



Armed Conflicts Report

Iraq (2003 - first combat deaths)

Update: January 2009

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of the Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

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Summary:

2008 In the wake of generally improved security, the Iraqi Parliament approved a bilateral Status of the Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the United States, as well as a Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) for future international co-operation. Plans for provincial elections, excluding the Kurdish provinces and the ethnically divided northern region of Kirkuk, were made for January 2009. Improved security itself stemmed from the US troop 'surge', as well as active targeting of the rebel Mahdi Army, and the formation of armed Sunni neighbourhood groups called "Awakening Councils." However, rule of law remained difficult to maintain. Suicide bombings and human and civil rights abuses remained frequent. Violence was particularly intense in Northern Iraqi cities such as Mosul and Kirkuk and Turkish military campaigns against Kurds also resumed in the north in 2008. Casualties resulting from conflict in Iraq included 314 US military, an estimated 1,900 Iraqi security forces and at least 8,315–9,028 civilians in 2008. The total number of deaths is estimated to be in a range of 151,000-155,000, including an absolute minimum range of 91,121 - 99,500 civilian deaths.

2007 The U.S. launched a new security plan that involved a troop 'surge' of 21,500 members of the American military to Iraq. Widespread violence continued to persist, including the deadliest attack since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which killed 250-500 people. There was also a major security breach in the Green Zone, the most heavily secured area of Baghdad. Sectarian violence, as well as violence against journalists and politicians, continued while police and state officials were increasingly targeted in attacks. The U.N. Security Council passed two resolutions which involved increasing the U.N's presence within Iraq and extending the mandate of the U.S. led multinational force in Iraq. Ministers from the Concord Front resigned from the government after citing specific grievances, which undermines the governments legitimacy. In November, the number of Iraqis killed dropped to 718, the lowest monthly death toll since just prior to the 2006 bombing of the Shiite Shrine, and the number of US troop deaths, at 37, was the lowest since March 2006. Iraq continues to be described as a humanitarian crisis: many people lack access to clean drinking water and other basic needs and stricter migration laws passed by neighbouring countries threaten to limit the ability of Iraqis to leave unsafe areas and seek asylum.

2006 This year saw a sharp increase in casualties as sectarian violence escalated, with up to 35,000 killed. The December 2005 elections resulted in Iraq's first democratically elected non-transitional government, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The increase in sectarian violence led parliament to pass a bill allowing for the potential division of Iraq into three semi-autonomous regions in 2008 if no other solution can be found.

2005 Iraq's first democratically elected government in fifty years was formed and a new constitution was adopted following the election of the Transitional National Assembly in February. The Assembly was dissolved and replaced with a permanent Parliament following late December elections. Intense fighting between US-led

troops and insurgents continued across Iraq killing between 9,000 and 12,000 civilians and combatants.

2004 Major clashes between US-led coalition forces and insurgents and frequent insurgent suicide bombings and attacks on Iraqi civilians and security forces continued through the year killing thousands of people. Some of the most intense fighting occurred during a coalition assault on the city of Fallujah that reportedly killed more than 1,600 insurgents and hundreds of civilians. The Interim Governing Council approved a new Iraqi constitution and the UN Security Council approved a US-UK plan that set January 30, 2005 as the date for elections.

2003 Following unsuccessful negotiations to secure a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force in response to Iraqi non-compliance with weapons inspectors, the United States formed a military coalition and invaded Iraq in March. The US-led coalition, whose stated objective was to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, met little organized military opposition and within weeks they had seized Baghdad, forced President Hussein into hiding, and established an interim US-administered government. As the year progressed the armed opposition faced by coalition forces intensified and spread throughout the country, in part due to the entry of insurgents from neighbouring countries into Iraq to join the resistance. There was also fighting among Iraqi factions vying for power in the post-Saddam Iraq, particularly Shia Muslim groups.

Type of Conflict:

State control

Parties to the Conflict:

1) US-led coalition - The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF-7): US troops comprise the majority of the coalition's forces. In 2007, the American military reached the highest troop levels in Iraq with a force of 170 000, up from 152,000 troops deployed in November of 2006. In 2006 there were 21 Non-U.S. countries contributing to the coalition, with significant contributions coming from the UK (8,500), South Korea (2,300), Australia (1,400), and Poland (900). The UK began withdrawing troops in 2007 and currently approximately 4000 remain in Iraq with plans to halve that number by 2008. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also announced the withdrawal of 550 combat troops by mid 2008 and other member countries have also expressed interest in decreasing or fully withdrawing their troop presence within Iraq.

[Source: www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm, accessed on April 5, 2007; Reuters, October 24, 2007; Associated Press, November 6, 2007; Crisis Watch Report, Issue No. 52, December 2007]

"CJTF-7 conducts offensive operations to defeat remaining noncompliant forces and neutralize destabilizing influences in the Area of Operations (AO) to create a secure environment in direct support of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)." [*CJTF7 Homepage*, at www.cjtf7.com/index.htm, accessed on May 13, 2004]

"An advance guard of Polish troops has arrived in Iraq to form the nucleus of the 9,000-strong international division which will shortly assume peacekeeping duties in the centre of the country. The reinforcements bring together an extraordinary alignment of countries, mainly close allies of the US, from eastern Europe, central America and Asia... At least 24 countries have agreed to contribute. Most will join the Polish-led division ... covering southern and central Iraq... Nine of the contributing countries will send a total of 5,500 troops to reinforce the British-led division centred in Basra ... Several countries, including Portugal and Italy, are sending armed police rather than combat troops." [*Guardian Weekly*, July 31 - August 6, 2003]

"President Bush is assembling a Coalition that has already begun military operations to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction ... Contributions from Coalition member nations range from: direct military participation, logistical and intelligence support, specialized chemical/biological response teams, over-flight rights, humanitarian and reconstruction aid, to political support. Forty-six countries are publicly committed to the Coalition ..." [*White house Press Release*, March 21, 2003]

allied with

a) Iraqi security forces, which have been assembled and trained by the coalition forces, including the NATO

Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I). NTM-I has approximately 205 troops. Trained Iraqi forces are formally under the authority of the Iraqi government led by President Jalal Talabani and Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. By the end of 2008, support by coalition forces resulted in the training and operational readiness of over 560,000 troops and police. However, their ability to contain insurgency without coalition support remains untested.

b) UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) formed in 2003, its 222 troops and several hundred other staff are mandated to address the political side of the conflict in Iraq.

c) "Awakening Councils," also known as "Sons of Iraq" (SOI): armed neighbourhood groups of mainly Sunni Iraqis, which are actively fighting insurgents. The US military finances these groups on the neighbourhood level. However, the cost of such "local security bargains" is more than financial: especially if these neighbourhood groups are not well integrated into local police forces, they could represent a source of instability and a threat to the US-backed Iraqi government. [Source: *Military Balance 2009*; US State Department, *2008 Human Rights Report: Iraq*]

2) Various Shia factions seeking to fill the political vacuum left following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Although these factions are composed of Shia Muslims, they have distinct political agendas and employ different methods to attain their objectives, occasionally clashing with one another. The main groups are:

- The Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). The SCIRI, whose leadership was based in Iran during much of Saddam's rule, represents much of Iraq's Shia population. The Badr Corps, the armed wing of the SCIRI, was also previously based in Iran and allegedly received military support from its Iranian hosts. Although the SCIRI leadership returned to Iraq in 2003 and were included in the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), the US is wary of the SCIRI's links with the Iranian government. Furthermore, the US-led coalition issued several warnings to the Badr Corps not to enter into Iraq while hostilities continued.

- The Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani is the most senior Shia religious leader in Iraq, and as a result holds sway with much of the Shia population. Although at times critical of the US-led occupying force, he has urged his followers to not take up arms against them. This moderate stance has distanced some of the more militant elements of the Shia population from him. Furthermore, his Persian heritage has alienated some non-Persian Shia Muslims.

- Muqtada al-Sadr, an anti-US Shia cleric, controls the Baghdad-based Jaish al-Mahdi militia, which is said to number in the thousands. He has frequently called for his followers to take up arms against the occupying forces. In 2007, Muqtada al-Sadr announced a self-imposed ceasefire. The ceasefire was orchestrated to assist al-Sadr in purging the militia of members he deemed untrustworthy in an attempt to revive the organization and increase its legitimacy amongst the Shia communities in Iraq. Many speculate that the militia is receiving support from Iran. After targeted attacks by Iraqi and US forces in 2008, Iraqi intelligence suggests that the Mahdi Army has been reduced from as many as 50,000 to as few as 150. Although reports suggest the Mahdi Army will disarm, it is also possible that the group will devolve into a "clandestine movement" or that it will split into political and military factions.

[Source: *The New York Times*, November 23, 2007; *Middle East Times*, June 26 2008]

"He is now in the process of reconstituting the [Mahdi] Army and removing all the bad people that committed mistakes and those that sullied its reputation. There will be a whole new structure and dozens of conditions for membership...There is just bound to be another war as long as the occupation remains. Our main enemy is America." Abdul Hadi al-Mahamadawi, commander of the Mahdi Army and cleric in Kerbala [*Christian Science Monitor*, December 12, 2007]

"Iran is definitely interested in having its own proxy political and military force in Iraq, just like Lebanon. Iran may try to wait a bit now to see who will emerge as the more dominant force... All the indications so far are that [Iran] has invested a great deal in the Mahdi Army" Riad al-Kahwaji, Dubai-based military expert on Iran [*Christian Science Monitor*, December 12, 2007]

3) Various Sunni factions. Sunnis dominated the country under Saddam Hussein, and oppose the occupation by coalition troops and the majority Shias. There are a number of Sunni groups, including:

- Jammāt al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad, sometimes called al-Qaeda in Iraq (or al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia), is the most prominent insurgent group, and has been blamed for some of the bloodiest bombings and beheadings. The

group was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed in a U.S. air strike in June of 2006. The new leader is Abu-Hamzah al-Muhajir. The group is thought to have as many as 10 000 members in Iraq.

[Source: *Associated Press*, November 12, 2007]

- Ansar al Islam/Ansar al Sunna (Supporters of Islam) was formed in December 2001. The Sunni Islamic group is composed primarily of Kurds who follow an extremist brand of Islam, however their primary focus is opposing the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of two large secular Kurdish groups that opposed Saddam Hussein with U.S. backing. The group has close links to and support from al-Qaida. Al-Qaida and Osama Bin Laden participated in the formation and funding of the group, which has provided safehaven to al-Qaida in northeastern Iraq.

- Mujahideen Shura Council. This is an organization of five insurgent groups, including al-Qaeda in Iraq, the Victorious Sect Army and the Islamic Jihad Brigade. It was formed in efforts to unify insurgents.

4) Remnants of Iraq's pre-war security forces (the regular army, the Republican Guard and the elite Special Republican Guard), which were formally dissolved by the coalition authorities, are thought to be involved in the armed resistance against coalition forces although it is impossible to determine exactly how many. Additionally, several militias loyal to Saddam Hussein, in particular the Fedayeen Saddam, are alleged to be resisting the coalition forces. By the end of 2004, however, there were virtually no distinguishable remnants of the pre-war Iraqi security forces. Former troops appear to have either joined with an insurgent group or re-trained to be part of the new Iraqi security forces.

5) Foreign fighters. It is estimated that hundreds, if not thousands, of non-Iraqis, some allegedly linked to the al Qaeda terrorist network, have flowed into the country to join in the fight against coalition forces. Saudi Arabia and Libya, both considered US allies in the fight against terrorism, were reported as being the source of approximately sixty percent of foreign fighters that entered Iraq in 2007. It is estimated that the flow of foreign fighters was 80 - 110 per month during the first half of the year; about 60 per month during summer months; and no more than 40 per month in the latter months after a sharp decline in October. The number of Saudi Arabians totalled 305 (42%) and Libyans accounted for 137 (18%). Of the more than 25,000 inmates in American detention centers in Iraq, 1.2 percent are foreigners. Other sources of foreign fighters include countries in northern Africa, Syria and Lebanon. Despite accusations that Iran is supporting and financing Shiite militias, only 11 Iranians are in American detention.

