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# **Low Intensity Conflict and Nation-Building in Iraq:**

## **A Chronology**

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# POST-WAR IRAQ

## *The Timeline*

### **2003**

- May 1:** The U.S. declares an end to major combat operations in Iraq. Seven U.S. soldiers are wounded when grenades are lobbed into an American base in Falluja, a stronghold for Hussein loyalists. This followed an incident where U.S. troops killed 15 civilians during protests in the city.
- May 2:** U.S. troops apprehend Saddam Hussein's minister of military industrialization, Abdul Tawab Mullah Hwaish, who is suspected of playing a central role in developing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. One of Saddam's vice-presidents, Taha Mohieddin Ma'rouf, is also arrested, bringing the total number of regime members in custody to 17, out of 55 being sought.
- May 3:** Schools re-open in Baghdad for the first time in seven weeks, but many children remain at home, as parents fear for their safety.
- May 5:** Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, the woman dubbed "Mrs. Anthrax" for her role in Iraqi biological weapons programs, is taken into U.S. custody. Ammash, number 53 on the list of most-wanted Iraqis, is the 19th person on the list to be apprehended.
- May 6:** President Bush names L. Paul Bremer, former ambassador and counterterrorism director, the new civilian administrator of postwar Iraq. He will replace retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner.
- May 7:** U.S. officials discover that Qusay Hussein, bearing a letter of authorization signed by his father, removed \$1 billion cash from the Iraqi central bank on March 18, 2003.
- May 9:** The U.S. and U.K. present a blueprint for postwar Iraq to the United Nations Security Council. The draft resolution names the two countries "occupying powers," giving them control of Iraqi oil revenues. The most senior Iraqi Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim returned to Iraq after 23 years of exile in Iran. U.S. General Ray Odierno, commander of U.S. 4th Infantry Division, initiated disarmament talks with the "People's Mujahidin," an Iranian opposition group based in Iraq.
- May 10:** A U.S. Black Hawk helicopter crashes into the Tigris River with three fatalities.
- May 12:** L. Paul Bremer officially replaces Jay Garner as head of the CPA. Coalition forces detain Rihab Rashid Taha Al-Azzawi Al-Tikriti, head of the Iraqi biological program.

- May 13:** A mass grave is found near Baghdad. The remains of 15,000 people appear to be Shiites killed during a 1991 popular uprising.  
Microbiologist Dr. Rihab Taha, known as “Dr. Germ” for her role in Iraq’s biological weapons program, surrenders to coalition forces.
- May 17:** 9,000 additional U.S. troops arrive in Baghdad to assist in policing the city.
- May 19:** Thousands of Shiites, apparently organized by Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, peacefully march through Baghdad to protest the American occupation.
- May 22:** The U.N. Security Council votes 14-0 to lift sanctions on Iraq and grant temporary control of the country to the U.S. and U.K. Syria boycotts the vote.
- May 27:** Two U.S. soldiers die in an organized attack on an army checkpoint in Fallujah. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan names Vieira de Mello head of U.N. operations in Iraq.
- June 2:** Hans Blix, the chief U.N. weapons inspector, sends his last report to the U.N. Security Council. In it, he states that the inspections carried out prior to the war did little to account for Iraq’s missing weapons of mass destruction.
- June 12:** An Apache AH-64 helicopter is downed in western Iraq; it is the first helicopter to be brought down by enemy fire since the collapse of the Hussein regime. The two pilots escape unhurt.
- June 13:** U.S. troops question about 400 suspects following Operation Peninsula Strike, the biggest military operation since the formal end of combat operations. Several Iraqis died in the three-day operation.
- June 15:** Hundreds of American soldiers sweep through Fallujah in another, apparently more precise, operation against guerrilla resistance. Operation Desert Scorpion is designed to defeat organized Iraqi resistance.  
An average of about one U.S. soldier has been killed per day since May 1.
- June 17:** American troops mount new searches through Baghdad after a sniper kills a U.S. soldier on patrol.
- June 19:** A rocket-propelled grenade strikes a military ambulance, killing one U.S. soldier and injuring two.
- June 21:** 55 U.S. troops have died since May 1 (138 died during the war itself).
- June 24:** Six British soldiers are killed in two attacks in the Shiite town of Al Majar al-Kabir. The gun battles with residents stem from local anger over the Allies use of dogs during house searches, as dogs are considered unclean in Islam.

