

THE MIDDLE EAST EXPLAINED

A project of the Duke-UNC Consortium
for Middle East Studies

STUDENT VIEWING GUIDE

Video: The Iraq War: Causes and Ramifications

Timeline

1920: Iraq is formed out of Ottoman provinces into a British colonial mandate territory.

1932: Iraq gains independence from Britain.

1968-2003: The Ba'ath Party rules Iraq.

1979-2003: Saddam Hussein is president of Iraq.

1970s: Hussein nationalizes oil and other industries.

August 2, 1990: Iraq invades and annexes Kuwait.

August 6, 1990: The United Nations Security Council imposes economic sanctions on Iraq.

1991: Coalition forces from 34 nations declare war against Iraq to restore Kuwait's independence.

March 20, 2003: A United States-led coalition invades Iraq, Iraq war begins.

2003-2004: A United States-led military occupation is established and run by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

2004: The insurgency continues: U.S. and Iraqi forces clash with insurgent fighters in the city of Falluja.

2004-2005: Iraqi Interim Government, appointed by the United States, governs Iraq until a new constitution is drafted.

2005-2006: The Iraqi Transitional Government, approved by the Iraqi National Assembly, rules in a caretaker capacity until a new government is formed and confirmed.

2006: The first government of Iraq rules. Since 2006, elections have been held in Iraq to elect the president and prime minister.

2007: Sectarian violence continues. President Bush commits an additional twenty-thousand troops to help bring stability to Baghdad.

2011: American presence in Iraq ends in 2011, but the Iraqi insurgency continues and intensifies as fighting from the Syrian Civil War has spilled into the country.



American soldiers topple a statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on April 9, 2003. Photo Credit: Getty Images

Key Terms

Iraq: Officially known as the Republic of Iraq, a predominantly Arab nation in the Middle East. Historically known as Mesopotamia, Iraq has continued to play an important role throughout world history.

Saddam Hussein: Saddam Hussein was a member of the Ba'ath Party and the president of Iraq for 24 years, 1979-2003. He ruled as a brutal dictator and suppressed minorities, fought a war with Iran, and nationalized industries. He was captured by American forces during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and was executed.

Ba'athism: A secular ideology that supports a united Arab society, regardless of faith. The Ba'ath party supports one-party states and is against multi-party democracy. Ba'athists think that that socialism is important for achieving a united Arab society.

Gulf War: A war waged by coalition forces from 34 nations, led by the United States, against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The coalition forces were victorious and restored Kuwait to independence.

United Nations Sanctions against Iraq: Sanctions (limits on imports) restricting trade and financial resources were placed on Iraq beginning in 1990 as a punishment for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and were largely enforced until 2003. High rates of malnutrition, lack of medical supplies, and diseases from lack of clean water were reported during sanctions.

Iraq War: The Iraq War began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by a United States-led coalition that overthrew the government of Saddam Hussein. The Bush administration invaded because they believed that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and posed an immediate threat to the United States and its allies. WMD were never found. The conflict has continued for over a decade as an insurgency emerged to oppose the occupying forces and post-invasion Iraqi government. Most U.S. forces were withdrawn by 2011, but civil war continues to divide the country.

De-Ba'athification: A policy by the U.S.-led occupation forces and following Iraqi governments to remove the Ba'ath Party's influence in the new Iraqi political system. Many employees in the public sector, as well as military personnel, were removed from their jobs.

Comprehension Questions: The Iraq War: Causes and Ramifications

1. Who was Saddam Hussein?

2. Why did the Iraqi regime decide to invade Kuwait?

3. How were the citizens of Iraq affected by the United Nations Security Council sanctions?

4. Compare and contrast the relationship between Western countries (the United States, Europe) and Iraq during the 1970s-1980s with their relationship in the 1990s-2000s:

5. What reasons were given by the United States for invading Iraq in 2003?

6. What was the effect of the “de-Baathification” of Iraq on Iraqi society?

7. In the past, Iraq was seen as a strong country in the Middle East. How do you think that the dissolution of Iraq has impacted people in other countries throughout the region?