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Pipe-laying barge installing pipe, September 2011
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Two drillings pads creating new oil wells in the Rumaila oil field, September 2011
This book is more than just my memoirs. It covers the Iraq oil story over my five months of prewar planning and seventy-five months in Iraq—October 2002 until September 2011. As a member of the Energy Infrastructure Planning Group (EIPG), I participated in the interagency oil sector planning at the Pentagon. After EIPG, I moved to retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner’s Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) team as a senior oil advisor in January 2003. ORHA started planning at the Pentagon and then deployed to Kuwait on March 17, 2003. We began moving into Iraq about a month later. As the first American civilian to enter the Ministry of Oil headquarters in Baghdad, on April 25, 2003, my initial task was to appoint the first post-Saddam Iraqi oil sector leadership team on May 3, 2003. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) under Ambassador L. Paul Bremer governed Iraq until June 2004. My tenure as an oil advisor continued through the CPA era.

The book addresses the important role that oil played after CPA. It includes oil’s role in northern Iraq during the surge of 2007, which involved the role of the Bayji Refinery and distribution of its petroleum products throughout the Sunni north. It covers the role of the Energy Fusion Cell in 2007 and 2008 to focus the oil and electricity sectors in support of the surge security objectives. It covers the increased oil production after 2009 and the role that the coalition forces played to support and push the export infrastructure project. This led to record production levels at the end of 2015, moving Iraq into the number-two production position in OPEC, behind Saudi Arabia.

Iraq’s oil production increased from 2.5 million barrels a day in early 2003 to 4.4 million barrels a day at the end of 2015, an increase that any oil company would envy. This book covers this thirteen-year period from the perspective of the US government and the coalition forces in a way that has never been told. Stories and vignettes are used throughout the book to highlight how the coalition forces partnered with the Iraqis in the Ministry of Oil to achieve successes in the oil sector. It also tells the stories of how the US government imposed obstacles when arrogance hindered us from partnering in 2003. Fortunately, the successes outnumbered the failures. The oil story
Preface

highlights the successes of many of the participants in the oil sector, including Iraqis, coalition military, and US government civilians.

It was always my intention to write a book about my Iraq oil adventure after returning from Baghdad in 2011. My family never understood what the attraction could be that took me to Iraq for seventy-five months between 2003 and 2011. They deserved an explanation. They heard some of my daily experiences while in Baghdad, but nothing that required more than five minutes of explanation on a long-distance phone call. My original reason for writing this book was to document my journey for my family. It quickly expanded to the broader purpose of telling the oil story to a larger audience. It provides historical information for the global oil industry and a historical military account of Iraq oil planning and execution. The book is used to thank the many Americans and Iraqis that enriched my life; the reader will note that I try to mention the name of each individual. Finally, the book provides a historical reference for anyone interested in the facts of our government’s Iraq oil sector involvement.

My wife did the initial editing of the manuscript for me. This process gave her a better appreciation of my Iraq attraction. She sacrificed a lot during my absence, much more than me. I loved the work. It was the most rewarding work in my life.

My sense of urgency in writing this book increased after my participation in a Rachel Maddow documentary. Maddow’s producers contacted me a couple of times in 2013 to convince me to agree to an interview, but I turned them down. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer contacted me and asked that I join him and Meghan O’Sullivan to help refute the suspected Maddow documentary theme: that the Iraq War was all about oil. I agreed to join them.

My preparation for the documentary made me realize that the Iraq oil story had never been written. My research while preparing for the interview made me realize something significant: there were Iraq oil events that should be more thoroughly investigated and documented. Some of the conclusions from my in-depth research were a surprise, even to me. There was an oil agenda that may have had a significant influence on the decision to go to war. Before 2014, I refuted any comment about oil being a significant motivator for our invasion of Iraq. My opinion has changed. There was an oil agenda, but it was not the oil agenda that most people believe. As a secondary objective of the book, this oil agenda is described; it is something that currently troubles me. What role did it play in the decision for war? It was an agenda to provide Iraqi oil to Israel. Pieces of this agenda are examined throughout the book.
Several of my ORHA and CPA colleagues told me that the oil story should be told and that I needed to tell it. No one else participated more in both the planning at the Pentagon and the subsequent execution of that plan in Iraq. My second tour started in 2006 and included oil reconstruction until late 2011. All of that time in Iraq was under the auspices of the Department of Defense (DOD). My two deployments were as a government civilian appointee or independent contractor. I am not aware of anyone under the DOD who spent more time in Iraq between 2003 and 2011. My service was under retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner, Ambassador Bremer, General Casey, General Petraeus, General Odierno, and General Austin. The ambassadors during my second tour included Khalilzad, Crocker, Hill, and Jeffrey.

One final trip was made in May and June 2015 under the State Department. My engagement was to lead a two-month USAID project that was an oil assessment for the new oil minister, Adil Abdul-Mahdi al-Muntafiki, and Ambassador Stuart Jones. The epilogue discusses the issues facing the oil sector at the end of 2015 and why the large production increases of 2012 through 2015 should moderate over the next five years.

