Iraque *versus* Irão: o conflito do Shatt el-Arab

POLÍTICA INTERNACIONAL E GEOPOLÍTICA

Instituto Cultural D. António Ferreira Gomes

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12/06/2019

PARTE I – O Iraque entre a grandiosidade do passado e a miséria do presente

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (1)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (2)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

Iraq (/ɪˈræk/, /ɪˈrɑːk/ (listen) or /aɪˈræk/; Arabic: العراق *al-'Irāq*; Kurdish: عێراق *Eraq*), officially the **Republic of Iraq** (Arabic: جُمُهورية العِراق *Jumhūrīyyat al-'Irāq*; Kurdish: کۆماری عێراق *Komari Eraq*), is a country in Western Asia, bordered by Turkey to the north, Iran to the east, Kuwait to the southeast, Saudi Arabia to the south, Jordan to the southwest and Syria to the west. The capital, and largest city, is Baghdad. Iraq is home to diverse ethnic groups including Arabs, Kurds, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Turkmen, Shabakis, Yazidis, Armenians, Mandeans, Circassians and Kawliya.[5] Around 95% of the country's 37 million citizens are Muslims, with Christianity, Yarsan, Yezidism and Mandeanism also present. The official languages of Iraq are Arabic and Kurdish.

Iraq has a coastline measuring 58 km (36 miles) on the northern Persian Gulf and encompasses the Mesopotamian Alluvial Plain, the northwestern end of the Zagros mountain range and the eastern part of the Syrian Desert.[6] Two major rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, run south through Iraq and into the Shatt al-Arab near the Persian Gulf. These rivers provide Iraq with significant amounts of fertile land.

Republic of Iraq

جمهورية العراق (Arabic)

کۆماری عێراق (Sorani Kurdish)

کۆمارا ئێراقێ (Kurmanji Kurdish)

Flag

Coat of arms

Motto: الله أكبر (Arabic)
"Allahu Akbar" (transliteration)
"God is the Greatest"

Anthem: "Mawtini"
"موطني"

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (3)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

The country today known as Iraq was a region of the Ottoman Empire until the partition of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. It was made up of three provinces, called vilayets in the Ottoman language: Mosul Vilayet, Baghdad Vilayet, and Basra Vilayet. In April 1920 the British Mandate of Mesopotamia was created under the authority of the League of Nations. A British-backed monarchy joining these *vilayets* into one Kingdom was established in 1921 under Faisal I of Iraq. The Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq gained independence from the UK in 1932. In 1958, the monarchy was overthrown and the Iraqi Republic created. Iraq was controlled by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party from 1968 until 2003. After an invasion by the United States and its allies in 2003, Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party was removed from power, and multi-party parliamentary elections were held in 2005. The US presence in Iraq ended in 2011,[8] but the Iraqi insurgency continued and intensified as fighters from the Syrian Civil War spilled into the country. Out of the insurgency came a highly destructive group calling itself ISIL, which took large parts of the north and west. It has since been largely defeated. Disputes over the sovereignty of Iraqi Kurdistan continue. A referendum about the full sovereignty of Iraqi Kurdistan was held on 25 September 2017. On 9 December 2017, then-Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over ISIL after the group lost its territory in Iraq.[9]

Government	Federal parliamentary constitutional republic
• President	Barham Salih
• Vice Presidents	Nouri al-Maliki Osama al-Nujaifi Ayad Allawi
• Prime Minister	Adil Abdul-Mahdi
• Majlis Speaker	Mohamed al-Halbousi
• Chief Justice	Medhat al-Mahmoud
Legislature	Majlis
Independence from the United Kingdom	
• Kingdom of Iraq	3 October 1932
• Republic declared	14 July 1958
• Current constitution	15 October 2005
Area	
• Total	437,072 km^2 (168,754 sq mi) (58th)
• Water (%)	1.1
Population	
• 2016 estimate	37,202,572[1]

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (4)

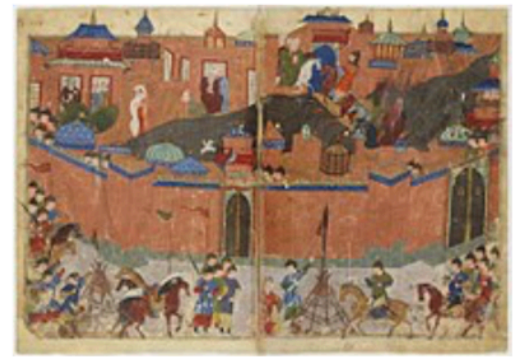
[FONTE: Wikipedia]

The Abbasid Caliphate built the city of Baghdad in the 8th century as its capital, and the city became the leading metropolis of the Arab and Muslim world for five centuries. Baghdad was the largest multicultural city of the Middle Ages, peaking at a population of more than a million,[35] and was the centre of learning during the Islamic Golden Age. The Mongols destroyed the city and burned its library during the siege of Baghdad in the 13th century.[36]

The Abbasid Caliphate at its greatest extent, c. 850.

In 1257, Hulagu Khan amassed an unusually large army, a significant portion of the Mongol Empire's forces, for the purpose of conquering Baghdad. When they arrived at the Islamic capital, Hulagu Khan demanded its surrender, but the last Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta'sim refused. This angered Hulagu, and, consistent with Mongol strategy of discouraging resistance, he besieged Baghdad, sacked the city and massacred many of the inhabitants.[37] Estimates of the number of dead range from 200,000 to a million.[38]

The Mongols destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate and Baghdad's House of Wisdom, which contained countless precious and historical documents. The city has never regained its previous pre-eminence as a major centre of culture and influence. Some historians believe that the Mongol invasion destroyed much of the irrigation infrastructure that had sustained Mesopotamia for millennia. Other historians point to soil salination as the culprit in the decline in agriculture.[39]



The sack of Baghdad by the Mongols.

The mid-14th-century Black Death ravaged much of the Islamic world.[40] The best estimate for the Middle East is a death rate of roughly one-third.[41]

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (5)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

The Thousand and One Nights, also called **The Arabian Nights**, Arabic **Alf laylah wa laylah**, collection of largely Middle Eastern and Indian stories of uncertain date and authorship whose tales of Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sindbad the Sailor have almost become part of Western folklore.

Aladdin

Aladdin Saluted Her with Joy, illustration by Virginia Frances Sterrett from *Arabian Nights* (1928).

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (6)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

The first European translation of the *Nights*, which was also the first published edition, was made by Antoine Galland as *Les Mille et Une Nuits, contes arabes traduits en français*, 12 vol. (vol. 1–10, 1704–12; vol. 11 and 12, 1717). Galland's main text was a four-volume Syrian manuscript, but the later volumes contain many stories from oral and other sources. His translation remained standard until the mid-19th century, parts even being retranslated into Arabic. The Arabic text was first published in full at Calcutta (Kolkata), 4 vol. (1839–42). The source for most later translations, however, was the so-called Vulgate text, an Egyptian recension published at Bulaq, Cairo, in 1835, and several times reprinted.

Meanwhile, French and English continuations, versions, or editions of Galland had added stories from oral and manuscript sources, collected, with others, in the Breslau edition, 5 vol. (1825–43) by Maximilian Habicht. Later translations followed the Bulaq text with varying fullness and accuracy. Among the best-known of the 19th-century translations into English is that of Sir Richard Burton, who used John Payne's little-known full English translation, 13 vol. (9 vol., 1882–84; 3 supplementary vol., 1884; vol. 13, 1889), to produce his unexpurgated *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, 16 vol. (10 vol., 1885; 6 supplementary vol., 1886–88).

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (7)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

Ottoman Iraq

During the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the Black Sheep Turkmen ruled the area now known as Iraq. In 1466, the White Sheep Turkmen defeated the Black Sheep and took control. From the earliest 16th century, in 1508, as with all territories of the former White Sheep Turkmen, Iraq fell into the hands of the Iranian Safavids. Owing to the century long Turco-Iranian rivalry between the Safavids and the neighbouring Ottoman Turks, Iraq would be contested between the two for more than a hundred years during the frequent Ottoman-Persian Wars.

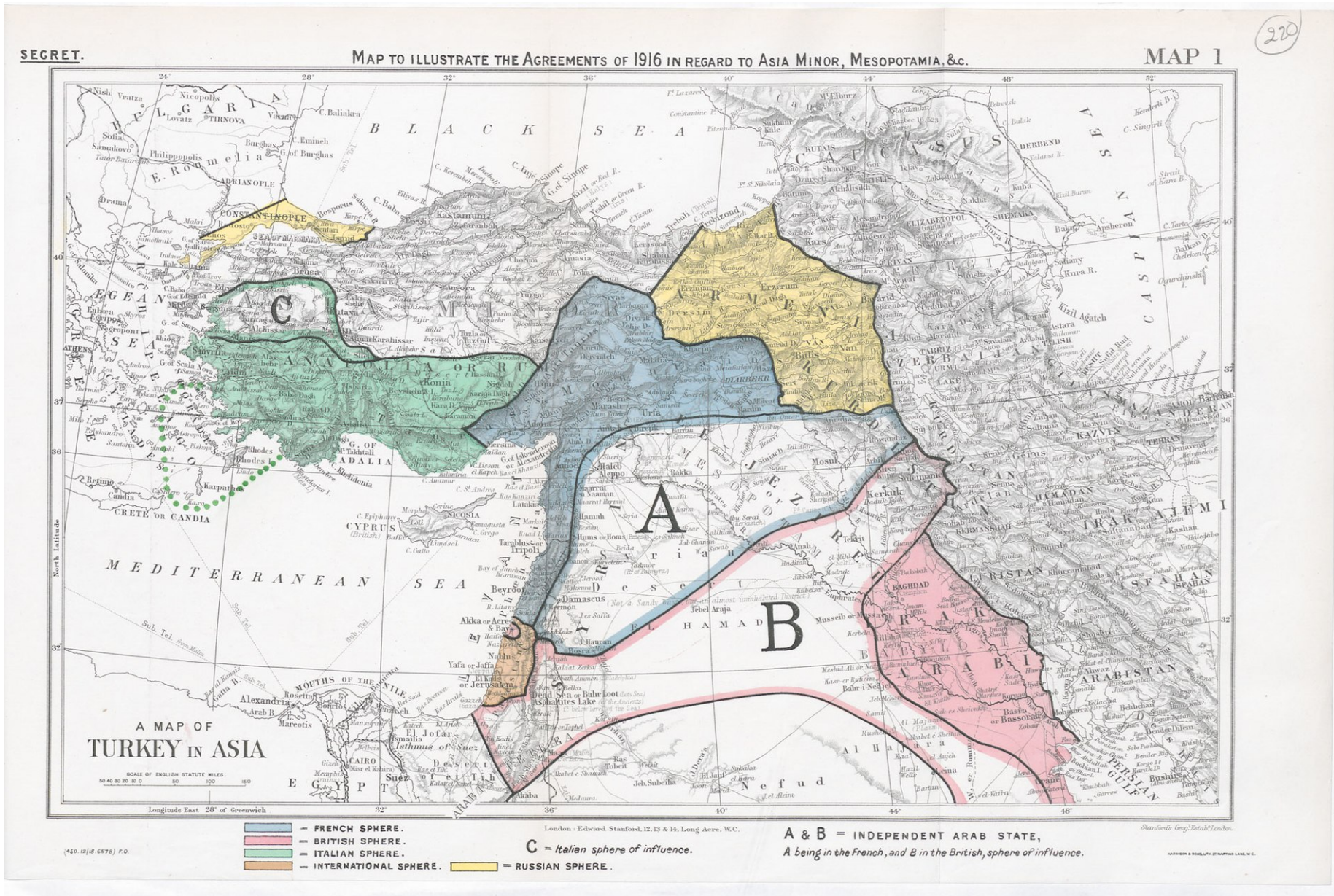
The 1803 Cedid Atlas, showing the area today known as Iraq divided between "Al Jazira" (pink), "Kurdistan" (blue), "Iraq" (green), and "Al Sham" (yellow).

