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## **RUSSIA AND IRAQ DEEPEN ENERGY, MILITARY TIES**

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The James Town Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor (9 December 2020)

John C. K. Daly

As the United States hastens its drawdown of troops in Iraq before the January 20 inauguration of President-elect Joseph Biden, Russia is seeking to fill the developing geopolitical vacuum there. On November 25, following discussions in Moscow with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, Russias top diplomat, Sergei Lavrov, remarked that Russian energy firms have invested billions of dollars in the Iraqi oil industry. When it comes to energy, the largest Russian companies are working in Iraq together with their partners. These are Lukoil, Rosneft, Gazprom-Neft and Bashneft. All four have invested more than \$13 billion in the Iraqi economy, Lavrov told journalists (Interfax, November 25). He added that Moscow was also prepared to increase arms deliveries to Baghdad, stating, We are ready to meet any Iraqi needs for Russian-made military products. Our country has traditionally played and continues to play a very important and significant role in ensuring Iraqs defense capability and equipping its army and security forces, including in the context of continuing terrorist threats (Mid.ru, November 25).

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