



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

Al Bayan Observatory



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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:

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Since 2014

Learning Too Much from Iraq

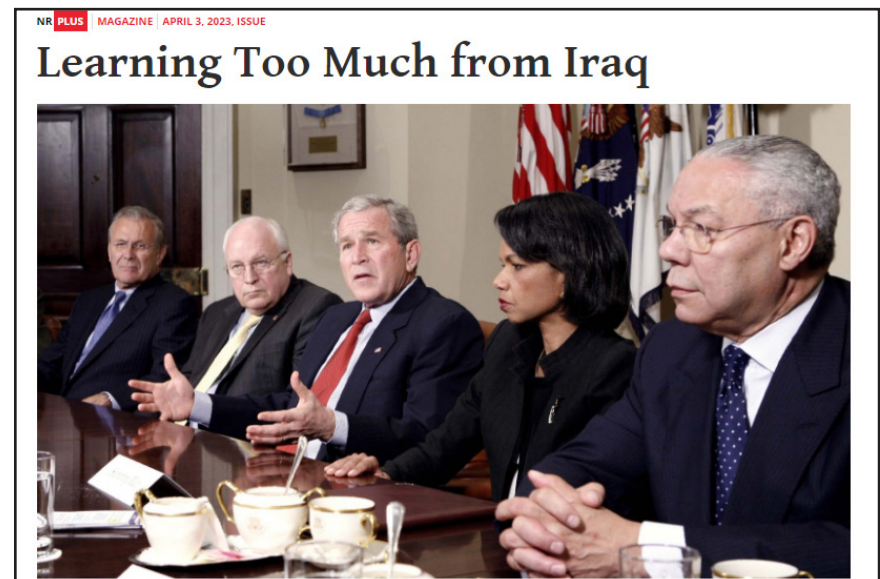
Kori Schake

March 16, 2023



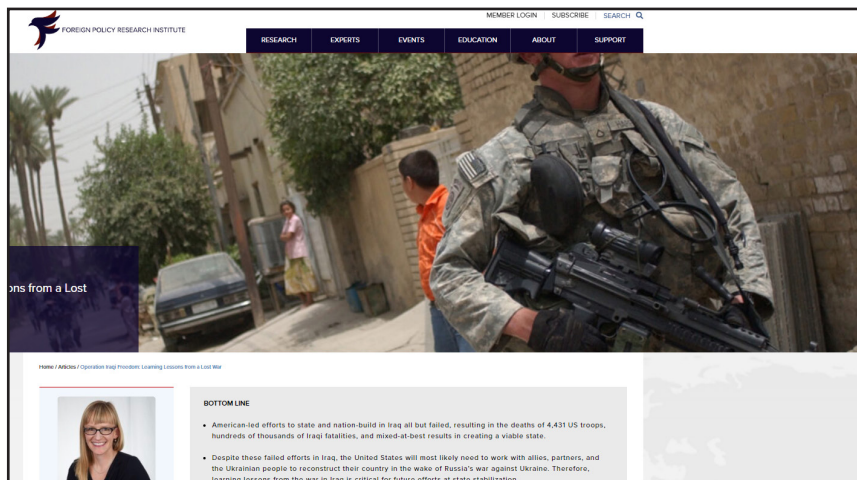
National Review

<https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2023/04/03/learning-too-much-from-iraq/>



Kori Schake in her article called “Learning Too Much from Iraq” about anniversary of American war on Iraq, provides her negative understating of the whole war and expresses: “Invading Iraq proved to have been a mistake, and the management of the war was a series of blunders across several administrations, but the decision to invade wasn’t strategic folly or reckless hubris. There were legitimate reasons for invasion and no great alternatives, and the decision was made at a time when the trauma of 9/11 had left the president and his cabinet incredibly intolerant of risk.” Schake who has joined the Bush White House in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, and before that had worked on Colin Powell’s joint staff and been a student of Condoleezza Rice, she believes that costs of war in Iraq have outweighed it benefits.

Operation Iraqi Freedom: Learning Lessons from a Lost War



Heather S. Gregg

March 30, 2023



Foreign Policy Research Institute

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/03/operation-iraqi-freedom-learning-lessons-from-a-lost-war/>

Heather S. Gregg, in her paper called “Operation Iraqi Freedom: Learning Lessons from a Lost War”, discusses the reasons of US failure in Iraq. Noting that “American-led efforts to state and nation-build in Iraq all but failed, resulting in the deaths of 4,431 US troops, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi fatalities, and mixed-at-best results in creating a viable state”, she believes that the “nation-building” project of Bush administration in Iraq is failed. Then she raises a question: what should the United States learn from its war in Iraq? As a reply, she gives two answers: “first and foremost, Operation Iraqi Freedom should teach the United States that wars are a terrible way to launch state and nation-building efforts. Wars wreak destruction not only on other militaries, but on a country’s civilian population, its infrastructure, its economy, and even the environment...Second, US efforts in Iraq should teach the United States that strategy requires not only knowing what to do

Heather S. Gregg

March 30, 2023

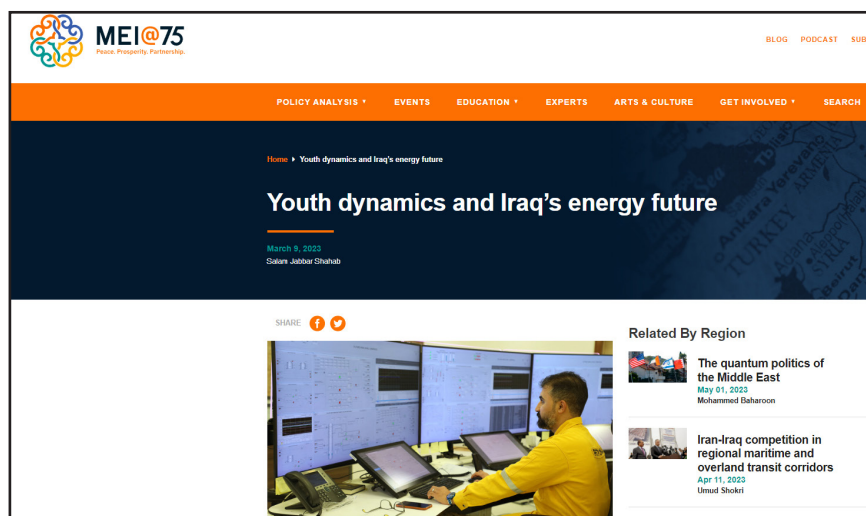


Foreign Policy Research Institute

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/03/operation-iraqi-freedom-learning-lessons-from-a-lost-war/>

but how to do it as well. How the United States chose to rebuild Iraq was disastrous”. At the end, she emphasizes that “Nothing can undo the many mistakes the United States made in Iraq. The best one can hope for twenty years on is that Americans can learn from these mistakes and do better by our allies and partners and the countries and people we are trying to help.”

