

*The Secretariat of the Eleventh Annual  
Virginia International Committee Simulation  
Presents:*

# The League of Arab States



*Chaired by Chris Adell*

VICS XI

Greetings VICS delegates,

I'm your chair, Chris Adell. I'm a fourth year economics and foreign affairs major with a concentration in the Middle East. I like ice cream, puppies, and short walks on the beach. (Long walks make me tired, but I'll go if I get ice cream at the end.) I'm from Great Falls, Virginia (about twenty minutes outside of Washington, DC.) I'm a transfer student, and before the University of Virginia I went to Virginia Commonwealth University and lived in Richmond, Virginia during my first two years of school.

The League of Arab States Committee will allow you to use the power and diplomacy of your member state to shape the greater Middle East. Through this, you should gain a better understanding of the states in the region and the situation concerning their relations with their Arab counterparts while having a bunch of fun. The committee will attempt to hammer out a unified Arab League stance on a few issues. The focus will depend on you, but a few central topics will be Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Iran, democracy, terrorism, oil, and regional economic development.

More specifically, the committee will need to decide to what extent the Arab League is willing to support (or not support) the emerging Iraqi government, factoring in the rising influence from Iran, increasing Sunni/Shi'i tensions, and major Western military presence. Concerning Israel and Palestine, the committee can weigh in on the Gaza pullout, the extent to which they will support (or not support) an emerging Palestinian State in Gaza and the West Bank, their responses to Israeli military actions in the occupied territories, their policies concerning new borders in Gaza and potentially in the West Bank, and most importantly, a position concerning the democratic process in Palestine, including any support (or lack thereof) for political parties like Hamas or Fatah. Also, the committee should formulate an Arab position concerning Iran's support for anti-Israeli groups, their nuclear ambitions, and their influence in Iraq.

My main concern is for you guys to enjoy yourselves while doing this, so if there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask. (Candy, friends, love, happiness, etc.) I'm glad you've joined and I look forward to our committee.

Sincerely,

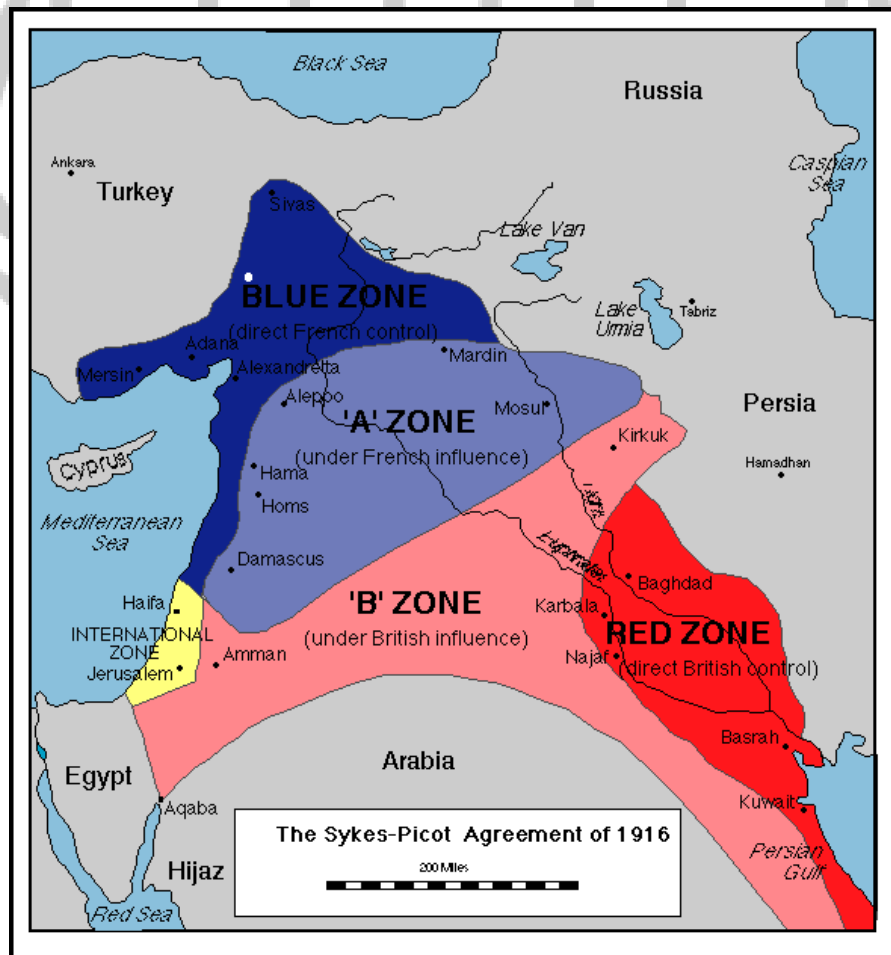
Chris Adell

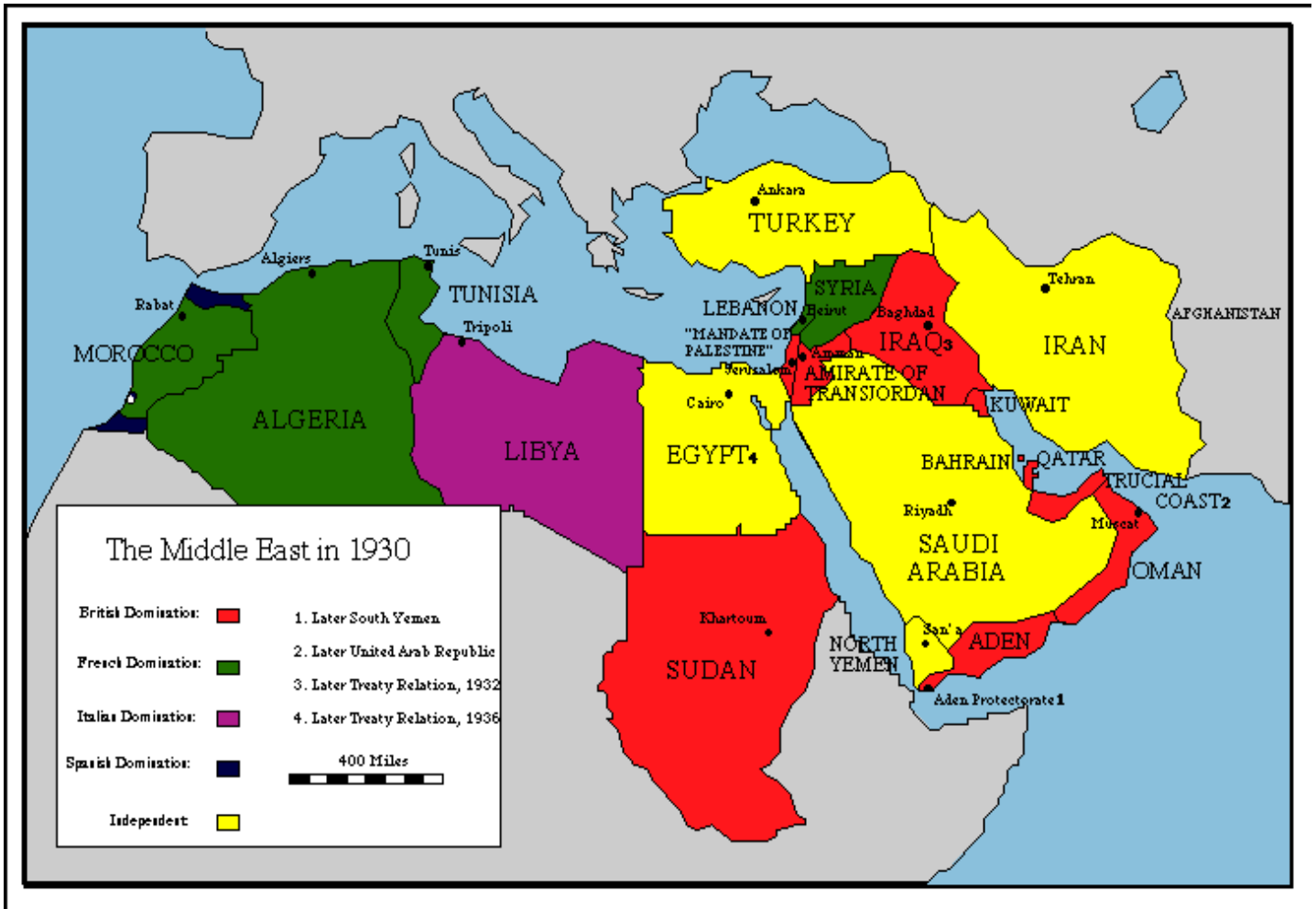
VICS XI

The League of Arab States



The majority of Arab states in the League came into existence after gaining independence from colonial powers during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The bulk of Arab states were parts of the Ottoman Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and up until WWI, when Britain and France split them up into two mandates under the secretly negotiated Sykes-Picot Agreement and then the San Remo Conference of 1920. The French mandate was over Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Turkey, while the British mandate included Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan.





The Ottoman Empire, followed by the French and British, left a lasting legacy in the Arab nation. Despite individuals' strong self identification as members of an Arab nation, the exiting colonial powers left behind arbitrarily defined borders and handpicked governments. While the borders have persisted, the governments in this region are typically unstable and the region has arguably seen more conflicts in the post WWII era than any other. Anti-colonial sentiment and intense distrust for world powers still runs high in the Arab world today, as revealed by the hostility with which the United States' Iraq War was met.

