help,” GulfNews.com, 20 August 2007, <http://www.gulfnews.com/region/Iraq/10148108.html>

³¹⁴ Mona Yacoubian, “Syria's Relations with Iraq,” United States Institute of Peace, April 2007, <http://www.usip.org/resources/syrias-relations-iraq>

³¹⁵ Bassem Mroue, “Syria Bars Iraq Refugees, Crisis Worsens,” *Washington Post*, 12 February 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200788.html>

³¹⁶ UNHCR, “2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Syrian Arab Republic,” December 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486a76.html>

³¹⁷ Kadhim Ajrash, “Iraq, Syria Agree to Build Cross-Border Oil, Gas Pipelines, Officials Says,” Bloomberg, 16 September 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-16/iraq-syria-agree-to-build-cross-border-oil-gas-pipelines-official-says.html>

³¹⁸ UPI, “Syria Eyes Pipelines Through Iraq,” 27 January 2011, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Resources/2011/01/27/Syria-eyes-pipelines-through-Iraq/UPI-51611296138208/

³¹⁹ Iraq Business News, “Syrian Plans to Boost Relations with Iraq,” 19 January 2011, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/01/19/syria-plans-to-boost-relations-with-iraq/>

Jordan

Jordan's shared border is the shortest of any of Iraq's neighbors, and the most remote from population centers in Iraq. Nonetheless, Jordan has significantly supported Iraq in restoring stability and security after 2003. For example, Jordan helped train Iraqi police in Amman.³²⁰ Jordan also shelters an estimated 450,000 Iraqi refugees—in a country with a population of only 6.5 million.^{321, 322} Iraqi refugees, the majority of whom are Sunni Arabs, are considered guests in Jordan and do not have legal status that would allow them to work.³²³ As a consequence of the refugee influx, infrastructure strains similar to those in Syria have developed in Jordan. It has also long contained a large Palestinian refugee population. Thus the country lies between two areas where radical Islamism (Hamas in the Palestinian region and al-Qaeda in Iraq) menaces the moderate pro-Western Jordanian government.



© Spanner Films / flickr.com
Iraqi refugees, Jordan

A February 2005 terrorist bombing by a Jordanian in Hilla, Iraq, which killed more than 120 Iraqis, led to a months-long rift between the two countries. As a result of the bombing, Iraqi leaders claimed that Jordan was exporting terrorists to Iraq.³²⁴ Later that year, three Iraqi suicide bombers struck hotels in Amman, Jordan, killing 60 people. The attack was later tied to al-Qaeda in Iraq, a group then led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was Jordanian. In December 2006 the two governments signed an agreement to share intelligence on al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.³²⁵

The instability in Iraq affected Jordan economically. Most notably, it ended below-market-price oil deals between them that helped sustain Jordan's economy during the 1990s and early 2000s. When cheap Iraqi oil ended in 2003, Jordan secured short-term concessionary oil deals with other Arab states to avoid an economic crisis. Subsidized oil shipments from Iraq resumed in 2007, although the shipments represented only 10% of Jordan's daily needs.³²⁶ In June 2011, Iraq agreed to increase its crude oil exports to

³²⁰ Bureau of New Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Jordan," 25 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3464.htm#foreign>

³²¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Jordan: People," in *The World Factbook*, 26 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html>

³²² UNHCR, "2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Jordan," December 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486566#>

³²³ UNHCR, "2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Jordan," December 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/4cd96bfc9.html>

³²⁴ Scott Lasensky, "Jordan and Iraq: Between Cooperation and Crisis," United States Institute of Peace, December 2006, http://usip.forumone.com/files/resources/SRdec2006_2.pdf

³²⁵ Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, "Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy," 4 April 2008. <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/104282.pdf>

³²⁶ NASDAQ, "Iraq Agrees to Increase Oil Exports to Jordan—Report," 2 June 2011, <http://www.nasdaq.com/asp/stock-market-news-story.aspx?storyid=201106020312dowjonesdjonline000344&title=iraq-agrees-to-increase-oil-exports-to-jordan---report>

Jordan from 10,000 to 15,000 barrels a day.³²⁷ Iraq also agreed to export approximately 30 metric tons of fuel oil (for power plants). Iraq will sell the crude oil and fuel oil at discounted prices.³²⁸

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, Iraq's oil-rich neighbor to the south, is predominantly Sunni Arab but has a significant Shi'a minority in its eastern province. It is concerned about Iraq's stability and the potential for Iran to influence developments. The kingdom's longest and most porous border is with Iraq, and continuing disorder there could facilitate an influx of terrorist elements into Saudi Arabia. Conversely, Iraq remains concerned about the infiltration of Saudi jihadists into their country.³²⁹ During the sectarian violence of 2005–2007, many of the suicide bombers in Iraq were Saudi Arabian.^{330, 331} Because of these threats to both countries from terrorist elements, Saudi Arabia is constructing a security fence along the border with Iraq. The fence will use the latest surveillance technology.³³²

A further Saudi concern is tied to Iraqi stability. The Saudis were cognizant of the threat of Sunni–Shi'a sectarian tensions in Iraq from the outset, and are acutely aware of the implications for regional stability. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is broadly about maintaining a balance of power within the region. The threat of a Shi'a-dominated federation of Iran and Iraq could place the Saudis in a difficult position. If it occurred, it would create great pressure on the kingdom's leaders to support Sunni groups in Iraq.³³³



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Clearing al-Qaeda prison camp

