

COUNTRY ANALYSIS BRIEFS

Iraq

Last Updated: September 2010

Background

Iraq has begun to develop its oil and natural gas reserves after years of sanctions and wars, but will need to develop its infrastructure in order to reach its production potential.

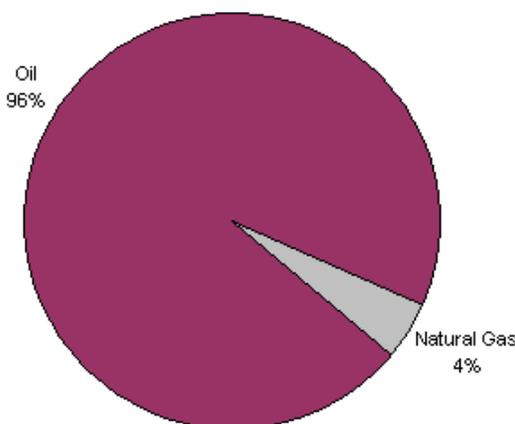
Iraq was the world's 12th largest oil producer in 2009, and has the world's fourth largest proven petroleum reserves after Saudi Arabia, Canada, and Iran. Just a fraction of Iraq's known fields are in development, and Iraq may be one of the few places left where vast reserves, proven and unknown, have barely been exploited. Iraq's energy sector is heavily based upon oil, with approximately 94 percent of its energy needs met with petroleum. In addition, crude oil export revenues accounted for over two-thirds of [GDP](#) in 2009.



Iraq's oil sector has suffered over the past several decades from sanctions and wars, and its oil infrastructure is in need of modernization and investment. As of June 30, 2010, the United States had allocated \$2.05 billion to the Iraqi oil and gas sector to begin this modernization, but ended its direct involvement as of the first quarter of 2008.

According to reports by various U.S. government agencies, multilateral institutions and other international organizations, long-term Iraq reconstruction costs could reach \$100 billion or higher. The proposed Hydrocarbons Law, which governs oil contracting and regulation, has been under review in the Council of Ministers since October 26, 2008, but has not received final passage.

Total Energy Consumption in Iraq, by Type (2007)



Source: EIA International Energy Statistics 2007

Oil

Iraq may be one of the few places left where vast oil reserves have been under-exploited.

Reserves

According to the Oil and Gas Journal, Iraq's proven oil reserves are 115 billion barrels, although these statistics have not been revised since 2001 and are largely based on 2-D seismic data from nearly three decades ago. Geologists and consultants have estimated that relatively unexplored territory in the western and southern deserts may contain an estimated additional 45 to 100 billion barrels (bbls) of recoverable oil. Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahrstani said that Iraq is re-evaluating its estimate of proven oil reserves, and expects to revise them upwards.

A major challenge to Iraq's development of the oil sector is that resources are not evenly divided across sectarian-demographic lines. Most known hydrocarbon resources are concentrated in the Shiite areas of the south and the ethnically Kurdish north, with few resources in control of the Sunni minority.

The majority of the known oil and gas reserves in Iraq form a belt that runs along the eastern edge of the country. Iraq has 9 fields that are considered "super giants" (over 5 billion bbls) as well as 22 known "giant" fields (over 1 billion bbls). According to independent consultants, the cluster of super-giant fields of southeastern Iraq forms the largest known concentration of such fields in the world and accounts for 70 to 80 percent of the country's proven oil reserves. An estimated 20 percent of oil reserves are in the north of Iraq, near Kirkuk, Mosul and Khanaqin. Control over rights to reserves is a source of controversy between the ethnic Kurds and other groups in the area.

Distribution of Oil Reserves				
Operating Area	Fields	Reserves (billion bbl)	2010 Production (1,000 bbl/d)	Potential Production (1,000 bbl/d)
KRG	6	2	15	375
North Oil Company	32	21	770	1,300
Midlands Oil Company	27	13	10	680
Missan Oil Company	10	8	110	820
South Oil Company	25	69	1,455	10,050
Total	100	113	2,360	13,225