It was a pleasure to relive my Iraq oil adventure while writing this book. I hope you enjoy reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it.
This book could not have been written without the help of many friends and colleagues. They have encouraged me and offered their help. I hope that all have been listed below.

There are a few chapters that include stories in which I did not participate very much, but these stories played an important role in the Iraq oil sector. For example, the Bayji Refinery story during the surge was very important to the northern oil sector. My participation from Baghdad was minimal, but the story was too important not to include. Input was received from a half-dozen military officers and civilians to document that story. Thanks to input from Dr. Ali Obaidi, Robert Carruthers, Joe DaSilva, Christian Cook, Quentin Coleman, and David Webb, I was able to piece together this important part of the surge.

Another good example was the story about Task Force Shield. My participation with that organization was primarily during the summer of 2003. To get the details of that story, I interviewed retired Colonel Tom O’Donnell in March 2015.

Other interviews included Lieutenant General Jay Garner, Rob McKee, Mike Stinson, Mike Mobbs, Pam Quanrud, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Shelton, Colonel John Agoglia, B. J. Ramos, Dr. Gordon Rudd, Clarke Turner, Robert Maguire, Ambassador Robin Raphel, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Callicotte, US Navy Captain Richard Fritzley, Stephen Lindsey, Kevin Ross, UK Brigadier General Hamish McNinch, UK Major General Richard Cripwell, and Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Dudding. It was a pleasure to meet with each and share our Iraq oil experiences. Some of their stories are included in the book. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, Dean Popps, and General David Petraeus also provided input.

I was fortunate to find an excellent mentor who had authored more than thirty books, Don Phillips. Don provided invaluable encouragement and assistance to me during the process.

Others helped me with writing the manuscript. They include Mr. Thamir Ghadhban, Ambassador Robin Raphel, Dr. Gordon Rudd, Robert Maguire, Colonel John “J. R.” Martin, Pat MacArevey, Tom Mason, Dr. Tom McKenzie, Elizabeth Baldwin, and Dr. Falih Al Jibury. Joe LeMonnier of Mapartist
xviii  Acknowledgments

.com helped with my Iraq oil sector maps. David Larkin provided some partial editing service.

My former oil company colleagues at the Romeo’s weekly luncheon group offered encouragement and a valuable source of additional industry discussion.

All statements of opinion or analysis expressed are mine and do not reflect the official positions or views of any US government agency. Nothing in the contents of this book should be construed as asserting or implying US government authentication of information or agency endorsement of my own views.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABOT</td>
<td>Al Basra oil terminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/D</td>
<td>barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUA</td>
<td>battle update assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>US Central Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERP</td>
<td>Commanders Emergency Response Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFLCC</td>
<td>Coalition Forces Land Component Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJTF-7</td>
<td>Combined Joint Task Force 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMMP</td>
<td>central metering and manifold platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Coalition Provisional Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESC</td>
<td>Defense Energy Support Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>director general</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECON</td>
<td>Embassy Economics Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFC</td>
<td>Energy Fusion Cell</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Energy Information Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIPG</td>
<td>Energy Infrastructure Planning Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESD</td>
<td>Energy Services Division of J9, US Forces–Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEED</td>
<td>front end engineering design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>Foreign Service officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Foster Wheeler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOI</td>
<td>government of Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRD</td>
<td>Gulf Region Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>GT</td>
<td>gas turbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICOEE</td>
<td>Iraq Crude Oil Export Expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>IED</td>
<td>improvised explosive device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td>inspector general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Iraqi National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>INES</td>
<td>Integrated National Energy Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Oil Company</td>
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## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IOR</td>
<td><em>Iraq Oil Report</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPSA</td>
<td>Iraq Pipeline through Saudi Arabia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRMO</td>
<td>Iraq Reconstruction Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRRF</td>
<td>Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Iraq Turkey Pipeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITAO</td>
<td>Iraq Transition Assistance Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOE</td>
<td>Japan Oil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAAOT</td>
<td>Khor Al Amayah oil terminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KB/D</td>
<td>thousand barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBR</td>
<td>Kellogg Brown &amp; Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRG</td>
<td>Kurdistan Regional Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSA</td>
<td>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB/D</td>
<td>million barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoO</td>
<td>Ministry of Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNF–I</td>
<td>Multi National Force–Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRE</td>
<td>meals ready-to-eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGL</td>
<td>natural gas liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGJ</td>
<td><em>Oil &amp; Gas Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIF</td>
<td>Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORHA</td>
<td>Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVP</td>
<td>Office of the Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCO</td>
<td>Project and Contracting Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIJV</td>
<td>Parsons Iraq Joint Venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMAC</td>
<td>Prime Minister's Advisory Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMO</td>
<td>Project Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS1</td>
<td>pump station 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIF</td>
<td>Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOP</td>
<td>State Company for Oil Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGIR</td>
<td>Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>South Oil Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMO</td>
<td>State Oil Marketing Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>single-point mooring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF RIO</td>
<td>Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF Shield</td>
<td>Task Force Shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUBA</td>
<td>Tuba pump station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USACE</td>
<td>US Army Corps of Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAR</td>
<td>US Army Reserves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abbreviations

