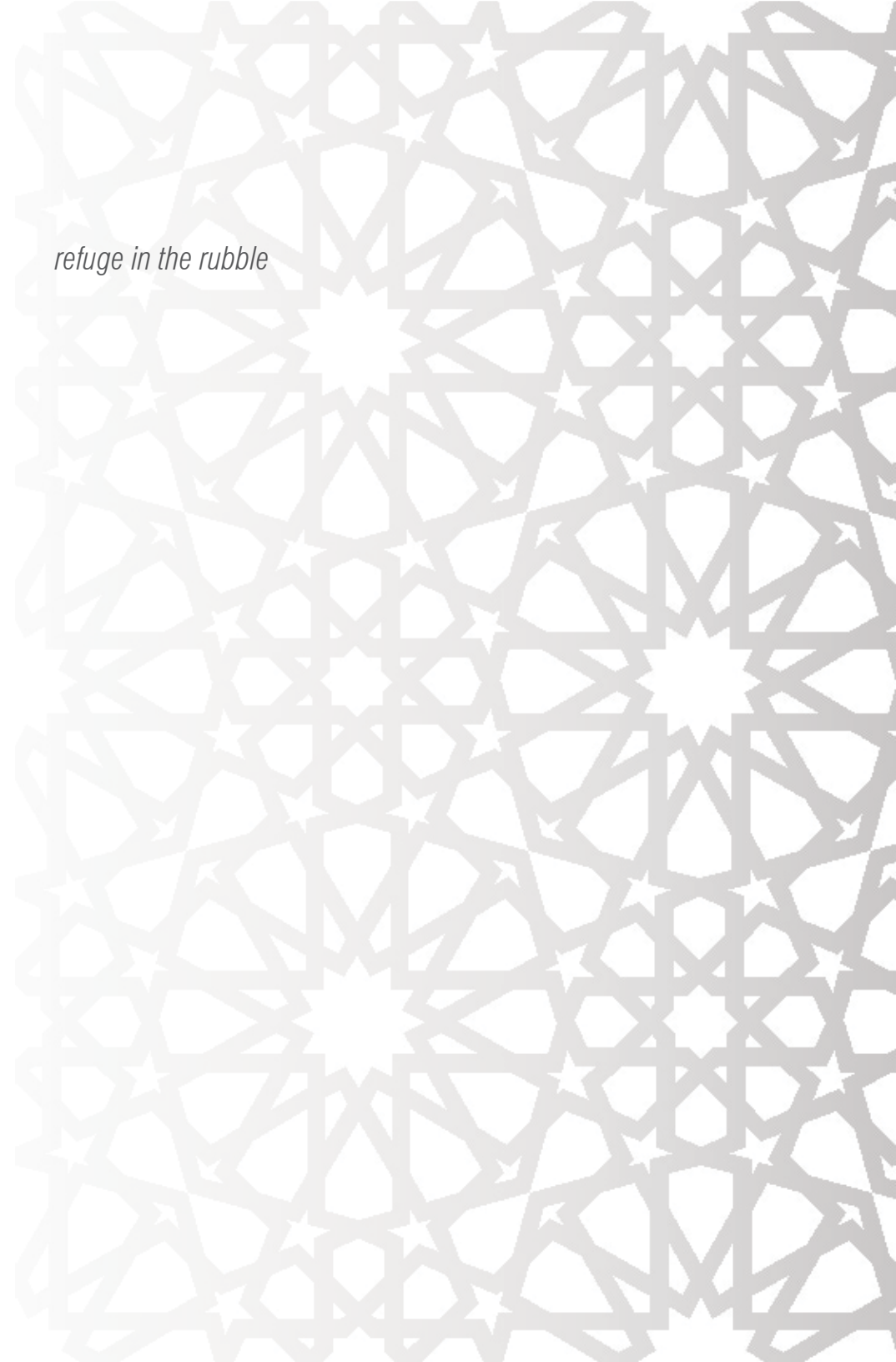


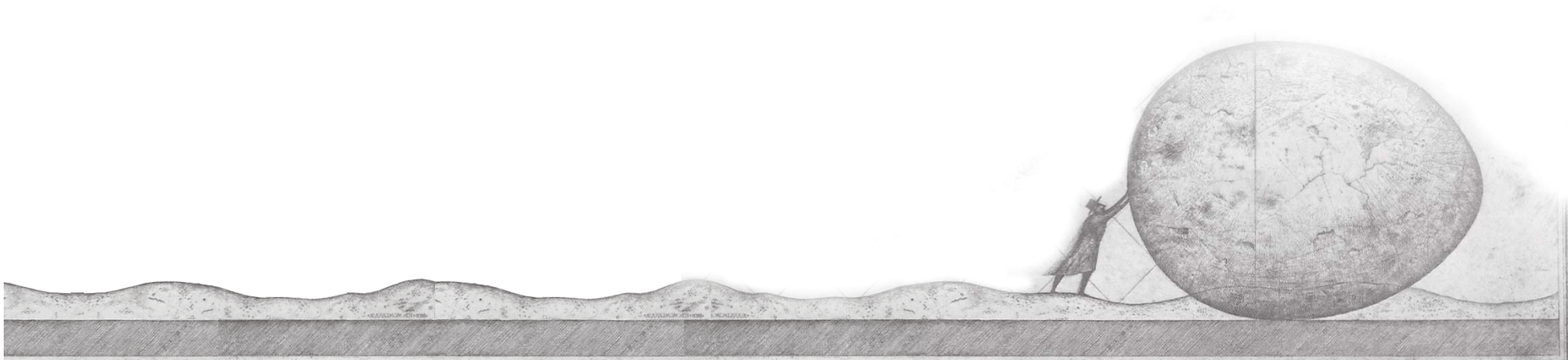
refuge in the rubble



*Island of Stability
or the open-sky museum of
stone sculpture in the
centre of the town.*