Source: Iraq Ministry of Oil

Production

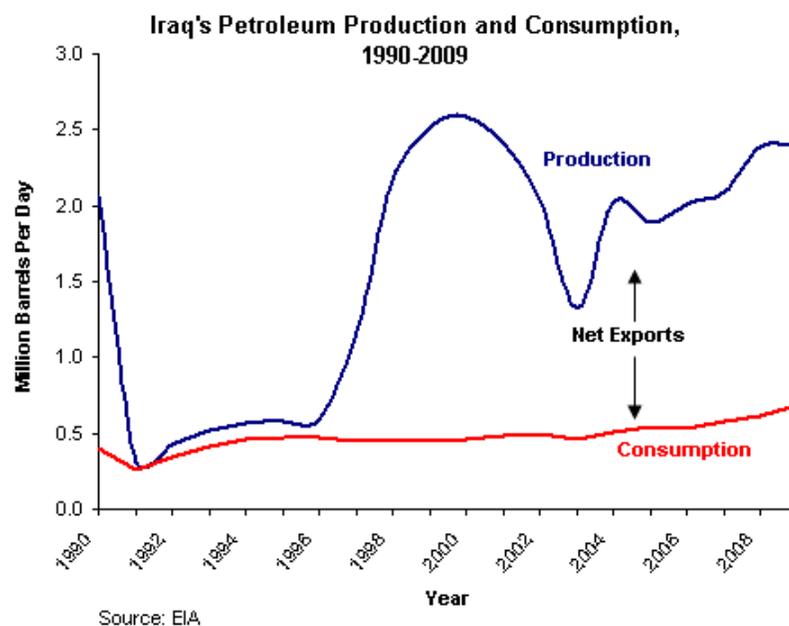
In 2009, Iraq's crude oil production averaged 2.4 million barrels per day (bbl/d), about the same as 2008 levels, and below its pre-war production capacity level of 2.8 million bbl/d in 2003. About two-thirds of production comes from the southern fields, with the remainder from the north-central fields near Kirkuk. At present, the majority of Iraqi oil production comes from just three giant fields: North and South Rumaila in southern Iraq, and Kirkuk.

Currently, the Ministry of Oil has central control over oil and gas production and development in all but the Kurdish territory through its three operating entities, the North Oil Company (NOC), the South Oil Company (SOC), and the Missan Oil Company (MOC), which was split off from the South Oil Company in 2008. According to the NOC's website, their concession and jurisdiction extends from the Turkish borders in the north to 32.5 degrees latitude (about 100 miles south of Baghdad), and from Iranian borders in the east to Syrian and Jordanian borders in the west. The company's geographical operation area spans the following governorates: Tamim (Kirkuk), Nineveh, Irbil, Baghdad, Diyala and part of Babil to Hilla and Wasit to Kut. The remainder falls

under the jurisdiction of the SOC and MOC, and though smaller in geographical size, includes the majority of proven reserves. MOC's oil fields hold an estimated 30 billion barrels of reserves. They include Amara, Halfaya, Huwaiza, Noor, Riffae, Dijaila, Kumait and East Rafidain.

Kurdistan Regional Government Issues

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the official ruling body of a federated region in northern Iraq that is predominantly Kurdish, passed its own hydrocarbons law in 2007. Despite the lack of a national Iraqi law governing investment in hydrocarbons, KRG has signed oil production sharing, development and exploration contracts with several foreign firms, and began exporting its own oil briefly. Norway's DNO and Sinopec/Addax are currently producing, and volumes could be ramped up to 100,000 bbl/d and reach 200,000 bbl/d within a year, according to the KRG natural resources ministry. The KRG ceased oil exports after four months in 2009, but its intention to resume exports has been a source of contention with the national government. The Iraqi Oil Ministry has been adamant that oil produced in the KRG will have to be shipped via SOMO, Iraq's oil exporting arm.



Development Plans

Iraq has begun an ambitious development program to develop its oil fields and to increase its oil production. Passage of the proposed Hydrocarbons Law, which would provide a legal framework for investment in the hydrocarbon sector, remains a main policy objective. Despite the absence of the Hydrocarbons Law, the Iraqi Ministry of Oil signed 12 long-term contracts between November 2008 and May 2010 with international oil companies to develop 14 oil fields. Under the first phase, companies bid to further develop 6 giant oil fields that were already producing with proven oil reserves of over 43 billion barrels. Phase two contracts were signed to develop oil fields that were already explored but not fully developed or producing commercially. Together, these contracts cover oil fields with proven reserves of over 60 billion barrels, or more than half of Iraq's current proven oil reserves.

