In this chapter an analysis of the nature of state and political development in Iraq has been made. The chapter also highlights the changing character of the Elites and Bureaucracy and the political culture in Iraq. Besides these, ethnic challenges to the Iraqi state particularly the Kurdish issue and Shi'a Sunni dichotomy have also been dealt with. In the end, the changes which have taken place after Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf crisis have been examined.

The modern Iraqi state was created out of the former Ottoman vilayets (provinces) of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Almost the entire territory of today's Iraq had come under control of the United Kingdom in 1920 and remained so till 1932 - the year Iraq got independence. The colonial state was built on the existing Ottoman apparatus and personnel and financed by indirect taxes that hit the poorest class severely. During the period of monarchy in Iraq (1932-58), the state reflected a striking condensation of the balance of existing social forces, among which foreign capital was
clearly dominant. However, the World War II changed the then existing scenario. After the war the economic activities in the country increased because of the demand for locally produced goods. But the resulting gains were restricted to landlords, merchants and state officials.¹

The 1958 Revolution brought an end to the monarchy phase in Iraq and General Abdul Karim Qasim, who led this Revolution became the Prime Minister of Iraq. The first proclamation informed the people that the National Government would be a "popular republic".² The decade that followed the Revolution was a period of turbulence that saw realignment and recomposition of class forces and an open struggle for class hegemony, primarily focused on control of the state apparatus. The revolution was brought about by the "free officers" (a secret organization within the military) who can be characterized as petty bourgeoisie in respect of their social origins and political inclinations. In Batatu's


words, it was "the climax of the struggle of a whole
generation of middle, Lower-middle and working classes".3

In July 1968, the Ba'ath party, in alliance with right
wing military officers, captured power in a bloodless coup. Under Ba'thist rule, the Iraqi state seized hold of,
manipulated and thereby transformed the pre-existing kinship
and ethnic cleavages of the society by physically
eliminating its foes and destroying those communities which
opposed the policies of the state.4 Isam al-khafaji, argues
that although the Ba'ath rule, did not start the ethnic,
religious, sectarian, regional and tribal cleavages in Iraqi
society, but it has:

perpetuated and exacerbated these cleavages rather
than worked to overcome them. The supporting
actors (or victims) in Iraqi politics have not
been individuals or citizens as such. They have
rather been treated as members of this sect or
that tribe, as sons of certain towns and regions.
This applies to the way some are incorporated
within the state system, and to the way others
are excluded from it, or assigned subordinate roles......Just as positions of power are reserved
for loyal families, the regime holds families of
dissidents responsible for their `crimes'... More

3. Hanna Batatu, The old Social classes and the
Revolutionary Movements of Iraq (New Jersey : Princeton

4. Simon Bromley, Rethinking Middle East Politics : State
Formation and Development (Cambridge : polity press,
than three decades after the 1958 Revolution which overthrew the monarchy and the domination of tribal landowners in Iraqi politics, Iraq has relapsed into family rule under a republican guise.  

Oil took the central place during the Ba'ath rule by virtue of being the dominant factor in the economy. In 1972 the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC) was nationalized and in the following year the prices of oil had increased fourfold. The increase in oil price enabled the state to earn huge revenues. By 1970s oil accounted for nearly 90 per cent of state revenue and virtually the whole of Iraq's foreign exchange.  

The State's control over the economy was tremendous. Half of all agricultural land was owned by the State. Further, the State controlled the inputs into agriculture and agri-business. By 1987 State-owned factories accounted for 96 per cent of the industrial workforce and 84 per cent of industrial output; the State accounted for 76 per cent of


gross fixed capital formation and 77 per cent of GDP.  

Politically, the process of State formation in Iraq has failed to consolidate a secular, republican government. Not only has the State been unable to successfully impose its authority vis-a-vis competing centre of power, but also the narrow ethnic and religious basis of the regime has frustrated the development of a more inclusive form of legitimacy based on either Arab nationalism or Iraqi patriotism. Simultaneously, the rentier aspects of Iraqi society have given the State massive powers of repression and largess and prevented the emergence of even relatively independent forms of organization based on modern social classes.

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8. With the emergence of Saddam Husain who belonged to Tikrit, more and more Tikrit origin people have been incorporated in the innermost circle at the very top. see Marion Farouk-sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: from Revolution to Dictatorship (London : KPI, 1987)

2. Coup of 1968 and Political Developments

On 17 July 1968, the Ba'th leaders, with the help of following individuals upon whom the security of the Abdal-Rahman Arif, the then President ultimately took power simply by gaining control of key military units. These men were Col. Abd al-Razzaq al-Nayif, Director of Military Intelligence; Col. Ibrahim Abd al-Rahman al-Daud, the Commander of the Republican guard; and Col. Sa'dun Ghaidan, the Commander of the 10th Armoured Brigade.10 The first official step taken after President Arif had been sent in exile to London, was the establishment of a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) which assumed supreme authority. Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr a prominent leader of the Ba'th Party installed as President and Abd al-Razzaq al-Nayif as Prime-minister. The Defense Ministry was given to al-Daud. Very soon differences on some important policy matters aroused between the Ba'th leaders and the Nayif-Daud group. For instance, Ba'th leaders favoured socialism while Nayif-Daud group opposed it. Apart from that, Nayif was in favour of an understanding with Mulla Mustafa, an important Kurdish leader. He was ready to settle the Kurdish question on terms

10. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, n.8. p. 112.
agreeable to Kurds and Arabs. On the other hand, the Ba'th leaders, unwilling to give concessions to the Kurds assuming that it might affect national unity, demanded a firm stand on the Kurdish question. These differences led the removal of both Nayif and Daud from the government. Nayif was sent to Moscow as the head of special mission and Daud was dispatched to Jordan to inspect Iraqi forces as a gesture of moral support to Jordan against Israeli pressures.\textsuperscript{11}

However, the removal of Nayif and Daud did not affect the business of government. On 30 July, 1968 President al-Bakr in his address to the nation declared that because of Nayif and Daud's opposition to Ba'th principles, the Ba'th leaders were compelled to drop Nayif and Daud from power.\textsuperscript{12}

Now, the door was open to the Ba'th party to take full control of the government and implement the policies of their choice. In the following pages changes that have taken place after the Ba'th party assumed full power on 30 July 1968 have been analysed.

\begin{itemize}
\item[12.] ibid., p. 30-31.
\end{itemize}
A. Government and The Constitution

After the removal of Nayif, President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr also held the post of Prime Minister. In addition, he became the nominally head of all branches of the Government and national forces. He also presided over the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and the Regional Command of the Ba'th party. Most of the cabinet posts were given to the Ba'th leaders. 13

Several features of this second government deserve mention. First, it was dominated by the military. The members of the newly formed RCC were all military-men. The second important feature was the predominance of Tikritis. Lastly, the government was completely dominated by the Ba'th party members. 14 Before the Revolution of 1958 the legislative power was vested with the king in Parliament which consisted of the Senate and chamber of deputies. Senators, who were appointed by the king, were not to exceed


14. Three of five members of the RCC were Tikritis viz. President al-Bakr, Hardan al-Tikriti (Defence Minister), and Hammad Shihab. To these must be added Saddam Husain, a Tikriti and relative of al-Bakr, who although hold no official position initially but played a key role behind the scenes. see Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, (London: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 212-13.
in number one fourth of the chamber of Deputies. The deputies were elected on the ratio of one on every 20,000 male Iraqi subjects. Each bill had to be submitted to each Assembly by turn before finally being approved by the king.\textsuperscript{15} Aftr the Revolution of 1958 led by General Qasim the military the existing procedure was abolished and a new provisional constitution was announced. But the decade of the 1960 saw frequent military coups (as mentioned in the first chapter) after which the previous constitutions (mostly provisional) were abolished and new constitutions were drafted.