[Source: *The New York Times*, November 23, 2007]

Status of Fighting:

2008 Iraq experienced a general improvement in security in 2008 for several reasons. Iraqi-US forces targeted the Mahdi Army in and around Sadr City, greatly reducing their numbers. Reports suggests that 570-2000 Mahdi militants were killed between March and May. The level of fighting was significant, and included rocket attacks against the Green Zone. However, by May 10th the Mahdi army allowed Iraqi forces to enter Sadr City without resistance, followed by reports by leader Moqtada Sadr that the group would split between its political and elite fighting units. The 2007 "surge" of US troops also contributed to security. Its impact was particularly augmented by the formation of "Awakening Councils," armed neighbourhood groups led mainly by Sunni Iraqis in Sunni neighbourhoods working in alliance with US forces. Despite these improvements, suicide bombings remained extremely frequent and deadly. In April alone, 100+ died from suicide bombings. The bombings often targeted symbols of the state such as police stations, or heavily populated areas such as markets. They continued to undermine the government's ability to maintain the rule of law; as such, abuses of human and civil rights remained rampant. The frequency of bombings was also often linked to political developments. For example, in the wake of a US-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement in November, the number of violent incidents increased as groups protested the deferral of US withdrawal. Furthermore, while security in Baghdad noticeably improved, the worst violence merely shifted north; the region surrounding Kirkuk remained particularly volatile due to ethnic tension between Kurds and Arabs, and control over regional oil. Throughout the year, US-Iraqi forces also commenced offensives in Mosul. In February, Turkish troops entered Northern Iraq in a continued campaign against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK); each side offered widely differing reports of the Turkish troops involved (1,000-10,000) and the casualties incurred (PKK casualties reported from 2-230, Turkish casualties reported from 27-81). Turkish airstrikes were also reported intermittently throughout the year.

"In June of 2007, there were 1600 attacks a week in this country. Today, there are roughly 125 attacks per week in the country" [Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, *NPR*, 2/11/2009]

2007 On February 13, the U.S launched a new security plan that involved a troop 'surge' of 21 500 members of the American military to Iraq. The mandate of the new security plan was to disarm militias and insurgents, with a special focus on the area of Baghdad. Despite the surge, the number of bomb, small-arms, mortar and sniper attacks, as well as attacks against Iraqi infrastructure reached an all-time high of almost 1 600 attacks per week in June. The efficacy of the troop surge was also undermined following a major security breach in the most heavily guarded region of Baghdad, known as the Green Zone, when a suicide bomber carried out an attack in parliament which resulted in the death of a Sunni law maker and a civilian. But, by September, the number of bomb, small-arms and other attacks had declined to 900 per week and further decreased to just below 600 per week at the beginning of December.

Many feel the decrease in violence in Baghdad, led to an increase in violence in more rural areas of the country as insurgent groups adjusted their operations to focus on less heavily patrolled areas. A coordinated attack by four suicide bombers against the Yazidis, a small Kurdish speaking sect located in the Ninevah province, killed 250-500 members of the community and was the deadliest attack of the war since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. As of September, the number of Iraqi's driven from their home due to the violence occurred at a rate of more than 60 000 per month and almost 4.5 million Iraqis have fled the country or have been displaced inside Iraq according to the UNHCR.

In December Turkey sent hundreds of troops across the border in the first confirmed ground operation targeting rebel basis inside Iraq since 2003. The attack was meant to target the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK) which has battled for autonomy for south-eastern Turkey with the Turkish government for more than two decades and use strongholds in northern Iraq for cross-border strikes. Iran also shelled border zones in Iraq used by Kurdish guerrillas, who oppose Tehran's Islamic regime.

In other areas, following the withdrawal of troops from southern Iraq's main city of Basra, attacks against British and Iraqi forces dropped by 90%. Sectarian violence as well as violence against journalists, and politicians continued while police and state officials were increasingly targeted in attacks. The number of Iraqi army units capable of operating independently declined from ten in March to six in July. An opinion poll of more than 2 000 people across Iraq found that 70% of Iraqi's believe that security deteriorated in the area covered by the US military surge and 67-70% of the Iraqi's polled believe that the surge hampered conditions for political dialogue, reconstruction and economic development.

"There is not 'a' civil war in Iraq but many civil wars and insurgencies involving a number of communities and organization struggling for power." Chatham House Report [*BBC News*, May 17, 2007]

"Sunnis understand they need to control areas around Baghdad if they eventually want to control Baghdad... And they don't have Baghdad right now." Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixson, commander of U.S. forces in northern Iraq [*Associated Press*, March 7, 2007]

"There's just no question [that violence has declined since a spike in June]... Murder victims are down 80 percent from where they were at the peak [and attacks involving improvised bombs are down 70 percent]." Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., Commander of the U.S. forces in Baghdad [*The New York Times*, November 9, 2007]

2006 An attack on a major Shiite religious site in February triggered a rise of sectarian violence throughout the year, leading some to label the situation in Iraq as a civil war. The increased violence, in the form of car bombings, explosions, gunfire, kidnappings and targeted killings, has left the country in complete upheaval, causing the internal displacement of an estimated 1.5 million people, and an equal number of refugees. Along with the sectarian violence, journalists, academics and physicians have also been targeted by insurgents. The government has been criticized for its inability to maintain control over the situation through police and security forces. The mandate of the U.S.-led multinational force was extended by the UN security council for another year. [*UN Security Council Resolution 1723* - see <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8879.doc.htm>]

"Terrorism and bombing campaigns, lawlessness, kidnapping and targeted killings continue to wreak havoc on civilians in Iraq, with the rights of women, children, detainees and religious leaders grievously violated, according to a new United Nations report." (Women, children, clergy

and detainees suffer abuses in strife-torn Iraq: UN. UN News Centre. January 18, 2006.)

"There are now thought to be 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Iraq, as well as an estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries. Each day as many as 2,000 people cross the border into Syria as the trend accelerates." (Escalating violence in Iraq prompts UN aid official to call for urgent help from leader, UN News Centre. October 11, 2006.)

"...if current patterns of discord and violence prevail for much longer, there is a grave danger of a breakdown of the Iraqi State, and potentially of civil war, which would be detrimental not only to the Iraqi people, but also to countries in the region and the international community in general." (Iraq is at 'crossroads' warns Annan, as reports say 100 civilians are killed every day. UN News Centre, September 11, 2006)

2005 Major fighting between US-led troops and insurgents resulted in the death of thousands of civilians and combatants. US troops launched large-scale military operations particularly in Anbar province against insurgents in control of several towns while insurgents attacked foreign troops and Iraqi state forces with daily shootings and bombings. Al-Qaida in Iraq carried out numerous suicide bombings including major attacks on Shia civilians. Fighting between Iraqi and foreign rebels was also reported.

