

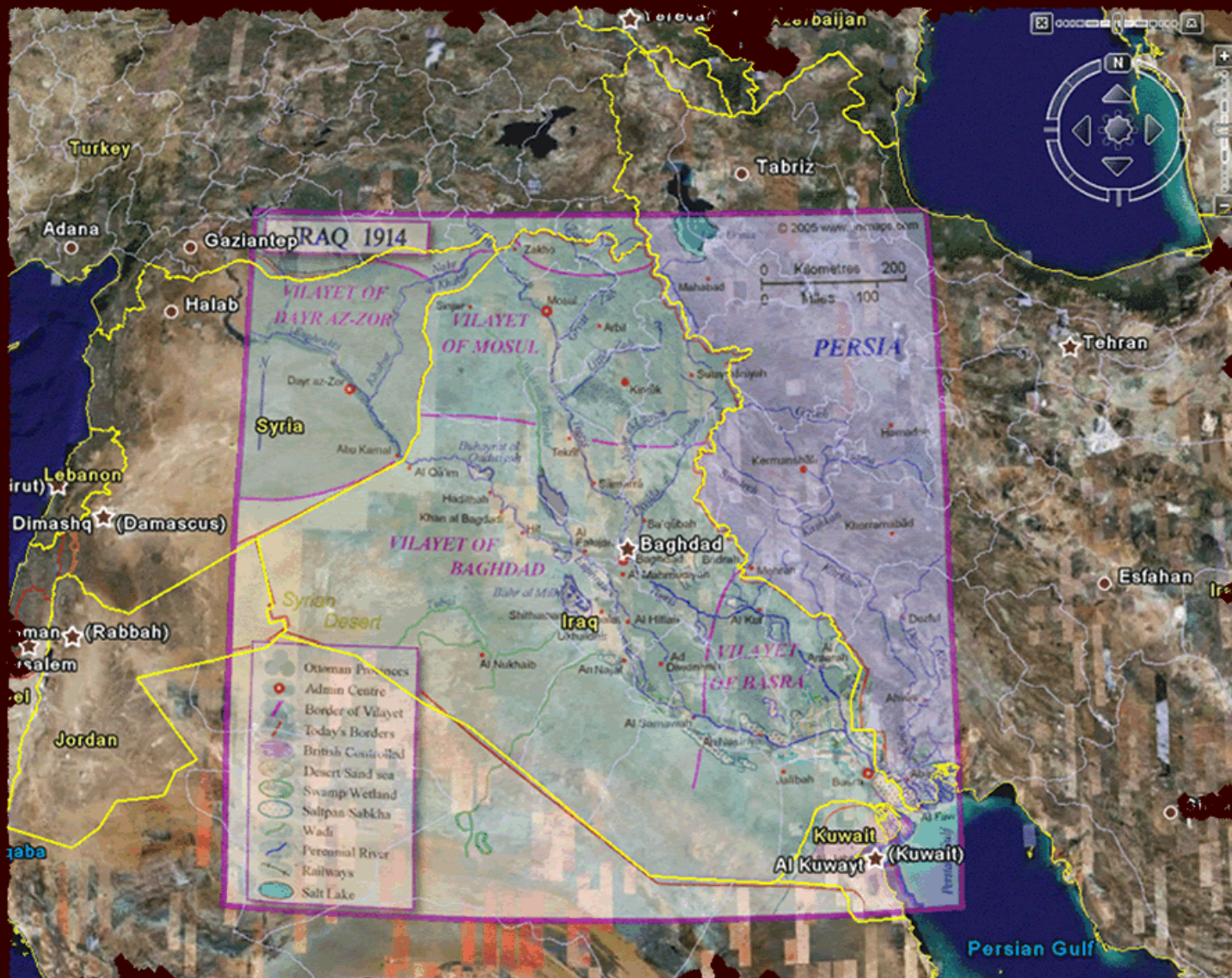
The Creation of Modern Iraq

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For centuries, Iraq has been a central location for imperial, political, and military activity in the Middle East.

This project investigates the political processes that led to the modern-day borders of Iraq and the consequences of these events, both in the Middle East and the world at large. The Middle East has been an area of great contention throughout history. For an interactive view of changes of power in the Middle East, please follow [this link](#). Pay careful attention to the locations of Iraq and the city of Baghdad, near the center of the Eastern border.



This map overlay shows the boundaries of the Ottoman *vilayets*, or provinces, that would eventually become Iraq. The purple border lines represent the edges of the vilayets in 1914, while the yellow/red border represents the constraints of modern Iraq.

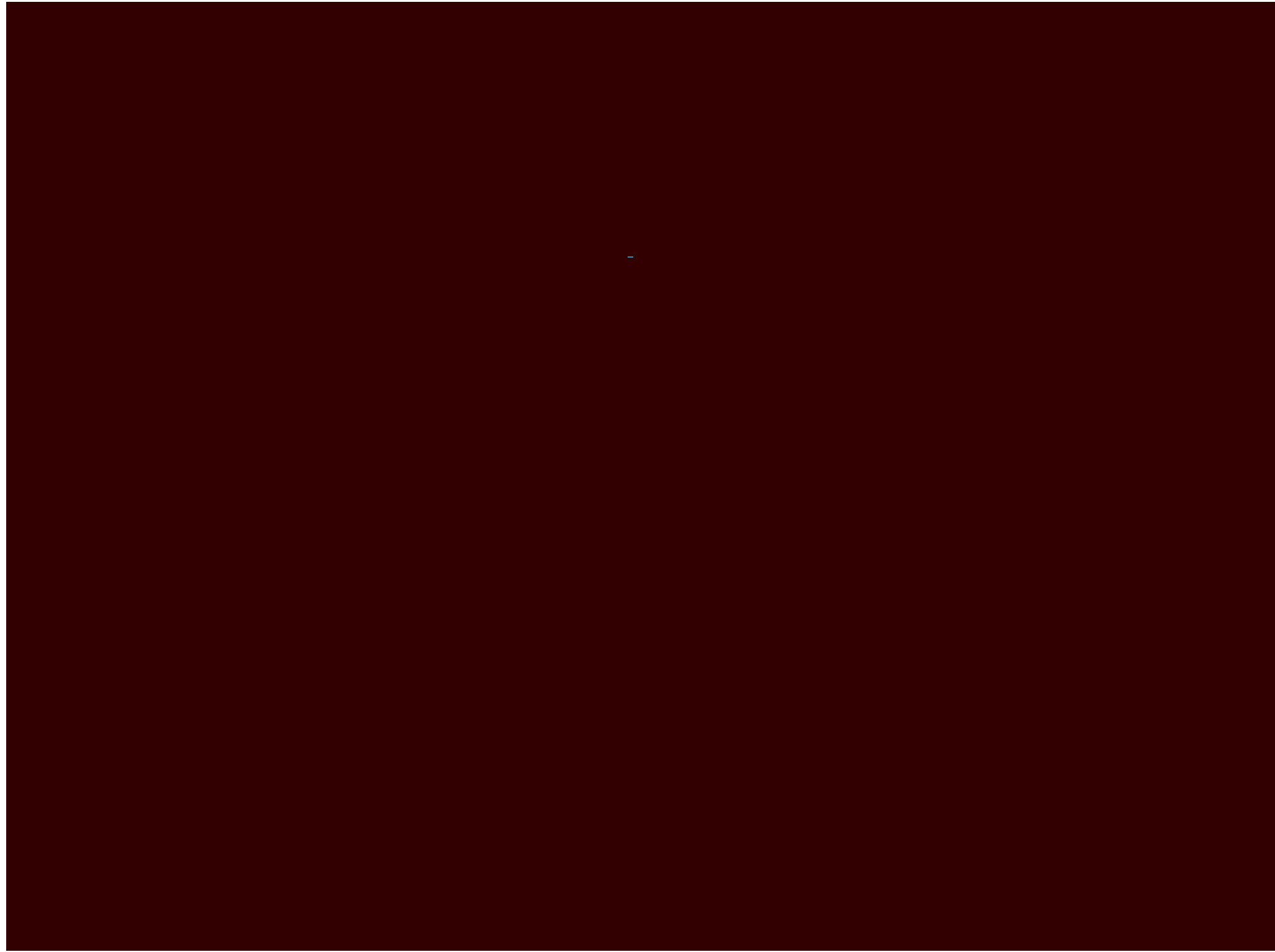


This map, from 1924, shows the various territories of the former Ottoman Empire and the manner in which they were divided up in the early 20th century. Although it is not central in this particular map, look in the southwest showing the results of the Treaty of Sevres, giving the French control of the Mandate of Syria and Lebanon, while ceding control of the Mandate of Mesopotamia to the British.