While Saudi Arabia has been cautious in its relations with Iraq in the post-Saddam Hussein era, it is looking to play a more active role in the country as a counterpoint to Iran's influence in its western neighbor.³³⁴ Saudi Arabia resumed direct flights to Iraq

³²⁷ Associated Press, "Iraq Agrees to Increase Oil Supply to Jordan by 50 Percent to Meet Rising Demand," *Washington Post*, 3 June 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/iraq-agrees-to-increase-oil-supply-to-jordan-by-50-percent-to-meet-rising-demand/2011/06/03/AG3q60HH_story.html

³²⁸ Iraq Business News, "Iraq to Increase Oil Supplies to Jordan by 50%," 6 June 2011, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/06/06/iraq-to-increase-oil-supplies-to-jordan-by-50/>

³²⁹ Susan B. Glasser, "'Martyrs' in Iraq Mostly Saudis," *Washington Post*, 15 May 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/14/AR2005051401270_2.html

³³⁰ Susan B. Glasser, "'Martyrs' in Iraq Mostly Saudis," *Washington Post*, 15 May 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/14/AR2005051401270.html>

³³¹ Ned Parker, "Iraq Insurgency Said to Include Many Saudis," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 July 2007, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/15/world/fg-saudi15>

³³² Turki al-Saheil, "Securing the Saudi-Iraq Border," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 28 July 2010, <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=3&id=21770>

³³³ F. Gregory Gause III, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question," *Strategic Insights* (Center on Contemporary Conflict, Naval Postgraduate School) 6, no. 2 (March 2007), <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2007/Mar/gauseMar07.pdf>

³³⁴ Ulf Laessing, "Analysis: Saudi Wants Bigger Role in Iraq to Counter Iran," *Reuters*, 2 August 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/08/02/us-saudi-iraq-idUSTRE6712K620100802>

after 20 years in July 2010 but has yet to open an Iraqi embassy on its soil as of August 2011.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti rulers have long been wary of Iraq, and with good reason. In 1938, shortly after the discovery of oil in Kuwait, and in 1961 and 1990, Iraq asserted territorial claims on Kuwait.³³⁵ Iraq based these claims on the Ottoman Empire's brief and tenuous sovereignty over Kuwait during the late 19th century.³³⁶ Besides the oil fields, a major motive in Iraq's claims on Kuwait has been improved access to Persian Gulf waters. Iraq's major cargo port, Umm Qasr, is located along a narrow inlet at Kuwait's northern border.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Kuwait Oil Fires

In 1990, the Hussein regime acted on these territorial claims, seizing and annexing Kuwait. Several months later, coalition forces restored Kuwaiti independence during the Gulf War. During the Iraqi retreat from Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's forces destroyed many of Kuwait's oil wells, which devastated the environment. Not surprisingly, Kuwait was keen to see the Hussein regime go. The Kuwaiti government provided significant support for the U.S.-led military invasion in 2003 and the subsequent Iraqi reconstruction projects.

Border issues and the status of Iraqi reparations still owed to Kuwait from the 1990 invasion have most recently been at the forefront of Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. Although their land boundary was formally defined by the UN a few years after the 1991 Gulf War, border disputes still occur.³³⁷ The maritime border between the two countries remains undemarcated.

The 1991 Gulf War left Iraq owing Kuwait reparations for the destruction of Kuwaiti infrastructure. As of mid-2011 about USD 24 billion of that bill remains.³³⁸ Iraq continues to set aside 5% of its oil revenues into a UN-administered fund to compensate Kuwait.³³⁹ Iraq has lobbied the UN for at least partial relief from these payments, arguing that the present government is being penalized for the Hussein regime's bad behavior. So far, Kuwait has stood firm on preserving the status of reparations, although negotiations

³³⁵ Jon B. Alterman, "Iraq and the Gulf States: The Balance of Fear," United States Institute of Peace, August 2007, 4, <http://www.usip.org/resources/iraq-and-gulf-states-balance-fear>

³³⁶ Jean R. Tartter, "Chapter 7: Regional and National Security Considerations: Territorial Disputes," in *A Country Study: Kuwait*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, January 1993, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+kw0053\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kw0053))

³³⁷ John Leland and Omar Al-Jawshy, "Iraq and Kuwait Remain at Odds after Shootout," *New York Times*, 11 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/middleeast/12iraq.html>

³³⁸ Associated Press, "Iraq and Kuwait Seek to Improve Relation," Fox News, 26 January 2011, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/01/26/iraq-kuwait-seek-improve-relations/>

³³⁹ CNN, "Report: Kuwaiti Prime Minister Visiting Iraq," 12 January 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/iraq.kuwait.visit_1_al-maliki-iraq-and-kuwait-iraqi-officials?_s=PM:WORLD

between the two countries are ongoing.³⁴⁰ Also, after high-level contacts in 2011, the two countries expressed their hopes for better relations.³⁴¹ So far, Iraq and Kuwait have agreed in principle to sharing border oilfields and creating a no man's land on both sides of their border.^{342, 343}

Turkey

The relationship between Turkey and Iraq is focused on ethnic demographics and economy. The Kurds, who live predominantly along both sides of the Iraqi–Turkish border, weigh heavily in Turkey's foreign policy because of their historical struggle for an independent homeland. From 1925 to 1938, there were 16 Kurdish rebellions that were intended to fracture the growing Turkish Republic. These rebellions reined in any ambitions of Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Turkey, to grab land in northern Iraq—especially in the oil-rich areas of Mosul and Kirkuk.³⁴⁴ Despite a 1926 border treaty between Iraq and Turkey, some Turkish leaders today occasionally question Iraqi sovereignty over its Kurdish regions.³⁴⁵



