



مركز البيان للدراسات والتخطيط
Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

Al Bayan Observatory



August 2023

A periodical bulletin to monitor Iraqi affairs in international think tanks

About the Center

Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies is an independent, nonprofit think tank based in Baghdad, Iraq. In addition to other issues, its primary mission is to offer an authentic perspective on public and foreign policy issues related to Iraq in particular and the Middle East region in general. BCPS pursues its vision by conducting autonomous analysis and proposing workable solutions for complex issues that concern the political and academic fields.

Note:

The opinions expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the directions adopted by the Center but rather the opinion of its authors.

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Since 2014

AMERICAN THINK TANKS



Iraq and Egypt Boost Diplomacy, but GCC Remains the Linchpin

Yerevan Saeed



Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington

<https://agsiw.org/iraq-and-egypt-boost-diplomacy-but-gcc-remains-the-linchpin/>



Yerevan Saeed, a visiting scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, analyzes the current changes in Iraq–Egypt relations, focusing on June 13, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al–Sudani’s second trip to Cairo in less than a hundred days. Accompaniment of eleven ministers and dozens of Iraqi businesspeople and signing 11 memorandums to expand trade, tourism, and investment, the author provides some insights on the trip. He concludes that “the surge in diplomatic engagements among Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan is advancing a more ambitious regional project and highlights their increased trust and shared goals and vision. It is a clear indication of the concerted effort being made by the three countries to forge a deeper and more comprehensive partnership, which could benefit their populations and the region as a whole. Continuing to work closely with GCC countries even as these three countries build out their new partnership remains the most direct – and likely the sole – path to success for this venture.”

Turkey's Halt on Iraqi Oil Exports Is Shaking Up Global Markets

Turkey's Halt on Iraqi Oil Exports Is Shaking Up Global Markets

A diplomatic deadlock over a 50-year-old pipeline agreement is wreaking havoc in the region—and beyond.

By **Emir Gurbuz**, the managing partner at the Legart Law & Consultancy firm in Istanbul. He is an expert in international law and serves as an executive board member for the Turkish Atlantic Council.



Emir Gurbuz, the managing partner at the Legart Law & Consultancy firm in Istanbul serving as an executive board member for the Turkish Atlantic Council, discusses the implications of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's visit to Iraq in the past days. For his, "Turkey's accelerating drift toward anti-Kurdish nationalism, and its insistence on using the KRG oil exports as a means of control, appear to have led to the current impasse... In contrast, Iraq and the KRG are keen to resume exports. It is not too late to resolve the situation. But central to moving forward is the need for Turkey to recognize that if the KRG falls, the resulting destabilization in Iraq will create far bigger problems, including opening the door for its historic rival, Iran. To avoid the most damaging outcomes, the international community must realize the conflict has always extended further than oil. Swift, careful, and diplomatic intervention is needed to prevent potentially calamitous regional instability."

Emir Gurbuz



FOREIGN POLICY

https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/25/turkey-iraq-krq-oil-pipeline-ceyhan-export-erdogan-embargo/#cookie_message_anchor

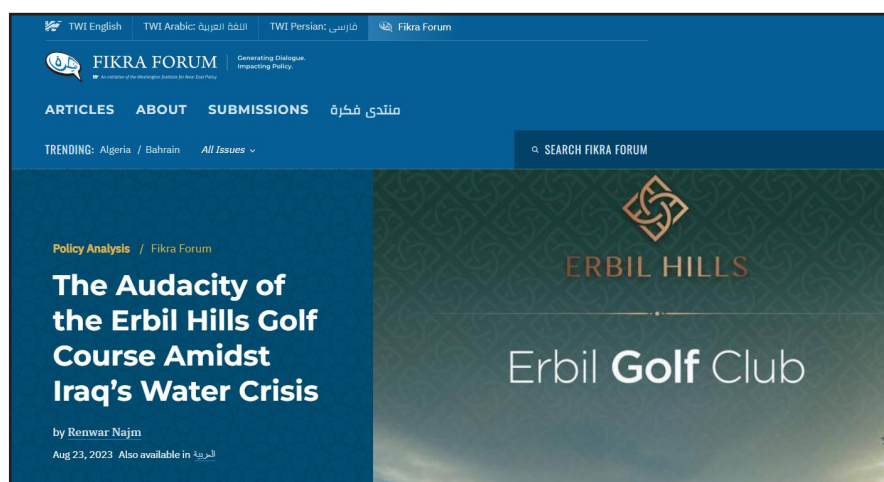
The Cradle of Civilization Is Drying Up Climate change endangers the Tigris and Euphrates— but it's not the only reason the rivers are vanishing

Renwar Najm



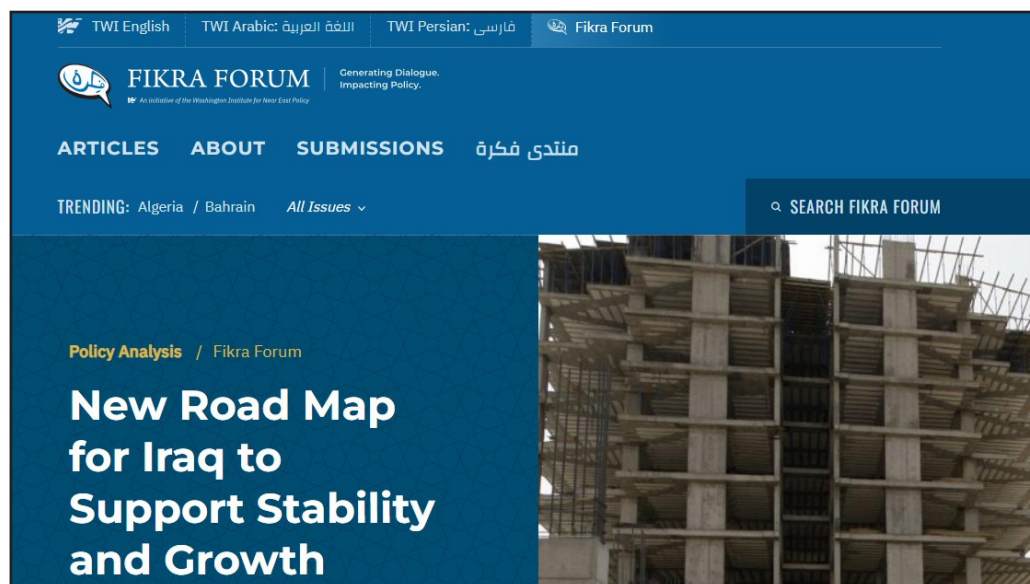
Washington Institute for
Near East Policy

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/audacity-erbil-hills-golf-course-amidst-iraqs-water-crisis>



Renwar Najm is a London-based Iraqi-Kurdish journalist who analyzes the role of Iraqi Kurdistan Iraq's water crisis. He writes: "Erbil Hills epitomizes the alarming trend of widening class disparities in Erbil and the KRI as a whole, an issue that has been escalating for years. The growing wealth divide has reached such an extreme level that the hard-earned wages of a worker in one part of the city cannot even cover the basic necessities of another. This outrageous inequality is also mirrored in the stark contrast of government-provided services. While the privileged residents of Erbil's Pavilion residential city luxuriate amidst artificial rivers, the less fortunate in Kasnazan and Taajil are forced to endure the appalling reality of sewage-filled alleys...The glaring disparity between the haves and have-nots is painfully evident in the KRI, and the Erbil Hills golf course only adds to this dynamic. More than aggravating the current water crisis, the project glaringly exposes the inherent injustices and misplaced priorities of those in power."