Youth dynamics and Iraq's energy future



Salam Jabbar Shahab, in a report written to Middle East Institute, called “Youth dynamics and Iraq’s energy future”, connects the perspectives of Iraq’s energy future to the social and cultural situation on Iraq in the coming decades. He openly declares “The next few decades will be crucial for Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as global changes reshape the energy sector. The push for sustainable development, the Paris Agreement climate goals, and associated efforts in areas like renewable energy, climate change, and environmental protection will bring about a transition across the sector, affecting everything from employment and working patterns to governance. These changes will likely present a number of challenges for Iraq, especially if the country fails to take the radical steps needed to adapt to the energy transition.” Suggesting that “there is a looming crisis on the horizon, as Iraq’s economy is still heavily dependent on oil revenue, which accounts for around 94.4% of its total revenue. Moreover,

Salam Jabbar Shahab

March 9, 2023



Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/youth-dynamics-and-iraqs-energy-future>

Salam Jabbar Shahab

March 9, 2023

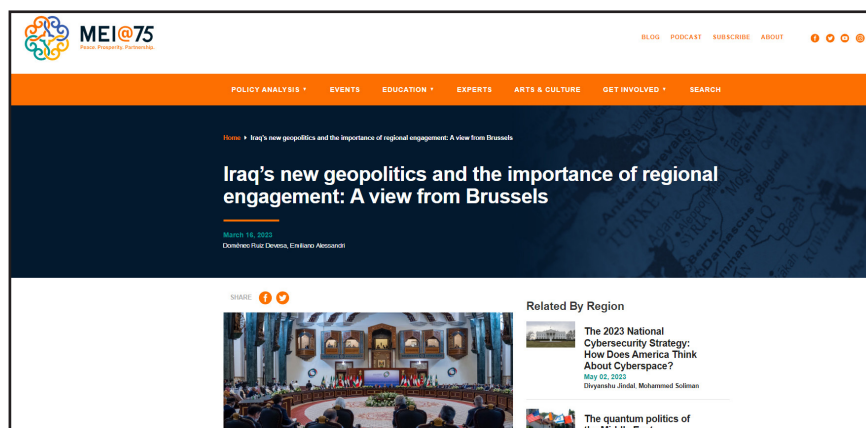


Middle East Institute

[https://www.mei.edu/publications/
youth-dynamics-and-iraqs-energy-
future](https://www.mei.edu/publications/youth-dynamics-and-iraqs-energy-future)

Iraq still flares gas associated with oil production, the cost of which is estimated at \$2.5 billion per year in lost revenue, and this burning also contributes greatly to exacerbating climate problems, environmental pollution, and the spread of disease”, he calls to serious works to address these issues. Thus, he provides seven suggestions: Fix the lack of disaggregated data, Better governance will strengthen the incentive system, Create an indicator for youth employment in the energy labor market, Make it easier to transition science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates into the energy sector, Provide vocational training for young people, especially in renewables, Expand financing for clean energy projects, Address gender-based barriers to sector employment.

Iraq's new geopolitics and the importance of regional engagement: A view from Brussels



Domènec Ruiz Devesa and Emiliano Alessandri also in a report written to Middle East Institute, called “Iraq’s new geopolitics and the importance of regional engagement: A view from Brussels”, have focused on the second Bagdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, launched in 2022. From them, “The Bagdad format is also unique in that it is open to Iran’s participation. While Tehran has for now showed only limited willingness to engage, using the gatherings to voice long-held grievances, Iranian and Sunni leaders have met on the margins, a possible sign of thawing tensions. As Iranian-Saudi relations evolve, direct contacts between Tehran and Riyadh could take place in the context of the conference”. They show that while Washington has lauded the restart of regional talks centered on Iraq, but the Biden administration has largely maintained the approach taken by previous President Donald Trump in assembling a Sunni front prepared to cooperate with Israel on Iran control. Even though Iran’s power over

Domènec Ruiz Devesa and
Emiliano Alessandri

March 16, 2023



Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/iraqs-new-geopolitics-and-importance-regional-engagement-view-brussels>

**Domènec Ruiz Devesa and
Emiliano Alessandri**

March 16, 2023



Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/iraqs-new-geopolitics-and-importance-regional-engagement-view-brussels>

Iraq has lessened somewhat in comparison to earlier years, there may be a tendency to use any available international setting to push Iran directly or tangentially, with little consideration for what Tehran’s reprisal might mean for the country’s still fragile security. Pointing to the EU’s potential role in Iraq, they believe that in backing a new strategy for Iraq and the area that focuses on creating bridges rather than blocs, Europe may have a significant role to play. At the end, they express that “Despite its recent tumultuous history — or perhaps precisely because of it — Iraq should be front and center as part of a new positive regional agenda. With the right vision and sufficient political will, the EU, together with the U.S. and relevant MENA [Middle Eastern and North African] partners, can be a lead promoter of this new approach.”

Bafel in Baghdad: Finding the contours of the PUK's strategy in federal Iraq



“Bafel in Baghdad: Finding the contours of the PUK’s strategy in federal Iraq”, is a paper written by Winthrop Rodgers in which the role of Bafel Talabani, the leader of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the Kurdistan Region and whole Iraq’s politics has been discussed. The author has analyzed the content of Talabani’s formal Instagram and Facebook account. It shows that 67% of Talabani’s meeting location has been Baghdad and the Sulaimani and 51% of his meetings has been with his allies. Based on these data, the author asserts that “It is notable also that Talabani almost never meets in person with the KDP’s senior leadership: The dataset suggests that he has met one of the big three Barzanis on just four occasions since the start of 2022.... Talabani’s approach to Baghdad stands in stark contrast to that of the KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party], whose top brass rarely venture

Winthrop Rodgers

March 13, 2023



Middle East Institute

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/bafel-baghdad-finding-contours-puks-strategy-federal-iraq>

Winthrop Rodgers

March 13, 2023**Middle East Institute**

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bafel-baghdad-finding-contours-puks-
strategy-federal-iraq](https://www.mei.edu/publications/bafel-baghdad-finding-contours-puks-strategy-federal-iraq)

into federal Iraq”. For the author “It is well-known that the working relationship between the PUK and the KDP is extremely tense at the moment, but the lack of high-level meetings demonstrates the extent of that dysfunction, given the top-down decision-making systems in both parties. If the top leadership is not getting together, it is unlikely that progress is being made to resolve their issues. Talabani has sent mixed messages to the KDP about their future together.” He believes conclusions such as the PUK will split from the Kurdistan Region, make arrangements for a separate budget with Baghdad, or make some other dramatic break with the KDP, are overblown and not correct. At the end, he concludes “The PUK’s strategy of pursuing close ties with Baghdad should be viewed as a supplement to its traditional focus of working within the Kurdistan Region, rather than a substitute for that approach. The PUK is in a difficult spot: The finances of government institutions in its home base of Sulaymaniyah are in bad shape, it is still dealing with the effects of a prolonged leadership struggle, the KDP appears to be meddling in its internal affairs, and its traditional base of voters are disillusioned. It needs help and support and there is a logic in looking for it in Baghdad, but whether this strategy will pay off remains an open question.”