With the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639, most of the territory of present-day Iraq eventually came under the control of Ottoman Empire as the eyalet of Baghdad as a result of wars with the neighbouring rival, Safavid Iran. Throughout most of the period of Ottoman rule (1533–1918), the territory of present-day Iraq was a battle zone between the rival regional empires and tribal alliances.

By the 17th century, the frequent conflicts with the Safavids had sapped the strength of the Ottoman Empire and had weakened its control over its provinces. The nomadic population swelled with the influx of bedouins from Najd, in the Arabian Peninsula. Bedouin raids on settled areas became impossible to curb.[45]

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (8)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]



As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (9)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

British administration and independent kingdom

The country today known as Iraq was a region of the Ottoman Empire until the partition of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. It was made up of three provinces, called vilayets in the Ottoman language: Mosul Vilayet, Baghdad Vilayet, and Basra Vilayet. These three provinces were joined into one Kingdom by the British after the region became a League of Nations mandate, administered under British control, with the name "State of Iraq". The British established the Hashemite king, Faisal I of Iraq, who had been forced out of Syria by the French, as their client ruler. Likewise, British authorities selected Sunni Arab elites from the region for appointments to government and ministry offices.[49][50]

British troops in Baghdad, June 1941.

Faced with spiraling costs and influenced by the public protestations of the war hero T. E. Lawrence[51] in *The Times*, Britain replaced Arnold Wilson in October 1920 with a new Civil Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox.[52] Cox managed to quell a rebellion, yet was also responsible for implementing the fateful policy of close co-operation with Iraq's Sunni minority.[53] The institution of slavery was abolished in the 1920s.[54]

Britain granted independence to the Kingdom of Iraq in 1932,[55] on the urging of King Faisal, though the British retained military bases, local militia in the form of Assyrian Levies, and transit rights for their forces. King Ghazi ruled as a figurehead after King Faisal's death in 1933, while undermined by attempted military coups, until his death in 1939. Ghazi was followed by his underage son, Faisal II. 'Abd al-Ilah served as Regent during Faisal's minority.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (10)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Iraq gained formal independence in 1932 but remained subject to British imperial influence during the next quarter century of turbulent monarchical rule. Political instability on an even greater scale followed the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, but the installation of an Arab nationalist and socialist regime—the Baʿth Party—in a bloodless coup 10 years later brought new stability. With proven oil reserves second in the world only to those of Saudi Arabia, the regime was able to finance ambitious projects and development plans throughout the 1970s and to build one of the largest and best-equipped armed forces in the Arab world. The party's leadership, however, was quickly assumed by Saddam Hussein, a flamboyant and ruthless autocrat who led the country into disastrous military adventures—the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88) and the Persian Gulf War (1990–91). These conflicts left the country isolated from the international community and financially and socially drained, but—through unprecedented coercion directed at major sections of the population, particularly the country's disfranchised Kurdish minority and the Shīʿite majority—Saddam himself was able to maintain a firm hold on power into the 21st century. He and his regime were toppled in 2003 during the Iraq War.

Iraq; Hussein, Saddam

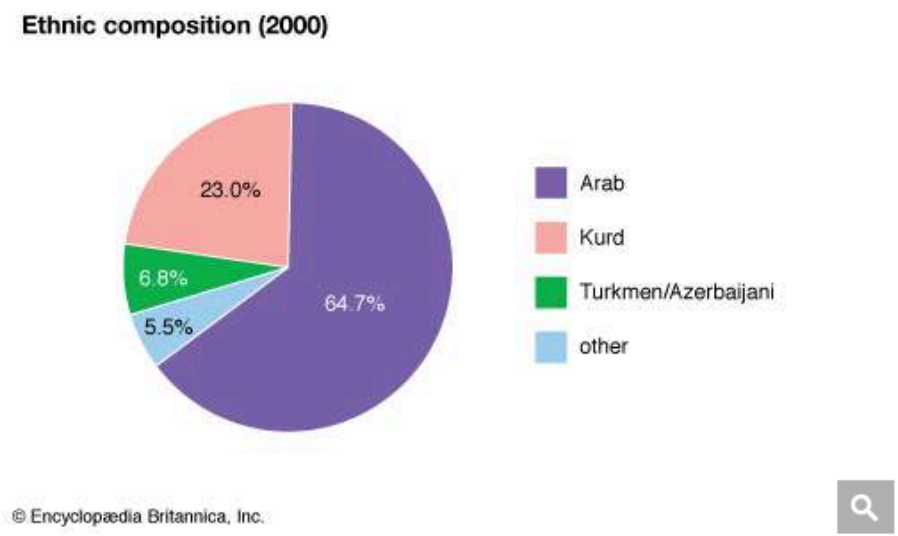
Take a brief look at Iraq's history leading up to the U.S.-led invasion of the country in 2003, which toppled Iraqi Pres. Saddam Hussein.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (11)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Ethnic groups

The ancient Semitic peoples of Iraq, the Babylonians and Assyrians, and the non-Semitic Sumerians were long ago assimilated by successive waves of immigrants. The Arab conquests of the 7th century brought about the Arabization of central and southern Iraq. A mixed population of Kurds and Arabs inhabit a transition zone between those areas and Iraqi Kurdistan in the northeast. Roughly two-thirds of Iraq's people are Arabs, about one-fourth are Kurds, and the remainder consists of small minority groups.



Iraq: Ethnic composition

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (12)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Arabs

Iraq's Arab population is divided between Sunni Muslims and the more numerous Shīʿites. These groups, however, are for the most part ethnically and linguistically homogenous, and—as is common throughout the region—both value family relations strongly. Many Arabs, in fact, identify more strongly with their family or tribe (an extended, patrilineal group) than with national or confessional affiliations, a significant factor contributing to ongoing difficulties in maintaining a strong central government. This challenge is amplified by the numerical size of many extended kin groups—tribal units may number thousands or tens of thousands of members—and the consequent political and economic clout they wield. Tribal affiliation among Arab groups has continued to play an important role in Iraqi politics, and even in areas where tribalism has eroded with time (such as major urban centres), family bonds have remained close. Several generations may live in a single household (although this is more common among rural families), and family-owned-and-operated businesses are the standard. Such households tend to be patriarchal, with the eldest male leading the family.

Kurds

Although estimates of their precise numbers vary, the Kurds are reckoned to be the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East, following Arabs, Turks, and Persians. There are important Kurdish minorities in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria, and Iraq's Kurds are concentrated in the relatively inaccessible mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan, which is roughly contiguous with Kurdish regions in those other countries. Kurds constitute a separate and distinctive cultural group. They are mostly Sunni Muslims who speak one of two dialects of the Kurdish language, an Indo-European language closely related to Modern Persian. They have a strong tribal structure and distinctive costume, music, and dance.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (13)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Kurdish settlement

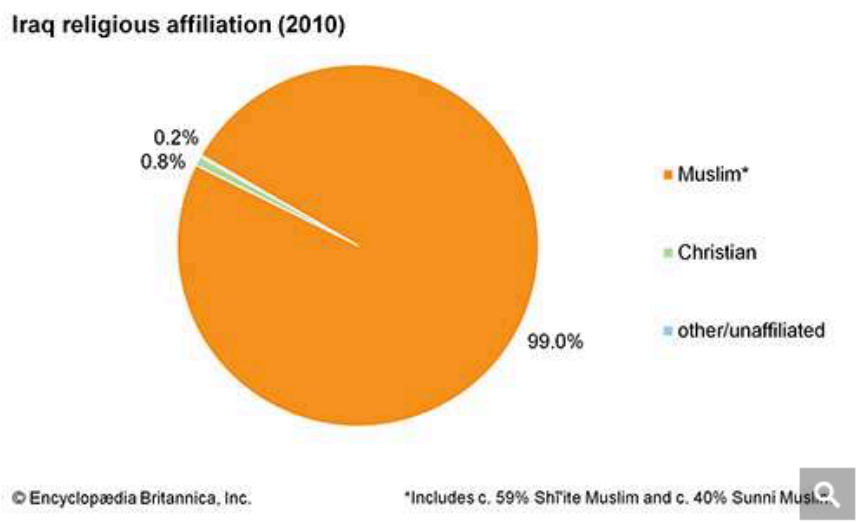
Areas of Kurdish settlement in Southwest Asia.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (14)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Religion

Iraq is predominantly a Muslim country, in which the two major sects of Islam are represented more equally than in any other state. About three-fifths of the population is Shīʿite, and about two-fifths is Sunni. Largely for political reasons, the government has not maintained careful statistics on the relative proportion of the Sunni and Shīʿite populations. Shīʿites are almost exclusively Arab (with some Turkmen and Kurds), while Sunnis are divided mainly between Arabs and Kurds but include other, smaller groups, such as Azerbaijanis and Turkmen.