After coming to power the Ba'th party felt need to broaden and institutionalize its power within the State. The first step in this direction was taken in September 1968, when the new Ba'thist regime produced a new provisional constitution. The first temporary constitution came into force on 21 September, 1968. The second temporary constitution, based on a thorough revision of the first, was promulgated in July 1970. This constitution was revised twice firstly in 1973 and then in 1974.\textsuperscript{16} Since then no new


\textsuperscript{16} Khadduri, n.11, p.32-33.
constitution has appeared (though promises have been made several times) until 30 July, 1990. This subject shall be taken up at a later stage in this chapter. In the following paragraphs the political structure that emerged from earlier charters except 30 July, 1990 shall be analysed.

The new constitution defined Iraq as a People's Democratic Republic, and aimed at achieving a unity among the Arab states and to establish a socialist system. Though Islam, the religion of the majority was declared to be the official religion of the state, but freedom of religion and religious practices to other groups were guaranteed. A provision referring to the Kurds stated that no part of Iraq could be given up. However, rights of all, regardless of race or religion, were to be equally protected. While the Arabic language was recognized as official for the whole country, Kurdish language was granted an official status for the Kurdish provinces.17

The constitution also defined the locus of power in the new regime. The machinery of government has four principal branches: the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the

17. ibid, p.32-35. See also Marr, n.14.
National Assembly, the Presidency and the Judiciary. Dominant power was given to RCC, which had the authority to promulgate laws and regulations, to deal with defence, to declare war and conclude peace, and to approve the budget. The National Assembly, composed of corporate representation exercises legislative power when convened. Its primary function is to enact laws submitted to it as bills either by the RCC, by the President of the Republic or by one-fourth of its members. The President, as the executive of the RCC, was made Commander in-Chief of the armed forces and the chief executive of the State. He was given the power to appoint, promote and dismiss civil and military personnel. The Judiciary, composed of all judges, was designed to be separate from other branches of the Government and considered immune from political influence. The appointments of the judges were to be made by the President and their functions were to be guided by a special law.18

The constitution has provided authority to the state to plan, direct and guide the income for the purpose of establishing socialism on a "scientific and revolutionary

18. For full text of the constitution, see Khadduri, n.11 Appendix A.
basis". The country's natural resources and the instruments of production were declared to be owned collectively by the nation. However, to a limited extent private ownership was recognized and private sector allowed.

B. The State

The Ba'th party considered the State as an important instrument by virtue of which the party can achieve its goals. The Ba'th party tried to influence mainly the State. The leaders of the party held key positions and the party kept on maintaining its identity without merging with the State. The Ba'athists opined that the state was only a means toward an end while the party was the agency which provided leadership and direction of action. Therefore, the party's function was that of a midwife between the state and people. The party chalked out the plans and formulate programmes, and the State acted accordingly. In case the State failed in its duty, the concerned leader of the party would be accountable before the party. Due to this reason, some leaders remained in key posts and acted as watchdogs to prevent those in the service of the State deviating from
C. The Bureaucracy

The Ba'th sought tremendous change in the political and the administrative systems in order to establish a new polity in accordance with the Ba'thist teachings. Changing the administrative system proved more difficult than changing political structure. The principal aim of the party was first to cleanse the administration from corrupt personnel and then replace them by eligible party members, so that the bureaucracy may work according to Ba'thist ideas.

Eventually the party succeeded in removing the corrupt elements from the bureaucracy but the task of replacement became difficult. Young functionaries who replaced the seasoned civil servants were no match in professional experience of their predecessors.

19. Khadduri, n.11, p.36-37. see Sahib al-Samawi al-Thawra wa al Dawla, al-Thawra, Baghdad, January 18, 1976. see also Batatu, n.3.

D. Changes within the Ruling Elite

The Ba'th regime that rules over Iraq today has introduced major changes in some areas in the construction of the ruling political elite, thereby contributing to the assimilation of important new elements of Iraqi society into the ruling elite.\textsuperscript{21} One such area has been the influx of provincial elements into the elite at the cost of Baghdadis. Notably, under the monarchy, politicians of Baghdadi origin were paramount in Iraqi governments. The influx of provincial elements into the palaces of power increased substantially since the mid-seventies and reached a peak after the Ninth Regional Congress of the Ba'th party in June 1982. Since then, there has not been even a single politician of Baghdadi origin in the highest echelon namely at the RCC. At that stratum, some twenty per cent hail from Mosul and the remaining eighty per cent from the province of Tikrit.\textsuperscript{22}

The Ba'th party, after coming to power, had made considerable efforts to secure adequate representation in


\textsuperscript{22} ibid, p.39.
the ruling elite from Iraq's various ethnic and denominational communities. However, this effort gained momentum after the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war. Saddam, it may be concluded, sought induction of various sects, particularly Shi'as, in the highest echelon of power. This step might have been taken to prevent the Shi'as from supporting the Shi'a regime in Iran.

According to Marr's calculations, between 1948 to 1958 almost 21 per cent of the top Iraqi politicians were Shi'as; from 1958 to 1968 they were reduced to only 16 per cent. However, since June 1982, the number of Shi'as representation shot up making it 33 per cent in the RCC alone. This is more significant in view of the fact that in 1958 when the Ba'th Party came to power, there was not even a single Shi'a member in the RCC. Besides, there has been more and more Shi'a representation at government levels than

what it was before 1968. Nevertheless, the army officers have been drawn overwhelmingly from the northwestern Arab Sunni families. Shi'as are preponderant in the general infantry rather than in the powerful air, armoured, artillery, and missile striking units.

3. PARTY POLITICS

Political parties were formed in Iraq soon after Faisal took the throne and remained active from 1921 until 1958. Except for the Communist Party, which was established in the 1930s, all other parties were formed around personalities, mostly Sunni Arabs who sought complete independence from British rule. However, by the time monarchy came to an end only a few political parties were active, viz. the Ba'ath Party, the Communist Party of Iraq (ICP), Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), etc. About the Ba'ath Party discussion has already been made in the first chapter. In the following pages the


Communist Party, the Kurdish Party and some other minor political parties will be discussed.