*For those who are tired of plastic
vanity, for those who feel sick
of foam rubber life, for those
who believe in heavy things
that are difficult to move...*

Brodsky and Utkin



ali alsaleh
architecture 479
fall 2014

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at its most basic responsibility, **architecture** as a profession **demand**s for a sense of **security**, a sense of **permanence**, and a sense of **home**.

this thesis intends to explore the role of space as a tool for refuge, a place to find comfort. since man was of Earth, shelter had been his ultimate necessity, in the caverns and under rocks. he was safe and he was familiar, away from the dangers of the unknown. and if his home was to be compromised, a new home was to be found, with hopes of a similar promise.

now, thousands of years later, we find ourselves searching for that same promise, a constant hum of nomads looking for a place to call our own, in pitched roofs and high-rises, in locked bedroom doors and soft plush blankets.

there is a peace to be found.



in order to properly explore the notion of architecture as hope and peace, I find it necessary to paint the extremes; that of a post-crisis scenario.

for if there was a time when one was hopeless, distressed, and afraid of tomorrow, it is the moments after war, when the rubble is all that is left after the dust settles. there is no more home. there is no more security. there is no more permanence.

and so we return to the womb in order to be cleansed, to start anew. only then can we move forward, our aim targeted towards a better tomorrow.

in this state of reconstruction, we begin at zero, like the caveman, to rebuild our trust in our nation, in our community, and in ourselves. and architecture's responsibility is to adapt and grow alongside us, aiding in the process.

at such a time of ambiguity and restlessness, architecture must stand as the solidity of the future, rooted in the grounds of certainty. because to rebuild means to re-live; to re-inhabit and to reassure oneself that the troubles of the past, although not forgotten, may rest below the foundation of the present.

Nan Ellin, in the *Architecture of Fear*, urges a fight for the human spirit and to constantly improve upon our world for future generations with the faith that things can and will get better. "Rather than crush this human spirit and the desire for connectedness, we must nourish them through our words and our works."

only then can we make way for a better generation.

there are three distinct settlement sites that refuge finds as
campground for a number of patrons. they are separated due
to the urgent role they have on the user, from none to all.

range of refuge

- _autonomy
- _control
- _necessity

autonomy_

as camps of choice, these sites range from localized to institutionalized organizations, from sleepovers in the backyard to Hawaiian retreats, and from Mecca to Burning Man. circumscribed by freedom, they act as refuge from our everyday norm, in order to teach, to follow, to pray, or to protest.



Boy Scout Camp_

"Camp is usually located in some spot sheltered by hills or rocks for the double purpose of securing the full warmth of the sun's rays, and screening it from the notice of strolling Indians that may happen in the vicinity. Within a convenient proximity to it stands a grove, from which an abundance of dry fuel is procurable when needed, and equally close the ripplings of a water-course salute the ear with their music."

Rufus Sage
Boy Scout Fieldbook (1846)

control_

as sites regulated by systems of power, they focus on strategic camping areas that respond to perceived threats, expected hazards, or immediate pressures. controlled by force, they are tools to oversee migration, work, and public exposure.



Concentration Camp_

designed as temporary installations by the Third Reich, Auschwitz and others were places for extermination. disregarding the basic needs of human rights, they still provided somewhat of a standard for shelter and nutrition, at least for a time. displaced Jewish persons and other minorities were forced to make a new home.

necessity_

exploring the transient spaces of relief and assistance, these sites respond to the power of circumstance. due to external forces such as military conflicts, economic shifts, and natural disasters, it is determined the location, scale and duration of the spaces.



Mass Shelter Camp_

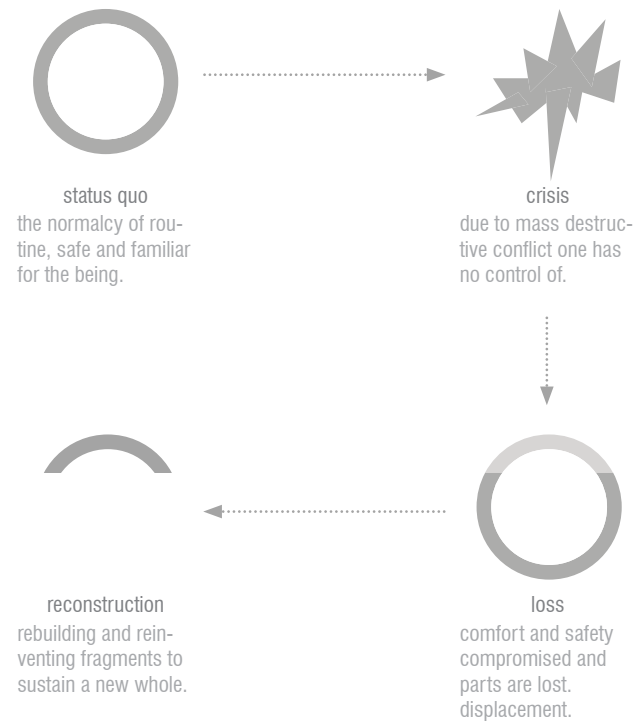
declared as a “refuge of last resort”, New Orleans’ Astro-dome contained over twenty thousand evacuees during Hurricane Katrina. the floodwaters transformed the arena into an island and “refugees” were forced to remain there for weeks until they would soon be relocated elsewhere.

focusing on refuge due to necessity,
for those that have displaced their homes and displaced their
families, the time after their sudden loss is a pace of doubt
and indistinctness. it is that of nomadic urgency.

