

Timeline: Iraq after Saddam

9 April, 2003

Saddam Husseins government is toppled

Saddam Husseins government loses control of Baghdad after US forces advance into the centre of the capital. In a symbolic moment American soldiers help a crowd of cheering Iraqis to pull down a huge statue of the ousted president.

15 April, 2003

US begins shaping Iraq future

Iraqi representatives at a US brokered meeting agree to work for a democratic federal Iraq. It is the first attempt at setting up a new civil authority since the toppling of the Baathist government. White House envoy Zalmay Khalilzad tells the gathering the US has "absolutely no interest in ruling Iraq".

1 May, 2003

President Bush declares end of major combat

President Bush declares the US has prevailed in the Iraq war and says major combat operations there have ended. But he warns there is still difficult work to do in Iraq.

6 May, 2003

Iraq gets new US civil administrator

President Bush appoints Paul Bremer as the top civil administrator in Iraq. His job is to oversee the transition to democracy. Mr Bremer is also given authority over Jay Garner the retired general currently in charge of reconstruction efforts.

22 May, 2003

UN lifts economic sanctions

The United Nations overwhelmingly backs a resolution lifting economic sanctions against Iraq and giving its backing to the US led administration. Fourteen of the 15 Security Council members vote to adopt the resolution. Syria the only Arab state on the council boycotts the meeting.

23 May, 2003

Saddam institutions abolished

Paul Bremer abolishes the ministries and institutions that formed the backbone of Saddam Husseins power structure. The Iraqi army is also disbanded. The move comes a week after thousands of members of Saddam Husseins Baath Party are banned from holding government jobs.

13 July, 2003

Iraq moves toward selfrule

The Iraqi Governing Council IGC meets for the first time. It is composed of 25 Iraqi nationals chosen by the USled coalition. The council will help draft a new constitution. Paul Bremer remains the ultimate authority in Iraq.

16 July, 2003

US admits it is facing guerrilla war

The US chief of military operations in Iraq acknowledges that attacks against US troops bear the hallmarks of a "classic guerrillatype campaign". Pentagon officials have until now described the attacks as uncoordinated violence by remnants of the Baathist regime.

22 July, 2003

Saddams sons killed in US raid

US troops kill Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay in a raid on a house in the northern city of Mosul. US forces are believed to have been tipped off about their whereabouts. The US later releases photographs of the bodies of the two men in an attempt to convince sceptical Iraqis that the feared brothers really are dead.

19 August, 2003

Suicide bombing demolishes UN offices

A huge bomb demolishes the United Nations Baghdad headquarters killing at least 20 people including top UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. More than 100 people are injured in the attack. Following the suicide attack a number of international agencies decide to pull their staff out of the Iraqi capital.

29 August, 2003

Shia leader killed in attack

A car bomb attack in the city of Najaf kills leading Shia politician Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr

alHakim and about 90 other people near the Tomb of Ali in the central Iraqi city one of the holiest shrines for Shia Muslims. Many Shias blame the attack on Saddam loyalists.

16 October, 2003

UN backs new Iraq resolution

The UN Security Council votes unanimously in favour of a revised US text setting out Iraq's political future. The resolution preserves the dominant role for the US-led administration but calls upon it to transfer sovereignty and government back to the Iraqi people "as soon as practicable".

23 October, 2003

Donors debate reconstruction

At a two-day meeting attended by 80 nations international donors pledge 13bn to fund Iraqi reconstruction in addition to the 20bn already promised by the US. The UN and the World Bank estimate that Iraq needs 56bn over the next four years.

27 October, 2003

Attacks mar start of Ramadan

On the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan suicide attacks kill more than 35 people and wound hundreds at the headquarters of the Red Cross and at five police stations in Baghdad.

2 November, 2003

US helicopter downed

In the heaviest US losses since the height of the war at least 15 American soldiers are killed and 21 wounded when their Chinook helicopter is shot down by insurgents.

12 November, 2003

Italian troops killed in HQ attack

A suicide attack on Italian headquarters in the southern city of Nasiriya kills 16 Italian military personnel two Italian civilians and eight Iraqis.