A. The Communist Party

Yusuf Salman a self-educated Christian laid the foundation of communist party in Iraq. However, the first central committee of the communist party was created in 1935. The Party appealed to journalists, teachers, lawyers and other educated professionals. Yusuf Salman was executed in 1949. Salam Adil was his successor who was killed in the coup of February 1963 which ended the Qasim regime and brought the Ba'th Party to power for the first time. In December 1967, leadership issue was entrusted to a Central Committee since there were differences over the leadership of the Party. Comrade Aziz Mohammad became the First Secretary of the Central Committee. He successfully conducted negotiations with the Ba'th party for cooperation between the two parties.27 When Ba'th party came to power in Iraq, the Communists demanded that the regime should grant "democratic freedoms". The party also called for formulation of a National Front composed of all parties and the formation of

27. Khadduri, n.11, p. 80-81; Batatu, n.3. pp. 709-1073.
a coalition Government. Fate of the Communist Party can be seen in the subsequent pages.

B. Kurdish Political Parties

During the monarchy period, no Kurdish party was recognized on the ground that a political party representing an ethno-cultural sect can be a threat to national unity. There were, however, several unlicensed Kurdish parties and groupings. The Kurdish group which played the most important role in the Kurdish movements was the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). The KDP came into existence in 1946 by the efforts of some Iraqi Kurds. Among the founders of the Kurdish Democratic party were Mulla Mustafa, Mustafa Khoshnaw, Mir Hajj and others.28 After the Revolution of 1958 the Kurdish Democratic Party got recognized. A group of Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) tired of old leadership formed a new political party namely the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

(PUK). The leader of PUK was Jalal Talabani.29

C. Other Political Parties and Groups

There were several other small groups which advocated democratic principles. However, these groups were very small and in principle they have much in common with the Ba'th party. As such, so far they have supported the Ba'th regime. To cite an example, there is the Independent Democratic group, headed by Muzhir al-Azzawi, who had represented the group at the Progressive National Front. Another group which got representation in the Progressive Nationalist Front was the Progressive National group led by Hisham al-Shawi. This group existed only as individuals with practically no organization.30

4. THE STATE AND BA'TH REGIME

The Ba'ath party took the initiative to prepare a draft charter for National action. On 15 November, 1971, the


charter was made public through the press and all parties and groups were invited to discuss it. It called for "joint action" of all the revolutionary forces in the Arab homeland to fight against imperialism, Zionism, and the reactionary forces who hampered the progress and development of Arab countries. For Iraq, the charter delineated some of the specific steps to be undertaken to achieve social, political and economic development.

For almost two years, from 1971 to 1972, the charter was discussed in public meeting as attended by representatives of various shades of opinion. On the basis of suggestions forwarded during the discussions, the final draft was prepared. Significantly, the substance of the final draft remained essentially the same as proposed initially by the Ba'th party. The delegates of various groups had draw a statute after approval of the charter. The statute provided that the Front is a kind of voluntary union of the progressive parties. It also provided to set up a central executive committee called the High Committee (HC), which was to be the principal executive organ of the Front. The HC was composed of 16 members: half of these were reserved for the members of Ba'th Party. The Communists party was given three seats, the Kurdish Democratic party
three and the Progressive Nationalists and the Independent Democrats one seat each. 31

Significantly, in the beginning the attitude of the Ba'th regime towards the Communist Party of Iraq (ICP) was lenient and co-operative. After the formation of a National Front, most of the Communists were released from jail and reinstated in jobs. Besides, the Communists were also appointed to the cabinet. The Ba'th, however, used this period of friendship and co-operation to control mass organizations and unions in which communist influence had been dominant. They did this by filling posts in the hierarchies with those of Ba'th members. In 1975 the ICP withdrew its support from Progressive National Front in protest against the government's Kurdish Policy. (This subject shall be discussed elsewhere in the following pages). Mass arrests and executions of Communists took place in 1978 after the Soviet-backed coup in Afghanistan. Saddam sought to destroy the Communist Party. By 1979 most of the Communist leaders had fled the country, the party went

31. Farouk-Sluglett and sluglett, n. 8 pp. 155-60; Khadduri, n.11 p. 97-100; see Majid khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab world (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).
underground and no more remain a political factor. 

Before dealing with the Kurdish question which has been a constant threat to national integration of Iraq, the role of the State, vis-a-vis ethnic problems will be discussed briefly.

A. Authoritarian Regime

Saddam Husain, a Tikriti by origin worked closely with Bakr after the Ba'th seized power in 1968. In 1970 Saddam became vice-Chairman of the RCC by successfully weeding out his chief political adversaries, Hardan al-Tikriti and Salah Mahdi Ammash. Both were popular militarymen who had tried to create personal alternative power bases. Saddam continued to consolidate his position and hold on the party through affecting changes in the RCC and the Iraqi Regional Command, ensuring that in 1974 the newly elected leadership,

32. Tachau, n.26, p.186; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, n. 8 pp. 182-187. On 9 November 1969, when the five member RCC was enlarged to fifteen. Saddam Husain became vice-chairman of the RCC thus officially become the second most important figure in the regime after al-Bakr. see Marr, n.14, p.214; Khadduri, n.11.
including a number of Shi'as supported him. On 16 July, 1979, on the eve of eleventh anniversary of the Ba'th takeover, Bakr resigned for reason of ill-health. Saddam was then sworn in as President. Besides the Presidentship Saddam also retained most of the key government posts including chairmanship of the RCC, the post of the Secretary-General of the Ba'th party, Prime Ministership, and the position of the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, etc. Political power in Iraq, gradually converged with Saddam and his family, as also other eminent Tikritis rather than the party members who were loyal to Ba'th ideology. As power gravitated into Saddam's hands, he exercised it in an increasingly paternalistic fashion. Saddam's single handed control of the party apparatus and government enabled him to embark on two disastrous military adventures: the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) and the Gulf War (1991).


B. Towards One-Party State

As has been mentioned earlier, after seizure of power the Ba'th regime formed the National Progressive Front. It actually materialized in 1973. The other main parties who rendered support to this Front were Communist Party of Iraq (ICP) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). Initially, the ICP made use of the relative freedom of action permitted under the terms of the Front to expand its support. However, the Ba'th party started humiliating the Communist Party members when they protested against the Kurdish policy in 1975. Most of the ICP members were exiled and the rest went underground. By 1979, the ICP ceased to be a political factor. 35 Ba'th party's relations with the Kurdish parties will be discussed elsewhere. Here, we shall analyse Ba'th party's hold over the government.