yet neither rushed nor static, they roam between the
fragments of their surroundings in search of settlement, a
subdued chaos stuck between time and place.

time.place

refuge and displacement sites are defined by where they
exist and for how long, a realm blurred between the
temporary and permanent.



path to displacement

in his 1943 paper, “A Theory of Human Motivation”, psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed man’s hierarchy of needs. often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental need at the bottom.

if the first four layers, called the “deficiency needs”, are not met, the individual will feel anxious and tense. this is obviously apparent after a crisis that dismantles the pyramid already in place for the individual.

displaced individuals must begin anew from the bottom in order to sustain equilibrium within themselves and their surroundings.

in addition, for infants and children, Attachment Theory is a model by John Bowlby that states their set-goal is to maintain or achieve proximity to attachment figures, usually the parents.

yet in times of mass crisis, children are often left orphaned and at a loss of a primary caregiver. this spirals into individuals of flawed normalcy that creates difficulties to attain the top three needs of the pyramid.

in order to reach personal growth and fulfillment for an individual, architecture must recognize its role as a foundation. along with food and water, it is shelter, an inherent necessity to support physiological and safety needs. for the power of the profession to diminish fear through design, it holds a certain responsibility for itself and designers.





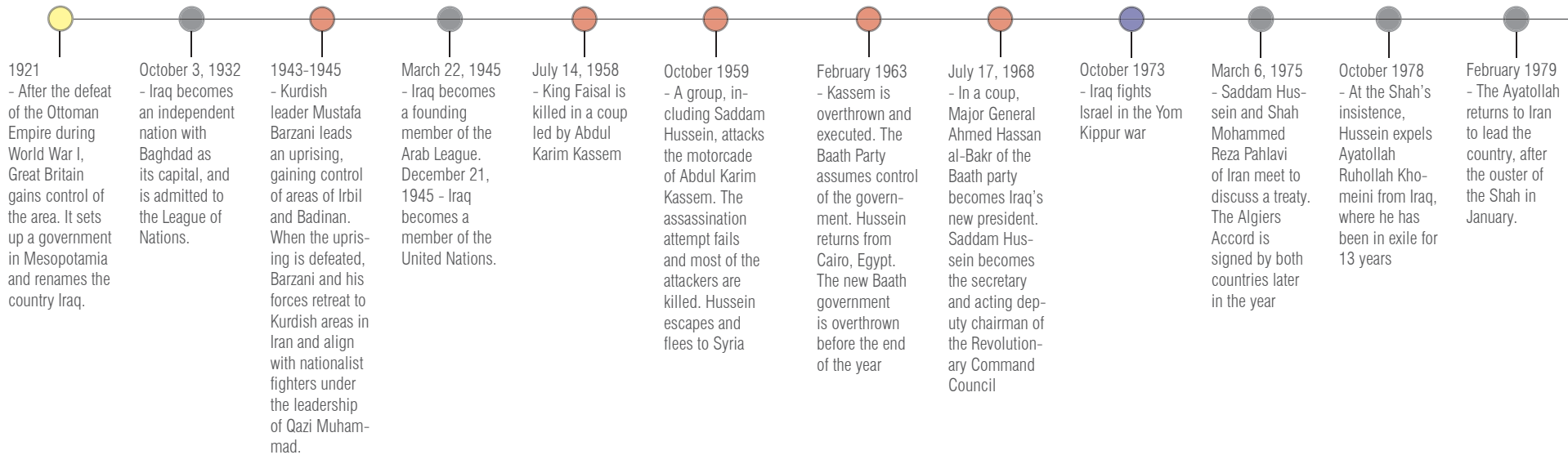
over the last decade, Iraq has witnessed an incredible rise in the number of displaced orphans. currently at over one million, most of these children, aged from birth to pre-teens, are left to fend for themselves in the nation's war-ridden streets. as a result of the ongoing war on terror, as well as the current ISIS crisis, for this generation of the new millennium, conflict in their homeland, rubble in their backyards, and missiles in the sky have become their "normal."

what's left of their future after the dust settles?
a day by day struggle to survive, as the 10 year old boy becomes the sole guardian of his 3 year old sister.
and for those privileged enough to room in an orphanage, they are forced to rot in unsanitary, unsafe, and crumbling housing shelters. without guardians, adequate nutrition, clothing, medical care, and education, they will grow up to be the bleak future of a slowly decaying nation.

in effort to address this issue, my research aims to raise awareness of the problem and begin to explore the necessary steps to rehabilitate these children and to provide for them a possibility of an optimistic future.

