CONCLUSION

The present study tries to outline the aims of the revolutionary changes in Iraq since its inception and when the Ba'ath Party came to power for a few months and the emerging trends that might ultimately lead to the establishment of a progressive and enduring political system which would command the greatest public appeal. That political system, it was suggested, should be based on a set of principles that have become overriding political thinking, such as nationalism and socialism — presumably along secular lines — and a measure of individual freedom. A new form of representation by virtue of which the public can participate in political processes is deemed necessary to provide legitimacy and inspire public confidence. These were the trends of thought in Iraq when the Ba'ath Party fully achieved power in 1968 and its leaders promised to give them practical expression and provide the country with a stable regime capable of achieving cherished national goal.

Has the Ba'ath Party accomplished any of these goals during the decade since it achieved power? To begin with, Iraq has experienced a series of military revolutions since 1958 which introduced violence as a method of political change and it had become exceedingly difficult to maintain public order and establish an enduring regime. Upon achieving power, the Ba'ath leaders were determined to
put an end to violent changes and erect a regime immune to military intervention. In the past despite several attempts to overthrow the regime (i.e. the abortive coups of 1970 and 1973) the Ba’th leaders have not only been able to discourage military intervention but have also succeeded in relieving the political process from military pressures. The Ba’th Party endeavors to bring if it has not already brought -- the Army under its control and hopes that its tenure of office will depend on civil rather than military support. The army seemed to have accommodated to party discipline by the recruitment of an increasing number of young Ba’th members into its ranks. Moreover, a number of Army officers have been induced to join the Ba’th Party and a growing fraternization between military institutions and top Ba’th leaders has become noticeable. Today even strikes and popular demonstrations that often recurred and disturbed public order are no longer feasible. For this reason even political opponents, though they often voice certain grievances against restrictions of political opinion, have paid a high tribute to the Ba’th Party’s ability to thwart military interventions and maintain stability and public order.

The first step in the right direction toward political participation was the establishment of the progressive National Front, composed first of two parties -- the Ba’th and the Communist Parties -- and then of other
"Progressive" parties and groups. Though in theory the progressive National Front of 1972 claimed to have a much wider popular base than the constituency of the Ba'th Party — indeed, it could only marginally claim the loyalty of all elements represented in the Front, in reality, however, the Ba'th Party alone was held responsible for political decisions.

Today Perhaps a more important instrument to enlist popular participation would be a functional National Assembly in which various shades of opinion be allowed to represent. The temporary constitution indeed has provided for such an Assembly but the relevant articles of the constitution (Articles 46-55) have not yet been implemented. Leaders of various groups and national organizations prepared to cooperate within the framework of the regime seem to be awaiting the opportunity to express their views through an elected organ but plans for holding of elections have not yet been laid down.

The Ba'th leaders have shown a greater enthusiasm in emphasizing "reconstruction" by planning and economic development than in the granting of freedom and political participation on the ground that no real progress and stability in the country can be achieved before poverty and other forms of deprivation were wiped out. Ba'th socialism, it is held, is designed to improve social and
economic conditions as a prerequisite to other ultimate objectives — democracy, freedom and Arab Unity."

The 1991 war and its aftermath brought to the surface an emotional unity Wihdathal (Unity of situation) among the Arabs. The sympathy expressed by many Arabs for Saddam and for his invasion and occupation of Kuwait, indicates that many Arabs do not take for granted the boundaries between Arab states because they do not consider the divisions of the Arab world to be permanent. In the Arab public eye, some borders are less popular than others. The borders that insulate the Gulf royal families and their fortunes are very unpopular and the elimination of the Gulf political orders and elites is desirable in the eyes of many Arabs.

Arab nationalism now consists of two major ideas; first, the notion that the Arabs share common sentiments and cultural and linguistic heritage and for some, a religious heritage, second the idea that some of the borders between Arabs state are not only artificial but also undesirable. There are various arguments that Arabs promote regarding the efficacy of Arab nationalism. For Faysal Darraj the well known Palestinian writer, the crises in Arab contemporary history do not underscore the divisions between the Arab people, rather they underline the schism between "the people" and "the regimes". The repurcussion of the
Gulf war, according to Darraj, sharpened the divisions between the people and the regimes but not among the Arab people themselves.