© Fredrik Malm
Kurdistan Border with Turkey

Though the Kurds in Iraq have attained some autonomy by creating a regional government since a no-fly zone was established after the 1991 Gulf War, Kurds in Turkey lack both political autonomy and cultural rights. To demand their freedom, some Kurds have again taken up arms against the Turkish government. The Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), founded in 1978, has carried out cross-border attacks against Turkey since 1984. After a 6-month truce, PKK militants resumed attacking Turkish targets in March 2011, 4 months ahead of national elections.³⁴⁶ Kurds make up approximately 20% of Turkey's 73 million residents.^{347, 348}

³⁴⁰ Reuters, "UN Backs 'Alternative' Iraq War Reparation Schemes," 27 July 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE56Q4Y620090727>

³⁴¹ Global Arab Network, "New Chapter—Kuwait, Iraq Strengthen Relations," 17 February 2011, <http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/201102179890/Kuwait-Politics/new-chapter-kuwait-iraq-strengthening-relations.html>

³⁴² Iraq Business News, "Kuwait and Iraq Agree New Border Deal," 24 November 2010, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/11/24/kuwait-and-iraq-agree-new-border-deal/>

³⁴³ Iraq Business News, "Iraq and Kuwait to Share Border Oilfields," 19 November 2010, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/11/19/iraq-and-kuwait-to-share-border-oilfields/>

³⁴⁴ Omer Taşpınar, "Turkey's Kurdish Question," *Pakistan Daily Times*, 6 April 2003, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2003/0406irag_taspinar.aspx

³⁴⁵ Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections, "Turkey Claims Kirkuk and Mosul Oil-Producing Regions in Iraq," 2 February 2003, <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/ntc30874.htm>

³⁴⁶ Diyarbakir, "PKK Militants Attack Turkish Police as Truce Over," Reuters, 24 March 2011, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/03/24/uk-turkey-kurds-idUKTRE72N6X020110324>

³⁴⁷ Marc Champion, "PKK Revokes Cease-Fire in Turkey," *Wall Street Journal*, 28 February 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704615504576172122380315948.html>

³⁴⁸ Sumedha Senanayake, "Iraq: Ethnic Tensions Increasing in Oil-Rich City," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2 November 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/11/304874c7-d3ff-471c-bfa3-087b0618c459.html>

Economic motives also underlie Turkey's desire for a secure and peaceful Iraq. An oil pipeline between the two countries has frequently been inoperative because of bombings. Before the 1991 Gulf War, this pipeline's revenues generated half of Iraq's hard currency.³⁴⁹ In spring 2009, Baghdad approved oil exports delivered through Turkey, under contracts negotiated between the Kurdistan Regional Government and foreign partners. This will generate income for both countries.³⁵⁰

Geopolitics of Water Resources

"The Iraqi government's future stability rests on its ability to provide basic public goods—water, food, and electricity—and this ability is related directly to the country's access to water resources," observed a scholar on the Middle East.³⁵¹ This dependence on water access is complicated by Iraq's location downstream from Turkey and Syria. The Euphrates and Tigris rivers originate in Turkey, enter Syria, and then pass into Iraq. The rivers are an important source of water for drinking, irrigation, and sanitation for all three countries.

Over the years each country has taken measures to secure its share of the water supply. Turkey built extensive dams, using its geographic position to appropriate the rivers regardless of the effects on its downstream neighbors. In 1990, the Turkish government diverted the flow of the Euphrates for an entire month, to fill a huge reservoir. When the Iraqi government complained, the Turks responded that water is a natural resource—just like oil in Iraq.³⁵² In 1975, Iraq nearly went to war over water diversions for Syria's large dams on the Euphrates River.



© Shay Haas
Euphrates River near Syrian border

In March 2008, the three countries agreed to create a commission to coordinate usage, but no collective agreement has emerged.³⁵³ Turkey's goal has been to turn its southeastern region into a national breadbasket.³⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Iraq needs to increase agricultural

³⁴⁹ Reuters, "Turkey Rejects Iraq's Request to Reopen Vital Oil Pipeline," *New York Times* Archives, 14 June 1991, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE5D81331F937A25755C0A967958260>

³⁵⁰ Saban Kardas, "The Kurdistan Regional Government Launches Oil Exports through Turkey," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 105, 2 June 2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35072&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=ce1a43b7fa

³⁵¹ Shlomi Dinar, "Hydrodiplomacy in the Middle East," Saisphere, Johns Hopkins University, 2008, <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/pressroom/publications/saisphere/2008/dinar.htm>

³⁵² Trade, Environment and Conflict Case Studies, American University, "Ataturk Dam and the Environment," September 1997, <http://www1.american.edu/teed/ataturk.htm>

³⁵³ David Michel, "Sustaining the Fertile Crescent: Mind the GAP," Henry L. Stimson Center, 1 March 2011, <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/sustaining-the-fertile-crescent-mind-the-gap/>