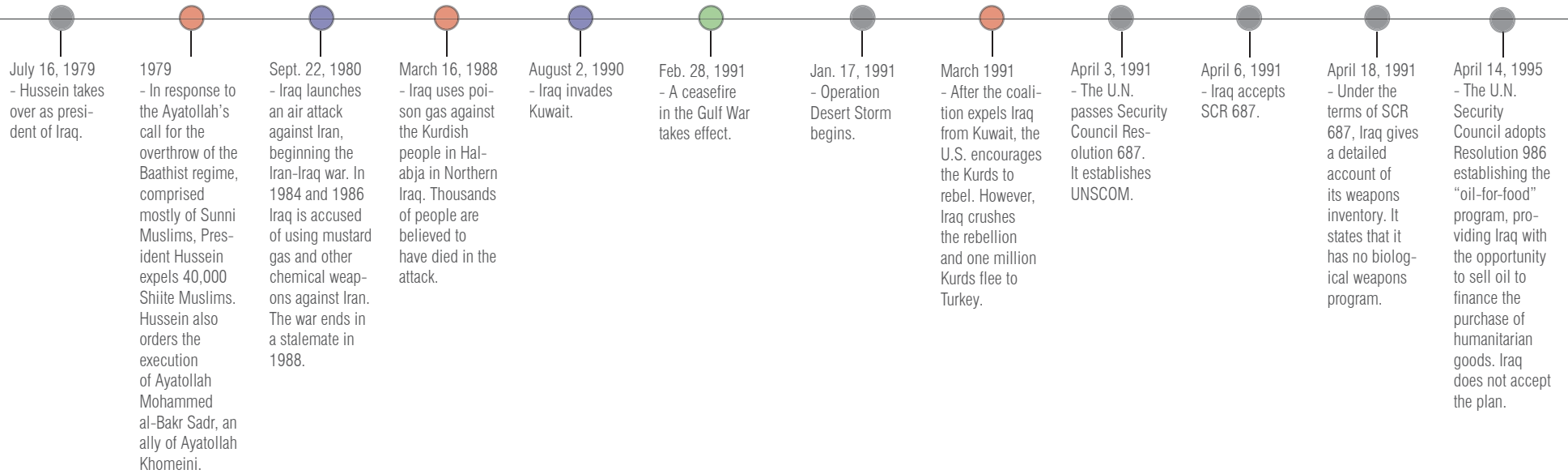
*a native of Iraq myself and a displaced refugee in 2000, I chose to study my homeland in hopes of grappling with some peace of mind at the chaos that constricts the nation.
this is no solution.
this is no resolution.
this is awareness. this is acceptance and response.*

a look into the time line of Iraq bleeds a history of turmoil.



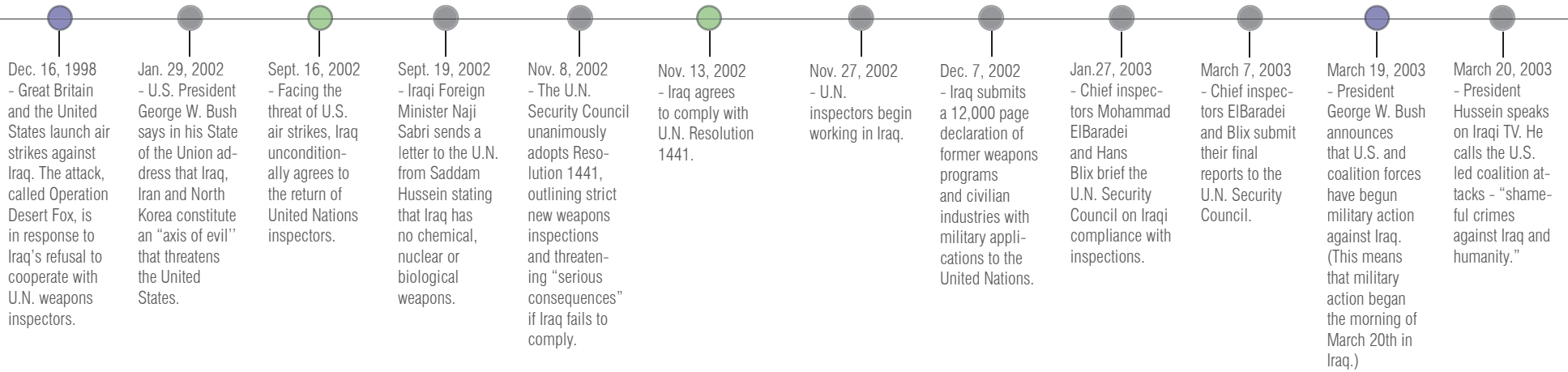
Legend

- beginning of time line
- internal conflict/ strike
- external conflict
- treaty/ agreement
- significant event