Iraq: Religious affiliation

Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (15)

[FONTE: Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Sunnis

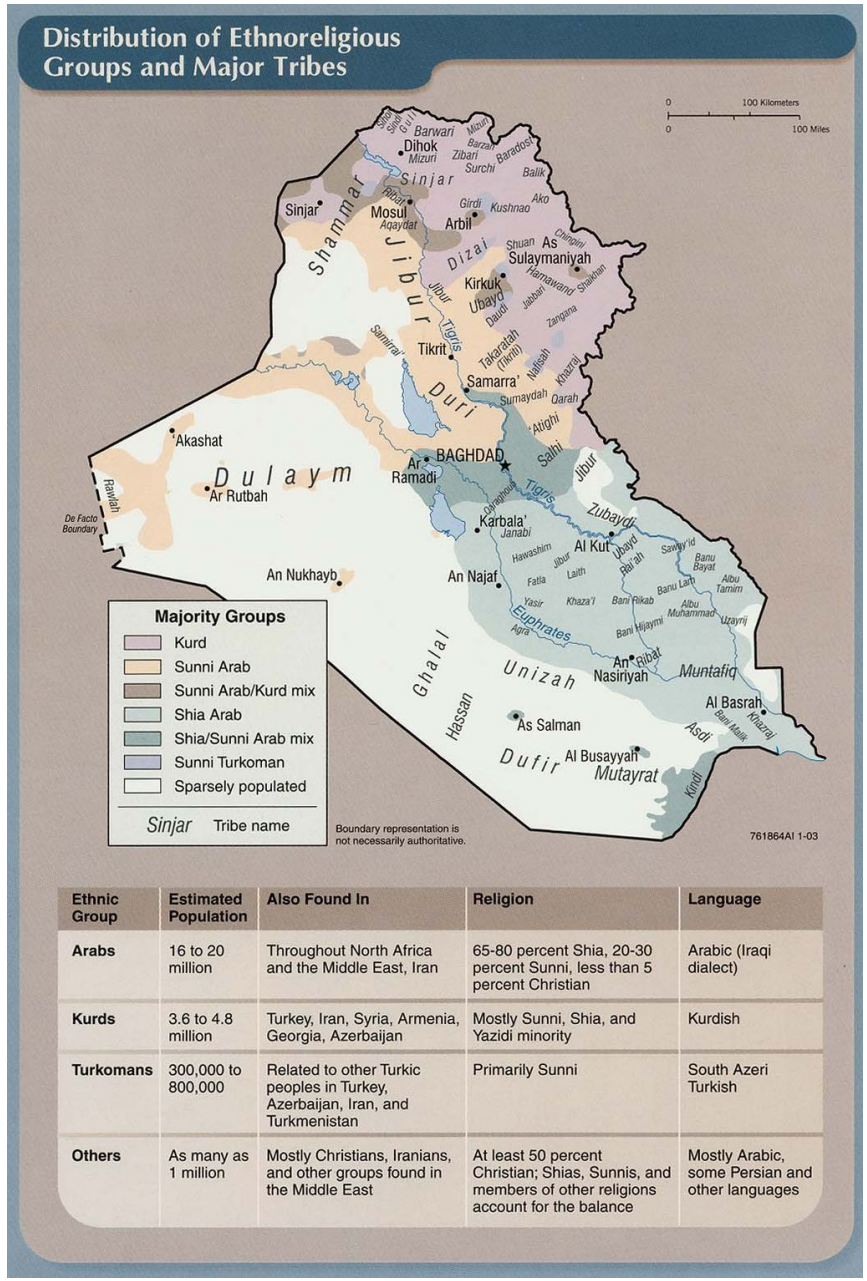
From the inception of the Iraqi state in 1920 until the fall of the government of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the ruling elites consisted mainly—although not exclusively—of minority Sunni Arabs. Most Sunni Arabs follow the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence and most Kurds the Shāfiʿī school, although this distinction has lost the meaning that it had in earlier times.

Shīʿites

Iraq's Shīʿites, like their coreligionists in Iran, follow the Ithnā ʿAsharī, or Twelver, rite, and, despite the preeminence of Iran as a Shīʿite Islamic republic, Iraq has traditionally been the physical and spiritual centre of Shīʿism in the Islamic world. Shīʿism's two most important holy cities, Al-Najaf and Karbalāʾ, are located in southern Iraq, as is Al-Kūfah, sanctified as the site of the assassination of ʿAlī, the fourth caliph, in the 7th century. Sāmarrāʾ, farther north, near Baghdad, is also of great cultural and religious significance to Shīʿites as the site of the life and disappearance of the 12th, and eponymous, imam, Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Ḥujjah. In premodern times southern and eastern Iraq formed a cultural and religious meeting place between the Arab and Persian Shīʿite worlds, and religious scholars moved freely between the two regions. Even until relatively recent times, large numbers of notable Iranian scholars could be found studying or teaching in the great *madrasah*s (religious schools) in Al-Najaf and Karbalāʾ; the Iranian cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, for instance, spent many years lecturing at Al-Najaf while in exile. Although Shīʿites constituted the majority of the population, Iraq's Sunnī rulers gave preferential treatment to influential Sunnī tribal networks, and Sunnīs dominated the military officer corps and civil service. Shīʿites remained politically and economically marginalized until the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Since the transition to elective government, Shīʿite factions have wielded significant political power.

As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (16)

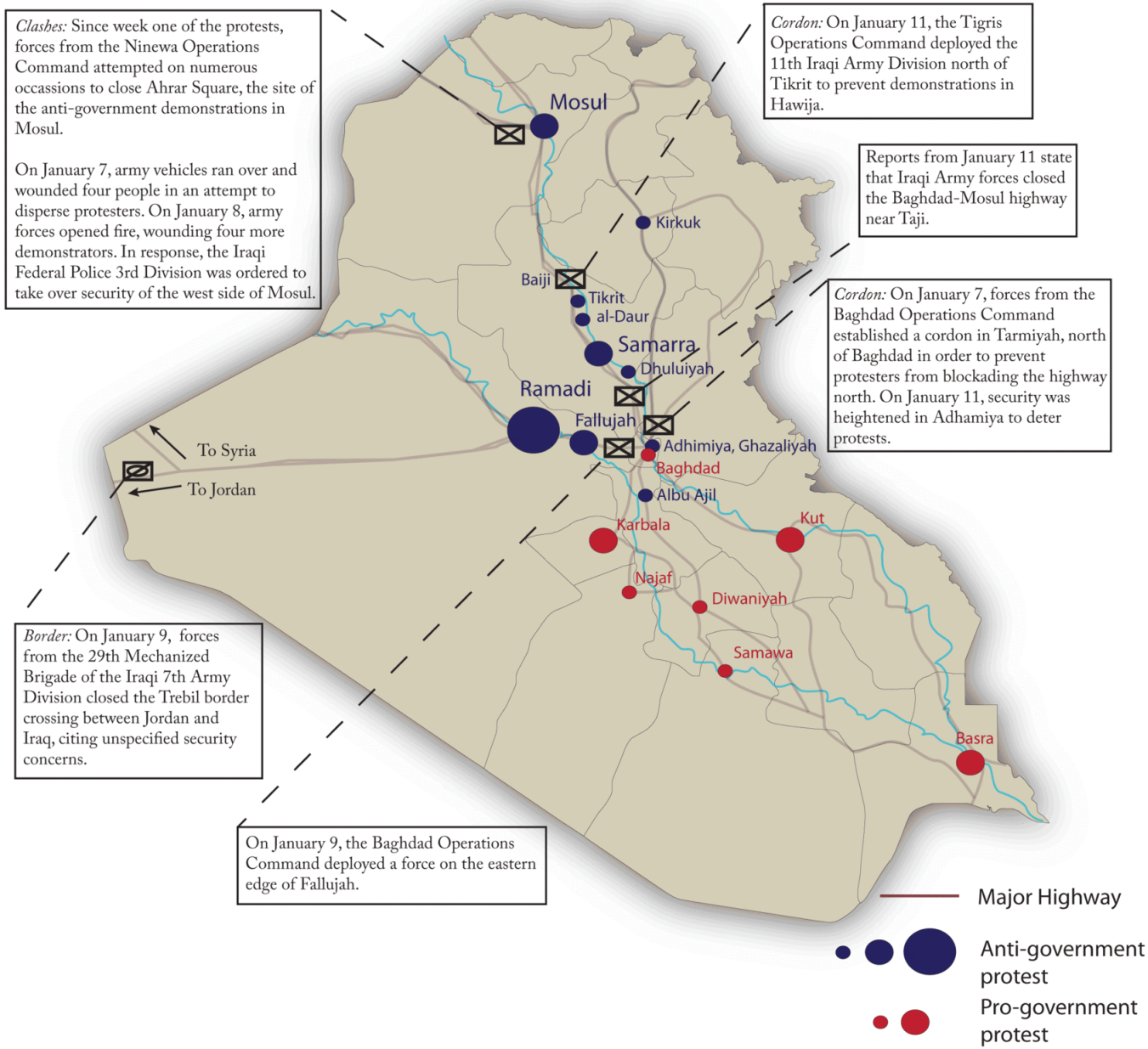
[FONTE: CIA, The World FactBook, 2003]



Ethnic Group	Estimated Population	Also Found In	Religion	Language
Arabs	16 to 20 million	Throughout North Africa and the Middle East, Iran	65-80 percent Shia, 20-30 percent Sunni, less than 5 percent Christian	Arabic (Iraqi dialect)
Kurds	3.6 to 4.8 million	Turkey, Iran, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan	Mostly Sunni, Shia, and Yazidi minority	Kurdish
Turkomans	300,000 to 800,000	Related to other Turkic peoples in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkmenistan	Primarily Sunni	South Azeri Turkish
Others	As many as 1 million	Mostly Christians, Iranians, and other groups found in the Middle East	At least 50 percent Christian; Shias, Sunnis, and members of other religions account for the balance	Mostly Arabic, some Persian and other languages