**June 26:** A U.S. soldier is killed when his vehicle is ambushed. A pedestrian also dies.

**June 30:** Three blasts rock Fallujah. One at the Al-Hassan mosque kills a Muslim cleric and six theology students, injuring 15 others. U.S. Central Command reports that “something like an ammunition dump” exploded near the mosque.

**July 1:** An explosion destroys a Sunni mosque in Fallujah, killing at least 10 Iraqis, including the chief cleric, and injuring four others. Many Iraqis blame an American missile for the destruction and chant, “America is the enemy of God.” U.S. troops shot dead two Iraqis who fail to stop at a checkpoint.

**July 4:** A tape recording, purportedly of Saddam Hussein, is broadcast urging guerrilla fighters in Iraq to continue their resistance to the U.S.-led occupation.

**July 5:** A British freelance TV cameraman is shot and killed in Baghdad. Seven Iraqi police recruits are killed and 40 are wounded by an explosion at a police-training center in Ramadi.

**July 7:** General John Abizaid replaces retiring General Tommy Franks as commander of Coalition forces in Iraq.

**July 13:** Iraq’s interim governing council has its first meeting. The 25-member council has power to name officials and will help draft a new constitution for the country.

**July 14:** One U.S. soldier dies and six are injured in an attack on a convoy in Baghdad.

**July 16:** Attacks in western Iraq claim the lives of a pro-U.S. mayor and his son. Abizaid announces that replacement troops may be deployed for yearlong tours.

**July 17:** An audiotape, purported to be of Saddam Hussein and apparently timed to coincide with the anniversary of the 1968 Baathist revolution, is played on Arab television station al-Arabiya, encouraging defiance to U.S. occupation.

**July 18:** Moqtada al-Sadr announces plans to form an independent “Islamic army” to challenge the American occupation and the Iraqi Governing Council.

**July 21:** U.N. Secretary General Annan endorses the Governing Council.

**July 22:** U.S. Special Forces kill Uday and Qusay Hussein in a firefight in Mosul. Special Forces, who were backed by 200 regular Army soldiers and several helicopters, stormed a villa following a tip from an Iraqi source. The Hussein brothers died along with a bodyguard and Qusay’s teenage son. Four Americans are wounded.

**July 24:** Three U.S. soldiers are killed when their convoy is ambushed in Qaiyara.

- July 25:** Japan agrees to support Iraqi reconstruction efforts with military personnel – its biggest deployment of troops since 1945.
- July 26:** A grenade attack kills four U.S. soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division at Baquba. The soldiers were guarding a children’s hospital.
- July 27:** A U.S. soldier dies in a grenade attack south of Baghdad, bringing the American death toll 5 in the last 24 hours.
- July 29:** A recording, purported to be by Saddam Hussein, declares that his two sons died as martyrs for Iraq, and pledges that the U.S. will be defeated.
- August 7:** A car bomb explodes outside the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad, killing at least 14 people and wounds dozens; all the dead were Iraqis. Following the attack, Iraqis rushed the rubble, smashing portraits of Jordan's King Abdullah II.
- August 8:** U.S. troops mistakenly open fire and kill six Iraqi civilians in Baghdad as they hurry home to beat the curfew.  
U.S. soldiers kill two Iraqis believed to be selling weapons at a market in Tikrit.
- August 9:** British troops fight to restore calm in Basra after fuel and power shortages.  
U.S. casualties reach 255 at the 100-day mark; 43 British have died.
- August 11:** Six Iraqi prisoners die and 59 are wounded when the Abu Gharib prison comes under mortar fire.
- August 14:** A British soldier is killed and two others are injured during a guerrilla attack on a military ambulance driving through the outskirts of Basra.
- August 15:** Saboteurs blow up a crude oil export pipeline in northern Iraq, sparking an enormous fire and halting oil exports to Turkey.
- August 16:** In an rare example of Sunni-Shia cooperation, a popular Sunni cleric, Ahmed Kubeisi, offers grass-roots and financial support to an outspoken anti-American Shiite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr.
- August 19:** A truck bomb explodes outside U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, killing 24 people, including the head of the U.N. mission, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Over 100 are injured. The dead also include the Iraq coordinator for the U.N. children's fund, UNICEF, and several World Bank staffers.
- August 21:** Coalition troops captured General Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as “Chemical Ali” for his role in the gas attacks against the Kurds in 1987. He is number five on the United States' list of the 55 most wanted Iraqis.