Though a true Arab nation state has yet to emerge, Arab nationalism has manifested itself in other forms. One of these is the League of Arab States. Founded by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen on March 22, 1945, the League was to "Serve the common good of all Arab countries, ensure better conditions for all Arab countries, guarantee the future of all Arab countries and fulfill the hopes and expectations of all Arab countries."<sup>2</sup> The League strongly resembles the United Nations in institutional structure and procedure, with a Secretary General, Deputy General

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~gov46/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Arab\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Arab_States)

Secretary, Council of the Arab League, Arab Economic and Social Council, Technical Committees, Specialized Ministerial Councils, Arab Specialized Organizations, Arab Unions, Joint Arab-Foreign Chambers of Commerce, Missions, General Secretariat Departments, and General Secretariat Sub Departments.

The League has expanded to include a wider array of states that have since gained independence or asserted an Arab identity. The League now includes Libya, who joined in March 28, 1951, Sudan, January 19, 1956, Morocco, October 1, 1958, Tunisia, October 1, 1958, Kuwait, July 20, 1961, Algeria, August 16, 1962, United Arab Emirates, June 12, 1971, Bahrain, September 11, 1971, Qatar, September 11, 1971, Oman, September 29, 1971, Mauritania, November 26, 1973, Somalia, February 14, 1974, Palestine, succeeding to the position held by the Palestine Liberation Organization since September 9, 1976, Djibouti, April 9, 1977, Comoros, November 20, 1993, and Eritrea, who joined the Arab League as an observer in January 2003. It should be noted that Libya announced its withdrawal on October 24, 2002. This would have been effective one year later; however Libya cancelled and reaffirmed a few times until it finally cancelled in May 25, 2003, remaining a member of the League.<sup>3</sup>



4

Since its inception, the League has been a historically important and sometimes effective policy tool for member states and a key factor in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, the Iran-Iraq War, Arab nationalism, economic cooperation between Arab states, and relations with other states, including Iran and western nations.

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Arab\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Arab_States)

<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Arab\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Arab_States)

Timeline <sup>5</sup>
1942: The United Kingdom promotes the idea of an Arab League in an attempt to win over Arabs as allies in war against Germany.
1944: Official representatives from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan (Jordan and Palestine) meet in Alexandria, Egypt, and agree to form the League of Arab States.
1945: Arab states sign the Arab League Pact, formally inaugurating the League.
1945: Arab league member states declare a boycott of Jewish businesses in Palestine (continued after the establishment of Israel as the Arab League boycott).
1946: Arab League members sign the Cultural Treaty.
1948: Arab League members declare war on Israel.
1950: League members sign the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty.
1953: Members establish the Economic and Social Council; Libya joins the Arab League.
1956: Sudan joins the Arab League.
1958: Morocco and Tunisia join the Arab League; The United Nations recognizes the League and designates it as the UN's organisation for education, science and culture in the Arab region.
1961: Kuwait joins the Arab League.
1962: Algeria joins the Arab League.
1964: The first summit convenes in Cairo; the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO) forms; a second league summit that autumn welcomes the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
1967: South Yemen joins the Arab League.
1971: Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates join the Arab League.
1973: Mauritania joins the Arab League.
1974: Somalia and Palestine (represented by the PLO) join the Arab League.
1976: Arab League summit in Cairo authorises the formation and deployment of an Arab peacekeeping force, mainly Syrian, in Lebanon.
1977: Djibouti joins the Arab League.
1979: The League suspends Egypt's membership in the wake of President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and of Egypt's peace agreement with Israel; the Arab League moves its headquarters to Tunis.
1987: The Arab League unanimously endorses a statement on Iraq's defense of its legitimate rights in its dispute with Iran.
1989: The League re-admits Egypt as a member; the League's headquarters returns to Cairo.
1990 (May): A summit meeting in Baghdad criticizes Western efforts to prevent Iraq from developing advanced weapons technology.
1990 (August): At an emergency summit, 12 out of the 20 states present condemn the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; unified Yemen joins the Arab League.
1993: Comoros joins the Arab League.
1994: The Arab League condemns the Gulf Cooperation Council's decision to end the secondary and tertiary trade embargo against Israel, insisting that only the Council of the Arab League can make such a policy change, and member states can not act independently on such matters.
1996: The Arab League Council determines that Iraq, Syria and Turkey should share the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers equitably between them. (This followed complaints by Syria and Iraq that extensive construction work in southern Turkey had started to restrict their water-supply.)
1998: The Arab League Secretary-General condemns the use or threat of force against Iraq; Arab League interior and justice ministers sign an agreement to strengthen cooperation against terrorism; the Arab League denounces bomb attacks against US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and US missile strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan.
2002: During an annual summit in Beirut in March, the Arab League proposes full normalization of relations with Israel in exchange for Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 internationally recognized borders, implying Israeli evacuation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, east Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the return of all Palestinian refugees and their descendants to Israel.
2002: Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi threatens to withdraw from the League, because of "Arab incapacity" in

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Arab\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Arab_States)

resolving the crises between the United States and Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

2003: The League votes 21-1 in favor of a resolution demanding the immediate and unconditional removal of US and British soldiers from Iraq. (Kuwait casts the lone dissenting vote.)

### Iraq



The United States' erroneous beliefs concerning the Iraq War's immediate aftermath established a poor start for its most ambitious nation-building endeavor since World War II. Lack of foresight set in motion a chain of events that may have doomed the experiment from the start. US officials' blind faith in the now defunct opinions of Iraqi exiles, who assured US officials that they would be "greeted as liberators," caused them to neglect the need for a post war plan to maintain order following the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. In the absence of such a plan, Iraq became a power vacuum in which the basic functions of the now absent state, such as protection of property in the face of rampant looting, were opportunistically undertaken by latent Iraqi opposition groups, greatly intensifying their power. Unconcerned with and often openly hostile to US interests, these groups found themselves in firm command and control of enclaves within Iraq to an extent rivaling the control of the US, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), and eventually the new Iraqi government. These Iraqi tribal, religious, and ethnic groups possessed a degree of infrastructural power that the ill equipped US and CPA, following in the path of their historical predecessors, would soon realize the necessity to co-opt in order to implement their otherwise impotent decrees.

In the northern Kurdish regions of Erbil, Dohuk, and Suleimaniya, the PUK, KDP, and Peshmerga militia had long been performing the functions of a state, dating back to a 1970 Autonomy Accord. After the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush

called on the “Iraqi people to rise up and overthrow Saddam Hussein.”<sup>6</sup> The Kurds took up arms and defied Saddam, even taking over Kirkuk. The uprising prompted Saddam Hussein’s Republican Guard to take back Kirkuk and push into Kurdish regions, using helicopter gunships to brutally put down the revolt. Only a few years after the terrible Anfal Campaign, Kurdish memories of its disastrous consequences displaced two million people when the Republican Guard began to hit back.<sup>7</sup> The US response was to establish a no fly zone, preventing Saddam’s helicopters from continuing their reign of terror. Though many Kurds had already died at the hands of Saddam’s helicopters, the Kurds managed to retain their autonomy under the cover of the US no fly zone. As a result, when the US invaded in March 2003, the Kurds’ lives were largely uninterrupted. Kurdish Peshmerga fought with the US paratrooper units in the north, further strengthening their role in Iraq.

In the south, Shi’i militias had long been repressed under Saddam Hussein. They had risen up against Saddam before, at the urging of George H.W. Bush after the Gulf War, but in what became known as the great betrayal, “no help had been forthcoming from the United States and their coalition partners when revolts erupted in the south...”<sup>8</sup> Considering this, they still rose up and even fought Iraqi forces during the March 2003 invasion. “British soldiers report that the Shi’i population of Basra appears to be rebelling against the Iraqi militia. The anti-Saddam resistance group based in Iran, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, confirmed that the Shi’i revolt was taking place in Basra.”<sup>9</sup> The Badr Brigade, the Shi’i militia aligned with the SCIRI, effectively placed their coercive power in the hands of local religious leaders in line with SCIRI beliefs. Political parties like Hakim’s SCIRI and Jaafari’s Al-Da’wa became the dominant political forces in the south, and along with the religious leader’s whose power they augment, took up the role of providing state functions. This is most evident in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, where the Badr Brigade is headquartered and Shi’i fervor at its highest.