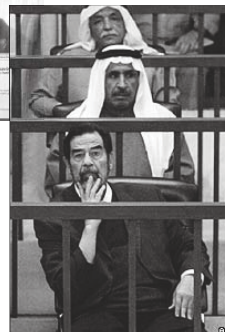
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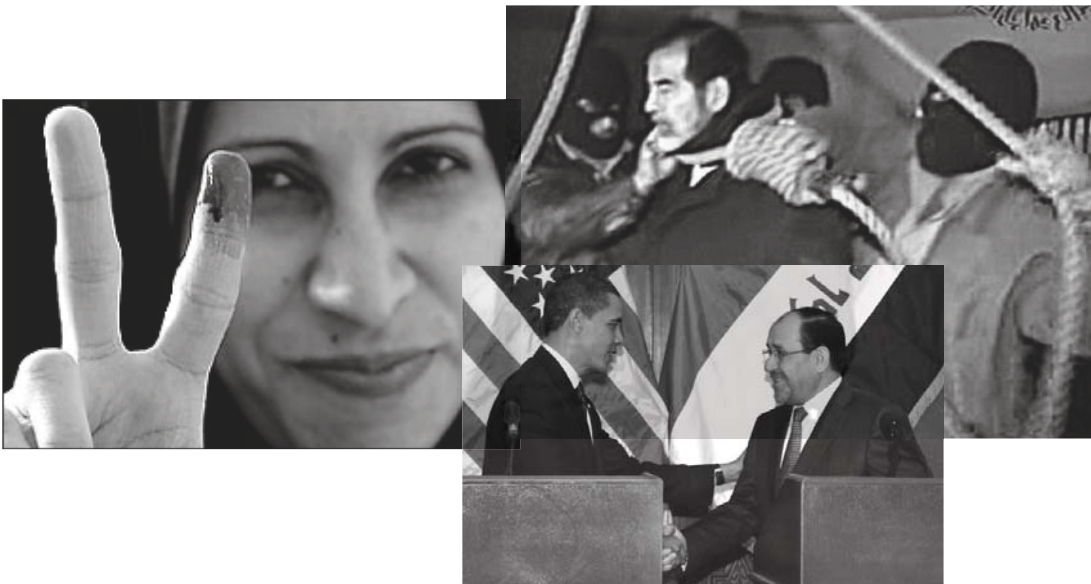
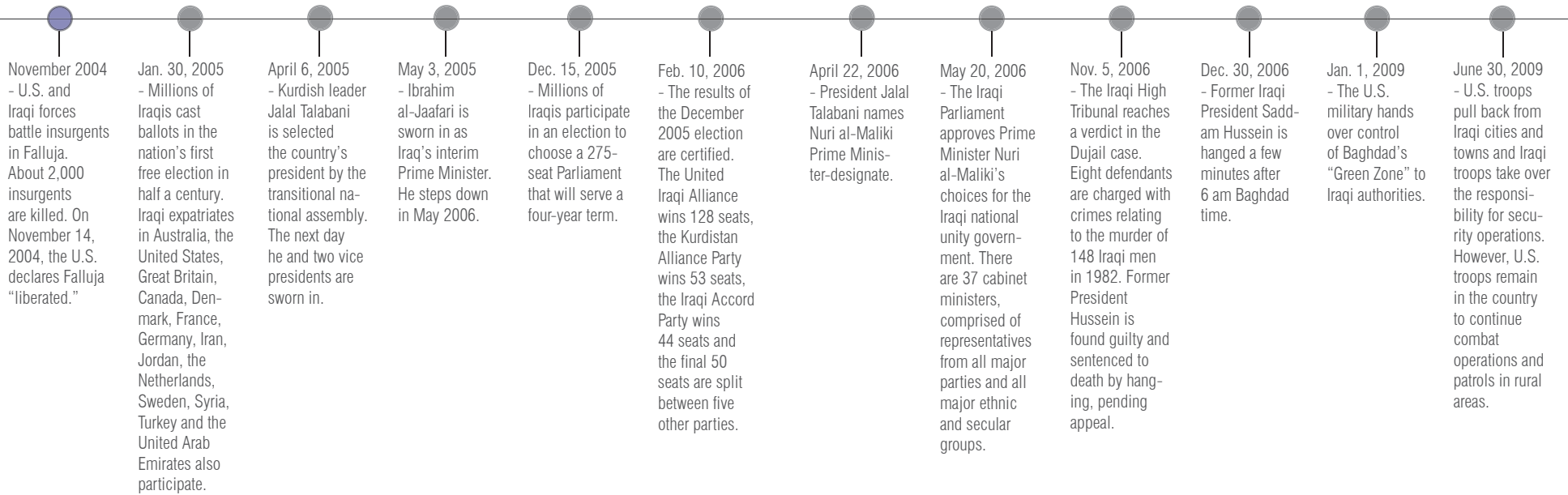
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Legend

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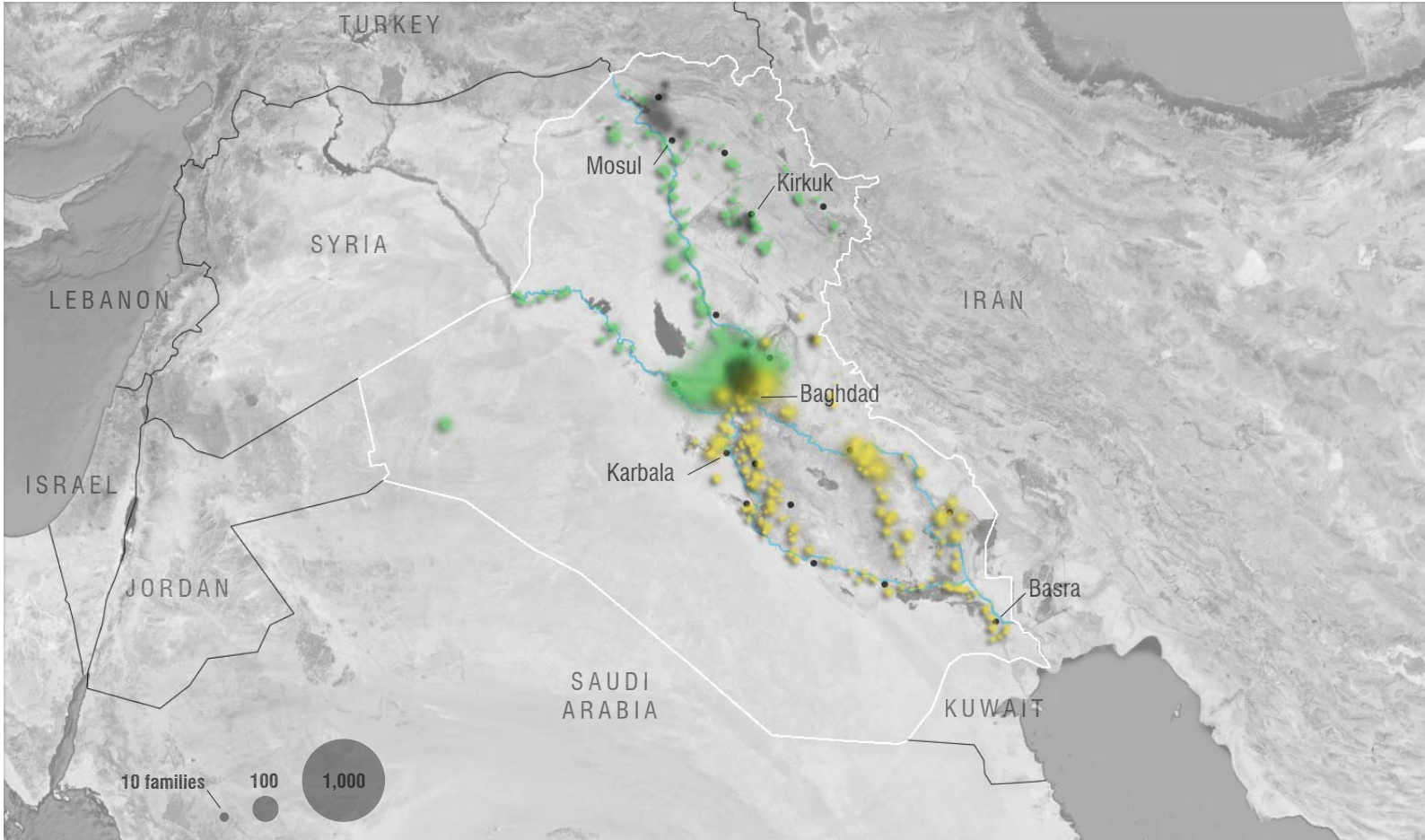