"More than a dozen explosions ripped through the Iraqi capital in rapid succession Wednesday, killing at least 160 people and wounding 570 in a series of attacks that began with a suicide car bombing that targeted laborers assembled to find work for the day. Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility." [Slobodan Lekic, *Associated Press*, September 14, 2005]

"Fighting erupted Wednesday between followers of the rebellious Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr and his opponents in the holy city of Najaf, killing at least four people and wounding at least 20, officials said." [Kirk Semple, *The New York Times*, August 25, 2005]

"Despite months of assurances that the forces were on the wane, the guerrillas and terrorists battling the American-backed enterprise here appear to be growing more violent, more resilient and more sophisticated than ever...American commanders say the number of attacks against American and Iraqi forces has held steady over the last year, averaging about 65 a day. But the Americans concede the growing sophistication of guerrilla attacks and the insurgents' ability to replenish their ranks as fast as they are killed." [Dexter Filkins and David S. Cloud, *International Herald Tribune*, July 25, 2005]

2004 Intense fighting between coalition forces and insurgents continued, killing thousands despite a US declaration of the end of major combat operations. Suicide-bomb attacks on civilians and Iraqi and coalition security personnel also occurred across the country, including in the heart of Baghdad. Some of the most intense fighting took place during a November coalition siege of the rebel stronghold of Fallujah. The US reported the deaths of over 50 coalition troops and 1,600 insurgents but did not report civilian deaths estimated in the hundreds. Kidnappings and assassinations remained common tactics employed by insurgents.

"Meanwhile, the U.S. invasion of Fallujah, launched on 8 November, brought the city largely under control of U.S. and Iraqi government forces, but a wave of attacks in central Iraq and northern city of Mosul cast doubt on claims the insurgency was significantly weakened as a result. The U.S. said over 50 troops and approximately 1,600 insurgents died in the invasion." [*International Crisis Group*, December 1, 2004]

"Violence surged in the run-up to the handover, with coordinated attacks in five cities on 24 June killing over 100. The security situation across Iraq remained unstable, with daily bombings, kidnappings and assassination attempts on Iraqi officials, along with strikes on oil infrastructure." [*International Crisis Group*, July 1, 2004]

"Violence continued with a series of large-scale attacks mainly targeting Iraqis: On 1 February suicide bombers struck offices of Kurdish political parties PUK and KDP, killing 101, including several senior Kurdish officials. Two apparent suicide car bombs on 10 and 11 February killed around 100 Iraqi men waiting in line for police and army jobs. Twin suicide attacks on the

Coalition base in al-Hillah on 18 February left 11 Iraqis dead and dozens of Coalition soldiers wounded." [*International Crisis Group*, March 1, 2004]

2003 On March 20, following the expiration of a US-ultimatum issued to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq or face war, US warplanes performed "decapitation strikes" targeting Hussein and other senior government officials. These unsuccessful strikes were followed by six weeks of a US-led military campaign involving mostly US troops with the UK being the second largest contributor. Troops entered Iraq and moved throughout the country virtually unopposed, until reaching the outskirts of Baghdad. Resistance by the Republican Guard was sporadic and unorganized and did not prevent the fall of Baghdad in April.

On May 1, President Bush declared major combat operations over in Iraq; however, fighting remained intense for the remainder of the year. Initially, much of the armed resistance faced by coalition forces was centred on the "Sunni Triangle" of central Iraq and was believed to come from loyalists of the old regime. Later attacks in the northern and southern areas of the country used guerrilla-style tactics involving ambushes and bombings, and became increasingly sophisticated. While military forces bore the brunt of the attacks, non-military personnel and institutions were also targeted including the August bombing of the United Nations headquarters and the October bombing of the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters. In addition, groups within Iraq targeted rivals. The assassination of Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim, a top Shia cleric, in August was attributed to loyalists of the former Baathist regime and clashes occurred between militant Shia factions vying for power.

The intensification of the conflict over the year, the increase in attacks on non-military institutions and civilians and the changing nature of the attacks, including more frequent suicide bombings, led analysts to believe more attacks were undertaken by combatants who had entered Iraq.

"U.S. forces killed 46 Iraqis in fierce fighting Sunday while repulsing a series of ambushes against two U.S. military convoys in the central Iraqi city of Samarra, military officials said ...

The Iraqi deaths – the most reported in a single day since ... May – came as other Iraqi fighters were demonstrating an increasing ability to attack foreigners. On Sunday, two South Korean electrical workers were shot dead and two others were wounded when their convoy was ambushed south of Tikrit ... Also ... suspected insurgents gunned down two Japanese diplomats along a road near Tikrit... The attacks on nonmilitary targets appear to be part of an effort by Iraqi guerrillas to broaden their insurgency, which has expanded over the past month beyond the center of resistance in the Sunni Muslim towns west and north of the capital. The insurgents have repeatedly struck in the far north ... as well as in the predominantly Shiite Muslim south." [*The Washington Post*, December 1, 2003]

"More U.S. troops have died in November than in any month since the war began in March, according to Defense Department figures... The surge has represented an increase in the effectiveness and the frequency of guerrilla attacks... Most of the other U.S. combat fatalities occurred in ground attacks by enemy fighters using weapons that have become characteristic of their resistance: guns, rocket-propelled grenades and remote-controlled explosives. At one point during the month, military officials reported that the number of guerrilla attacks was averaging more than 40 a day." [*The Washington Post*, November 29, 2003]

"The U.N. special representative in Iraq and at least 16 others died Tuesday in a bomb explosion that ripped through the organization's headquarters in Baghdad... Some U.S. officials believe Iraq is becoming a major 'magnet' for al Qaeda terrorists, who now pose more of a threat than remnants of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party ... James Rubin, a former U.S. deputy secretary of state, agreed that the terrorism milieu in Iraq has changed, pointing to more attacks against civilian targets and fewer large-scale attacks against American soldiers." [*CNN.com*, August 20, 2003]

"U.S. military commanders were forced to acknowledge yesterday that their soldiers are fighting an all-out guerrilla war in Iraq, as a flurry of attacks and killings made it apparent that U.S.-led forces do not have control over the country..." [*globeandmail.com*, July 17, 2003]