³⁵⁴ Ali Akanda, Sarah Freeman, and Maria Placht, "The Tigris-Euphrates River Basin: Mediating a Path Towards Regional Water Stability," *Al Nakhlah* (The Fletcher School, Tufts University) (Spring 2007), <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Al-Nakhlah/Archives/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/al%20Nakhlah/archives/2007/placht-2.ashx>

production, which will require more water as irrigation systems are repaired and expanded. These are some of the difficulties involved in an agreement between the countries on equitable access to water. Periodic droughts, such as one in Iraq between 2005 and 2009, exacerbate the problem and affect agriculture and livestock. Water shortages in the first half of 2009 forced Iraqi farmers to reduce their rice crop by half.³⁵⁵

Shortage and poor management of water are still contributing to dire situations in Iraq today as water levels at Iraqi dams continue to fall.^{356, 357} In 2010, fewer than 70% of Iraqis outside Baghdad had access to potable water, dropping to less than 50% in rural areas.³⁵⁸ In Baghdad, 25% of the population were not connected to a water supply. Less than 8% of Iraqi homes outside of Baghdad were connected with sewage systems, creating conditions ripe for water-borne diseases such as cholera.

Issues Affecting Security

Poverty

Though hunger and poverty levels have improved because of an overall better security situation, humanitarian aid, and economic growth since 2005, poverty and unemployment remain serious problems in Iraq.³⁵⁹ Although reliable data is difficult to gather under current conditions, millions of Iraqis still depend on government food rations, 23% live below the poverty line of USD 2.20 per day, and about 15% are unemployed (with a 28% underemployment rate).^{360, 361} Young males are disproportionately affected and the demographic most likely to resort to crime or insurgency. In the past few years, young men would join terrorist groups for food when all other options failed, but in the past year, many have taken to the streets to protest



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com
Marketplace, Baghdad

³⁵⁵ Christine Welter, "Drought in Iraq Threatens Grain and Rice Harvest: Low Water in Euphrates Due To Turkey's and Syria's Water Policies," Suite101.com, 21 July 2009, http://war-poverty.suite101.com/article.cfm/drought_in_iraq_threatens_grain_and_rice_harvest#ixzz0MVNc3QMR

³⁵⁶ Iraq Business News, "Water Levels Fall at Key Iraqi Dams," 13 April 2011, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2011/04/13/water-levels-fall-at-key-iraqi-dams/>

³⁵⁷ United States Institute of Peace, "The Tigris-Euphrates River Basin: A Science Diplomacy Opportunity," April 2010, <http://www.usip.org/publications/the-tigris-euphrates-river-basin-science-diplomacy-opportunity>

³⁵⁸ World Bank, "Iraq: A Project to Address the Shortage in Potable Water Supply," February 2010, <http://go.worldbank.org/B6ALZWAKM0>

³⁵⁹ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 16 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

³⁶⁰ BBC News, "Iraq: Key Facts and Figures," 7 September 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11095920>

³⁶¹ Jane Arraf, "Iraq's Arab Spring: Protests Rise against Persistent Poverty in Oil-Rich Nation," *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 May 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0524/Iraq-s-Arab-Spring-Protests-rise-against-persistent-poverty-in-oil-rich-nation>

corruption and demand government reform.^{362, 363} Popular protests in February 2011 prompted Prime Minister Maliki to make changes in the ministries if they failed to improve basic services within 100 days.^{364, 365} At the end of the deadline, he seemed to have backtracked on his word.

Although billions have been spent on reconstruction, billions have been lost to mismanagement and corruption in the government.³⁶⁶ A significant amount of oil revenues are needed to develop infrastructure for oil production and export. The government, which is the largest employer in the country, had to freeze hiring when the price of oil dropped. The private sector has not yet developed enough to offer stable employment—making families who lack a government salary particularly vulnerable to poverty. As of mid-2010, about one-third of the workforce were engaged in the private sector.³⁶⁷

Displaced Persons and Refugees

Between 2003 and 2008, an estimated 2.3 to 2.5 million Iraqis—the majority of them Sunni—fled to neighboring countries, especially Syria and Jordan.³⁶⁸ These refugees have benefited from an Arab tradition in which providing refuge is a moral responsibility. Yet the respective governments have made it clear that the Iraqis are only temporary residents, who will remain on the margins until they can go home.³⁶⁹



© CODEPINK Women For Peace
Iraqi refugee

The number of Iraqi refugees spiked in the wake of the Samarra shrine bombing in February 2006.³⁷⁰ Although violence has since lessened, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) opines that refugees should not be forced to return despite the

³⁶² Al Jazeera, “Iraq Power Outages Provoke Protests,” 21 June 2010,

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/06/2010621141946159881.html>

³⁶³ IRIN, “Iraq: Jobs Fair Aims to Reduce Unemployment, Insurgency,” 10 July 2007,

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=73157>

³⁶⁴ Gregg Carlstrom, “Maliki Asks for Patience on Iraqi Reforms,” Al Jazeera, 7 June 2011,

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/06/201167101447231247.html>

³⁶⁵ Voice of America, “Iraq Clashes Reported over Government Reform Plans,” 10 June 2011,

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/middle-east/Iraq-Clashes-Reported-Over-Government-Reform-Plans-123635594.html>

³⁶⁶ Jane Arraf, “Iraq’s Arab Spring: Protests Rise against Persistent Poverty in Oil-Rich Nation,” Christian Science Monitor, 24 May 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0524/Iraq-s-Arab-Spring-Protests-rise-against-persistent-poverty-in-oil-rich-nation>

³⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 15 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

³⁶⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “Iraq,” *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom*, September 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108483.htm>

³⁶⁹ Patricia Weiss Fagen, “Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan,” Institute for the Study of International Migration and Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University, 2007, 5, <http://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu/Iraqirefugees.pdf>

³⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, “Failed Responsibility: Iraqi Refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon,” 10 July 2008, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5563>

improved security situation.³⁷¹ Iraq's ability to absorb returnees is still limited, particularly in Baghdad, which remains extensively partitioned to prevent a resurgence of ethnic-based conflict and forced relocation.³⁷² Those returning to mixed Sunni–Shi'a neighborhoods could be targeted for violence, particularly because squatters from the other group have likely taken up residence in their homes.³⁷³ As of early 2010, nearly 1.8 million Iraqi refugees were still living abroad.³⁷⁴

The rate of returns rose in 2008 and 2009, slowed in early 2010, but picked up again in early 2011. Some 350,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and nearly 60,000 refugees returned between 2008 and 2009 compared to 60,000 IDPs and 16,000 refugees in the first half of 2010. As of December 2010, 1.5 million Iraqis were still internally displaced.³⁷⁵ Because of the recent popular uprisings in the Middle East, hundreds of Iraqis have returned from Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Libya to escape conflict. Iraqis returned on their own or used free transportation the Iraqi government provided. Some also received an incentive of USD 3,400 for returning.³⁷⁶ But the government has been slow to support these returning displaced Iraqis because of budget shortfalls, a housing shortage, inadequate social services, low growth in the private sector, and high unemployment.³⁷⁷ The same factors affect the plight of the 40,000 refugees and asylum seekers seeking shelter in Iraq, most notably from Iran and Turkey.

³⁷¹ Lisa Schlein, "UN Says Iraq Still Too Fragile to Handle Refugees," Voice of America News, 6 June 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2009-06/2009-06-06-voa19.cfm?CFID=268371252&CFTOKEN=68321150&jsessionId=6630d4056dad1f2a84a0c2d32103d3919170>

³⁷² David Enders, "Behind the Wall: Inside Baghdad's Sadr City," Virginia Quarterly Review (Summer 2009), 120–135, <http://www.vqronline.org/articles/2009/summer/enders-sadr-city/>

³⁷³ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq: Patterns of Violence, Casualty Trends and Emerging Security Threats." Center for Strategic and International Studies, 9 February 2011, 76, http://csis.org/files/publication/110209_Iraq-PattofViolence.pdf

³⁷⁴ UNHCR, "2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Iraq," December 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html#>

³⁷⁵ UNHCR, "2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Iraq," December 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html#>

³⁷⁶ Muhanad Mohammed, "Iraqi Refugees Abroad Flock Home from Turmoil," Reuters Africa, 31 May 2011, <http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFMUH92406720110531?sp=true>

³⁷⁷ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 11 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

Corruption

Corruption is widespread and continues to be a significant problem in Iraq. The country's high corruption levels have placed it at the bottom of global and Middle East indices of corruption perception and control of corruption.³⁷⁸

Corruption thrives in Iraq because the public sector remains the largest employer. Partly a legacy of the Hussein regime and partly a result of a weak state, corruption persists in the form of government procurement, government payrolls, and trade, although substantial efforts have been made to reduce corruption in the electricity, oil, and gas sectors.^{379, 380}



© Salam Pax
Demonstrators

Three main institutions handle corruption cases; all three are overseen by the Joint Anti-Corruption Council but none has jurisdiction in the Kurdistan region, which has its own regional offices. Iraq ratified the UN Conventions Against Corruption in 2008 and 2 years later announced a 5-year action plan to address over 200 corruption cases.³⁸¹ Each ministry has a specific plan and most had already implemented their plans by the end of 2010. But as of early 2011, institutions still lacked the capacity to address corruption at high levels, where criminal laws protect officials from investigation and prosecution.³⁸² Corruption was a major theme during the 25 February 2011 “day of rage,” a nationwide antigovernment protest movement that brought thousands to the streets.³⁸³ Corruption undermines the delivery of basic services such as electricity and water.^{384, 385}

One of the worst offenders in Iraq has been the Ministry of Trade, which controls a rationing system begun in 1995 that still distributes essential food and clothing. International donations of agricultural staples (such as rice) are often sold to a hungry populace, enabling ministry officials to make money off humanitarian assistance. Other complaints centered on the ministry's practice of buying cheap food that was unfit for

³⁷⁸ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq,” March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

³⁷⁹ Abbas Kadhim, “Iraq's Quest for Democracy amid Massive Corruption,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 March 2010, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2010/03/03/iraq-s-quest-for-democracy-amid-massive-corruption/xm>

³⁸⁰ Stephen Kurczy, “The 8 Worst Countries on Transparency International's List,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 October 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2010/1026/The-8-worst-countries-on-Transparency-International-s-list/Iraq>

³⁸¹ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq,” March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

³⁸² Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Investment Climate Statement—Iraq,” March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157295.htm>

³⁸³ *Los Angeles Times*, “Iraq: Nationwide Protests against Corruption and Poverty Ignite Sporadic Violence,” 25 February 2011, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/02/iraq-protests-1.html>

³⁸⁴ Reuters, “Factbox: Issues Facing Iraq's New Parliament,” 14 June 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/06/14/us-iraq-politics-parliament-idUSTRE65D34J20100614>

³⁸⁵ Ahmed Rasheed, “Corruption-Plagued Iraq Joins Oil Transparency Group,” Reuters, 10 January 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/01/10/us-iraq-oil-transparency-idUSTRE60917C20100110>

human consumption, and then charging the state the full international price.³⁸⁶ The embattled minister of trade, whose two brothers were employed as security guards at the ministry and implicated in various food-for-profit schemes, resigned in May 2009.³⁸⁷