As a result of these contract awards, Iraq expects to boost production by 200,000 bbl/d by the end of 2010, and to increase production capacity by an additional 400,000 bbl/d by the end of 2011. When these fields are fully developed, they will increase total Iraqi production capacity to almost 12 million bbl/d, or 9.6 million bbl/d above current production levels. The contracts call for Iraq to reach this production target by 2017.

Infrastructure Constraints

Iraq faces many challenges in meeting this timetable. One of the most significant is the lack of an outlet for significant increases in crude oil production. Both Iraqi refining and export infrastructure are currently bottlenecks, and need to be upgraded to process much more crude oil. [Iraqi oil exports](#) are currently running at near full capacity in the south, while export capacity in the north has been restricted by sabotage, and would need to be expanded in any case to export significantly higher volumes.

Production increases of the scale planned will also require substantial increases in natural gas and/or water injection to maintain oil reservoir pressure and boost oil production. Iraq has associated gas that could be used, but it is currently being flared. Another option is to use water for re-injection, and locally available water is currently being used in the south of Iraq. However, fresh water is an important commodity in the Middle East, and large amounts of seawater will likely have to be pumped in via pipelines that have yet to be built. ExxonMobil has coordinated initial studies at water injection plans for many of the fields under development. According to their estimate, 10 -15 million bbl/d of seawater could be necessary for Iraq's expansion plans, at a cost of over \$10 billion.

Furthermore, Iraq's oil and gas industry is the largest industrial customer of electricity, with over 10 percent of total demand. Large-scale increases in oil production would also require large increases in power generation. However, Iraq has struggled to keep up with the demand for power, with shortages common across Iraq. Significant upgrades to the electricity sector would be needed to supply additional power.

Iraq also plans to sign delineation agreements on shared oil fields with Kuwait and Iran. Iraq would like to set up joint committees with its neighbors on how to share the oil.

Results of Oil Field Bidding Rounds					
First Bidding Round (brownfields)	Operators	2009 Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Incr. 1,000 bbl/d	Reserves (billion bbl)
Rumaila	BP, CNPC, SOMO	1,000	2,850	1,850	17.8
West Qurna, Phase I	ExxonMobil, Shell, NOC	270	2,325	2,055	8.6
Zubair	Eni, Occidental, Kogas, Misan Oil	205	1,200	995	4.0
First Round Total (billion barrels)		1,475	6,375	4,900	30
Second Bidding Round (greenfields)					
West Qurna, Phase II	LUKOil, Statoil, Oil Exploration CO.	0	1,800	1,800	12.9
Majnoon	Shell, Petronas, Misan Oil	55	1,800	1,745	12.6
Halfaya	CNPC, Petronas, Total, South Oil	3	535	532	4.1
Gharaff	Petronas, JAPEX, North Oil	0	230	230	0.8
Badra	Gazprom, KOGAS, Petronas, TPAO, Midlands	0	170	170	0.1
Qayarah	Sonangol, Nineveh	2	120	118	0.9
Najmah	Sonangol, Nineveh	0	110	110	0.9
Second Round Total (billion barrels)		60	4,765	4,705	32
Totals - Rounds 1 & 2		1,535	11,140	9605.0	62.7

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

Refining

Estimates of Iraqi nameplate refining capacity vary, from 637,500 bbl/d according to the *Oil and Gas Journal* to 790,000 bbl/d according to the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction. Iraqi refineries have antiquated infrastructure and only half run at utilization rates of 50 percent or more. Despite improvements in recent years, the sector has not been able to meet domestic demand of about 600,000 bbl/d, and the refineries produce too much heavy fuel oil and not enough other refined products. As a result, Iraq relies on imports for 30 percent of its gasoline and 17 percent of its LPG.

Existing Refineries in Iraq			
Refinery	Location	Capacity (bbl/d)	Notes
Baiji	North-Central Iraq	310,000	Improvements in operational issues
Basrah	Near Basrah	150,000	Considering adding 70,000 bbl/d distillation tower
Daura	Baghdad	110,000	Considering adding 70,000 bbl/d distillation tower
Erbil	Erbil	40,000	
K-3 Haditha, Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Muftiah, Najaf, Nassiriyah-Samawah, Qaiyarah-Mosul	Scattered	< 20,000 each	Topping plants making low-grade diesel and kerosene

Source: *Oil and Gas Journal*, Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

To alleviate product shortages, Iraq's 10-year strategic plan for 2008-2017 set a goal of increasing refining capacity to 1.5 million bbl/d, and is seeking \$20 billion in investments to achieve this target. Iraq has plans for 4 new refineries, as well as plans for expanding the existing Daura and Basrah refineries.