**August 23:** Three British soldiers are killed in a guerrilla attack in Basra.

**August 29:** An explosion at a Najaf Mosque kills about 95, including one of Iraq's most important Shiite leaders, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim. Another 125 are wounded. Ayatollah al-Hakim was the leader of Sciri, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and returned to Iraq in May following more than two decades of exile in Iran.

**September 7:** President Bush's announces that \$87 billion is needed to cover additional military and reconstruction costs in Iraq.

**September 10:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside coalition intelligence offices in Irbil. Three die; 41 are injured.

**September 12:** U.S. troops mistakenly shoot and kill ten Iraqi policemen in Fallujah. Angry residents vow to initiate a new wave of violence against Americans.

**September 19:** Former Iraqi defense minister, General Sultan Hashim Ahmad – number 27 on the list of the 55 most-wanted Iraqis – surrenders to U.S. forces.

**September 25:** Dr. Aqila al-Hashimi, the only female member of the Iraq Governing Council, dies five days after being shot. Men with machine guns and a bomb attacked Hashimi near her home. The career diplomat was the only member of the former Baathist regime to occupy a position on the Council.

**October 2:** David Kay's interim report indicates no evidence of Iraqi WMDs.

**October 5:** The White House reorganizes its reconstruction efforts in Iraq, placing National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice in charge while diminishing the role of the Pentagon.

**October 9:** A suicide bomber rams his car into a police station in Baghdad, killing nine. Two U.S. soldiers die and four are injured in an ambush in Baghdad.

**October 12:** A suicide car bombing near the Baghdad Hotel kills eight and wounds 32.

**October 14:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, killing one Iraqi and wounding at least 13. In an apparent change of strategy, insurgents are targeting supporters of the Coalition rather than U.S. troops.

**October 17:** Three U.S. soldiers and at least seven Iraqis die in a gun battle outside the office of a Shia cleric in Karbala.  
All fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council vote in favor of Resolution 1511. The resolution added international legitimacy to the CPA but emphasizes the need to hand over political control to Iraqis as soon as possible.

**October 19:** Two American soldiers die in an ambush outside Kirkuk.

**October 23-24:** The Madrid Conference, an international donors' conference of 80 nations, yielded \$13 billion in addition to the \$20 billion already pledged by the United States. This amount falls short of the \$56 billion target, a figure the World Bank and U.N. estimated would be needed for Iraq over the next four years.

**October 26:** A rocket hits the Rashid hotel in Baghdad, narrowly missing Paul Wolfowitz, the American deputy secretary of defense. An U.S. colonel dies; 18 others are wounded.

**October 27:** Four coordinated suicide attacks in Baghdad kill 43 and wound more than 200. The targets are the headquarters of the Red Crescent (Islamic Red Cross) and three police stations. It's the bloodiest day since the fall of Hussein's regime.

**November 2:** In the single deadliest strike on U.S. forces since the war began, guerrillas shoot down an American Chinook helicopter six miles south of Fallujah, killing 16 U.S. soldiers and injuring 21 others.

**November 7:** Six U.S. soldiers die when their Black Hawk helicopter crashes after being struck by a rocket-propelled grenade.

**November 12:** The U.S. launches Operation Iron Hammer, a preemptive counter-insurgency strike against pro-Saddam loyalists. A car bomb outside an Italian military police station in Nassiriya kills 18 Italian officers and at least eight Iraqis.

**November 21:** A suicide bombing outside the PUK office in Kirkuk kills four.

**November 29:** Two U.S. soldiers, seven Spanish intelligence officers, two Japanese diplomats, and a Colombian oil worker die in separate guerrilla attacks.

**November 30:** U.S. forces repel three ambushes on American convoys in Samarra, killing 46 Iraqis, capturing eight. November produces the highest death toll for U.S. troops – 82 – since May 1.

**December 9:** A car bomb explodes outside an American military barracks near Mosul, wounding 60, including 41 U.S. troops.

**December 13:** Saddam Hussein is captured by American troops. The former dictator is found hiding in a hole near Tikrit, his hometown. He surrenders without a fight.