USF–I  US Forces–Iraq
USG  United States government
VBIED  vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
VLCC  very large crude carrier
WMD  weapons of mass destruction
WQ₁  West Qurna 1 oil field
Z₁  Zubair 1 pump station
Z₂  Zubair 2 pump station, also called IPSA 1
Dramatis Personae

(Sequenced Chronologically)

**Washington, DC**

Michael Mobbs—Director of EIPG
Pam Quanrud—Oil Contact on the NSC
Clarke Turner—EIPG Team Member from DOE, and ORHA Oil Team
Frosty—EIPG Team Member from CIA, and ORHA Oil Team
Seneca Johnson—EIPG Team Member from State Department
Michael Makovsky—EIPG Team Member from OSD Policy
Lieutenant General (Retired) Jay Garner—Director of ORHA, 2003
Lieutenant General (Retired) Ron Adams—Deputy Director for ORHA, 2003
Major General Carl Strock—US Army Corps of Engineers’ Senior Representative on ORHA and CPA
Doug Feith—Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Paul Wolfowitz—Deputy Secretary of Defense
Dr. Ahmed Chalabi—Chairman of Iraqi National Congress

**Iraq**

**Iraqis**

Thaer Ibrahim—Director General of South Refining Company, 2003–2008
Jabbar Al Luaibi—Director General of South Oil Company, 2003–2009
Dr. Radhwan Al Saadi—Director General of Accounting and Economics Directorate, 2003–2007
Dr. Faleh Al Khayat—Director General of Technical Directorate, 2003


Abdul Karim Al Luaibi—Oil Minister, 2011–2014 (no relation to Jabbar Al Luaibi)


Abdul Jabbar Al Waggaa—Deputy Oil Minister for Upstream, 2005–2007

Ahmed Al Shamma—Deputy Oil Minister for Midstream, 2005–2014

Motasam Hassan—Deputy Oil Minister for Downstream, 2005–present

Dr. Ali Obaidi—Director General North Refining Company, 2007–2010

Dheyaa Jaffar—Director General South Oil Company, 2009–2015

Oday Al Quoraishi—South Oil Company Project Manager, 2006–2011

Americans and Others

Ambassador Lewis Paul Bremer III—Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003–2004


Brigadier General Bob Crear—Commander, Task Force RIO, 2003

Admiral (Retired) David Oliver—CPA Budget Director, 2003

Colonel Tom O’Donnell—Commander of Task Force Shield, 2003–2004


Colonel Bob Schroeder—Civil Affairs Officer Assigned to CPA Oil, 2003

Rob McKee—Former Conoco Upstream President, CPA Senior Oil Advisor, 2003–2004

Mike Stinson—Former Conoco Upstream Vice President, CPA Senior Oil Advisor, 2004

Terry Adams—Former BP Executive, CPA Oil Advisor, 2003

Bob Morgan—Former BP Executive, CPA Oil Advisor, 2004 (killed May 25, 2004)

Norm Szydlowski—Former Chevron Executive, CPA Oil Advisor and Embassy Senior Oil Advisor, 2004
Dramatis Personae

Brigadier General Mike Walsh—Commander Gulf Region Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers, 2006–2007
Dr. Les Dixon—Senior Executive Service GRD Director of Projects, 2006–2007
Captain Richard Fritzley (US Navy Reserve)—GRD Oil Director, 2006–2007
Captain Tom Brovarone (US Navy)—GRD Oil Director, 2007
John Sickman—Embassy IRMO Senior Oil Advisor, 2006–2007
UK Brigadier General Richard Cripwell—Director of Energy Fusion Cell, 2007
UK Brigadier General Carew Wilks—Director of Energy Fusion Cell, 2008
Admiral Mark Belton—Director of Energy Services Division, 2009–2010
Colonel Greg Zehner—Director of Energy Services Division, 2010–2011
Map of Iraq as of 2015.
American Oil Minister

Who’s going to fill the top job?
—Dr. Radhwan Al Saadi

It was April 27, 2003, my third day in Baghdad as part of the initial civilian element that entered Iraq under retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner and the DOD Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). Eighteen senior advisors for the various ministries, including me, had arrived in Baghdad from Kuwait on April 24 aboard a C-130 air force transport plane. The other advisors were active and retired ambassadors or other experts in their fields and were assigned as senior advisors to Iraq’s ministries. My responsibility was the oil sector, and I was assigned to be the senior oil advisor to General Garner.