Legend

- beginning of time line
- internal conflict/ strike
- external conflict
- treaty/ agreement
- significant event

location of IDP refugees

due to ISIS's growing influence, the thousands of internally displaced persons were scattered and divided north and south of the capital of Baghdad. not only did families lose their homes, many lost their children and were forced to camp out in barren grounds, either waiting to die or start a new life.



Religion of IDPs

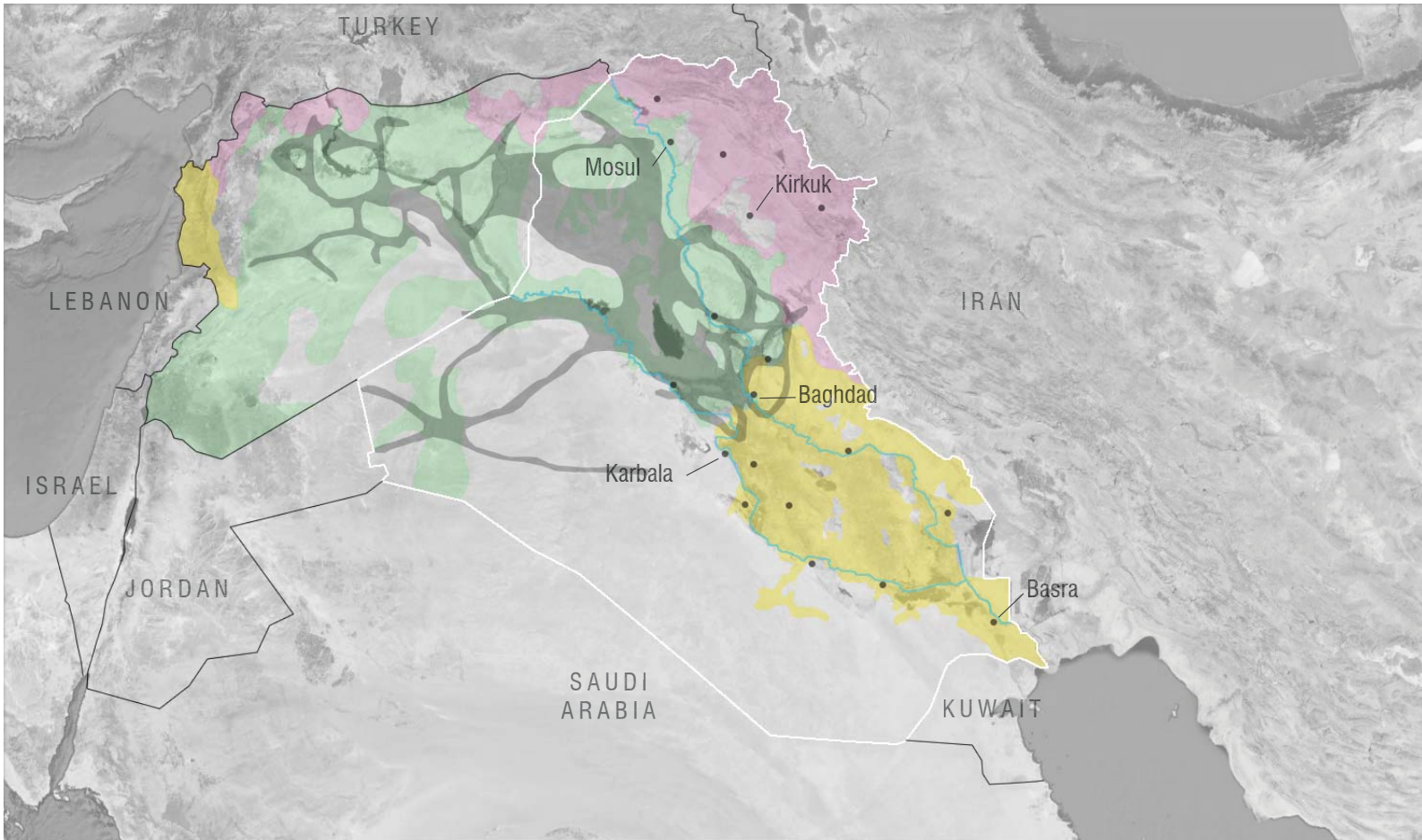


Places of Origin



separation of demographics
due to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

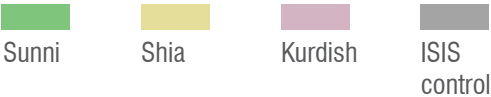
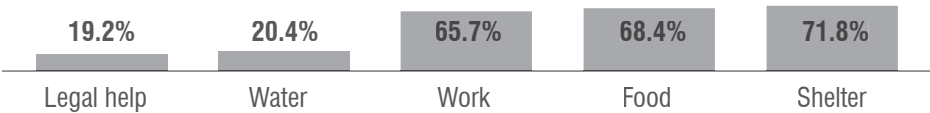
ISIS's strategic control of both Iraq
and Syria created real disparities
between the different sects of Islam.