"Major combat operations in Iraq are over, and Americans and her allies have prevailed, President

Bush said this evening on the flight deck of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier." [*American Forces Press Service*, May 1, 2003]

"U.S. stealth warplanes launched 'decapitation strikes' aimed at killing Saddam Hussein or some of his top lieutenants at dawn in Baghdad today in what was the opening shot of an American-led war in Iraq. President George W. Bush went on national television late last evening to announce that a war to oust the Iraqi president and disarm Iraq had begun, just two hours after an ultimatum had passed for Mr. Hussein to leave the country." [*globeandmail.com*, March 20, 2003]

Number of Deaths:

Total: As of early 2009, the low end estimate of civilian deaths recorded by Iraq Body Count was 91,121-99,500. Taking into account undocumented civilian deaths as well as those of Iraqi insurgents (over 19,000), coalition forces (4,538), US contractors (over 917) middle range estimates suggest that 151,000-155,000 have been killed. This estimate is also corroborated by new data from the Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group. High end estimates, which typically measure all "excess deaths" (directly and indirectly attributable to the conflict) suggest 1-1.2 million deaths, as well as 4.5 million displaced, 1-2 million widowed and 5 million orphaned. In addition, 5,000 to 6,000 Iraqi troops were killed while fighting under the former Iraqi government. Within the civilian totals, more than 100 journalists, most of whom were Iraqi but include 13 Europeans and two Americans, have been killed as well as more than 40 media support workers. The UN reports that 200 academics have been killed since the start of the war for sectarian reasons or because of their secular views and teachings.

[Source: *Iraq Body Count*, March 2009; Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 31/01/2008; *The Nation*, February 2, 2009; *Iraq Coalition Casualty Count*; *Reuters*, 3/7/2007; *USA Today*, 5/21/2008]

"Considering the number of dead and displaced, this is probably the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world." James Paul, executive director of Global Policy Forum [*The Star*, September 20, 2007]

"Everyone can guess, but what is the real number? I'm not sure if anyone knows how many people are killed due to the violence and terrorism." Sadiq al-Rikabi, political advisor to the Prime Minister [*Washington Post*, January 8, 2007]

"Every time there's a new thing that the U.S. government wants the military to do and there's not enough military to do it, contractors are hired... When we see the 3 000 service member deaths, there's probably an additional 1 000 deaths we don't see." Deborah Avant, political science professor at George Washington University [*Associated Press*, February 23, 2007]

"A team of American and Iraqi epidemiologists estimates that 655,000 more people have died in Iraq since coalition forces arrived in March 2003 than would have died if the invasion had not occurred...The survey was done by Iraqi physicians and overseen by epidemiologists at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. The findings are being published online today by the British medical journal the *Lancet*." ['Study Claims Iraq's 'Excess' Death Toll Has Reached 655,000', Brown, David, *Washington Post*, October 11, 2006]

"From 2003 through mid-2006, the Baghdad morgue received 30,204 bodies, according to the L.A. Times. The Health Ministry documented 18,933 deaths from "military clashes" and "terrorist attacks" between Apr. 5, 2004 and Jun. 1, 2006. Together, this amounts to 49,137 deaths." ['50,000 Dead, But Who's Counting?' Resende, Juliana Lara. *United Nations Inter Press Service News Agency*, July 7, 2006]

2008 Iraq Body Count databases documented civilian deaths directly resulting from conflict; they added 8,315–9,028 civilian deaths to their database in 2008. This number is a large decrease from the approximately 25,000 civilian deaths in each of 2006 and 2007, and more on par with the figures in the first 20 months of the invasion (from May 2003-December 2004, they recorded 15,355 deaths). The statistics also illustrate that the most significant drops have occurred in Baghdad. During the latter half of 2008 the rate of US military casualties fell to a range of 13-29 monthly, the lowest rates since the conflict began, and totaled 314 for the year. The US State Department cites estimates that 1,900 Iraqi security forces members were killed in 2008.

[Sources: *Iraq Body Count*, March 2009; Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 31/01/2008; *The Nation*, February 2, 2009; *Iraq Coalition Casualty Count*]

"According to Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I), civilian deaths from violence during the year fell 72 percent to approximately 15 per day; Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) deaths from violence fell by 57 percent to five per day, compared to the previous year." [US State Department, *2008 Human Rights Report, Iraq*]

2007 Between 22 586 - 24 159 Iraqi civilians were killed during 2007. U.S. military deaths were 902, representing the highest loss of American troops in one year since the 2003 invasion. During 2007 car bombs and snipers were estimated to kill an average of one hundred people per day. A lack of access to adequate sanitation and clean water continue to threaten the lives of Iraqis and as a result, two thirds of deaths of children under five are caused by diarrhea and respiratory infections. In November, the number of Iraqi's killed dropped to 718, which is the lowest monthly death toll since just prior to the 2006 bombing of the Shiite Shrine that provoked retaliatory sectarian violence. The number of US troop deaths also declined for the sixth consecutive month and was recorded at 37 (the lowest number since March 2006).

"We've gone from horrific levels of murder to very bad, which is an improvement but not a reason to celebrate... At these so-called low levels, there's a massive number of excess deaths still likely to occur." Richard Garfield, Professor at Columbia University and Manager of Health and Nutrition for the World Health Organization [*The Associated Press*, December 4, 2007]

2006 It is estimated that close to 35,000 Iraqis were killed, mostly civilians. U.S. military deaths were 822.

"During 2006, a total of 34,452 civilians have been violently killed and 36,685 wounded." (*UN Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Report 1 November – 31 December 2006*)

"The latest announcement brought the toll of U.S. military deaths in Iraq to at least 822 in 2006, according to the AP count." ('U.S. death toll in Iraq passes 3,000', *Associated Press*, Jan 1, 2007)

2005 Between 9,000 and 12,000 people were killed this year of whom nearly half were civilians.

2004 Between 3,500 and 9,500 people were killed by conflict violence in 2004. According to various reports an estimated 848 US soldiers and 38 non-US coalition soldiers were killed. Accurate numbers for other deaths were much more difficult to produce but independent media and several organizations monitoring the situation estimated that between 2,400 and 7,500 Iraqi insurgents and civilians were killed. A number of foreign contractors were also killed in 2004.