Planned New Refineries in Iraq			
Refinery	Capacity (bbl/d)	Investment	Front end engineering and design contract
Nassiriyah	300,000	\$8 billion	Foster Wheeler
Kirkuk	150,000	\$5 billion	Shaw Group
Misan	150,000	\$5 billion	Shaw Group
Kerbala	140,000	\$5 billion	Technip
Total	740,000		

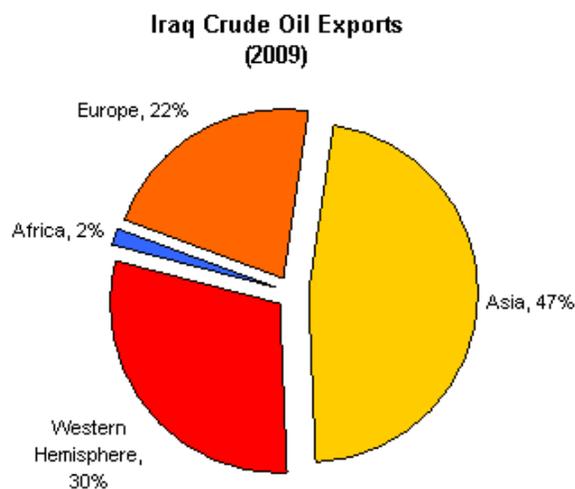
Source: Middle East Economic Survey

Oil Exports

Total effective export capacity is 2.5 million bbl/d, far lower than installed capacity because of disruptions, lack of maintenance, and because some facilities have been closed for years and are unlikely to be re-opened.

Exports

Iraq exported 1.8 million bbl/d of crude oil in 2009. About 1.5 million bbl/d of this came from Iraq's Persian Gulf ports, with the rest exported via the Iraq-Turkey pipeline in the north. The majority of Iraqi oil exports go to refineries in Asia, especially China, India, and South Korea.



Source: EIA, APEX, Global Trade Atlas

Export Pipelines

To the North: Iraq has one major crude oil export pipeline, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan (Iraq-Turkey) pipeline, which transports oil from the north of Iraq to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. This pipeline has been subject to repeated disruptions this decade, limiting exports from the northern fields. Iraq signed an agreement with Turkey to extend the operation of the 1.6 million bbl/d pipeline, as well as to upgrade its capacity by 1 million bbl/d.

In order for this pipeline to reach its design capacity, Iraq would need to receive oil from the south via the Strategic Pipeline, which was designed to allow flows of crude oil from the south of Iraq to go north via Turkey, and vice-versa. Iraq has proposed building a new strategic line from Basra to the northern city of Kirkuk, with the line consisting of two additional crude oil pipelines.

To the West: The Iraq-Syria-Lebanon Pipeline has been closed and the Iraqi portion reported unusable since the 2003 war in Iraq. Discussions were held between Iraqi and Syrian government officials to re-open the pipeline, which had a design capacity of 700,000 bbl/d, although actual volumes never reached this level. The Russian company Stroytransgaz accepted an offer to fix the pipeline in December 2007, but no follow-up was made. Iraq and Syria have discussed building several new pipelines, including a 1.5 million bbl/d pipeline carrying heavy crude oil, and a 1.25 million bbl/d pipeline for carrying light crudes.

To the South: The 1.65 million bbl/d Iraq Pipeline to Saudi Arabia (IPSA) has been closed since 1991 following the Persian Gulf War. There are no plans to reopen this line.

Iraq has also held discussions to build a crude oil pipeline from Haditha to Jordan's port of Aqaba.

Ports

The Basra Oil Terminal (formerly Mina al-Bakr) on the Persian Gulf has an effective capacity to load 1.3 million bbl/d and support Very Large Crude Carriers. In February 2009, the South Oil Company commissioned Foster Wheeler to carry out the basic engineering design to rehabilitate and expand capacity of the terminal by building four single point mooring systems with a capacity of 800,000 bbl/d each. According to former Minister of Oil Issam al-Chalabi, it would take at least until 2013 to complete the project if financing is found.

There are five smaller ports on the Persian Gulf, all functioning at less than full capacity, including the Khor al-Amaya terminal.