Military and Police Structure

The armed forces of Iraq were disbanded by the Coalition Provisional Authority in May 2003. Since August 2003, the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC–I) and then the United States Forces–Iraq have been working with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior to recruit, train, and deploy forces for the new Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The ISF comprises both military and police forces: army, navy, air force, police, and counterterrorism. Total active personnel in Iraq in 2010 was 191,957 with no reserve personnel.³⁸⁸ Although the armed forces are becoming increasingly professional, there is a concern about the decentralized nature of the military and local commanders' direct link to the prime minister.³⁸⁹



DoD Image
Iraqi police officer

Most of the Iraqi military forces, under the administration of the Ministry of Defense, are army units. The total number of operational Iraqi army personnel was about 197,300 as of April 2010.³⁹⁰ As of August 2010, the army had 13 infantry divisions and 1 partially fielded mechanized division. Their ground forces included 196 battalions in 55 combat brigades in 51 infantry, 3 mechanized brigades, and 1 tank brigade.³⁹¹ Budget constraints have limited new recruits and the army was not at full personnel capacity by late 2010. An additional 5,600 Iraqi military members were deployed in air force units as of May 2010.³⁹² The air force aims to achieve minimum essential capability (MEC) in almost all mission categories by December 2011, but the navy will probably achieve MEC prior to

³⁸⁶ Patrick Cockburn, "Iraq Faces the Mother of all Corruption Scandals," *Independent*, 29 May 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-faces-the-mother-of-all-corruption-scandals-1692571.html>

³⁸⁷ Timothy Williams, "Trade Official Quits as Iraq Continues Investigations," *New York Times*, 25 May 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/world/middleeast/26iraq.html>

³⁸⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq: Patterns of Violence, Casualty Trends and Emerging Security Threats," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 10 February 2011, 23, http://csis.org/files/publication/110209_Iraq-PattofViolence.pdf

³⁸⁹ Aaron C. Davis, "In Iraq, Military Still Seen as Dysfunctional," *Washington Post*, 9 June 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/in-iraq-military-still-seen-as-dysfunctional/2011/06/07/AGaBk7MH_story.html

³⁹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, Charles Loi and Adam Mauser, "Iraq's Coming National Challenges: Transition Amid Uncertainty," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5 January 2011, 36, http://csis.org/files/publication/110105_Iraq_1-Introduction.pdf

³⁹¹ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 72 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

³⁹² U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 76 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

that date.³⁹³ The navy, largely staffed in Umm Qasr and headquartered at Baghdad, did face logistics and communication difficulties. It began recruiting again in mid-2010 since hiring began in 2008. The navy's personnel stood at approximately 3,000 in April 2010.³⁹⁴

The Ministry of Interior oversees all police units. The Iraqi Police Service (IPS) grew from 60,000 in 2004 to approximately 306,000 by December 2008. By the same time, the National Police had approximately 43,000 members.³⁹⁵ The National Police, renamed the Federal Police in August 2009, is a paramilitary organization with duties between those of the army and local police forces. Beginning July 2009, an additional task of the Federal Police has been to escort U.S. military convoys through Iraqi cities.³⁹⁶

Terrorist Groups

Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)

One infamous terrorist organization still operating in the country is al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), though at a much-diminished level compared to 2006 and early 2007.³⁹⁷ This group was founded by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who spent much of the late 1990s and early 2000s in either Afghanistan or a Jordanian prison before moving his operations to northern Iraq sometime in 2002. Although al-Zarqawi had some contacts with Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda operatives, his terrorist organization seems to have been mostly independent of al-Qaeda until 2004.³⁹⁸

Zarqawi's group initially focused on terrorist attacks to destabilize and ultimately overthrow the Jordanian regime, but its jihadist scope later broadened.³⁹⁹ By October 2004, Zarqawi had become synonymous with some of the most brutal insurgent attacks and kidnappings in Iraq. At this time, he pledged loyalty to Osama bin Laden and his

³⁹³ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 49, 77 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

³⁹⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, Charles Loi and Adam Mauser, "Iraq's Coming National Challenges: Transition Amid Uncertainty," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5 January 2011, 36, http://csis.org/files/publication/110105_Iraq_1-Introduction.pdf

³⁹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 72 (June 2010), http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/June_9204_Sec_Def_signed_20_Aug_2010.pdf

³⁹⁶ Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq, Public Affairs Office, "Iraqi National Police Renamed Federal Police," 2 August 2009, http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=27481&Itemid=128

³⁹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense Report to Congress, "1. Stability and Security," in *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, at 22 (June 2009), http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_CongressJul09.pdf

³⁹⁸ Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) 2, no. 24 (15 December 2004), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=27304

³⁹⁹ Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) 2, no. 24 (15 December 2004), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=27304_2369019

group became formally associated with al-Qaeda.⁴⁰⁰ His goal was to foment civil war between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ites, and thus prevent the Shi'a-led government from consolidating control over post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.⁴⁰¹

Zarqawi was killed by a U.S. bombing strike on 7 June 2006. AQI then alienated the Sunnis with its deadly violence, prompting the formation of Awakening councils. These collections of mostly Sunni tribes vowed to restore order by driving out fundamentalists and foreign fighters—a goal that gave them common cause with Coalition objectives.