15 November, 2003

Timetable set for handover

The IGC announces that the US-led coalition will hand over power to a transitional government by June 2004. One of the interim body's responsibilities is to prepare for a full sovereign Iraqi government by 2005 following a general election. The plan details a much faster route to Iraqi sovereignty than the one previously laid out.

13 December, 2003

Saddam Hussein captured

US troops capture Saddam Hussein. He is found hiding in a tiny cellar at a farmhouse near his hometown of Tikrit and surrenders without a fight. The US which had offered a 25m reward for detrmation leading to Saddam Husseins capture says it received a tipoff from a member of his clan.

1 February, 2004

Irbil suicide bombings kill 100

At least 100 people are killed and scores wounded by twin suicide bombings during Eid celebrations at the offices of the main Kurdish political parties in the city of Irbil.

10 February, 2004

Police station attacked

A car bomb outside a police station in the Shia town of Iskandariya kills at least 45 and wounds scores. It is one of many deadly attacks on police stations and army recruitment centres around the country.

1 March, 2004

Interim constitution agreed

The IGC agrees a temporary constitution. The document includes a bill of rights and recognises Islam as a source of legislation. It also grants Kurds a measure of autonomy. The signing of the draft constitution known as the Transitional Administrative Law is delayed until 8 March because of Shia objections.

2 March, 2004

Massacre on Shia holy day

More than 180 people are killed in blasts targeting Iraqi Shias as they celebrate the climax of a holy ritual in the cities of Karbala and Baghdad. American officials blame the attacks on Abu Musab alZarqawi a Jordanian who they say has links to alQaeda.

31 March, 2004

US contractors killed in Falluja

Four American civilian contractors are killed and their bodies mutilated and dragged through the streets of the city of Falluja. A sign underneath one of the lynched bodies reads "Falluja is the cemetery for Americans". Falluja lies in the socalled Sunni triangle where support for Saddam

Hussein remains strong.

4 April, 2004

Shia uprising erupts in several cities

More than 40 supporters of the radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr and a number of coalition soldiers are killed in clashes in Baghdad Basra and Najaf. The clashes follow the arrest of one of Mr Sadr's top aides and the closure of his newspaper by the US-led coalition. In coming days the violence spreads to other areas both Sunni and Shia.

6 April, 2004

US bombs Falluja mosque

About 40 people are killed when a US laser-guided bomb hits a mosque complex in Falluja during fighting there. The US military says the strike targeted insurgents who were firing from inside the mosque complex.

20 April, 2004

Tribunal for Saddam trial set up

Iraqi leaders set up a tribunal to try Saddam Hussein and other members of the Baathist government. The court will decide the charges they face.

21 April, 2004

Dozens killed in Basra attacks

Four suicide attacks leave at least 68 people dead in the city of Basra and the nearby town of Zubair. The bombings are aimed at police buildings.

23 April, 2004

Ban on Baathists eased

Paul Bremer says former public sector workers who lost their jobs after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime may be reinstated. In what is described as a major shift in US policy members of the former ruling Baath party who had a clean record could return to their old jobs in the military or education.

29 April, 2004

Prisoner abuse photos spark outrage

A series of photographs emerge showing US forces abusing Iraqi detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. The graphic images show naked inmates being terrorised by dogs and being forced to simulate sex acts. A number of guards face prosecution.

30 April, 2004

US troops pull back from Falluja

US Marines start withdrawing from Falluja after a month of bloody clashes with rebels. The US begins handing over security in the city to an Iraqi general.

11 May, 2004

Hostage beheading video released

A video posted on an Islamic militant website shows the beheading of US hostage Nick Berg. In the video the civilians captors among them Abu Musab alZarqawi say they are avenging the abuse of Iraqi detainees. It is the first of a number of beheadings of foreign hostages in Iraq.

17 May, 2004

Iraqi Governing Council president killed

A suicide bomber kills Ezzedine Salim holder of the rotating presidency of the Iraqi Governing Council. In the following months a number of senior Iraqi officials are assassinated.