For Darraj and many Arab nationalist writers, the division of the Arab world into separate states has only served the interests of those Western powers who feared Arab unification and power. Furthermore, some modern Arab nation—states are seen as being closely associated with the interests of both Western powers and Arab ruling families and groups and are regarded as subservient to those interests. The response of many Arab officials to the attempt by the Iraqi regime to eliminate the Kuwaiti political entity was strikingly different from the enthusiasms expressed among the Arab masses to the disaster that befell Kuwait. Arab public dissatisfaction with oppressive system in most if not all—Arab countries lead many Arabs to link oppressiveness with the regional (iqlimi) fragmentation of the Arab world.

The current intellectual debate about Arab nationalism entails no illusions and obstacles in the path of Arab—Partial or full—unification. The opposition by Western powers and Israel to the goal of Arab unity appears to increase, not decrease, the popularity of the idea. In an unusual communique circulated in Syria in January 1991, noted Arab intellectuals expressed their opposition to the
Gulf war and affirmed their faith in collective Arab action and in the necessity of "Arab Power". To many Arabs, the United States fixation with Iraqi military capabilities is indicative of Western fears of Arab military and political power. In other words the sympathy that many Arabs expressed for Saddam was not so much directed toward his person but toward his military apparatus, of which many Arabs in the epoch of defeat and despair were proud.

Unlike the nostalgic Arab nationalism harking back to the Baghdad of Harun al-Rashid, Arab nationalism today does not aspire to achieve glory and greatness, two words that appeared frequently in the Arab nationalist literature of the first part of this century. Many Arabs simply took for greater ease of population movement within the Arab world without worrying about the watchful cruel eyes of the mukhabarats (intelligence networks).

In the present phase invariably Arabs are united by the concept of wiḥdat al-masaʿib (Unity of disasters). Unity is expressed in various ways and in different degrees because of the varied oppressive conditions in the Arab world. The Gulf Governments for example, were and still are intolerant of expression of dissent, as are Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi Governments. Iraqis who strongly expressed their staunch opposition to the tyranny of Saddam Hussain were later oppressed by Iraqi
troops, to the indifference of the world community.

In a society where kinship, communal, tribal and other primordial loyalties prevail, the Ba’th has attached considerable value to the mystique of being an Arab. The self-assertion of his Arab identity would awaken the nationalist consciousness that lay dormant and trigger off automatic processes for self realization as an Arab nationalist. It is clear that Ba’thists are not prepared to distinguish between the individual being a national of the state and a nationalist.

However, the over-emphasis on people rather than territory, and nationality rather than citizenship, makes Ba’thist doctrine repressive as its strives for the assimilation of heterogeneous communities so that everyone conforms to its militant nationalist requirements. It is a recipe for the establishment of authoritarian rule under the control of a totalitarian party.

The present Ba’thist regime is more intensely ideological and Arab nationalist, and has an over projected ambition of transforming Iraq into a modern and secular state as a part of the Arab world. The reality is in fact, far from it. In the final analysis it can be said that devis the process of nation-building in Iraq already in precarious and uncertain condition. The task for Arab
intellectuals and many among the masses is to link the goal of Arab unity with the crucial issues of democratization and Islam. This affirms the point that the political and social process in Iraq are not autonomous but are effected by the movements and ambitions of the countries both inside and outside the region.

Recent developments in the Arab world have caused many people to switch their focus from secular ideologies such as Arab nationalism, Ba’thism and socialism to Islamic oriented thinking. Arab nationalism has been associated with political failure and defeat. The climax of this failure occurred in the war against Israel and the recent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait further more, Islamic revivalist movements have de-emphasized Arab nationalism in favour of Islamic nationalism in their socio-political activities. Islam has provided Arabs with a sense of distinctive identity. Due to the failure of other ideologies, most Arabs consider Islam to be the only viable ideology that can strengthen the Arab world.