

WMD programs in Iraq



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Basic data Iraq

Official name:	Republic of Iraq (Al Jumhuriyah al Iraqiyah)
Independent since:	1932
Republic since:	1958
Surface area:	437,393 sq. km
Capital:	Baghdad
Main towns:	Baghdad, Nineveh, Basra, Babylon
Neighbouring countries:	Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Kuwait, Jordan
Population:	22.6 million
Age:	0-14 years: 42% 15-64 years: 55% > 64 years: 3%
Ethnical background:	Arab: 75-80% Kurdish: 15-20% other: 5
Religion:	Muslim: 97% (12-15% Sunni, 50-65% Shia) other: 3%
Workforce:	6 m (52% is working for the government)
Exports in 2000:	20,600 m US\$
Main export partners:	US, Italy, France, Spain, Japan
Imports in 2000:	11,200 m US\$
Main import partners:	France, Australia, China, Russia, Germany
President and Prime Minister:	Saddam Hussein
Vice-President:	Taha Yassin Ramadan
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	Naji Sabri
Minister of Defence:	General Sultan Hashim Ahmed
Minister of Military Affairs:	General Abdel-Jabbar Khalil Shanshal

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2.1 General

Most of the intelligence services in the world have no doubts about the fact that Iraq is rebuilding its WMD and missile infrastructure. WMD contribute to Iraq's aim to become one of the most powerful states in the Middle East.

Before 1998, the year of the expulsion of the UNSCOM observers, a lot of sites and materials were destroyed but the knowledge and scientists remained. This has enabled Iraq soon to start new WMD-programs.

The MIC, Military Industrial Committee, is one of the most important institutes in Iraq with regard to the development of WMD. Approximately 60 sites fall under the responsibility of the MIC. The headoffice is situated opposite the Rashid Hotel, in the street that leads to the Presidential Castle, also known as Main Castle Saddam Hussein. The building has 11 floors and approximately 1,500 people are working for this institution. The office of the General Manager of the MIC is situated on the third floor.

The Security Service of the MIC is situated next to the headoffice. The building has 12 floors, 3 of which are underground. According to our source, a prison with very small cells was situated in the cellar of the building. Prisoners are tortured frequently.

The test area of the MIC for chemical weapons is situated near Al Musayyib, 70 km south of Baghdad. This area has a surface of 30 by 35 kilometres. Chemical bombs were tested on sheep in the past. From a source whose reliability has not been established we received information that biological weapons were tested on prisoners. The test location was a building in the town of Jorf al-Sakr, in the region of Najaf.

2.2 Procurement of raw materials

Due to the sanctions against Iraq, the country is officially not allowed to buy other goods than food, medicine and education materials (Oil for Food Program). For the WMD-programs Iraq depends on foreign countries because the country does not have enough knowledge and materials to develop WMD fully independently. It is common knowledge that Iraq is evading the sanctions by third party constructions. A lot of materials and knowledge have been acquired from companies in Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Yugoslavia.

Jordan is one of the most important transit countries. A lot of Iraqi procurement companies are situated in Jordan. Amman and Aqaba are important transit cities.

In February 2001 Iraq expanded its diplomatic activities in Russia by stationing a military officer. This might be an indication that the Iraqi procurement activities in Russia will increase.

Also Syria becomes increasingly involved in procurement activities. Iraq smuggles oil to Syria through a pipeline that can carry 150.000 barrels a day, and by means of a recently reopened railway line. On the 13th of August 2001 Iraq and Syria signed several (free trade) agreements (Jordan has similar agreements with Iraq). Syria and Iraq will also set up 7 companies in the heavy industry, pharmaceutical industry, transport, telecommunication, health sector and trade. The agreements will facilitate the transit of goods to Iraq.

2.3 Trade relations with the Netherlands

For some time now Iraq has regarded the Netherlands as a restricted country. This means that the Iraqi government does not want to conclude trade contracts with Dutch companies. Since spring 2001 it has become more difficult for Dutch businessmen to get visas. Despite these restrictions, there are still several Dutch companies which are doing business with Iraq (Oil for Food Program).

2.4 Level of knowledge

The general level of knowledge in Iraq is high. It happens frequently that high-educated students are following post-doc or specialised courses abroad. A lot of Iraqi scientists are working for WMD-programs. Due to the embargo and the pressure from the authorities, employees are forced to be inventive. A lot of materials are bought via difficult constructions in order to evade international inspections. If scientists lack certain knowledge, they will seek information abroad. In the past Iraq used Iraqi students and businessmen to collect information from libraries, bookshops and companies.

2.5 Ballistic missiles

Iraq produces missiles that can reach its neighbouring countries; the al-Samoud and Ababil-100. The al-Samoud has a range of 150 km and is driven by liquid propellant. The Ababil-100 is an Iraqi artillery missile based on a Yugoslav design and has a range of 100 km.

The BVD has also indications that Iraq is using the Russian missile Luna M (=Frog 7) and the Ababil 50 for their chemical weapons program. The Luna has a range of 70 km, a 550-kg warhead and an impact area of approximately 2.8-km long by 1.8-km wide. The Ababil 50 has a range of 50 km.

There are suspicions that Iraq is redeveloping long-distance missiles.

2.6 Nuclear weapons

Nuclear specialists predict that Iraq will have the disposal of modern nuclear weapons in 3 to 5 years. The IAEC (Iraqi Atomic Energy Committee) and the Iraqi Institute for Nuclear Energy are two important organisations with regard to the Iraqi nuclear weapons program. Both institutes are situated in al-Tuwayatha, a suburb of Baghdad. The development of nuclear weapons takes place in secret departments within these organisations.

The factory that develops the ignitions for nuclear weapons is situated in al-Atheer, next to the al-Muatasim factory, which was destroyed during the Gulfwar. From one of our sources we received information that the diagrams and designs for the ignitions came from the Ukraine and that RDX, Pentnt, APC and Aluminium powder were used for the ignition of nuclear weapons.