2003 According to independent reports, between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in 2003, with most deaths occurring among Iraqi civilians. Of this total, several hundred coalition soldiers (mostly US), approximately 2,000 Iraqi combatants, and over 5,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in the six weeks of official war (March 20 - May 1).

Political Developments:

2008 On September 24, the Iraqi Parliament passed legislation for provincial elections to take place in late January 2009, excluding the ethnically-divided Kirkuk region (Tameem) and the three Kurdish provinces. On November 27th 2008, the Iraqi Parliament also approved a long anticipated, bilateral Status of the Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the United States. The SOFA requires US troops to leave Iraq by the end of 2011, but legalizes their operations on the streets of Iraq until mid-2009 and allows them to work in close consultation with Iraqi military forces until their final withdrawal. Approximately 143,000 US troops remained in Iraq at the end of 2008, and groups which bitterly opposed the SOFA saw it as a means of extending the illegitimate presence of these foreign forces in Iraq. The SOFA also strengthened the rule of law, by making US military contractors subject to Iraqi law, and requiring US security forces to abide by certain civil rights and regulations. Iraqi Parliament also approved a Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) governing bilateral co-operation in a wide range of activities. The UN also expanded its mandate in November, hoping to emphasize its role in advancing political dialogue and reconciliation in Iraq. On December 31st, the mandate of some 5,000 UK and Australian troops was extended until July 2009. In

December in Baghdad, thousands protested for the release of journalist Muntadar al-Zaidi, who was detained for trail after throwing shoes at then-US President George Bush.

"Definitely, today is an historic day for Iraqi-American relations, signing the security pact after months of difficult talks and negotiations" – Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari speaking about the SOFA, 16/11/2009 [*RadioFreeEurope*, 17/11/2009]

2007 Ministers from the Concord Front, Iraq's largest Sunni bloc, resigned after accusing the government of failing to appropriately manage Shiite militias and the arbitrary arrest and detention of Sunnis citizens. The government was also accused of making unsatisfactory progress with regards to security, specifically disarmament, and a failure to implement appropriate, sustainable and timely reconstruction programs. The U.N. Security Council unanimously passed a US-Britain proposed resolution calling for a greater U.N. presence in Iraq, and the allowance of a U.N. special envoy to be deployed. The envoy will assist the Iraqi government with political, economic, electoral, and constitutional matters, promote human rights and refugee issues, and facilitate dialogue among ethnic and religious groups and between the government of Iraq and neighbouring countries. The resolution, which would increase the number of U.N. staff in Iraq from 65 to 95, was opposed by U.N. Staff Council, who want all U.N. personnel to be removed from the country until security improves. The Security Council also agreed to an Iraqi request to extend the mandate of the U.S.-led multinational force. Despite this request, political tension between the United States government and PM Maliki was expressed by both parties following a meeting held in Syria between the Prime Minister and the government of Iran, which the U.S. did not support, and the decision by the U.S armed forces to begin arming Sunni tribesmen to combat al Qaida, which many worry will increase the risk of sectarian war following the eventual withdrawal of international forces. More than two million Iraqis remain displaced within Iraq and thousands continue to flee the country daily due to the violence. Syria is home to 1.2 million Iraqi refugees, who until recently could enter the country fairly easily, however, the passing of new legislation will restrict the movement of refugees within Syria. Many fear that new laws will force Iraq's displaced population to remain in dangerous areas within Iraq and may increase civilian casualties and make recruitment easier for armed militias. The U.S. underwent increasing international scrutiny for its role in human rights abuses of prisoners within Iraq, as well as the behaviour of contracted American companies within Iraq. The CIA investigated a shooting of civilians by Blackwater, an American security company, and found that at least fourteen of seventeen Iraqi civilians killed by company personnel were unjustified. The American government is currently voting on a bill which would extend criminal legislation currently only applied to soldiers to all contractors operating in war zones.

"While the Baghdad security plan was intended to reduce sectarian violence, U.S. agencies differ on whether such violence has been reduced... The capability of Iraqi security forces have not improved... Overall... Key legislation has not been passed, violence remains high, and it is unclear whether the Iraqi government will spend \$10 billion in reconstruction funds [as promised]." U.S. Government Accountability Office report on political and military progress in Iraq, 'Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq' [*Washington Post*, August 20, 2007]

"The United Nations looks forward to working in close partnership with the leaders and people of Iraq to explore how we can further our assistance under the terms of this resolution." Ban Ki-Moon, U.N. Secretary General [*BBC News*, August 13, 2007]

"The government has made tremendous strides toward the day when security will be provided by a self-sufficient, Iraq national security force... While the Iraqis will always be grateful for their liberation from an absolute despot, no Iraqi government official - indeed, no Iraqi citizen - wants the presence of foreign troops on Iraqi soil on day longer than is vitally necessary... But today, and for the foreseeable months at least, the presence of (multinational) troops is vitally necessary not only for Iraq but also to safeguard regional security and stability." Hoshyar Zebari, Iraq's Foreign Minister [*Associated Press*, June 14, 2007]

2006 The results of elections for Iraq's first democratically elected non-transitional government were released in February. The Shia coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance won a majority of 128 seats, followed by two Sunni blocs, the Iraqi Accordance Front and the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, which received a combined total of 55 seats, the Kurdish alliance received 53, and the secular Iraqi National List received 25. Women make up over 25% of the government. Under the current constitution, this government will serve four years. In April, Prime Minister Jafari resigned and was replaced by Nouri al-Maliki. The government has been criticized for its

inability to maintain control in light of increasing sectarian violence. Due to the rise of sectarian violence, a bill was passed in October that could lead to the division of Iraq into separate semi-autonomous regions. The bill prevents this from taking place until 2008. [BBC News]

2005 National elections were held in January. The Shia-based United Iraqi Alliance won 140 seats, the Kurdish Alliance won 75 seats and the Iraqi List (interim PM Ayad Allawi's alliance) won 40 seats in the 275 seat Transitional National Assembly. Sunni political groups boycotted the elections. Two months later the interim National Assembly approved the creation of a new Iraqi government led by Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as President and by Shia leader Ibrahim Jaafari as Prime Minister. In October, a divisive Iraqi constitution was approved during a nation-wide referendum when Shia and Kurdish support ensured the necessary majority despite overwhelming Sunni voter opposition. Parliamentary elections to establish Iraq's first non-transitional government were held in late December with the participation of Sunni-based parties. The outcome of the elections remained unclear by year's end although observers expected a victory for the United Iraqi Alliance, a collection of Islamist Shiite groups.

