



For Immediate Release  
December 7, 2005

## Fact Sheet: Rebuilding Iraq

 [National Strategy for Victory in Iraq](#)

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### Today's Presidential Action:

**To Defeat The Enemy, The United States Is Helping Iraqis Rebuild.** Over the course of this war, the Coalition has learned that winning the battle for Iraqi cities is only a first step. The Coalition has adjusted to win the "battle after the battle" by helping Iraqis consolidate their gains and keep the terrorists from returning.

- **Iraqi Forces Are Securing Cities, Allowing For Targeted Reconstruction.** As steady training produces more capable Iraqi Security Forces, those forces have been able to better hold onto the cities Iraqi and Coalition forces cleared together. With help from Coalition military and civilian personnel, the Iraqi government can then work with local leaders and residents to begin reconstruction - with Iraqis leading the building efforts and the Coalition playing a supporting role. This approach is working in cities like Najaf and Mosul.
- **Iraqi And Coalition Forces Have Cleared And Are Holding The City Of Najaf.** Ninety miles south of Baghdad, Najaf is home to one of Shia Islam's holiest places - the Imam Ali Shrine. As a predominantly Shia city, Najaf suffered greatly during Saddam's regime. About a year after U. S. troops liberated the city, it fell under the sway of a radical and violent militia. Fighting damaged homes and businesses, and the local economy collapsed as visitors and pilgrims stopped coming to the shrine out of fear for their lives. In the summer of 2004, the Iraqi government and Coalition decided to retake control of the city. Iraqi and Coalition forces rooted out the militia in tough, urban fighting. Together with the Iraqi government and the Shia clerical community, we forced the militia to abandon the shrine and return it to legitimate Iraqi authority. The militia committed to disarm and leave Najaf.
  - **As Soon As The Fighting In Najaf Ended, Targeted Reconstruction Moved Forward.** The Iraqi government played an active role, and so did our military commanders, diplomats, and workers from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Together, they worked with Najaf's governor and other local officials to rebuild the local police force, repair residents' homes, refurbish schools, restore water and other essential services, and reopen a soccer stadium. Fifteen months later, new businesses and markets have opened in some of Najaf's poorest areas, religious pilgrims are visiting the city again, and construction jobs are putting local residents back

to work. One of the largest projects was the rebuilding of the Najaf Teaching Hospital, which had been looted and turned into a military fortress by the militia. Thanks to efforts by Iraqi doctors and local leaders, with the help of American personnel, the hospital is now open and capable of serving hundreds of patients each day.

- **Najaf Has Made Tremendous Progress.** Najaf is now in the hands of elected government officials. An elected provincial council is at work drafting plans to bring more tourism and commerce to the city. Political life has returned, and campaigns for the upcoming elections have begun, with different parties competing for votes. The Iraqi police are now responsible for day-to-day security. An Iraqi battalion has assumed control of the former American military base, and American forces are now about 40 minutes outside the city. There is still plenty of work to be done. Sustaining electric power remains a major challenge, and construction has begun on three new substations to help boost capacity. To address a clean water shortage, new water treatment and sewage units are being installed. Security has improved dramatically, but threats remain. Local leaders and Iraqi Security Forces are working to resolve these problems - and Americans are helping.
- **Iraqi And American Forces Have Cleared And Are Holding The City Of Mosul.** Mosul is one of Iraq's largest cities and home to a diverse population of Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and other ethnic groups. It was here that American troops brought justice to Saddam's sons in the summer of 2003. Mosul was relatively quiet in the months after liberation, and American forces began to redeploy elsewhere in the country. Then, the enemy infiltrated the city, and by late last year, they had gained control of much of Mosul. American and Iraqi forces responded with a series of coordinated strikes on the most dangerous parts of the city and killed, captured, and cleared out many of the terrorists and Saddamists. Over time, the Iraqi police and legitimate political leaders regained control. As Iraqis have grown in strength and ability, they have taken more responsibility for the city's security, and Coalition forces have moved into a supporting role.
  - **After The Security Situation Improved, Reconstruction Accelerated.** Local Iraqi leaders, with Coalition support, upgraded key roads and bridges over the Tigris River, rebuilt schools and hospitals, and started refurbishing the Mosul Airport. Police stations and firehouses were rebuilt, and Iraqis have made major improvements in the city's water and sewage network. But real challenges still remain. Because the city is not receiving enough electricity, Iraqis have a major new project underway to expand the Mosul power substation. Terrorist intimidation is still a concern, but turnout for the October referendum was over 50 percent in the province where Mosul is located - more than triple the turnout in the January election.
- **With Progress, Serious Challenges Are Being Addressed.** Corruption exists at both the national and local levels of the Iraqi government. Fraud will not be tolerated, so the American Embassy in Baghdad is helping to demand transparency and accountability for the money being invested in reconstruction. Another problem is the infiltration of militia groups into the Iraqi Security Forces - especially the Iraqi police. We are helping Iraqis deal with this problem by embedding Coalition transition teams in Iraqi units to mentor police and soldiers. In a free Iraq,