The murder of Sheik Abdul Sattar Abu Risha, a leader in the Anbar province Awakening movement, did little to reverse AQI's declining fortunes even as AQI became decentralized.⁴⁰² Offshoots of the AQI include the 1920 Revolution Brigades and the Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI), and possibly the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). AQI's next leader, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, and the leader of the ISI, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, were killed in Iraq in April 2010.⁴⁰³ The remnants of AQI are now mostly in and around the city of Mosul, although they are active throughout Iraq. They still have foreign elements; total membership is estimated in the tens of thousands. Their attacks have targeted civilians since the March 2010 elections.



DoD Image
Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abu Risha

Other Insurgent Groups

Other insurgent organizations operate within Iraq; many are jihadist and employ terrorist tactics. Several of these, though brutally violent in their operations, have criticized AQI because of the indiscriminate nature of its attacks.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ Gary Gambill, "Unraveling Zarqawi's Al-Qaeda Connection," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) 2, no. 24 (15 December 2004),

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=27304

⁴⁰¹ Kenneth Katzman, "Al Qaeda in Iraq: An Assessment," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 15 August 2008, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32217.pdf>

⁴⁰² Greg Bruno, and Julia Jeffrey, "Profile: Al-Qaeda in Iraq (a.k.a. al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia)," Council on Foreign Relations, 26 April 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/profile-al-qaeda-iraq-k-al-qaeda-mesopotamia/p14811>

⁴⁰³ CNN, "Officials: Al Qaeda in Iraq Leaders Killed," 19 April 2010, http://articles.cnn.com/2010-04-19/world/iraq.militants.killed_1_al-qaeda-iraq-abu-ayyub-al-baghdadi?_s=PM:WORLD

⁴⁰⁴ Kathleen Ridolfo, "Iraq: Al Qaeda Tactics Lead to Splits Among Insurgents," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 17 April 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/4/CA95FAFC-1E70-450A-A4BF-9417B05CAA3C.html>

Ansar al-Islam is a Kurdish Islamist jihadist group that has pursued the same goals and many of the same tactics as AQI, to which it has ties.⁴⁰⁵ The group has been operating in northern Iraq since September 2001. The group changed its name in 2003 to *Ansar al-Sunnah*, apparently to broaden its support to include Sunni Arab jihadists, but returned to the *Ansar al-Islam* name in December 2007.⁴⁰⁶ In May 2010, Iraq's security forces arrested Abu Abdallah al-Shafi'i. His detainment is believed to have significantly undermined the group's operational capabilities.⁴⁰⁷



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Iraq insurgent

The *Islamic Army of Iraq* (IAI) was one of the largest insurgent organizations in Iraq, but its ranks have split since the Awakening movement began. Several reports have identified IAI field commanders as now being leaders of "Sons of Iraq" militias (part of the Awakening councils, providing informal security).^{408,409} The organization is considered more nationalistic than religious in its motivations.⁴¹⁰

In northern Iraq, *Jaysh Rajal al-Tariqah al-Nakshbandia* (JRTN) continues to attack U.S. forces. This organization is apparently dominated by Ba'athists and links itself to the Nakshbandia Sufi order, a branch of Islam generally considered more mystical than militaristic.⁴¹¹

Another group is the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), which the U.S. identified as a foreign terrorist group in 2007. The group was founded in 1978 and began violent attacks 6 years later. Primarily consisting of Turkish Kurds, the PKK mostly operates out of Iraq. Its goal is to establish an independent Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey. It has launched several terrorist attacks in Turkey since 2004 after abandoning a 5-year, self-imposed ceasefire.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁵ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 6. Terrorist Organizations," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 20 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>

⁴⁰⁶ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 6. Terrorist Organizations," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 20 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>

⁴⁰⁷ National Counter-Terrorism Center, "Ansar al-Islam (AI)," n.d., <http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/ai.html>

⁴⁰⁸ Herve Bar, "Iraq's Islamic Army Rejects Links With 'Awakening,'" Middle East Online, 7 January 2008, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=23776>

⁴⁰⁹ Muhammad Abu Ramman, "A Newspaper Report on Iraq's Sunni Factions" (summarized by Nathaniel Rabkin, Institute for the Study of War), *al-Hayat*, 26 February 2008, <http://www.understandingwar.org/arabic-news/newspaper-report-iraqs-sunni-factions>

⁴¹⁰ Jonathan Finer, "Iraq's Insurgents: Who's Who," *Washington Post*, 19 March 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/17/AR2006031702087.html>

⁴¹¹ Rafid Fadhil Ali, "Sufi Insurgent Groups in Iraq," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Organization) 6, no. 2, 25 January 2008, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4683

⁴¹² Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 6. Terrorist Organizations," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 20 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>

Several Shi'ite militants, formerly in the Mahdi Army, continue to carry out violent attacks in small-scale militias. Among these groups are the Promised Day Brigade (PDB), *Asa'ib Ahl-Haqq* (AAH), and *Kata'ib Hizbollah* (KH).⁴¹³ The PDB has been anointed by Muqtada al-Sadr as the successor militia to the Mahdi Army and is ready to be activated when needed.^{414, 415}

Outlook

Some long-term and short-term trends can be identified. Clear evidence shows that the military situation on the ground has improved, especially in Baghdad and adjacent Sunni-majority provinces. Whether that is sustainable after the scheduled withdrawal of U.S. troops at the end of 2011 remains uncertain. Sustained peace may be greatly affected by how well the Awakening council fighters (the Sons of Iraq) are integrated into the Iraqi security forces.^{416, 417}