Army Civil Affairs Colonel Joe “Bob” Schroeder, USAR, accompanied me in a Humvee to a meeting at the Baghdad Civic Center. The meeting was arranged by my contact at the National Security Council (NSC) of the White House. Colonel Schroeder was assigned to the 352nd Civil Affairs Command, and his mission was to assist the ORHA oil team. Schroeder and his folks were invaluable, especially during my first couple of weeks in Baghdad.

“Gary, do you think these three Iraqis that we’re meeting today were some of those that we saw yesterday at the ministry?” Bob asked. Bob and I had met several Iraqis during our first visit to the oil ministry complex the previous day. Bob had taken me to the ministry to initiate contact with Iraqis and meet the US military commander in the area.

My NSC contact phoned me the previous night on my satellite phone. She gave me three Iraqi names for today’s meeting. “Bob, Pam Quanrud at the NSC mentioned that these three gentlemen are considered the best oilmen in the ministry. So, I suspect they were among the dozen or so that we met yesterday.”

The Baghdad Civic Center was a large complex that became the meeting place for much activity and eventually the home for Iraq’s parliament. It was located inside the Green Zone and about a mile from Saddam’s Presidential Palace, the current ORHA headquarters. Electricity had not been restored since the beginning of the war a few weeks prior, but the sun was shining and there was plenty of light inside the building. Bob and I quickly moved
up the stairs to the second floor toward a small meeting room outside of one of the main auditoriums. As we approached the room, I recognized the three distinguished-looking Iraqi gentleman from the previous day at the oil ministry. A US civilian accompanied them.

Introductions were quickly made and the five of us moved into the small room. The US civilian did not stay. The three Iraqis were Dr. Radhwan Al Saadi (director general of Finance and Economics Directorate), Dr. Faleh Al Khayat (director general of the Technical Directorate), and Mr. Thamir Ghadhban (director general of the Planning Directorate). All were principal directorates within the headquarters of the Ministry of Oil in Baghdad. All three had received their advanced education in the United Kingdom, spoke fluent English, and had at least thirty years of uninterrupted service in the Iraqi oil industry inside of Iraq. Radhwan had struggled to get the other two gentlemen to accompany him to the meeting.

As a twenty-one-year veteran of Mobil Oil and ExxonMobil training, my first item on the agenda was safety. The safety discussion was substantially different from any that I had experienced at ExxonMobil. We discussed the immediate safety of their families and any specific threats to them, especially for meeting with me. The Iraqis were anxious about meeting me privately in the Civic Center because they did not want to be perceived as cooperating with the American occupiers. Many Iraqis considered us occupiers and not liberators, as we were led to believe by our Washington leadership. These gentlemen recognized the importance of making this early private contact. They knew that several of their colleagues in southern Iraq had met with me earlier in April.

The next point on the agenda was the clarification of the US oil sector mission. “Contrary to what you might be reading in the press, we are not here to steal Iraq’s oil. Your oil belongs to the Iraqi people,” I explained. “The US and my mission is to quickly return Iraq’s oil sector to producing at the same level before hostilities started, to repair and restore to prewar levels.” And I added with a smile, “So that I can quickly return to my family in the US.” This last comment would elude me for several years. April 2003 was my first of seventy-five months in Iraq over the following nine years.

The three Iraqis acknowledged my comments and agreed that we all had a common objective, to get the oil flowing again. “We need to minimize the negative impact to the Iraqi people,” said Thamir Ghadhban. “Shortages of cooking and transportation fuels will add to their suffering. Iraqis have already suffered too many shortages in the past under the former regime.” Al Saadi and Al Khayat agreed.

“Good, we are in agreement that it is in everyone’s interest to get the oil flowing,” I said. “Now, what do you recommend I do to help you accomplish
the goal?” All three immediately responded that a leadership team must be appointed as soon as possible.

“Until appointments are made, no one knows who is in charge at the ministry,” said Dr. Radhwan.

Having sensed that this would be an important agenda item, I reached into my case and pulled out a one-page document that had been provided to me before my departure from DC (see Figure 1.1). It was the organizational structure of the Ministry of Oil, including the names of the individuals in the top twenty-five jobs prior to hostilities. The chart included all the oil ministry directorates in Baghdad as well as the operating companies located throughout the country. It was organized under three deputy ministers: upstream, midstream, and downstream. We focused on all the jobs except for the minister position and the three deputies.

“So, I understand that we need to appoint all of the key leaders designated on this organizational chart. Do you agree?” I asked.

All three Iraqis looked surprised at what was in my hand. “Where did you get that document?” said Dr. Faleh.

“It is not important where I got this, but if I understand you correctly, ORHA needs to appoint Iraqis to these top twenty-five leadership positions within the Ministry of Oil, as soon as possible.”

“Yes, that is what we need,” said Ghadhban.

“OK, let’s get started,” I said.