Human Actors
Non-Human Actors

1910	
1911	
1912	Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) founded with the goal to seek a concession from Ottoman Empire to explore for Iraqi oil.
1913	
1914	World War I breaks out. TPC forced to cease oil exploration plans.
1915	
1916	
1917	March - British forces occupy Baghdad. Proclamation of Baghdad delivered by Lt. Gen. Sir Stanley Maude. Speaks of liberation from the Turks and British/Baghdadi friendship.
1918	Faisal bin Al Hussein Bin Ali El-Hashemi (later King Faisal I) aids the Allies in conquering greater Syria and Damascus, becomes part of Arab government.
1919	January 12 - Paris Peace Conference opens. Mosul rebels against British rule. On August 28 the King-Crane Commission Report is released detailing British interest in the Middle East.
1920	San Remo Conference is held in Italy. Prepares the division of the Ottoman Empire post-WWI.
1921	Cairo Conference (Hashemite Monarchy established with Faisal selected as Iraqi King). Baghdad and Basra (former Ottoman <i>vilayets</i>) combined to form Iraq.
1922	
1923	British recognize Kurdish autonomy.
1924	British use aerial bombardment to defeat Kurdish rebels and re-annex Kurdistan into Iraq.
1925	TPC obtains concession to search for oil in Iraq. Iraqi government recieved a royalty, linked to oil company profits and not payable for 20 years. Exploratory drilling began immediately.
1926	Mosul added as third <i>vilayet</i> creating formal boundaries of modern Iraq. Follow this link for details of Mosul's importance.
1927	October 15 - Oil struck north of Kirkuk, at Baba Gurgur in Mosul, which had just been added to the boundaries of Iraq a year previous.
1928	July - The Red Line Agreement is signed by the partners of the TPC. This agreement codified the stake of each company in the TPC and blocked out Iraqi interests.
1929	TPC renamed Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC).
1930	Third Kurdish rebellion begins in September, put down by RAF bombing.
1931	Concessions of IPC renegotiated. 70-year cession to enlarged area (83,200 sq.km.) east of the Tigris. Iraqi government recieved additional payments and pipelines to the Mediterranean.
1932	Iraq gains independence (urged by King Faisal) from Britain
1933	September 8 - King Faisal dies in Switzerland, age 50, of a heart attack. Succeeded by King Ghazi bin Faisal, or Ghazi of Iraq.
1934	Kirkuk oil field brought online. IPC completes pipeline from Kirkuk to Haditha, then to Tripoli in Lebanon and one to Haifa. Follow this link for a map of the pipeline from 1934.
1935	
1936	
1937	

1938	IPC begins to export significant quantities of oil. Kirkuk production averaged 4 million tons per year. IPC gains rights to southern Iraq and forms Basrah Petroleum Company.
1939	April 4 - King Ghazi dies in sports car wreck, some believe foul play is involved, succeeded by King Faisal II of Iraq
1940	
1941	UK invades Iraq out of fear that PM Rashid Ali al-Gaylani was a Nazi supporter and might cut off oil supplies to the West. UK restores Hashemite monarchy with Nuri al-Said as king.
1942	
1943	
1944	
1945	
1946	
1947	October 26 - British WWII occupation of Iraq ends



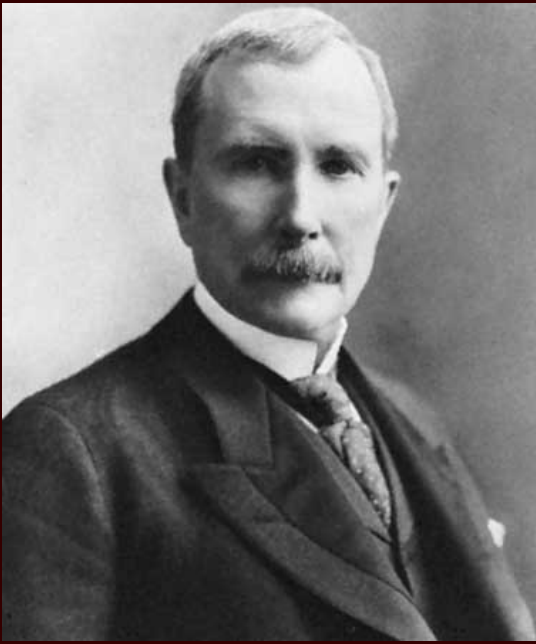
Human Actors



[King Faisal](#)

Faisal bin Al Hussein Bin Ali El-Hashemi (Faisal I) - May 20, 1883 - September 8, 1933

Faisal I served as King of Iraq from August 23, 1921 to his death in September 1933. He was born in Ta'if (in what today is known as Saudi Arabia), the son of the Grand Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali. He began his political career in 1913, when he was elected to represent the city of Jeddah in the Ottoman parliament. He began to draw attention from Europeans when he sided with the British in World War I, despite the widely-held belief that siding with non-Muslims was against the teachings of Islam. He became part of the Arab government in 1918 after aiding the Allies in the capture of Damascus during the battle for Greater Syria. He was appointed leader of the Arab delegation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and conditionally accepted the Balfour Declaration for development of a Jewish state in the Middle East. On March 7, 1920, Faisal was made king of Greater Syria, but was expelled to Britain in August by the French, who had gained control of the Mandate of Syria. The United Kingdom, meanwhile, had gained control of the Mandate of Mesopotamia, which included Iraq. They elected to avoid direct administration of the region and created a monarchy (known as the Hashemite monarchy) to rule, with Faisal as head in 1921. He ruled during Iraq's contentious period from 1921 to 1933, during which time he was instrumental in arranging Iraq's independence. Faisal I died on September 8, 1933 in Berne, Switzerland, of a heart attack. He was succeeded by his son, Ghazi.



John D. Rockefeller

John D. Rockefeller - July 8, 1839 - May 23, 1937

John D. Rockefeller was a revolutionary businessman and philanthropist of the late 1800s and early 20th century. He founded Standard Oil in 1870 and maintained his share of stock through his retirement in 1897. As a result of this, as the importance of petroleum products and gasoline skyrocketed, so too did Rockefeller's fortunes. He was America's first billionaire, and is considered the richest man in history, with a net worth exceeding \$318 billion in 2008 dollars. Rockefeller was a ruthless business man, and was accused of many shady business tactics, including the destruction of competitors refineries. In addition, he benefitted greatly from the laissez-faire, hands-off business approach of the Gilded Age, creating some of the most powerful trusts and monopolies of the time, including the bribing of railroads with rebates for shipping only Standard Oil and the establishment of ownership over all stages of production for American oil. He also was involved in foreign oil, specifically as a member of the Turkish (later Iraqi) Petroleum Company. Rockefeller used his wealth in philanthropy as well, founding the University of Chicago and Rockefeller University, as well as funding educational and public health works, some of which would help eliminate hookworm and yellow fever. Rockefeller died at the age of 97 of arteriosclerosis.

