

## Chapter 4. Government and Politics



*Bas relief of a warrior from Nimrud, ca. end of the eighth century B.C.*

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM in 1988 was in what was officially characterized as a “transitional” phase. This description meant that the current method of rule by decree, which had been in effect since 1968, would continue until the goal of a socialist, democratic republic with Islam as the state religion was attained. The end of the transition period was to be marked by the formal enactment of a permanent constitution. The timing and the specific circumstances that would terminate the transitional stage had not been specified as of early 1988.

The country remained under the regime of the Baath (Arab Socialist Resurrection) Party, which had seized power through a coup d'état in July 1968. The legality of government institutions and actions was based on the Provisional Constitution of July 16, 1970, which embodied the basic principles of the Baath Party—Arab unity, freedom, and socialism. These principles were in turn rooted in the pan-Arab aspirations of the party, aspirations sanctified through identification with the historic right and destiny of all Arabs to unite under the single leadership of “the Arab Nation.”

The most powerful decision-making body in Iraq, the ten-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which functioned as the top executive and legislative organ of the state, was for all practical purposes an arm of the Baath Party. All members of the RCC were also members of the party's Regional Command, or state apparatus. President Saddam Husayn was both the chairman of the RCC and the secretary general of the Baath's Regional Command. He was generally recognized as the most powerful political figure in the country.

From its earliest days, the Baath Party was beset by personality clashes and by factional infighting. These problems were a primary cause of the failure of the first Baath attempt to govern Iraq in 1963. After the Baath returned to power in 1968, intraparty fissures were generally held in check, albeit not eliminated, by President Ahmad Hasan al Bakr. When Saddam Husayn succeeded to the presidency in 1979, he also commanded the loyalty of the major elements of the Baath.

Saddam Husayn and other Baath leaders have always regarded the ability to balance endemic intraparty tensions—such as those between military and civilian elements and among personalities across boundaries of specialization—as the key to success in Baghdad. Above all, they perceived harmony in the military-civilian

coalition as pivotal. Although the Baath had begun recruiting within the Iraqi military as early as 1958, and within ten years military members constituted the backbone of the party's power, civilian Baath leaders maintained overall control of the party.

Iraqi politics under the Baath regime were generally geared toward mobilizing support for the regime. Loyal opposition had no place, and it was not recognized as legitimate. The party leaders believed competitive politics ill-suited to Iraq, at least during the indefinite transitional period. They condemned partisan political activity, which they insisted had had damaging consequences on national unity and integration. The Baath also invoked Iraq's unhappy legacy of ethnic and regional cleavages as justification for harsh curbs on political rights.

In 1988, twenty years after the Baath had come to power, it still was not possible to assess popular attitudes toward Saddam Husayn, toward the Baath Party, toward political institutions, or toward political issues because there had been insufficient field research in the country. Even though elections for a National Assembly had been held in 1980 and again in 1984, these had been carefully controlled by the government, and genuinely free elections had not been held for more than thirty years. Politicians or groups opposed to the principles of the 1968 Baath Revolution of July 17 to 30 were not permitted to operate openly. Those who aspired to be politically active had few choices: they could join the highly selective Baath Party, remain dormant, go underground or into exile, or join the Baath-sponsored Progressive National Front (PNF).

The PNF, which came into existence in 1974, was based on a national action charter that called for collaboration between the Baath and each of the other parties considered to be both progressive and nationalist. The PNF served as the only risk-free, non-Baath forum for political participation, although even this channel was denied to those whose loyalties to the regime were suspect. The Baath Party's objectives in establishing the front were to provide the semblance of broad popular support for the government as well as to provide the facade of alliance among the Baath and other parties. The Baath, however, held a dominant position within the front and therefore assumed sole responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the front's executive commission, which was composed of the Baath's most important members and sympathizers.

In early 1988, the war with Iran continued to preoccupy Saddam Husayn and his associates. Approximately 75,000 Iraqis had been killed in the war, and about 250,000 had been wounded; more than 50,000 Iraqis were being held as prisoners of war in Iran. Property damage was estimated in the tens of billions of dollars;

destruction was especially severe in the southern part of the country (see Introduction).

## **Constitutional Framework**

The Provisional Constitution of July 16, 1970, upon which Iraq's governmental system was based in 1988, proclaims Iraq to be "a sovereign people's democratic republic" dedicated to the ultimate realization of a single Arab state and to the establishment of a socialist system. Islam is declared to be the state religion, but freedom of religion and of religious practices is guaranteed. Iraq is said to be formed of two principal nationalities, Arab and Kurd. A March 1974 amendment to the Constitution provides for autonomy for the Kurds in the region where they constitute a majority of the population. In this Autonomous Region (see Glossary) both Arabic and Kurdish are designated as official languages for administrative and educational purposes. The Constitution also prescribes, however, that the "national rights" of the Kurds as well as the "legitimate rights" of all minorities are to be exercised only within the framework of Iraqi unity, and the document stipulates that no part of Iraq can be relinquished.

The Constitution sets forth two basic aims, the establishment of a socialist system based on "scientific and revolutionary principles," and pan-Arab economic unity. The state is given an active role in "planning, directing, and guiding" the economy. National resources and the principal means of production are defined as "the property of the people" to be exploited by the state "directly in accordance with the requirements of the general planning of the national economy." The Constitution describes public properties and the properties of the public sector as inviolable.