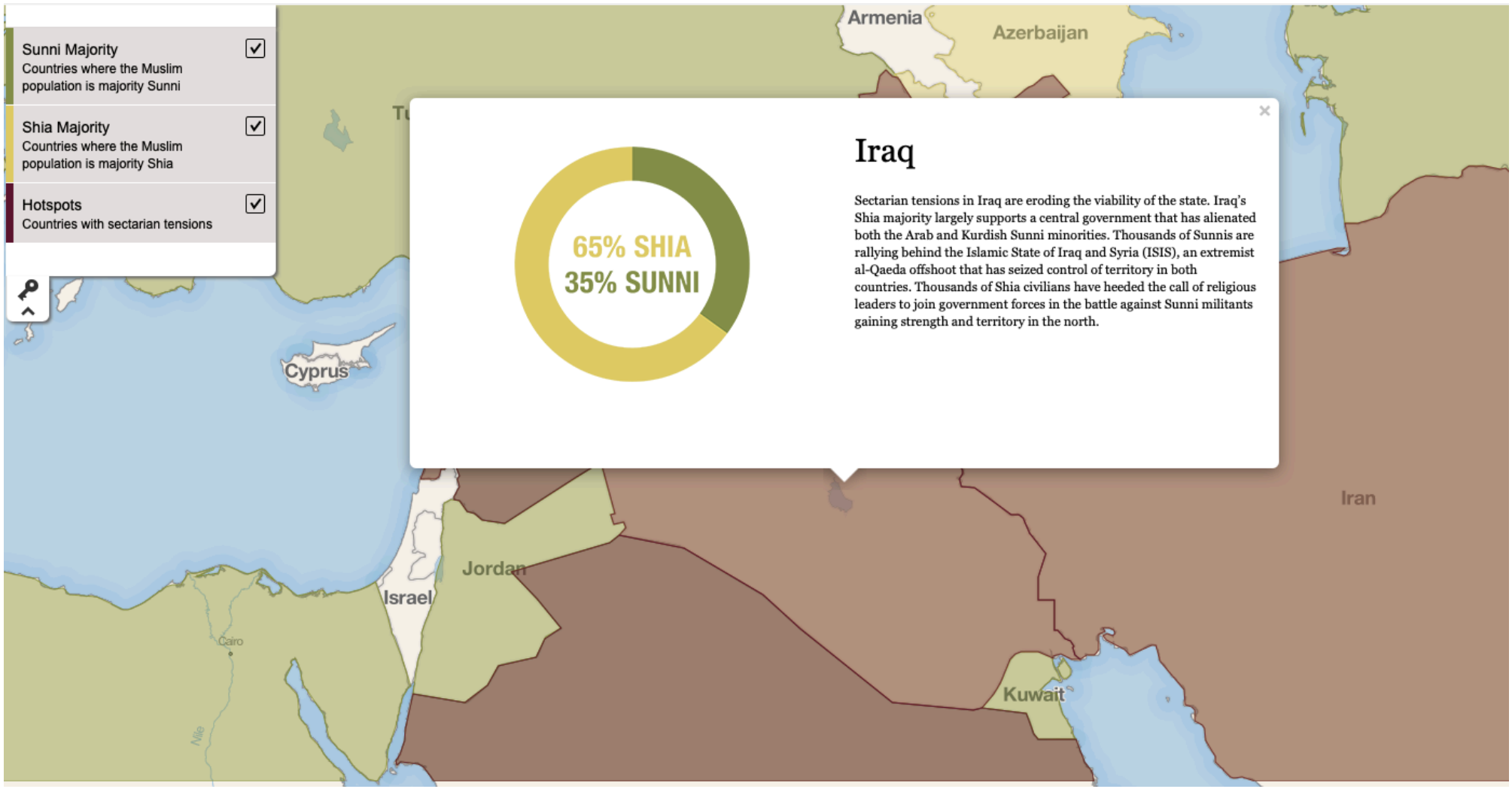
As origens do moderno Estado do Iraque (17)

[FONTE: Vox / Protestos de populações sunitas no Iraque em 2013]



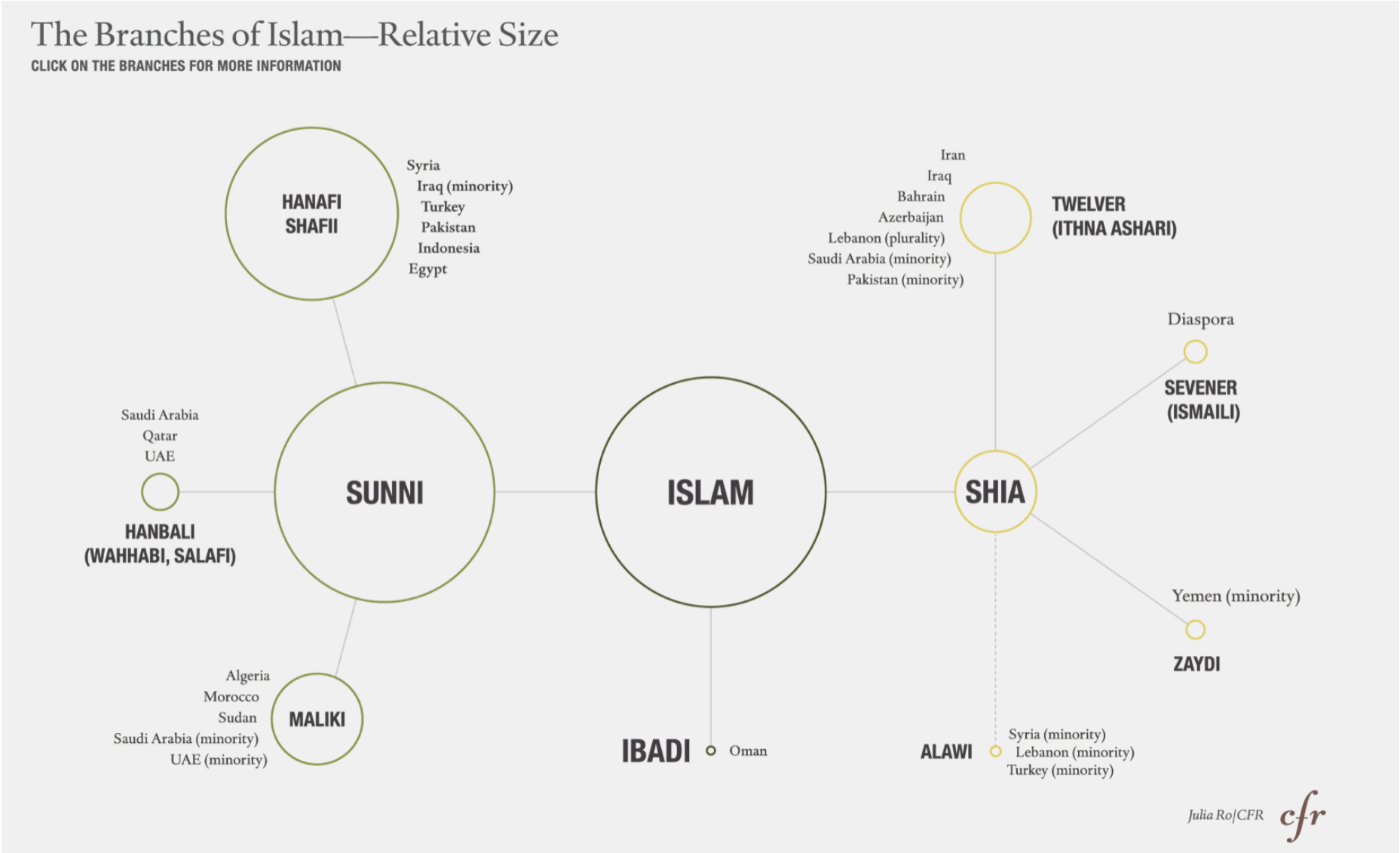
A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (1) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (2) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]



A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (3) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (4) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]



A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (5) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

Origins of the Schism

Mohammed unveiled a new faith to the people of Mecca in 610. Known as Islam, or submission to God, the monotheistic religion incorporated some Jewish and Christian traditions and expanded with a set of laws that governed most aspects of life, including political authority. By the time of his death in 632, Mohammed had consolidated power in Arabia. His followers subsequently built an empire that would stretch from Central Asia to Spain less than a century after his death. But a debate over succession split the community, with some arguing that leadership should be awarded to qualified individuals and others insisting that the only legitimate ruler must come through Mohammed's bloodline.

A group of prominent early followers of Islam elected Abu Bakr, a companion of Mohammed, to be the first caliph, or leader of the Islamic community, over the objections of those who favored Ali ibn Abi Talib, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law. The opposing camps in the succession debate eventually evolved into Islam's two main sects. Shias, a term that stems from *shi'atu Ali*, Arabic for "partisans of Ali," believe that Ali and his descendants are part of a divine order. Sunnis, meaning followers of the *sunna*, or "way" in Arabic, of Mohammed, are opposed to political succession based on Mohammed's bloodline.

Ali became caliph in 656 and ruled only five years before he was assassinated. The caliphate, which was based in the Arabian Peninsula, passed to the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus and later the Abbasids in Baghdad. Shias rejected the authority of these rulers. In 680, soldiers of the second Umayyad caliph killed Ali's son, Husayn, and many of his companions in Karbala, located in modern-day Iraq. Karbala became a defining moral story for Shias, and Sunni caliphs worried that the Shia Imams—the descendants of Husayn who were seen as the legitimate leaders of Muslims (Sunnis use the term "imam" for the men who lead prayers in mosques)—would use this massacre to capture public imagination and topple monarchs. This fear resulted in the further persecution and marginalization of Shias.

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (6) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

An ancient religious divide is helping fuel a resurgence of conflicts in the Middle East and Muslim countries. Struggles between Sunni and Shia forces have fed a Syrian civil war that threatens to transform the map of the Middle East, spurred violence that is fracturing Iraq, and widened fissures in a number of tense Gulf countries. Growing sectarian clashes have also sparked a revival of transnational jihadi networks that poses a threat beyond the region.

Islam's schism, simmering for fourteen centuries, doesn't explain all the political, economic, and geostrategic factors involved in these conflicts, but it has become one prism through which to understand the underlying tensions. Two countries that compete for the leadership of Islam, Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran, have used the sectarian divide to further their ambitions. How their rivalry is settled will likely shape the political balance between Sunnis and Shias and the future of the region, especially in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Yemen.

Alongside the proxy battle is the renewed fervor of armed militants, motivated by the goals of cleansing the faith or preparing the way for the return of the messiah. Today there are tens of thousands of organized sectarian militants throughout the region capable of triggering a broader conflict. And despite the efforts of many Sunni and Shia clerics to reduce tensions through dialogue and counterviolence measures, many experts express concern that Islam's divide will lead to escalating violence and a growing threat to international peace and security.

Sunni and Shia Muslims have lived peacefully together for centuries. In many countries it has become common for members of the two sects to intermarry and pray at the same mosques. They share faith in the Quran and the Prophet Mohammed's sayings and perform similar prayers, although they differ in rituals and interpretation of Islamic law.

Shia identity is rooted in victimhood over the killing of Husayn, the Prophet Mohammed's grandson, in the seventh century, and a long history of marginalization by the Sunni majority. Islam's dominant sect, which roughly 85 percent of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims follow, viewed Shia Islam with suspicion, and extremist Sunnis have portrayed Shias as heretics and apostates.

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (7) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

Modern Tensions

Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 gave Shia cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini the opportunity to implement his vision for an Islamic government ruled by the "guardianship of the jurist" (*velayat-e faqih*), a controversial concept among Shia scholars that is opposed by Sunnis, who have historically differentiated between political leadership and religious scholarship. Shia ayatollahs have always been the guardians of the faith. Khomeini argued that clerics had to rule to properly perform their function: implementing Islam as God intended, through the mandate of the Shia Imams.