former militia members must shift their loyalty to the national government and learn to operate under the rule of law.

**The United States Is Working With Iraq's Leaders To Build A Sound Economy That Will Deliver A Better Life For Iraqis.** Iraq is a nation with the potential for tremendous prosperity. The country has a young and educated workforce, abundant land and water, and among the largest oil resources in the world. Yet for decades, Saddam Hussein used Iraq's wealth to enrich himself and a privileged few and neglected the country's infrastructure and economy. The Coalition is helping the new Iraqi government reverse decades of economic destruction, reinvigorate its economy, and make responsible reforms. With Coalition help, the Iraqis are rebuilding infrastructure and establishing the institutions of a market economy. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. A free Iraq will be built by the free people of Iraq - and the United States is proud to help.

- **Reconstruction Efforts Are Focused On Local Projects That Deliver Rapid And Noticeable Improvements.** The Coalition's approach to helping Iraqis rebuild has changed and improved with time. When the reconstruction process was first begun in the spring of 2003, the focus was on building large-scale infrastructure - such as electrical plants and water treatment facilities. This approach was not meeting the priorities of the Iraqi people. In many places, the most urgent needs were smaller, localized projects like sewer lines and city roads. In consultation with the Iraqi government, resources started to be used to fund smaller, local projects that could deliver rapid, noticeable improvements. American military commanders were given more money for flexible use, and the Coalition worked with Iraqi leaders to provide more contracts to Iraqi firms. By adapting reconstruction efforts, the United States is now better able to help Iraqi leaders serve their people.
- **Together, Iraqis And Americans Are Making Progress.** Reconstruction has not always gone as well as hoped - primarily because of the security challenges. Rebuilding a nation devastated by a dictator is a large undertaking - even harder when terrorists attempt to destroy gains. Yet, in the space of two and a half years, the United States has helped Iraqis conduct nearly 3,000 renovation projects at schools, train more than 30,000 teachers, distribute more than 8 million textbooks, rebuild irrigation infrastructure to help more than 400,000 rural Iraqis, and improve drinking water for more than 3 million people. The Coalition has helped Iraqis introduce a new currency, reopen their stock exchange, and extend \$21 million in micro-credit and small business loans. As a result of these efforts and Iraq's newfound freedom, more than 30,000 new Iraqi businesses have registered since liberation, and according to a recent survey, more than three-quarters of Iraqi business owners anticipate growth in the economy over the next two years. This economic development and growth will be key to addressing the high unemployment rate across many parts of the country. In addition, Iraqis have negotiated significant debt relief and completed an economic report card with the International Monetary Fund - a signal that Iraqis are serious about reform.

## Victory In Iraq

**The United States Will Settle For Nothing Less Than Complete Victory In Iraq.** Withdrawing on an artificial deadline would endanger the American people, harm our military, and make the Middle East less stable. It would also give the terrorists exactly what they want. The al-Qaida leader Zawahiri

recently wrote to the terrorist Zarqawi in Iraq, and he cited the Vietnam War as a reason to believe the terrorists can prevail. The terrorists think they can make America run in Iraq; the terrorists hope America will withdraw before the job is done - so they can take over the country and turn it into a base for future attacks. America will not yield the future of Iraq to men like Zarqawi, nor will it yield the future of the Middle East to men like bin Laden.

- **Building Democracy In Iraq Will Establish A Peaceful Civil Society That Is An Ally In The War On Terror.** Free societies are peaceful societies, and democracies do not attack each other. Free nations give their citizens a path to resolve their differences peacefully through the democratic process. Democracy can be difficult, complicated, and even chaotic. Iraqis have to overcome many challenges, including longstanding ethnic and religious tensions, and the legacy of decades of brutal repression. But they are learning that democracy is the only way to build a just and peaceful society - because it is the only system that gives every citizen a voice in determining their future.

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