New Road Map for Iraq to Support Stability and Growth



Fawzi al-Zubaidi, an expert on Middle East affairs and national security, suggests the stability and development in Iraq. He concludes: “.. the Sudani government must restore voter confidence in the political process while preventing coercion and force in the electoral process... Finally, dealing with the internal issues of displaced persons and the rights of minorities and women will also go a long way in building Iraq’s reputation as a reliable, stable country. These steps constitute a road map to restore Iraq to a normal state in the eyes of the international community. If Sudani succeeds in implementing these steps by handling them as a single package of “indivisible” measures and policies, Iraq could make a quantum leap in its modern history, accelerating the rebuilding and development of the entire country. However, Iraq’s failure to implement these obligations and steps will open the door to chaos, conflict, and further division”.

Fawzi al-Zubaidi



**The Washington Institute
For Near East Policy**

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/new-road-map-iraq-support-stability-and-growth>

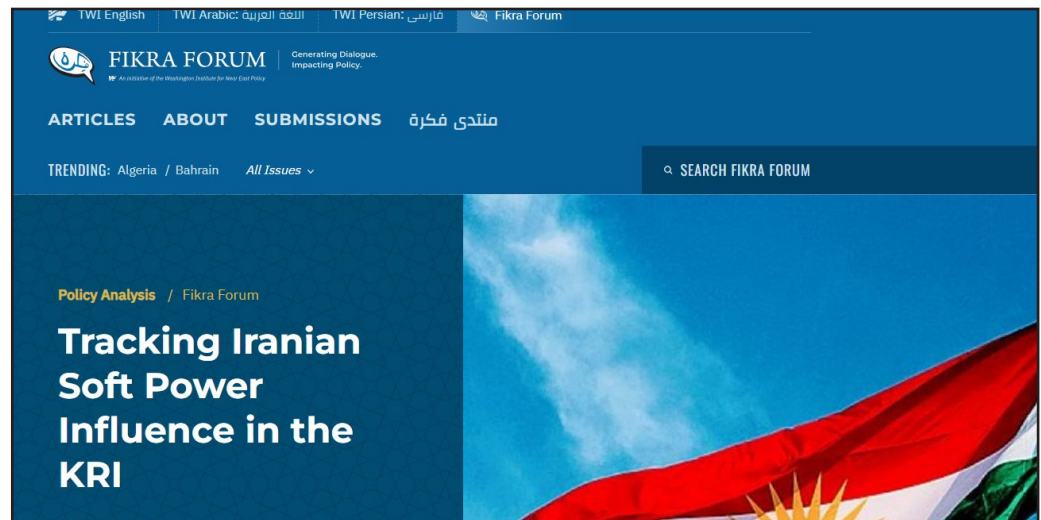
Tracking Iranian Soft Power Influence in the KRI

Nawras Jaff



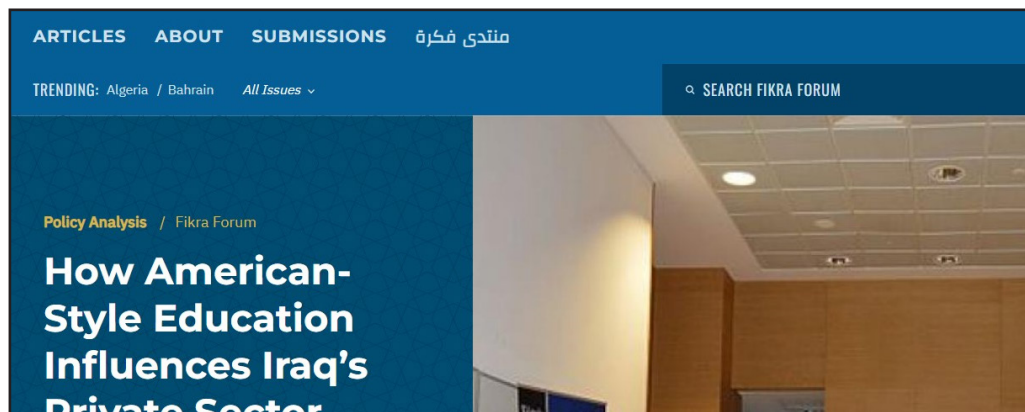
**The Washington Institute
For Near East Policy**

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tracking-iranian-soft-power-influence-kri>



Nawras Jaff, a political columnist in Iraq, writes about the soft power of Iran in the northern parts of Iraq. For him: “The Islamic Republic of Iran over several years has gained a significant foothold in Iraq, spreading its influence and agenda throughout Iraqi daily life.” In the end, he concludes, “More recently, Iran has taken to bringing its own universities and educational opportunities inside the borders of its neighbor. Islamic Azad University, a multi-branch Iranian university with campuses in the Islamic Republic and Syria, has reached the approval phase to build five new campuses in the Middle East... With Iran wielding such effective influence campaigns on both the political and cultural levels, all signs point to Iranian soft power continuing to grow in the KRI. Though the impact of these soft power efforts only tends to become evident over time, the current signs of Iranian influence in the KRI’s political, religious, and educational life suggest that this movement will remain effective in the future.

How American-Style Education Influences Iraq's Private Sector



May Kadow, a research assistant in The Washington Institute's Program on Arab Politics, discusses the current situation of American-style education in Iraq. For him, "to grow, the Iraqi economy needs a more robust private sector, which needs young Iraqi workers with business-ready skill sets. American-style universities are filling the gap." He concludes that "the U.S. government is actively supporting the development of both liberal arts and practical, marketable skills for Iraqi students, empowering them to sharpen their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities and propelling them towards greater personal and professional success.... As opportunities to participate in U.S.-based educational exchange programs dwindle and Iraq faces significant internal challenges, direct support from the United States for Iraqi universities and students is more crucial than ever... By continuing and increasing their commitment to American-style educational institutions in Iraq, the United States can strengthen the Iraqi economy and build lasting bonds that transcend political uncertainties."

May Kadow



**The Washington Institute
For Near East Policy**

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-american-style-education-influences-iraqs-private-sector>

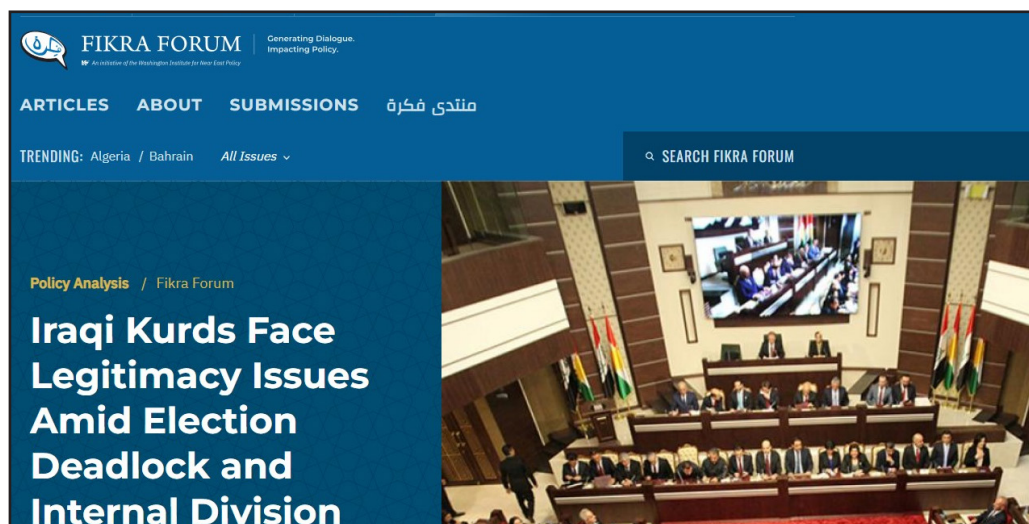
Iraqi Kurds Face Legitimacy Issues Amid Election Deadlock and Internal Division