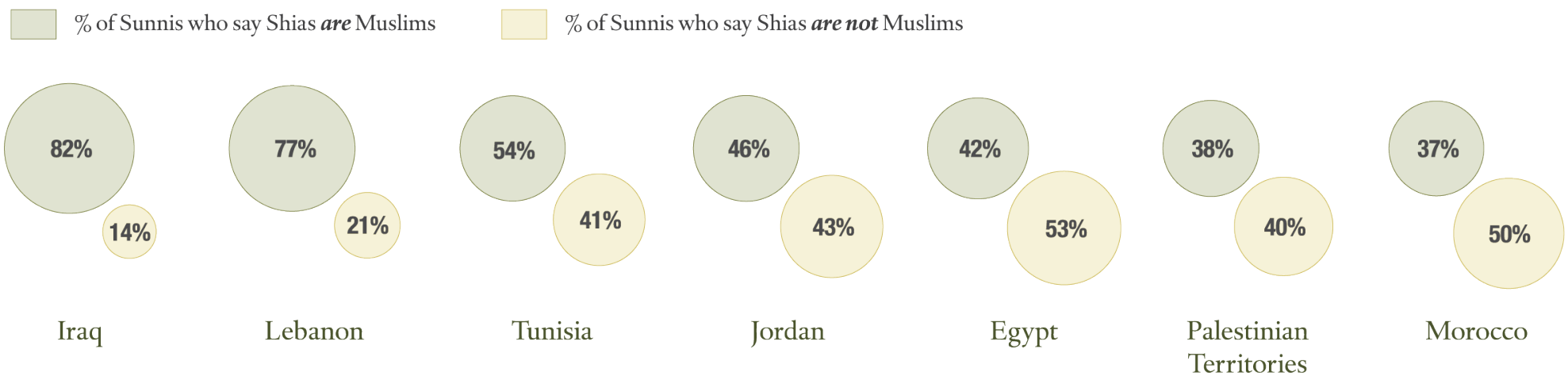
Under Khomeini, Iran began an experiment in Islamic rule. Khomeini tried to inspire further Islamic revival, preaching Muslim unity, but supported groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Pakistan that had specific Shia agendas. Sunni Islamists, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, admired Khomeini's success, but did not accept his leadership, underscoring the depth of sectarian suspicions.

Saudi Arabia has a sizable Shia minority of roughly 10 percent, and millions of adherents of a puritanical brand of Sunni Islam known as Wahhabism (an offshoot of the Sunni Hanbali school) that is antagonistic to Shia Islam. The transformation of Iran into an overtly Shia power after the Islamic revolution induced Saudi Arabia to accelerate the propagation of Wahhabism, as both countries revived a centuries-old sectarian rivalry over the true interpretation of Islam. Many of the groups responsible for sectarian violence that has occurred in the region and across the Muslim world since 1979 can be traced to Saudi and Iranian sources.

Saudi Arabia backed Iraq in the 1980–1988 war with Iran and sponsored militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan who were primarily fighting against the Soviet Union, which had invaded Afghanistan in 1979, but were also suppressing Shia movements inspired or backed by Iran.

The transformation of Iran into an agitator for Shia movements in Muslim countries seemed to confirm centuries of Sunni suspicions that Shia Arabs answer to Persia. Many experts, however, point out that Shias aren't monolithic—for many of them, identities and interests are based on more than their confession. Iraqi Shias, for example, made up the bulk of the Iraqi army that fought Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, and Shia militant groups Amal and Hezbollah clashed at times during the Lebanese civil war. The Houthis, a Zaydi Shia militant group in Yemen, battled the government of Ali Abdullah Saleh, a Zaydi, several times between 2004 and 2010. Then, in 2014, the Houthis captured the capital Sana'a with ousted president Saleh's support.

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (8) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]



A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (9) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

For their part, both mainstream and hard-line Sunnis aren't singularly focused on oppressing Shias. They have fought against coreligionists throughout history, most recently in the successive crackdowns on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia's battles against al-Qaeda and related Sunni militant groups. Sharing a common Sunni identity didn't eliminate power struggles among Sunni Muslims under secular or religious governments.

But confessional identity has resurfaced wherever sectarian violence has taken root, as in Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion removed Saddam Hussein, a dictator from the Sunni minority who ruled over a Shia-majority country. The bombing of a Shia shrine in Samara in 2006 kicked off a cycle of sectarian violence that forced Iraqis to pick sides, stirring tensions that continue today.

In the Arab world, Shia groups supported by Iran have recently won important political victories. The regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which has ruled since 1970, relies on Alawis, a heterodox Shia sect that makes up about 13 percent of Syria's population, as a pillar of its power. Alawis dominate the upper reaches of the country's military and security services and are the backbone of the forces fighting to support the Assad regime in Syria's civil war. Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq unseated Saddam Hussein and instituted competitive elections, the Shia majority has dominated the parliament and produced its prime ministers. Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia militia and political movement, is the strongest party in Lebanon. The Houthis, Shia militants in Yemen tenuously linked to Iran, have toppled the country's internationally recognized government. Iran, a majority Shia country, has seen its regional influence swell as its allies in these countries have accumulated power.

Sunni governments, especially Saudi Arabia, have increasingly worried about their own grips on power, a concern that was exacerbated during the protest movement that began in Tunisia in late 2010. The Arab Awakening, as the uprisings are known, spread to Bahrain and Syria, countries at the fault lines of Islam's sectarian divide. In each, political power is held by a sectarian minority—Alawis in Syria and a Sunni ruling family in Bahrain—where Shias are the majority. In Yemen, Houthi rebels have expanded their territorial control, which Saudi Arabia perceives as a potential beachhead for Iran on the Arabian peninsula, along vital shipping routes in the Red Sea and in territory abutting Saudi Arabia's own marginalized Shia minority.

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (10) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]

Flash Points

Sunni-Shia tensions contribute to multiple flash points in Muslim countries that are viewed as growing threats to international peace and security. The following arouse the most concern among regional specialists:

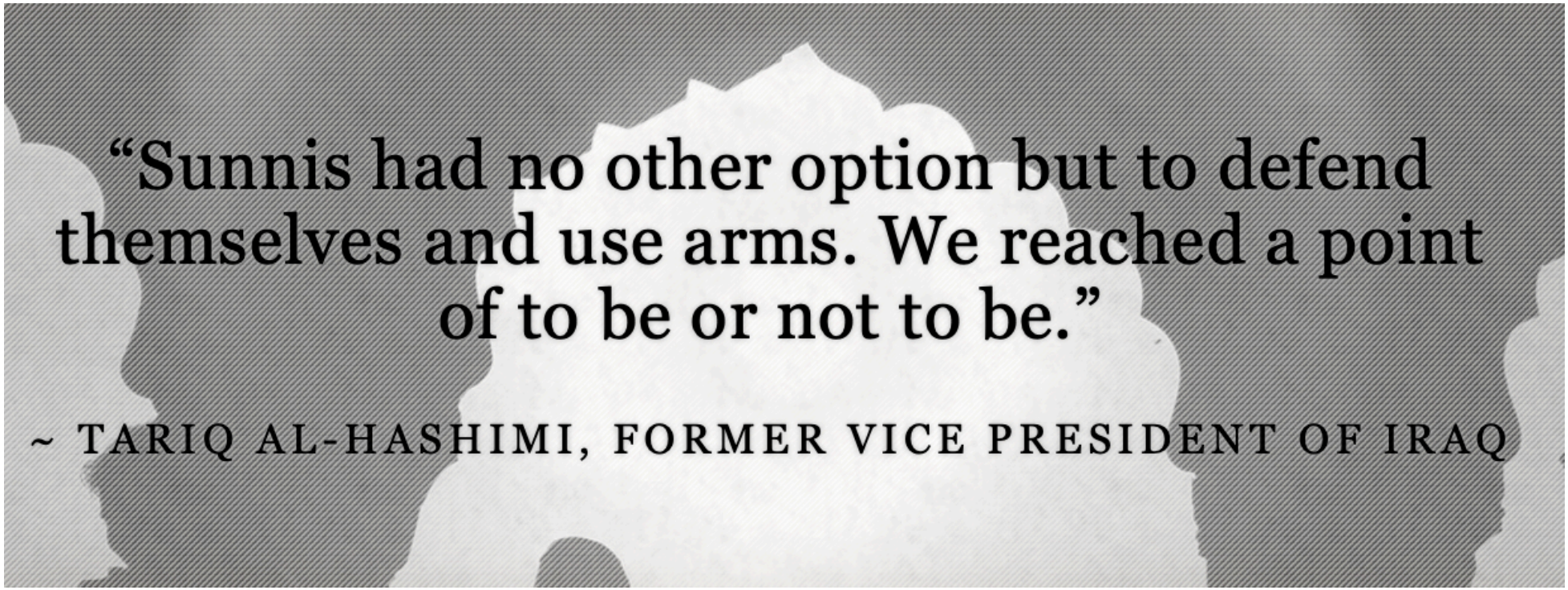
Rising Militancy

Sectarian violence intensified in 2013 and has grown since. Extremists were "fueled by sectarian motivations" in Syria, Lebanon, and Pakistan, according to the U.S. State Department. After years of steady losses for al-Qaeda–linked groups, Sunni extremist recruitment is rising, aided by private funding networks in the Gulf, particularly in Kuwait, with much of the violence directed at other Muslims rather than Western targets. Shia militant groups are also gaining strength, in part to confront the threat of Sunni extremism. In 2015, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for, among other attacks, bombing Shia worshippers in Kuwait; attacking Sunni and Shia mosques in Saudi Arabia; downing a Russian passenger plane in Egypt, killing over two hundred people; and a pair of suicide bombings in a Shia-majority district of south Beirut that killed more than forty people.