Overland Export Routes

Overland routes are used to export limited amounts of crude from small fields bordering Syria. In addition, Iraq has resumed shipping oil to Jordan's Zarqa refinery by road tankers at a rate of 10,000 bbl/d.

Oil Infrastructure				
Ports	Upgrades	Status	Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)	Effective Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)
Basra	developing plans to add at least 3.2 million bbl/d	operational	1,600	1,300
Khor al-Amaya		operational	700	200
Export Pipelines	Route	Status	Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)	Effective Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)
IPSA	Iraq-Saudi Arabia	closed	1,650	0
Iraq-Turkey	Kirkuk-Ceyhan	operational	1,600	1,000
Heavy Oil via Turkey	Majnoon-Turkey	proposed	1,500	0
Iraq-Syria	Haditha -Syria	proposed	1,250	0
Iraq-Turkey	Haditha-1T1A depot-Turkey	proposed	1,000	0
Iraq-Syria-Lebanon	Kirkuk-Banias-Tripoli	closed	700	0
Iraq-Jordan	Haditha-Aqaba	proposed	500	0
Internal Pipelines	Route	Status	Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)	Effective Capacity (Thousand bbl/d)
Strategic	Haditha-Rumaila-Basra	limited usage	800	200

Source: *Arab Oil and Gas Directory, Middle East Economic Survey*

Natural Gas

Reserves

According to the Oil and Gas Journal, Iraq's proven natural gas reserves are 112 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), the tenth largest in the world. An estimated 70 percent of these lie in Basra governorate (province) in the south of Iraq. Probable Iraqi reserves have been estimated at 275-300 Tcf, and work is currently underway by several IOCs and independents to accurately update hydrocarbon reserve numbers. Two-thirds of Iraq's natural gas resources are associated with oil fields including, Kirkuk, as well as the southern Nahr (Bin) Umar, Majnoon,

Iraq's natural gas sector is believed to contain significant untapped resources which the Government of Iraq would like to develop

for domestic consumption and export.

Halfaya, Nassiriya, the Rumaila fields, West Qurna, and Zubair. Just under 20 percent of known gas reserves are non-associated; around 10 percent is salt "dome" gas. The majority of non-associated reserves are concentrated in several fields in the North including: Ajil, Bai Hassan, Jambur, Chemchemical, Kor Mor, Khashem al-Ahmar, and al-Mansuriyah.

Production

Iraqi natural gas production rose from 81 billion cubic feet (Bcf) in 2003 to 522 Bcf in 2008. Some is used as fuel for power generation, and some is re-injected to enhance oil recovery. Over 40 percent of the production in 2008 was flared due to a lack of sufficient infrastructure to utilize it for consumption and export, although Royal Dutch Shell estimated that flaring losses were even greater at 1 Bcf per day. As a result, Iraq's five natural gas processing plants, which can process over 773 billion cubic feet per year, sit mostly idle.

To reduce flaring, Iraq has been working on an agreement with Royal Dutch Shell to implement a 25-year project to capture flared gas and provide it for domestic use. Iraq's cabinet gave preliminary approval for the \$17 billion deal covering development of 25 – 30 Tcf of associated natural gas reserves in Basra province through a new joint venture, Basra Gas Company. The agreement, which originally was to cover all of Basra province, has been modified to include only the associated gas from the Rumaila, Zubair, and West Qurna Phase I projects. Implementation of this agreement is necessary for the new oil development projects to go forward.

Upstream Development

Iraq has planned an upstream bidding round in late 2010 for three non-associated natural gas fields with combined reserves of over 7.5 Tcf. This will be the third hydrocarbon bidding round conducted by Iraq, following two earlier rounds that were held to develop Iraq's oil fields. All of the companies that prequalified to bid in the two earlier rounds will be invited. Iraq has committed to purchasing 100 percent of the gas.

Third Bid Round - Natural Gas Fields	
Fields	Reserves (trillion cubic feet)
al-Mansuriyah	3.0
Akkas	4.5
Sibba	0.1
Third Round Total	7.6

Source: Middle East Economic Survey

Export Plans

Plans to export natural gas remain controversial due to the amount of idle and sub-optimally-fired electricity generation capacity in Iraq - much a result of a lack of adequate gas feedstock. Prior to the 1990-1991 Gulf War, Iraq exported natural gas to Kuwait. The gas came from Rumaila through a 105-mile, 400-MMcf/d pipeline to Kuwait's central processing center at Ahmadi. In 2007, the Ministry of Oil announced an agreement to fund a feasibility study on the revival of the mothballed pipeline.