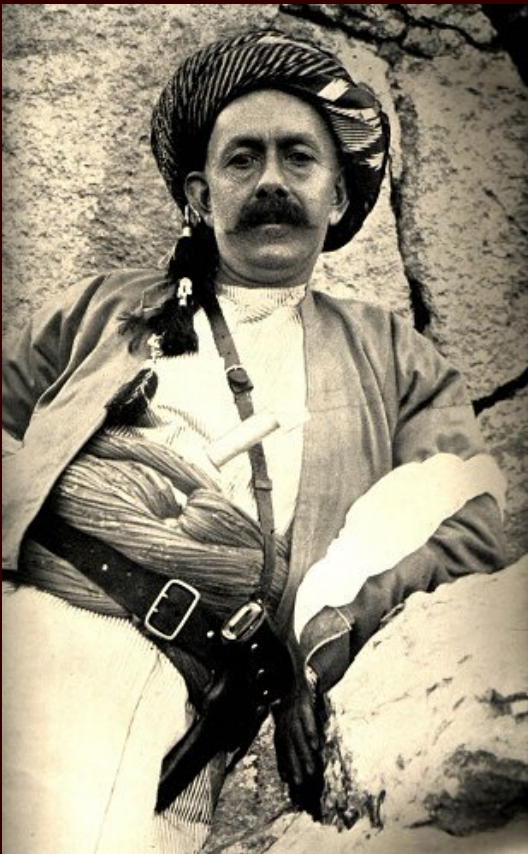
Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian - 23 March 1869 - 20 July 1955

Calouste Gulbenkian was born near Istanbul in 1869 to an Armenian father who was an oil dealer. His father sent him to be educated at King's College in London, where he studied oil engineering and became interested in Middle East oil exploration. He involved himself in a number of oil exploits, and came into great wealth by arranging a merger that resulted in the creation of Royal Dutch/Shell, from which he emerged with a majority stake. Gulbenkian earned the nickname "Mr. Five Percent" because of his habit of maintaining a 5% share in companies he developed, no matter what. He was the prime mover behind the [Turkish Petroleum Company](#), which opened exploratory drilling in the newly divided Ottoman Empire in the British Mandate of Mesopotamia. He famously



Calouste Gulbenkian

gained access to the entire Iraqi oil concession, but doled out much of the land for other companies in the TPC to develop. "Better a small piece of a large pie than a large piece of a small pie", he famously declared, holding onto 5% of the TPC stock. Gulbenkian was also well-known for his art collection, which was so extensive that he was forced to loan out art and sculpture pieces to the British National Gallery and Museum. In World War II, Gulbenkian had acquired diplomatic immunity as the Iraqi minister to Paris and followed the French government to Vichy as the Iranian minister. He died in Lisbon in 1955.



Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji

Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji - (Exact Birthdate Unknown)
1878 - October 9, 1956

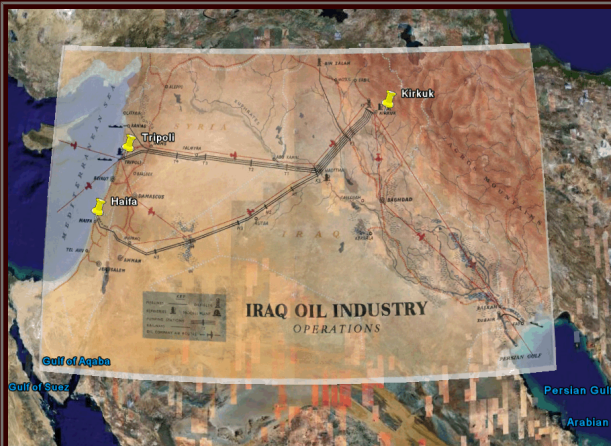
Sheikh Mahmoud was a Kurdish revolutionary leader who fought for an independent Kurdish state against the British in the 1920s and 1930s. He declared himself Ruler of all of Kurdistan in 1919 shortly before being installed as governor of Sulaimaniya, and ordered the arrest of all British military and police officers. As a result, the British attacked, and Barzanji was defeated in June and exiled to India. However, he was returned to Kurdish regions by the British as governor in 1922 to try and avoid a Turkish takeover of the Kurdish areas of Iraq. However, the Turks began arming Barzanji's forces, and he defied the British by declaring himself King of Kurdistan. The British actually recognized a Kingdom of Kurdistan in 1923, but with Royal Air Force support, the rebels were put down and in 1924 the Kurdish lands were re-annexed into Iraq. Barzanji fled to the Iranian border with his followers, and led a third and final Kurdish revolt in 1930. However, the British had the technological advantage, and the Kurds were unable to defend themselves from the bombing raids of the RAF. Barzanji fled to Iran, but was captured on May 13th, 1931 and imprisoned in exile in southern Iraq until his death.

Non-Human Actors



Iraqi Oil Reserves

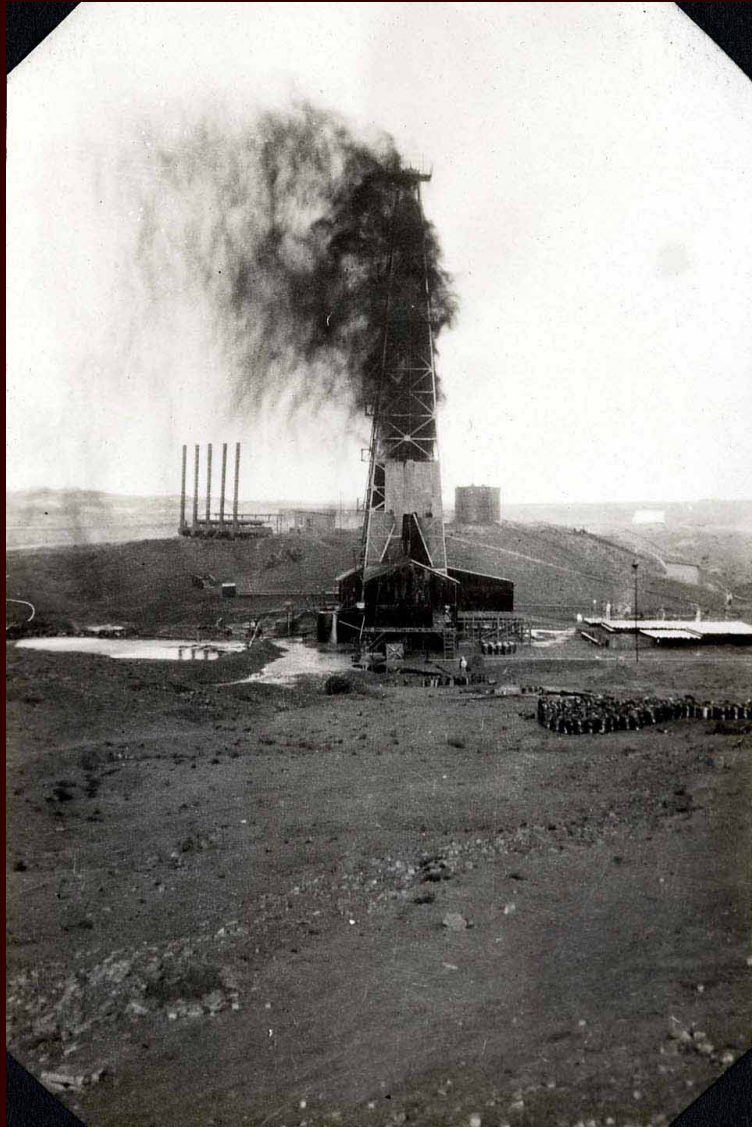
Iraqi oil reserves are the most important non-human actor in Iraq. The oil reserves in the land have created conflict after conflict, generally between Western powers and the inhabitants of Iraq. The existence of the largest oil reserves in Iraq lying in Mosul was central to the Western interest in the area that resulted in British conflict with Kurds and staunch opposition to an independent Kurdish state. Later wars against American-led forces would ensue later in the 20th century, with Western interest continuing because (many believe) of the large reserves of oil in the country. The sheer wealth at stake in the region has made what was once an area of contention in many empires before the discovery of oil into an area of aggressive conflict.



The Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea created a great quantity of debate and argument during the meetings of the Turkish (later Iraqi) Petroleum Company. French oil conglomerate CFP demanded that a pipeline be constructed that would pump oil from the Baba Gurgur field to the Mediterranean, thus allowing the French Company access to the oil reserves as quickly as possible. They were opposed by Standard Oil and Royal Dutch/Shell, who had sufficient oil reserves already to sustain profits. CFP did not, and wanted to open a pipeline as quickly as possible to start making money. They were joined by the Iraqi government, who did not want Standard and Royal Dutch/Shell to keep the oil in reserve and thus deprive the Iraqis of money. Eventually the pipe was installed, after the TPC arranged for a greater concession of land to explore.

The Turkish Petroleum Company



The first geysers of oil spray from the exploratory drill site at Baba Gurgur in Mosul, Iraq.

The Turkish Petroleum Company (later called the Iraqi Petroleum Company) was a European corporation of oil companies who sought a concession from the Ottoman Empire to search Iraq for oil reserves, in an effort to exclude other outside interests. The main backer of the project was Armenian-born businessman and oil speculator Calouste Gulbenkian, who secured such a concession from the Ottomans, only to see his aims interrupted by the outbreak of WWI. In the aftermath of the war and the [San Remo Conference](#) (which saw the division of non-Turkish Ottoman lands), competition for the potential oil strikes increased, as the Allied powers recognized the importance of possessing a source of oil. The French had seized German stakes in the area, and used them to pry their interests into involvement with the project. American and Italian interests (including the Near East Development Corporation, with member company American John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil) demanded to be included as partners as well, and while the Italians were refused entry, the American interests were successful in joining the company.

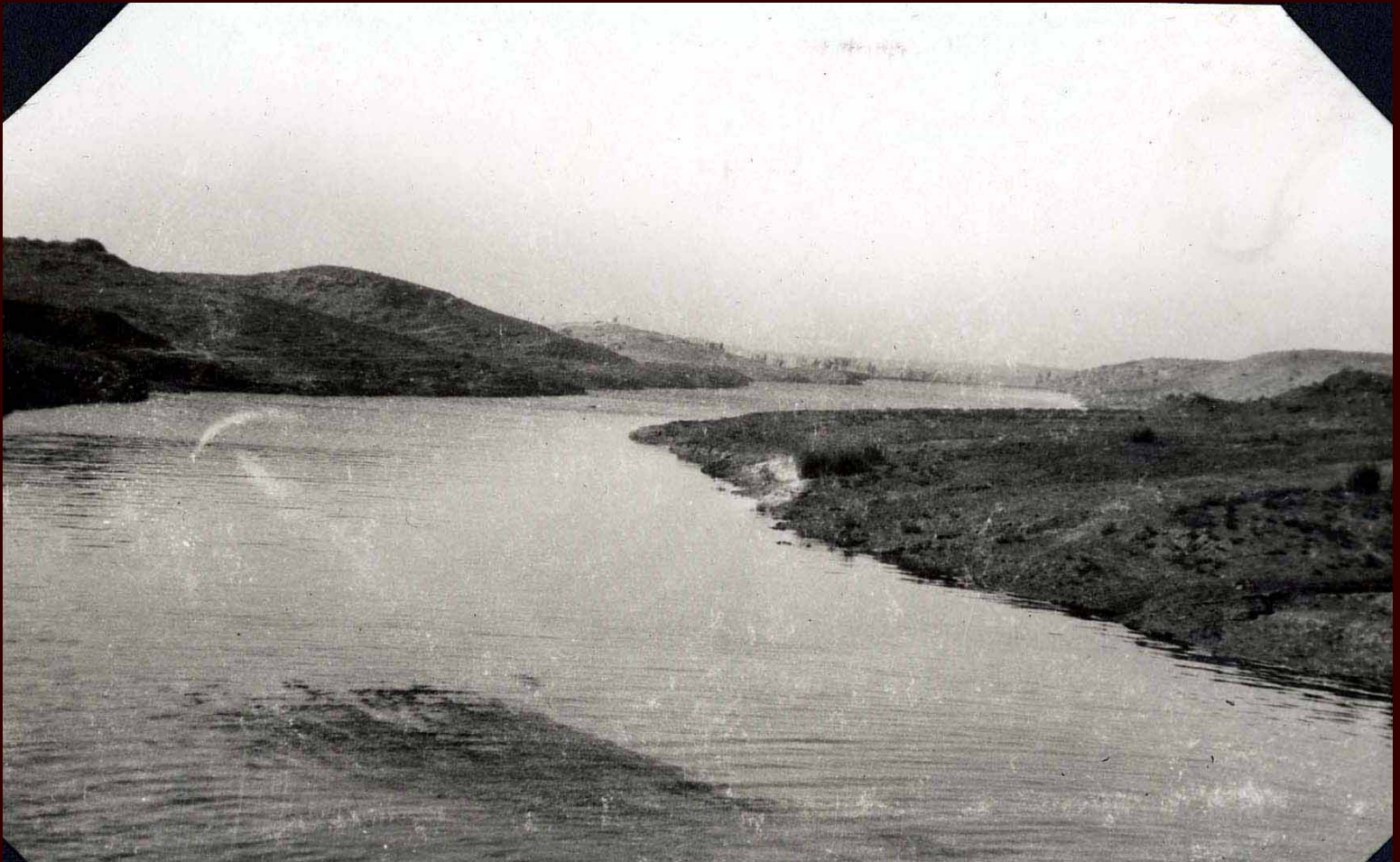
Thirteen years after the TPC was founded, in 1925, the company was awarded its first oil concession from the Iraqi government. The agreement stated that the Iraqi government would be entitled to a royalty for every ton of oil that was extracted. However, this agreement was tilted very favorably towards the Western powers, as it linked the royalty to oil company profits and was not required to be paid for the first twenty years. Exploratory drilling began immediately, and on October 15, 1927, oil was struck near Kirkuk in the former Ottoman *vilayet* of Mosul, at a location called Baba Gurgur. Tons of oil was spilled before the strike could

be brought under control, a sign of the valuable oil field that lay beneath the earth at Baba Gurgur.

In 1928, the shareholders of the TPC came together to sign the Red Line Agreement. It was a formal agreement struck regarding the composition of the TPC. [The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company](#) (today BP), [Royal Dutch/Shell](#), the [Compagnie Francaise des Petroles](#), and the Near East Development Corporation each got 23.7% of the shares, leaving Gulbekian with the 5% that was left over. Gulbenkian is said to have remarked "Better to have a small piece of a big pie than a big piece of a small one". The TPC became a non-profit company, registered in Britain, charged with producing crude oil for the parent companies based on their share percentage. The various interests were only allowed to refine and sell in Iraq's internal market, to prevent competition between parent companies. The Iraqis, however, lost out. Despite being entitled to purchase up to 20% of shares, foreign investors were able to resist their participation, despite pressure from the British government to include them.