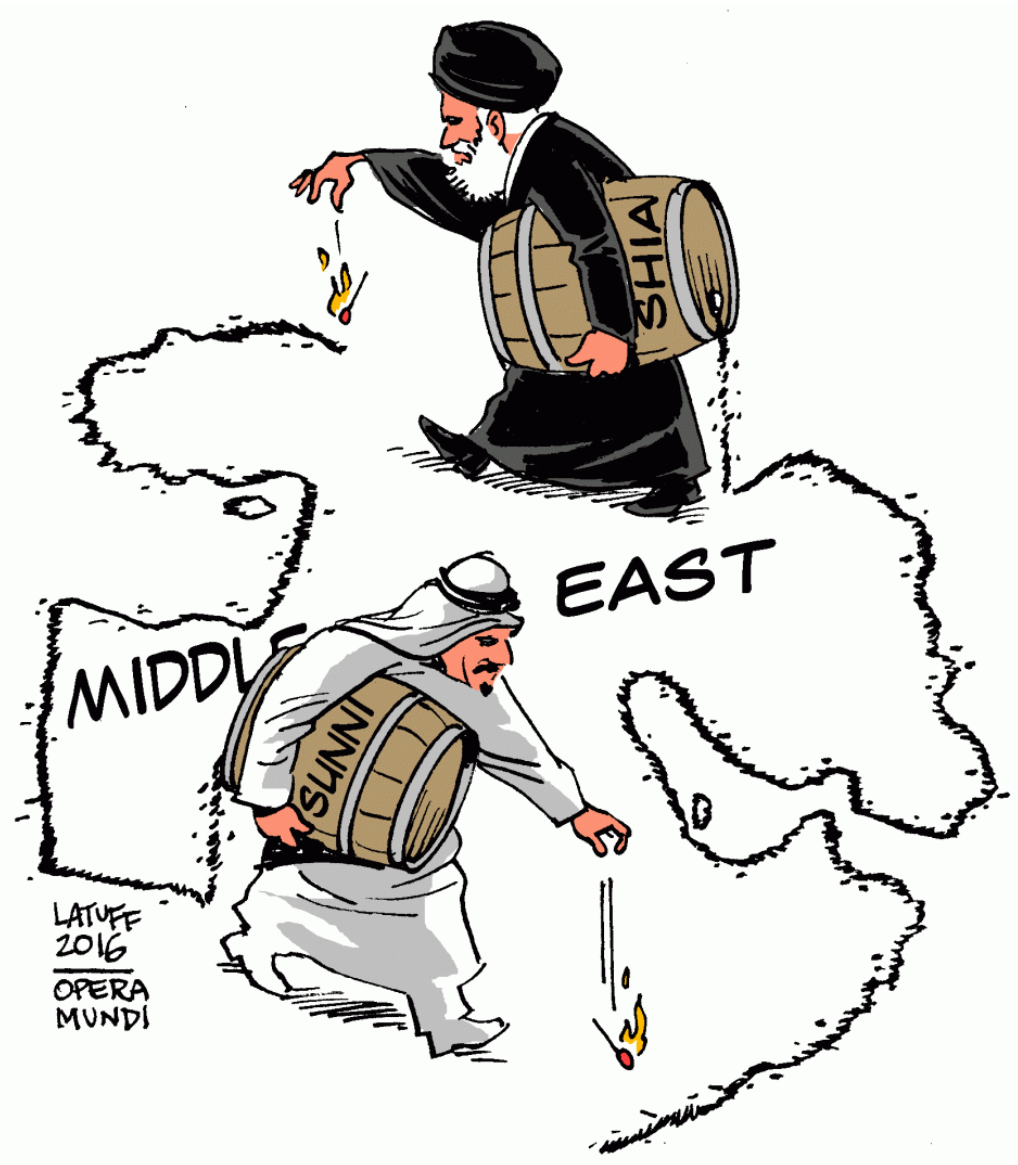
Humanitarian Crisis

The ongoing civil war in Syria has displaced millions internally, and more than four million civilians, mostly Sunni, are now refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The influx of more than one million mostly Sunni Syrians into Lebanon, a state that experienced its own fifteen-year civil war (1975–90), has burdened its cash-strapped government and put pressure on communities hosting refugees. Jordan and Iraq are struggling to provide housing and services to an impoverished and traumatized population. Turkey has provided considerable humanitarian aid, yet Ankara must increasingly balance "the public's sympathy for and unease toward refugees," the International Crisis Group reports. The spillover of migrants and refugees into Europe spiked in 2015, and countries with generous resettlement policies are bracing for a larger influx as the wars in the Middle East continue.

A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (11) [FONTE: Council on Foreign Relations]



A divisão sunitas / xiitas e as suas implicações no Iraque e Médio Oriente (12) [FONTE: Latuff Cartoons]



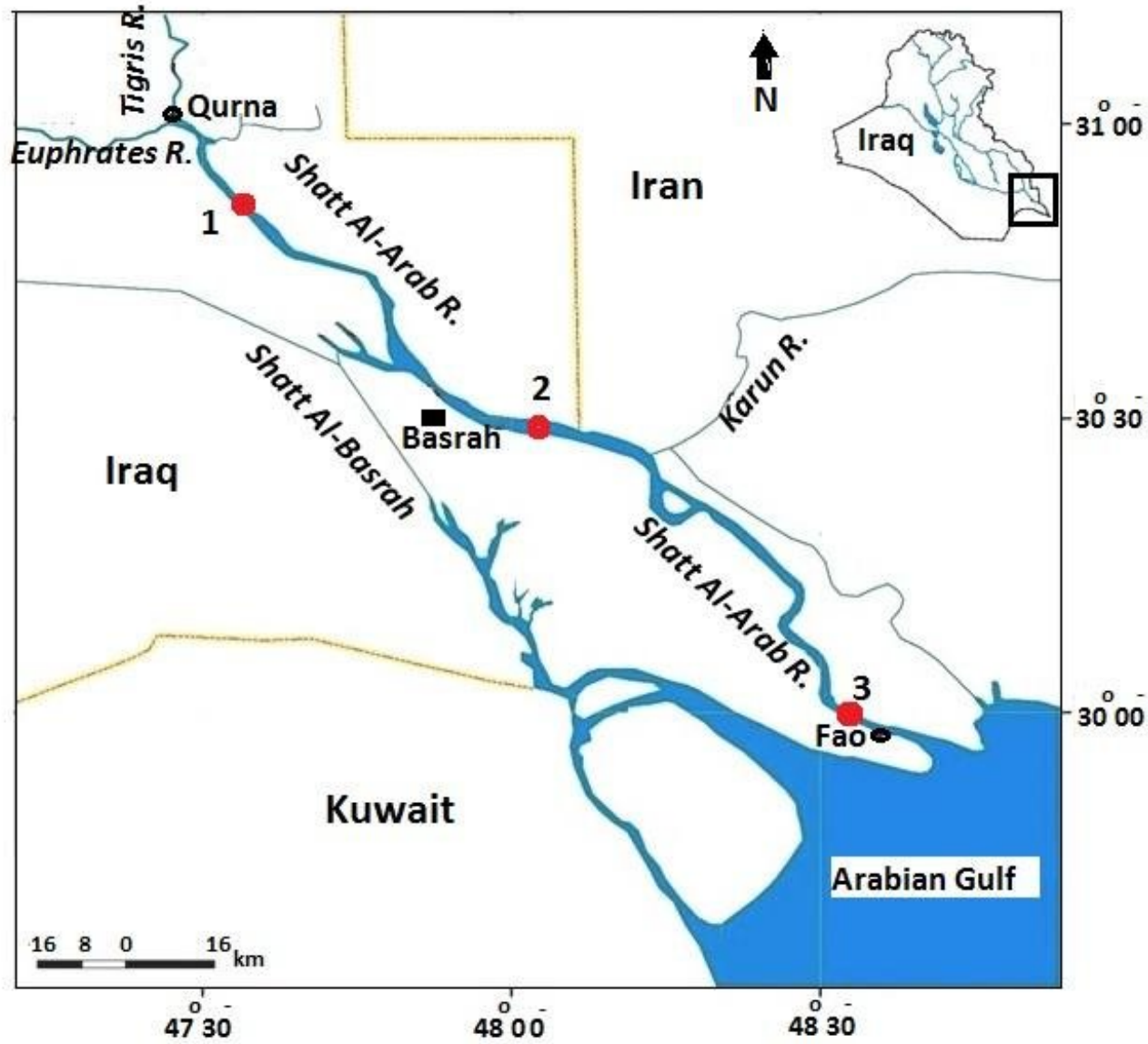
PARTE II – O conflito do Shatt el-Arab

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (1)

[FONTE: Wilson Center]

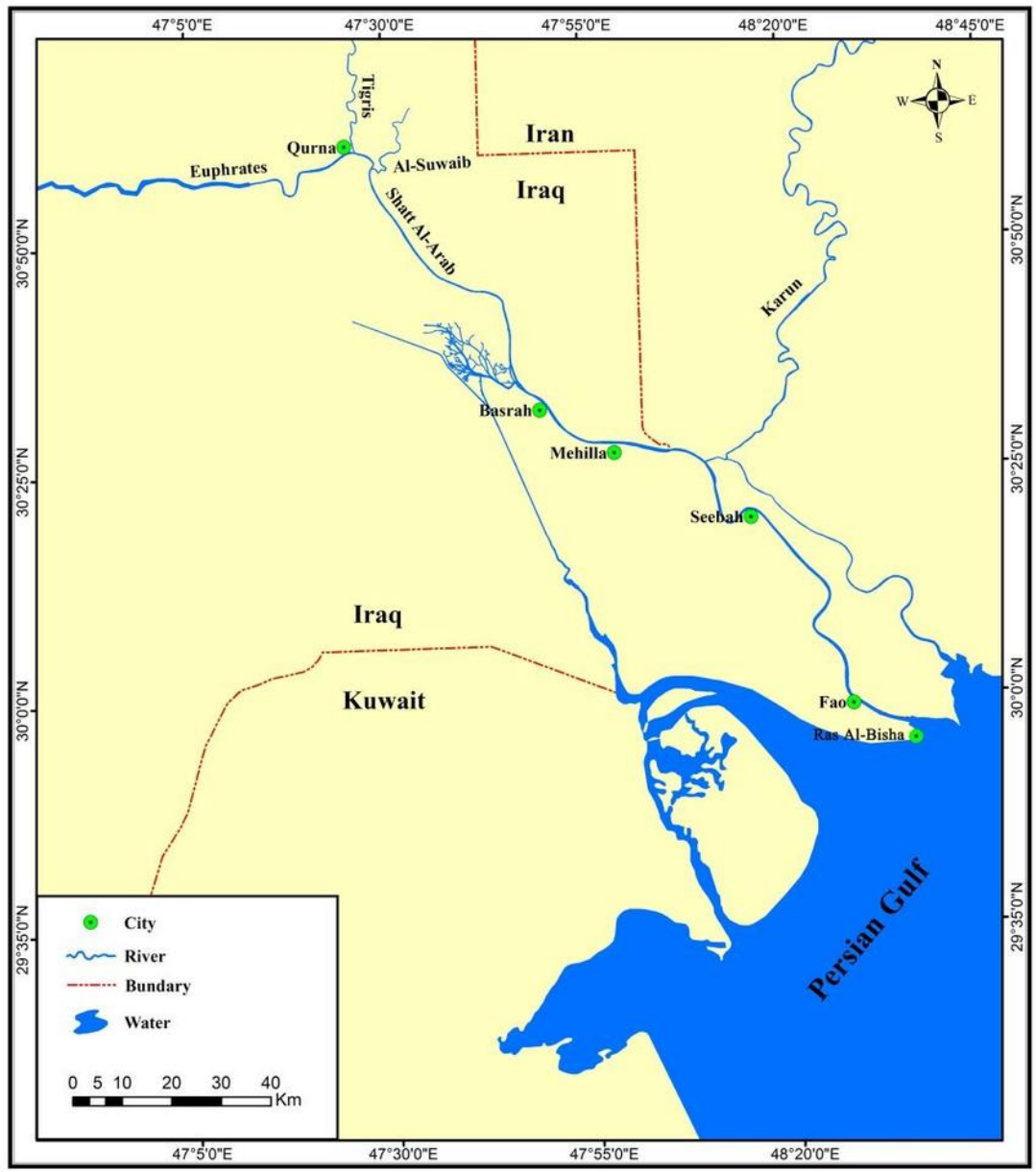
O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (2)

[FONTE: Researchgate / Abdul-Razak M Mohamed]



O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (3)

[FONTE: Researchgate / Abdul-Razak M Mohamed]



O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (4)

[FONTE: Público, 30/03/2007]