Bekir Aydoğın



The Washington Institute
For Near East Policy

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqi-kurds-face-legitimacy-issues-amid-election-deadlock-and-internal-division>



Bekir Aydoğın, an Erbil-based journalist focusing on Iraqi Kurdistan, discusses the current situation of Iraqi Kurds. He asserts: “Disunity among the Kurds not only causes election uncertainties and concerns over democratic standards but also leaves the Kurds vulnerable to the moves of the central government that may make these divisions more entrenched. As history has shown, Kurdish parties can achieve outstanding accomplishments when they “play along,” as was the case in the early 1990s and the post-2003 era when they secured status. But in the opposite case, they are doomed to fail, as has happened since the 2017 independence referendum, when the KRI lost the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. Given Baghdad’s increased encirclement of the KRI, the alarming current level of disagreement between the KDP and PUK perhaps necessitates a more comprehensive and serious agreement such as the Washington Agreement of 1998.”

A First-Hand Look at Arba'een, the World's Largest Annual Pilgrimage

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A First-Hand Look at Arba'een, the World's Largest Annual Pilgrimage

Arba'een draws millions of people together in a gathering where pilgrims' needs are provided for out of generosity and without payment. I needed to see this with my own eyes and traveled to Iraq to take part. What I saw impressed me forever with the understanding that peace and compassion are possible here on Earth.

BY MEHDI ALAVI



Mehdi Alavi writes about the Arba'een walk pilgrimage now happening in Iraq. For him, “Arba'een draws millions of people together in a gathering where pilgrims’ needs are provided for out of generosity and without payment. I needed to see this with my own eyes and traveled to Iraq to take part. What I saw impressed me forever with the understanding that peace and compassion are possible here on Earth.” He describes his experience joining this walking pilgrimage: “My journey was exceptional. My life’s dream of unity and peace was realized in my travels. I watched people who were amazingly liberated from fear, judgment, and the desire for control and power. I saw them all sharing their basic needs with strangers. I learned that the vision of the coming together of people from all walks of life united for the pursuit of compassion, love, and peace ALREADY exists.”

MEHDI ALAVI

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<https://www.fairobserver.com/world-news/a-first-hand-look-at-arbaeen-the-worlds-largest-annual-pilgrimage/>

Political impasse in Iraq's Kurdistan Region

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<https://www.faiobserver.com/world-news/political-impasse-in-iraqs-kurdistan-region/>

Kurdistan Region

Iraq's Kurdistan Region will not have elections until next year. Rivalries between the regional parties have made it impossible for Kurdistan to conduct its own elections. In a major blow to Kurdish autonomy, Baghdad will now step in to conduct the elections.

BY WINTHROP RODGERS



Winthrop Rodgers believes that “Iraq’s Kurdistan Region will not have elections until next year. Rivalries between the regional parties have made it impossible for Kurdistan to conduct its elections. In a major blow to Kurdish autonomy, Baghdad will now step in to conduct the elections”. He asserted that “While the erosion of Erbil’s political authority relative to Baghdad is a major concern, the real losers here are not the squabbling political leaderships of the KDP and the PUK, but the people of the Kurdistan Region. They are now being denied the right to self-governance...Now, the dithering of the ruling parties has denied them the basic democratic right of the ballot box. Self-governance and the right to elections are now at risk. While there has been debate to be had about whether elections in the Kurdistan Region have been free and fair, it is beyond doubt that they are necessary.”

Turkey Killed Iraqi Civilians—Where Is the Uproar?



To the author, “Turkey has been waging an air war against militants in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region. This month, a rash of airstrikes killed seven people, including five civilians. Kurdish and Iraqi authorities, not wanting to endanger political and economic ties with Turkey, have been shamefully silent.” He concludes that “Fidan’s visit comes at a delicate time for Iraq–Turkey relations, and talks are expected to cover an extensive agenda that includes oil, water, security, and trade. In many ways, Ankara has staked out a maximalist stance on these issues to elicit concessions from Baghdad; the recent airstrikes are likely part of that strategy... While it is unsurprising that Iraqi and Kurdish officials do not want to upset Ankara ahead of these talks, it is also reprehensible. That civilians can be killed with impunity and hardly a murmur of official outrage shows the weakness of Iraqi and Kurdish leaders who hide behind realpolitik while their people are killed from above.”

WINTHROP RODGERS

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<https://www.fairobserver.com/world-news/turkey-news/turkey-killed-iraqi-civilians-where-is-the-uproar/>

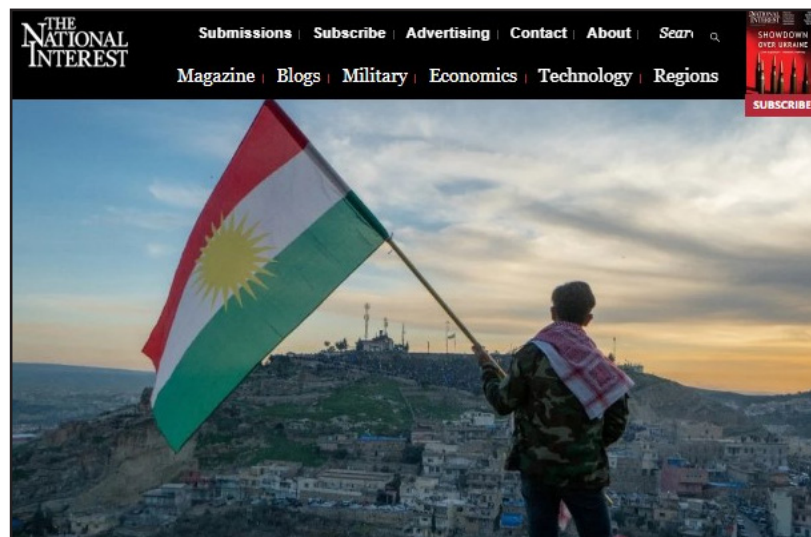
Are Turkey and Iran Uniting Against the Iraqi Kurds?

Shad Sherko



NATIONAL INTEREST

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/are-turkey-and-iran-uniting-against-iraqi-kurds-206736>



Shad Sherko, a journalist working in Iraqi Kurdistan, believes, “From Ankara and Tehran’s perspective, a subservient or weakened Iraqi Kurdish region must be achieved.” For him, “Turkey and Iran already face their nationalist Kurdish movements, some of them armed, such as the PKK and KDPI. Both groups maintain a large number of bases in Iraqi Kurdish territory. Tehran **accused** the KDPI of fomenting the nationwide protests that swept the country for months over the death of the Kurdish woman in the custody of the Iranian morality police.... An autonomous Kurdish region would be a model for those fighting to free the remaining parts of what is known as Kurdistan, which have been long divided between Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Governments have been and remain afraid that any concessions to Kurdish demands will result in further demands for independence. Therefore, from Ankara and Tehran’s perspective, a subservient or weakened Iraqi Kurdish region must be achieved.”