The emerging political order in the north and south, despite a few incidents of violence, were a stark contrast to the Sunni regions of central Iraq, including Baghdad and the infamous Sunni Triangle. Whereas the north and south had latent groups mobilized by resistance to Saddam, this region was largely the beneficiary of Saddam’s regime, and the heart of its support. “Saddam had been known for courting Sunni Muslims, like himself, from small towns along the Tigris...”<sup>10</sup> With resistance to Saddam’s rule almost non-existent, this region had no latent groups that could take up state functions in the absence of Saddam’s regime. “Some residents estimated that as many as 90 percent of their fellow townspeople were party members; as many as a fourth were employed by the army, government, or intelligence. As they saw it, Saddam guaranteed their interests and provided them patronage.”<sup>11</sup>

After US soldiers took Baghdad on April 9, 2003, they failed to maintain order and the ensuing power vacuum became immediately apparent. “The immediate

---

<sup>6</sup> (Tripp 258)

<sup>7</sup> (Tripp)

<sup>8</sup> (Tripp)

<sup>9</sup> ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003\\_Iraq\\_war\\_timeline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_Iraq_war_timeline))

<sup>10</sup> (Shahdid 223)

<sup>11</sup> (Shahdid 224)



manifestation of this failure was the inability- perhaps even the unwillingness- to establish order on the ground after Saddam Hussein was toppled from power. In the days and weeks that followed, Iraqis... attacked and ransacked virtually every significant public building in Baghdad, while ravaging other cities such as Basra.”<sup>12</sup> All the basic functions of government were disregarded by the US, and Coalition soldiers were unprepared for the post war chaos. If a state is a monopoly of the legitimate use of coercion, the US did nothing to maintain any semblance of a monopoly on coercion, much less more advanced functions like the provision of basic services and utilities. “Scared police stayed off the streets. Lawlessness was the status quo... The long blackouts in searing heat that began toward the war’s end remained the norm... With electricity went water, sanitation, air-conditioning, and the security brought by light at night... Trash and soggy leftovers piled on corners ripened in the heat.”<sup>13</sup>

There was a chance the US could have been received with some degree of cooperation or at least passivity on the part of many Iraqis, on condition that they prove themselves. “They rid us of our repression, there’s no question about that. But we want to know how it turns out. Are they here for our sake? They said they came to save us. Now they have to prove it.”<sup>14</sup> The first scenes from Baghdad after the US had taken control of the city were a testament to the exuberance of many Iraqis. The atmosphere immediately following the fall of Saddam Hussein was relatively hopeful. “First—and this is really the overarching principle—the United States seeks to liberate Iraq, not occupy Iraq—If the President should decide to use force, let me assure you again that the United States would be committed to liberating the people of Iraq, not becoming an occupation force.”<sup>15</sup>

With the inception of the CPA on April 21, 2003 and the passage of UN Resolution 1483 on May 22, 2003, directly acknowledging that the US was an occupying power, the cooperation was decreasingly forthcoming. The US, under the auspices of the CPA, proceeded to dismantle the entire state apparatus. Bremer’s infamous Order Number 2 disbanded the Iraqi Army and began the process of de-Ba’athification. In combination with the US’s inability to stop the rampant looting, the CPA’s active dismantlement of the Iraqi Army was perceived as complicity in the humiliating destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, especially by the overwhelmingly Sunni soldiers and bureaucrats who comprised that infrastructure. The US, who had told the Iraqi people, “We will help the Iraqi people to find the benefits and assume the duties of self-government. The form of those institutions will arise from Iraq’s own culture and its own choices,” was now seen as complicit in the destruction of Iraq’s institutions.<sup>16</sup> To this day, most quality of life indicators have yet to reach prewar levels.<sup>17</sup>

The process of de-Ba’athification has created a huge pool of resentment amongst the disenfranchised Sunni population. This resentment has become the driving force behind the insurgency, which has become the formidable challenge to nation-building in Iraq. The insurgency has seriously called anyone’s monopoly on coercion in Iraq into question. The insurgency has followed a cyclical and often erratic pattern of activity

---

<sup>12</sup> (Diamond 282)

<sup>13</sup> (Shahdid 135)

<sup>14</sup> (Shahdid 125)

<sup>15</sup> (Paul Wolfowitz, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003\\_-\\_2004\\_occupation\\_of\\_Iraq\\_timeline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_-_2004_occupation_of_Iraq_timeline))

<sup>16</sup> (George W. Bush, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003\\_-\\_2004\\_occupation\\_of\\_Iraq\\_timeline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_-_2004_occupation_of_Iraq_timeline))

<sup>17</sup> (Brookings)

typical of asymmetric warfare.<sup>18</sup> The absence of a linear pattern has made it impossible to predict the strength or activity of the insurgency, but there are some notable points that serve to provide evidence concerning the objectives, motivations, structure, strength, and support of the insurgency.

The insurgency is composed of a disparate array of factions that are unified in their opposition to Coalition and US occupation of Iraq including foreign jihadists, Iraqi Islamists, ex-Ba'athists, and Iraqi nationalists.<sup>19</sup> Depending on the faction, opposition to the occupation can entail opposition to the new Iraqi government, who are seen by some as collaborators, or for some more sectarian insurgent groups, this can even entail attacks on civilians of ethnic groups that have benefited from the occupation or the new Iraqi government. Although these groups ultimately have different objectives, there is some evidence of cooperation among them. "Two days after Sadr launched his revolt, residents of the traditionally Sunni neighborhood of Ahdamiya, considered by many the birthplace of Iraq's Ba'ath Party, marched with Sadr's followers. Throughout Sadr's revolt, Sunni groups... hailed him as a hero... A leaflet made the rounds: 'God is greatest,' it proclaimed. 'Long live the resistance in Fallujah, long live the resistance in Sadr City. No Sunnis and no Shi'a, only Islamic unity.'... On a wall in Jihad... four exhortations were space about ten yards apart: 'Long live Fallujah's heroes,' 'Down with America and long live the Mahdi Army,' 'Long live the resistance in Fallujah,' and, finally 'Long live the resistance.'"<sup>20</sup>

The most radical groups of insurgents are the foreign jihadists, made up of Wahabis and Salafis who seek to impose shari'a law and their radical interpretation of Islam on Iraqis. They are certainly the smallest group within the insurgency, though they often come from Saudi Arabia and Syria with substantial funding.<sup>21</sup> Given their small numbers, the jihadists have little chance of actually achieving their objectives, and they tend to focus on theatrics like suicide bombings and beheadings. They are increasingly defined by the most notorious and perhaps most radical insurgent group, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al Qaeda in Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq does not appear to discriminate in its victims, though they tend to attack Shi'a more than Sunnis. Al Qaeda in Iraq has made explicit its goal of destabilizing Iraq and inciting civil war, and has claimed credit for a number of attacks that have killed many civilians, including the bombings of the Jordanian Embassy and the UN Headquarters.<sup>22</sup> The jihadists, hated by many Iraqis for their willingness to kill Iraqi civilians, have been steadily losing support, and have more recently been involved in fighting with Iraqi nationalists within the insurgency, in the form of leadership assassinations.

VICS XI

---

<sup>18</sup> (Brookings)

<sup>19</sup> (Baram)

<sup>20</sup> (Shahdid 378)

<sup>21</sup> (Brookings)

<sup>22</sup> (Binni, <http://www.freemuslims.org/news/article.php?article=343>)



Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

The ex-Ba'athists are also a minority in the insurgency, however they are an extremely well funded and well trained faction of the insurgency, especially in comparison to their nationalist counterparts. There is evidence that Saddam prepared and equipped many in his regime to wage an asymmetrical warfare after his government's fall, and many of his agents have testified to receiving large amounts of cash and information concerning weapons caches. Bremer's Order Number 2, the disbandment of the Iraqi Army, has contributed significantly to the number of ex-Ba'athists operating with the insurgency, bringing with them their arms and military training. The Sunni Triangle, with corners in Baghdad, Ramadi, and Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, is known to be the heart of Saddam's support, and is at the heart of the mostly Sunni insurgency.

The Iraqi nationalists are likely the largest contingent of the insurgency, comprised of those who resent the US occupation, and draw parallels to the Israeli occupation of Palestine or the British colonial occupation of Iraq. They do not necessarily oppose the new Iraqi government, and some may even be co-opted into the political process. They are motivated by a myriad of different reason, from tribal retaliation for some specific grievance like a humiliating search or detainment, to a religious opposition to any foreign presence on Iraqi soil. Iraqi nationalists, the bulk of the insurgency, might not necessarily have to be defeated militarily, which could prove a very daunting task, given their seemingly inexhaustible support base and large numbers. They often have specific grievances that can be addressed, such as unemployment, a lack of utilities, or the failure of the CPA and Iraqi government to maintain order.<sup>24</sup> They are also believed to be mobilized by the smaller but better funded Islamist and ex-Ba'athist contingents of the insurgency, which creates reason to believe that without the support of Islamist and ex-Ba'athist funds and organization, and without the encouragement of tribal and religious leaders, most Iraqi nationalists would end their violent insurgent activities.

Muqtada al-Sadr's movement is perhaps the most notable nationalist movement, and an example of co-option. A slum of about two million Shi'a north of Baghdad, called Saddam City since its 1959 founding, chose a name better fitting its sentiments after the fall of Saddam's regime, Sadr City. Muqtada al-Sadr, son of the famous cleric Mohammad Sadeq al-Sadr who was assassinated by Saddam in 1999, used the authority bestowed upon him by his lineage to fill the power vacuum left in the wake of the US invasion. He formed the Mahdi Army, his militia, which he used to take up the functions of the state. He began to punish looters and thieves with vigilante justice, and eventually began to enforce Islamic shari'a law, forbidding alcohol and forcing conservative dress

<sup>23</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zarqawi>

<sup>24</sup> (Baram)

upon Iraqis.<sup>25</sup> Though he is officially a lower ranking Shi'i cleric, he emerged as a formidable political force and continued to gain more power and recruits for his Mahdi Army, as tensions with other Shi'i clerics and the CPA rose. The CPA blamed Sadr for the April 12, 2003 murder of relatively liberal cleric Abdul Majid al-Khoei. The tensions became outright fighting following the CPA closure of Sadr's newspaper, Al Hawza, for inciting violence through its claims that the US was behind some of the suicide bombings against civilians. The closure was met with protests that turned violent in early April 2004, and fighting between coalition forces and the Mahdi Army broke out in a few major cities where they took control of key locations, including the holy city of Najaf.<sup>26</sup>



Muqtada al-Sadr

At the same time as the fighting broke out with Sadr's Mahdi Army, US Marines were preparing for an assault on Fallujah in retaliation for the murder and mutilation of four employees of Blackwater, a private military contractor. Fallujah had completely fallen to Sunni insurgent control. Thousands of fighters in Fallujah stood ready to confront the US, which had cordoned off the city in preparation for its assault. The simultaneity of the two uprisings amounted to an all out revolt in both Sunni and Shi'i regions against the CPA.<sup>28</sup> As the US Marines advanced on the city, fears of a media backlash forced the CPA to halt the advance, resulting in a stalemate. Fallujah would remain cordoned off until a massive assault reclaimed the city in November 2004.