We Still Haven't Addressed the Iraq War's Real Intelligence Failure



Michael Rubin

March 18, 2023



American Enterprise Institute

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/we-still-havent-addressed-the-iraq-wars-real-intelligence-failure/>

Michael Rubin has been active in the month of March in analyzing the internal and international issues of Iraq. In an Op-Ed in Washington Examiner under the title of “We Still Haven’t Addressed the Iraq War’s Real Intelligence Failure”, he re-reads the very history of American war of Iraq and highlights the failure of the American intelligence system and concludes: “Intelligence reports are seldom black-and-white but are often a hodgepodge of gray with opposite points made for the sake of bureaucratic ass-covering. The tragedy of subsequent partisanship — especially in the House and Senate intelligence committees — is that there has been no basic correction to ensure such a dynamic does not repeat.”

Iraq in 2023 is a very different place to 2003 Iraq

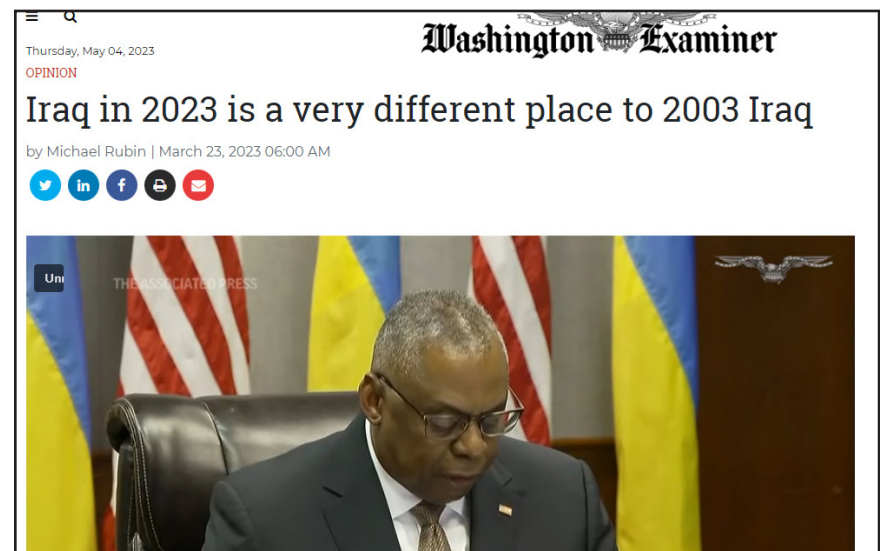
Michael Rubin

March 23, 2023



Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/iraq-2023-a-very-different-place-2003-iraq>



In another Op-Ed, called “Iraq in 2023 is a very different place to 2003 Iraq”, Michael Rubin points to the very changes that Iraq has experienced throughout the past two decades and considers these changes main factors to understand the current Iraq. For him, appointment of the current Iraqi prime minister is an important sign: “Prime Minister Muhammad Shia’ al Sudani marks a generational change in Iraq’s political leadership. He is the first post-war prime minister who was never in exile and who rose up through layers of bureaucracy from a low position.... Muqtada, however, is young: just 48. He will remain a force, though perhaps not as potent as in recent months. His own actions belie his anti-corruption rhetoric, and Iraqis resent his followers’ violence. His constituency is also soft. The fight against the Islamic State created new heroes, none of whom

came from a Sadrist background. While Iraqis venerate his late father, the passage of time loosens Muqtada’s claim to their loyalty.” At the end, he expresses: “Iraq begins its third post-war decade, the Biden administration must focus more on the future than the past. It should stop puffing up aging warlords like Barzani, who holds no position but whom Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin nevertheless met, or believing would-be warlords like Muqtada are messiahs. It is time to end the era of personality-based diplomacy behind it, stop seeing Iraq only through the lens of Iran, and respect rather than undermine Iraq’s democracy at this time of generational change.”

Michael Rubin

March 23, 2023



Washington Examiner

[https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/
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place-2003-iraq](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/iraq-2023-a-very-different-place-2003-iraq)

Washington Should Apply Magnitsky Act Sanctions to Former Iraqi Ally

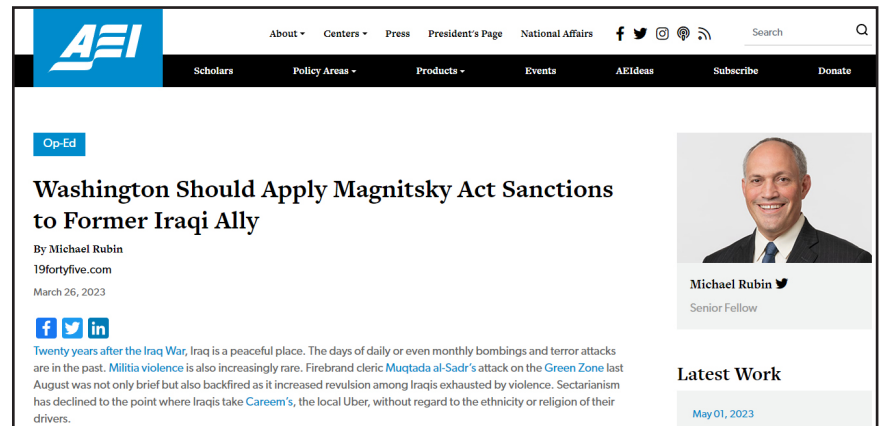
Michael Rubin

March 26, 2023



American Enterprise Institute

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/washington-should-apply-magnitsky-act-sanctions-to-former-iraqi-ally/>



Rubin provides other recommendations to the American administration to challenge those Iraqi politicians who pretend to be connected to America by applying anti-corruption acts. In a paper called “Washington Should Apply Magnitsky Act Sanctions to Former Iraqi Ally”, calls for “clean up Iraq” and expresses that “The greatest problem facing Iraq today is not violence but corruption.” For him, America has prioritized anti-Iranian attitude to non-corrupt career in Iraqi internal politics and elaborates that “The source of Washington’s original embrace of Kadhimi was a belief he would stand up to Iranian influence. Even if he were sincere in this, his actions have trapped his greatest supporters. For Washington to circle the wagons around those involved in the corruption scheme is to allow Tehran and its Iraqi proxies to depict themselves as more interested in clean governance.” He continues “That Washington engages in the same pattern in Iraqi Kurdistan only projects an image that the United States is not serious about good governance and punishes corruption for cynical rather than principled reasons.” Calling corruption “a cancer in Iraq”, Rubin

writes “While the United States is right to target Iranian-directed militia leaders in Iraq, it undercuts the strength of the tool and undermines the moral utility of the Global Magnitsky Act itself with such selective enforcement.” At the end, he concludes “From an Iraqi perspective, there is no difference between corruption perpetrated by Khazali and Fayyadh on one hand, and Kadhimi’s entourage and the Barzani family on the other. If the United States truly wants to help Iraq and deny Iranian-backed groups a cudgel to beat America’s image, Washington must fight corruption perpetrated by its friends with the same fervor with which it targets its adversaries.”