In 1931, the Iraqi Petroleum Company (as it had been renamed in 1929) faced a challenge. Internal tensions grew between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Royal Dutch/Shell and Standard Oil on the one side and the French CFP and other smaller oil interests on the other. The former had significant oil stakes outside of Iraq, and wanted to hold Iraqi oil in reserve, while the latter wanted to build pipelines to the Mediterranean in order to begin exporting oil as quickly as possible. These disagreements caused the IPC's concessions to expire, as they failed to meet several of the requirements laid out in the original agreement, including the building of pipelines and shipping locations. However, the IPC renegotiated its deal with the Iraqi government and gained a 70-year concession to a much larger area of 83,200 km² east of the Tigris River. In return, the IPC agreed to provide the Iraqi government with payments and loans, and promised to build a pipeline to the Mediterranean by 1935. The [pipeline](#) from Baba Gurgur to Haditha, which then split into two separate pipelines heading to ports at Haifa and Tripoli came online in 1934, the same year the Kirkuk oil field began production. By 1938, the Baba Gurgur pipeline was producing four million tons of oil per year, before WWII made Mediterranean shipping difficult and production was greatly reduced.

The IPC managed to maintain its monopoly on Iraqi oil by buying out and taking over competing oil companies until 1961, when [General Abdul Karim Qassem](#)'s revolutionary government nationalized the oil industry. The Baba Gurgur field remains the most valuable source of oil in Northern Iraq, with more than 10 billion barrels of oil in reserve.



This map of Iraq illustrates the country's oil infrastructure. Major oil fields are shown as green ovals, with the largest, Kirkuk, labeled as a 'Supergiant oilfield (5 billion barrels in reserves)'. Other significant fields include Basra, Rumaylah, and the fields in the north like Mosul and Kirkuk. The map shows a network of oil pipelines (green lines) connecting these fields to refineries (black icons) and export terminals. Key pipelines include the Iraq-Turkey pipeline to the Ceyhan terminal, the Iraq-Syria pipeline, the Iraq Strategic Pipeline, and the Iraqi Pipeline through Saudi Arabia (IPSA). The map also indicates the locations of pump stations (T-shaped icons) and operational refineries (black icons). A legend in the top right corner defines the symbols for oil fields, pipelines, pump stations, refineries, and tanker terminals. A scale bar shows distances in kilometers (0 to 100) and miles (0 to 100). The map includes labels for major cities like Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and Kirkuk, as well as the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. A dashed line on the western border indicates the 'De Facto Boundary'.

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/%7Eezekiell/The%20Turkish%20Petroleum%20Company.html> (3 of 4) [12/10/2008 1:31:16 PM]

Mosul in Rebellion

During World War I, the British (through Colonel Sir Arnold Wilson) encouraged the Kurdish people to rise up against the Ottomans. In return, Wilson said, the British would commit themselves to the creation of an independant Kurdish nation after the war. However, this did not occur, a result that infuriated many Kurds, which led to conflict.

1919	<p>May 22 - Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji, shortly before he was to be named governor of Sulaimaniya, orders the arrest of all British military officials and police in the region. Seizing control, Barzanji declared himself Ruler of all of Kurdistan and surrounded himself with an army of his tribal followers. The revolt quickly spread to the cities of Mosul and Erbil, forcing the British to employ aerial assaults, artillery, and chemical gas (on one occasion) to attempt to quell the uprising.</p> <p>June 18 - Britain deploys two brigades to defeat Barzanji's fighters. The two forces meet at Darbandi Bazyan near Sulaimaniya. Barzanji's forces were defeated by superior British technology and numbers. He himself was injured, arrested, and exiled to India.</p>
1920	
1921	
1922	<p>Sheikh Qaydir, brother of Barzanji begins to battle against the British with aid from Turkey.</p> <p>September - Barzanji is returned from exile by the British and appointed governor to act as a buffer between Iraq and Turkey.</p> <p>November 18 - Barzanji defies the British and declares himself King.</p>
1923	British recognizes Kurdish autonomy, however, war continues in Kurdistan.
1924	British finally defeat Kurdish rebellion with assistance from the RAF, re-annex Kurdistan into Iraq. Barzanji escapes with some of his forces and moved into exile near the Iranian border.
1925	
1926	
1927	
1928	

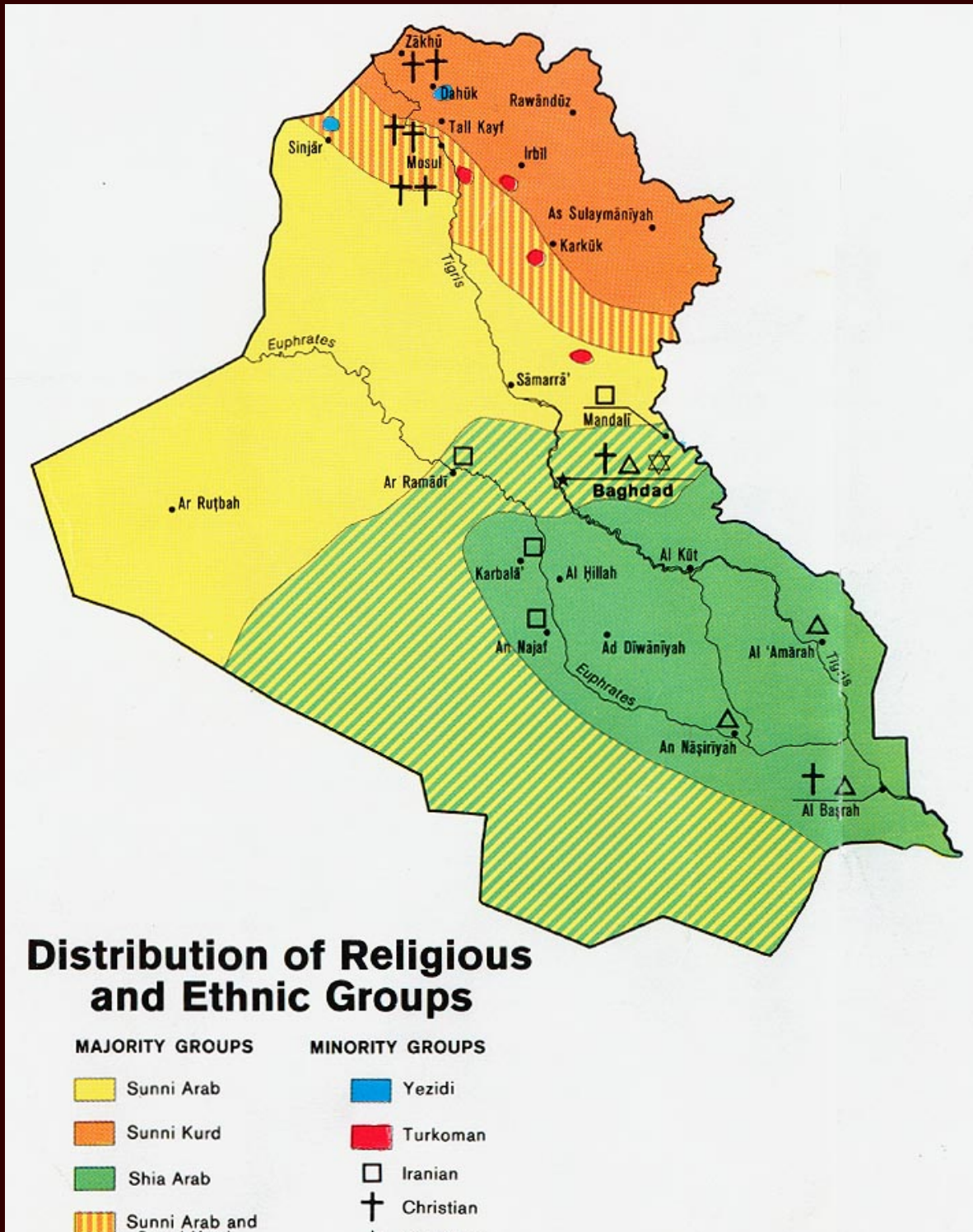
1929	
1930	British troops had mostly departed Iraq and Barzanji's forces began to move back into Kurdistan. September - Third Kurdish revolt begins, with the combined forces of Barzanji and Mustafa and Ahmad Barzani.
1931	March - British bombing of Kurdish villages resumes, supported now by British-armed Iraqi army. The Kurds were unable to defend themselves from the bombings, and Barzanji fled to Iran. May 13th - Barzanji captured and imprisoned in southern Iraq.

