

WORLD&NATION

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A free Iraq now faces a future on its own

By Rebecca Santana and Lara Jakes
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — For the first time in decades, Iraqis face a future on their own, with neither Saddam Hussein's iron fist nor the United States' military might to hold them together. This has been both their dream and nightmare: They wanted American troops (the occupiers) to go, but they wanted American troops (the protectors) to stay.

Now many fear an increase in violence, growing Iranian influence and political turmoil after President Barack Obama's definitive announcement that all U.S. forces will leave by the end of the year.

In conversations with The Associated Press, Iraqis across the political, religious and geographic spectrum on Saturday questioned what more than eight years of war and tens of thousands of Iraqi and U.S. lives lost had wrought on their country. They wondered how their still struggling democracy could face the challenges ahead.

"Neither the Iraqis nor the Americans have won here," said Adnan Omar, a Sunni from the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk.

Rifaat Khazim, a Shiite from the southern city of Basra, said, "I do not think that this withdrawal will bring anything better to Iraq or that Iraqi leaders will be able to achieve stability and security in this country. Most of the Iraqis yearn now for Saddam's time. Now, Iraq is defenseless in the face of the threats by the neighboring countries."

Across the country there was a strong sense of disbelief. The Americans, having spent hundreds of billions of dollars, lost



Nabil al-Jurani The Associated Press

Abbas Fadel, 55, distributes juice to celebrate the announcement of the U.S. Army's withdrawal by January in Barra, Iraq Saturday.

nearly 4,500 troops' lives and built up sprawling bases as big as many Iraqi cities, would never really leave, many Iraqis thought. Some celebrated the exit of foreign occupiers and the emergence of real sovereignty. But there was also an apprehension, almost a sense of resignation, that things will get worse.

Though greatly reduced from the depths of near civil war from 2006 to 2008, shooting and bombings rattle Iraqis daily. Significantly all the elements from those darkest days remain: al-Qaida militants, Shiite militias, Sunni insurgents. Resentment still simmers among the Sunni Muslim minority over domination by the Shiite majority, Kurds in the north still hold aspirations of breaking away. Despite years of promises of better government services, most of the country gets by on a few hours of electricity a day.

In the eyes of Iraqis, the Americans were both the cause of those woes and the bulwark against them exploding. Many

blame the 2003 U.S.-led invasion for unleashing all the demons kept bottled up by Saddam's dictatorship, and allowing new ones — like al-Qaida — to slip in.

Nearly 40,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, all of whom will withdraw by Dec. 31, a deadline set in a 2008 security agreement between Baghdad and the administration of then-President George W. Bush.

The Obama administration, concerned over continued violence and growing Iranian influence, for much of this year pushed to keep thousands of U.S. troops here in a significant-sized training mission. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and other Iraqi officials expressed support of the idea.

But talks ran aground over Iraqi opposition to giving American troops legal immunity that would shield them from Iraqi prosecution. Legal protection for U.S. troops has always angered everyday Iraqis who saw it as simply a way for the Americans to run roughshod over the country.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CONTROLLER

PART 6

It's time to turn it down and shut it off.

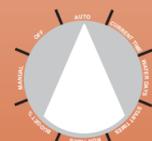
Now that Fall is in full swing and Winter is approaching, consider the following:

- Turn your sprinklers off for a week after each full day it rains.
- Adjust your controller to a lower setting during the winter.
- Upgrade your landscape to low water use plants, sprinklers and smart controllers.



Locate your controller

- Turn it off on rainy and windy days.
- Cooler temperatures means changing to a fall schedule.



Get familiar with your controller

- Locate your manual and understand your controls.
- Visit www.bewaterwise.com to find a copy of your manual.

PART 1



Know when your soil is thirsty

- Test your soil to see if it's clay, loam, or sandy soil.
- Adjust your controller according to your soil type.



Know how to pick and place your plants

- Choose low water use plants for your landscape.
- To help choose plants, visit: www.iegardenfriendly.com.

PART 3



Make your irrigation more efficient

- Consider replacing traditional sprinklers with efficient ones.
- To help improve water efficiency, visit: www.freesprinklernozzles.com.

PART 5



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For more information: www.ieua.org & www.bewaterwise.com

Cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Ontario, and Upland; Cucamonga Valley Water District; Fontana Water Company; Monte Vista Water District; San Antonio Water Company; Chino Basin Water Conservation District; Chino Basin Watermaster; Inland Empire Utilities Agency

If hard water does this to your dishwasher . . .



What does it do to your skin, hair and clothes?

Save Our Soft Water CALIFORNIA



Battelle Memorial Institute study photo on 30th day of dishwasher using hard water. A message from the Pacific Water Quality Association.