The fighting with Sadr ended in a truce after large numbers of casualties on both sides, and Sadr agreed to disarm and join the political process. He maintained some control around holy sites in Najaf, through the time of the CPA's handover of sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government under Ayad Allawi. Sadr eventually declared that US patrols were violating the truce and proceeded to resume fighting around Najaf in August 2004. The most respected and powerful cleric in Iraq, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, brokered another truce, which sent the fighters home and put the much more powerful and much more peaceful Sistani in control of the holiest sites, including the Imam Ali Mosque. After the fighting with Sadr was largely resolved, the US and Iraqi Interim Government realized the need to clear the Sunni insurgency in Fallujah ahead of the January 2005 elections to ensure their legitimacy. In November 2004, US Marines with Iraqi Security Forces used "overwhelming force" to eliminate the insurgency in Fallujah, ending the last

<sup>25</sup> (Diamond)

<sup>26</sup> (Shahdid)

<sup>27</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muqtada\\_al-Sadr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muqtada_al-Sadr)

<sup>28</sup> (Shadid 178)

instance of complete insurgent control over a major city. It was still not a complete victory, as most of the fighters in Fallujah fled and have likely joined the insurgency elsewhere, where they continue to mount attacks on Coalition forces and Iraqis participating in the new government.



Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani

The January elections, boycotted by much of the Sunni community, led to a new government. The first direct nationally elected government was to preside over the ratification of the Iraqi Constitution at the insistence of Ayatollah Sistani.<sup>30</sup> With the new government in place, voters ratified the Iraqi Constitution in October 2005 with opposition from mainly Sunnis, including two provinces with over two-thirds no votes and a majority no vote in Ninawa just short of the third two-thirds threshold that could have voted down the constitution. The focus was increasingly taken off of the US and placed to a greater extent on the new Iraqi Government. Statistics show that although attacks on Coalition forces seemed to become stable following elections, dropping greatly in recent months, attacks on Iraqis have been steadily increasing.<sup>31</sup> The conflict is increasingly being fought along ethnic lines, with Shi'a and Kurds operating under the auspices of the Iraqi state and disenfranchised Sunnis turning to violence. The power struggle is increasingly sectarian.

The US, in order to stabilize Iraq, has consistently resorted to co-opting opposition, allowing Sadr, an alleged murderer, to join the political process and allowing the Peshmerga and the Badr Brigades to become the police, national guard, and army in their respective regions.<sup>32</sup> The US appears to be continuing its de facto policy of co-option in dealing with the now almost exclusively Sunni insurgency. The problem with this policy in regards to the Sunni insurgency, is that there does not seem to be a single or even handful of Sunni groups that legitimately represent the Sunni population, much less the Sunni insurgency. There is no significant change in attacks when supposedly large political parties are brought into the political process, like recent talks with Hamid's Iraqi

<sup>29</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sistani>

<sup>30</sup> (Diamond)

<sup>31</sup> (Brookings)

<sup>32</sup> (Diamond)

Islamic Party, nor has there been a significant decrease in attacks since the recent January 2006 Iraqi elections, in which Sunnis participated.

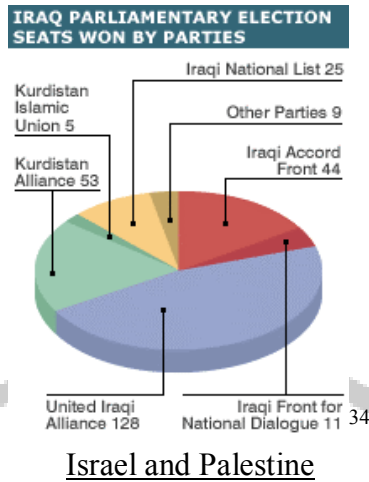
Though maintaining goodwill amongst the population immediately following the war certainly would have helped, nation-building in Iraq was never an easy task. There were huge obstacles to overcome even without an insurgency and a hostile population divided on ethnic lines, most of which are almost impossible to address without first ending the insurgency. Iraq has the unfortunate position of a rentier state, which causes the leaders, paid heavily by oil wealth, to have no need to build a state bureaucracy to maintain administrative institutions for the collection of taxes and management of resources. Of course, their decision is certainly economical so long as they continue to effortlessly receive large revenues from oil. Iraq, with its huge reserves of oil, gives groups a lot to fight over and little room for compromise. The cost of an armed struggle is small in comparison to the vast wealth of the oil reserves at stake. The insurgency continues unabated, and although it is not impossible to make some gains in the other dimensions, progress in one does depend to a great extent on progress in the others. “In the absence of pervasive security, the prospects of widespread economic recovery or political development are very limited.”<sup>33</sup>

Whether or not the US can succeed in Iraq now largely depends on the Iraqi government. All the US has left are troops who might be able to put down violent uprisings, but can not effectively address their root causes. Only those that the US has co-opted into the political process can do this, and whether or not they are interested in doing so is still uncertain, given that the dominant Shi’i United Iraqi Alliance has retained its militias and much of its support from Iran. The political process has shown some reason to be hopeful, such as high voter turnout and increased Sunni participation in the new government, with the Sunni Iraqi Accord Front and the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue winning a significant increase in representation. Talks with Sunni parties seem to have given us a better picture of the Iraqi insurgency as well, revealing that the insurgency seems to be increasingly split between the moderate factions whose grievances can potentially be addressed, and those that will not compromise, like Al Qaeda in Iraq. In the effort to win over the people of Iraq, the new Iraqi government must take advantage of this split and work to bring the moderate Sunni groups under their umbrella, alienating the extreme groups enough to win support at their recruit base. Of course whether or not the Iraqi government proves adept enough to quell the insurgency is open to debate.

VICS XI

---

<sup>33</sup> (Dobbins 146)



<sup>34</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4630518.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4630518.stm)







In the 1880s, the Zionist movement was initiated in Europe. This movement held that the Jewish people had a right to a state of their own; most Zionists specifically held that the state should be in a part of their historic homeland, the area then known as Palestine. At that time Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire. Under Ottoman rule, Palestine had substantial regional independence, and the area was inhabited predominantly by Palestinian Arabs (about 95%, mostly Muslims, some Christians), and Jews (about 5%).

In 1917 the British army took control of Palestine and Transjordan from the Ottomans. In that year, its government issued the Balfour Declaration, viewing “with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people ... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” In the same period, the British were giving contradictory assurances to the Palestinian Arabs.

The Zionists interpreted that as a promise from the British that they would help them build a state in Palestine, in part because of divided opinions in British government, with some endorsing that view and some not.

Signed in January 1919, the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement promoted Arab-Jewish cooperation on the development of a Jewish National Homeland in Palestine and an Arab nation in a large part of the Middle East.

In 1920, the San Remo conference largely endorsed the 1916 Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement, allocating to Britain the area of present day Jordan, the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and Iraq, while France received Syria and Lebanon. In 1922, the League of Nations formally established the British mandate for Palestine and Transjordan, at least partially fulfilling Britain’s commitments from the 1915-1916 Hussein-McMahon Correspondence by assigning all of the land east of the Jordan River to the Emirate of Jordan, ruled by Hashemite King Abdullah but closely dependent on Britain, leaving the remainder west of the Jordan as the League of Nations British mandate of Palestine.

Arabs opposed the division of their lands into multiple territories under the control of various European powers, arguing that it was unjust and imperialist. Some of them—led by Grand Mufti Muhammed Amin al-Husseini—also opposed the idea of turning part of Palestine into a Jewish state, objecting to any form of Jewish homeland. This was the source of much of the Palestinian and Arab resentment against British rule. It also extended to the growing number of Jews immigrating to Palestine.

Initially, the trickle of Jewish immigration emerging in the 1880s met with little opposition from the local population. However, in the 1920s and 1930s, as Anti-Semitism grew in Europe, Jewish immigration began to increase markedly, causing Arab resentment of British immigration policies to explode. Zionist agencies purchased land from absentee landlords and replaced the Palestinian Arab tenants with European Jewish settlers. In addition, the influential Jewish trade union Histadrut demanded that Jewish employers hire only Jews. As a result, Arabs feared that they would become alienated.

As many European Jews entered Palestine illegally, British attempts at immigration restrictions were largely ineffective. Arab resentment towards the British continued to grow.

In 1936, the British proposed a partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The partition was rejected by both the Arabs and the Zionist Congress. During the years

1936-1939 there was an upsurge in militant Arab nationalism that later became known as the “Great Uprising.” The uprising came as Palestinian Arabs felt they were being marginalized. In addition to non-violent strikes and protests, some resorted to acts of violence targeting British military personnel and Jewish civilians. The uprising was put down by the British forces.