**December 14:** A car bomb destroys a police station near Baghdad, killing at least 17.

**December 27:** Guerrillas attack government buildings and foreign military bases in Karbala with suicide car bombs, mortars and guns. 19 Iraqis die.

**December 31:** Eight Iraqis die when a car bomb rips through a Baghdad restaurant. Over 30 are wounded, including three Western journalists.  
The death toll for U.S troops in December is 40.

## **2004**

**January 5:** Three American soldiers are discharged after beating Iraqi POWs.

**January 6:** Two French nationals are killed in Fallujah after their car brakes down.

**January 9:** A rocket downs a U.S. medivac helicopter near Fallujah, killing nine.  
A bomb explodes outside a mosque in Baquba, killing at least 5.

**January 14:** Some 30,000 followers of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Hussein al-Sistani march through Basra, protesting in support of his demands for direct elections.

**January 17:** A roadside bomb kills three U.S. soldiers and two Iraqis, bringing the U.S. death toll to 500 since the conflict began.

**January 18:** A suicide bomber detonates a truck packed with 500kg of explosives at CPA headquarters, killing at least 31 people and injuring more than 100.

**January 19:** Tens of thousands of Shiite Muslims march through Baghdad, demanding direct elections to choose a new government. It is the largest protest since the occupation of Iraq began 10 months before. The demonstration is partly inspired by Sistani's opposition to the American plan for caucuses.

**January 21:** Four Iraqi women, working as laundresses at an U.S. military base, are gunned down and killed on their way to work.

**January 24:** Five U.S. soldiers die in separate bombings in the Sunni Triangle.

**January 25:** Seven Iraqi policemen die in a pair of attacks in Ramadi.  
The U.S. military loses its fifth helicopter in a month, which crashes in the Tigris River while searching for a soldier whose boat capsized. Both pilots die.

**January 26:** Guerrillas fire a rocket into the parking lot of occupation headquarters. No injuries reported.

**January 27:** Six American soldiers are killed and four are wounded when homemade bombs explode in two roadside attacks in central Iraq.  
A gunman opens fire on cars carrying CNN workers south of Baghdad, killing two Iraqi employees and wounding an American cameraman.

**January 28:** A car bomb explodes outside the Shaheen Hotel in central Baghdad, killing three while destroying the building and a police post.

David Kay, the CIA's chief weapons inspector, reports his findings to a Senate committee, claiming U.S. pre-war intelligence estimates of Iraqi weapons programs were "almost all wrong."

**January 31:** Twelve people, including three American soldiers, are killed in separate bomb attacks in northern Iraq: a suicide bomber rammed his car into a police station in Mosul, killing at least 9 people and wounding 45; in the second attack, three American soldiers die when a homemade bomb destroys their Humvee. 519 U.S. service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, 381 have died since May 1.

The death toll for U.S. troops in January is 46.

**February 1:** 109 people die and 247 are wounded in two suicide attacks during Muslim celebrations at separate headquarters of two leading Kurdish parties in Arbil. One American soldier is killed and 12 are wounded in a rocket attack. 20 people trying to loot an ammunition dump in southwestern Iraq are killed when the arms unexpectedly explode.

**February 5:** Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a popular Shiite cleric, survives an assassination attempt when gunmen open fire on his entourage.

**February 9:** The U.S. military intercepts a document written by Abu Musab Zarqawi, an Islamic extremist from Jordan with ties to al Qaeda. The 17-page letter details a planned campaign of violence meant to destabilize Iraq by pitting religious and ethnic groups against one another. Expressing frustration with the insurgency's failure to force out American troops, Zarqawi asks al Qaeda for assistance in accelerating guerrilla activities. Zarqawi is a suspect in several attacks in Iraq, including the bombings of U.N. headquarters, the main gate to the occupation headquarters in Baghdad, and a shrine in the holy city of Najaf. Together, the attacks killed nearly 200 people and wounded hundreds more.

**February 10:** A car bomb explodes outside a police station in Iskandariya, killing at least 55 and wounding up to 65. Many of the victims were applicants lined up outside. A near riot follows when the Iraqi police chief, Ahmed Ibrahim, arrives at the scene. Crowds shout anti-American slogans.