By the mid-1970s the Ba'th party had become an efficiently organized and powerful apparatus, increasingly penetrating every possible sphere of life. In order to achieve this position the party had taken several steps to

35. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, n.8, pp. 180-190; Marr, n.14, pp.225-32.
strengthen its hold over the government.³⁶ Although ministerial reshuffles occurred at regular intervals but Ba'th party's share of ministerial berths never went down below two-thirds. Moreover, the key posts were always given to Regional Command members who represented the Ba'th party. In September 1977, all Regional Command members were appointed members of the RCC, thus making this body indistinguishable. The party, through the overlap of personnel on three essential bodies the Regional Command, the RCC, and the Council of Ministers could be able to control policy formulation, policy legislation and policy execution. In this way the Ba'th leaders had full control over the State.³⁷

C. Political Culture

Fouad Ajami argues that in the Arab world, the State reign, but it does not rule. The State reigns insofar as it maintains a monopoly over the means of violence. It does not

³⁶ ibid, p.184.
rule because through violence, consent can not be acquired. Ajami further states that, "It is not to the State that Arabs owe loyalty, but to their families and clans". The writ of a State modelled in this way would in principle extend only as far and as firmly as the reach of its repressive capability. The Lebanese civil war provides a tragic new confirmation of these insights into the politics of legitimacy and authority in the Arab world.

There are in fact two problems here: first, the problem of 'State versus civil society' conceived as society sans those citizens who live within the State, and second, the problem of 'authority in a State system' riddled with the presumption of violence. In very small states (Lebanon) or very large societies (Egypt) the first problem outweighs the second as the formative influence on the polity. But in the case of middle sized country like Iraq, the priorities can get reversed to the extent that civil society is swallowed up by the State.


Having inherited a system not unlike that stated by Ajami, the Ba'th devised a novel approach to tackle the problem of hostility and alienation from the State: they turned people into employees. In its old form, authority was a problem because the social base of power was limited, facilitating cyclical political change through wars and coups. In its Ba'hist form this problem withered away to be replaced by one of managing and administering conflicts within the bloated State. The system is more stable because, despite the higher levels of violence in society generally, the party, on behalf of the new polity, has actually manufactured its own social base. From this viewpoint, the bedrock on which the regime in Iraq rested, was its full blown apparatus of violence comprising some 67,000 people.

To sum up, the tone of political culture in Iraq, as al-Khalil stated, has become 'Kafkaesque', by which he means the culture which is saturated with a sense of impersonality of sinister and impenetrable forces, "operating on helpless individuals, who nonetheless intuit that they are being

buffeted about by a bizarre, almost transcendental kind of rationality". 42

D. Criminalisation of Politics

The Ba'th Party systematically and meticulously extended its control over all aspects of Iraqi life — politics, society and economy. The control was extended by means of terror, the instrument of which was a pervasive network of secret police and intelligence services. Tentacular control was exercised through party branches set up in neighbourhoods, in colleges and schools, in government offices and army units. 43

The feuds and rivalries within the regime were actively pursued from the initial years of Ba'th takeover. Hardan al-Tikriti, Minister of Defence and Deputy Commander-in-Chief, was dismissed in October 1970 and murdered in Kuwait the following year. His colleague, General Salih Mahdi Ammash, was likewise dismissed in September 1971 and exiled to the embassy in Finland. They both were senior Ba'hist officers.

42. al-Khalil, n.39, p.45.

Hardan resented the growing domination exercised by al-Bakr and Saddam. Ammash on the other hand was not at good terms with Saddam. Other Ba'athist of long standing were also done away with: Abd al-Karim al Sheikly, the Foreign Minister and Abd al-Karim Mustafa Nasrat, another Minister, were both murdered. So was Fuad al-Rikabi, leader of the Ba'th party between 1952 and 1958. The only challenge to Saddam Husain's dominance was made by a fellow-Ba'athist Nazim Kzar, who was chief of internal security and was known for his brutality. In July 1973 he plotted to murder Bakr and Saddam Husain. He took hostage two senior Ba'thist officers, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Interior. The plan however, failed and Kzar killed the Minister of Defence and later tried to flee the country. He was caught and executed together with his accomplices. 45


More recently, two sons-in-law of President Saddam Husain who had returned to Iraq after defection to Jordan were slain, along with seven other people. Although, the government news agency said that two sons-in-law of Saddam Husain, namely General Hussain Kamel, Minister of Industry and Military Industrialization and his brother Col. Hasan Ali al-Majid, were shot dead by their family members. However, President Saddam's hand in the killings can not be ruled out. Iraqi government has a long history of violence and disputes are often settled by the gun.

E. The Iraqi State and the Army

The Iraqi army have been indispensable to the state's unity and the regime's maintenance. Unlike the army during monarchy, the present Iraqi army grew out of Iraqi society. As such the army was potentially exposed to the country's ethnic problems as well as political ups and downs. Due to these reasons, the army itself became a threat to the very regime it intended to protect. The Iraqi government, therefore, had to maintain a close watch to the army's political disposition. The solution to the challenge to the

46. Iraqi army during monarchy was composed of ex-Ottoman and ex-Sharifian forces. See Bromley, n.4, p.137.
State and maintenance of the Ba'th regime was threefold:

1. to ensure the army's ability and willingness to suppress ethnic challenges by building an officer corps whose composition mirrored that of the urban Sunni Arab ruling elite;

2. to intensify the army's political loyalty by more focused means, including purges of suspect officers and reliance on party or kinship ties in selection and promotion; and

3. to limit the opportunities for dissident unit commanders to act independently and perhaps turn their guns against the political leadership, by adopting a highly centralized command system. 47

This pattern of government army relations was put in place during the British Mandate period, when authority and control were progressively transferred to Iraqi governments. 48


The system of officer recruitment ensured that the army remained an effective instrument for suppressing ethnic uprising, mainly the Kurds and the Shia's. It could not insulate the army from other dimensions of civilian politics. For Iraq's military elite and so also for much of its Sunni Arab political class, the army was not just a security force, but also a means of asserting and protecting the nation's independence, an instrument of nation-building, and a carrier of the nation's virtues and goals.49

Although the Government leaders, were aware of the threat posed to them by a politicized officer corps, but they were unable to dispense with the support of the army, both as an instruments to maintain the state's integrity and as a prop in their internecine power struggles.50 However, the rulers tried to ensure the loyalty of the military establishment by relying on affective ties, especially


family relationship, and by insisting on tight, centralized control of information and operation. But, whenever political leader failed to satisfy military expectations or when circumstances permitted, a faction in the army intervened by taking power themselves as it did in 1958, twice in 1963, and in 1968.

E.1. The Army Under Ba'th Regime: The major change which has taken place since the Ba'th take over in 1968, and particularly after Saddam Husain became President, has been the successful demilitarization of politics. The demilitarization of politics does not however, mean the depoliticization of the military. On the contrary, the Ba'th regime went much further than any of its predecessors in thoroughly penetrating the army. Thus, it became a capital offense for anyone in the armed forces to engage in any political activity or to have any connection with any political organization other than the Ba'th party.