The British placed restrictions on Jewish land purchases in the remaining land in an attempt to limit the socio-political damage already done. Jews alleged that this contradicted the League of Nations Mandate which said “...the administration of Palestine... shall encourage, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency... close settlements by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not acquired for public purposes.” Jews argued that the British had allotted twice as much land to Arabs as Jews instead of the same amount. Arabs held that the contract was disproportionately in favor of Jewish settlement when the relative size of the two populations at the time was considered.

During the war and after, the British forbade European Jews entry into Palestine. This was partly a calculated move to maximize support for their cause in World War II among Arabs. That the Zionists would support the anti-Semitic Axis was unlikely (though attempts at cooperation were not entirely unheard of) and the British government considered it worth sacrificing Jewish sentiment in an attempt to gain Arab support. The immigration policy was also in response to the fact that security in Palestine had begun to tie up troops much needed elsewhere.

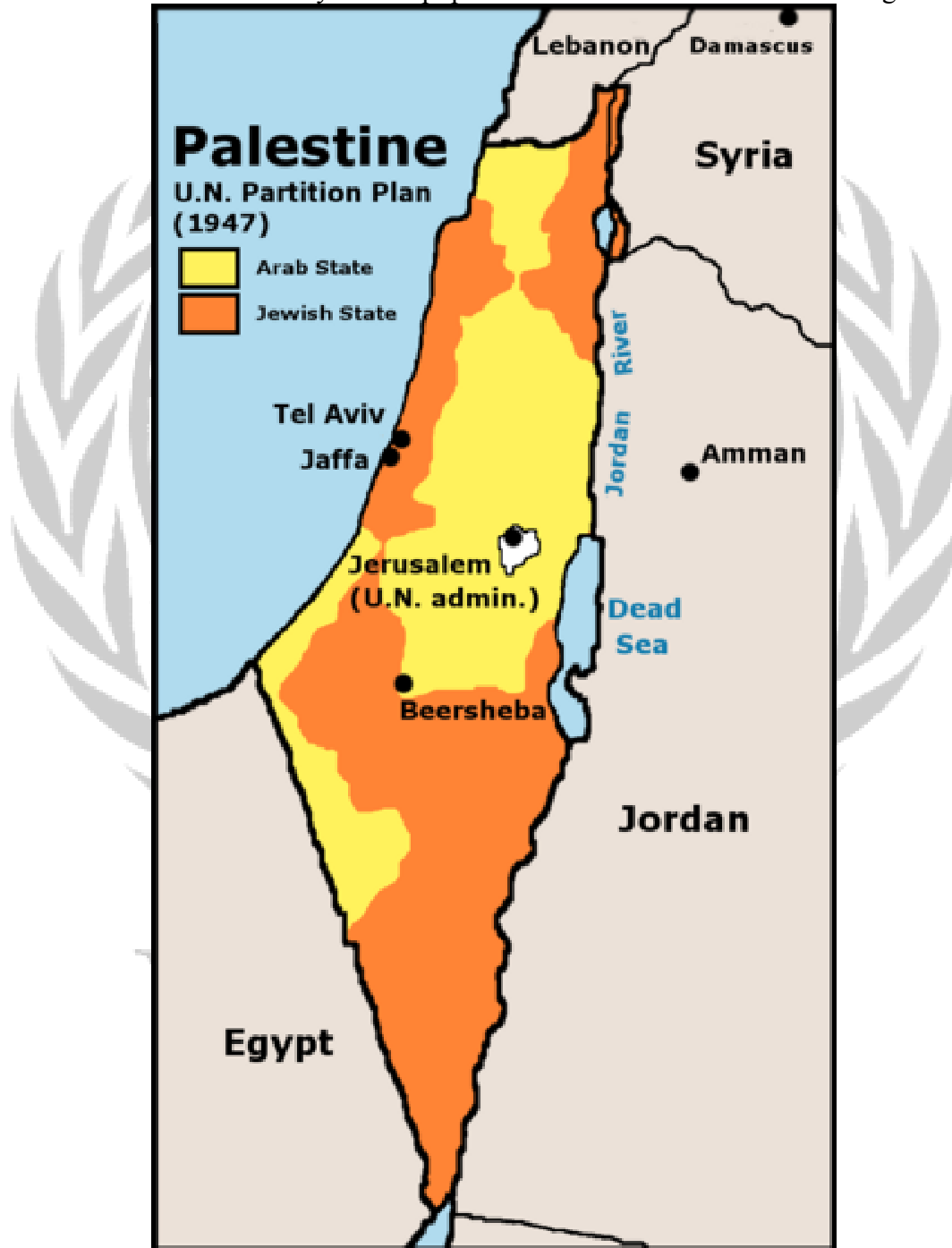
After Operation Agatha, the June 29, 1946 arrest by British authorities in Palestine of about 2700 Jewish activists and fighters, on July 22, 1946, members of the Jewish underground military organization Irgun Tsvai-Leumi bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which was the base for the British Secretariat, the military command and a branch of the Criminal Investigation Division (police). 91 people were killed, most of them civilians: 28 British, 41 Arab, 17 Jewish, and 5 others. Around 45 people were injured. This escalation of violence may have decreased British resolve to continue their presence in Palestine.

The Zionist leadership decided to begin an illegal immigration (haa’pala) using small boats operating in secrecy. About 70,000 Jews were brought to Palestine in this way between 1946 and 1947. A similar number were captured at sea by the British and imprisoned in camps on Cyprus.

Details of the Holocaust (through which the German Nazi government was responsible for the deaths of approximately six million European Jews) had a major effect on the situation in Palestine. It propelled large support for the Zionist cause and led to the 1947 UN Partition plan for Palestine.

The newly-formed United Nations appointed a committee, The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), to try to solve the dispute between the Zionists and the Palestinians. UNSCOP recommended that Mandatory Palestine be split into three parts, a Jewish State with a majority Jewish population, an Arab State with a majority Arab population and an International Zone comprising Jerusalem and the surrounding area where the Jewish and Arab populations would be roughly equal. Under the plan, the Jewish State would comprise most of the coastal plain (where the majority of Jewish settlements were located), as well as the eastern part of the Galilee and the Negev desert. The Arab State would encompass roughly a section of the Mediterranean

coast from what is now Ashdod to the Egyptian border, a section of the Negev desert adjacent to the Egyptian border, the Judean and Samaritan highlands, and the eastern part of the Galilee including the town of Acre. The town of Jaffa would be an exclave of the Arab State. The Jewish State would be roughly 5,500 square miles in size (including the large Negev desert which could not sustain agriculture at that time) and would contain a sizable Arab minority population. The Arab state would comprise roughly 4,500 square miles and would contain a tiny Jewish population. Neither state would be contiguous.



Neither side was happy with the Partition Plan. The Jews disliked losing Jerusalem, which had a majority Jewish population at that time and worried about the tenability of a noncontiguous state. However, most of the Jews in Palestine accepted the plan and the Jewish Agency, the de facto government of the Yishuv campaigned fervently for its approval. The more extreme Jewish groups, such as the Irgun, rejected the plan. The Partition Plan was rejected entirely by the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states who felt it was unfair that the Zionists should receive half of Palestine when they owned about 6% of land and constituted only one third of the population. (Proponents of the resolution pointed out that 70% of the land was state owned).

The UN General Assembly voted on the Partition Plan on November 29th, 1947. 33 states, including the US and the USSR, voted in favor of the Plan, while 13 mostly Muslim countries opposed it. Ten countries abstained from the vote. The approval of the plan sparked the Jerusalem Riots of 1947 and gave great legitimacy to the future state of Israel.