**February 11:** In yet another attempt to disrupt the construction of a security apparatus, a suicide bomber rammed a car packed with explosives into a crowd of Iraqi Army recruits in central Baghdad, killing at least 47 and wounding at least 50 others.

**February 14:** Roughly 70 guerrillas firing rockets, mortars and machineguns raid police headquarters and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) in Fallujah in an effort to free foreign prisoners. 15 policemen, four insurgents and at least four civilians die in the attack. The dead guerrillas appear to be Lebanese and Iranian nationals. At least 70 prisoners escape, many – 18 by one account – flee with the attackers.

**February 15:** Muhammad Zimam Abd al-Razzaq al Sadun, No. 41 on the Coalition’s list of most wanted Iraqis, is captured in a Baghdad suburb.

**February 18:** Polish troops thwart twin suicide car bombs as the vehicles approach a Coalition base in Hilla, south of Baghdad. The speeding trucks explode prematurely, killing 11 Iraqi civilians and wounding as many as 100, including nearly 60 coalition troops from Poland, Hungary and the U.S.

**February 23:** At least 10 people are killed and over 35 are injured when a car bomb explodes outside a Kirkuk police station.

**February 25:** A U.S. OH-58 Kiowa Helicopter crashes into the Euphrates River near Hadithah, killing two of its crew. The cause of the crash is unknown, though several eyewitnesses say it was shot down. Abu Mohammed Hamza, a Jordanian explosives expert believed to be a top lieutenant of Zarqawi, is reported dead after an American raid in Habbaniya.

**February 27:** A group of Sunni clerics issue a fatwa demanding an end of violence in Iraq. The document calls on Iraqis to stop killing Iraqis inside the country but makes no mention of attacks on Americans or other foreigners. The death toll for U.S. troops in February is 21.

**March 1:** The Iraqi Governing Council agrees on a draft constitution that recognizes Islam as the central source of Iraqi law but also protects an array of individual rights. The document envisions 25% of the seats in the national assembly to be filled by women.

**March 2:** In the bloodiest day in Iraq since the end of the war, at least five bombs explode near Shiite religious ceremonies in Baghdad and Karbala, as hundreds of thousands of pilgrims pack the streets for the Ashoura ceremony. At least 270 people die; 573 are wounded. A mourning procession marches to the hospital decrying, “We defy you, America and Israel.” It is the first time Shiites are permitted to observe the holy day since the Baathists took power. Zarqawi is named the “chief suspect.”

**March 9:** Iraqi policemen deliberately kill two CPA officials and their Iraqi translator 70 miles south of Baghdad. The “targeting killings” produce the first American civilian deaths in Iraq.

- March 10:** In a second such incident, two Iraqi women who worked as laundresses for U.S. troops are gunned down and killed in Baghdad.
- March 13:** Three U.S. soldiers die in Baghdad when an improvised roadside bomb explodes. Another U.S. soldier meets the same fate the following day.
- March 15:** Four American missionaries are murdered in a drive-by shooting in Mosul. 564 U.S. servicemen have died since the start of the war, 426 since May 1.
- March 16:** Four die – including Dutch and German engineers – in an ambush in Karbala.
- March 17:** Seven die when a car bomb levels the Mount Lebanon Hotel in Baghdad.
- March 18:** Four Iraqis die in an explosion outside the Mirbad Hotel in Basra. Locals are said to have attacked – or even killed – the suspected perpetrator.
- March 20:** On the anniversary of the start of the war, rocket attacks strike several targets in Baghdad, killing at least four Iraqi civilians. There are no organized protests.
- March 22:** Grand Ayatollah Sistani warns the U.N. of “dangerous consequences” if it endorses the American-sponsored interim constitution.
- March 23:** Attacks against Iraqi police persist, as 11 Iraqi policemen are shot and killed in separate attacks in Kirkuk and Hilla.
- March 24:** Fallujah continues to be a hotbed of insurgent activity, as attackers ambush a U.S. military patrol; three civilians die and two American soldiers are wounded. U.S. Marines assume security responsibility from the Army, hoping to bring a “softer” approach to the volatile town.
- March 25:** A bomb explodes at an oil field in Khabaz, about 55 miles west of Kirkuk. The ensuing fire rages for 24 hours before being extinguished.
- March 26:** U.S. Marines kill four Iraqis during a four-hour gunfight in Fallujah.
- March 28:** Several thousand Iraqis protest the closure of a Baghdad newspaper after the CPA claimed the paper incited violence. Demonstrators burned American flags and chanted anti-American slogans.