Dr. Faleh proposed three principles before we started evaluating candidates for jobs. “There should be no collective punishments, there should be no retroactive application of new rules, and there should be no guilt by association.” He was apparently concerned about possible bias against oil officials who worked under the previous regime and members of the Baath Party. We all agreed, but I interjected that the one exception was involvement with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). I warned that WMD was the one issue where there would be no tolerance. The three Iraqis mentioned that WMD was something that did not involve the oil ministry.

There were no objections, so the five of us spent the next two hours going through each position and discussing the appropriate Iraqi for the job. It was a good discussion, highlighting important skillsets required for specific positions. I was working with professional oil executives, not unlike my colleagues in the global oil industry. Many questions were asked and answered before we settled on a specific appointee for a job. Is he technically competent? What is his educational background? Has he demonstrated leadership skills? How?

Many of the appointees were incumbents and those were easy decisions. A few appointees were designated as temporary or deputy director general
Fig. 1.1 Oil Ministry Organization Chart, March 2003
when it became obvious that no consensus could be reached. Most noteworthy was the appointee for director general of the State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO). It was one of the smallest groups, but one of the most important. SOMO consisted of about 150 people; most were highly educated and experts in their field. They were responsible for marketing all oil exports from Iraq and had developed an excellent reputation throughout the Middle East oil industry. We decided to temporarily appoint the previous deputy director general.

The Iraqi Tanker Company director was the last appointee.

We agreed to have a meeting on May 3 with the entire leadership team. Formal appointment orders signed by the appropriate ORHA official would be issued for that meeting. The formal meeting would be followed by a public announcement and discussion with the press.

As we stood to leave, Dr. Radhwan turned to me and asked, “Who’s going to fill the top job?”

We had discussed all the directors general positions, but we had not mentioned who would be the oil minister, the most important position. The NSC back in DC would make this decision. I would provide input, but the final decision was not mine. So, I decided to get input from the three Iraqis.

“Who do you think should fill that job?” I asked.

Radhwan said he thought it should be an Iraqi who had suffered hardships under the Saddam regime during the previous decades and not an Iraqi expat who had escaped from Iraq years before.

“I will share your recommendation with the people making that decision,” I said.

We had all started to walk out of the meeting room when Dr. Radhwan stopped and turned to me, “Gary, until you appoint someone, you are the minister of oil, right?”

He was right. Garner had mentioned that all of his ministerial senior advisors were ministers until an Iraqi was appointed. However, there was something about hearing it come from Dr. Radhwan that made it sound so much more official.

“That’s why the appointment will be done quickly. We will have a name by the formal meeting on May 3,” I replied.

Dr. Radhwan’s comment truly caught my attention. My first thoughts were guarded, almost paranoid. I had just had a telephone conversation with my NSC contact a week prior in Kuwait. Folks in the NSC were irritated about press clippings of US Army general officers quoted as taking credit for early accomplishments in the oil sector. Our orders were to always keep an Iraqi face on anything pertaining to the oil sector. How was I supposed to keep my face out of the press as the American oil minister?
Chapter 1

My concerns faded later that evening while cleaning up some of the dirt in my palace bedroom before calling it a day. The room was large enough for about ten army cots and would eventually house five more ORHA oil advisors in another week, but I was the only inhabitant for now.

The windows throughout the palace had been shattered during the “shock and awe” bombing campaign, the massive US air force bombing of Baghdad in the first few days of hostilities. The dust storm that hit most of Iraq the night before had deposited a layer of dirt everywhere. The same storm woke me up at midnight; I was coughing because the dust was so thick that I could not breathe. I grabbed a towel from my duffle bag to filter my air and went back to sleep.

Creature comforts were nonexistent. Meals ready-to-eat (MREs) and bottled water were our nourishment. We had no electricity, no running water, and no indoor bathroom facilities. It did not seem like a palace at the time.

After cleaning things up, I reclined on my army cot and reflected on my new title, “Your Excellency, the Minister of Oil.” The title had a nice sound to it—delusions of grandeur, a temporary escape from reality! My new portfolio had proven oil reserves of more than 112 billion barrels; ExxonMobil’s oil and gas equivalent reserves were only about twenty billion barrels.

How did I get myself here? What did I do wrong, or right? A kid from East Wheeling, a neighborhood of Wheeling, West Virginia, known for steel mills and coal mines.

I was raised in an Irish–German Catholic family with two brothers and a sister, and religion and sports molded my early life. My father, Henry “Bud” Vogler, was a navy pilot during World War II. He joined the navy a year after graduating from high school and was placed into the navy aviator cadet program. The navy sent him to college for a couple of years and then through flight school. The war ended just as he graduated from flight school, so he left the navy to return to Wheeling and marry his high school sweetheart.

My mother, Margaret Ellen George, was the eldest of six children. Her father fought in World War I with the 42nd Infantry under a very capable military leader, Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur. My grandfather started the Wheeling American Legion Post #1 upon his return from France, one of the oldest in the United States.