28 May, 2004

Iyad Allawi named interim prime minister

The Iraqi Governing Council names Iyad Allawi a Shia as prime minister of the interim government scheduled to take office on 30 June. Two days later Mr Allawi names his cabinet and the council dissolves itself.

8 June, 2004

UN approves resolution backing power transfer

The UN Security Council unanimously approves a resolution to end the formal occupation of Iraq on 30 June and transfer sovereignty to an interim Iraqi administration. The text authorises the USled multinational force and gives the Iraqis control over their oil revenues.

28 June, 2004

US hands over power to interim government

Two days ahead of schedule the USled coalition formally hands over power in Iraq. At a lowkey ceremony in Baghdad Paul Bremer transfers sovereignty to an Iraqi judge before leaving the country. Hours later Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and his cabinet are sworn in.

1 July, 2004

Saddam Hussein appears before Iraqi judge

The former Iraqi president makes a defiant first appearance in court to hear charges of war crimes and genocide. Saddam Hussein rejects the courts jurisdiction and brands President Bush the real criminal.

7 July, 2004

Iraq brings in tough security law

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi signs a law allowing the government to impose martial rule in troubled regions. The new law comes into force as Iraqis are increasingly being killed in insurgent attacks.

28 July, 2004

Scores killed in Baquba bombing

About 70 people are killed in a car bomb explosion outside a police station in Baquba north of Baghdad.

18 August, 2004

National assembly members chosen

After four days of talks the Iraqi National Conference selects a 100seat national assembly to oversee Iyad Allawis government until the general elections. The National Council has the power to veto legislation and approve the 2005 budget.

27 August, 2004

Najaf militants surrender shrine

After three weeks of fighting in Najaf forces loyal to the radical cleric Moqtada Sadr leave the Imam Ali mosque and US forces pull back. The peace deal was brokered by Iraqs top Shia leader Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

24 October, 2004

Iraqi army recruits killed

More than 40 Iraqi army recruits are killed in an ambush in the northeast of the country. Police said the bodies of the men were found by the roadside each with a single bullet wound to the head. The killings represent another blow for the strategy of trying to transfer security from foreign troops to local forces.

15 November, 2004

Falluja retaken by US and Iraqi forces

The US says its forces control Falluja more than a week after American troops launched an

assault on insurgents there. US commanders say 1200 insurgents have been killed in the fierce fighting. Rebels had been in control of the city since April.

22 November, 2004

Date for general elections set

Iraq's first election since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's government is set for 30 January 2005 the authorities announce.

22 December, 2004

Deadly attack on US base in Mosul

In the worst single incident for US soldiers in Iraq 19 US soldiers are killed in an explosion at a US military base in Mosul. At least three other people die and more than 60 are injured in the suicide attack.

14 January, 2005

Iraq jail abuse leader found guilty

The soldier accused of being the ringleader in the abuse of prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib jail has been found guilty of mistreating detainees. Charles Graner 36 was convicted by a military jury in Texas after a fourday trial at which he was said to have assaulted prisoners for fun.

20 January, 2005

Zarqawi tape warns of long Iraq fight

An audio tape apparently made by one of the leaders of the insurgency Abu Musab alZarqawi says the fight against US-led forces could continue for years. The tape posted on an Islamist website denounces Shia Muslims for fighting alongside US troops in Iraq. With nine days to go until the elections attacks on Shias are reported to be on the rise.

24 January, 2005

Iraq announces capture of most lethal Zarqawi ally

The interim authorities say they have captured Sami Mohammad Ali Said alJaaf also known as Abu Omar alKurdi. He is said to be a key ally of Abu Musab alZarqawi and is accused of many bombings including the blast at the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003. The arrest was reportedly made on 15 January but not immediately revealed.

30 January, 2005

Iraqis vote in first multiparty election for 50 years

Millions of Iraqis go to the polls to elect a transitional assembly despite the threat of violence. It

is the country's first multiparty election for half a century. As expected turnout is high in Shia and Kurdish areas. The poll is hailed as a success by international and Iraqi leaders.