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Traffic control point

Political progress has not kept pace with the improvements in security, and hard-line ethnic and sectarian political stances sometimes negate political progress. Military officials consistently state that the situation cannot be solved strictly by military means. There needs to be reconciliation and compromise that strengthen government institutions and acknowledge the needs of all Iraqis, regardless of their ethnic, tribal, or sectarian associations.⁴¹⁸

Yet the provincial elections of 2009 and national elections in 2010 brought a great deal of political progress to the country. The provincial elections saw a return of Sunnis to the polls, an ouster of Iranian backed clerics and others elected in 2005, and a move to embrace “technocrats” who have experience navigating the troubled political waters of the country. The national elections saw a return of Sunnis to a more representative portion of elected positions in formerly Kurdish-controlled provinces outside the Kurdish semi-autonomous area.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹³ Michal Harari, “Status Update: Shi’a Militias in Iraq,” Institute for the Study of War, 16 August 2010, http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Backgrounder_ShiaMilitias.pdf

⁴¹⁴ *Economist*, “Muqtada al-Sadr, Back in Business,” 5 May 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18652167>

⁴¹⁵ Robert Dreyfuss, “Muqtada al-Sadr’s Fiery Call: ‘US Out of Iraq,’” *Nation*, 10 January 2011, <http://www.thenation.com/blog/157604/muqtada-al-sadrs-fiery-call-us-out-iraq>

⁴¹⁶ Sumehda Senanayake, “Iraq: Future Of Awakening Councils in Limbo,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 4 April 2008, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1079738.html>

⁴¹⁷ Greg Bruno, “Finding a Place for ‘The Sons of Iraq,’” Council on Foreign Relations, 9 January 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16088/>

⁴¹⁸ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Prospects for Iraq’s Stability: Some Security Progress but Political Reconciliation Elusive,” August 2007, 7, http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20070823_release.pdf

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Chapter 5 Assessment

1. An agreement with the Iraqi government requires the withdrawal of all U.S. troops by 31 December 2011.

True

The outgoing Bush administration, under deadline pressure from an expiring UN security mandate, negotiated an agreement to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraqi cities, towns, and villages by 30 June 2009, and all troops by 31 December 2011.

2. Infiltration of insurgents from Syria into Iraq has been a pressing security issue for the new Iraqi government.

True

Since the restoration of diplomatic ties in November 2006, the two countries have agreed to cooperate on pressing security issues—such as the infiltration of insurgents from Syria to Iraq.

3. Iraq has announced that it will build a high-tech security fence along the border with Saudi Arabia.

False

The Saudis are building a high-tech fence along the border with Iraq. Many of the suicide bombers in Iraq during the sectarian violence from 2005–2007 came from Saudi Arabia, while the Saudis worry that disorder in Iraq will generate an influx of terrorists to Saudi Arabia.

4. Iraq sets aside 25% of its oil revenues as Gulf War reparations to Kuwait.

False

Iraq continues to set aside 5% of its oil revenues to compensate Kuwait. But Iraq's government has lobbied the UN for at least partial payment relief—arguing that the current government is being penalized for the Hussein regime's bad behavior.

5. The goal of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is to foment civil war between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ites.

True

If al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) were to achieve their goal to foment civil war between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ites, it would prevent the Shi'a-led government from consolidating control over post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.

Final Assessment

1. Wind and earthquakes are Iraq's most frequently occurring natural hazards.
True / False
2. The Al-Dibdibah desert is the expansive gravelly plain located in southwestern Iraq.
True / False
3. The majority of Iraq's proven oil reserves are located around Kirkuk.
True / False
4. Land mines and unexploded ordnance are a significant environmental concern in Iraq.
True / False
5. The city of Baghdad is encircled by a defensive wall.
True / False
6. Since 1958, Iraq has experienced several military coups.
True / False
7. Recent violence in southern Iraq mostly occurred between Shi'ite militias and Kurdish forces.
True / False
8. Iraq's urban infrastructure was practically destroyed in the 1991 Gulf War.
True / False
9. The Iran-Iraq war ended as a stalemate.
True / False
10. Saddam Hussein seized power by facilitating a massive purge within the Ba'ath Party.
True / False
11. Iraq is second in the world in terms of proven oil reserves.
True / False
12. During the Hussein era, the manufacturing sector was under state control.
True / False
13. In early 2009, Iraqi government officials announced that electricity production levels had surpassed those of early 2003.
True / False

14. Oil exports account for more than 75% of Iraq's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
True / False
15. In April 2008, Iraq joined the World Trade Organization (WTO).
True / False
16. Kurds are the second-largest ethnic group in Iraq.
True / False
17. Iraq's constitution recognizes Arabic and Kurdish as the country's official languages.
True / False
18. Christians account for approximately 20% of Iraq's population.
True / False
19. Article 41 of the interim constitution extends jurisdiction to concerned religious sects in matters that affect women.
True / False
20. Mutaa is an informal, usually short-term marriage contract practiced by Sunni Muslims in Iraq.
True / False
21. Iraq currently supplies Jordan with 90% of its daily oil needs.
True / False
22. Iraq and Iran have Shi'a dominated governments.
True / False
23. Older males are the demographic most affected by joblessness and poverty.
True / False
24. Internal displacement of the population remains a serious security concern in Iraq.
True / False
25. Water shortages are a growing concern in Iraq.
True / False

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