Michael Rubin

March 26, 2023



American Enterprise Institute

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/washington-should-apply-magnitsky-act-sanctions-to-former-iraqi-ally/>

Corruption is the forgotten legacy of the Iraq invasion

Reva Dhingra and Marsin Alshamary

April 3, 2023

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<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/04/03/corruption-is-the-forgotten-legacy-of-the-iraq-invasion/>



Reva Dhingra and Marsin Alshamary have focused on the problem of corruption in the current Iraq. Remembering that the “Oil-for-Food” program, which allowed the sale of Iraqi oil in exchange for humanitarian support, was plagued by massive fraud by Iraqi officials, foreign companies, and United Nations personnel, they refer to the repeated assertions made by Iraqi politicians and experts on this issue. According to some experts, corruption in Iraq’s public sector reached unprecedented heights when the country received a flood of funding for rebuilding after 2003 and there was little accountability for contracting and spending. In this manner While carrying out reconstruction projects, a sizable number of aid project contractors, Iraqi officials, and U.S. personnel actively participated in corruption. Additionally, key ministries in the post-reconstruction period were staffed on the basis of political connections rather than competence. Thus, even 20 years after the war, elite corruption patterns that have persisted since the war’s end have severely harmed Iraq’s public services. For them, “the long-term

effects of the flood money during the reconstruction period were to help establish the public sector as a center of corruption. Understanding the patterns of corruption entrenched during reconstruction is an important part of helping Iraq undertake much-needed public sector reform to build functioning public services for its citizens.” At the end, the authors recommend: “Iraqi governments have come to view Iraq’s oil wealth as unregulated and political parties and armed groups have actively fought against any regulation. This wealth, which has been used as a tool of patronage in Baathist and post-Baathist Iraq, must be regulated by the Iraqi people if Iraq has any chance of overcoming corruption.”

Reva Dhingra and Marsin Alshamary

April 3, 2023

The Brookings logo is displayed in a blue serif font within a white rectangular box with a thin black border.

BROOKINGS

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/04/03/corruption-is-the-forgotten-legacy-of-the-iraq-invasion/>

The protester paradox: Why do anti-Islamist activists look toward clerical leadership?

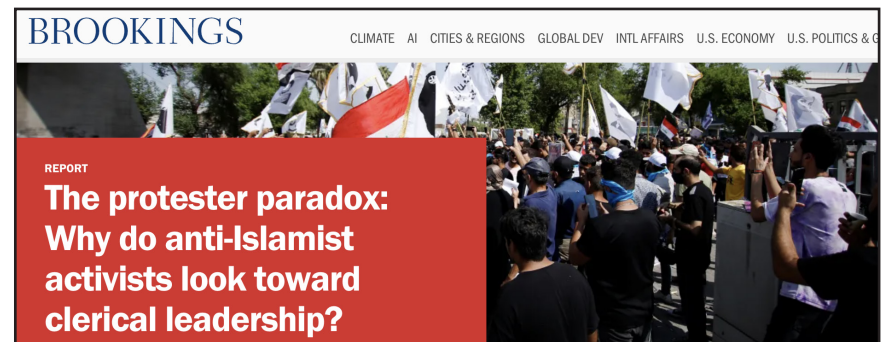
Marsin Alshamary

April 3, 2023

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<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-protester-paradox-why-do-anti-islamist-activists-look-toward-clerical-leadership/>



Marsin Alshamary brought up the question of how Iraqi civil society activists and protesters could support a secular or civil state while also seeking recognition from a religious institution during their protest movement, which lasted from October 2019 to February 2020. These activists and protesters looked to the Marjajya, a Shia religious establishment, for support and legitimacy. She initially contends in her piece that Iraqi protestors have formed and defined their position on “secularism” and the “civil state” based on their rejection of the Islamist parties that have wrongly dominated Iraq since 2003. To put it another way, they favor the separation of religion and politics more so than the separation of religion and the state. The Marjajya promotes itself as being non-interventionist in politics, but she claims that historically, it has had a (mostly mediative) role in protest movements. The Marjajya supported a settlement via the current political institutions while highlighting the right to peaceful protest in the 2019 protest movement, which was not an exception. She concludes by stating that policymakers and analysts occasionally underestimate the complexity of class and religion in Iraq and that future research should take note of this. She also acknowledges that her arguments primarily reflect the positions of middle- and upper-middle-class activists, rather than those of the working-class protesters.

The rise of a Shia Vatican in Iraq



The author has concentrated on the quick growth of Shia religious organizations, especially Shiite shrines in Iraq after 2003. He contends that Iraq has recently seen the emergence of an organic, living model of cultural heritage apart from Western practice. For him, its foundation is the management of Shia Islam's material and immaterial riches. Therefore, new research and cooperative relationships must be established while taking into account Shia religious Shia authorities' growing presence and influence in the nation, particularly regarding how cultural heritage is managed. Thus, a new political economy built around a vast network of institutions connected to the Shia clerical class has emerged, effectively acting as a state entity within Iraq, the author says. Shia shrines and the Shia Endowment are constructing hundreds more shrines around the nation in connection with those rising investments. By doing this, a profitable Shia pilgrimage and religious tourism network is being established, essentially building a grid of cultural and religious sites over the whole nation. Entire geographies

Mehiyar Kathem

April 14, 2023



Atlantic Council

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<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-rise-of-a-shia-vatican-in-iraq/>

Mehiyar Kathem

April 14, 2023



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<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-rise-of-a-shia-vatican-in-iraq/>

are gradually changing and being repositioned in the service of Shia religious institutions as a result of the expansion of shrines and the purchase of land through investments. At the end the author concludes “The resulting cultural heritage landscape, increasingly dominated by Shia religious institutions, will have wide-changing repercussions on Iraq and its political trajectories. However, it is in those spaces that relationships are negotiated and, by extension, institutions that manage society and politics are established. Significantly, and in light of growing interest in Iraq’s cultural heritage, Shia religious institutions need to be better engaged so as not to ignore the work being done to manage Shia-related cultural resources and their long-term impact on the country... In the meantime, however, and perhaps for the long-term, the anchoring of Shia religious institutions as a national actor in the cultural heritage field may altogether change Iraq’s cultural landscape. Whether or not emboldened and revitalized religious institutions will transform Iraq, their work may very well accrue to the rise of a Shia Vatican or, at the very least, influence the space in which Iraq’s identities and futures are forged.

Iraq's New Oil Deal Is a Big Mistake



In this article, Michael Rubin refers to the recent phenomenon that Iraqi Kurdish oil stopped flowing through Turkish pipelines last month after international arbitrators ruled that Turkey violated a 1973 treaty by exporting Kurdish oil without first securing Baghdad's permission.

