One year after the U.S. military pullout, Iraq teeters between statehood and failure as Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki struggles to hold the country together.

Keywords
Iraq, Baghdad, Troops, Soldiers, Invasion, Military, Saddam Hussein, Regime, Kuwait, Shock and Awe, Insurgency, Violence, Sunnis, Shiite, Civil War, Casualties, Opinions, Citizens, Civilians, Life, Safety, Barry McCaffrey, Bombings, Car Bombs, Muslim, Killing, Wounded, Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister, Government, Unity, Religion, Iran, Weapons, Bashar al-Assad, President, Syria, Oil, Economy, Democracy

Citation
A Year After U.S. Pullout, is Life Better in Iraq?
https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=62359
Source: NBC News Web Exclusive
Creator: Jim Maceda
Copyright: NBCUniversal Media, LLC.
Event Date: 12/18/2012
Air/Publish Date: 12/18/2012
Clip Length 00:02:42
A Year After U.S. Pullout, is Life Better in Iraq

JIM MACEDA, reporting:

On the streets of Baghdad the traffic hasn’t changed but it’s no longer U.S. military patrols or convoys that’s causing the gridlock. American combat troops are history. A year ago today the last of several hundred U.S. soldiers crossed from Iraq into Kuwait. Almost nine years earlier a U.S. and allied shock and awe invasion toppled Saddam Hussein’s regime and then triggered an insurgency and spasms of violence between Sunnis and Shia that boarded on civil war. Tens of thousands of Iraqis died, some thirty-six thousand American soldiers were killed or wounded. But are Iraqis better off since the U.S. pullout? Opinions are mixed.

Unidentified Man #1: All the people are happy, now it’s very good.
Unidentified Man #2: My opinion is it’s not better it’s not, you know, worse.
MACEDA: And it’s clearly not safe. While levels of violence are much lower than they were at the height of the civil war, hundreds of Iraqis, security forces, Shiite pilgrims are once again being killed every month in car bomb and suicide attacks, both on the rise. As recently as Monday, at least seven car bombs struck mostly Shiite targets across the country killing twenty-five more Iraqis and wounding dozens, all part of a pledge by Sunni militants and al Qaida to strike hard.

General (ret) BARRY McCAFFREY (NBC News Military Analyst): Massive attempt by the Sunni minority, probably a third of the country, to destabilize a Shia government.
MACEDA: The U.S. left Iraq in the hands of this man, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a religious Shiite who under U.S. pressure formed a government of national unity, including Sunnis and secular Iraqis. But today some Middle East experts say Iraq is teetering on ethnic and religious fault lines. Critics accuse Maliki’s government of torturing opponents in secret prisons. He recently sent troops and tanks to the
north to face off with ethnic Kurdish militiamen over disputed areas. Meanwhile, Maliki is cozying up to the fellow Shiite neighbor Iran and according to The New York Times, he’s allowed transshipments of Iranian weapons to prop up Syria’s Bashar al-Assad, hardly the moves of a U.S. ally.

General McCAFFREY: Mister Maliki is no democrat. There’s no rule of law impetus inside Iraq. It’s a seething mass of violence.

MACEDA: But Iraq does have oil. Its two and a half million barrels a day equal its highest pre-war production levels. And Maliki with prodding from the West maybe able to hold Iraq together, even say some optimists with a semblance of democracy if Iraq doesn’t slip back into chaos first.