Though the army was effectively subjugated under the

51. Tarbush, n.49, p.118.

civilian rule yet it was still the ultimate barrier whom the Sunni Arab minority could use against the potential opposition by Kurds or the Shia's. Consequently, the regime continued to rely on the same methods, adopted by its predecessors, to control the State by commanding army's political loyalty with the help of emphasizing affective ties like family, kinship, etc.53

5. PLURALISM AND ETHNIC CHALLENGES

One of the salient features of the Third World societies has been the expansion of the role of the State as an independent variable in shaping the balance of societal forces which also includes managing socio economic and political claims of various ethnic groups. David Brown defined Third World multiethnic societies that, "formerly attained only spasmodic and limited control outside their core regions and capital cities have sought increasingly systematic control over peripheral regions through the expansion of their administrative bureaucracies, armies and

educational systems". At the same time, the range of governmental interference has expanded with raising revenues and maintaining order, as the need to direct, train and motivate labour has increased.

The pervasive role of the State has allowed it to develop into an institution that is autonomous from all others actors in the society while maintaining monopoly and exclusive control over coercive forces that enable the State to shape, inter alia, class formations and ethnic relations. The relative independence of the State, vis-a-vis other social forces has allowed the State to shape and alter ethnic identities in multiethnic societies. In many Third


World settings, the State has been instrumental in fostering or altering ethnic identities to suit its own policy objectives, legitimize its authority, promote national unity, and generate interethnic rivalries in the interest of consolidating its position over individuals and groups in society.\(^\text{56}\)

Iraqi State represents various ethnic groups. There are three major sects namely Arab Sunni, Arab Shi'a and the Kurds. The Arabic-speaking majority comprised about 75 to 80 per cent of the population, and the Kurdish-speaking minority was estimated at 15 to 20 per cent.\(^\text{57}\) In 1973, it was estimated that these were approximately 1.8 million Kurds in Iraq (almost as many as in northwestern Iran), and 3.2 million in Eastern Turkey.\(^\text{58}\)


\(^{58}\) *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago Ill: Benton, 1973), vol.13, p.515.
A. Kurdish Issue

Kurdish demands for autonomy or independence for Kurdistan have been one of the most enduring sources of ethnic conflict in the modern Middle East. At present, the Kurds are primarily concentrated in Turkey, Iraq and Iran. In the Middle East, a mosaic of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, "extending over the borders of newly-established states, has induced a proliferation of strong nationalism frequently imbued with marked irredentism".59

The Kurds provide an example of a community with a peculiar irredentism of its own, that is, without a patron state to sponsor its nationalist aspirations. Distinguished by ethnic ties and a common language, the Kurds in Iraq, Iran and Turkey "have articulately envinced aspirations to unite in one nation state".60 In Iraq, the Kurdish areas have experienced less modernization and industrialization

59. Jacob M. Landau, "Irredentism and Minorities in the Middle East" in Immigrants and Minorities, (London: Frank Cass, 1990), vol.9, no.3, p.243. Irredentism may be defined as one facet of extreme nationalism expressed ideologically and aimed at redeeming for the homeland territories which an ethnic ally or culturally connected group inhabits or has inhabited in history. Facts and myths bring together to create an overriding bond for the community. See also A.D. Smith, "National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent", Research in Social Movements: Conflict and Change, VII, 1984, p.95.

60. Landau, ibid, p.244.
than the rest of the country. This discrimination has contributed to the enduring quality of Kurdish ethnic consciousness.61

Against this background, the Ba'th government has conducted a series of negotiations with Kurdish elements, culminating in the issuing of the 'Manifesto of 11 March 1970'. The March Manifesto gave a considerable boost to the Kurdish national movement: it met fundamental Kurdish demands which previous governments did not accept. The manifesto began by declaring that the Kurds of Iraq were part of the divided Kurdish people, and that the Kurdish national movement was part of the general Iraqi national movement. The government promised the Kurds full recognition of their nationality and autonomy within four years. The Kurdish language was made the primary language in the Kurdish areas, and also an official language which would be taught in addition to Arabic throughout Iraq. A Kurdish vice-president was to be appointed in the central government together with five Kurdish cabinet ministers. The Kurds were to be allowed to form their own political organizations, and a certain number of the Kurdish Peshmarga (armed men) were

61. Entessar, n.29, p.6-7.
to be 'integrated into the Iraqi armed forces as border guards'. 62 The government also located new factories in the region and hastened the pace of agrarian reforms. Within a few months, "construction had begun on hospitals and schools and over 2,700 houses had been built or rebuilt in the Kurdish area. 63

Despite its initial optimism, the March Manifesto had shown signs of break down by 1972. Mulla Mustafa the leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) began to demand revisions in the Manifesto to allow him more military and political latitude. As he revealed later, the United States, Israel and the Shah of Iran were partly responsible for Mulla Mustafa's new demands because they promised to increase financial and military support to him in exchange for his continuing challenge to destabilise the Ba'thist government. 64 Moreover, the selection of a Kurdish vice-President also developed the differences as the Iraqi


63. Entessar, n.29, p.71.

government did not accept the candidature of the KDP's nominee, Habib Muhammad Karim. Perhaps Karim's Iranian origin made him suspicious in the eyes of the Iraqi governments and the two sides could not agree on another candidate. 65

The major drawback of the March Manifesto, however, was its failure to define the precise geographic boundaries of the area to be covered by the autonomy provisions. The Manifesto had specified that within a four-year period the laws of the autonomous region should be enacted. Differences soon appeared between Mulla Mustafa and Ba'th government over Kirkuk area, the centre of Iraq's oil production. The government claimed that only some parts of Kirkuk had a Kurdish majority and, therefore, only those parts should be included in the autonomy region. Obviously the government was unwilling to give up its direct control over a region, important to the economy of the whole country. On the other hand, Mulla Mustafa was adamant that Kirkuk be included in the Kurdish autonomy area. 66 The deadlock resulted in

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66. Sa'ad Jawad, n.62, p. 50.
resignations of the Kurdish ministers from Iraqi cabinet in February 1974.

By 1974, the Ba'th government concluded that the talks with Mulla Mustafa over the implementations of the March Manifesto would not allow the government to make the plan operational within the required four-year time limit. Consequently, the government unilaterally amended the plan and announced a new plan for Kurdish autonomy on March 11, 1974. It provided the Kurds fifteen days to accept the plan or forfeit any chance of gaining self-rule in the future. The 1974 Autonomy Law dealt with the same areas of self-rule as the 1970 March Manifesto. Moreover, the Autonomy Law provided for the establishment of a Kurdish Legislature and an executive council and delineated the responsibilities these organs had to the local population and the central government.67

The 1974 Autonomy Law too could not satisfy the Kurds leader Mulla Mustafa, since Kirkuk was not included in the Autonomy region. Besides, the central government selected

Irbil as the regional capital of Kurdistan. According to the Kurds Sulaymanieh, and not Irbil, was the centre of Kurdish intellectual and cultural life.\textsuperscript{68} The Kurds rejected the plan and intensified their fighting against the Iraqi regime. The Kurds have been successful initially in keeping the Iraqis at bay so long they were supported by Iran. Later on, Mulla Mustafa surrendered when Iranian support was cut off due to Algiers Agreement.\textsuperscript{69} Under the terms of Algiers Agreement, Iraq agreed to accept the mid-channel (Thalweg Line) of Shatt al-Arab as the boundary between the two countries. In the past, Iraq had insisted on total control of this waterway that separated the two countries at their southern extreme at the entrance to the Gulf. In return, Shah agreed to cease all aid to the Kurdish resistance in Iraq.\textsuperscript{70}

Thousands of Kurds took refuge in Iran following the announcement of the Algiers Agreement and Mulla Mustafa's subsequent orders to give up the fight. The Iraqi army was

\textsuperscript{68} Uriel Dann, "The Kurdish National Movement in Iraq", \textit{Jerusalem Quarterly}, no.9. (Fall 1978), pp.135-36.