**March 31:** In one of the most gruesome scenes since the conflict began, four American civilian contractors are killed in an ambush in Fallujah. Jubilant crowds then drag the charred bodies through the streets and hang them from a bridge. Some corpses are dismembered and displayed above a sign that reads, “Fallujah is the graveyard of Americans.”

In a separate incident, five U.S. soldiers die when their convoys hit a roadside bomb in Malahma, 12 miles northwest of Fallujah.

March produces the second-highest death toll for U.S. troops – 48 – since May 1.

**April 4:** The followers of Moktada al-Sadr, a militant Shiite cleric with fiercely anti-American rhetoric, violently march through at least six Iraqi cities, seizing control of the area around Kufa and killing nine Coalition troops – seven in Sadr City alone. The violence begins when demonstrations supporting Sadr and his deputy, who was arrested the previous day, clash with Coalition forces, first in Najaf and then in Sadr City.

**April 5:** In response to the rising violence, the CPA issues a warrant for the arrest of Sadr in connection with the murder of a rival cleric in April 2003. It may prompt a confrontation the Americans have long wished to avoid.

The U.S. further shifts its strategy by pursuing those responsible for the March 31 slayings of American civilians in Fallujah.

**April 6:** At least 20 American soldiers die in three days of ferocious fighting in central and southern Iraq. In one of the most lethal days for American troops, an additional 12 Marines are killed in an attack in Ramadi, previously an area of relative calm. Coalition forces suddenly face a war on two fronts: against the Sunnis in central Iraq and against the Shiites in the south. Fighting continues to rage in Sadr City and Fallujah. Sadr’s militiamen clash with Iraqi security forces in Najaf, Nasiriya, Basra and Baghdad. In Kufa, Shiite opposition forces replace police, essentially creating an occupation-free zone. Sadr urges his followers to carry on fighting and proclaims his solidarity with Ayatollah Sistani, claiming to be “his military wing in Iraq.” Sistani, for his part, asks Shiites to remain calm.

**April 7:** Coalition troops clash with opposition fighters throughout central and southern Iraq, and as far north as Kirkuk. U.S. forces drop a 500-pound bomb on a mosque compound in Fallujah. Ukrainian troops evacuate Kut after confrontations with Sadr’s “Mahdi Army.” Polish forces combat opposition in Karbala.

A Canadian aid worker is abducted in Kufa.

**April 8:** Sadr’s militiamen maintain control of Kafa, Kut, and parts of Najaf.

Kidnappers seize three Japanese civilians near the Kuwaiti border and threaten to burn them to death unless Japan withdraws its forces in Iraq.

Eight South Korean missionaries are freed after a brief kidnapping in Baghdad.

A total of 13 foreigners are taken hostage.

**April 9:** U.S. forces halt their offensive in Fallujah to allow for negotiations and the entry of foreign aid.

Coalition troops retake Kut.

Kidnappings continue to plague foreign workers, as an American truck driver appears as a prisoner on Arab television while two U.S. soldiers and seven oil workers are reported missing.

**April 10:** Sadr's supporters retain control of Kufa and Najaf.

Hundreds of reinforcements join Marines surrounding Fallujah. Insurgents offer a truce if U.S. forces leave the city.

Militants threaten to kill and mutilate an American contractor they kidnapped during a convoy ambush.

**April 11:** Insurgents down a U.S. helicopter in Baghdad, killing two crewmembers.

The streets of Fallujah are quiet throughout the first day of the ceasefire.

26 American soldiers die in weekend fighting.

At least 28 civilians from 11 countries have been kidnapped in the last week.

**April 12:** Sadr withdraws his militia from Najaf, Karbala and Kufa in a bid to stave off an American assault.

Seven Chinese civilians are released after being held in captivity.

**April 13:** U.S. Central Command requests an additional 10,000 troops.

A U.S. military helicopter crashes outside Fallujah, probably from enemy fire.

Five Ukrainian and three Russian energy workers are released after being kidnapped from their Baghdad homes.

**April 14:** Sporadic fighting persists in Fallujah despite a four-day-old ceasefire that quelled much of the violence. Dozens of foreign workers remain missing.

