

US. - Iraq Relations Timeline

Or Why We Shouldn't Think That The People That Got Us Into This Mess Will Get Us Out



Hostage Crisis Hinckley shoots Reagan Iran-Contra Hearings S&L Scandal Gulf War Waco Oklahoma City O.J. Simpson Trial Monica Lewinsky/Impeachment 9/11

Quick History

According to James Chritchfield, a former CIA east division chief, the CIA took interest in the Ba'ath Party which Saddam was part of. In 1963 the Ba'ath took over the Iraqi Government of General Abdel Karim Kassem in a military coup. Six months later, the Ba'ath party has an internal coup that radicalizes the new government. Saddam builds his power within the Ba'ath government by first becoming the head of security. The CIA and the US forge a stronger relationship with the Shah of Iran and back away from Iraq, yet American oil companies continue to work with Baghdad. In 1979, after consolidating undisputable influence, Saddam assumes the Presidency.

Donald Rumsfeld meets with Hussein on behalf of the Reagan administration. Rumsfeld notes "efforts to assist were inhibited by certain things that made it difficult for us, citing use of chemical weapons, possible escalation in the Gulf and human rights."

UN Secretary General reports Iraq's use of mustard gas and nerve agents against Iranian soldiers, with significant usage in 1981 and 1984.

US ambassador meets Saddam and tells him that the US will not interfere if Iraq invades Kuwait.* 6 days later Iraq invades.

Atty Gen William Barr does not appoint an independent prosecutor after his appointee Frederick Lacey releases his report calling the investigation into the Bush administration "errant nonsense". He does however report that the State Dept tried to hamper the Justice Dept inquiry into BNL in order to protect a Billion dollar government backed loan to Iraq. And admits that he didn't sufficiently investigate allegations of the Commerce Dept altering export licenses for Iraq or whether administration officials misled congress in testimony on US aid to Iraq.

A US Justice Department team investigating BNL learn that nuclear equipment built in the US was illegally shipped to Iraq. The equipment aided Iraq's efforts in trying to develop a nuclear device.

Leading American scientists, one of whom was in charge of Depleted Uranium (DU) after the Gulf War, demand a ban of the material and ask that Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo be immediately cleaned before more are injured or die. Birth defects, stillbirths and cancer soared in Iraq after the war. Birth defects are also one of the side effects of Gulf War Syndrome and are present in Kosovo and Bosnia in similar patterns. The US dropped 300 tons of DU laden bombs during the Gulf War. After impact a radioactive powder is left that can linger for thousands of years.

US and UK launch a bombing campaign "Operation Desert Fox" to destroy suspected nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs. Weapons inspectors are notified and leave the country. Saddam refuses to let them reenter.

The nation's largest grassroots Gulf War veterans group (National Gulf War Resource Center) asks Congress to turn over the reins on medical research of Gulf War illnesses to an independent body, saying the Pentagon's efforts are biased and designed to minimize liability while not helping the tens of thousands of sick Gulf War veterans.

Ford Motor Co. President Nick Scheele drove the five-millionth Ford Explorer off the assembly line in Louisville.

State Department reports almost daily use of chemical weapons by Iraq.

Iraq begins receiving US backed loans.

The US formally declares that Saddam used chemical weapons but refuses to back congressional efforts to impose sanctions on Iraq citing endangering massive postwar construction contracts.

State department memo alleges that Iraq's will use additional funding to further nuclear arms development.

Food For Oil program begins allowing Iraq to sell oil and buy basic goods.



Reagan Normalizes relations with Iraq to clear the way for loan guarantees. After intelligence reports indicate that Iraq could lose, he decides that the United States should do whatever is necessary and legal to prevent Iraq from losing the war with Iran. It is formalized by issuing a National Security Decision Directive co-written by Howard Teicher and Geoff Kemp. The plan calls for billions of dollars of credits, providing US military intelligence and advice to the Iraqis, and closely monitoring third country arms sales to Iraq to make sure that Iraq has the military weaponry required.

Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) provides technical support to Iraq, in the form of Iranian battle plans, strike points, and satellite photos. Officials involved admit to having known that chemical weapons were part of the Iraqi arsenal.

US Department of Commerce ok's over 70 shipments of chemical components, including live anthrax, E-coli bacteria, botulism, West Nile and more.

Reagan publicly admits trading arms for hostages in Iran. This sets off the Iran-Contra investigation which will prove that high ranking Reagan officials used US arms sales to Iran to finance the Contras in violation of a congressional ban.

Iraq attacks the Kurdish town of Halabjah with mix of poison gas and nerve agents, killing 5000 residents.

After James Baker III pushes for a \$1 Billion line of export credit it is given to Iraq through the CCC GSM-102 program run by the agriculture department.

James Baker III recommends that Bush override congresses wish to cease loan guarantees to Iraq (mostly due to human rights issues). Bush signs a waiver that clears another 1 billion through Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) Atlanta.

"Operation Desert Storm" begins. It will last under 6 six weeks and cost the US and allies 60 Billion dollars, 149 US die, 25,000 Iraqi die.

BNL is discovered to have given Iraq Billions in off-the-books illegal loans. It spurs a public outcry and sets the wheels in motion for the investigation that will be known as Iraqgate.

Bush pardons Caspar W. Weinberger and other Iran-Contra defendants effectively ending the Iran-Contra investigation as evidence was surfacing of his own involvement.

Over 100,000 Gulf War vets report having debilitating ailments known as Gulf War Syndrome. The defense Department denies it's existence.

Howard Teicher testifies in a Florida court "The CIA, including both CIA Director Casey and Deputy Director Gates, knew of, approved of, and assisted in the sale of non-US origin military weapons, ammunition and vehicles to Iraq."

A 20-month house panel on Gulf War Syndrome finds that the Defense Department had mishandled it's investigation into the mysterious ailment and oversight of it's research should be turned over to a less bias agency.

US government backed loans made during the Bush administration on which Iraq defaulted are realized to have cost the taxpayers 2 billion dollars.

Halliburton, of which at the time Dick Cheney was CEO, oversees \$23.8 million of business contracts for the sale of oil-industry equipment and services to Iraq through two of its subsidiaries, Dresser Rand and Ingersoll-Dresser Pump.

US becomes the fastest growing buyer of Iraqi oil, buying 700,000 barrels of Iraqi oil a day. Companies buying oil include: Chevron Texaco Corp., Exxon Mobil Corp. and Valero Energy Corp., all need to buy through middlemen due to congressional prohibitions on direct sales.

Citing Saddam as a threat to national security by having weapons of mass destruction and a possible link to Al Qaeda the Bush administration calls for a regime change in Iraq.



Ronald Reagan and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz meet at the White House in 1984.



An estimated 80,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Turkey after being attacked in 1998.



An estimated million refugees fled Iraq during the Gulf War into neighboring countries.



Saddam burns oil fields in Kuwait wreaking incredible environmental damage.



Bush meets with the emir of Kuwait.



Unprotected American troops removing destroyed tanks in an area possibly laden with Depleted Uranium.



The road to Basra after an allied attack destroyed hundreds of vehicles, many of which were civilian.

'It is becoming increasingly clear, that George Bush, operating largely behind the scenes throughout the 1980s, initiated and supported much of the financing, intelligence, and military help that built Saddam's Iraq into the aggressive power that the United States ultimately had to destroy . . .'

Ted Koppel, Nightline, 1992

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* What exactly April Glaspie tells Saddam is the most disputed fact in this time line. The Iraqis released an edited version that appears to say she gave the Iraqis the ok to invade by saying America has no opinion in Iraq's Arab- Arab conflicts. The Bush administration denies this but refuses to release documents that detail her instructions. In any case the Bush administration was warned of the invasion of Kuwait and did nothing to stop it.

SOURCES:
CNN
New York Times
ABC News
National Security Archive
US Military
BBC
LA Times
Frontline

*Most of the info on this page comes from the National Security Archive report at <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/igintro.htm>, the rest were reported by two or more of the sources above.