The Constitution classifies the ownership of property as "a social function that shall be exercised within the limits of society's aims and the state's programs in accordance with the provisions of the law"; nevertheless, the Constitution also guarantees private ownership and individual economic freedom "within the limits of the law, provided that individual ownership will not contradict or be detrimental to general economic planning." The Constitution stipulates that private property may not be expropriated except for the public interest and then only with just compensation. The size of private agricultural land holdings is to be defined by law, and the excess is to be regarded as the property of the people. The Constitution also bars foreign ownership of real estate, although individuals may be granted a legal exemption from this prohibition.

Articles 19 through 36 of the Constitution spell out fundamental rights and duties in detail. The right to fair trial through due

process, the inviolability of person and of residence, the privacy of correspondence, and the freedom to travel are guaranteed to all citizens. The Constitution also assures citizens of their right to religious freedom; to the freedom of speech, of publication, and of assembly; and to the freedom to form political parties, trade unions, and professional societies. The Constitution directs the state to eliminate illiteracy and to ensure the right of citizens to free education from elementary school through the university level. According to Article 28, the aims of education include instilling opposition to "the doctrines of capitalism, exploitation, reaction, Zionism, and colonialism" in order to ensure the achievement of the Baathist goals of Arab unity, freedom, and socialism. The Constitution also requires the state to provide every citizen with employment and with free medical care.

The Constitution defines the powers and the functions of the different government institutions. These include the RCC, the National Assembly, the presidency, the Council of Ministers, or cabinet, and the judiciary (see fig. 11). According to Article 37, the RCC "is the supreme body in the State." Article 43 assigns to the RCC, by a vote of two-thirds of its members, authority to promulgate laws and regulations, to deal with national security, to declare war and conclude peace, and to approve the government's budget. Article 38 stipulates that all newly elected members of the RCC must be members of the Baath Party Regional Command. The Constitution also provides for an appointed Council of Ministers that has responsibility for carrying out the executive decisions of the RCC.

The chief executive of the RCC is the president, who serves as the commander in chief of the armed forces and as the head of both the government and the state. The powers of the president, according to the Constitution, include appointing, promoting, and dismissing personnel of the judiciary, civil service, and military. The president also has responsibility for preparing and approving the budget. The first president, Ahmad Hasan al Bakr, was in office from 1968 to 1979, when he resigned and was succeeded by Saddam Husayn.

Articles 47 through 56 of the Constitution provide for an elected National Assembly, but its powers are to be defined by the RCC. Elections for the Assembly took place for the first time in June 1980. Subsequent National assembly elections were held in October 1984.

The Constitution can be amended only by a two-thirds majority vote of the RCC. Although the 1970 Constitution is officially designated as provisional, it is to remain in force until a permanent constitution is promulgated.

## **Government**

The Constitution provides for a governmental system that, in appearance, is divided into three mutually checking branches, the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. In practice, neither the legislature nor the judiciary has been independent of the executive.

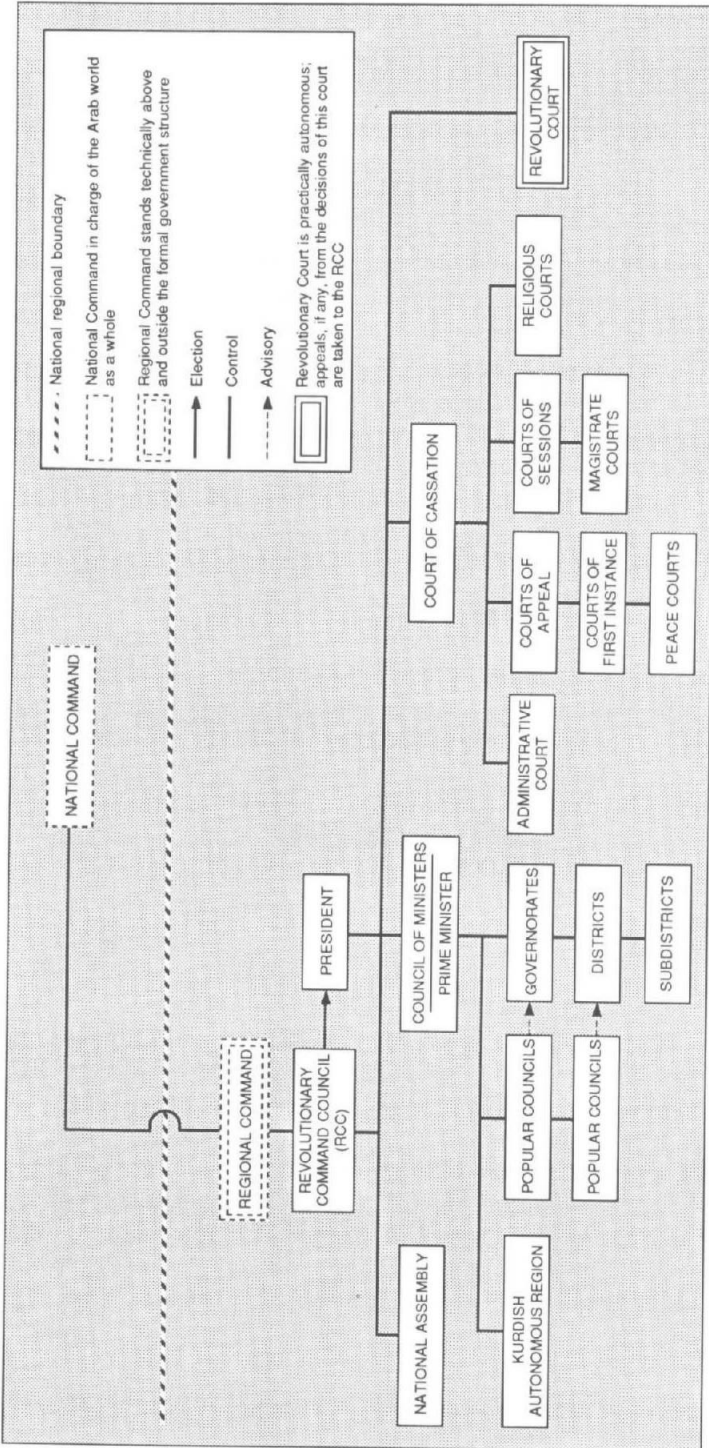
### **The Revolutionary Command Council**