Mom and Dad were married in December 1945 and children started arriving a couple of years later. Dad emphasized family values and sports. We played baseball, football, and basketball, depending on the month of the year. Football became the priority sport for us in high school; I was team captain in my senior year.
West Point was my selection for college after receiving a congressional appointment. I jokingly liked to say that I needed a more liberal and less disciplined education for college after twelve years of Catholic school.

The reality was that my motivation for attending West Point was the same as that of General Dwight Eisenhower, to get a free education. My desire to play Division I football also influenced me. Only Division III schools recruited me, so my plan was to “walk on” at West Point and make the football team. During my fifth practice on the West Point plebe team, the coach walked up to me and said, “Vogler, you are too slow. Find another sport to play.” I did.

A severe concussion during intramural boxing prevented me from participating in contact sports for a while. So, my attention turned to other activities. I was eventually appointed the editor in chief of our class yearbook, *The Howitzer*. I graduated in the class of 1973, the same class as my more famous classmates General John Abizaid and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry. My appreciation of the West Point experience increased exponentially with age and wisdom. The institution is an asset that has significantly contributed to the success of our great country since 1802.

Going to school with some of the best and brightest young Americans with great leadership potential was a recipe for success. My cadet military unit was company F-2, nicknamed the F-2 Zoo. The Zoo had developed its reputation a few years before my arrival, but we took pride in maintaining our company’s traditions. That folklore was steeped with heavy emphasis on the intramural contact sports like football, boxing, wrestling, and lacrosse. It seemed to work well. Just during my four years, company F-2 was the cadet home to such future leaders as General Martin Dempsey (chairman of the Joint Chiefs), Lieutenant General Ben Freakley, Major General Randy Castro, Under Secretary of Defense Mike Dominguez, and Tom Mason, Esq. These five and other Zoo cadets contributed to the success of *The Howitzer* in 1973.

Two weeks after graduation I married my high school sweetheart, Barbara Chapman, and eventually moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for my first assignment with an airborne unit. I enjoyed the camaraderie among the officers in our battalion and especially the pride that went with being a paratrooper.

All lieutenants were expected to attend and graduate from the 82nd Airborne Division jumpmaster course. My turn arrived during my first year. It was a two-week program and the first week consisted of instruction and classroom training. The second week was multiple jumps, with each student placed in the role of jumpmaster at least once. The student would be the jumpmaster while a few classmates would be the jumpers. Graders observed
in the back of the aircraft and graded every detailed activity and command given by the student jumpmaster. It took only one small mistake to fail the course. Attention to detail was imperative.

My try as jumpmaster was a success, but during my third jump for a fellow student jumpmaster, disaster almost struck. I nearly crashed and burned. I was the last jumper in a stick of jumpers and was carrying ninety pounds of equipment in front of me below my reserve parachute.

The signal lights next to the open aircraft door changed from red to green. The jumpmaster shouted, “Go, Go, Go,” keeping his jumpers moving quickly out the door. His commands of “Go” were barely audible above the loud noise of the aircraft engines. As I approached the door, my equipment caught something either on the jumper in front of me or on the floor of the aircraft, so my jump out the door was not as precise as it should have been; I botched my exit. The wind caught my equipment and started spinning me at a high rate, six or seven revolutions. My parachute had deployed, but it did not feel normal. The riser straps on my parachute were twisted so tight from my spinning that I could not look up to view my chute. I was falling at a higher speed than the other jumpers in my stick.

We were trained to bicycle with our legs when the risers were twisted, to help them untwist. Unfortunately, the ninety pounds of equipment in front of my legs restricted this effort. My fall continued at high speed and I knew that my time was running out. My adrenaline flow was at peak levels. Bicycling eventually worked! My chute fully opened. Looking up, I saw a beautifully inflated parachute.

But the danger was not over. One of the jumpers from an earlier stick was moving under me. All paratroopers realize the hazards of this situation. My parachute collapsed when he moved under me. He took my air. I landed on his inflated parachute. My legs were running as fast as possible, running off the side to get away from him. We were trained to quickly run off an inflated parachute when this happens. Adrenaline had me running faster than ever. I fell quickly toward the earth. My parachute reinflated just a moment before a very hard impact on the ground.

This was the first of many near-fatal events in my adult life. There were half a dozen during my prewar life, but they increased significantly between 2003 and 2011. Either I am extremely lucky or I have a great guardian angel.

My assignments at Fort Bragg taught me several things about myself. The most important was that the army was not for me. The post-Vietnam army of the mid-1970s was not a good army. Drug use and alcoholism among the troops were serious problems. Several soldiers in my first platoon were given the option by law enforcement officials in their hometowns of going to jail or joining the army.
The equipment was old, and senior officers were under constant pressure to make their unit readiness look better than it really was. That said, some of my friendships developed during that first tour have continued for life, like the friendship with one of our country’s great orthopedic surgeons, Dr. Tom McKenzie.