28 February, 2005

Car bombing in Hilla south of Baghdad kills at least 114

In addition to killing 114 people the bombing injures 130 others. It is the single worst incident of its kind since the US invasion. The car reportedly driven by a suicide bomber explodes near a queue of people applying for government jobs in Hilla 100 km 60 miles south of Baghdad.

7 April, 2005

Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani sworn in as the new interim president

The Iraqi Parliament end weeks of deadlock by electing Mr Talabani to the largely ceremonial position. The appointment of Mr Talabani leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan is seen as a major political victory for Iraq's Kurdish community which suffered greatly under Saddam Hussein.

May, 2005

Bombings and shootings surge killing hundreds

The violence shatters the lull which followed the Iraqi election at the end of January. The latest attacks by insurgents are largely in the centre and north of the country. Iraqi ministries put the civilian death toll for May at 672 up from 364 in April. Analysts blame the stalled political progress.

14 June, 2005

President of Iraqi Kurdistan sworn into office

The leader of one of the two main Kurdish parties in Iraq Massoud Barzani is sworn in as the new regional president of Iraqi Kurdistan. Although some Kurds still seek it Kurdish leaders have dropped claims for full independence settling instead for a federal Iraq.

19 July, 2005

Report estimates 25000 Iraqi civilians killed since 2003

Nearly 25000 civilians have died violently in Iraq since the US led invasion in March 2003 a report says. The dossier based on media reports says US led forces were responsible for more than a third of the deaths. The survey was carried out by the UK based Iraq Body Count and Oxford Research Group which includes academics and peace activists.

28 August, 2005

Iraqis Sunnis reject constitution

Kurdish and Shia negotiators approve the Iraqi draft constitution and present it to parliament. However Iraq's Sunni leaders reject the document and call for the intervention by the UN and Arab League. The constitution is to be voted on by Iraqis on 15 October.

31 August, 2005

Almost 1000 killed in stampede

Almost 1000 people die in a stampede of Shia pilgrims in northern Baghdad. The incident happens on a river bridge as about a million Shias march to a shrine for a religious festival. Witnesses said panic spreads over rumours of suicide bombers. It was the largest loss of life in a single incident since the US-led invasion.

14 September, 2005

Three days of violence kills hundreds

The attacks begin on 14 September with a suicide bombing in Baghdad's mainly Shia Kadhimiya district that killed more than 100. The other attacks included a bombing of a Shia mosque in central Iraq and the shooting of a crowd of labourers in eastern New Baghdad.

19 September, 2005

UK troops storm Basra police station to release hostages

British troops stage a dramatic mission to free two soldiers being held hostage in a Basra police station. The pair whose unconfirmed reports suggested were Special Forces officers were detained by Iraqi police after failing to stop at a checkpoint. Amid reports that the men were to be handed over to militants and clashes between troops and Iraqi demonstrators British forces used armoured vehicles to break into the police compound and release the men.

28 September, 2005

US woman soldier guilty of Abu Ghraib abuses

US Private Lynndie England is sentenced to three years in jail by a military panel for abusing prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib jail last year. She is given a dishonourable discharge. In a statement hours before the sentence was read out she apologises to coalition forces in Iraq as well as to detainees and their families.

29 September, 2005

62 killed in bomb attacks in Balad nr Baghdad

5 October, 2005

UK accuses Iran over Iraq attacks

A senior British official accuses Tehran of supplying specialist bombmaking equipment to Shia Muslim insurgents in southern Iraq. An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman responds "This is a lie. The British are the cause of instability and crisis in Iraq."

15 October, 2005

Iraqis vote in constitution referendum

Millions of people go to the polls to vote in a referendum on Iraq's new constitution under which the country would become an Islamic federal democracy. Turnout in the ballot held amid heavy security is high despite a number of attacks and violent incidents.

16 October, 2005

70 killed in airstrikes near Ramadi

Helicopters and aircraft bomb two villages near Ramaid in western Iraq killing about 70 militants the US military says. Local eyewitnesses are "ed as saying many were civilians.