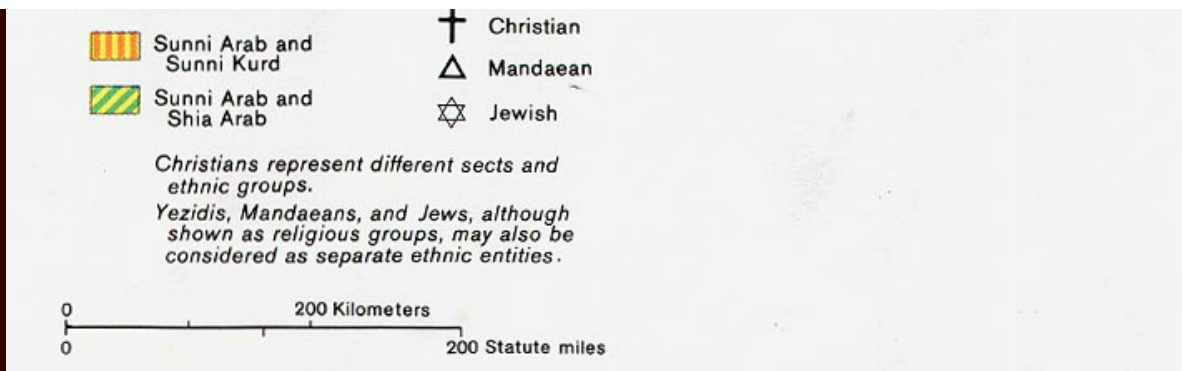
San Remo Conference - April 19 - 26 1920

January	16th - Paris Peace Conference closes. League of Nations is formed.
February	
March	
April	25th - San Remo Conference in Italy (prepared the division of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I) Shareholing in Turkish Petroleum Company was a major issue, as big powers realized importance of having their own oil supplies. The United States demanded to be allowed to participate, and was eventually permitted to buy into TPC. Iraqi companies were to be allowed to invest in 20% of the company.
May	
June	
July	
August	10th -Treaty of Sevres officially divides Ottoman Empire. France gains control of Mandates of Lebanon and Syria, Britain gains Class A Mandate of Mesopotamia. For a map of the territory involved in the Treaty of Sevres, follow this link . Despite promises that a Kurdish nation would come into being under the treaty, Turkish officials put sufficient pressure on the proceedings to prevent the creation of an independant Kurdistan.
September	
October	
November	
December	

Mosul

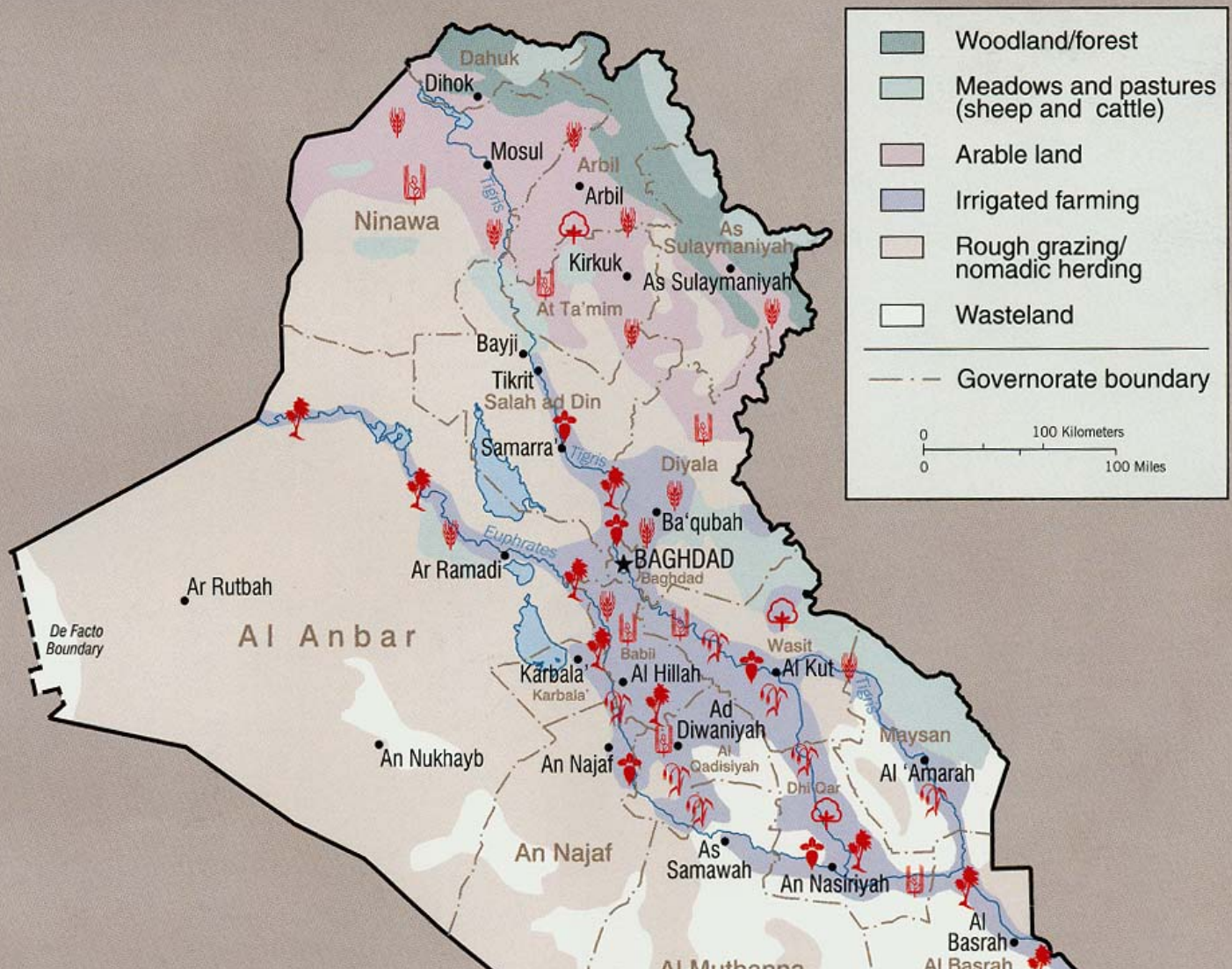
Mosul's addition to Iraq meant a great deal to the future of the nation. These maps, detailing ethnicity, land use, and oil production in Iraq highlight the critical importance of the addition of the *vilayet* of Mosul to Iraq in 1926. As these maps show, Mosul is a unique region that stands in many ways in stark contrast to the former Ottoman *vilayets* of Baghdad to the south and Basra to the southeast. These differences have played exceedingly important roles in the history of Iraq, and make Mosul one of the most compelling regions in the Middle East.