Barzani's Days As Kurdish Leader Are Numbered



Michael Rubin, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, openly asserts that “Masrour Barzani should be worried.” He states, “Iraqi Kurdistan is neither as secure nor stable as the regional prime minister and heir apparent of the powerful Barzani family believes. Mismanagement and corruption contribute to an economic downturn, and his old strategy of buying friends will falter as money runs out.” He concludes, “It is always calm before a storm. While the West may believe they can do business with a dictatorship if it keeps the region stable and constrains Iranian influence, they are wrong on two counts. First, Barzani’s smuggling to Iran continues apace; he will deal with anyone to augment power. Second, Kurds, frustrated by his cruelty and incompetence, are ready to be rid of him. His father, Masoud, dominated Iraqi-Kurdish affairs for 40 years. The question is whether Masrour will be able to survive in the arena for another two.”

Michael Rubin

1945

19fortyfive.com

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2023/08/barzanis-days-as-kurdish-leader-are-numbered/>

Peshmerga reform hangs in the balance in Iraq's Kurdistan Region

Winthrop Rodgers



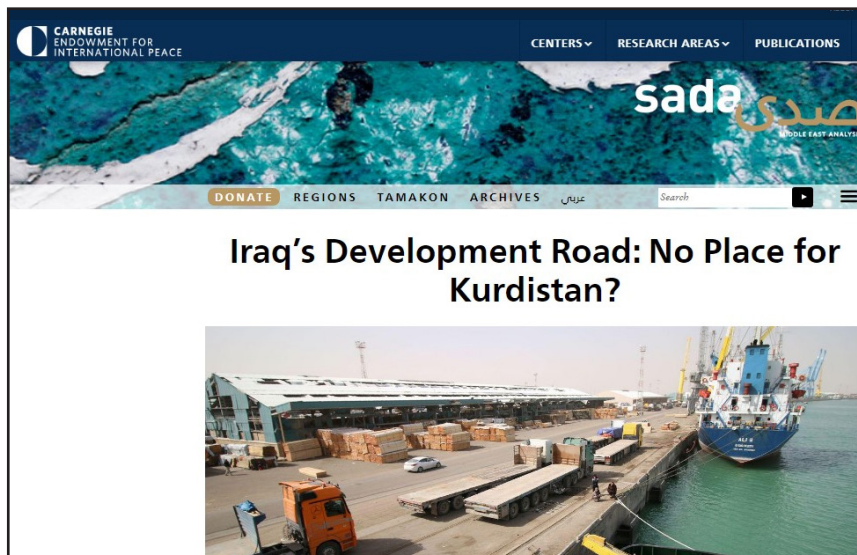
Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/peshmerga-reform-hangs-balance-iraqs-kurdistan-region>



Winthrop Rodgers, a journalist and researcher based in Sulaymaniyah in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, has written a paper on the efforts to reform the Iraqi Kurdish security forces known as the Peshmerga as he believes that they are at "serious risk of failing". He writes that "tensions between the ruling parties of Iraq's Kurdistan Region are not new, but the working relationship between the leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has collapsed over the past year. depoliticization and unification of the Peshmerga have rarely seemed more remote." He concludes that "Peshmerga reform stands at a junction that speaks to more general dynamics. Will the political leadership put aside their mutual mistrust and advance a unified vision in service of all people and institutions of the Kurdistan Region regardless of political affiliation or will they crawl deeper into partisan self-interest as their foreign partners gradually tune out? Opportunity remains, barely and not for long."

Iraq's Development Road: No Place for Kurdistan?



SARDAR AZIZ



Carnegie Endowment For
International Peace

<https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90345>

Sardar Aziz, a former senior adviser in the Kurdish parliament and researcher and writer, discusses the issue of including Iraqi Kurdistan in the development plans of Iraq. He believes that “while justified as economically infeasible, the exclusion of Kurdistan from a new Iraqi infrastructure plan is a purely political move.” He concludes, “Infrastructure is always political, especially regarding nationwide projects. But given that the Iraqi state governs under the fear of territorial disintegration, excluding KRI from the Development Road is a risky move. Iraqi Kurds will see the project as part of a strategy of de-development—intended to marginalize and exclude the KRI—which can only lead to greater national discord. As the KRI Minister of Transport and Communication himself emphasized, “there will be no road to development [in Iraq] without Kurdistan.”

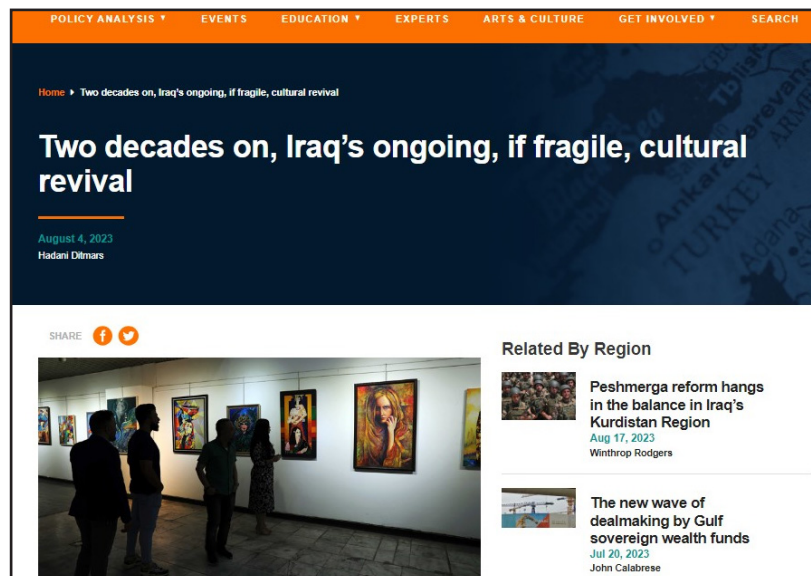
Two decades on, Iraq's ongoing, if fragile, cultural revival

Hadani Ditmars



Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/two-decades-iraqs-ongoing-if-fragile-cultural-revival>



Hadani Ditmars discusses the new movement of Iraqi cultural activists amid many internal problems. He writes, “at the Iraq Museum, the new director, Luma Yas al-Duri, plans to expand the educational programs, while the recently refurbished Assyrian Gallery is a jewel among the many impressive rooms. Once a symbol of the cultural destruction wrought by the 2003 invasion, the museum, which officially reopened last year after a three-year hiatus amid the protest movement, is a promising example of Iraq’s ongoing, if fragile, cultural renewal.” And concludes that “In a nation where contemporary cultural development has been historically tied to the price of oil, one hopes that some of the golden age of 1970s state investment in the arts will soon rematerialize — both as a counterbalance to the vagaries of the free market and as a boon to an ancient culture rising again from the ashes of three decades of destruction.”