\textsuperscript{70} Entessar, n.29, p.77.
then free to carry out the government's policy of depopulating Kurdish villages and deporting their residents to the Southwestern desert region of the country. The estimated numbers of Kurds vary from 40,000 to 300,000, who were affected by the Ba'thist policy of deportation in the aftermath of Mulla Mustafa's defeat. The Iraqi government acknowledged the population transfers by stating that the government's policy was to establish a ten kilometer security belt along the Iranian border, and that villagers in the security belt had to be transferred elsewhere in the country. On the political front, "the impact of the Algiers Agreement was the fragmentation of the Kurdish front into competing movements and political parties, which led to the debilitation of Kurdish unity in Iraq".

Divisions within the Kurdish resistance movements in Iraq after Mulla Mustafa's death in 1979 propped up which


73. Entessar, n.29, pp.126-27.
resulted in the deterioration of the Kurdish position, vis-a-vis the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. However, the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, and the 1991 Gulf war following Saddam Husain's invasion of Kuwait, have profoundly affected the Kurdish struggle.

A.1 The Iran-Iraq War and the Kurdish Issue: After the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war both the countries took specific measures to woo and involve their respective Kurdish population in the war efforts. As the Iraqi regime began to fear the prospect of a potentially destabilizing Iranian-Kurdish front in the north, Saddam Husain sought to open secret negotiations with the Kurds. However, Iraq soon succumbed to Turkish pressure as Turkish government blamed Iraqi Kurds for major disturbances that were taking place throughout southern Turkey. Hence Saddam's move to talk with the Kurds could not materialize.

Between 1984 and 1986, the Iran-Iraq war entered a relatively quiet phase. However, Iranian support for Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) enabled the latter to increase the number of raids against Iraqi targets. In 1987, the combine Iranian-Kurdish units had captured the Gerdman Height and seized other positions above the Iraqi Kurdish town of
The apparent success of Iranian-Kurdish cooperation irked Saddam to the extent that he ordered the destruction of hundreds of Kurdish villages. This destruction continued throughout the year 1988 and into 1989, even after the cease-fire of Iran-Iraq war. Many eyewitness accounts and investigations by independent human rights organizations and medical teams uncovered evidence of Iraqi use of chemical weapons against the Kurds.

A.2 The Gulf war and Kurdish uprising: The Kurdish guerrillas (peshmargas), having suffered at the government's hands after the Iran-Iraq war, subsequently again started building bases in Kurdistan. Just after the ceasefire, the Kurdish leaders took an unprecedented step - they captured Kurdistan's main cities formerly garrisoned by Iraq's army. Within days, Sulaymaniyah, Irbil and Dohuk were captured besides Kirkuk - the, oil city.


75. Newsweek, June 10, 1991

But in the absence of military support from the multinational forces the Kurdish guerrillas were unable to resist the onslaught of the Iraqi armed forces which very soon crushed the uprisings. By early April 1991, the government forces had recaptured Kirkuk, Irbil, Dohuk and other cities. Some 50,000 Kurds were reported to have been killed in the hostilities and, fearing genocide, an estimated one to two million Kurds fled to Iran and Turkey.77

To sum up, the Kurdish revolt after the ceasefire appeared to have achieved greater unity of purpose among various Kurdish factions through their alliance (Kurdish Iraqi Front) which came into being in 1988, rather than seeking the creation of an independent Kurdish state - which would not be tolerated by the Turkish and Iranian governments. The Kurdish-Iraqi front claimed that the objective of the insurrection was the full implementation of the 15- article peace plan which had been concluded between Kurdish leaders and the Iraqi government in 1970.78

78. ibid, p.497.
B. The Shi'a-Sunni Dichotomy

The Ba'th party is an Arab nationalist and Socialist party. It may be called semi-secular, though its approach to religion is highly ambiguous. Articles 15 of its constitution describes:

The national bond will be the only bond existing in the Arab state—a bond that guarantees harmony between the citizens and their fusion in one nation and that combats other and factious forms of solidarity such as religious, the sectarian, the tribal, the racial, and the provincial.\(^7\)

Ba'th was established jointly by a Greek orthodox Christian (Michel Aflaq) and a Sunni Muslim (Salah al-Bitar) and was influenced in early days by Zaki al-Arsuzi, belonging to Nusairi or Alawi sect (an ultra Shi'a sect).\(^8\) However, in a country like Iraq, "where both Shi'ism and Sunnism have been historically strong, where the Shi'is in the recent centuries have developed strong grudges and grievances against the Sunnis for their deprivations, where the followers of these sects have lived in geographical distinct areas, and, above all with the Shi'i resurgence in

\(^7\) For the text of the Constitution, see Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Arab Left*, (Syracuse, 1976), pp.126-37.

\(^8\) Batatu, n.3. p.724-25.
neighbouring Iran, with which the relationship of the Iraqi Shi'i region have been emotionally and religiously strong, the Ba'th ideal of 'fusion in one nation' could not have been achieved despite the process of massive Ba'thization.81

One of the barometers of measuring the influence of different communities in a state or a society is the representation of each community in the power structure of the country including the ruling party. Though the Ba'th Party did not rule during the period 1952 to 1970, (except for nine months in 1963 and one-and-a half years from 1968 to 1970), the membership of the Regional Commands of the Iraqi Ba'th party during this period gives an indication of the interest of the Shi'a community in the party.82

Table 1 shows that the strength of Shia's reduced drastically in the Regional Command of Ba'th during 1963-70 in comparison to 1952-63. The main reason for the decline of the Shi'as lay in the discriminatory practices of the police. The Ba'thist belonging to this sect were, after the

82. ibid
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commands of November 1952-1963</th>
<th>Commands of November 1963-1970</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No of members (a)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi’i Arabs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunni Arabs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurds</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
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(a) In this column, individuals are counted as many times as the number of terms for which they were appointed or elected to the command
(b) In this column, individuals, who were elected or appointed to command for more than one term, are counted only once.
(c) Include one Arab-Turboman
(d) Arabized Fuwaili (Shi’i) Kurd
(e) Arabized Kurds

1963 coup by Abdul Salam Arif; on the whole more systematically hunted out than their Sunni comrades and when nabbed treated with severity.83

The moderate faction of the first Ba'thist rule (1963), led by Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saleh Mahdi Ammash (both Sunnis), had remained intact and it was this faction that in 1968 came to power with increased strength. Probably, one of the outcomes of this process was that the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), from 1968 to 1977, was composed of Sunni members dominated by two Tikritis, Bakr and Husain,84 although Shi'as were there in the regional commands and the councils of ministers. Besides, Shia's were also present in the RCC, that came into existence on 4 September 1977.