In 1988 the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) continued to be the top decision-making body of the state. The RCC was first formed in July 1968, and since then it has exercised both executive and legislative powers. The chairman of the RCC is the president of the republic. The number of RCC members has varied over time; in 1988 there were ten members.

According to the Constitution, the RCC is the supreme organ of the state, charged with the mission of carrying out the popular will by removing from power the reactionary, the dictatorial, and the corrupt elements of society and by returning power to the people. The RCC elects its chairman, who serves concurrently as president of the republic, by a two-thirds majority vote. In case of the chairman's official absence or incapacitation, his constitutional powers are to be exercised by the vice-chairman, who also is elected by the RCC from among its members. Thus the vice-chairman (in 1988 Izzat Ibrahim, who had served since 1979) is first in line of succession.

The members of the RCC, including both the chairman and the vice-chairman, are answerable only to the RCC itself, which may dismiss any of its members by a two-thirds majority vote and may also charge and send to trial for wrongdoing any member of the council, any deputy to the president, or any cabinet minister. Since 1977 the Baath Party has regarded all members of the Baath Party Regional Command as members of the RCC. The interlocking leadership structure of the RCC and the Regional Command has served to emphasize the party's dominance in governmental affairs.

The RCC's constitutional powers are wide ranging. It may perform legislative functions, both in collaboration with, and independently of, the National Assembly; approve government recommendations concerning national defense and internal security; declare war, order general mobilization, conclude peace, and ratify treaties and international agreements; approve the state's general budget; lay down the rules for impeachment of its members and set up the special court to try those impeached; authorize the chairman or the vice-chairman to exercise some of the council's powers except for legislative ones; and provide the internal regulations and



*Figure 11. Government Organization, 1988*



working procedures of the council. The chairman is specifically empowered to preside over the council's closed sessions, to sign all laws and decrees issued by the council, and to supervise the work of cabinet ministers and the operation of the institutions of the state.

### **The National Assembly**

Although the 1970 Constitution provides for a parliament called the National Assembly, this body was not instituted until 1980. The RCC first circulated a draft law creating the assembly in December 1979; after some changes this was promulgated as law the following March. According to the law, the National Assembly consists of 250 members elected by secret ballot every four years. All Iraqi citizens over eighteen are eligible to vote for assembly candidates. The country is divided into 250 electoral districts, each with an approximate population of 250,000. One representative is elected to the assembly from each of these constituencies. The National Assembly law also stipulates, however, that there is to be a single electoral list. Furthermore, the qualifications of all candidates for the assembly must be reviewed and be approved by a government-appointed election commission. In practice, these provisions have enabled the Baath Party to control the National Assembly.

To qualify as a candidate for National Assembly elections, individuals need to meet certain conditions. For example, prospective candidates must be at least twenty-five years of age, must be Iraqi by birth, must not be married to foreigners, and must have Iraqi fathers. Having a non-Iraqi mother is grounds for disqualification except in those cases where the mother is of Arab origins and from another Arab country. In addition, persons who were subject to property expropriation under the land reform or nationalization laws are not eligible candidates. Furthermore, all aspiring candidates are required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the election commission that they believe in the principles of the 1968 Baath Revolution, that is, in the Baath Party's objectives.

The first parliamentary elections since Iraq became a republic in 1958 were held in June 1980, and the First National Assembly convened at the end of that month. Baath Party candidates won 75 percent, or 187, of the 250 seats. The remaining 25 percent were won by parties allied with the Baath and by independent parties. Elections for the Second National Assembly were held in October 1984. Approximately 7,171,000 votes were cast in that election, and the Baath won 73 percent (183) of the seats. Thirty-three women were elected to the assembly. Saadun Hammadi was elected chairman of the assembly, and two years later he was made a member of the RCC.

Since 1980 the National Assembly generally has held two sessions per year in accordance with Article 48 of the Constitution. The first session is held in April and May, and the second session in November and December. During the few weeks each year that the National Assembly is in session, it carries out its legislative duties in tandem with the RCC. The assembly's primary function is to ratify or reject draft legislation proposed by the RCC. In addition, it has limited authority to enact laws proposed by a minimum of one-fourth of its membership, to ratify the government's budget and international treaties, and to debate domestic and international policy. It also has authority to supervise state agencies and to question cabinet ministers. Although the assembly has served as a forum for limited public discussion of issues, its actual powers were restricted and ultimate decision-making authority pertaining to legislation continued to reside with the RCC in 1988.

### **The President and the Council of Ministers**

The president is the chief executive authority of the country. He may exercise authority directly or through the Council of Ministers, the cabinet. He must be a native-born Iraqi. The Constitution does not stipulate the president's term of office, nor does it provide for his successor. President Bakr served for eleven years before retiring for health reasons in 1979. He was succeeded by Saddam Husayn, the former vice-chairman of the RCC, who continued to hold the office of president in early 1988.