Expressing that “Kurds are loyal not to the Barzanis but to the money they distribute. The minute the Barzanis cannot pay their supporters is the moment the Kurdish spring begins”, he explains how “the Pentagon pays Barzani a quarter billion dollars annually to subsidize the militia he uses to prey upon the public. Nor do ordinary Kurds benefit from the oil business: Barzani diverts much of the oil revenue he sells into private family accounts and businesses while public sector employees, perhaps 70% of the region, go unpaid.” He further explains that “Behind the sweet nothings Barzani whispers to American diplomats, he imprisons journalists for talking to American officials, helped arm the Islamic State in a miscalculated effort to use it as a lever against Baghdad, sold local sovereignty to Turkey, and has run the region into the ground. Kurds say they trust Baghdad or a broader array of Kurdish parties to control

Michael Rubin

April 14, 2023



Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/iraqs-new-oil-deal-is-a-big-mistake>

Michael Rubin

April 14, 2023



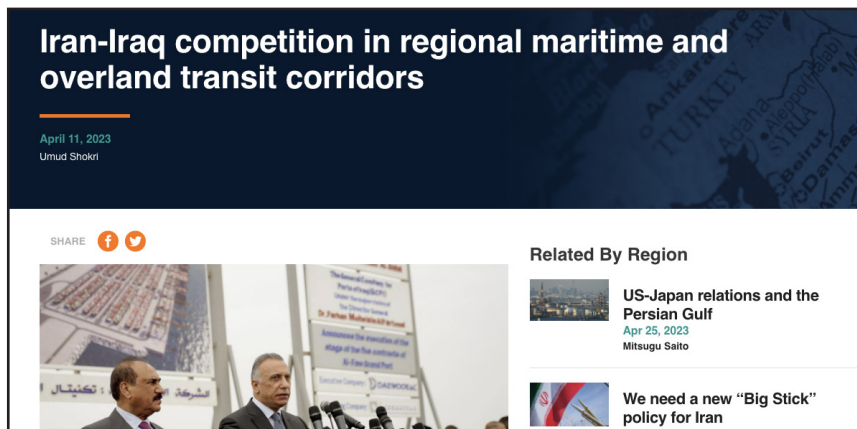
Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/iraqs-new-oil-deal-is-a-big-mistake>

the account to pay their salaries more than the Barzani children.

All Iraqis will pay the price for Iraq’s latest oil bargain.” As a conclusion, the author asserts: “There will be no stability in Iraq if the United States encourages corruption over good governance or partners with any party, family, or individual who believes their path to power is through Iraq’s failure rather than success”.

Iran-Iraq competition in regional maritime and overland transit corridors



The author makes reference to Iraq's efforts to build the massive 54-square-kilometer al-Faw Grand Port project in order to lessen the country's dependency on other countries' ports and overland transportation from Iran and Turkey for its imports. Although he thinks there is a severe lack of investment and that corruption is pervasive, he thinks Al-Faw will be one of Iraq's future economic pillars. Additionally, he thinks that the attention paid to Al-Faw and China's investments in Iraq has highlighted how little influence Iran has in international transit and trade, an area in which Tehran performs far below its potential. He is referring to a brand-new train connection that is now under construction and will ultimately connect Europe to the Persian Gulf through Turkey and Iraq. The Iranian port of Khorramshahr, which is close by, does not have the same geopolitical position as al-Faw, which further emphasizes Iran's international isolation and the effects of sanctions. For him, Iran has a number of significant concerns about

Umud Shokri

April 11, 2023



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<https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-iraq-competition-regional-maritime-and-overland-transit-corridors>

Umud Shokri**April 11, 2023****MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE**

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Iraq's transit ambitions and its cooperation with China, ranging from the potential weakening of its own position in the transit trade. At the end, the author asserts: "The al-Faw Port project provides several opportunities for Iraq to strengthen its role in regional transit and its geopolitical position more broadly. To do so, it will first have to address both internal challenges, like corruption and political divisions, and external challenges, such as investment competition between China and the United States. Looking across the region, projects like al-Faw seem to present a threat for some countries, like Iran, while likely benefiting others, such as Turkey, Qatar, and Syria. Despite the significant potential upside for Iraq, both economically and politically, the associated challenges will not be easy to overcome."

Border Crossings: The Unholy Alliance Between Iran and Iraqi Militias



According to the author, Iran’s plan to maintain control over Iraq heavily relies on border crossings. However, despite the desire of the Iraqi people reduce these unequal ties with Iran, it is unlikely that the government will implement reforms to border crossing anytime soon. He thinks that the economic outlet for Iran under sanctions is Iraq. He elaborates on the Iraqi pushback against Iran’s dominance and concentrates on some of the previous president Kadhimi’s initiatives to lessen the influence of militias in Iraq’s economy and politics after mentioning the degree to which the Iranians used the Iraqi military to circumvent the sanctions. At last he concludes: “The most far-reaching development in Iraq’s political culture over the past five years has been the abandonment by the public of previous notions of sectoral reform. No longer will ordinary people entrust the government to address problems—education, health, or agriculture—on a piecemeal basis. The public’s loss of faith in the ruling political class has led to the insistence on overall political reform first: fixing decision-making at the highest levels of the state by holding the ruling political class accountable. As such, any reform of border crossings will have to be part of a larger political reform package that results from significant public

AKEEL ABBAS

APRIL 28, 2023



CARNEGIE MIDDLE EAST CENTER

<https://carnegie-mec.org/2023/04/28/border-crossings-unholy-alliance-between-iran-and-iraqi-militias-pub-89643>

AKEEL ABBAS

APRIL 28, 2023

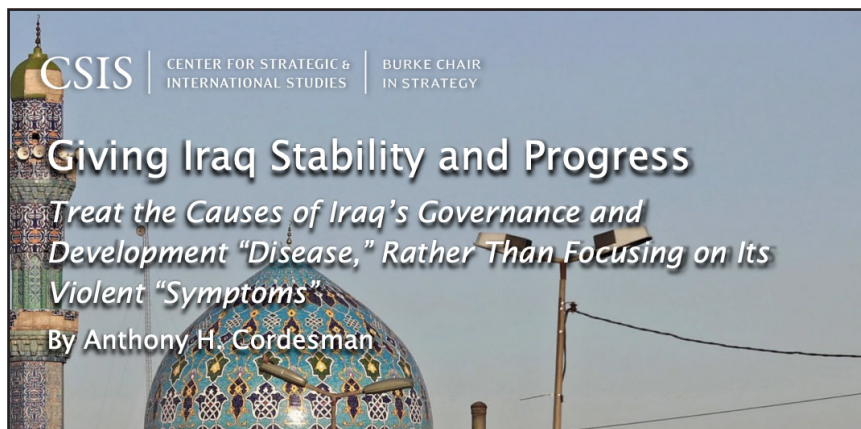


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pressure. The regular functioning apparatus of the Iraqi state cannot, in and of itself, effect border crossing reform. Only a strong-willed and popular prime minister with full control over the executive branch and support from a powerful parliamentary bloc can do that—and in the process overcome the bureaucratic death trap and implement beneficial projects. But it remains an open question whether Iraq will have such a prime minister anytime soon.”

