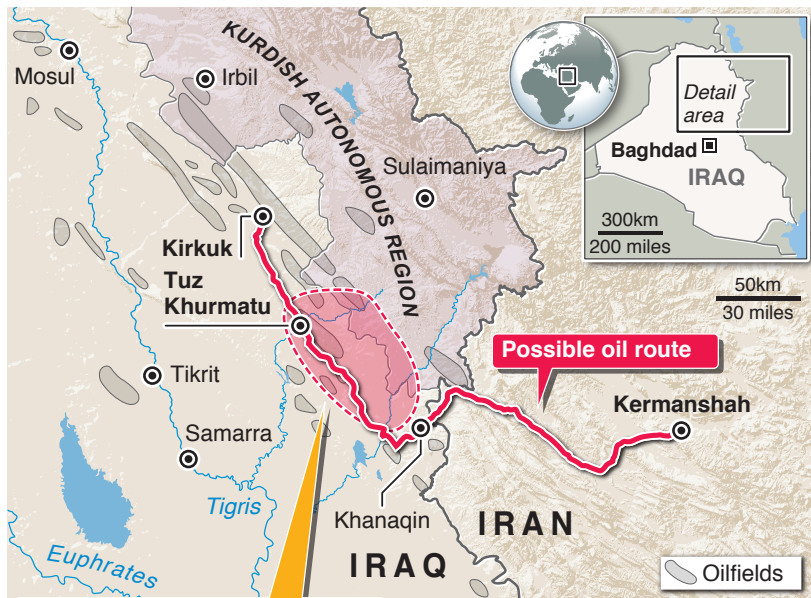


Iraqi army to secure oil route to Iran

Iraqi forces, backed by the U.S.-led coalition, have launched a major operation to clear militants from a planned route that could be used to transport crude from Kirkuk's lucrative oil fields to Iran



Feb 7: Iraqi security forces (ISF), supported by Iran-backed Popular Mobilization Units (PMF), Iraqi army and federal police, launch attack in Tuz Khurmatu district against White Flags group



White Flags:
Comprises remnants of Islamic State and Kurdish fighters displaced when ISF and PMF took over areas around Kirkuk and Tuz Khurmatu in October



With Iraq unwilling to use Kurdistan Regional Government's oil infrastructure, Baghdad has agreed to swap up to 60,000 barrels per day of crude from Kirkuk for refined Iranian oil