The position of vice-chairman, rather than the office of vice-president, appeared to be the second most powerful political one. The vice-presidency appeared to be a largely ceremonial post, and the vice-president seemed to be appointed or dismissed solely at the discretion of the president. In 1988 the vice-president was Taha Muhy ad Din Maruf, who was first appointed by Bakr in 1974, and was subsequently kept in office by Saddam Husayn. The vice-chairman of the RCC, who would presumably succeed Saddam Husayn, was Izzat Ibrahim.

The Council of Ministers is the presidential executive arm. Presidential policies are discussed and translated into specific programs through the council. The council's activities are closely monitored by the diwan, or secretariat of the presidency. The head of the diwan is a cabinet-rank official, and his assistants and support staff are special appointees. The members of the diwan are not subject to the regulations of the Public Service Council, the body which supervises all civil service matters.

Cabinet sessions are convened and presided over by the president. Some senior members of the RCC are represented on the



*President Saddam Husayn  
Courtesy Embassy of Iraq, Washington*

cabinet. By convention, about one-third of the cabinet positions may be reserved for members of the Baath Party. In early 1988, the cabinet consisted of forty-one members including president Saddam Husayn and vice-president Maruf. Ministerial portfolios included those for agriculture and agrarian reform, communications, culture and arts, defense, education, finance, foreign affairs, health, higher education and scientific research, industry and minerals, information, interior, irrigation, justice, labor and social affairs, oil, planning, public works and housing, religious trusts, trade, and transport. Additionally, there were seven ministers of state and seven presidential advisers with ministerial status. Of the cabinet members, the president and the minister of defense, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of interior, and the minister of trade were also members of the powerful RCC.

### **The Judiciary**

Although the Constitution guarantees an independent judiciary, it contains no provisions for the organization of courts. Consequently, the legal system has been formed on the basis of laws promulgated by the RCC. In early 1988 the judicial system consisted of courts that had jurisdiction over civil, criminal, administrative, religious and other matters. The courts were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, and all judges were appointed by the president. The secular courts continued to function partly on the basis of the French model, first introduced prior to 1918 when Iraq was under Ottoman rule and subsequently modified, and partly on Islamic law. The three dominant schools of Islamic jurisprudence were the Hanafi among the Sunni Arabs, the Shafii among the Sunni Kurds (see Glossary), and the Jafari among Shia Arabs. The Christian and Jewish minorities had their own religious courts for the adjudication of personal status issues, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

For judicial administration, the country was divided into five appellate districts centered, respectively, in Baghdad, Basra, Al Hillah (Babylon), Kirkuk, and Mosul. Major civil and commercial cases were referred to the courts of first instance, which were of two kinds: 18 courts of first instance with unlimited powers, and 150 courts of first instance with limited powers. The former were established in the capitals of the eighteen governorates (provinces); the latter, all of which were single-judge courts, were located in the district and subdistrict centers, and in the governorate capitals (see fig. 1). Six peace courts, two in Baghdad and one in each of the other four judicial district centers, handled minor litigation.

Decisions of these courts could be appealed to the relevant district court of appeals.

Wherever there were civil courts, criminal cases were judged by magistrates. Six sessions courts reviewed cases appealed from the lower magistrates' courts. The personal status of both Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims and disputes arising from administration of waqfs (religious trusts or endowments) were decided in sharia (Islamic law) courts. Sharia courts were located wherever there were civil courts. In some places sharia courts consisted of specially appointed qadis (religious judges), and in other places of civil court judges. Christians, Jews, and other religious minorities had their own separate communal councils to administer personal status laws.

Civil litigation against government bodies and the "socialist sector" and between government organizations were brought before the Administrative Court, set up under a law promulgated in November 1977. Jurisdictional conflicts between this court and other courts were adjudicated by the Court of Cassation, which on appeal could also review decisions of the Administrative Court. Offenses against the internal or external security of the state—whether economic, financial, or political offenses—were tried before the Revolutionary Court. Unlike the other courts described above, the Revolutionary Court was not under the jurisdiction of the appellate court system. In addition, the RCC periodically established special security courts, under the jurisdiction of the secret security police, to handle cases of espionage, of treason, and of "antistate" activities. The proceedings of the Revolutionary Court and of the special security courts, in contrast to the practice of all other courts, were generally closed (see Criminal Justice System, ch. 5).

The court of last resort for all except security cases was the Court of Cassation. It consisted of a president; vice-presidents; no fewer than fifteen permanent members; and a number of deputized judges, reporting judges, and religious judges. It was divided into general, civil, criminal, administrative affairs, and personal status benches. In addition to its appellate function, the Court of Cassation assumed original jurisdiction over crimes committed by high government officials, including judges. The Court of Cassation also adjudicated jurisdictional conflicts between lower courts.

### **Local Government**

In 1988 there were eighteen governorates (*alwiya*, sing., *liwa*), each administered by a governor appointed by the president. Each governorate was divided into districts (*aqdhiya*, sing., *qadha*) headed by district officers (*qaimaqamun*; sing., *qaimaqam*); each district was divided into subdistricts (*nawahy*; sing., *nahiyah*) under the

responsibility of subdistrict officers (*mudara*; sing., *mudir*). Mayors headed cities and towns. Municipalities were divided into several categories depending upon the size of local revenues. Baghdad, the national capital, had special administrative status. The mayor of Baghdad and the mayors of other cities were presidential appointees.