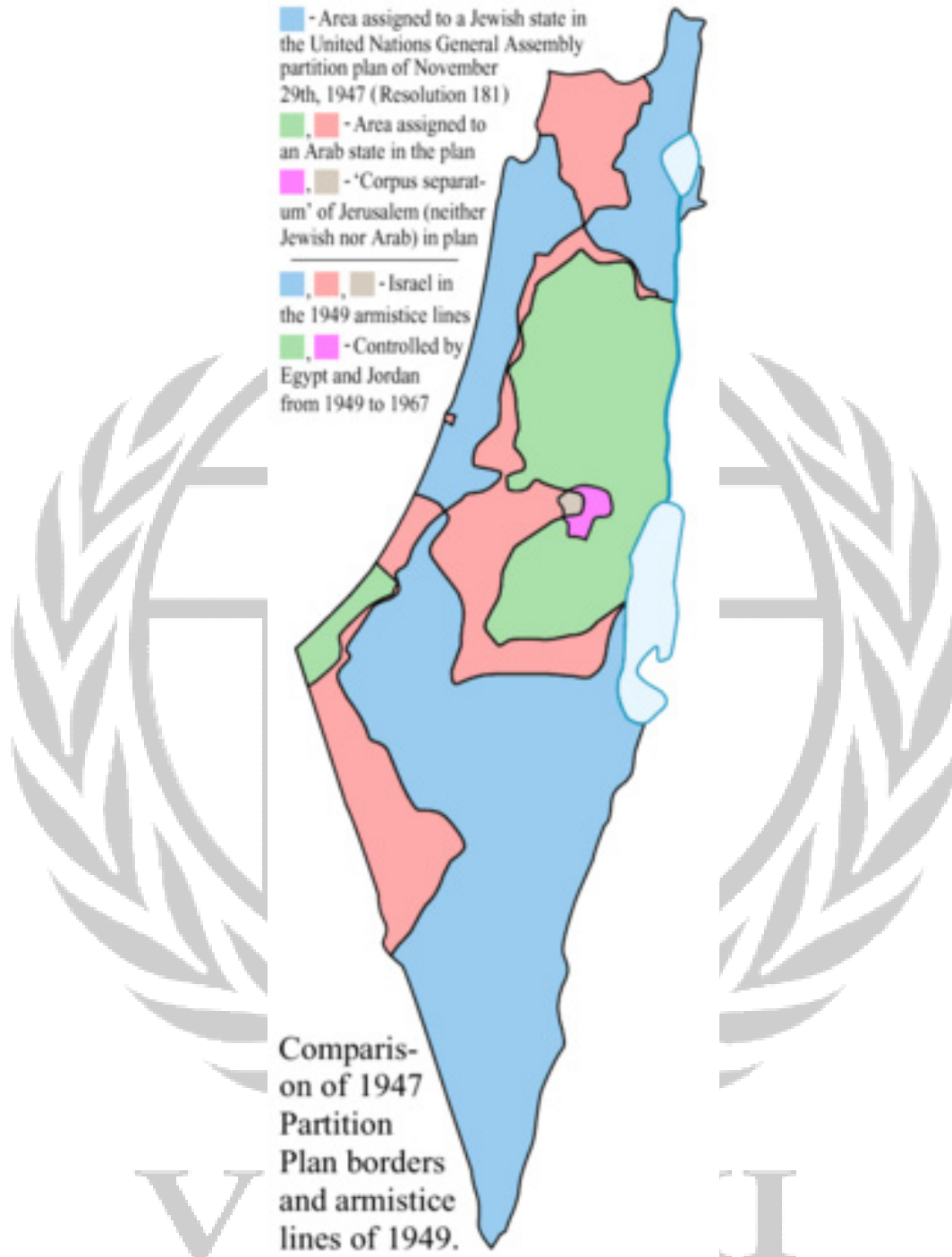
Following November 29, 1947, the Yishuv was attacked by Arab irregulars. This “battle of roads” consisted mainly of ambushes against logistical convoys and traveling Jews. Jewish underground groups carried out some raids in retaliation (including some apparently deliberate attacks on civilians, such as the Deir Yassin massacre), but full scale war erupted only after the British had left and Israel declared itself an independent Jewish state.<sup>35</sup>

The 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War, known as the “Israeli War of Independence” or “al-Nakba” (The Disaster), began after the British withdrawal and the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. The Arabs had rejected the November 1947 UN Partition Plan, which proposed the establishment of Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. Jewish and Arab militias had begun campaigns to control territory inside and outside the designated borders. Joint Jordanian, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi troops invaded Palestine, which Israel, the US, the Soviet Union, and UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie called illegal aggression, while China broadly backed the Arab claims. The Arab states proclaimed their aim of a “United State of Palestine” in place of Israel and an Arab state. They considered the UN Plan to be invalid because it was opposed by Palestine’s Arab majority, and claimed that the British withdrawal led to an absence of legal authority, making it necessary for them to protect Arab lives and property. About two thirds of Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from the territories which came under Jewish control; practically all of the much smaller number of Jews in the territories captured by the Arabs, for example the Old City of Jerusalem, also fled or were expelled. About 700,000 Arabs (estimates vary from 520,000 to 957,000) became refugees during the fighting.

The fighting ended with signing of the Rhodes Armistice, which formalized Israeli control of the area allotted to the Jewish state plus 23% of the area allotted to the Arab state. The Gaza Strip was occupied by Egypt and the West Bank by Jordan until June 1967 when they were siezed by Israel during the Six-Day War.

---

<sup>35</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Israeli-Palestinian\\_conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Israeli-Palestinian_conflict)



In 1949, Israel offered to allow families that had been separated during the war to return, to release refugee accounts frozen in Israeli banks (these were eventually released in 1953), to pay compensation for abandoned lands, and to repatriate 100,000 refugees (about 15% of those who had fled). This number would have included some 35,000 refugees whose return had already been negotiated and was underway. The Arabs rejected this compromise, at least in part because they were unwilling to take any action that might be construed as recognition of Israel. They made repatriation a precondition for negotiations, which Israel rejected.

In the face of this impasse, Israel didn't allow any of the Arabs who fled to return and, with the exception of Transjordan, the host countries where they ended up did not grant them — or their descendants — citizenship. As of 2004, most of them, and their offspring, still live in refugee camps. The question of how their situation should be resolved remains one of the main issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians who fled or were expelled from the areas that became Israel were not allowed to return to their homes, and took up residence in refugee camps in surrounding countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and the area that was later to be known as the Gaza Strip. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was established to alleviate their condition.

Over several years after the 1948 war ended, approximately 900,000 Jews fled the Arab countries they were living in, in many cases owing to anti-Jewish sentiment, expulsion (in the case of Egypt), or, in the case of Iraq, legal oppression of these 900,000, two thirds ended up in refugee camps in Israel, while the remainder migrated to France, the United States and other Western or Latin American countries. Since that time, Israel has maintained that an exchange of population had occurred, and that the Jews fleeing Arab countries constitute refugees equivalent in status to the estimated 750,000 Palestinian refugees forced to live in refugee camps in the Middle Eastern countries. Furthermore, Israel has charged that Palestinian refugees were neglected by most Arab nations, whereas Jewish refugees were integrated into Israeli society, and that this neglect is the true cause of the poverty and misery experienced by the residents of those camps, not their flight or expulsion from Israel as the Palestinians believe.<sup>36</sup>

The 1956 Suez War was a joint Israeli-British-French operation, in which Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula and British and French forces landed at the port of Suez, ostensibly to separate the warring parties, though the real motivation of Britain and France was to protect the interests of investors in those countries who were affected by Egyptian President Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal. Israel justified its invasion of Egypt as an attempt to stop attacks upon Israeli civilians, and to restore Israel shipping rights through the Straits of Tiran, which Egypt claimed was within its territorial waters. The invading forces agreed to withdraw under U.S. and international pressure, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai as well, in return for the installation of U.N. separation forces and guarantees of Israeli freedom of shipment. The canal was left in Egyptian (rather than British and French) hands.

1956 to 1967 saw the rise of Nasserism; the founding of the United Arab Republic in 1958 and its collapse in 1961; disputes between Israel and Syria over water and border areas; continued fedayeen raids, mostly from Syria and Jordan, and Israeli reprisals; and the increasing alignment of the Arab states with the Soviet Union, who became their largest arms supplier.

In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded. It was the first Palestinian organization that worked for the right of Palestinian refugees to return, and, initially, for the destruction of Israel. From the start, the organization used armed struggle in the conflict with Israel. From 1969 to 2004 the PLO was led by Yasser Arafat.

The Six-Day War, 1967 began as a strike by Israel, which Israel and its supporters consider preemptive, against Egypt and Syria following the Egyptian closure of the

---

<sup>36</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab-Israeli\\_conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab-Israeli_conflict)

Straits of Tiran (a casus belli, according to a possible interpretation of international law), a build up of troops along the Syrian border, expulsion of U.N. peacekeepers from the Sinai, stationing some 100,000 Egyptian troops at the peninsula, and a public announcement by Nasser that he intended to destroy Israel. (In fact Nasser had said this would be an objective only if Israel “embarks on an aggression against Syria or Egypt”). Surprise Israeli air strikes destroyed the entire Egyptian air force while still on the ground. A subsequent ground invasion into Egyptian territory led to Israel’s conquest of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. In spite of Israel’s request to Jordan to desist from attacking it, both Jordan and Syria began to shell Israeli targets; Israel responded by capturing the West Bank from Jordan on June 7, and the Golan Heights from Syria on June 9. The war also created a new wave of 200,000 to 300,000 Palestinian refugees. They also have neither been allowed to return nor granted citizenship in their host countries.



The War of Attrition was a limited war fought between Egypt and Israel from 1968 to 1970. It was initiated by Egypt as a way to recapture the Sinai from Israel who had occupied it since the Six-Day War. The war ended with a cease-fire signed between the countries in 1970 with frontiers at the same place as when the war started.

When the cease fire came into effect, Israel had lost territory on the east side of the Suez Canal to Egypt but gained territory west of the canal and in the Golan Heights. The 1973 Yom Kippur War began when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise joint attack in the Sinai and Golan Heights. The Egyptians and Syrians advanced during the first 24–48 hours, after which momentum began to swing in Israel's favor. By the second week of the war, the Syrians had been pushed entirely out of the Golan Heights. In the Sinai to the south, the Israelis had struck at the "hinge" between two invading Egyptian armies, crossed the Suez Canal (where the old cease-fire line had been), and cut off an entire Egyptian army just as a United Nations cease-fire came into effect. Israeli troops eventually withdrew from the west of the Canal and the Egyptians kept their positions on a narrow strip on the east allowing them to re-open the Suez Canal and claim victory.

The PLO was recognized as "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people by the Arab League at their meeting in Rabat, Morocco in 1974.