Living Arrangements



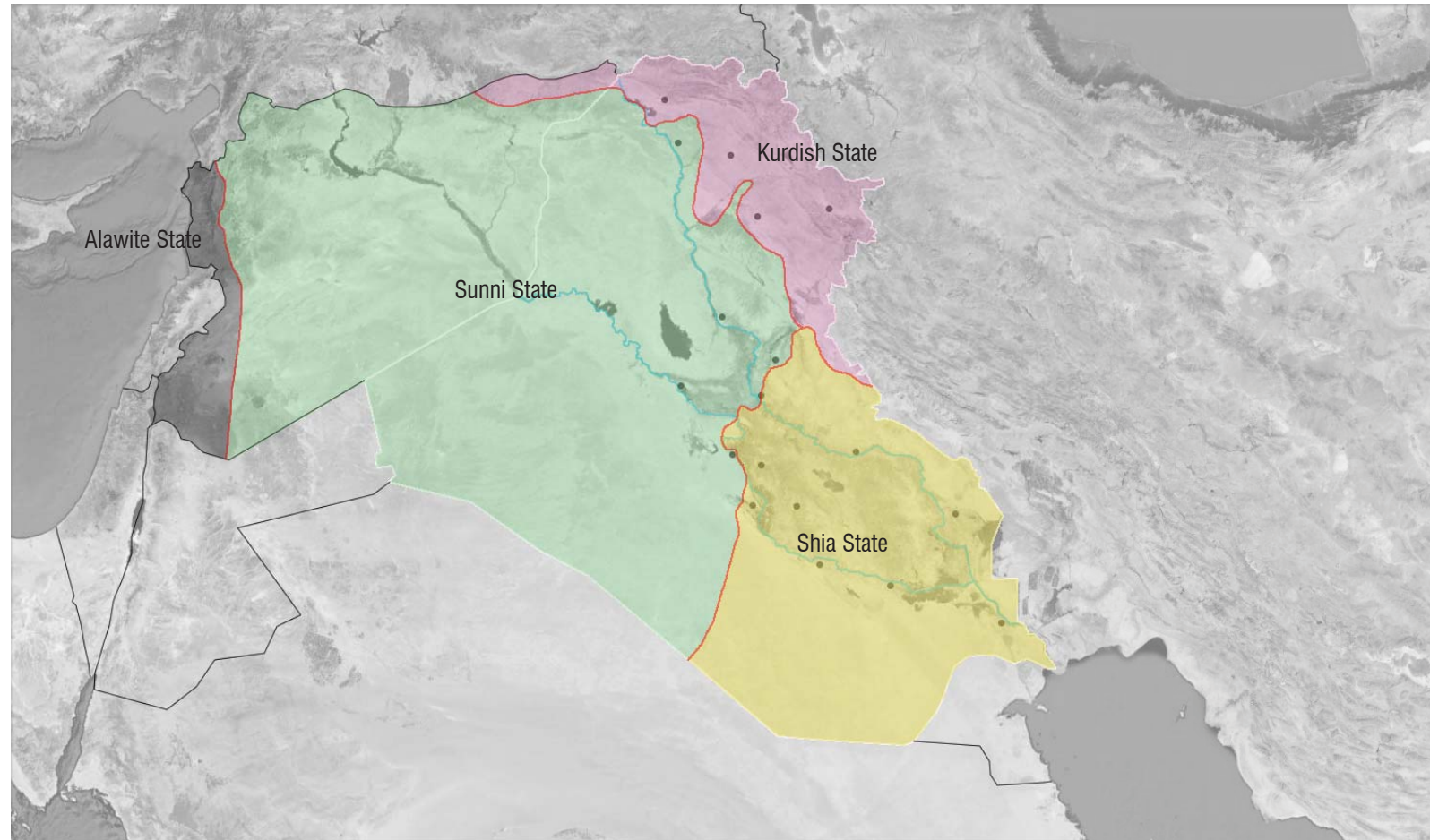
Top Needs



proposed future borders of Iraq and Syria

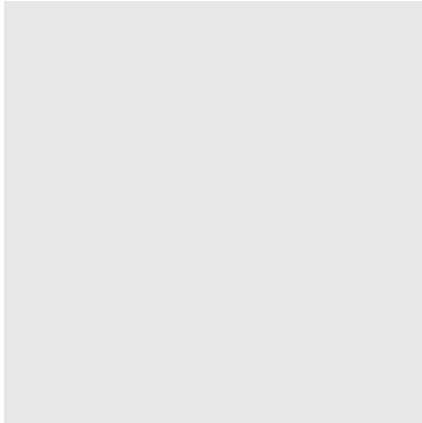
if ISIS continues to expand and gain political influence, the borders of Iraq and Syria would be assumed null and separate new states are to be hard lined based on the sects.

although extremely saddening to lose my native land, such a proposition would hypothetically cause some temporary rest within the area. and as such a rebuilding process can take place in all sections.



Hypothetical
state borders

reality as...



*the common and the flawed, the deficient
and the acceptance of everyday.*

architecture as...