In 1971 President Bakr promulgated the National Action Charter, a broad statement of Baath Party political, economic, social, and foreign policy objectives. This document called for the formation of popular councils in all administrative subdivisions. These councils were to be given the right to supervise, to inspect, and to criticize the work of the government. The first councils were appointed in 1973 in accordance with a law promulgated by the RCC. As late as 1988, however, there was insufficient empirical research available to determine whether the popular councils were autonomous forums for the channeling of grievances or were merely Baath Party-dominated institutions used to encourage active popular support of, and involvement in, government-initiated activities.

### **Kurdish Autonomy**

Three governorates in the north—Dahuk, Irbil, and As Sulaymaniyah—constitute Iraqi Kurdistan, a region that historically has had a majority population of Kurds. Ever since Iraq became independent in 1932, the Kurds have demanded some form of self-rule in the Kurdish areas. There were clashes between Kurdish antigovernment guerrillas and army units throughout most of the 1960s. When the Baath Party came to power in July 1968, the principal Kurdish leaders distrusted its intentions and soon launched a major revolt (see *The Emergence of Saddam Husayn, 1968–79*, ch. 1). In March 1970, the government and the Kurds reached an agreement, to be implemented within four years, for the creation of an Autonomous Region consisting of the three Kurdish governorates and other adjacent districts that have been determined by census to have a Kurdish majority. Although the RCC issued decrees in 1974 and in 1975 that provided for the administration of the Autonomous Region, these were not acceptable to all Kurdish leaders and a major war ensued. The Kurds were eventually crushed, but guerrilla activities continued in parts of Kurdistan. In early 1988, antigovernment Kurds controlled several hundred square kilometers of Irbil and As Sulaymaniyah governorates adjacent to the Iranian frontier.

In early 1988, the Autonomous Region was governed according to the stipulations of the 1970 Autonomy Agreement. It had a twelve-member Executive Council that wielded both legislative and executive powers and a Legislative Assembly that advised the

council. The chairman of the Executive Council was appointed by President Saddam Husayn and held cabinet rank; the other members of the council were chosen from among the deputies to the popularly elected Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Assembly consisted of fifty members elected for three-year terms from among candidates approved by the central government. The Legislative Assembly chose its own officers, including its cabinet-rank chairman, a deputy chairman, and a secretary. It had authority to ratify laws proposed by the Executive Council and limited powers to enact legislation relating to the development of "culture and nationalist customs of the Kurds" as well as other matters of strictly local scope. The Legislative Assembly could question the members of the Executive Council concerning the latter's administrative, economic, educational, social, and other varied responsibilities; it could also withhold a vote of confidence from one or more of the Executive Council members. Both the assembly and the council were located in the city of Irbil, the administrative center of Irbil Governorate. Officials of these two bodies were either Kurds or "persons well-versed in the Kurdish language," and Kurdish was used for all official communications at the local level. The first Legislative Assembly elections were held in September 1980, and the second elections took place in August 1986.

Despite the Autonomous Region's governmental institutions, genuine self-rule did not exist in Kurdistan in 1988. The central government in Baghdad continued to exercise tight control by reserving to itself the power to make all decisions in matters pertaining to justice, to police, to internal security, and the administration of the frontier areas. The Baath Party, through the minister of state for regional autonomy and other ministerial representatives operating in the region, continued to supervise activities of all governing bodies in the region. The minister of justice and a special oversight body set up by the Court of Cassation reviewed all local enactments and administrative decisions, and they countermanded any local decrees that were deemed contrary to the "constitution, laws, or regulations" of the central government. The central government's superior authority has been most dramatically evident in the frontier areas, where government security units have forcibly evacuated Kurdish villagers to distant lowlands (see *The Kurds*, ch. 2).

## **Politics**

### **The Baath Party**

In early 1988, the Baath Party continued to stress parallelism

focused on “regional” (*qutri*) and “national” (*qawmi*) goals, following the Baath doctrine that the territorially and politically divided Arab countries were merely “regions” of a collective entity called “The Arab Nation.” Hence the Baath movement in one country was considered merely an aspect of, or a phase leading to, “a unified democratic socialist Arab nation.” That nation, when it materialized, would be under a single, unified Arab national leadership. Theoretically, therefore, success or failure at the regional level would have a corresponding effect on the movement toward that Arab nation. Moreover, the critical test of legitimacy for any Baath regime would necessarily be whether or not the regime’s policies and actions were compatible with the basic aims of the revolution—aims epitomized in the principles of “unity, freedom, and socialism.”

The Baath Party in Iraq, like its counterparts in other Arab regions (states), derived from the official founding congress in Damascus in 1947. This conclave of pan-Arab intellectuals was inspired by the ideas of two Syrians, Michel Aflaq and Salah ad Din al Bitar, who are generally regarded as the fathers of the Baath movement. Several Iraqis, including Abd ar Rahman ad Damin and Abd al Khaliq al Khudayri, attended this congress and became members of the party. Upon their return to Baghdad, they formed the Iraqi branch of the Baath. Damin became the first secretary general of the Iraqi Baath.

From its early years, the Iraqi Baath recruited converts from a small number of college and high school students, intellectuals, and professionals—virtually all of whom were urban Sunni Arabs. A number of Baath high school members entered the Military College, where they influenced several classmates to join the party. Important military officers who became Baath members in the early 1950s included Ahmad Hasan al Bakr, Salih Mahdi Ammash, and Abd Allah Sultan, all of whom figured prominently in Iraqi political affairs in later years.