My early decision to leave the army enabled me to develop a transition plan. The University of Utah offered an executive MBA program at Pope Air Force Base, adjacent to Fort Bragg. It was one of the first of its kind and many junior military officers took advantage of the program. Robert McDonald, former secretary of veterans affairs, former chairman of Proctor & Gamble, and West Point class of 1975, took advantage of the same program during his first assignment at Fort Bragg.

With my West Point engineering degree and MBA, a civilian career in late 1977 was my preference. Hold on. The army had other ideas, and one year remained on my five-year West Point commitment. The army personnel office advised me that an overseas tour was necessary. My options were a one-year, unaccompanied (without wife) tour to Korea or a three-year, accompanied tour to Germany. Guten Tag, Frau Vogler, we are going to Germany!

The three years in Germany passed quickly. A recruiting agency prepared me for transitioning to a civilian career. Our daughter, Lindsay, was born at the Landstuhl military hospital in April 1980, and we all returned to the United States in December 1980.

After just a few corporate interviews and offers, Mobil Oil was my choice. They sent me to their petrochemical facility in Beaumont, Texas. The facility was new and Mobil was planning major expansions over the following five years. I stayed for more than six years. During those years, we saw the addition of our son, Chase. Jobs in the production, engineering, and contracts departments provided good junior management experience.

Mobil sent the family and me to Saudi Arabia in 1987 for an opportunity at the new Yanbu joint venture export fuels refinery. This assignment helped prepare me for my future Iraq work. The exposure to Middle East culture, refinery management, and oil pricing gave me skillsets that eventually served me well in Iraq.

The first Gulf War occurred during my tour in Yanbu. Mobil immediately evacuated all the families; the employees stayed on the job. Our refinery became the primary supplier of military fuel to the US military for the war. We were located in theater but far from Kuwait on the Red Sea coast. My army reserve unit at the time of the first Gulf War was the EUCOM HQ in Stuttgart, Germany. My mobilization to active duty in Stuttgart to support the war effort was canceled when EUCOM recognized the role of our refinery as a primary supplier of fuel for the war.
The four years in Yanbu were enough to get me assigned to the Mobil Oil headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia, in September 1991. Several staff positions followed for me. One of the highlights of my Fairfax career was being part of a great American corporate turnaround. Mobil's US Marketing and Refining Division undertook several cost-cutting and reorganization initiatives in the early 1990s to move the financial performance from worst to first among its US competition. That competition included Exxon, Amoco, Shell, Texaco, Chevron, and BP. Mobil maintained that leadership for five years until the merger with Exxon.

David Norton, creator of the “Balanced Scorecard,” has featured Mobil Oil’s corporate success story in several of his books. A professional highlight for me was being placed on the implementation team with Norton’s Renaissance Solutions consulting group.

One of my jobs during that time was to advise our division president daily on key performance indicators and implement the scorecard strategy. The lesson I relearned during those years was the same lesson drilled into me at West Point: it’s all about leadership.

My post-merger position with ExxonMobil was a good job. I was the planning manager for a Global Procurement organization with more than three thousand employees. The US Government Accounting Office (GAO) considered our company’s Procurement organization as one of the three best in the country. I participated in a benchmarking exercise with the GAO in 2000. The GAO was charged with recommending changes to government procurement based on industry best practices.

My twenty-one-year career with Mobil Oil and ExxonMobil ended in February 2002 when my request to receive the executive financial separation package was approved. This “golden parachute” provided the financial incentive to exit. It was available to Mobil Oil executives departing within two years of the merger.

The ExxonMobil culture was not for me. Decentralization and empowerment had been keys to success under Mobil Oil, but control and centralization best described the new culture under ExxonMobil. I had a great boss, Dr. Jean Baderschneider, vice president of Global Procurement. Jean had the sharpest mind of all of my previous supervisors. This made my decision to leave very difficult, but I caught myself counting the months until retirement. A successful fight with cancer in 1996–1997 reminded me of my mortality; life was too short to be counting down months until retirement. My last six months were spent in Indonesia to fix some company problems. An Indonesian insurgency had attacked our pipelines and shut down operations. In return for taking this six-month assignment, my reward was the financial...
separation package. My experience in Indonesia with fixing pipelines after insurgent attacks would eventually serve me well in Iraq.

My army reserve assignment in the late 1990s and in 2002 was as a military academy liaison officer working with West Point admissions and high school students in northern Virginia. This work was very satisfying. Five seniors at Centreville High School landed appointments to West Point in 1997. Similar to many of my northern Virginia appointees, those five individuals graduated from West Point, served tours in war zones, and continued their careers with the army. As of 2015, all five had achieved the rank of major and continued their career in the military.

My West Point work also helped me network with fellow graduates in the DC area. It led to an additional army reserve assignment with the headquarters at the Army Corps of Engineers. My supervisors in that unit attended a meeting at the Pentagon in early fall 2002 that discussed an Iraq oil planning effort. They forwarded my resume and that initiated my Iraq appointment.