"Iraq's rushed constitutional process has deepened ethnic and sectarian rifts and is likely to worsen the insurgency and hasten the country's violent break-up, the International Crisis Group (ICG) said on Monday. ... The draft constitution drawn up since June bears the imprint of the Shi'ite and Kurdish parties that dominate the parliament elected in January polls largely boycotted by Sunni Arabs. ... Sunni Arabs reject the draft mainly because they believe its provisions on federalism could lead to Iraq's break-up, leaving them in a landlocked heartland without oil resources." [Alistair Lyon, *Reuters*, September 26, 2005]

2004 Six months after the December 2003 capture of Saddam Hussein, the US-led coalition handed power to an interim Iraqi government. The UN Security Council gave unanimous approval to a plan drafted by the US and UK governments to hold elections and to keep coalition forces in Iraq beyond the handover of power. A leading Shia politician, Ayad Allawi was appointed Iraq's first Prime Minister by the Interim Governing Council and top Shiite cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani brokered a new ceasefire in August between US forces and followers of radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr after the original ceasefire broke down.

A fact-finding mission by UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi led UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to conclude that Iraqi elections were not feasible before the end of 2004 or early 2005. The Interim Governing Council signed a provisional constitution and the Iraqi electoral commission set 30 January as the date for nation-wide elections despite concern that a postponement was needed to ensure effective representation of Sunni Arab Muslims. Predicting a Sunni absence from polls, the Iraqi Islamic Party withdrew from the elections process and other Sunni parties did not plan to run candidates.

"The U.S.-led military occupation of this restive land formally ended Monday, 15 months after Saddam Hussein was swept from power, with Iraq's new leaders taking over in a surprise ceremony designed to foil attacks by guerrilla insurgents whom U.S. forces are still struggling to vanquish." [*New York Times*, June 29, 2004]

"Ayad Allawi, a leading Shia politician who had opposed Saddam Hussein from exile, is set to become Iraq's prime minister. Given the state the country is in, his task will be unenviable." [*Economist*, May 21, 2004]

2003 Although a November 2002 UN Security Council resolution called for Iraq's full disclosure of its program for weapons of mass destruction (WMD), by early 2003 the consequences for Iraqi non-compliance remained unclear. For several weeks in February, the US and the UK attempted to persuade members of the Security Council of the necessity of military action against Iraq. The US claimed Iraq posed an enormous threat to regional and international peace and security because of its WMD stockpiles and the political links between Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the al Qaeda terrorist network. However, the progress made by UN weapons inspectors in January and February led several members of the Security Council to call for ongoing inspections and to insist that the use of force be authorized only as a last resort. The Security Council stalemate led to the US forming a coalition, numbering approximately 40 states, which agreed that enforcement action was required against Iraq, regardless of UN authorization.

On March 20 the US declared war on Iraq and within several weeks had appointed an interim government to

replace the deposed Saddam Hussein, who remained underground until his capture in December. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), consisting of US officials, was created to implement a system of governance in Iraq and, in July, the CPA appointed an Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) comprised of Iraq's various ethnic and religious groups. The CPA and the IGC agreed to a transfer of power to a democratically elected government guided by a permanent constitution by December 2005.

By the end of the year, the grounds upon which the US-led coalition based its military intervention - primarily Iraq's possession of WMD— was discredited by most analysts due to the coalition's failure to find any supporting evidence. Although the UN involved itself in the rebuilding of Iraq with the creation of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the August bombing of the UN's Baghdad headquarters led to a significant reduction in the organization's international staff posted in Iraq.

"Secretary of State Colin L. Powell conceded Thursday that despite his assertions to the United Nations last year, he had no 'smoking gun' proof of a link between the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and terrorists Al Qaeda. 'I have not seen a smoking-gun ...'Mr. Powell said, ...'But I think the possibility of such connections did exist, and it was prudent to consider them at the time that we did.'" [*The New York Times*, January 9, 2004]

"The United Nations said Wednesday it was temporarily pulling its remaining international staff out of Baghdad, joining other organizations in withdrawing after Monday's deadly suicide car bombing at the Baghdad headquarters of the Red Cross... The United Nations scaled down its staff following the Aug. 19 truck bombing at its Baghdad headquarters ... The Red Cross said it would remain in Iraq but would scale back the number of international staff ..." [*Associated Press*, October 30, 2003]

"U.S. and British forces in Iraq have been unable to find weapons of mass destruction because 'previous policies of sanctions and UN weapons inspection and destruction actually worked,' according to a report recently issued by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and the Fourth Freedom forum (FFF)... 'As a result of either stubbornness or short-sightedness, or both, the administration failed to see the full picture of how successful prior efforts had been in dismantling many aspects of the Iraqi weapons program,' the authors write. 'In fact, the efficacy of UN disarmament efforts was dismissed summarily.'" [*The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and Fourth Freedom Forum*, 'Unproven: The Controversy over Justifying War in Iraq,' June 2003]

Background:

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the subsequent UN-authorized military operation (Desert Storm) which succeeded in expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the UN Security Council imposed extensive disarmament obligations upon Iraq in its Resolution 687. In 1998, the Iraqi government announced its decision to cease cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), that had been created in 1991 to monitor Iraq's disarmament efforts, leading to harsh condemnation by the UN Security Council and the withdrawal of the Special Commission later in the year. In 2002, the US Administration called upon the Security Council to live up to its obligations as specified in Resolution 687 and insisted that either Iraq disarm itself or be forcibly disarmed by the international community. Security Council Resolution 144 of November 2002 noted that Iraq "has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions," called for the establishment of an "enhanced inspection regime," and reissued a warning that Iraq will "face serious consequences" if it did not comply with its obligations. In the months following, the level of cooperation of the Iraqi government with the weapons inspection team was hotly debated at the UN Security Council. Some members, primarily the US and the UK, argued that Iraq was not cooperating and that the existing resolutions allowed for force to be used to disarm Iraq. Others, led by France, argued that although Iraq was not cooperating in full with the weapons inspectors, an additional resolution explicitly authorizing the use of force would be required prior to any military intervention. Moreover, they argued, the recent cooperation of Iraq, albeit limited, was an indication that weapons inspections were succeeding and should therefore continue. No consensus was reached at the Security Council, preventing it from explicitly authorizing any use of force, and a US-led coalition force invaded Iraq in March 2003, deposing Saddam Hussein and capturing him in December.

