

## Operation Iraqi Freedom



The Iraq War, also known as the Occupation of Iraq, the Second Gulf War, or in the U.S., Operation Iraqi Freedom, is an ongoing conflict which began on March 20, 2003 with the United States-led invasion of Iraq.

The main rationale for the Iraq War offered by U.S President George W. Bush, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair, and their domestic and foreign supporters, was the belief that Iraq possessed and was actively developing weapons of mass destruction. Some officials from countries on the U.N. Security Council that opposed the war agreed. These weapons, it was argued, posed a threat to the United States, its allies and interests. In the 2003 State of the Union Address, Bush claimed that the U.S. could not wait until the threat from Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein became imminent. After the invasion, however, no evidence was found of any such weapons. Some U.S. officials cited claims of a connection between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. No evidence of any substantial al-Qaeda connection has been found.

The war began on March 20, 2003, when a largely British and American force supported by small contingents from Australia, Denmark, and Poland invaded Iraq. The invasion soon led to the defeat and flight of Saddam Hussein. The U.S.-led coalition occupied Iraq and attempted to establish a new democratic government; however it failed to restore order in Iraq. The unrest led to asymmetric warfare with the Iraqi insurgency civil war between many Sunni and Shia and Iraqis and al-Qaeda operations in Iraq. Coalition nations have begun to withdraw troops from Iraq as public opinion favoring troop withdrawal increases. The causes and consequences of the war remain controversial.