Iraq has eyed northern export routes such as the proposed Nabucco pipeline through Turkey to Europe, and in July 2009 Prime Minister Nouri al-Malikie suggested that Iraq could be exporting 530 Bcf per year to Europe by 2015. A second option is the Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP) project. The proposed AGP pipeline would deliver gas from Iraq's Akkas field to Syria and then on to Lebanon and the Turkish border sometime in 2010, and then on to Europe. Other proposals have included building LNG exporting facilities in the Basra region.

Profile**Energy Overview**

Proven Oil Reserves (January 1, 2010E)	115 billion barrels
Oil Production (2009)	2.4 million barrels per day, of which 2.4 million barrels per day was crude oil.
Oil Consumption (2009E)	0.7 million barrels per day
Crude Oil Distillation Capacity (2009)	0.6 million barrels per day
Proven Natural Gas Reserves (January 1, 2010E)	112 trillion cubic feet
Natural Gas Production (2008E)	66 billion cubic feet

Natural Gas Consumption (2008E)	66 billion cubic feet
Recoverable Coal Reserves (2008E)	0
Coal Production (2008E)	0
Coal Consumption (2008E)	0
Electricity Installed Capacity (2007E)	8.5 gigawatts
Electricity Production (2007E)	31 billion kilowatt hours
Electricity Consumption (2007E)	30 billion kilowatt hours
Total Energy Consumption (2007)	1.2 quadrillion Btus*, of which Natural Gas (4%), Oil (96%), Hydroelectricity (<1%), Coal (0%)
Total Per Capita Energy Consumption (2007)	45.0 million Btus
Energy Intensity (2007)	14,030 Btu per \$2005-PPP**

Environmental Overview

Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2008)	101 million metric tons, almost all of which are from oil
Per-Capita, Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2008)	3.6 metric tons
Carbon Dioxide Intensity (2008)	1.0 Metric tons per thousand \$2005-PPP**

Oil and Gas Industry

Organization	National hydrocarbons draft law currently in negotiation; will set governance of sector. The North Oil Company (NOC), South Oil Company (SOC), and the Missan Oil Company (MOC) are the three main upstream oil companies, with the North Gas Company (NGC), the South Gas Company (SGC), and the recently formed Basra Gas Company the equivalents on the natural gas side.
Major Oil/Gas Ports	Al-Basra, Khor al-Amaya, Khor az- Zubair, Um Qasr, Abu Fulus
Major Oil Fields	Rumaila, Majnoon, West Qurna, Kirkuk, Zubair, Halfaya, Missan, Bai Hassan
Major Natural Gas Fields	Mansouriya, Akkaz
Major Refineries (capacity, bbl/d)	Baiji (310,000), Basrah (150,000), Daura (110,000), Erbil (40,000)

* The total energy consumption statistic includes petroleum, dry natural gas, coal, net hydro, nuclear, geothermal, solar, wind, wood and waste electric power.

**GDP figures from Global Insight estimates based on purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates.

Links

EIA Links

- [EIA – Iraq Country Energy Profile](#)
- [EIA – OPEC Revenues Fact Sheet](#)

U.S. Government

- [CIA World Factbook - Iraq](#)
- [Library of Congress Country Study on Iraq \(1998\)](#)
- [Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction](#)
- [U.S. Aid for International Development – Iraq \(USAID\)](#)
- [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Gulf Regional Division](#)
- [U.S. Commercial Service – Iraq](#)
- [U.S. Department of Commerce Iraq Reconstruction](#)
- [U.S. Government Accountability Office: Iraq Reconstruction](#)
- [U.S. Embassy in Baghdad](#)
- [U.S. State Department Iraq Status Report](#)
- [U.S. State Department's Background Note- Iraq](#)
- [U.S. State Department Consular Information Sheet – Iraq](#)
- [U.S State Department Travel Information Sheet – Iraq](#)

Other Links

[AcademicInfo – US Government Resources on Iraq](#)
[BBC: Iraq Country Profile](#)
[BBC: The Struggle for Iraq \(News, Special Report\)](#)
[The Economist: Iraq](#)
[Government of Iraq](#)
[IMF Country Information Page – Iraq](#)
[Information on Iraq from ArabNet](#)
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