While the Shi'a sectarian element had been quiescent since the 1930s, it began to emerge in the 1960s and this sectarianism got merged with religious resurgence of the Da'wa party established in 1968 with the blessings of Shi'a world's greatest mujtahid of the day, Muhsin al-Hakim of Najaf. After al-Hakim's death in 1970, there were only three marji'is (the highest mujtahids) in Iraq, all at Najaf:

84. ibid, pp.1079-92.
namely, Abu al-Qasim al-Khui, al-Khomeini, and Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. None became associated with the Dawa party. The Dawa's first test of strength with the government occurred in 1974, when the Husaini processions broke up into angry political protests. They were more furious in 1977, when the police attempted to intervene with them half-way between Najaf and Karbala. However, Shi'a sectarianism and resurgence got a tremendous boost because of the stay of Khomeini in Iraq, the publication of his book *Hukumat e-Islami* (The Islamic Government) based on his lectures delivered in Najaf in early 1970 (The main discussions in this book, centres on refuting the centuries-old Shi'a theological objection to the absence of the Awaited Imam), his active opposition to the rule of Shah in Iran.

**B.1 The Shi'a and Iran-Iraq War:** It would be, perhaps, fair to say that on the whole, the Iranian revolution could cut no ice in Iraq outside the ranks of small but deeply committed Shi'a groups. As one observer of the Iraqi scene had remarked it was "facile" to assume that the majority of

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the Shi'a Iraqis "wish for Iranian political intervention". On the contrary, there was visible identification among them with Iraq as a form of nation-state.\textsuperscript{86} Significantly, since the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and more so after the outbreak of Iraq-Iran war, Saddam Husain has spared no efforts to recruit Shi'as into the Ba'th party and to extend economic benefits to their areas.\textsuperscript{87} However, the Ba'th regime was not successful to win over the majority of Shi'as, since they raised voice of resentment against regime immediately after cease-fire of the Gulf-War.

B.2 The Shi'a uprising after the Gulf War: The first signs of Shi'a uprising appeared only after unofficial ceasefire at the end of February, 1991. Many anti-Ba'th demonstrations took place in Basra and the uprising, soon engulfed most Shi'a towns. It was so intense and violent that it would not be an exaggeration to call it a civil war.\textsuperscript{88} The two holy Shi'a cities, Najaf and Karbala, joined the uprising but the

\textsuperscript{86.} See Keith S. McLachlan's article in \textit{The Times} (London), May 16, 1982.


\textsuperscript{88.} \textit{International Herald Tribune} (IHT), March 11, 1991.
government used extremely harsh measures to supress it. By mid-March, the government had succeeded in crushing the uprising. But revelation of such anti-government sentiments as distorting the pictures of president Saddam, looting and burning government buildings, and executing officials, were shocking proofs of the depth of Shi'as hatred toward a regime that still lacked legitimacy after 22 years in power.89

Along with the quell of uprising, the Ba'ath also took steps to appease the Shi'a majority and buy its goodwill, including intensified contacts with different Shi'a tribal leaders whom the Ba'ath had formerly considered "reactionaries", but whose presence was now badly needed to pacify the Shi'a.90

6. FARCE FACADE OF DEMOCRACY

The immediate precipitant of Saddam Husain's decision to invade Kuwait were widely understood to lie in the


90. On these events see Alif Ba, March 27, 1991; Financial Times, April 15, 1991.
growing political and economic problems inside Iraq, especially after the August 1988 cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. Although the regime portrayed the war with Iran as a great victory, a majority of the population did not share that view. Eight years of bloody conflict had succeeded merely in restoring the status quo ante. The cost of bloodshed had been immense - nearly 400,000 casualties which constituted over 2 per cent of the Iraqi population along with $80 billion debt that Baghdad had incurred during the war period. Iraq also looked forward to the quick signing of a peace treaty with Iran and the return of some 65,000 Iraqi prisoners of war (POW) held there. Finally, People of Iraq looked forward to more democracy, and an easing of the regime's war-time repression. None of these expectations could be met easily. Peace itself proved elusive. By November 1988, the UN-sponsored peace negotiations were stalemated and the exchange of POWs suspended. The ostensible reason for the deadlock was Baghdad's demand for sovereignty over the entire Shatt-al-

Arab, which had been divided between Iran and Iraq in 1975 treaty.  

Neither cease-fire brought prosperity, nor could Saddam easily fulfill the expectations of more democracy. In November 1988, as the Iran-Iraq peace talks faltered, Saddam Husain suddenly announced a new programme of democracy for Iraq, including freedom of speech, constitutional reform and pluralism, permitting the formation of political parties besides the Ba'ath. Three high-level committees were established to study the above three issues. All the foreign embassies in Baghdad was asked for a copy of their country's constitution, and "democracy in Iraq" became a prominent theme in government's propaganda. Minor changes followed. All the newspapers introduced a column for reader's letters of complaint. With a statement by Saddam Husain at the top of the page saying, "Write what you like without fear." Almost all such letters, however, were limited to complaints regarding administrative problems and police abuse.  


93. ibid, pp. 168-69.
The results of Iraq's National Assembly election in April 1989 similarly held initial promise. Although candidates were well screened for their loyalty to Saddam, a fairly honest process followed. Ba'th party members won only 40 per cent of the assembly seats, considerably lower than the 75 per cent they had won in the previous elections in 1984. People even expected that the newly elected National Assembly would first approve the new constitution before its spring session came to an end in May 1989 and then dissolve itself to pave the way for new elections under a liberalized regime.94

But like the press, nothing much changed. No new constitution appeared, and no new elections were scheduled. In fact, the long-promised constitution was not promulgated until July 30, 1990 — three days before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Among its provisions, chapter 1, Article 15, affirmed that Iraq adhered to the principle of "settling conflicts through peaceful means on the basis of equality, mutual interests, and reciprocal dealing." Chapter 3. Article 46, stated that "the individual's sanctity, dignity and honour shall be safeguarded," while Article 64 affirmed,

94. ibid, p.169.
"All state organs ...... must protect the environment from pollution and nature from damage that destroys its beauty and functions." Of course, as events were to demonstrate, none of these had any relation with the reality, and the new constitution was suspended immediately after the invasion of Kuwait.

7. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ: AFTER THE SECOND GULF WAR

The constitution promulgated on the eve of the invasion of Kuwait resurfaced in March 1991, as the population rose in revolt against the regime. The announcement of the new constitution was accompanied by the appointment of a new cabinet, headed by Sadun Hammadi, a Shi'a and a longtime Ba'thist, Hammadi represented the more sophisticated and less thuggish elements within the Iraqi regime.

Yet the view that events had created a situation in which Saddam Hussain would be forced to follow his proclaimed policy of liberalization were not borne out by events. Even as earlier promises of reform were renewed,

senior Iraqi officials were advised by Saddam privately that "the move toward democracy was merely a ploy". 96 This is what proved to be the case.

Indeed, such signs were already evident, on 6 March, 1991 soon after the uprising began. The most brutal figure in the regime and a cousin of Saddam Husain, Ali Hassan al-Majid, the man who was mainly responsible for the ruthless suppression of the Kurdish uprising during the Iran-Iraq War, was promoted from the post of Minister of Local Government to that of Minister of the Interior, while at Majid's brother, Hisham, whom Saddam had previously dismissed from an administrative position in Babylon province for blatant corruption, was rehabilitated and made Governor of Kurdistan. 97

In the following months, Saddam made further moves to strip away authority from those possessing the least modicum of leaning towards independence, while at the same time promoting figures who were closely connected to him, sharing his background (members of the Sunni Arab tribes from the

region north of Baghdad, with minimal education or social standing, often having close ties with the security services, and also well-known for their brutality).

In September 1991 Sadun Hammadi was suddenly ousted as Prime Minister and replaced by Muhammed Hamza Zubaydi. The ostensible reason for replacing Sadun Hammadi was the result of the tenth Ba'th Party congress. According to the Iraqi press the meeting lasted twenty-eight continuous hours. The extended duration of the meeting was perhaps meant to serve as a testimony to the regime's claim of its new democratic practices. Elections were held for a new Regional Command. Consistent with Saddam's promises of the spring 1989 greater obeisance was made to the appearance of democracy. For the first time elections were declared publically. Yet the results seemed to be what saddam Husain himself would have dictated.\textsuperscript{98}

The Arabic press reported that Hammadi had argued forcefully during the Congress that it was vital for the regime to open up internally, implementing political and economic reforms while complying with the UN resolutions in order to end economic sanctions. Saddam, however, was seen

\textsuperscript{98.}ibid, pp.173-74.
to discard Hammadi during the discussion. The result was that among the forty-two candidates who were in the fray, Hammadi stood as low as on thirty-ninth, position, receiving just twenty-eight votes.

It would seem that despite the regime's claims that the elections for party leadership were held by secret ballot, Saddam had the means to manipulate and secures the results the way he wanted. Saddam Husain was re-elected unanimously to lead the party. Saddam's longtime deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri received only four votes less than Saddam and the notorious Ali Hasan al-Majid secured third position in the party poll. Of the seven new members elected to party leadership, all had joined the party as young men, many of them at the age of fourteen years only. Six member were Sunni Arabs from the regions to the north and West of Baghdad, while five had backgrounds in the military academy. (one of the regime's techniques for ensuring its continued hold on power after 1968 was to conduct quick courses in the

99. Middle East Mirror, September 16, 1991

military schools and promote its friends speedily).\textsuperscript{101}

The next month, in October 1991, changes were made in the composition of the regime's highest governing body, the Revolutionary Command Council. Among the three new members was the infamous Ali Hassan al-Majid. In November 1991, Ali Hasan was transferred to the Defense Ministry, while Wathan Ibrahim Saddam's half brother, who had headed the security services until 1983, was appointed as Interior Minister. Thus, soon after the ceasefire in the Gulf War, and despite promises of more democracy engendered by the war, the second most important man in Iraq was the figure most notorious for his brutality, while Saddam had managed to consolidate control in Baghdad by promoting and relying upon an increasingly tighter and narrower circle of associates.\textsuperscript{102}

\textbf{8. CONCLUSION}

The Ba'ath party, being unpopular in many quarters, initially tried to broaden its support and also sought legitimacy. The formation of a progressive National Front was an effort in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} Mylroie, n.92, p.174.
\end{thebibliography}
this direction but gradually the Iraqi State headed towards one-party State. The other opposition groups were liquidated by way of murder, terror and executions. This culture was more apparent with the emergence of Saddam Husain as the President of the country. For example Saddam Husain's hand in the killing of his two sons in-law namely Husain Kamil, an ex-Industry Minister and Hassan ali al-Majid, ex-Minister of Interior in recent days can not be ruled out. These two powerful persons have defected to Jordon in Aug. 95 and called for overthrow of Saddam. They later returned to Iraq and were slain alongwith several other persons. A notably, Saddam's single-handed control over the party apparatus and on the government eventually led to two disastrous wars : the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) and the Gulf war (1991). He still retains his former position through his control over the army which he manages through 'family ties'. It may be concluded that political power was based more on personal ties to Saddam, his family and extended family of Tikritis than on party membership or loyalty to party ideology which is a reflection of patriarchial social structure in Iraq.

Although both Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Husain tried to shift Iraq from a military rule to a civilian regime, nevertheless, Iraqi army has remained indispensable
to the State's unity and the regime's maintenance. Ultimately, the mainstay of the regime has been provided by the armed forces.

However, the Ba'th regime in Iraq, since 1968, has made the most impressive contributions toward the consolidation of the Iraqi national state. The method for dealing with the major opposition groups the Shi'as, and the Kurds, was either to neutralize or accommodate them. The Shi'as, a majority in the Arab population of Iraq, never managed to unite politically in order to gain control of the country. However, after Khomeini's ascendance to power in Iran and subsequent fears of a spillover of the Islamic revolution from Iran to Iraq, many leaders of the Dawa party were arrested and executed. At the same time, Saddam poured money into Shi'a areas in order to prevent their support for the Khomeini regime in Iran. Saddam, particularly after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, recruited many Shi'as

103. Da'wa party was formed in 1968 by Shi'a religious leaders with close ties to Iran. It was inspired by the Iraqi Bagir al-Sadr, who preached a return to Muslim precepts in government and social justice. In 1979, with riots in al-Najaf and Karbala, the government suppressed al-Da'wa, which was now dedicated to the overthrow of the regime with support from Iran. Baqir al-Sadr was arrested and executed. see Tachau, n.26, p.193.
into the Ba'th party. The community also found its members in the RCC. Moreover, the Iraqi regime also benefited from Shi'as reluctance to come under Iranian extreme fundamentalist rule. It should be noted that Iraqi Shi'as have been, by and large, considered religiously moderate.

The Kurdish problem is entirely different. Unlike Shi'as the clash here has been between two nationalities-Kurdish and Arab. The Kurds have sustained their struggle intermittently for 70 years, and the tribal uprisings since 1930's have evolved into a more or less organized national movement. Further, the Kurds' demand for autonomy has been a threat to the State's territorial integrity. However, the State of Iraq failed to integrate the Shi'as and Kurds in the political system. Their allegiance to the nation can be acquired only after giving their due shares in the power structure.