The path to transforming Iraqi Kurdistan's economic diversity and potential



Honar Issa

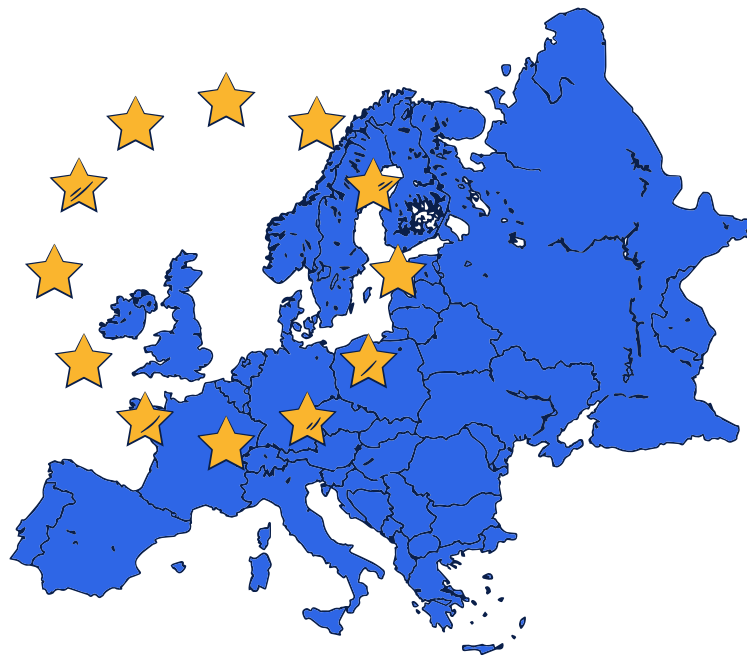


Atlantic Council

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/kurdistan-regional-government-economy/>

Honar Issa, the secretary of the Board of Trustees at the American University of Kurdistan (AUK), discusses the economic situation in Iraq Kurdistan. Writing that “the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has endeavored to establish a diversified economy through Vision 2020 and Vision 2030. The KRG has undertaken numerous initiatives to achieve this significant objective, including administrative reform, digital transformation, agricultural development, banking system advancement, and the implementation of a tax regime.” He concludes that “the self-sufficiency and sustainability of a government are contingent on a strong economy, and this is the path the KRG has taken. Such a diversified economy should replace the single-commodity economy, where oil is central to all revenues. Only then a prosperous nation can be built. Once a successful economic model is established in the Kurdistan Region, it can be extended and applied throughout the rest of Iraq.”

EUROPEAN THINK TANKS



For Iraq, by Iraqi women: A tribute on World Humanitarian Day



Noor Taher



Norwegian Refugee Council

<https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2023/for-iraq-by-iraqi-women-a-tribute-on-world-humanitarian-day/>

Noor Taher writes about some of the successful Iraqi women in terms of humanitarian actions. She remembers two colleagues—Safaa and Marwa—who “epitomize in many ways the conviction and commitment of our team across the country and the world.” She continues: “Both Safaa and Marwa are part of our Protection from Violence programme, which supports internally displaced Iraqis who may face risks because of who they are or where they are. As Iraqis, both women lived in cities controlled by the self-proclaimed “Islamic State” between 2013 and 2017.” At the end, the author writes: “Safaa and Marwa are one of 372 Iraqis who work for NRC across eight governorates to support vulnerable people in need. They are the face of NRC in remote villages and towns recovering from conflict, and the ones who lead our commitment to help people recover and rebuild.”

Iraqi Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer Report



Norwegian Refugee Council


<https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/iraqi-youth-entrepreneurship-barometer-report/>



The Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer survey, conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), delves into the challenges young Iraqi entrepreneurs face, particularly in agriculture. Covering five governorates – Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, and Ninewa – the report highlights themes like inclusiveness, skill access, business initiation, competitiveness, and essential ecosystem support... This edition unveils contrasts, with Baghdad and Ninewa respondents more optimistic about business development support (BDS) than Anbar, Basra, and Kirkuk. The barometer reveals that there are significant gaps in the support networks available to young entrepreneurs and their awareness of the assistance provided by the business ecosystem. This situation emphasizes the pressing need for more investment in training, financial support, and the enhancement of the overall business environment. Achieving gender equality and enhancing access to education, infrastructure, and support networks are crucial steps to foster youth engagement and promote the growth of businesses.”

China And Russia Execute A Pincer Movement Around Iraq's Biggest Oil Assets

Home / Energy / Energy-General



SIMON WATKINS

Simon Watkins is a former senior FX trader and salesman, financial journalist, and best-selling author. He was Head of Forex Institutional Sales and Trading for...


More Info


China And Russia Execute A Pincer Movement Around Iraq's Biggest Oil Assets


By [Simon Watkins](#) - Aug 21, 2023, 6:00 PM CDT


- ▶ Through a large number of smaller deals, Russia and China are looking to increase their influence in the crucial Iraqi upstream oil sector.
- ▶ The exploration and development contracts for China are done through a backdoor method, with firms that are less well-known than the big state players that attract little or no publicity.
- ▶ China regards TotalEnergies' \$27 billion deal as a huge threat to its plans to close the net around Iraq's oil and gas sector.

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Simon Watkins



OIL PRICE

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/China-And-Russia-Execute-A-Pincer-Movement-Around-Iraqs-Biggest-Oil-Assets.html>

Simon Watkin believes that “Through a large number of smaller deals, Russia and China are looking to increase their influence in the crucial Iraqi upstream oil sector.” In addition, for him, “the exploration and development contracts for China are done through a backdoor method, with firms that are less well-known than the big state players that attract little or no publicity.” He concludes that “China regards TotalEnergies’ \$27 billion deal as a huge threat to its plans to close the net around Iraq’s oil and gas sector.” And that “According to the E.U. energy security source, China regards this deal as a huge threat to its plans to close the net around Iraq’s oil and gas sector, and it also believes it might threaten some of its activities in the country’s chief regional sponsor, Iran. Specifically, Iran and Iraq share many of their major oil reservoirs, and many of the two countries’ oilfields are just two parts of these same oil reservoirs.”

The Real Reason Russia Is Ramping Up Oil Production In Iraq

Simon Watkins



OIL PRICE

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/The-Real-Reason-Russia-Is-Ramping-Up-Oil-Production-In-Iraq.html>

Home / Energy / Crude Oil



SIMON WATKINS

Simon Watkins is a former senior FX trader and salesman, financial journalist, and best-selling author. He was Head of Forex Institutional Sales and Trading for...

More Info

The Real Reason Russia Is Ramping Up Oil Production In Iraq

By [Simon Watkins](#) - Aug 15, 2023, 7:00 PM CDT

- ▶ **Russia is moving to gain a tighter grip on Iraqi oil production as its influence in Kurdistan is waning.**
- ▶ **Russia finally effecting a major increase in oil production from Iraq's supergiant West Qurna 2 oil field.**
- ▶ **West Qurna 2 has estimated recoverable oil reserves of around 13 billion barrels and, like most of the big fields in Iraq.**

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Simon Watkins believes that “Russia is moving to gain a tighter grip on Iraqi oil production as its influence in Kurdistan is waning. Russia finally effecting a major increase in oil production from Iraq’s supergiant West Qurna 2 oil field. West Qurna 2 has estimated recoverable oil reserves of around 13 billion barrels and, like most of the big fields in Iraq.” He also asserts, “However, only one month later, 93% of the people of Iraq’s semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan voted in favour of complete independence from Iraq, and chaos ensued, seeing Iranian forces move into the KRI, with Russian support. Only one month after that, Russia effectively took control of the region’s oil sector, and looked to put the squeeze on the Federal Government of Iraq (FGI) run out of Baghdad. As also analyzed in depth in my new book on the new global oil market order”

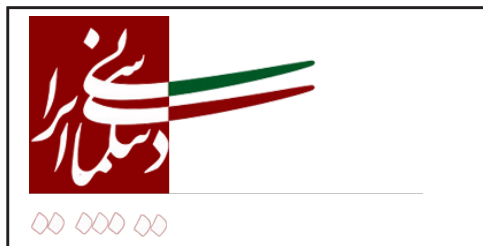
IRANIAN THINK TANKS



America's plan to use terror cells

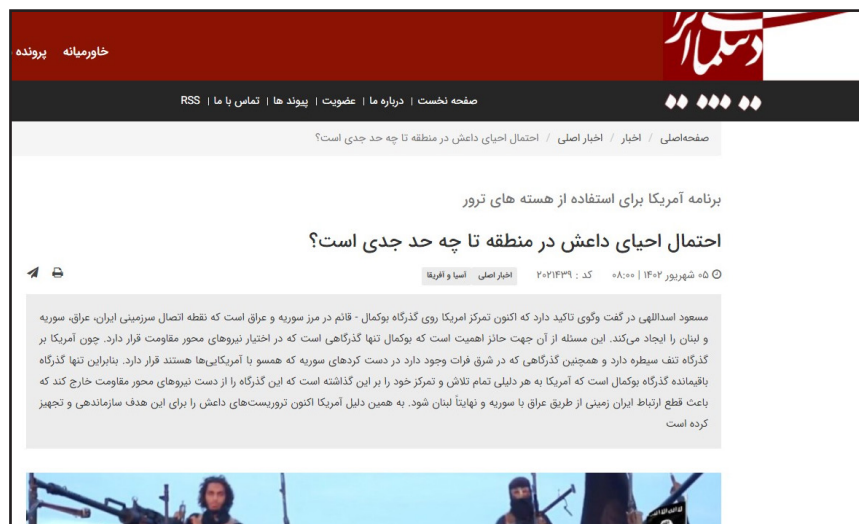
How serious is the possibility of Daesh revival in the region?

