

Iraq for the Iraqis:

How and When

by [Patrick Clawson \(/experts/patrick-clawson\)](/experts/patrick-clawson)

Mar 15, 2004

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Are Iraqis ready to take on the responsibilities of sovereignty? Regardless of the government that assumes sovereign authority on June 30, it will remain fragile and weak at first, and heavily reliant on the United States. Indeed, the U.S. influence may remain so pervasive that it could look like indirect imperial control, which is how the British ran Iraq for decades. If the handover goes ahead as scheduled, Iraqis, Middle Easterners, or the world at large may not accept the government as legitimate. In that case, resistance attacks, which have already reached the dimensions of uprisings in Fallujah and Najaf, could spread and intensify. The administration seems determined to make the handover on June 30. But the mood in Iraq among responsible people is this: get it right, even if it takes longer. These conclusions emerged from a ten-day trip to Iraq in February by a six-person team from The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Our team traveled 1,000 miles by car from Turkey across all of Iraq to Kuwait. Ours was one of the few groups—if not the only one—to have done this complete tour. We arranged our trip ourselves and controlled our itinerary rather than relying on the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).... ❖

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