Iraq: An Overview

- **Geography**: borders Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria.
- **Population**: More than 22 million excluding Kurdish-held northern Iraq.
- **Capital**: Baghdad (five million inhabitants).
- **Religion**: Islam is the state religion. A Christian minority of 750,000
- **History**: Iraq (and the Middle East) has had a long history of colonial rule.
Saddam Hussein: Background

- Born April 28, 1937 in Al-Awja, Iraq
- Affiliated with the Ba’ath socialist party
- Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command council and in 1979 became Iraq’s 5th president.
- In office from July 16, 1979 until April 9, 2003
Saddam Hussein: His Strategy

- Once the war started, having a defense that was deeply behind enemy front lines, so that the U.S. would have to lose many of its people to win the war.
- He believed that after the U.S. public saw massive casualties on their side, they would want to retreat.
- Use of the U.S. media to his advantage.
- Declaring this a Jihad or Holy war (pulling support from the Muslim community).
The Persian Gulf War: Background

- Iran - Iraq War in 1988; U.S. supported Iraq
- Saddam demanded reparations from the Arab Cooperation Council - caused tension.
- American interest in the Middle East-OIL.
- Altruism or OIL?
**Persian Gulf War: Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait**

- On August 2, 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait so as to attain its oil wealth to pay off the war debt.
- August 10th, 1990, Saddam declares a Jihad against the U.S. and Israel.
- U.S. / U.N. reaction (Operation Desert Shield) - demanded immediate withdraw and issued an ultimatum to be out by Jan 15, 1991.
- Beginning on January 16, 1991, the U.S. initiated an around the clock bombing of major cities.
- January 12th, 1991 - Congress grants Bush the authority to wage war.
Persian Gulf War: Operation Desert Storm

- Officially begins at 3am Baghdad time on Jan. 17, 1991
- Air Strikes - Early allied strikes limited Iraqi ability to wage war
- Technology played a huge role - asymmetrical in nature
- Ground offensive - met little Iraqi resistance as Coalition forces enter Kuwait City on Feb. 27
Persian Gulf War: Conclusions

• During the War, the U.S. had the chance to go all the way into Baghdad, and to oust Saddam Hussein out of power.
• President George Bush decided not to because that was not the original mission, a decision that some in the United States would later come to regret.
• Many UN Resolutions passed limiting what Iraq could do
The Iraqi people’s perception of the war

- Largely unknown because of the heavy censoring of media by the Iraqi government
- Originally thought that this would be a quick and easy war, since Kuwait was such a small country
- Some had not predicted U.S. involvement.
The War as seen by Americans

• Most Americans at this time, even those who are usually against wars, were very patriotic and willing to fight

• The invasion of Kuwait was seen as completely unprovoked aggression on the part of Iraq
Propaganda

• ”Oil Sheiks,” from Kuwait financed American Public Relations firms to put a good spin on the war, and sell to the Americans.

• Tactics Included:
  – commercials of Iraqi abuses of human rights
  – distributing “Free Iraq” T-shirts at college campuses
  – declaring a “National Prayer Day” for Kuwait
The Kuwaiti embassy bought 200,000 copies of the newly published book *The Rape of Kuwait* and distributed it to U.S. troops.

PR firms made dozens of videos that gave a biased documentation of what was truly going on in Kuwait and distributed them to news sources. These sources then showed them to their audiences, unknowing of the fact that most of these stories were propaganda tools.
The Pentagon came up with a plan to insure that no independent or uncensored media were allowed to go.

Only government approved media was allowed into the “pool”.

The government of Saudi Arabia helped in restricting journalists’ access.

Most reporters at the time did not question their ability to report the truth while being taken around by military escorts, many just wanted the story.
Media continued

• After Desert storm, some of the media sources admitted that they were wrong, but mostly, the American public remains unaware of the misrepresentation of facts that led Americans to rally behind the war.

• Many historians connect this to “the government learning their lesson after Vietnam.”
Post-Persian Gulf / Pre-War in Iraq

- **March 1991:** Following the Persian Gulf War’s end, a ceasefire imposes sanctions on Iraq and sends in UN weapons inspectors.
- The United States imposes no-fly zones in Iraq to curb its military power.
Post War Continued

- UN resolution allows for oil to be sold to other countries in exchange for medicine and food.
- Iraq stops working with UN weapons inspectors in October 1998.
- The United States replies with Operation Desert Fox.
- New regulations involving weapons inspections are imposed, but Iraq refuses to comply.
Saddam's Diplomatic Deals

Special! Unfettered Access

Saddam: A Name You Can Trust
DO YOU HAVE ANY... WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION?

GO FISH.
2003-2010 Iraq War

• The conflict with Iraq is changed by the World Trade Center Attacks in 2001.
• George W. Bush announces that the war on terrorism will extend beyond the borders of Afghanistan, hinting of the second war on Iraq that was to come in 2003.
• War ends uneventfully in 2010 and U.S.is often criticized for:
  – Nation-building efforts
  – Increasing troop involvement with out clear vision
  – Asymmetrical / Urban warfare
December 13, 2003, captured
Transported to Camp Cropper by Americans until his trial.
June 30, 2004, U.S. handed him over to the Interim Iraqi government to be tried.
Charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide
November 5, 2006, sentenced to death by hanging
Five things that distinguish the Persian Gulf War from other wars...

1. Environmental Damage
2. Gulf War Syndrome
3. Technological advances
4. End of the world prophecies
5. Briefness
1. Environmental Damage

- More than 80% of Kuwaiti livestock was killed, many fisheries were polluted.
- Half a billion tons of carbon dioxide released from burning oil, increases global warming.
• There are still pools of oil with unexploded bombs.
• The disease rate in the Kuwaiti population has gone up.
• Crops and livestock have still not been recovered.
2. Gulf War Syndrome

- After the war, many soldiers reported having disease-like symptoms, such as loss of memory, sudden onsets of cancer, a lowered immune deficiency, and children being born with deformities.
- There are many theories to the causes of the “Gulf War Syndrome”.
• Some say it is because of U.S. experimentation with new vaccines that soldiers were forced to get prior to the war.
• Some say it is a result of chemical or biological warfare.
...concerns have been expressed over our candor about Gulf War Syndrome...
GULF SYNDROME
(SYMPTOM CHECKLIST.)

- Muscle pain
- Chest pain, shortness of breath
- GID
- Rash
- Headache, fatigue
- Deafness

HELP

GULF VET

REVISED

THOMPSON
PENTAGON - V.A.

Have a seat in the waiting area and we'll call you when it's your turn.

Agent Orange

Gulf War Illness
3. Technological Advancement

- New technologies, like smart bombs, allow the U.S. to more specifically target army operations, not hurt civilians.
- It’s a “War of Information” with the internet. We have to watch what is posted because we never know who will gain access to information.
• The U.S. disabled parts of the Iraq army by infecting them with computer viruses.

• U.S. technological superiority allowed them to win the war, even though the “smart bomb” would be criticized as the smoke cleared.
4. End of the World Prophecies

- Because the Gulf War was occurring in the Middle East, it sparked a lot of end-of-the-world prophecies from fundamentalist Christian writers and speakers.

- Most of these people were very much for the war, wanting to portray the U.S. as fighting on “God’s side”.
The war was said to have been predicted by the Biblical chapter of Revelations.

The burning oil lakes in Kuwait were reminiscent of biblical predictions about a “burning lake of fire”.

Prophecies sparked intense support for the war from believers of this biblical prediction.
5. Briefness

- The actual war was very short, only lasted 39 days and consisted of one operation, Desert Storm.
- Many say the U.S. won because of technological superiority.