The region that became Mosul is part of a larger area covering portions of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Armenia known as Kurdistan, literally "Land of Kurds". The Kurdish people are an ethnolinguistic group whose origins are complex and widely disputed. Throughout history they have asserted themselves as a separate and independent group, deserving of self-determination and self-rule. However, due to a number of factors, including natural resources that are addressed in the next maps, Kurdish attempts for independence have been met with stiff resistance. In 2003, the Kurds welcomed the American-led Coalition forces and have fought with them against insurgents, seeing American involvement in Iraq as an opportunity for independence. Currently, Kurdish peoples make up about 17% of the Iraqi population.

Land Use



Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

Barley Cotton Dates Rice Vegetables Wheat



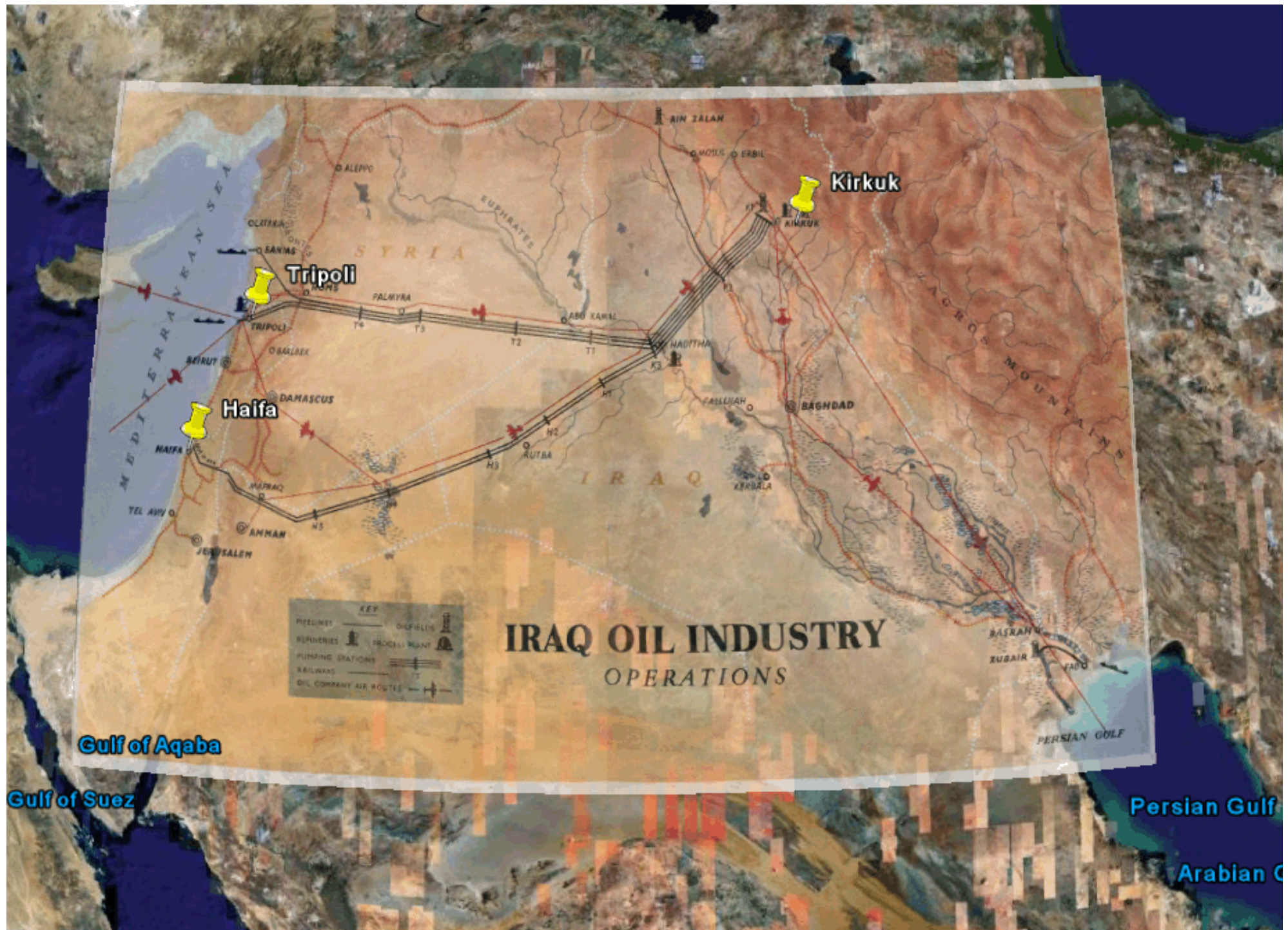
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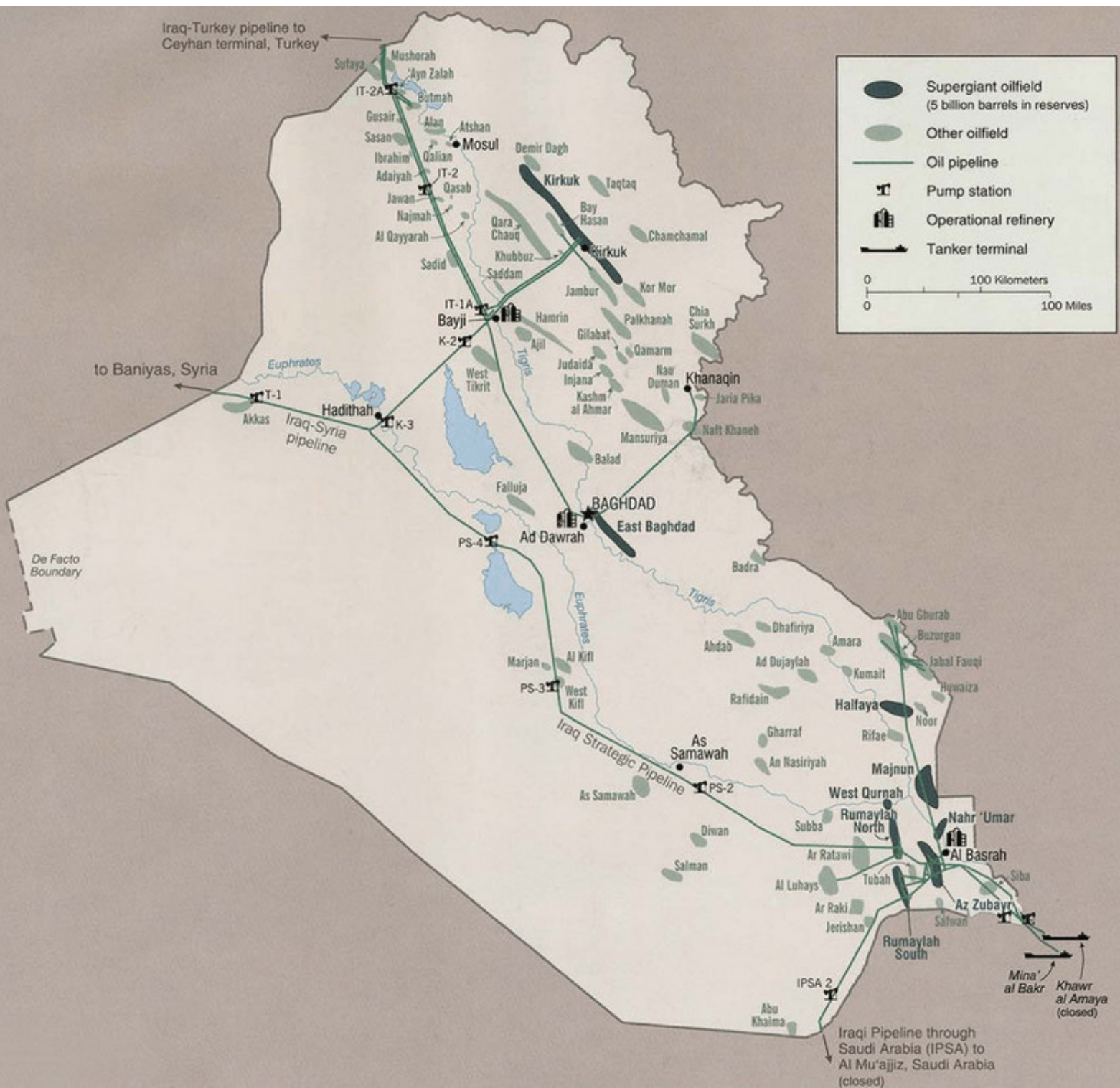
The natural resources of Iraq are not evenly divided, and the disproportionate amount of arable land in Mosul is an important factor in the differences between Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish Iraqis. While the former *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra have access to irrigated farming, the arable land and access to forested land in Mosul, a primarily Kurdish region, has helped lead to an entirely different way of life for Northern Kurds. The land allowed them to pursue a somewhat more sustainable lifestyle of cultivation as opposed to being held to generally relying on herding and some irrigated farming for subsistence. As a result, Kurdish society developed differently than Sunni and Shia societies, and the emphasis on this distinctness has fueled the Kurdish push for independence, which in turn has resulted in a great deal of conflict as world powers attempt to enforce their will in the area.