During the 1950s, the Baath was a clandestine party, and its members were subject to arrest if their identities were discovered. The Baath Party joined with other opposition parties to form the underground United National Front and participated in the activities that led to the 1958 revolution. The Baathists hoped that the new, republican government would favor pan-Arab causes, especially a union with Egypt, but instead the regime was dominated by non-Baathist military officers who did not support Arab unity or other Baath principles. Some younger members of the party, including Saddam Husayn, became convinced that Iraqi leader Abd al Karim Qasim had to be removed, and they plotted his assassination. The October 1959 attempt on Qasim’s life, however, was



bungled; Saddam Husayn fled Iraq, while other party members were arrested and tried for treason. The Baath was forced underground again, and it experienced a period of internal dissension as members debated over which tactics were appropriate to achieve their political objectives. The party's second attempt to overthrow Qasim, in February 1963, was successful, and it resulted in the formation of the country's first Baath government. The party, however, was more divided than ever between ideologues and more pragmatic members. Because of this lack of unity, the Baath's coup partners were able to outmaneuver it and, within nine months, to expel all Baathists from the government. It was not until 1965 that the Baath overcame the debilitating effects of ideological and of personal rivalries. The party then reorganized under the direction of General Bakr as secretary general with Saddam Husayn as his deputy. Both men were determined to return the Baath to power. In July 1968, the Baath finally staged a successful coup.

After the Baath takeover, Bakr became president of the regime, and he initiated programs aimed at the establishment of a "socialist, unionist, and democratic" Iraq. This was done, according to the National Action Charter, with scrupulous care for balancing the revolutionary requirements of Iraq on the one hand and the needs of the "Arab nation" on the other. According to a Baath Party pronouncement in January 1974, "Putting the regional above the national may lead to statism, and placing the national over the regional may lead to rash and childish action." This protestation notwithstanding, the government's primary concerns since 1968 have been domestic issues rather than pan-Arab ones.

In 1968 the Baath regime confronted a wide range of problems, such as ethnic and sectarian tensions, the stagnant condition of agriculture, commerce, and industry, the inefficiency and the corruption of government, and the lack of political consensus among the three main sociopolitical groups—the Shia Arabs, the Sunni Arabs, and the Kurds. The difficulties of consensus building were compounded by the pervasive apathy and mistrust at the grass-roots levels of all sects, by the shortage of qualified party cadres to serve as the standard-bearers of the Baath regime, and by the Kurdish armed insurgency. Rivalry with Syria and with Egypt for influence within the Arab world and the frontier dispute with Iran also complicated the regime's efforts to build the nation.

Since 1968 the Baath has attempted to create a strong and unified Iraq, through formal government channels and through political campaigns designed to eradicate what it called "harmful prerevolutionary values and practices," such as exploitation, social inequities, sectarian loyalties, apathy, and lack of civil spirit. Official





*Tahrir Square, Baghdad, showing the Monument of Liberty  
Courtesy United Nations*

statements called for abandonment of traditional ways in favor of a new life-style fashioned on the principles of patriotism, national loyalty, collectivism, participation, selflessness, love of labor, and civic responsibility. These "socialist principles and practices" would be instilled by the party's own example, through the state educational system, and through youth and other popular organizations. The Baath particularly emphasized "military training" for youth; such training was considered essential for creating "new men in the new society" and for defending the republic from the hostile forces of Zionism, imperialism, anti-Arab chauvinism (e.g., from Iran), rightists, opportunists, and reactionaries (see Paramilitary Forces; Internal Security, ch. 5).

The Baath's major goal since 1968 has been to socialize the economy. By the late 1980s, the party had succeeded in socializing a significant part of the national economy (see *The Role of Government*, ch. 3), including agriculture, commerce, industry, and oil. Programs to collectivize agriculture were reversed in 1981, but government investment in industrial production remained important in the late 1980s. Large-scale industries such as iron, steel, and petrochemicals were fully owned and managed by the government, as were many medium-sized factories that manufactured textiles, processed food, and turned out construction materials.

The Baath's efforts to create a unified Arab nation have been more problematic. The party has not abandoned its goal of Arab unity. This goal, however, has become a long-term ideal rather than a short-term objective. President Saddam Husayn proclaimed the new view in 1982 by stating that Baathists now "believe that Arab unity must not take place through the elimination of the local and national characteristics of any Arab country. . . . but must be achieved through common fraternal opinion." In practice this meant that the Iraqi Baath Party had accepted unity of purpose among Arab leaders, rather than unification of Arab countries, as more important for the present.

As of early 1988, the Baath Party claimed about 10 percent of the population, a total of 1.5 million supporters and sympathizers; of this total, full party members, or cadres, were estimated at only 30,000, or 0.2 percent. The cadres were the nucleus of party organization, and they functioned as leaders, motivators, teachers, administrators, and watchdogs. Generally, party recruitment procedures emphasized selectivity rather than quantity, and those who desired to join the party had to pass successfully through several apprentice-like stages before being accepted into full membership. The Baath's elitist approach derived from the principle that the

party's effectiveness could only be measured by its demonstrable ability to mobilize and to lead the people, and not by "size, number, or form." Participation in the party was virtually a requisite for social mobility.

The basic organizational unit of the Baath was the party cell or circle (*halaqah*). Composed of between three and seven members, cells functioned at the neighborhood or the village level, where members met to discuss and to carry out party directives. A minimum of two and a maximum of seven cells formed a party division (*firqah*). Divisions operated in urban quarters, larger villages, offices, factories, schools, and other organizations. Division units were spread throughout the bureaucracy and the military, where they functioned as the ears and eyes of the party. Two to five divisions formed a section (*shabah*). A section operated at the level of a large city quarter, a town, or a rural district. Above the section was the branch (*fira*), which was composed of at least two sections and which operated at the provincial level. There were twenty-one Baath Party branches in Iraq, one in each of the eighteen provinces and three in Baghdad. The union of all the branches formed the party's congress, which elected the Regional Command.