Masoud Asadollahi



Iranian Diplomacy Website

<https://tinyurl.com/ysvg438y>

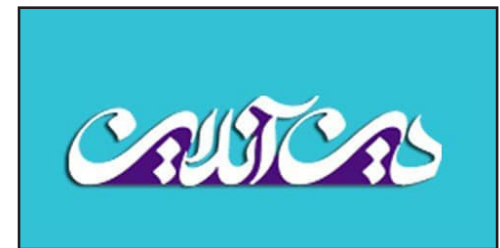


Masoud Asadollahi emphasizes in the interview with the Iranian Diplomacy website that America's focus is now on the Bukamal-Qaim crossing on the border of Syria and Iraq, which creates the territorial connection point of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. This issue is vital because Bukamal is the only crossing for resistance forces. As the US has control over the Tanf crossing, and the crossing east of the Euphrates is in the hands of the Syrian Kurds, who are aligned with the Americans, the only remaining crossing is the Bukamal crossing, which, for whatever reason, America has put all its efforts and focus on taking this crossing out of the hands of the resistance forces, which will cut off Iran's land connection through Iraq with Syria and finally Lebanon. For this reason, America has now organized and equipped ISIS terrorists for this purpose.

Ayatallah Sistani and citizenship rights



Muhammad Hadi Zahid Gharwi



Deen online

<https://tinyurl.com/ysme57hu>

After the spread of pictures of a number of citizens in the Jadriyah area of Baghdad resorting to the Supreme Leader, Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, after they were pressured by those in power to give up their properties, the Supreme Reference Office confirmed in a statement its condemnation of behaviours contrary to religion and law. In this study, Gharwi sheds light on Mr. Sistani's approach and vision towards citizenship rights according to his jurisprudential premises.

In the study, the author refers to the intellectual details of Sistani related to the right of citizens to self-determination, election, choice of the type of political system, values, decision-making, the right of women, clerics, peaceful demonstration and assembly, reforms, anti-corruption, decent living, justice, security, freedom, private space, and education.

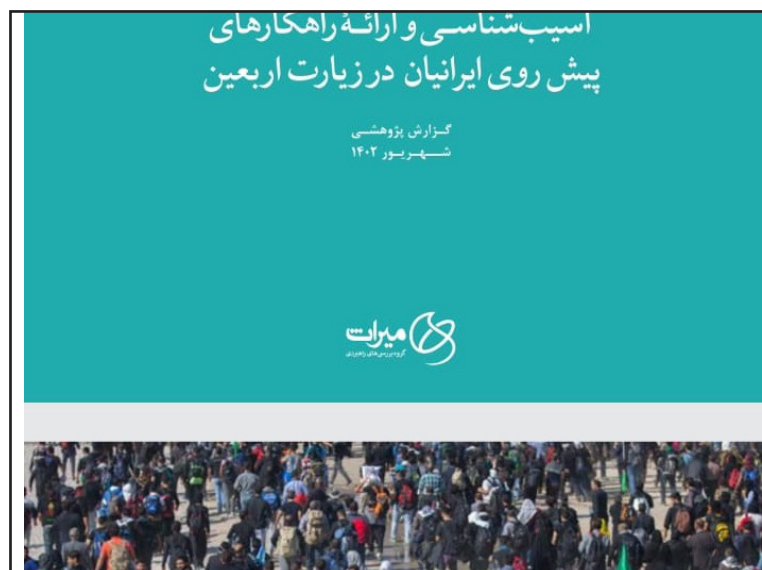
The problems of the Al'arbaeina visit, and the policies available to the Iranians

Amir Hashemi Moghadam



Mirath Group for Strategic Studies

<https://mssinst.com/blog/page/2/>



Last year's Al'arbaeina visit ceremony witnessed widespread problems in passenger transport, overcrowding, passport supervision and border crossings, provision of health services, food, etc., due to the attendance of more than a limit of visitors at the Iraqi border. These problems led to a large number of visitors suffering from hyperthermia (heat stroke), some dying, widespread criticism about the way the ceremony was conducted, and significant negative reactions in some media, especially foreign media. Based on this, it is necessary to study all the dimensions of the damage of the al'arbaeina march. What you will read next is a summary of the results of the research to answer this necessity, as well as the vision of inside Iran and inside Iraq for visitors from both sides and the vision of experts in the policies available in Iraq and Iran to avoid problems

TURKISH THINK TANKS



What is at stake behind Fidan's visit to Iraq?

Murat Yeşiltaş

DAILY SABAH

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<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/what-is-at-stake-behind-fidans-visit-to-iraq>

What is at stake behind Fidan's visit to Iraq?

BY MURAT YEŞILTAŞ | AUG 25, 2023 - 12:05 AM GMT+3 |



Murat Yeşiltaş, a professor of international politics in the Department of International Relations at the Social Sciences University of Ankara and the director of foreign policy research at SETA, points out that “Iraq is one of the most strategic countries in the neighboring geography for Türkiye in terms of the fight against terrorism, energy geopolitics, economic relations, internal stability and rivalry between the countries in the region. Therefore, Fidan’s visit is quite critical before President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s expected visit to Iraq.” He concludes that “positive outcomes from Fidan’s negotiations might pave the way for Erdoğan’s visit, potentially fostering strategic cooperation between Türkiye and Iraq as Ankara’s regional influence grows stronger with Baghdad’s strategic importance ... If Fidan’s negotiations yield positive outcomes, a robust foundation for Erdoğan’s visit will be laid, potentially paving the way for strategic cooperation within Türkiye–Iraq relations. Türkiye’s regional influence is resurging, with Iraq playing a strategic role in fortifying this influence”.

Experts Answer: Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's Comprehensive Visit to Iraq



Ankara-based Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research has asked Turkish experts about the recent trip of the Turkish minister of foreign affairs to Iraq. According to them, “Türkiye and Iraq are two important countries for each other. In this context, there are various indications regarding the importance of the Iraqi visit of Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey... the first dimension is the still pending or frozen problems between the two countries seeking a solution. These problems can be listed as water sharing, the export of Iraqi oil through the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, and the presence of PKK elements on Iraqi soil. The second dimension of the common issues between the two countries is the expectation of strategic cooperation... Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's visit to Iraq has a very comprehensive content. In the meetings held with official officials and representatives of almost all parts of Iraq, Turkey's perspective on Iraq was refreshed in the minds of its interlocutors.”