Shatt el-Arab: o canal da discórdia

30 de Março de 2007, 0:00

a O canal de Shatt el-Arab (Costa dos Árabes, para o iraquianos) ou Arvandrud (rio Arvand, para os iranianos), onde os 15 marinheiros britânicos foram capturados, tem sido fonte permanente de conflito desde há 70 anos. Pulmão económico e único acesso marítimo do Iraque ao Golfo, juntamente com o porto de Oum Qasr, no extremo Sul, o Shatt el-Arab é o estuário dos rios Tigre e Eufrates. Com uma extensão de 200 quilómetros, o canal fica próximo das jazidas da Baixa-Mesopotâmia, as mais importantes do Iraque. Em 1937, um tratado deu o controlo da maior parte do Shatt el-Arab ao Iraque. Este acordo resultou de pressões britânicas e o Irão denunciou-o em 1969, iniciando uma série de incidentes fronteiriços. Em 1975, Bagdad e Teerão assinaram novo pacto (Acordo de Argel), que fixou a demarcação da fronteira no ponto médio mais profundo do canal. Em Setembro de 1980, Saddam Hussein violou o compromisso e invadiu o Irão, provocando uma guerra, que se prolongou durante oito anos. A captura dos marinheiros deu-se numa área em que o Irão e o Iraque nunca se entenderam. A legislação internacional (com interpretações divergentes) delibera que, numa situação destas, as águas territoriais "não devem prolongar-se além da linha média". Contudo, formações rochosas, barreiras de areia e ilhotas tornam impossível a missão de determinar até onde chega a jurisdição de cada parte. Quando Saddam desafiou Khomeini, toda a região, em particular as cidades de Bassorá (Iraque) e de Abadan (Irão), assim como a península de Fao, foram palco de sangrentos combates. O Acordo de Argel foi retomado em 1990, quando Bagdad renunciou oficialmente às suas reivindicações sobre o controlo total do Shatt el-Arab. (Fontes: AFP e El País)

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (5)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

Shatt al-Arab clashes

Shatt al-Arab clashes refers to clashes that took place in Shatt al-Arab region from 1936 up to 1980 concordant with Iran–Iraq War. The Shatt al-Arab was considered an important channel for both states' oil exports, and in 1937, Iran and the newly independent Iraq signed a treaty to settle the dispute. In the 1975 Algiers Agreement, Iraq made territorial concessions—including the Shatt al-Arab waterway—in exchange for normalized relations. In return for Iraq recognizing that the frontier on the waterway ran along the entire thalweg, Iran ended its support of Iraq's Kurdish guerrillas.

Clashes

Since the Ottoman–Persian Wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, Iran (known as "Persia" prior to 1935) and the Ottomans fought over Iraq (then known as Mesopotamia) and full control of the Shatt al-Arab until the signing of the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 which established the final borders between the two countries.[1]:4 The Shatt al-Arab was considered an important channel for both states' oil exports, and in 1937, Iran and the newly independent Iraq signed a treaty to settle the dispute. In the same year, Iran and Iraq both joined the Treaty of Saadabad, and relations between the two states remained good for decades afterwards.[2] In April 1969, Iran abrogated the 1937 treaty over the Shatt al-Arab, and as such, ceased paying tolls to Iraq when its ships used the waterway.[2] Iran's abrogation of the treaty marked the beginning of a period of acute Iraqi-Iranian tension that was to last until the 1975 Algiers Agreement.[2] In 1969, Saddam Hussein, Iraq's deputy prime minister, stated: "Iraq's dispute with Iran is in connection with Khuzestan, which is part of Iraq's soil and was annexed to Iran during foreign rule."[3]

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (6)

[FONTE: Wikipedia]

In 1971, Iraq (now under Saddam's effective rule) broke diplomatic relations with Iran after claiming sovereignty rights over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs in the Persian Gulf following the withdrawal of the British.[4] As retaliation for Iraq's claims to Khuzestan, Iran became the main patron of Iraq's Kurdish rebels in the early 1970s, giving the Iraqi Kurds bases in Iran and arming the Kurdish groups.[2] In addition to Iraq fomenting separatism in Iran's Khuzestan and Balochistan, both states encouraged separatist activities by Kurdish nationalists in the other state. From March 1974 to March 1975, Iran and Iraq fought border wars over Iran's support of Iraqi Kurds.[2][5] In 1975, the Iraqis launched an offensive into Iran using tanks, though the Iranians defeated them.[6] Several other attacks took place; however, Iran had the world's fifth most powerful military at the time and easily defeated the Iraqis with its air force. Some 1,000 people died on the course of the 1974-75 clashes in the Shatt al-Arab region.[7] As a result, Iraq decided against continuing the war, choosing instead to make concessions to Tehran to end the Kurdish rebellion.[2][5] In the 1975 Algiers Agreement, Iraq made territorial concessions—including the Shatt al-Arab waterway—in exchange for normalised relations.[2] In return for Iraq recognising that the frontier on the waterway ran along the entire *thalweg*, Iran ended its support of Iraq's Kurdish guerrillas.[2]

The Shatt al-Arab on the Iran–Iraq border

After the Iranian Revolution

Despite Iraq's goals of regaining the Shatt al-Arab, the Iraqi government seemed to initially welcome Iran's Revolution, which overthrew Iran's Shah, who was seen as a common enemy.[2][8]on 17 September 1980, Iraq suddenly abrogated the Algiers Protocol following the Iranian revolution. Saddam Hussein claimed that the Islamic Republic of Iran refused to abide by the stipulations of the Algiers Protocol and, therefore, Iraq considered the Protocol null and void. Five days later, the Iraqi army crossed the border.[9]

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (7)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

What Iraq Has to Gain, and Lose, by Resurrecting a Border Deal With Iran

Highlights

- *Iraq's recent agreement to share the Shatt al-Arab waterway with Iran stands as a testament to the new level of political closeness between the historically hostile neighbors.*
- *But in addition to the diplomatic symbolism, Iraq knows it needs Iran's help to develop and clean the river and, in turn, help mitigate the blowback from its water crisis and ongoing unrest in Basra.*
- *However, by deepening ties with its controversial neighbor, Baghdad risks further complicating its delicate relations with Iran's regional and Western enemies.*

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (8)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

In early March, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Iraq for his first-ever official state visit. The trip seemed to underline a newfangled closeness between the two countries, with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's announcement that he and Rouhani had signed several agreements to cooperate on issues such as border security and economic development. But the two sides' decision to return to a 44-year-old border demarcation deal garnered the most attention in Iraq because of its immense historical and cultural significance.

The Big Picture

After a century punctuated by periods of hostility and bloody conflict, relations between Iran and Iraq seem to be on the mend — with Tehran seeking to deepen its political and economic ties amid increasing sanctions pressure from the West, while Baghdad looks to Iran to help quell its continued agricultural woes and security threats. The countries' recent decision to revive a 1975 border agreement has symbolically cemented this new chapter of increased cooperation and friendliness between the two neighbors.

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (9)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

A Symbol of a Bloody History

The revival of the 1975 Algiers Agreement acknowledges that Iraq and Iran are on the same page regarding one of the most historically contentious issues between them: the delimitations of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Arguing over access to the waterway, which is where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet, predates the formation of modern-day Iraq and Iran – with the Ottoman Empire exporting dates from palm farms that stretched for miles along the river in the 19th century.

But disputes over Shatt al-Arab became particularly contentious after oil was discovered in Iraq in the 1920s, with Baghdad wanting to preserve its freedom of navigation on the river in order to build up its oil sector. In 1975, the countries signed the Algiers accord to demarcate their various maritime and land border disagreements. Iran offered to withdraw military assistance to the Iraqi Kurds, who had been engaged in a violent dispute with the federal government in Baghdad. And in exchange, Iran would get half of the Shatt al-Arab waterway – granting it access to key ports as Tehran developed its own oil export industry.

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (10)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (11)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

For several years, the agreement alleviated hostilities between Iraq and Iran, until Iran's 1979 revolution ushered in a new government and shifted power dynamics again. This led to the suspension of the Algiers accord shortly thereafter (where it had remained until this year's revival). As a result, the Shatt al-Arab waterway became the site of a violent war between Baghdad and Tehran throughout the 1980s, with Iran seeking to gain full control of the waterway. Today, the river is now a graveyard of sunken Iraqi and Iranian ships and vessels and serves as a painful reminder of the bloody history the two countries share.

Understanding Iraq's Rationale

When the Algiers Agreement was signed in 1975 to equally share the waterway, it provided mutual benefits to both countries. But today, the Shatt al-Arab seemingly holds more strategic importance for Iraq than it does for Iran. While there are a couple of oil ports along the waterway, Iran's most important terminals are further out along the Persian Gulf. But for Iraq, the Shatt al-Arab remains one of its only waterways to the Persian Gulf, and provides fresh water to farms and factories up and down the river – begging the question as to why Baghdad would willingly give up any access to such a vital river by reaffirming the Algiers Agreement.

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (12)

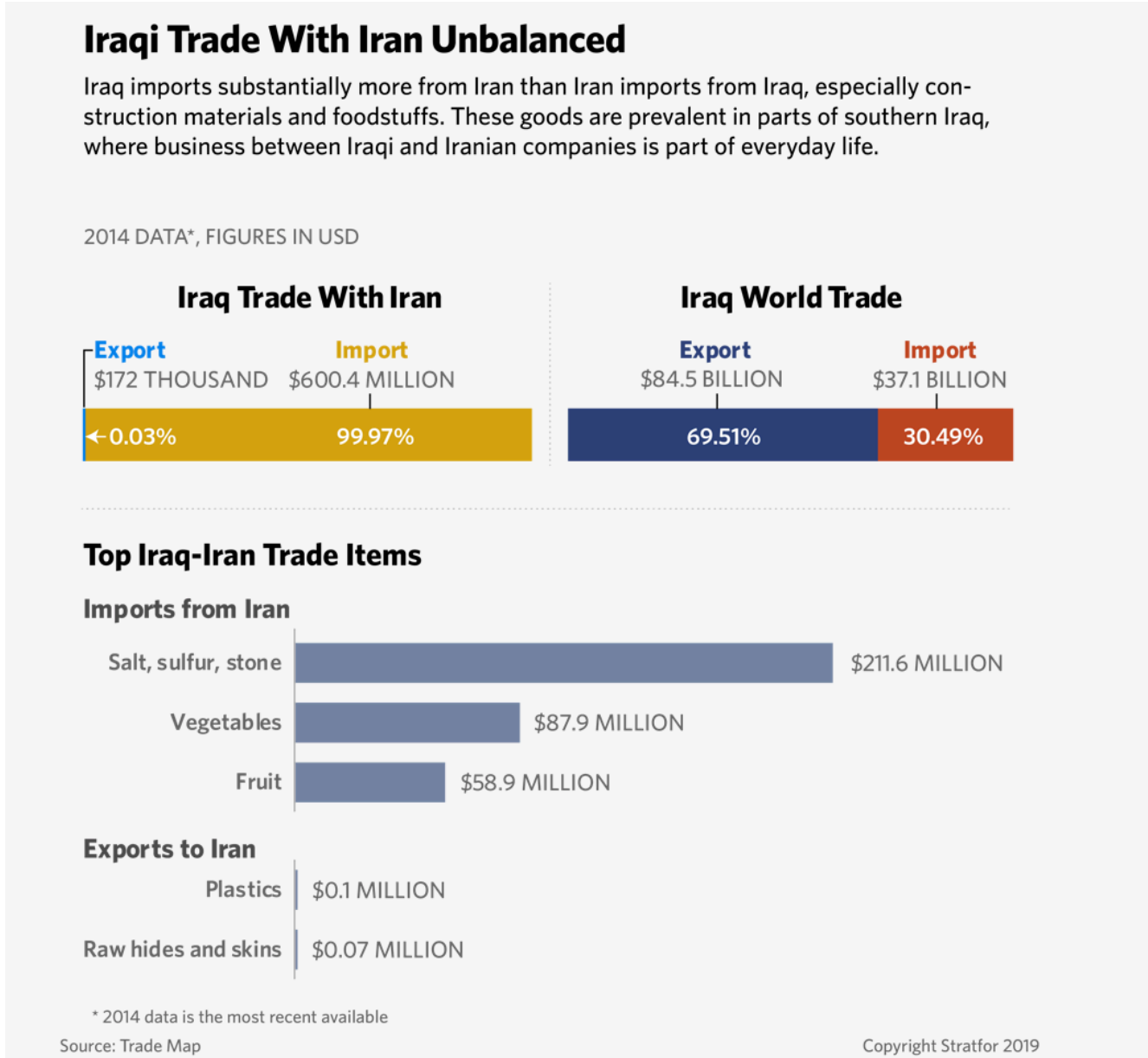
[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