Giving Iraq Stability and Progress: Treat the Causes of Iraq’s Governance and Development “Disease,” Rather Than Focusing on Its Violent “Symptoms”



According to the author, the United States may look back on its military interventions in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 and claim several tactical victories in the war on terror and violent resistance groups. Although the United States ultimately lost the war in Afghanistan, it did achieve a measure of success in its two conflicts in Iraq: the first one was against hardline Sunni extremists, and the second was against ISIS. He continues that, at the strategic and grand strategic levels, the American involvement in Iraq was a failure in general terms. Similar to many other American military triumphs, Iraq’s violent symptoms were treated rather than the disease of poor leadership, inadequate development, and a lack of national cohesion. This study, which looks at the origins and effects of these nation-building failures, is the initial draft of the author’s working paper. It looks beyond the errors committed by the United States during and after its invasion in

Anthony H. Cordesman

April 11, 2023



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treat-causes-iraqs-governance-and-
development-disease](https://www.csis.org/analysis/giving-iraq-stability-and-progress-treat-causes-iraqs-governance-and-development-disease)

2003. However, it also looks at Iraq's history of unsuccessful nation-building, including Saddam Hussein's legacy, the price Iraq paid for his ambition and repression, as well as the costs of his invasions of Iran and Kuwait. It examines the entire costs of Saddam's administration on Iraq's growth, his wars from 1980 to 2003, and the subsequent conflict and political unrest. However, it also considers at recent history and Iraqi causes of the current challenges to effective nation-building in Iraq, their current nature and scope, and the practical issues Iraq is currently facing in meeting them. It does address the U.S. failures during and after the invasion in 2003. It demonstrates that the majority of these problems can now be solved by Iraq—and by Iraqis. After that, it offers suggestions for how Iraq might proceed despite its severe political divisions and the magnitude of the issues it is currently dealing with. Although it doesn't provide any simple answers, it does suggest that there might be viable alternatives.

Green Building Addresses Energy Crisis in Iraq



The author has concentrated on how being a woman and a young person in Iraq relates to the present effects of climate change in this nation. According to her, women and young people in Iraq are particularly impacted by climate change, and their participation in relief operations is crucial. Inequalities already present are made worse by climate change, which also disproportionately affects vulnerable communities. Women and young people are more likely to be displaced and to have harmful health effects, as well as to be excluded from decision-making and denied access to resources. Despite these obstacles, the women and youth of Iraq are seen as having a vital role to play in moving the country toward a more sustainable future. They may share their opinions, expertise, and abilities to combat climate change and advance sustainable development. Women's views, for instance, are crucial to sustainability initiatives in a variety of areas. Youth may also lead the way in developing novel solutions by using their technical expertise to create fresh instruments and methods

Basima Abdulrahman

April 20, 2023



WILSON CENTER

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/green-building-addresses-energy-crisis-iraq>

Basima Abdulrahman

April 20, 2023



WILSON CENTER

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/green-building-addresses-energy-crisis-iraq>

for combating climate change. She emphasizes the role of women and the significance of entrepreneurship in the future of the Iraqi economy based on her experience as the founder and CEO of KESK, the country's first Greentech business. At the end, she expresses her optimism about the future of entrepreneurship endeavors in Iraq and writes: "knowing that we can work together toward mitigating threats and securing a prosperous, peaceful, and livable planet. I also find peace knowing that governments and corporations are shaping new ways in response to climate change and scaling up their engagement in advancing sustainable development."

Iraqi Kurdistan Twenty Years After



The author claims that the 2003 American invasion of Iraq gave the Kurds in the region fresh hope for decreasing their ties to Baghdad. But he thinks that later things have weakened that spirit. Although there has been significant progress toward autonomy, the historical Kurdish situation still exists. The decision by the International Court of Arbitration in Paris that Ankara had violated a 1973 bilateral agreement with Baghdad (renewed in 2010) granting the Iraqi federal government sole authority over Iraq's oil sales through the pipeline to Türkiye is, in his opinion, the most significant setback to this aspiration. The Kurdish administration had been utilizing a pipeline on Turkish soil to pump 400,000 barrels per day from fields in Kirkuk and the Kurdish area to the market. As a result, Türkiye swiftly shut off the pipeline. The author believes although the two major Kurdish parties reportedly made several accomplishments, their rule has been defined by nepotism and corruption as they compete and even engage in physical combat over the riches, which include oil income, customs taxes raised at the Turkish and Iranian borders, and bribes from multinational corporations.

Joost Hiltermann

April 28, 2023



**INTERNATIONAL CRISIS
GROUP**

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/iraqi-kurdistan-twenty-years-after>

Joost Hiltermann

April 28, 2023

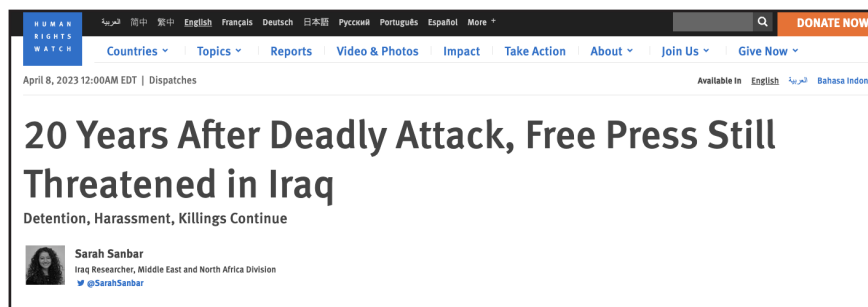


**INTERNATIONAL CRISIS
GROUP**

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/iraqi-kurdistan-twenty-years-after>

At the end, the authors raises this question: “So, where does Iraqi Kurdistan stand?” and replies: “the leadership that descended from the mountains and took control when the U.S. and its allies removed the Iraqi regime, first from the region in 1991, then from the rest of Iraq twelve years later, is ageing and losing legitimacy. Iraqi Kurdistan’s sclerotic political system, moreover, has made it difficult for a crop of leaders untainted by clan-based corruption to emerge. The region is home to a predominantly young population that is restless and potentially volatile. In a perfect world, they would shove aside the old leadership in regional elections, clean up the Kurdish house and use the Kurds’ clout in Baghdad to work toward maximum autonomy inside Iraq – independence except in name. But, given the unlikelihood of political renewal – a Kurdish spring – many young Kurds are voting with their feet, setting off on the dangerous, expensive journey through Türkiye and across the Mediterranean to countries where they believe the grass is greener”

20 Years After Deadly Attack, Free Press Still Threatened in Iraq



The author gives a succinct history of Iraqi journalism in the years after 2003, including how much it cost the country’s journalists. She claims that a free press remained in danger throughout the US occupation. US forces routinely imprisoned journalists, with some using the excuse that their reporting was helping or participating in the insurgency. It is still in the same predicament today. The media is not seen by Iraqi authorities as an important component of Iraqi society, but rather as an enemy that must be contained and controlled. The author reports that currently, both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal government of Iraq use ambiguously worded laws to prosecute critics. Authorities are intimidating and, in some circumstances, silencing journalists, activists, and other critical voices by utilizing charges under these statutes. At the end she expresses that: “To protect free speech and enable a free press to flourish, Iraqi federal and Kurdistan regional authorities should end intimidation, harassment, arrests, and assaults of journalists and others for exercising their right to free expression. They should investigate credible allegations of threats or attacks by government employees against critics. Finally, authorities should amend laws and penal code articles that limit free speech and muzzle critical reporting. Only when these conditions are met will a free press have the platform it needs to flourish in Iraq.”