The Regional Command was both the core of party leadership and the top decision-making body. It had nine members, who were elected for five-year terms at regional congresses of the party. Its secretary general (also called the regional secretary) was the party's leader, and its deputy secretary general was second in rank and power within the party hierarchy. The members of the command theoretically were responsible to the Regional Congress that, as a rule, was to convene annually to debate and to approve the party's policies and programs; actually, the members were chosen by Saddam Husayn and other senior party leaders to be "elected" by the Regional Congress, a formality seen as essential to the legitimation of party leadership.

Above the Regional Command was the National Command of the Baath Party, the highest policy-making and coordinating council for the Baath movement throughout the Arab world. The National Command consisted of representatives from all regional commands and was responsible to the National Congress, which convened periodically. It was vested with broad powers to guide, to coordinate, and to supervise the general direction of the movement, especially with respect to relationships among the regional Baath parties and with the outside world. These powers were to be exercised through a national secretariat that would direct policy-formulating bureaus.

In reality, the National Command did not oversee the Baath movement as a whole in 1988 because there continued to be no

single command. In 1966 a major schism within the Baath movement had resulted in the creation of two rival National Commands, one based in Damascus and the other in Baghdad. Both commands claim to be the legitimate authority for the Baath, but since 1966 they have been mutually antagonistic. Michel Aflaq, one of the original cofounders of the Baath Party, was the secretary general of the Baghdad-based National Command, and Saddam Husayn was the vice-chairman. In practice, the Syrian Regional Command, under Hafiz al Assad, controlled the Damascus-based National Command of the Baath Party, while the Iraqi Regional Command controlled the Baghdad-based National Command.

Theoretically, the Iraqi Regional Command made decisions about Baath Party policy based on consensus. In practice, all decisions were made by the party's secretary general, Saddam Husayn, who since 1979 had also been chairman of the RCC and president of the republic. He worked closely with a small group of supporters, especially members of the Talfah family from the town of Tikrit (see *The Emergence of Saddam Husayn, 1968–79*, ch. 1); he also dealt ruthlessly with suspected opposition to his rule from within the party. In 1979 several high-ranking Baathists were tried and were executed for allegedly planning a coup; other prominent party members were forcibly retired in 1982. Saddam Husayn's detractors accused him of monopolizing power and of promoting a cult of personality.

### **The Politics of Alliance: The Progressive National Front**

In 1988 Iraq was no nearer to the goal of democracy than it had been when the Baath came to power in 1968. The establishment of "popular democracy" as a national objective remained essentially unfulfilled. Political activities were restricted to those defined by the Baath regime. The party, however, recognized that not all citizens would become party members, and it sought to provide a controlled forum for non-Baathist political participation. It created the Progressive National Front (PNF) in 1974 to ally the Baath with other political parties that were considered to be progressive. As a basis for this cooperation President Bakr had proclaimed the National Action Charter in 1971. In presenting the charter for public discussion, the Baath had invited "all national and progressive forces and elements" to work for the objective of a "democratic, revolutionary, and unitary" Iraq by participating in the "broadest coalition among all the national, patriotic, and progressive forces."

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) was one of the important political groups that the Baathists wanted involved in the PNF. Discussions between the Baath and the ICP took place periodically

over three years before the latter was induced to join the PNF in 1974. For Baath leaders, the PNF was a means of containing potential opposition to their policies on the part of the ICP. Although the ICP was too small to pose a serious armed challenge to the Baath, it was regarded as a major ideological rival. The ICP's roots were as deep as those of the Baath, because the former party had been formed by Iraqi Marxists in the 1930s. Like the Baath, the ICP was an elitist party that advocated socialist programs to benefit the masses and that appealed primarily to intellectuals. Despite these similarities, there had been a long history of antagonism between the two parties. Baathists tended to suspect the communists of ultimate loyalty to a foreign power, the Soviet Union, rather than to the Arab nation, even though the Baathists themselves regarded the Soviet Union as a friendly and progressive state after 1968.

In return for participation in the PNF, the ICP was permitted to nominate its own members for some minor cabinet posts and to carry on political and propaganda activities openly. The ICP had to agree, however, not to recruit among the armed forces and to accept Baath domination of the RCC. The ICP also recognized the Baath Party's "privileged" or leading role in the PNF: of the sixteen-member High Council that was formed to direct the PNF, eight positions were reserved for the Baath, five for other progressive parties, and only three for the communists. The ICP also agreed not to undertake any activities that would contravene the letter or spirit of the National Action Charter.

The ICP may have hoped that the PNF would gradually evolve into a genuine power-sharing arrangement. If so, these expectations were not realized. The Baath members of the High Council dominated the PNF, while the party retained a firm grip over government decision making. By 1975, friction had developed between the ICP and the Baath. During the next two years, at least twenty individual ICP members were arrested, tried, and sentenced to prison for allegedly attempting to organize communist cells within the army in contravention of the specific ban on such activities. The April 1978 Marxist coup d'état in Afghanistan seemed to serve as a catalyst for a wholesale assault on the ICP. Convicted communists were retried, and twenty-one of them were executed; there were virulent attacks on the ICP in the Baathist press; and scores of party members and sympathizers were arrested. The ICP complained, to no apparent avail, that communists were being purged from government jobs, arrested, and tortured in prisons. By April 1979, those principal ICP leaders who had not been arrested had either fled the country or had gone underground. In 1980 the ICP formally withdrew from the PNF and announced the formation

of a new political front to oppose the Baath government. Since then, however, ICP activities against the Baathists have been largely limited to a propaganda campaign.