19 October, 2005

Saddam Hussein goes on trial in Baghdad

Saddam Hussein goes on trial at a speciallybuilt courtroom in Baghdad charged with crimes against humanity. He questions the validity of the court before pleading not guilty. The former Iraqi leader along with seven associates is charged with ordering the killing of 143 Shia men in the town of Dujail in 1982.

15 December, 2005

High turnout in election for fullterm government

Turnout was high across the country. Sunni Arabs who boycotted the previous election in January 2005 participated in large numbers even in insurgent strongholds. The results were announced in January 2006 with the Shialed United Iraqi Alliance winning but failing to obtain an absolute majority.

21 January, 2006

Shialed United Iraqi Alliance announced as winner of Decembers election but without an absolute majority

The alliance took 128 of the 275 seats 10 short of an outright majority. Kurdish parties won 53 seats and the main Sunni Arab bloc 44. A number of Sunni politicians alleged the poll was marred by fraud.

22 February, 2006

Bomb attack badly damages the alAskari shrine in Samarra one of the holiest sites in Shia Islam

Two men blew up the famous golden dome of the shrine in a dawn attack. The bombing sparked reprisals against Sunnis in Iraq and increased fears of civil war. There were also protests across the Muslim world.

13 March, 2006

UK announces its troops in Iraq will be reduced by 800 to 7000

16 March, 2006

US targets area near Samarra with what it describes as the largest air assault since Saddam fell

The Iraqi foreign minister said the aim of the operation was to stop insurgents turning Samarra into a stronghold. It became clear that the operation did not include air strikes and the "largest air assault" phrase referred to the fact that more helicopters were used to move troops than in previous operations. FONT COLOR000099 FONT

7 April, 2006

Triple suicide bombing kills 85 at Shia Buratha mosque

22 April, 2006

President Jalal Talabani asks Shia politician Nouri Maliki to form government

Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's appointment followed months of political deadlock and raised hopes of an end to violent sectarian divisions. The dominant Shia bloc picked Mr Maliki as its nominee after interim Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari agreed to step down. Mr Maliki a key architect of postinvasion Iraq who served as an advisor to Mr Jaafari also won approval from Sunni politicians.

6 May, 2006

Five UK personnel killed in helicopter crash in Basra

8 June, 2006

Air strike kills alQaeda leader in Iraq Abu Musab alZarqawi

Jordanianborn Abu Musab alZarqawi was considered the figurehead of the Sunni insurgency. He was leader of alQaeda in Iraq blamed for killing thousands of Shias and US forces. The US said he was killed in an air strike on an isolated safe house approximately 8km five miles north of Baquba. Abu Hamza alMuhajir was named as Zarqawi's successor.

1 July, 2006

Car bomb kills 66 in Shia area of Sadr City Baghdad

13 July, 2006

UK hands over responsibility for security in Muthanna province to local forces

18 July, 2006

Car bomb kills 53 in southern city of Kufa near Shia shrine

21 August, 2006

Saddam Hussein faces genocide charges in Anfal trial

Saddam Hussein and six other defendants including his cousin Ali Hassan alMajid known as Chemical Ali go on trial over their role in a military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq in the 1980s. More than 180000 people are alleged to have died in the Anfal campaign.

7 September, 2006

US announces handover of some control of Iraqi navy and air force

21 September, 2006

UK and Italian forces hand over control of Dhi Qar province

17 October, 2006

Baker commission begins considering US policy change on Iraq

The task force set up to examine the effectiveness of US policies in Iraq is said to be considering a call for major changes. The panel led by former US Secretary of State James Baker is said to think that "staying the course" is an untenable longterm strategy. Mr Baker's commission is due to report after the November midterm elections in the US.

5 November, 2006

Saddam Hussein sentenced to death by hanging

Many Iraqis celebrate as Saddam Hussein is convicted of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death by hanging. The charges relate to the killing of 148 people in Dujail following an assassination attempt on him in 1982. Saddam Hussein and his codefendants have the right to appeal but that is expected to take only a few weeks and to end in failure for the defendants.