After the PLO was ousted from Jordan, its previous base, in 1970 it relocated to southern Lebanon. From there it carried out attacks into Israel. Ending these attacks was one of the reasons given for the 1982 Lebanon War as a result of which the PLO was forced to relocate to Tunisia.

At the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, the Palestinian Black September group, a militant faction of the PLO, carried out the Munich massacre, resulting in the deaths of eleven Israeli Olympic athletes. It was among the first Palestinian attacks to become world news.

Operation Litani was the official name of Israel's 1978 invasion of Lebanon up to the Litani River. The invasion was a military success, as PLO forces were pushed north of the river. However, international outcry led to the creation of the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeeping force and a partial Israeli retreat.

The 1982 Lebanon War began when Israel attacked Lebanon, justified by Israel as an attempt to remove the Fatah militants led by Yasser Arafat from Southern Lebanon (where they had established, during the country's civil war, a semi-independent enclave used to launch terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians). The invasion was widely criticized both in and outside Israel, especially after the bloody Sabra and Shatila Massacre took place. It was carried out by Phalangist Christian Arab militias, allied to Israel, on September 16-17, 1982. Estimates of victims ranged from 700 to over 3000. For its involvement in the Lebanese war and its indirect responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila Massacre, Israel was heavily criticized, including from within. An Israeli Commission of Inquiry found that Israeli military personnel had several times become aware that a massacre was in progress without taking serious steps to stop it. Although the attack succeeded in exiling Arafat to Tunisia, Israel became entangled with various local Muslim militias (particularly Hezbollah), which fought to end the Israeli occupation. By 1985 Israel retreated from all but a narrow stretch of Lebanese territory designated by



Israel as the Israeli Security Zone. The UN Security Council Resolution 425 confirmed that as of June 16, 2000, Israel had completely withdrawn its forces from Lebanon.<sup>37</sup>



Yasser Arafat

The First Intifada, 1987-1993, began as an uprising of Palestinians, particularly the young, against the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The exiled PLO leadership in Tunisia quickly assumed a role, but the uprising also brought a rise in the importance of Palestinian national and Islamic movements. The Intifada started by a group of youth who started throwing rocks at the Israel occupying forces in Jabalia (Gaza Strip) in December 1987. Children of Palestine were the leaders of this uprising and were called (Atfal Al-Hijara). The Intifada ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords by Israel and the PLO on September 13, 1993.

The Gulf War, 1990-1991, began with the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait and did not initially involve direct military engagement with Israel. An international coalition led by the United States which included Arab forces was assembled to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. To draw Israel into the confrontation and fracture the multinational coalition, Iraq launched Scud missiles on Israeli cities and on Israel's nuclear facilities at Dimona. However, under strong pressure from the U.S. which feared direct Israeli involvement would threaten the unity of the coalition, Israel did not retaliate against Iraq and the multinational coalition ousted Iraqi forces from Kuwait. During the war, the Palestinian leadership and King Hussein of Jordan allied themselves with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Kuwait and other Gulf Arab monarchies then expelled more than 400,000 Palestinian refugees and withdrew their support from the Palestinian cause, which was one of the factors leading to the PLO signing the Oslo Accords.

---

<sup>37</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Israeli-Palestinian\\_conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Israeli-Palestinian_conflict)



Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton, and Yasser Arafat

Since the Oslo Accords, the governments of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) have been officially committed to an eventual two-state solution. The main unresolved issues between these two bodies are the status and future of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem which comprise the areas for the proposed State of Palestine, Israeli security, Palestinian security, the nature of a future Palestinian state, the fate of the Palestinian refugees, the settlement policies of Israel, and the ultimate fate of settlements, sovereignty over Jerusalem's holy sites, including the Temple Mount and Western Wall (Wailing Wall) complex.

The al-Aqsa Intifada began in late September, 2000, around the time Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon and a large contingent of armed bodyguards visited the Temple Mount or Al-Haram As-Sharif complex in Jerusalem and declared the area eternal Israeli territory. Widespread riots and attacks broke out in Jerusalem and many major Israeli cities, and spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the months after the death of Yasser Arafat on November 11, 2004, and his succession by Mahmoud Abbas, the Intifada is largely thought to have come to an end. An Israeli Human Rights group B'Tselem estimated the death toll to be around 4000.

In 2002, Saudi Arabia offered a peace plan in the New York Times and at a summit meeting of the Arab League in Beirut. The plan, based on UN Security Council Resolution 242 and Resolution 338, but going further, essentially calls for full withdrawal in return for fully normalized relations with the whole Arab world. This proposal received the unanimous backing of the Arab League for the first time.

In response, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said: "...the Saudi step is an important one, but it is liable to founder if terrorism is not stopped... It is... clear that the details of every peace plan must be discussed directly between Israel and the Palestinians, and to make this possible, the Palestinian Authority must put an end to terror, the horrifying expression of which we witnessed just last night in Netanya."<sup>38</sup>

One current peace proposal is the Road map for peace presented by the Quartet of the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States on September 17, 2002. Israel has also accepted the road map but with 14 "reservations". Israel has implemented a controversial disengagement plan proposed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. According to plans submitted to the United States, Israel has stated that it will remove its entire "permanent... civilian and military presence" in the Gaza Strip, (namely 21 Jewish settlements there, and four in the West Bank), but will "supervise and guard the external envelope on land, will maintain exclusive control in the air space of Gaza,

<sup>38</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab\\_League\\_and\\_the\\_Arab-Israeli\\_conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League_and_the_Arab-Israeli_conflict)

and will continue to conduct military activities in the sea space of the Gaza Strip.” The Israeli government argues that “as a result, there will be no basis for the claim that the Gaza Strip is occupied territory,” while others argue that the only effect has been that Israel “would be permitted to complete the wall (the Israeli West Bank Barrier) and to maintain the situation in the West Bank as is.”

Gaza has been forcibly evacuated of all Jewish settlers due to the withdrawal ordered by Ariel Sharon, however the future of the West Bank, comprising a large chunk of land in Israel, historical Judaea, is yet to be determined. Israel currently plans on expanding existing large West Bank settlement blocs, and maintains the current impasse in the peace process —negotiations toward a permanent peace treaty featuring a two-state solution— cannot be restarted until the Palestinian government dismantles terrorist groups.<sup>39</sup>

On January 4, 2006, Sharon suffered a massive hemorrhagic stroke, with bleeding in the brain, and was evacuated by ambulance from his ranch, Havat Hashikmim, which is in the Negev region, to Hadassah hospital, Jerusalem, to undergo brain surgery. On the night of Sharon’s stroke, in the wake of his serious illness, and following consultations between Government Secretary Israel Maimon and Attorney General Meni Mazouz, the Prime Minister was declared “temporarily incapable of discharging his powers”, and Ehud Olmert, the Deputy Prime Minister, was officially confirmed as the Acting Prime Minister of Israel. Olmert and the Cabinet have announced that the elections will take place on March 28 as scheduled. According to Israeli law, an Acting Prime Minister can remain in office 100 days after Prime Minister became permanently incapacitated before the President has to appoint a new Prime Minister. Sharon has not yet been declared permanently incapacitated and, regardless, with the next general elections being March 28, 2006, the question of long-term prime ministerial succession will be resolved in the ballot.<sup>40</sup>

On January 26, 2006, the Palestinian Central Elections Committee announced that Hamas, sworn to destroy Israel, had won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), defeating the ruling Fatah party. According to the preliminary results the List of Change and Reform obtained 42.9 % of the vote and 76 of the 132 seats. Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei and his cabinet resigned, leaving Hamas to form a new government. After the victory, The US Bush administration and the European Union have threatened to cut financial aid to the Palestinian Authority if Hamas members hold ministerial positions. President Vladimir Putin however said that Russia would not support any efforts to cut off financial assistance to the Palestinians.<sup>41</sup>

VICS XI

---

<sup>39</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel-Palestine\\_conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel-Palestine_conflict)

<sup>40</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel\\_Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon)

<sup>41</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas>



Iran



In 1953 Iran's democratically elected prime minister Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, was removed from power in a complex plot orchestrated by British and US intelligence agencies (dubbed "Operation Ajax"). The operation was conducted following the Prime Minister's nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. It reinstated the Iranian monarchy, handing power back to former Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Following Dr. Mosaddegh's fall, the Shah's rule became increasingly dictatorial, particularly in the late 1970s. With strong support from the USA and the UK, the Shah further modernized Iranian industry but crushed civil liberties. His autocratic rule led to the Iranian revolution in 1979. An Islamic republic was soon established under the Ayatollah Khomeini.

The new theocratic political system instituted some conservative Islamic reforms as well as introducing an unprecedented level of direct clerical rule. It also engaged in an anti-Western course due to Western support of the Shah. In particular Iranian-American relations were severely strained after the Iranian seizure of U.S. embassy personnel in

1979, Iran's subsequent attempts to export its revolution, and its support of anti-Western militant groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.