Bilgay Duman

July 21, 2023



**Foundation for Political,
Economic, and Social Research**

<https://www.setav.org/uzmanlar-cevapliyor-disisleri-bakani-hakan-fidanin-kapsamli-irak-ziyareti/>

Turkmen agenda in Iraq visit

Selçuk Bacalan



Anadolu Agency

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/gorus-irak-ziyaretinde-turkmen-gundemi/2976615#>

gündemi

Dışişleri Bakanı Hakan Fidan'ın Irak'ta Türkmenlerle de görüşmesi, Irak'taki Türkmen toplumunun Türkiye-Irak ilişkilerindeki önemini gösterdi. Irak'ın kuruluşundan bu yana Türkmenler, Türkiye-Irak ilişkilerinde yumuşatıcı bir güç olarak ortaya çıktı.

Dr. Selçuk Bacalan | 26.08.2023 - Güncelleme : 26.08.2023



According to the Selçuk Balacan, “Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan’s meeting with the Turkmen in Iraq showed the importance of the Turkmen community in Iraq in Turkey-Iraq relations. Since the establishment of Iraq, the Turkmen have emerged as a softening force in Turkey-Iraq relations...Fidan’s meetings with political actors from all layers of Iraq are important in terms of the relations between the two countries and the representation of the Turkmen, who have been systematically excluded from Iraqi politics since the establishment of Iraq, in the government and decision-making bodies...During the talks, in addition to bilateral relations between Iraq and Turkey, the terrorist organization PKK, the resumption of the shipment, which was halted as a result of the disagreement between the Baghdad-Erbil governments on the sale of Iraqi oil to international markets through Turkey since March 2023, the Development Road Project, the increase in the trade volume between the two countries. And water problems were among the important topics.”

Intense and delicate diplomacy in Iraq from Fidan

Fidan'dan Irak'ta yoğun ve ince diplomasi

27 Ağustos 2023

PAYLAŞ



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Bilgay Duman - Dışişleri Bakanı Hakan Fidan 22-24 Ağustos tarihlerinde Irak'ta bir dizi görüşmeler gerçekleştirdi. Ancak bu ziyaretin hem kapsamı hem de görüşmelerin sayı ve niteliğine bakıldığında tam bir "çıkarma" olduğunu söylemek mümkün. 22 Ağustos akşamı Irak'ın başkenti Bağdat'a inen Fidan, ayağının tozuyla daha havalimanında Iraklı mevkidaşı Fuad Hüseyin ile bir araya geldi. Görüşme sonrası yapılan basın toplantısı Fidan'ın ziyaretinin kapsamını ortaya koyar nitelikte oldu. İkili tarafından gerçekleştirilen basın toplantısında terör örgütü PKK ile mücadelenin ana gündem maddesi olduğu görülürken, iki ülke arasında 25 milyar dolara ulaşan ticaret hacminin artırılması, Irak petrolünün satışı konusunda yaşanan

Bilgay Duman



MILLİYET

Bilgay Duman, a Turkish expert on Iraqi issues, writes about the recent visit of the Turkish minister of foreign affairs to Iraq. For him, "At this point, it is seen that a great effort has been made to reactivate the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, which has been closed since 25 March. Although no "concrete" steps have been taken during the visit for now, it would not be wrong to say that relations with Iraq will evolve to a different dimension with Fidan's visit. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also plans to visit Iraq in the upcoming period. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that Fidan made a productive preparatory visit before President Erdoğan's visit. In other words, Saplings plowed the field in Iraq and made it ready for planting. The process also shows that a good harvest will be obtained from Iraq."

<https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/dusunenlerin-dusuncesi/fidandan-irakta-yogun-ve-ince-diplomasi-6996925>

Iraq-Egypt Rapprochement and Its Regional Effects

Şeyma Kızılay



Center For Middle Eastern Studies

<https://orsam.org.tr/tr/irak-misir-yakinlasmasi-ve-bolgesel-etkileri/>

Irak-Mısır Yakınlaşması ve Bölgesel Etkileri



Şeyma Kızılay, a Turkish expert on Iraq and Turkey relations, writes, “Iraq and Egypt have been drawing attention with the high momentum they have achieved in bilateral cooperation and diplomatic relations in recent years.” Ultimately, she concludes that “the strengthening of the Iraq-Egypt relations also affects the developments within the scope of the tripartite mechanism, in which Jordan is also involved. In this sense, a relationship dynamic at the level of strategic cooperation is observed between the parties. Regional reflections of mutual development and deepening of partnerships also cover these regional integration activities. As it is known, the cooperation between the three countries, which has taken its place as the “New Levant” project, has strategic importance. The project creates a political and economic impact between the countries concerned and at the regional level. It includes a variety of partnerships, from energy and electricity megaprojects to economic security and free passage between the three countries.”

REGIONAL THINK TANKS

Promising opportunities... How Iraq Can Benefit from Regional Calm?

Mervat Zakaria



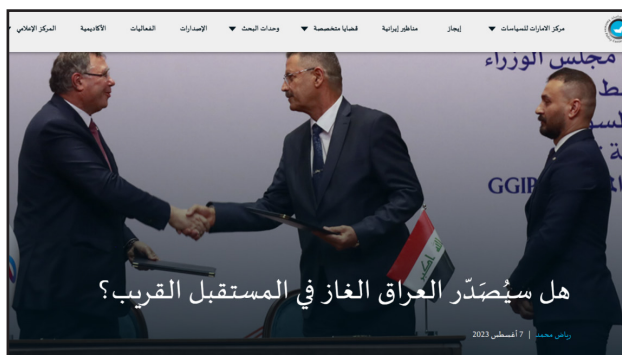
Arab Center for Studies and Research

<http://www.acrseg.org/>



Over the past few decades, Iraq has been caught up in Iran–Saudi tensions, thus Baghdad has become the largest beneficiary (which has been a major facilitator) of the Chinese–brokered resumption of relations agreement signed on March 10, 2023, in Beijing between Riyadh and Tehran. This demonstrates that after a decade of extreme polarization, key regional players are now focusing more on economic prosperity than geopolitical competition, which can bring direct and needed benefits to Iraq, through several points; To impose the return of Iraq to its Arab surroundings, as well as the shift in relations with Iran to balanced relations, as well as the level of dealing with the international crises that Iraq will have the most flexibility in dealing with, as well as the possibilities of bringing many Gulf investments into Iraq, which will be a great promising opportunity for Iraq and its surroundings.

Will Iraq export gas in the near future?



In this paper, the author discusses Iraq's attempts to invest in natural gas and the chances of Iraq becoming a source country for natural gas. (Mohammed Shiaa Al-Sudani) During the signing of the fifth round of licenses for oil and gas fields, concerning

Iraq's self-sufficiency in gas during the next three years and its entry into the world oil market as its source, this paper discusses five main themes: first, the double gas crisis; Iraq is suffering from a shortage of gas supplies – which is used in power plants – which has led to its heavy dependence on imports from Iran, despite having good gas reserves, and the second: results of licensing rounds; Iraq has begun to pay attention to the issue of the investment of associated gas – which is burned during oil extraction – and natural gas since the signing of licensing rounds 14 years ago, while the increase in Iraqi gas production has not exceeded 50% in 18 years, and the third: political interference; The writer states that political conflicts have disrupted the signing of the fifth round of licenses – which includes oil and gas fields – for a full five years, and will likely disrupt other strategic projects in the future. Corruption in Iraq also remains a major factor limiting foreign investment in its various economic sectors, including oil and gas; Fourth: the influence of the Iranian worker; Iran has an interest in Iraq's continued reliance on Iranian gas. But this has not prevented Iraq from seeking to terminate this accreditation, most recently, the author concludes that Iraq will probably be able to invest part of its gas with the help of foreign companies. And it may reach self-sufficiency by 2030, but a steady population increase -- more than a million people every year -- will consume most of the gas that Iraq produces. This will limit Iraq's chances of being a gas exporter.