**April 15:** Khalil Naimi, an Iranian diplomat, is shot and killed one day after his arrival in Najaf to mediate the standoff between U.S. troops and al-Sadr supporters.

A group calling itself the Green Brigade kills one of four abducted Italians.

**April 16:** A missing American soldier is seen held captive by insurgents on Al Jazeera.

Fifteen Iraqis die in skirmishes with U.S. troops in Fallujah.

**April 17:** Ten U.S. soldiers die in fighting throughout the country; two die in accidents.

**April 20:** Insurgents attack a U.S. detention center near Baghdad, killing 22 prisoners.

American forces ease the Fallujah blockade but demand that insurgents disarm.

**April 21:** Suicide car bombs explode outside several police facilities in and around

Basra, killing at least 68. Angry crowds hurl stones at Coalition forces trying to reach the wounded.

**April 23:** A CPA spokesman warns that “time is running out” for the Fallujah ceasefire.

**April 24:** Seven American soldiers die in insurgent attacks. 28 Iraqis are killed in roadside and market bombings near Baghdad.

**April 26:** Al-Arabiya TV broadcasts a video in which militants promise to kill three Italian hostages unless the Italian public protests against the war in Iraq.

**April 27:** U.S. forces kill 64 insurgents in an overnight firefight near Najaf.

**April 28:** U.S. Marines call in AC-130 gunships to blast rebel positions in Fallujah.

**April 30:** A former Iraqi Army general enters Fallujah under a Coalition plan to restore order with a new Iraqi force led by officers who once served Saddam Hussein.

**April 31:** Photos of Iraqi prisoners being abused and tortured while in U.S. custody are splashed across worldwide media outlets.  
137 U.S. troops died in April, which is the highest monthly death toll since the invasion of Iraq, and more than the past three months combined.

**May 3:** American commanders select a new Iraqi general to command security forces in Fallujah after charges of torture and repression surface around the original pick.

**May 5:** As Iraqi protesters demonstrate outside Abu Ghraib prison, President Bush appears on Arab television, explaining, “...What took place in that prison does not represent the America that I know.”

**May 6:** U.S. forces seize parts of Karbala, Najaf and Kufa, but fierce resistance remains. A suicide car-bomber kills five Iraqis and a U.S. soldier in Baghdad. In an audiotape posted on an Islamic website, bin Laden offers 22 pounds of gold to anyone who kills CPA chief L. Paul Bremer or top U.S. military officials.

**May 7:** Insurgents ambush a police car in Mosul, killing four Iraqi officers.

**May 11:** A videotape showing the decapitation of Nicolas Berg, an American civilian in Iraq, appears on an Islamist website. The executioner is purportedly al Qaeda-affiliate al-Zarqawi, who claims revenge for the American mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

**May 15:** Coalition forces battle Shiite insurgents in Najaf, Karbala, Al Amara, Nasiriya and Sadr City.

**May 16:** Gunmen kill three Iraqi women working for the CPA in Baghdad.

**May 17:** A suicide bomber kills Izzedin Salim, the president of the Iraqi Governing Council, and at least six others at a check point into a CPA headquarters zone. U.S. forces call in an airstrike in Karbala against Al-Sadr's militia, which is taking refuge near the Shrine of Hussein, one of the holiest shrines in Shiite Islam.

**May 18:** Fighting between Coalition Forces and insurgents continues in Najaf.

**May 19:** The group headed by Zarqawi, calling itself Jama'at al-Tawhid, claims responsibility for the slaying of IGC chief Izzedin Salim. Grand Ayatollah Sistani, demands that all "armed forces" – both Coalition and insurgent – "leave the holy cities and open the way for police and tribal forces."

**May 20:** Iraqi officials claim U.S. forces killed 40 unarmed civilians at a wedding party near the Syrian border. American commanders deny the charge, claiming Coalition forces were first fired upon.

**May 23:** U.S. troops strike insurgents loyal to al-Sadr in Kufa, killing 36. Al-Sadr's militia appears to withdraw from the Shrine of Hussein in Karbala.

**May 25:** For the second time in a month, the shrine of Imam Ali, one of the holiest sites for Shiite Muslims, is damaged when U.S. forces clash with militiamen loyal to al-Sadr in Najaf and Kufa. American commanders deny responsibility for damaging the shrine. At least 13 Iraqis die.