[Source: *United Nations Security Council Resolutions 687 (1991), 1441 (2002)*, Jutta Brunnee, 'The Use of Force Against Iraq: A Legal Assessment,' in *Behind the Headlines*, Vol. 59, No. 4 Summer 2002 - Canadian Institute of International Affairs]

Arms Sources:

The informal dissolution of the Iraqi security forces at the time of the US-led military operation and the subsequent disbanding of these forces by the coalition authorities, resulted in the diffusion of large numbers of small arms throughout Iraq that were readily available for insurgents. Also, the US government cannot account for 190,000 weapons issued to Iraqi security forces in 2004 and 2005, and has spent 19.2 billion dollars on Iraq's security forces since 2003, specifically 2.8 billion dollars on equipping them. The influx of fighters from outside of Iraq may have been accompanied by an influx of weapons. For example, the Badr Corps which entered Iraq through Iran have reportedly received Iranian military assistance for over a decade. The US and the UK forces are supplied primarily by domestic arms industries. In addition, the transitional Iraqi government and/or the US-led forces have received conventional arms from Australia, Canada, Germany, Jordan, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Iraqi shepherds have begun digging up landmines planted during the Iran-Iraq war and are selling them to insurgents who are using the mines to create roadside bombs. It has been estimated that 12-16 million mines were planted along the Iran border, less than 10 000 of which were removed between 1998 and 2002 by U.N. forces. Approximately thirty percent of insurgent weapons found in Diyala province are a product of the Iran-Iraq war, including the mines as well as weapons caches buried by the Iraqi military. The insurgent groups are also financing arms using money that they have extorted from Iraqi contractors. As of July, 3 300 development and reconstruction projects in Anbar have been completed, with a total value of \$363 million USD. A portion of those funds have been seized and used by the insurgents to purchase arms and also to bribe Syrian border police to allow weapons as well as fighters to enter Iraq illegally.

An investigation launched into the disappearance four plane loads of weapons carrying more than 99 tonnes of AK-47's and other weapons in 2004, which the U.S. government contracted to be flown from an American based in Bosnia to Iraqi security forces in Baghdad has revealed that a Moldovan cargo firm with ties to Viktor Bout, a Russian air transporter and one of the worlds most notorious arms dealers was hired to move the arms. The plane was recorded taking off, however there is no record of the flight landing in Baghdad. This has led many to criticize the US government for its negligence in ensuring adequate diligence in keeping track of US supplied arms entering the country.

Within Iraq, many male children are employed as bomb makers by insurgents, due to the inability of many women to find employment within the country following the death of their husbands and fathers. Many Iraqis with no direct role in the conflict have also turned to small-scale arms deals for their livelihood due to the high rate of unemployment, which totals as much as sixty percent in some areas.

"A large proportion of the weapons being used by the insurgents in Iraq are actually American or European in origin - not because they are being supplied by those governments but because the weapons have found their way, either through the security forces, or commercial dealings, in the hands of the insurgents." Paul Ingram, senior analyst of the British American Security Information Council [*Radio Free Europe*, June 5, 2007]

"[the government] cannot account for about 110 000 AK-47 assault rifles, 80 000 pistols, 135 000 items of body armour, and 115 helmets reported as issued to Iraqi forces, the weapons disappeared from army records between June 2004 - September 2005... [since 2004, the military] has not consistently collected supporting records confirming the dates the equipment was received, the quantities of equipment delivered, or the Iraqi units receiving the items." [*Agence France Presse*, August 1, 2007]

"They're going out there and farming them [the landmines]... Shepherds are digging them up and selling them on the black market... All of that unexploded ordinance and minefields and shrapnel - it's still out there." statement made by an unnamed American soldier [*Associated Press*, March 5, 2007]

"We work for about eight hours a day and are supervised by two men. They give us food and at

the end of the day we get paid for our work. Sometimes we get \$7 USD and sometimes we get \$10 USD, depending on how many bombs we make... The bombs are used to fight American soldiers. I was really afraid in the beginning but then my parents told me it was for two good causes: the first is to help our family eat; and the second is to fight occupation forces." Abdul-Rafiz, 11 yrs old, employed by Sunni insurgents [*Reuters*, May 14, 2007]

Economic Factors:

Iraq substantially increased its estimates of the amount of oil and natural gas deposits on Sunni lands after oil companies were paid tens of millions of dollars over the past two years to re-examine seismic data across the country and retrain petroleum engineers. Sunni dominated areas were formerly believed to have a lack of natural resources comparable to other areas of the country and therefore were encouraged to participate and support a strong central government, which it was hoped would distribute oil resources equitably as needed. These discoveries may increase the calling for by many separatist and insurgent groups to divide the country along sectarian and regional boundaries.

Farmers in southern Iraq have started to grow opium poppies for the first time, which has sparked fears that Iraq may become a major drug producer comparable to Afghanistan. Drug smugglers have continued to use Iraq as a transit point for heroin, produced from opium labs in Afghanistan.

The U.S. agency overseeing reconstruction in Iraq has criticised the Iraq government for failing to provide basic services such as food and shelter for eight million people and cited that economic corruption and mismanagement were equivalent to a 'second insurgency' in Iraq. In 2006, the government spent 22% of its budget on vital rebuilding projects, while spending 99% of the allocated budget for salaries. Prevailing insecurity is said to have created an underground economy which supports gangs, smugglers and extremists who are profiting from the conflict. High rates of unemployment have led many citizens otherwise uninvolved in the conflict to participate in arms dealing and weapons manufacturing, as well as to become involved in the insurgency as a means of survival.

"What this [oil resources] does is, it gives Anbar and Sunnis an economic future different from phosphate and cement... This gives them a future and a hope." Brigadier Gen. John Allen of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, deputy commanding general of Multi-National Force-West, responsible for the Anbar province [*International Herald Tribune*, February 20, 2007]

"Definitely unemployment and deprivation develop tension and hostility. Let us take the suicide bombers, nearly all of them belonged to deprived families. I think that unemployment and deprivation produce the human fuel for terrorist groups." Ali al-Zubi, sociology professor at Kuwait University [*Al Jazeera*, March 30, 2007]

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