Riyadh Mohammed



Emirates Policy Center

<https://www.epc.ae/ar/details/brief/hal-syusadr-aleiraq-alghaz-fi-almustaqbal-alqaribi>

Local elections in Iraq: the disintegration of alliances. And the prospects of Muqtada al-Sadr's return

Safinaz Muhammad Ahmad



Al-Ahram Center For Political &
Strategic Studies

[https://acpps.ahram.org.eg/
News/20970.aspx](https://acpps.ahram.org.eg/News/20970.aspx)



In this paper, the researcher discusses changes to the map of political alliances in Iraq of all kinds, Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish, as a result of the preparations for the provincial council elections scheduled for December 20, 2023. The first: is options for the disintegration of political alliances, as the “coordination framework” would be divided into three currents; the hard-right movement, the moderate current and the secular Shiite civil current, as well as the Sunni alliances, which will be retaliated against in three or two lists, according to the distribution of grass-roots bases in the provinces. The position of the opposition civilian forces, and the third level discusses an attempt by the Sadrist movement to return to political action and to contest elections.

Report: A New Chapter of the Shiite-Shiite Conflict and its Repercussions on Iranian Influence in Iraq



International Institute of Iranian Studies

<https://tinyurl.com/ys36s2m2>

The report raises a set of questions and controversial points in the issue of the “Shiite–Shiite conflict” as the report calls it, as the circumstances and timing of the last round of the Shiite–Shiite conflict raise important questions to analyze the conflict and stand on its expected consequences and scenarios, centered on the conflict environment, issues, features, dimensions, levels and repercussions, compared to previous rounds of conflict, especially if it is a recurring conflict with political and religious dimensions within one sectarian component that leads the Iraqi scene and has been at the helm of governance for two decades. Implications for the future of Iranian influence, as well as for the future of the Iraqi state, and where is the new escalation between Sadr and Maliki headed? Who has the greatest influence on the Iraqi and Shiite equation? What is expected of Iran in the face of this continuous and repeated escalation between the two strongest Shiite alliances in the Iraqi arena?

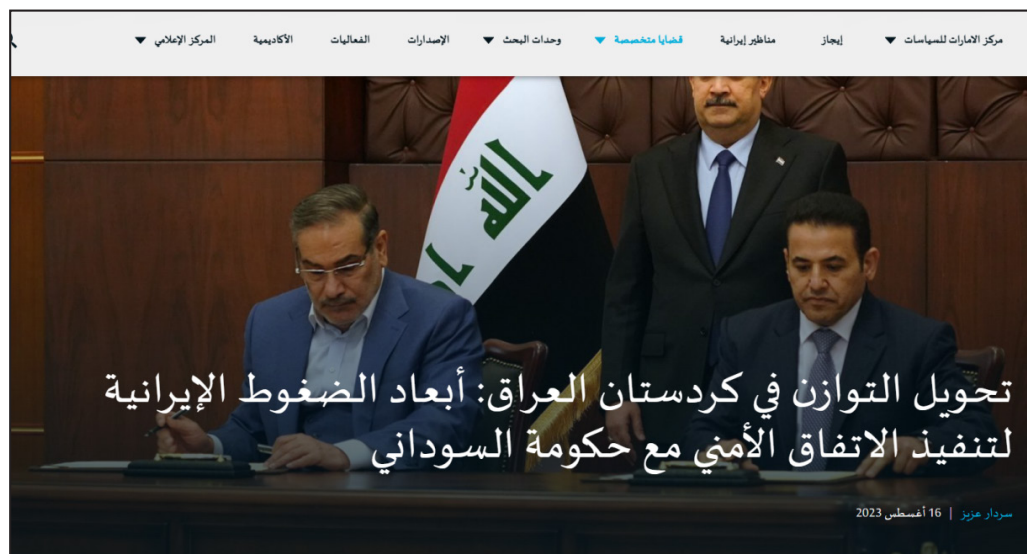
Shifting the Balance in Iraqi Kurdistan: Dimensions of Iranian Pressure to Implement the Security Agreement with the Government of Sudanise

Sardar Aziz



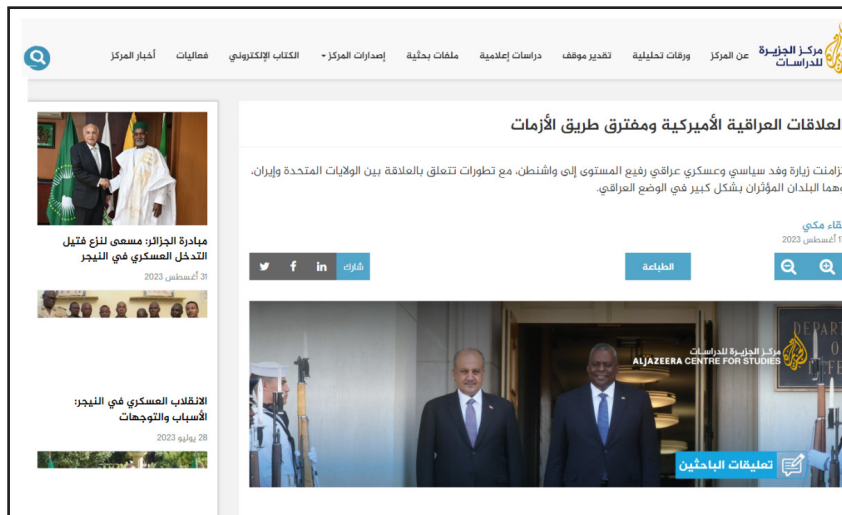
Emirates Center for Studies

<https://acpps.ahram.org.eg/News/20970.aspx>



This paper focuses on the dimensions of the Iraqi-Iranian security agreement in the issue of opposition groups in the Kurdistan region, as Iran increased its pressure on the Iraqi side in order to implement the security agreement concluded between them in March 2023, which prevents Kurdish armed opposition groups from using the territory of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to launch cross-border attacks against Iranian targets, and the most important factor in shaping the current Iranian pressure on Iraq regarding the Iranian Kurdish opposition is the recent internal crisis in Iran, where Tehran believes that it was initiated by the Kurds; and that a hardline security approach is necessary to prevent it from erupting again, despite Tehran's threat to use force inside Iraq to strike Kurdish opposition bases, Iran gets what it needs from Iraq without resorting to force, usually as the Iranian armed forces' inclination to use force would jeopardize its recent achievements.

Iraqi-American relations and the crossroads of crises



The paper focuses on the dimensions of Iraqi–American relations, especially after the visit of the Iraqi delegation to Washington in early August of this year. The paper deals with three main dimensions on which this visit was based, the first dimension; worried relations as a result of Iraq’s location in the middle of the US–Iranian conflict in the region, and the expansion of the base of Iranian influence in Iraq, and the second dimension; the regional context, as the paper mentions the regional events that coincided with the visit, such as the agreement with the US administration on the release of frozen Iranian funds in Iraq. The US base was subjected to missile bombardment in the (Conico) field in the northern countryside of Dur Al-Zour in Syria, and the third dimension is attempting to reduce tension as a result of Iraq’s fall in the middle of US–Iranian tension.

Lqaa Makki



Al Jazeera Center for Studies

<https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5716>