But upon a closer look, officially ceding some right of passage to the waterway doesn't actually endanger any of Iraq's baseline economic interests. For one, sharing more of the river with Iran won't limit any of Iraq's activity in its most important sector, oil production, considering the vast majority of Iraqi oil is shipped via pipelines to terminals just off Faw in the Persian Gulf. It also won't harm Iraq's ability to import other shipments, since most food and other goods are shipped to the Iraqi port city of Umm Qasr, located on its border with Kuwait. In fact, sharing more of the Shatt al-Arab could ultimately yield more advantageous trade deals for Iraq by helping generate goodwill with Iran.

But perhaps more importantly, Iraq also knows it needs to pursue development projects along the Shatt al-Arab to help contain the separatist-fueled unrest in Basra, which is threatening Baghdad's grip on the oil wealth it so heavily depends on. And for that to happen, Iraq knows it needs to be on good terms with Iran – and specifically, Iranian businesses.

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (13)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]



O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (14)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

Creating a clean slate for cooperation in the Shatt al-Arab region also makes it easier for Iranian companies to help with cleaning out the heavily silted and polluted waterway, which could improve the salty water currently harming Iraq's agricultural production. And indeed, the first concrete step Iran and Iraq have taken since recommitting themselves to the Algiers Agreement has been setting up a committee to clean some of the waterway by dredging portions of the canal and eventually developing some of it.

New Friends, New Problems

Regardless of the shorter-term economic potential of the waterway, however, reaffirming the 1975 Algiers Agreement in 2019, in and of itself, stands as a testament to the current level of closeness between Iran and Iraq – which could pose long-term geopolitical implications for Baghdad.

> **Reaffirming the Algiers Agreement highlights Iraq's willingness to concede to Iran for its own economic benefit — and likewise, the leverage Iran still holds over Iraq.**

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (15)

[FONTE: Startfor, 5/04/2019]

The United States, for one, will likely not take kindly to Iraq cozying up with its chief rival in the region. This could place Baghdad in an even stickier situation, as it attempts to balance increasing U.S. sanctions pressure against Iran while maintaining access to one of its major providers of food and manufactured goods.

In the long run, the renewal of the 1975 agreement could also create problems for Iraq's relationship with its other Persian Gulf neighbor, Kuwait. Kuwait and Iraq have long argued over the joint development of port facilities in Faw, as well as the undetermined maritime border between the two fairweather friends. And Iraq's willingness to agree with Iran over its maritime border could stir anxiety in Kuwait and other Iran-opposed states in the Arab Gulf fueled by Baghdad's apparent new level of comfort with Iran.

On the grander scale, the signing of the agreement thus highlights Iraq's willingness to concede politically to Iran on a contentious issue for its own economic benefit – and likewise, Iran's ability to pressure Iraq because of Baghdad's dependency on Tehran for economic and security support. As a result, Iraq will find that its budding relationship with its controversial neighbor may come at the cost of complicating Baghdad's already tricky political position with its regional neighbors and Western allies.

O Shatt el-Arab: uma fronteira disputada (16)

[FONTE: Hajjaj Cartoons, 2015]

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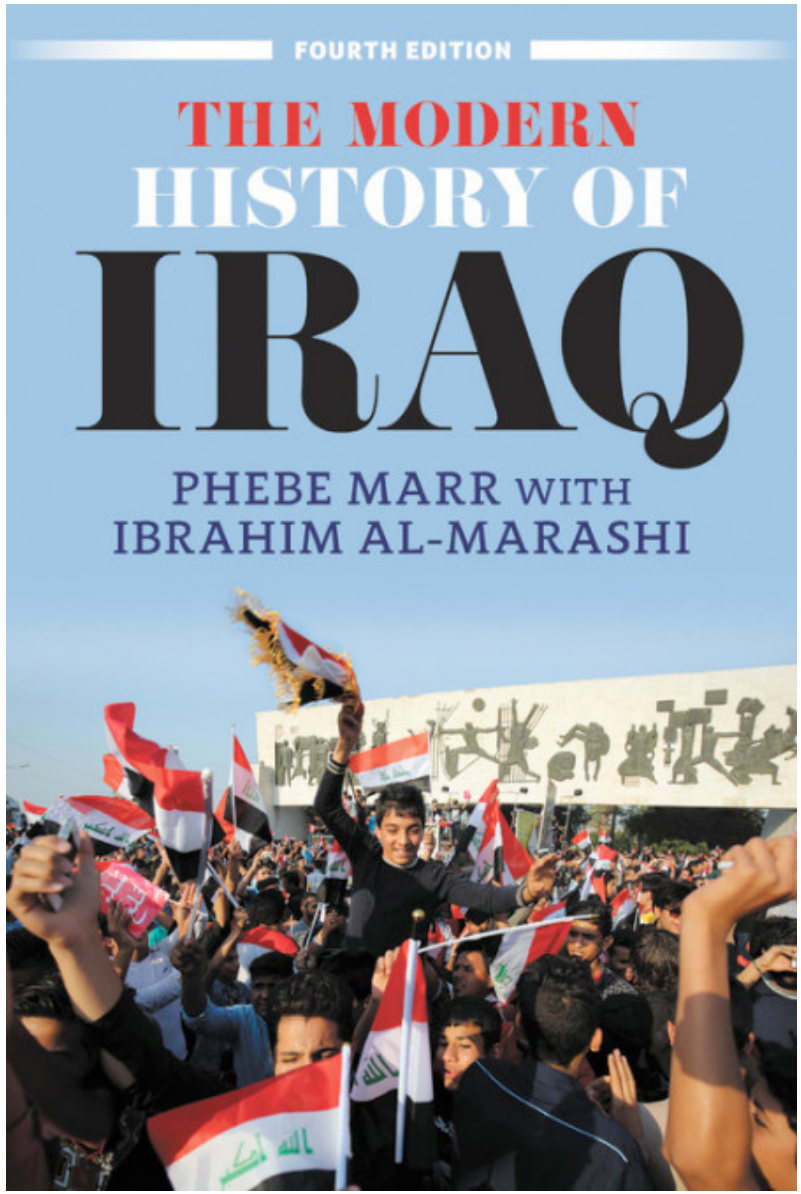

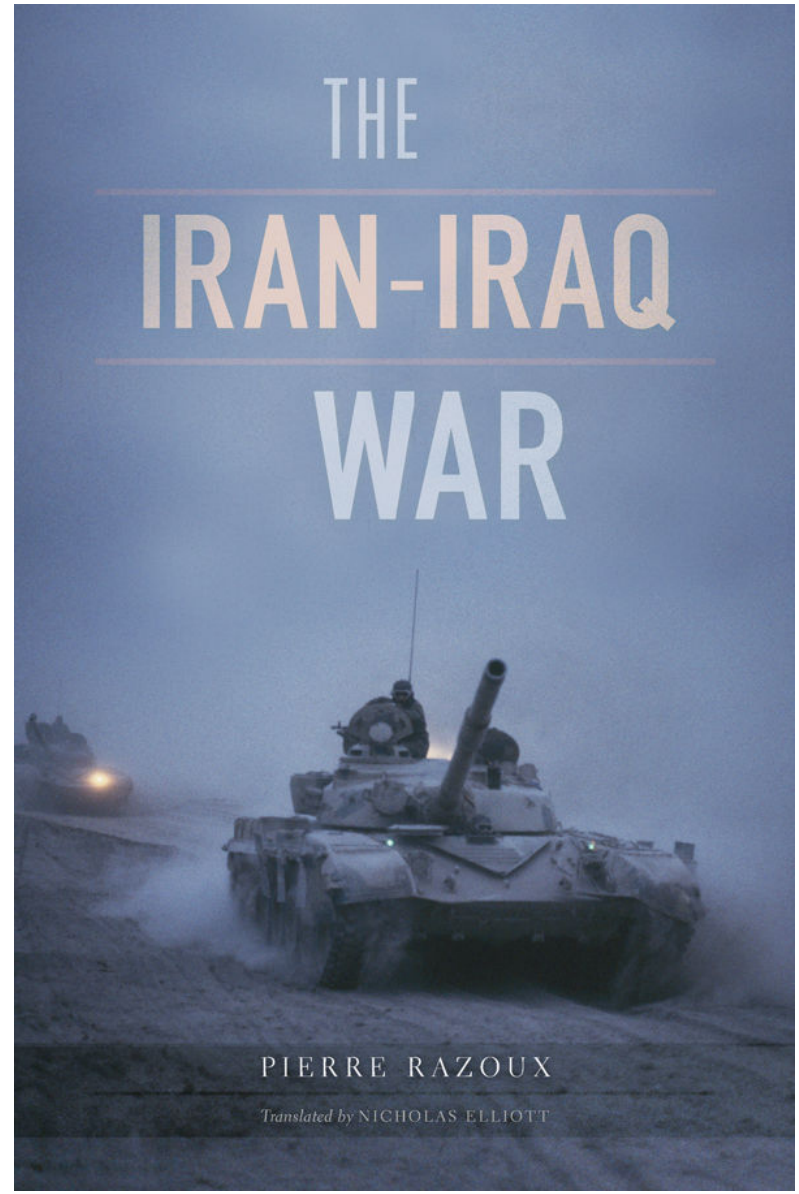

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