

# World war i and the war in iraq

War



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World War I was the great armed conflict of 1914-18. Until World War II, it was often called the Great War because it was the most destructive and widespread war the world had ever seen. World War I began as a local conflict over a minor issue. Eventually it engulfed much of Europe and drew in, directly or indirectly, the entire major powers of the world. The first declaration of war was made by Austria-Hungary against Serbia (now part of Yugoslavia) on July 28, 1914.

Before the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, 28 nations (counting the British Empire as one nation) were directly engaged in the conflict (Roth, pp. 216-218/ 2003). On one side were France, Belgium, the British Empire, Russia, and Serbia; and, later, Japan, Italy, the United States, and 16 other countries. They were called the Allied and Associated Powers, or the Allies. The opposing side consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey, and Bulgaria. They were known as the Central Powers.

After the war, there were reduced to small separate states and Czechoslovakia was created from Austro-Hungarian territory in Central Europe. The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (which became Yugoslavia in 1929) was established, comprising Austro-Hungarian lands in the Balkans and the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. Poland, which had been partitioned among the Germans, Austrians, and Russians in the 18th century, was re-established along its historical borders (Brook-Shepard, pp. 64-67/ 2002). Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were freed from Russian domination.

In the Middle East, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Hejaz, (a territory within modern Saudi Arabia), Transjordan (modern Jordan), and Palestine were carved out of the Ottoman Empire. France's quick defeat in World War II has been attributed, at least in part, to the devastation it suffered in World War I. The vast system of overseas holdings of Great Britain began to change from an empire to a commonwealth. The war was at least partly responsible for the success of the Russian revolution and the rise of Communism.

The United States, after the war, its first experience of being involved in European affairs, declined to take a role as a world leader and retreated into isolationism, refusing to join the League of Nations (Robbins, pp. 161-164/2004). Many people thought of World War I as "the war to end all wars," fought "to make the world safe for democracy." Because of an overly harsh peace treaty, the weakness of the League of Nations, a worldwide economic depression, and the rise of fascism, the war had the opposite effect.

It made the Second World War almost inevitable. About four years ago, on the 20th of March 2003, a multinational military force marched in to Iraq. More than 40 countries joined in together to form a coalition force, with the US providing the most number of invading forces to oust Saddam Hussein's regime. Amidst protests and anti-war campaigns around the world, the coalition force led by the United States and United Kingdom --- plunged in to the Iraq War. Official statements given by U. S. President George W. Bush's administration, as to the reasons for the invasion, were primarily to:

- remove Iraq's alleged production and accumulation of weapons of mass destruction
- stop Saddam Hussein's support on terrorist activities
- give

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freedom to the Iraqi people from Saddam's reign of terror (" President Discusses Beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom")

Due to the unpopularity of the government's decision and the subsequent turn of events, the public continuous to give other speculations as to why the invasion had to be done. In U. K. initial public support was mainly based on the issue that Britain had a moral case to uphold in behalf of other nations (" Moral Case for Iraq War, Key to Initial UK Support"). But those that consider the possible long-term damage concerning their country's welfare believed the need to refrain from getting involved: that it might eventually endanger civilian lives in case of retaliation by terrorist groups, and the economic cost of war. After the military attack on Iraqi soil, evidence to support the Bush government's justification for the invasion was still lacking, insufficient, and vague.

Had the purported danger been present, it would not have taken only 21 days to topple down Saddam's government with minimal loss on the coalition's forces. Saddam's Soviet-built armaments were ill-equipped and no match for the invading forces, disproving the US claim. For most, it did succeed to eliminate Saddam, but nevertheless, failed to eliminate the problem in Iraq or helped the plight of the Iraqis, who now have to contend with not one but many oppressive guerilla-group factions that try to rule in Iraq.