Sarah Sanbar

April 8, 2023



HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/08/20-years-after-deadly-attack-free-press-still-threatened-iraq>

The Crisis Of Representation In The Kurdistan Region Of Iraq

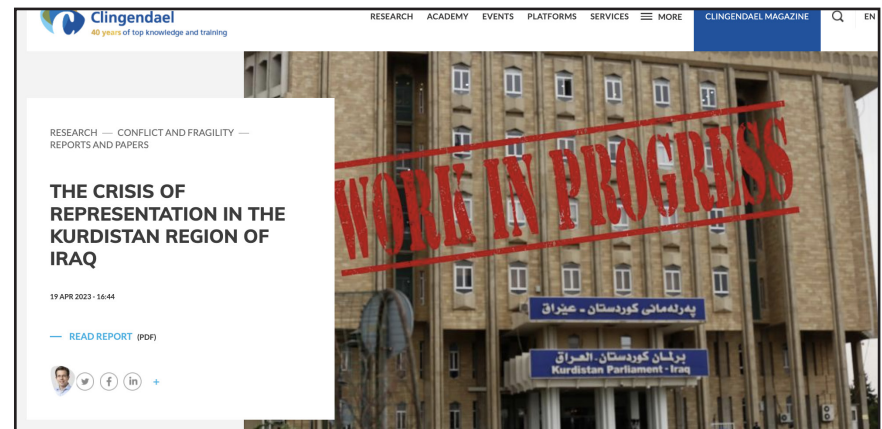
Erwin Van Veen

April 19, 2023



CLINGENDAEL

<https://www.clingendael.org/publication/crisis-representation-kurdistan-region-iraq>



This essay evaluates the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) using the notion of political illustration and assesses the space for development. It concludes that the KRI currently exhibits poor performance across all four dimensions of representation. For instance, low voter participation rates, high levels of dissatisfaction with the governing class, and escalating division within and between political parties are some manifestations of this. The author claims that The KRI is still far from having representative government, much less democratic government. The rise of family parties as major power brokers hindered the region's transition from communist rule, guerrilla-style revolt, and internal struggle to a more stable, modern, and representative society. According to the author, their conquest of the Kurdistan Regional Government was primarily made possible by taking unearned rents, particularly from petroleum sales, and keeping armed forces affiliated with political parties. These issues have acted as a trends of de-representation of their own people. However, the KRI's parent companies, the Barzani and Talabani family

conglomerates, are currently dealing with deteriorating levels of public confidence and mounting economic issues. Using the importance of their presence to the high-wire act that the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) perform to balance Iran, Turkey, and Baghdad. At the end, the author advises the Western countries who wish to improve the state of representation in the KRI to consider conditioning their engagement on improvements in the quality of governance.

Erwin Van Veen

April 19, 2023



CLINGENDAEL

[https://www.clingendael.org/
publication/crisis-representation-
kurdistan-region-iraq](https://www.clingendael.org/publication/crisis-representation-kurdistan-region-iraq)

Education for all

Noor Taher

April 13, 2023



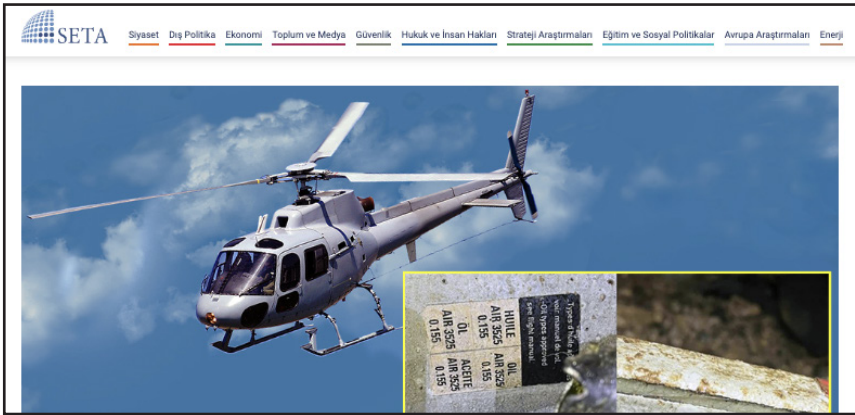
Norwegian Refugee Council

<https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2023/education-for-all/>



The Domiz camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was established in 2012 to house Syrian refugees who were escaping turmoil and violence across the border. Noor Taher reports about the camp in this piece. Nearly 250,000 people now live there, including a generation of kids, teenagers, and young adults eager to take charge of their futures. He describes the state of education in the camp and demonstrates how the Norwegian Refugee Council collaborates with the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure the success of the transition to formal education through back-to-school initiatives, teacher trainings, school rehabilitation, distance learning, and closer coordination between students, teachers, parents, and the Directorate of Education. According to him, the change is already apparent since students say they love their lessons and feel encouraged as they adjust.

Closure of Airspace for Helicopter and Sulaymaniyah Flights Downed in Iraq



The author refers to crash of The helicopter carrying PKK/YPG members around the city of Duhok in northern Iraq on the night of March 15. For him, it is obvious that Therefore, it is seen that the Kurdistan Workers' Party accessed French helicopters with US funds and through the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Referring to the point that an expensive chain must be established for supply, pilotage training, maintenance, ground handling, fuel and spare parts supply, he raises that question that who runs this chain?”. After discussing the internal positive views and practices of the Kurdish regional parties toward the Kurdistan Workers' Party, he expresses that it is now on Turkey's agenda to directly intervene in unidentified flights in regions close to Turkish borders. At the end, the author criticizes Iraqi government and writes: “it is useful to mention the Iraqi central government. The helicopter incident confirmed the authority vacuum in northern Iraq. Criticizing Turkey in its fight against terrorism, the Iraqi administration remains a spectator to the developments in the north in Baghdad. The message of the decision to close the airspace to the Iraqi Government is clear: Turkey takes every precaution for its security!”

Murat Aslan

April 8, 2023



**Foundation for Political,
Economic and Social
Research (SETA)**

<https://www.setav.org/irakta-dusen-helikopter-ve-suleymaniye-ucuslarina-hava-sahasinin-kapatilmasi/>

Sulaymaniyah Message

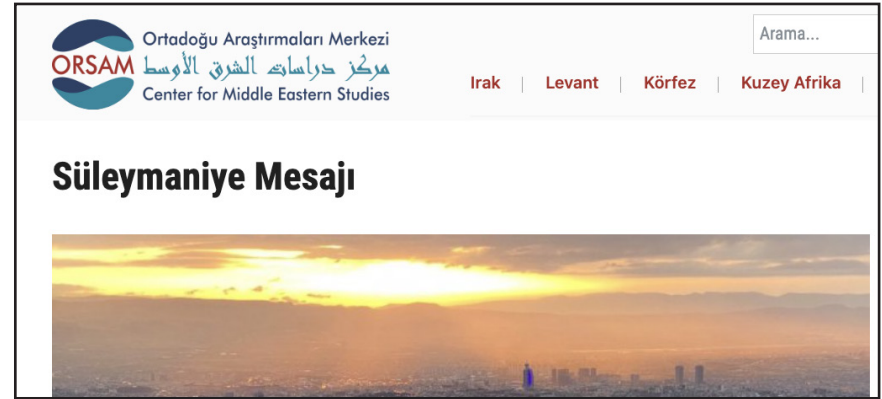
Bilgay Duman

April 10, 2023



ORTADOĞU ARAŞTIRMALARI
MERKEZİ

[https://orsam.org.tr/tr/suleymaniye-
mesaji/](https://orsam.org.tr/tr/suleymaniye-mesaji/)



