

“Shock and awe” – U.S.-led Iraq War



■ **Mar 20, 2003: Invasion launched.** U.S. President **George W. Bush** (above top) and British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** (above) base invasion on flawed claims that **Saddam Hussein** (below) has weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)



■ **Apr 9:** American troops storm Baghdad and topple Saddam

■ **Dec:** Forces capture Saddam near Tikrit

■ **Apr 2004:** Accounts of abuse and torture by U.S. military and CIA of prisoners held in **Abu Ghraib** prison in Baghdad spark international outrage

■ **Apr-Aug 2004:** Clashes emerge between U.S.-led coalition forces and followers of Shiite cleric **Muqtada al-Sadr** (below), who demands that foreign troops leave Iraq



■ **Oct:** U.S. arms inspector **David Kay** (above) reports no WMDs exist in Iraq. **Conclusion undermines justification for invasion**

■ **Jan 2005:** Shiite and Kurdish parties take most seats in new parliament, Sunnis boycott election

■ **May 2006:** Shiite politician **Nouri al-Maliki** elected as Prime Minister

■ **Dec 30:** Saddam is executed by hanging



■ **Jan 2007:** President Bush orders surge of 30,000 U.S. troops – peaking at 170,300

■ **Apr 2008:** Poll by **Pew Research Center** shows 57 percent of Americans believe decision to invade was wrong

■ **Nov:** **Barack Obama** wins U.S. presidential election on pledge to withdraw troops



■ **Jan 2009:** President Bush presents Blair with **Presidential Medal of Freedom** – highest honour awarded to civilians

■ **Jul:** **Iraq Inquiry**, led by **Sir John Chilcot**, examines UK's role in war

■ **Dec 2010:** Al-Maliki – supported by al-Sadr – wins second term as prime minister

■ **Dec 2011:** U.S. troops leave Iraq, handing over responsibility for internal security to Iraqi Army and police



■ **2014:** Rise of **Islamic State (IS)** from **Al Qaeda** affiliates. IS battles to form caliphates based in Syria. IS takes over **Mosul, Fallujah, Tikrit** and **Ramadi**. U.S. troops return at invitation of Baghdad government



■ **Jun:** At least 670 mainly Shiite inmates at **Badush Central Prison** massacred by IS

■ **Jul 2016:** Long-awaited official report into UK's role calls for former Prime Minister to be held accountable. **Blair committed to join U.S.-led invasion in memo dated Jul 28, 2002**

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■ **2019-2020:** Battle against IS mostly ends. Anti-government protests mount against rampant corruption

■ **Jan 2020:** U.S. President **Donald Trump** orders drone strike near Baghdad airport to assassinate General **Qassim Soleimani** – head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps **Quds Force**

■ **Oct 2022:** Parliament chooses Kurdish leader **Abdul Latif Rashid** as president. Shiite prime minister **Mohammed Shia al-Sudani** pledges to fight corruption and improve living standards

■ **Mar 2023:** About 2,500 U.S. troops remain scattered around country, mainly in Baghdad, Irbil and Al Tanf