*the ideal, the basics of necessity for hu-
mankind, and the representation of stan-
dard.*

exposure



at risk of being vulnerable, uncovered and helplessly in the way of danger.

shelter



to be protected and secured, from man, nature, and oneself.

temporary



displaced, wavering and unsettled, resting on shreds of ambiguity.

permanence



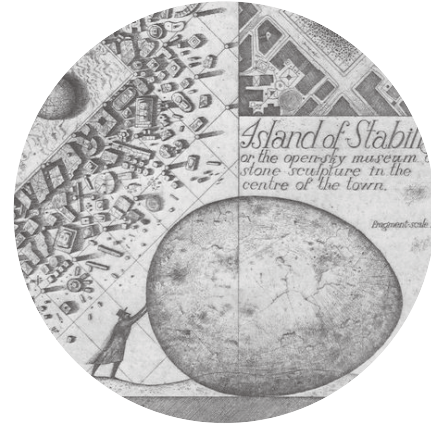
to be rooted in a home, finding comfort in the longevity of time.

flaccidity



*an uncertainty in living, grounded
loosely in doubt and misinformation.*

solidity



*assuradness and trust, in one's environ-
ment and society.*

distress



a condition of anxiety and grief, augmented by the chaos, and hopeless to being altered.

comfort



to be content, at peace with the well-being of oneself and their surroundings.

danger



in constant and consistent crisis, an everyday jeopardy of day by day survival.

safety



to find assurance in the asylum, detached from harm.

I am interested in a location that can boast the potential to reconstruct a nation and its people. If the division of states should occur, the **city of Basra** would most likely become the capital of the Shia sect.

Located in the southern tip of Iraq, it holds several accolades of a promising future.

_ *basrah* (arabic for “the overwatcher”)

_ Iraq’s 2nd largest city (1.5 mil)
_ primarily Shia

_ world’s 4th largest oil reserve
_ Iraq’s primary port
_ international airport
_ terminal point for pipelines
_ largest plantation of datepalms in the world

_ where Tigris and Euphrates Rivers meet
_ “Venice of the East”
_ foundation of Islamic thought and Arab literature
_ historic location of Sumer
_ home of Sinbad the Sailor
_ proposed Garden of Eden



penetrated by a complex network of canals and streams, the city is vital for irrigation and other agricultural use. these canals were once used to transport goods and people throughout the city, but during the last two decades, pollution and a continuous drop in water levels have made river navigation impossible in the canals.

the heart of the fertile crescent, it populates on agricultural goods, including rice, maize corn, barley, dates, and wheat.

shipping, logistics, and transport are also major industries.

yet it's economy is largely dependant on the oil industry, estimating a reserve of 115 billion barrels.

In Voltaire's Zadig "Bassora" is the site of an international market where the hero meets representatives of all the world religions and concludes that "the world is one large family which meets at Bassora"

In H.G. Wells's "The Shape of Things to Come", where the "Modern State" is a the center of a world state emerging after a collapse of civilization, and becomes in effect the capital of the world.



Within the governate of Basra, one possible site may be explored:



Al-Qurnah, Iraq

_74 km NW of Basra

_qurnah (arabic for "connection/joint")

_garden of eden

_biblical tree of knowledge

_west qurna field as world's 2nd largest oil field

for the city of Basra, for its families and the future of their kids and this decaying nation, I propose an institution that aims to act as a vocational marketplace. it is a city within a city. Aldo van Eyck stated that "the analogy of city and house: a small world within a large one, a large world within a small one, a house as a city, a city as a house, a home for children."

accepting the horrific realities of the present, it is necessary to acknowledge the state of these children. they need shelter, they need guidance, they need hope. they are the upcoming generation, and with no hand to hold, they will grab rifles.

a vocational marketplace would grant them housing and care and education, as well as become a trade school to cement a positive influence in their lives and the community.

relying on agricultural abundance, the oil industry, and a strong passion for arts and literature, the institution would provide necessary jobs for the adults, and the children that have been forced to grow up too quickly.

as the sites themselves create a context of connections, they can easily become a hub for a new Iraq, a doorway to the rest of the world.

in order to propose this architectural intervention, we must assume that the hypothetical borders separating the sects are well on their way, and it is a time for rehabilitation and reconstruction; that the new Iraq values its future. only then can its citizens hold on to permanence, attain security, and find a new home.

it is my hope that the project, although not the solution, can become a catalyst for progress. and where there is architecture, there is growth. there is evolution.

the intent is to give hope, to carve space that nourishes the soul and eases the mind.

"our problem here is that we do not receive academic education. If only the government could build special schools for us to guarantee our future."

_9 year old girl

"Existing to offer. Believing in what they can become and what they deserve. Refusing to ignore."

"Home is not just a place to find comfort at night. Home is where comfort finds you, and makes everything better."

"For now, the streets are empty. The orphanage has gathered in the children with the hope that someday soon it can introduce young life and joy back into cities that have seen far too much sorrow."

"the large hand and the small hand clung to one another, one no more desperate than the other"

"Sheltering the growth of a nation."

"A child finds refuge in a small collection of tattered photographs. Sitting quietly in a caravan full of strangers, she wonders who she had become through this violence. Camp Bravo in 4 hours."

*"Throat aches bare,
lungs breathe sorrow.
Gut cramps pain,
heart pumps dry.
Knees bow to mommy.
Yet I cannot cry
for one more angel."*

"The temenos wall, the divider between the chaos beyond and the world within."

*"Have you ever seen a grown man cry?
Ground vibrations shake my bones. Screams cut my ears.
Under billows of dust, the Man has taken them.
You don't know pain until you've lost a loved one."*

"Comfort, peaceful, play. Diverting, never forgetting."

*"lost amongst the dust
small hands groping for safe walls
she cannot see love
but only in her guardian
he who fights the same"*

"Someone holds your hand. Finally you are not alone."

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