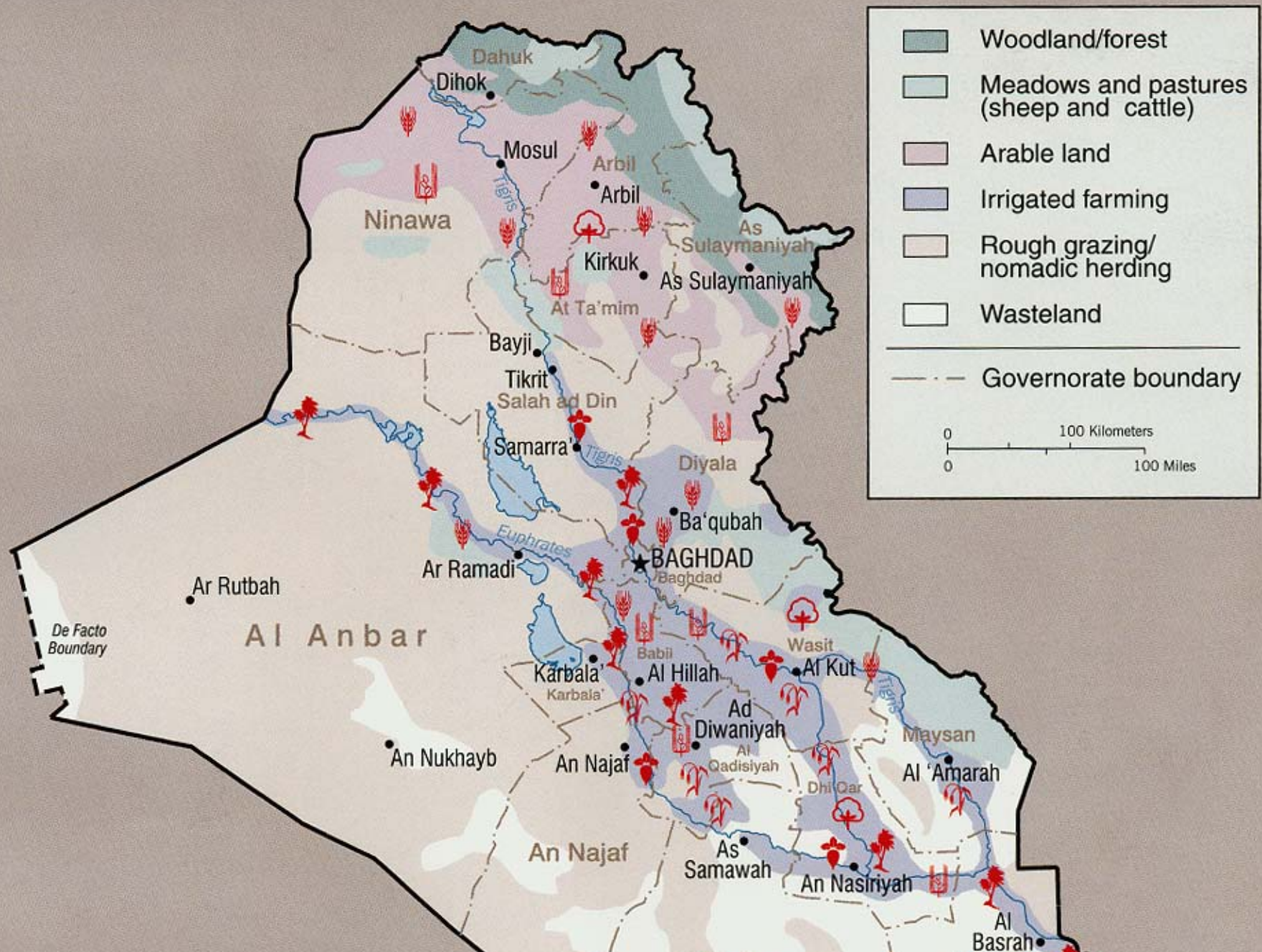


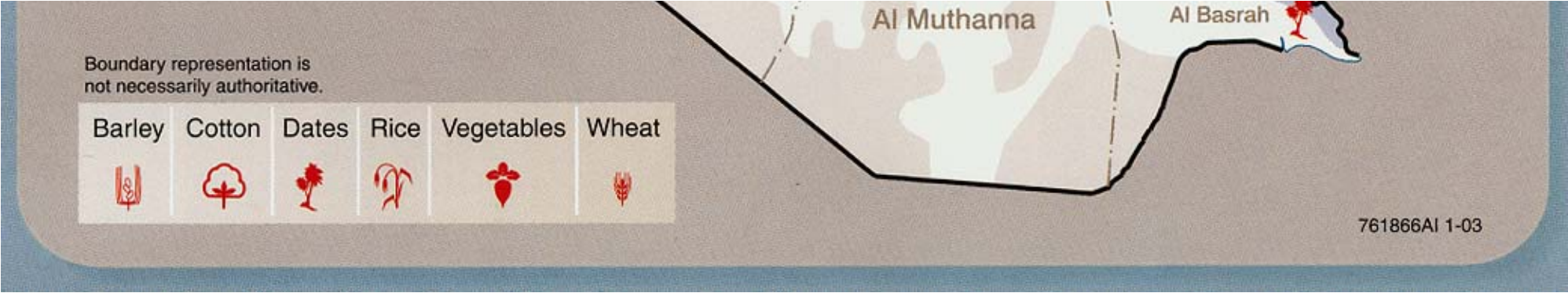
The existence of oil reserves in Iraq are of obvious importance. Although Iraq was a contentious region during the age of empires in Eurasia, the discovery of oil in the region has made it one of the most explosive region in the world. The most valuable oil field (the titanic Kirkuk supergiant field with over 10 billion barrels of oil in reserve) is located in Mosul, which put the region in a position of crucial importance in the 20th century. Interests from France, the United States, Britain, Turkey, Iraq and the Kurdish population have all battled furiously over the region, especially once oil was struck near Kirkuk at Baba Gurgur.





Land Use





The Treaty of Sevres

TREATY OF SEVRES



This map details the portions of the former Ottoman Empire and the manner in which they were divided following World War I. The southeast portion of the map shows the British Mandate of Mesopotamia, with Mosul located in the north of Iraq on the Tigris River.