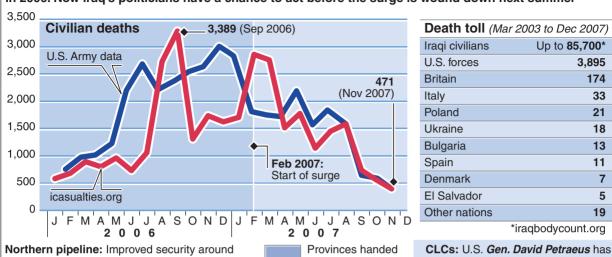
## 2008 seen as crucial year for Iraq

The U.S. surge of some 30,000 troops has been credited with dramatically reducing sectarian violence. with civilian deaths reported to be down to below 500 a month across Iraq from a high of almost 3,400 in 2006. Now Irag's politicians have a chance to act before the surge is wound down next summer



Death toll (Mar 2003 to Dec 2007) Iraqi civilians Up to 85.700\* U.S. forces 3,895 Britain 174 33 Poland 21 Ukraine 18 13 Bulgaria 11 7 Denmark FI Salvador 5 Other nations 19 \*iragbodycount.org

Irag-Turkey pipeline has boosted oil exports to near 2 million barrels per day \_ Muqtada al-Sadr: Shia

Qaim: Syrian

border crossing

back to Iraqi control TURKEY

Dohuk

0

Arbil

armed 80.000 Sunni militia members -Concerned Local Citizens - in north and west of Baghdad to help fight Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). CLC members are paid \$300 a month by U.S. Army to patrol their Sulaimaniyah neighbourhoods



cleric has shunned

government but controls

militias on streets. His

reopened. Number Mosul of foreign fighters Kirkuk: Sectarian violence entering Iraq has continues between Kurds fallen by half to and Sunni Arabs about 60 a month Diyala: Bloodiest province Balad where U.S. is fighting AQI Falluia **Baghdad:** 12 hours electricity a day

Najaf



**JORDAN** 

Naiaf: Rapidly becoming centre of political, religious and economic power in oil-rich south. U.S. army has refurbished Sadr Hospital, making it best-equipped medical centre in Iraq. Massive expansion

SAUDI

Karbala

Karbala

of golden-domed Imam Ali shrine funded by Iran

ARABIA

160km

100 miles

Muthanna



Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani: Most influential figure in Iraq. Kurdish, Sunni and Shia political leaders regularly travel to Najaf to discuss their plans with

him before making them public Pictures: Associated Press, Getty Images

**KUWAIT** 

0

Maysan

Amara

Dhi Qar

Basra

Basra

Persian

Gulf

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki: His Shia Dawa Party is accused of failing to reach out effectively to Sunnis. Hostile to CLCs, fearing they may later turn their guns against Shia government

© GRAPHIC NEWS