In 1980 Iran was attacked by neighbouring Iraq and the destructive Iran-Iraq War continued until 1988. The struggle between the reformists and conservatives over the future of the country continues today through electoral politics and was a central focus in the 2005 elections where conservative candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad triumphed.<sup>42</sup>

The issue of Iranian support for militant groups in Iraq arises within the context of the accession to power in Iraq of pro-Iranian political groupings that had been active against Saddam Hussein's regime for many years, and had long enjoyed Iranian support. Some of these groups now in power in Iraq were in exile in Iran during the Saddam years, and had the opportunity to gain substantial familiarity with Iran's leaders. This background has led Iranian leaders to characterize Iran's provision of funds and political support to Shi'i Muslim groups in Iraq as humanitarian and targeted on groups in Iraq that had long suffered repression at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Moreover, the fall of Saddam Hussein has opened Iraq and its Shi'i holy cities of Najaf and Karbala to an influx of Shi'i pilgrims from Iran, estimated at two million per year. These post-Saddam trends and developments give Iran an opportunity and justification to send representatives into Iraq from virtually all of Iran's various ministries and Shi'i Islamic charity organizations.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, Iran has showcased its growing political and economic influence over and mentorship of the Iraqi government. During exchanges of high-level visits in the summer of 2005, including a large Iraqi delegation led by Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari in July, Iraqi officials essentially took responsibility for starting the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, indirectly blamed Saddam Hussein for ordering the use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces during that conflict, and condemned Israel. During a defense ministerial exchange, the two countries signed military cooperation agreements, as well as agreements to open diplomatic facilities in Basra and Karbala (two major cities in Iraq's mostly Shi'i south), and agreements on new transportation and energy links, including oil swaps and possibly future oil pipeline connections. Iran offered Iraq a \$1 billion credit line as well. Iraq denies that the military agreements signed include commitments by Iran to train Iraqi forces, saying the cooperation is limited to border security, landmine removal, remaining POW/MIA issues from the Iran-Iraq war, and information sharing.

Iran's objective in Iraq is primarily political, now that the conventional military and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat from Saddam Hussein has been removed. The thrust of Iran's strategy in Iraq has been to engineer and perpetuate domination of Iraq's government by pro-Iranian Shi'i Islamist movements that would, in Iran's view, likely align Iraq's foreign policy with that of Iran. To that end, Iran's leaders and diplomats have sought to persuade all Iraqi Shi'i Islamist factions in Iraq to work together through the U.S.-orchestrated political process, because the sheer number of Shi'a in Iraq (about 60% of the population) virtually ensures Shi'i predominance of government. To this extent, Iran's orientation in Iraq differs little from the main emphasis of U.S. policy in Iraq, which is to set up a democratic process that reflects majority preferences. Iran's strategy bore fruit with victory by a Shi'i Islamist bloc ("United

---

<sup>42</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran>

Iraqi Alliance”) in the January 30, 2005 National Assembly elections. That bloc, which won 140 of the 275 Assembly seats, includes all of Iran’s Shi’i Islamist protégés in Iraq, particularly the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the most pro-Iranian of the groups, and the Da’wa (Islamic Call) party. The Prime Minister of Iraq is Da’wa’s leader Ibrahim al-Jafari.

SCIRI controls a militia called the “Badr Brigades” (now renamed the “Badr Organization”) which number about 20,000. Badr fighters are playing unofficial policing roles in Basra and other Shi’i cities. Those Badr members that have joined the national Iraqi police and military forces are widely said to retain their loyalties to Badr and SCIRI. The Badr Brigades were formed, trained, and equipped by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, politically aligned with Iran’s hardliners, during the Iran-Iraq war. During that war, Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Baath Party officials, but the Badr forays did not spark broad popular unrest against Saddam Hussein’s regime. Some Sunnis have accused Badr fighters of conducting retaliatory attacks on Sunnis suspected of links to the insurgency. (A related militia called the “Wolf Brigade” is a Badr offshoot that is formally under the Ministry of Interior’s control. It is led by a SCIRI activist.)

Iranian leaders have also cultivated ties to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the 75-year-old Iranian-born Shi’i cleric who is de-facto leader of mainstream Shi’i Islamists. However, Sistani has differed with Iran’s doctrine of direct clerical involvement. As a revered Shi’i cleric with a large following in Iran itself, Sistani resists political direction from Iran.

Iran’s relations with Moqtada Al Sadr, another Shi’i Islamist cleric, are more complicated. The 31-year-old is a scion of the revered Sadr clan and he has strongly criticized the U.S. presence in Iraq. His great uncle, Mohammad Baqr Al Sadr, was a contemporary and ally of Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and was hung by Saddam Hussein in 1980. Unlike SCIRI and Da’wa leaders, Sadr and his clan remained in Iraq during Saddam’s rule, and Sadr has generally been seen as a rival to those parties for preeminence among Iraq’s Shi’a. For these reasons, Iran’s relations with Sadr are somewhat more tenuous and uneven than Iran’s relations with Da’wa and SCIRI. Iran’s strategy thus far apparently has been to build ties to Sadr and attempt to persuade him to work with SCIRI, Da’wa, and Ayatollah Sistani in the political process, while tolerating — or possibly even encouraging — his occasional challenges to U.S. and British forces in southern Iraq.

Like SCIRI, Sadr believes that it is useful to maintain his own militia in post-Saddam southern Iraq. In mid-2003, Sadr began recruiting a militia (the “Mahdi Army”) to combat U.S. forces. U.S. military operations put down Mahdi Army uprisings in April 2004 and August 2004 in Sadr City (a Shi’i-inhabited slum area of Baghdad), Najaf, and other Shi’i cities. In each case, fighting was ended with compromises under which Mahdi forces stopped fighting in exchange for amnesty for Sadr himself. Since August 2004, the Mahdi Army has largely ended active anti-U.S. activity, but Mahdi fighters continue to patrol Sadr City and parts of other Shi’i cities, particularly in Basra, where they have sought to ensure that personal behavior conforms to Islam and tradition. Mahdi (and Badr Brigade) assertiveness in Basra has partly accounted for a sharp deterioration of relations since July 2005 between Iraqi officials in Basra and the British forces that conduct peacekeeping in the city.

A variety of press reports say that other Shi'i militias are performing informal police functions in southern Iraq. One such militia is derived from the fighters who challenged Saddam Hussein's forces in the southern marsh areas, around the town of Amara, north of Basra. It goes by the name Hizbollah-Iraq and it is headed by guerrilla leader Abdul Karim Muhammadawi, who was on the Iraq Governing Council during the U.S. occupation period (May 2003-June 2004). Hizbollah-Iraq apparently plays a major role in policing Amara and environs. (Muhammadawi has agreed to run on the slate of Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Chalabi in the December 15, 2005 elections. Chalabi has been politically close to Iran and reportedly has been under U.S. investigation for passing U.S. military secrets to Iran.)

Iranian support to Sunni Muslim insurgents in Iraq, such as foreign volunteers commanded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, would not appear to fit Iran's political strategy in Iraq. These factions are attempting to bring down Iraq's government in which pro-Iranian factions are predominant, an objective clearly not shared by Iran. On the other hand, some believe that Iran might want to support Sunni insurgents for no other purpose than to cause harm to the U.S. military position in Iraq. Another interpretation is that some of Iran's assistance to Shi'i factions such as Sadr's group is being re-transferred to Sunni guerrillas without Iran's knowledge or support. Sadr has held talks with some major Sunni militant groups in an effort to forge a Shi'i-Sunni anti-U.S. alliance.

Official Assertions of Iranian Support to Armed Groups.

Some U.S. and allied officials appear to believe that Iran's agenda in Iraq might be broader and more threatening than providing political support to pro-Iranian factions. According to experts who share this view, Iran might be seeking to develop a broad range of options in Iraq that include sponsoring insurgent violence to pressure U.S. and British forces to leave Iraq or simply to weaken the United States in Iraq. In August 2005, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld confirmed press reports that U.S. forces had found some Iranian-supplied explosives (reportedly including highly lethal shaped explosives) in Iraq.

He did not specify whether the weapons shipments had formal Iranian government approval, or even which Iraqi faction(s) the bombs were intended for. On October 6, 2005, British Prime Minister Blair made similar allegations about Iran, backing up press comments the previous day from an unnamed British government official who alleged that Iran had supplied explosive devices to Sadr's Mahdi Army. Blair, in his public comments, attributed the shipments to "Iranian elements" or Iran's ally, Lebanese Hizballah, acting on Iran's behalf, and he asserted that the explosives had been used to kill eight British soldiers in and around Basra since July 2005.

Iran appears to be pursuing multiple options in Iraq. Iran is supporting the U.S.-engineered political process in Iraq because doing so favors pro-Iranian movements in Iraq, which have numeric strength and a degree of popularity. However, Iran is preserving the option of sponsoring militant activity in Iraq either to drive U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq or to raise the costs of U.S. military intervention close to Iran's borders. The significant Iranian influence in Iraq could enable Iran to retaliate against the United States should the United States succeed in persuading the United Nations to impose economic sanctions on Iran because of its nuclear program. Iran might also retaliate through Iraqi proxies if the United States were to undertake direct military action against Iran's nuclear facilities or other installations.



Iran's relationship with Iraq's Moqtada Al Sadr is relatively new, but Iran appears to see him as a growing force in Iraqi politics, and a long term asset to Iran. Sadr has a large and dedicated following particularly among lower-class Shi'i Muslims in Iraq, and his newly formed Mahdi Army now rivals more established Shi'i militias in southern Iraq. Many of the alleged Iranian weapons shipments into Iraq appear to have been destined for Sadr's forces. The Mahdi Army has the potential to again come into conflict with U.S. forces, possibly bringing Iran or its representatives into conflict with the United States as well.<sup>43</sup>



---

<sup>43</sup> <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/57460.pdf>