6 December, 2006

Major report on US policy in Iraq published

The Iraq Study Group issues its report on recommendations for US policy in Iraq in the future. The study group led by former US Secretary of State James Baker urges renewed efforts to resolve the wider conflict in the Middle East including holding talks with Iran and Syria.

31 December, 2006

Saddam Hussein is hanged

Saddam Hussein is executed at dawn on the first day of Eid alAdha just as Sunni Muslims were preparing to make their sacrificial offering by killing a sheep. There was a storm of protest at home and abroad after unofficial footage of the hanging was posted on the internet. Mobile phone footage shows the former leader being taunted at the gallows.

10 January, 2007

President Bush announces plans for troop boost

The Bush plan calls for more than 20000 US redetracements most of whom would be deployed in Baghdad in an effort to secure the capital and clear it of sectarian forces. Mr Bush ignores calls from the Iraq Study Group to open talks with Iran and Syria.

22 January, 2007

More than 130 people are killed in and around Baghdad

8 March, 2007

US approves more troops for Baghdad

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates approves a request for an extra 2200 military police to support the security drive in Baghdad.

19 March, 2007

Envoys from the US Iran and Syria join Baghdad talks

The event brings together all of Iraq's neighbours and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The conference is aimed at persuading Iraq's neighbours to lend at least tacit if not active support to the Iraqi government. That means the United States is be sitting round the

same table as Iran and Syria

27 March, 2007

A Truck bomb explodes in Tal Afar killing 152

16 April, 2007

Six ministers from Moqtada Sadr's political bloc leave the cabinet

Radical cleric Moqtada Sadr orders six members of his Shia political bloc to resign from the cabinet in an attempt to pressure Prime Minister Nouri Maliki to set a timetable for a US troop withdrawal.

18 April, 2007

Nearly 200 people are killed in a string of bombings across Baghdad

1 August, 2007

Six members of the main Sunni political bloc leave the Iraqi cabinet

Six members of the main Sunni Arab political bloc the the Iraqi Accordance Front leave the cabinet complaining that the Shialed administration had failed to meet a list of demands including one urging tough action against Shia militias.

6 August, 2007

Five Sunni MPs loyal to Iyad Allawi leave the cabinet

14 August, 2007

Over 500 people are killed in attacks on the Yazidi community in northern Iraq

More than 500 members of the Yazidi religious minority in the villages of Qataniya and Adnaniya are killed in a coordinated bomb attack involving a fuel tanker and cars. Tensions between the sect and local Muslims had grown after a Yazidi girl was reportedly stoned by her community in April for converting to Islam. Yazidis worship an archangel believed by some Christians and Muslims to be the devil.

16 August, 2007

Prime Minister Nouri alMaliki forms a majority ShiaKurdish coalition government without Sunni Arab representation.

29 August, 2007

The Mehdi Army militia declare a sixmonth ceasefire

11 September, 2007

US commander Gen Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker testify before Congress on progress in Iraq

16 September, 2007

Employees of the private security contractor Blackwater kill 17 Iraqi civilians an act described the Iraqi government as illegal

The Iraqi government accuses Blackwater of killing 17 civilians without provocation while the private security contractor was escorting an American diplomatic envoy in Baghdad. Blackwater maintains that its employees acted in selfdefence.

17 October, 2007

The Turkish parliament votes to authorize crossborder raids against Kurdish militants operating from northern Iraq.

16 December, 2007

The lastremaining province under British control Basra is handed over to the Iraqis

12 January, 2008

Iraqs parliament passes legislation allowing former officials from Saddam Husseins Baath party to return to public life

The decision to remove all members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party from positions of power in Iraq in 2003 was widely seen as one of the contributing factors to the country's postinvasion instability. The move to reverse the law was resisted by Iraq's Shialed government but on 12 January a law was passed allowing former Baath members back into public life.

17 February, 2008

Turkey launches a military operation into northern Iraq against Kurdish militants

22 February, 2008

Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr orders a sixmonth extension of the Mehdi Armys ceasefire

2 March, 2008

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visits Baghdad the firstever trip to Iraq by an Iranian president.

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