

A timeline of war

by Kaitlin Ugolik, March 5, 2008



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December 13, 2003 Iraq's deposed leader Saddam Hussein is captured by American troops.

March 20, 2003

The war against Iraq begins 5:30 a.m. Baghdad time, when the U.S. launches Operation Iraqi Freedom. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claims the initial phase of the war is mild compared to what is to come.

April 9, 2003

The fall of Baghdad: U.S. forces take control of the city, but sporadic fighting continues throughout

the capital.

April 14, 2003

Major fighting in Iraq is declared to be ceased by the Pentagon, after U.S. forces take control of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's birthplace, and the last city to exhibit strong Iraqi resistance. Saddam Hussein's whereabouts remain unknown.

What was initially expected to be a quick war is about to enter its sixth year on March 20, 2008. Here is a quick recap of the past five years the United States has been in Iraq. Next week The Pendulum takes a look at the Cost of War.

July 13, 2003

Iraq's interim governing council, composed of 25 Iraqis appointed by American and British officials, is inaugurated. The council has power to name ministers and will help draw up a new constitution for the country. But, the American administrator Paul Bremer retains ultimate authority.

December 13, 2003

Iraq's deposed leader Saddam Hussein is captured by American troops.

April 30, 2004

The appalling physical and sexual abuse and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad comes to light when photographs are released by the U.S. media.

June 16, 2004

The Sept. 11 Commission (formally the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks) concludes in its report that there is "no credible evidence that Iraq and al-Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States." The link between al-Qaeda and Iraq was used as one of the justifications for the war. President Bush disputes the report's conclusion the next day, insisting there was "a relationship" between the two.

Sep. 15, 2004

In a BBC interview, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says the war against Iraq was illegal and violated the UN Charter. The U.S., U.K. and Australia vigorously reject his conclusion.

January 12, 2005

The White House announces the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, one of the main justifications for the war, is officially over. No such weapons were found.

October 15, 2005

Millions of Iraqi voters head to the polls to vote on a constitution. To cast a vote, Iraqis dip their right index finger into purple ink, leaving many with proudly stained fingers.

April 22, 2006

Nuri al-Maliki of the Shiite Dawa party, is approved as prime minister, ending four months of political stalemate.

July 18, 2006

The UN announces that during June, an average of more than 100 civilians were killed in Iraq each day. During the first six months of the year, civilian deaths increased by 77 percent, reflecting the serious spike in sectarian violence in the country.

December 20, 2006

Americans formally give control of the troubled province to the Iraqi government. It is the first time since the war began that the U.S. relinquished control of a province.

December 30, 2006

Saddam Hussein is hanged. On Nov. 5, a court sentenced Saddam to death for the killing of 148 Shiites in Dujail in 1982. On Dec. 28, an Iraqi appellate court chief upheld the death sentence, and the execution was scheduled for two days later.

May 1, 2007

President Bush vetoes the \$124 billion spending bill passed in late April by Congress for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill called on the Bush administration to establish benchmarks for the Iraqi government that would set a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

September 10, 2007

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November 13, 2007

FBI investigators report that 14 of the 17 shootings of Iraqis on Sept. 16 by Blackwater guards were unjustified and the guards were reckless in their use of deadly force.