On Wednesday, October 23, 2002, I went for an interview at the Pentagon after being told by my army reserve unit that I was needed there by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). My only question was, “What is OSD?” The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P) was going to be my new workplace for a while.

The Pentagon was an impressive structure from the outside, but walking the corridors on the inside was inspiring. Pictures of famous military leaders and military hardware lined the walls. My eyes were wide open as I was quickly escorted through the halls and into an interview.

My interview that day in October 2002 was with Michael H. Mobbs. Mike had just been appointed to lead an interagency planning cell, the Energy Infrastructure Planning Group (EIPG). Mobbs was a lawyer and protégé of Doug Feith, the undersecretary of defense for policy. His law degree was from the University of Chicago Law School. He was brought into the Pentagon with the Bush Administration and had been working on several issues, including the prison issue at Guantanamo Bay.

Mike told me to take a seat as he sat down and said, “Gary, let me get to the point. I have reviewed your civilian resume and I think you can help us. We have been tasked by Secretary Rumsfeld to put together an interagency planning cell with participation from State, CIA, and DOE. Do you have a current security clearance?”

My army reserve security clearance was up-to-date at the SECRET level. I mentioned this, but I suspect that he already knew the answer since he had been in contact with the Corps of Engineers.
“What are the terms of reference for this planning cell?” I asked.

Mike pulled out a document with the bright red secret cover sheet. He turned the document for me to read. It was a one-page letter signed by Secretary Rumsfeld outlining our task.

Mike gave me a couple of minutes to digest the contents of Rumsfeld’s letter. He told me that there were no plans to activate me within the army reserves for the work. He was bringing me in on a contract for a period of no more than sixty days. He said that no one currently assigned to the team had oil industry experience like mine. The DOE person was scheduled to arrive from Wyoming in a few days and he operated oil wells for DOE out west, but he had never worked for an oil company. Mike then asked me if I was interested.

I looked down at the document one more time and realized the importance of what he was asking me to do. “Mike, when do you want me to start?”

That was the beginning of five months of prewar planning followed by seventy-five months in Kuwait and Iraq, until my final departure from Baghdad at the end of September 2011. I had a seventeen-month tour (March 2003 through July 2004) and a fifty-eight month tour (December 2006 through September 2011) under the Department of Defense. I returned to Iraq in 2015 for an assessment of the oil sector under a USAID contract. All my tours were adventures; some had more adrenaline rushes in a month than most Americans experience in a lifetime.

As a civilian, I had no political or agency loyalty issues. My politics were centrist, with no chosen political party affiliation. My parents were Kennedy Democrats, but my grandparents had been staunch Republicans. As a successful ExxonMobil employee for twenty-one years, an army reserve officer (rank of lieutenant colonel) for more than twenty years, and a West Point graduate, I was well qualified for the demanding assignment. Some of my observations in the oil sector prompted questions at the time, and some of those questions remain unanswered or only partially answered today.

What role did oil play in the decision to go to war? What is the Haifa pipeline and why did the press question the oil minister so much about this pipeline? What were some of the oil agendas and what impact did they have on the mission? Why did our bombing targets avoid all oil infrastructures except for an oil pump station in Anbar Province? Why did the Iraqis attack oil pipelines? Was the prewar oil planning effort effective? How did the ministry headquarters get spared from the looting and burning? Why was fuel supply the top priority in 2003? What role did oil play in the surge of 2007? What is the untold story of Iraq’s auction of their large oil fields in 2009?

The answers to these questions will be discussed in the following chapters. The search for answers to these questions prompted troubling thoughts...
for me. We lost 4,489 American military personnel between the start of 2003 and the end of 2011. Many faces of those young men and women that made the ultimate sacrifice were etched in my brain. More than thirty thousand American servicemen and servicewomen received severe, life-changing injuries. The Treasury estimated that the total cost of the Iraq War would pass $2 trillion when veterans’ costs are paid. This was a huge cost to our country for what currently appears to be of little to no benefit.

There are a couple of messages throughout this book. First, partnering and teamwork between Iraqis and the coalition enabled us to overcome huge obstacles and achieve successes that kept the oil flowing. Most of those obstacles were self-imposed because of American arrogance. Despite a lack of military resources on the ground, Washington political agendas, CPA’s payroll and budgeting policies, government procurement delays, a Syria agenda, and other problems, the oil continued to flow. Even the Iraqi obstacles of the insurgency, criminal activity, and political decisions were not enough to stop the many successes in the Iraqi oil sector. This book covers most of those successes in detail.

Second, I am now convinced that oil did play a role in the decision to go to war. I would not have made that statement prior to 2014. Learning several facts changed my mind. It is my opinion that a dream to provide Iraqi oil to Israel played a role in the decision to go to war. How much of a role is not known, but shipping oil worth $30 to $50 billion through Israel every year would have enriched many and solved Israel’s serious energy problems. Several chapters discuss this oil agenda.