The author begins by remembering the recent visit of the prime minister of Iraq to Turkey on March 21–22 and holds that as a result, a new enthusiasm with the new “Silk Road,” the “Development Road Project,” developed in the ties between the two nations. Then mentioning the current conflicts involving the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Turkish government. He makes the striking claim, “Today, the city of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq is where the terrorist group Kurdistan Workers’ Party finds the coziest space.” Then he goes into detail about the specific reasons why the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party are connected, as well as the function that the Talibanis play in Syria about the Syrian–Kurdish forces. The author concludes by claiming: ““Now, the steps taken by Bafel Talabani are not only disrupting the Kurdish domestic politics or the Baghdad–Erbil balances, but also the regional balance and cooperation. However, the personal ambitions and savings of individuals, as well as the domination of other countries, should not be allowed to undermine stability and cooperation opportunities“.

What Does the Drone Attack at Sulaymaniyah Airport Foreshadow?



The author believes that the closure of Turkish airspace to the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's (IKRG) international airport in Sulaymaniyah province, due to the “intensification of Kurdistan Workers' Party activities in the region”, and the subsequent airstrike carried out near the airport seemingly targeted Mazloum Kobani, the General Commander of the Democratic Syrian Forces (SDF), tells a lot about the Ankara-Washington-Süleymaniye line in terms of its causes and consequences, heralds new processes in the relations of Süleymaniye with both Erbil and Ankara and Washington in the new period. The author details the actions of Ankara to “break the Sulaymaniyah-Rojava Air Corridor” and control “the US- Syrian Democratic Forces- Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Triangle”.

At the end, the author expresses: “Ankara, which is in favor of the continuation of the bipartisan status quo in the KRG, does not

Mehmet Alaca

April 11, 2023



**ORTADOĞU ARAŞTIRMALARI
MERKEZİ**

<https://orsam.org.tr/tr/suleymaniye-havaalanina-duzenlenen-drone-saldirisi-neyin-habercisi/>

Mehmet Alaca

April 11, 2023

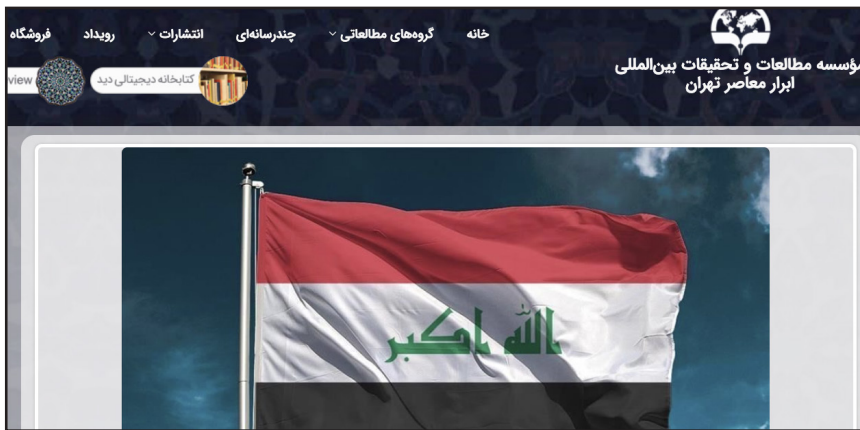


**ORTADOĞU ARAŞTIRMALARI
MERKEZİ**

<https://orsam.org.tr/tr/suleymaniye-havaalanina-duzenlenen-drone-saldirisi-neyin-habercisi/>

want this status quo to be disrupted by either the KDP or the PUK. The KDP, which has serious commercial and political relations with Turkey, is making room for the PKK in Ankara due to its bad relations with the PKK. However, Turkey has no sphere of influence over the PUK except for its airspace, and therefore, expecting the PUK to act like the KDP means misreading the region. The fact is that the KDP, whose Kurdish nationalism is much more prominent, would not bring its tensions with the SDF to this level if its conflict with the PKK ended and it had no commercial and political ties with Ankara. In other words, the views of the KDP and PUK towards the PKK may only deteriorate periodically, and a structural opposition to the PKK may not develop. In this sense, it may be an option for Ankara to focus on the political and ideological codes that make the party different from the KDP by developing economic relations with the PUK over natural gas. However, Turkey's insistence on its current policy of completely eliminating the PKK in Iraq and restoring the actors that it could not find channels in this regard indicates that the tension with the PUK will continue."

Will Iraq play a mediating role in the nuclear agreement?



The author supports Sudan's government's foreign policy, claiming that this policy, based on non-centralization and constructive ties, marks the beginning of a new era in Iraq's history. After mentioning the new developments in Iraq's relationship with its neighboring countries and international powers, the author states that Iraq's success in investing its Arab relations to expand towards the West on the one hand, and France, Saudi Arabia, and Iran bringing it together at one table on the other, proved two things: first, Iraq's successful diplomacy, which qualifies it for mediation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and second, the possibility of a negotiated settlement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Finally, the author makes political, economic, and security suggestions to the Iraqi government and world community.

Heytham Al-Khazali

April 6, 2023



Tehran International Studies & Research Institute

<https://tisri.org/?id=husswin6>

The continuation of the US military presence in Iraq and its consequences

Muhammagh Bagher Sedaghat

April 7, 2023



STRATEGIC COUNCIL ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS

<https://tinyurl.com/2pcedpyo>



First, the author discusses the ups and downs of American forces in Iraq, citing the assassination of Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as a watershed moment in this field. Following that incident, the government's reaction to the presence of the Americans became negative, the parliament passed a resolution to expel foreign forces, and resistance forces reacted strongly by targeting the American forces' equipment. He argues that money from the sale of Iraqi oil reaches the Iraqi government via American banks, and that country can regulate the exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar with the American dollar, putting pressure on the Iraqi government anytime it wishes. He goes on to say that the Iraqi government cannot act against the interests of Americans and their presence in the region and Iraq, contrary to Washington's wishes, and that, on the other hand, the presence of American military forces in Iraq is not in line with Iraq's interests and is only done to secure America's interests. He also states: "Iraq receives the most influence from Iran in terms of culture and popular, social, and political commonalities.

According to the White House, if American troops leave Iraq, the nation will be given over to a major player known as Iran”. In the end, he concludes: “As long as the United States considers it necessary to maintain its military presence in Iraq, the Iraqi government will have no power to confront them in this regard; in the past, wherever the Iraqi government did not take action to provide for their interests, it was met with the reaction of American forces”.

Muhammagh Bagher Sedaghat

April 7, 2023



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FOREIGN RELATIONS**

<https://tinyurl.com/2pcedpyo>