The various Kurdish political parties were the other main focus of Baath attention for PNF membership. Three seats on the PNF were reserved for the Kurds, and initially the Baath intended that these be filled by nominees from the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), the oldest and largest Kurdish party. By the time the PNF was established in 1974, however, the KDP was already involved in hostilities against the government. The KDP, which originally had been formed in 1946 in Iran where Mullah Mustafa Barzani and other party cofounders had fled following the collapse of a 1945 revolt, was suspicious of the Baath's ultimate intentions with respect to self-rule for the Kurdish region. Even though Barzani himself had negotiated the March 1970 Autonomy Agreement with Saddam Husayn, he rejected Baghdad's March 1974 terms for implementing autonomy. Subsequently, full-scale warfare erupted between central government forces and KDP-organized fighters, the latter receiving military supplies covertly from Iran and from the United States. The Kurdish rebellion collapsed in March 1975, after Iran reached a rapprochement with the Baath regime and withdrew all support from the Kurds. The KDP leaders and several thousand fighters sought and obtained refuge in Iran. Barzani eventually resettled in the United States, where he died in 1979. Following Barzani's death, his son Masud became leader of the KDP; from his base in Iran he directed a campaign of guerrilla activities against Iraqi civilian and military personnel in the Kurdish region. After Iraq became involved in war with Iran, Masud Barzani generally cooperated with the Iranians in military offensives in Iraqi Kurdistan (see *Internal Developments and Security*, ch. 5).

Barzani's decision to fight Baghdad was not supported by all Kurdish leaders, and it led to a split within the KDP. Some of these Kurds, including Barzani's eldest son, Ubaydallah, believed that the Autonomy Agreement did provide a framework for achieving practical results, and he preferred to cooperate with the Baath. Other leaders were disturbed by Barzani's acceptance of aid from Iran, Israel, and the United States, and they refused to be associated with this policy. Consequently, during 1974, rival KDP factions, and even new parties such as the Kurdish Revolutionary Party and the Kurdish Progressive Group, emerged. Although none of these parties seemed to have as extensive a base of popular support as did the KDP, their participation in the PNF permitted the Baath to claim that its policies in the Autonomous Region had the backing of progressive Kurdish forces.



The unanticipated and swift termination of KDP-central government hostilities in March 1975 resulted in more factional splits from the party. One breakaway group, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) under the leadership of Jalal Talabani, was committed to continuing the armed struggle for Kurdish autonomy. Until 1985, however, most of the PUK's skirmishes were with fellow Kurdish fighters of the KDP, and Talabani himself held intermittent negotiations with Baathist representatives about joining the PNF. Other KDP splinter groups agreed to cooperate with the central government. In order to accommodate them, and in recognition of the fact that no single political party represented the Kurds, two additional seats, bringing the total to eighteen, were created in the PNF. Thus, the number of Kurdish representatives increased from three to five. The composition of the PNF changed again in 1980, following the withdrawal of the three ICP members; the number of Kurds remained constant.

In 1975 the Baath invited two independent progressive groups to nominate one representative each for the unreserved seats on the PNF. These seats went to the leaders of the Independent Democrats and the Progressive Nationalists. Neither of these groups was a formally organized political party, but rather each was an informal association of non-Baathist politicians who had been active before 1968. These groups had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Baath Party that their members had renounced the former "reactionary" ideas of the various prerevolutionary parties to which they had belonged.

In 1988 the Baath Party continued to hold the position that the PNF was indispensable as long as the Arab revolutionary movement faced dangers in Iraq and in other parts of the Arab homeland. The Baath insisted that its policy of combining its "leading role" within the front and a cooperative relationship based on "mutual respect and confidence" among itself and the front's members was correct and that, in fact, this was a major accomplishment of its rule. Nevertheless, the PNF was not an independent political institution. Although it served as a forum in which policy could be discussed, the Baath actually controlled the PNF by monopolizing executive positions, by holding half of the total seats, and by requiring that all PNF decisions must be by unanimous vote.

### **Political Opposition**

Although the Baath in 1988 permitted the existence of several non-Baathist political parties, it did not tolerate political opposition to its policies. An effective security police apparatus had forced underground those groups opposed to the Baath (see Internal

Security, ch. 5). Other opposition groups operated in exile in Europe, Iran, and Syria. These included the ICP, the KDP, the PUK, a Baath splinter that supported the Damascus-based National Command, and several Islamic parties. Although various opposition parties periodically succeeded in carrying out acts of violence against regime targets, especially in Kurdistan, for the most part their activities within Iraq did not seriously challenge the Baath regime.

The opposition to the Baath historically has been fragmented, and efforts to form alliances—such as the ICP's November 1980 initiative to create a Democratic and Patriotic Front of Kurdish and Arab secular parties—foundered over ideological divisions. Personality clashes and feuds also prevented the various Kurdish and Arab secular parties from cooperating. In addition, many of the opposition parties seemed to have a weak internal base of popular support because of the prevailing perception that they had collaborated with enemies of Iraq at a time when the country was engaged in war with Iran.

The religious opposition to the Baath was primarily concentrated among the devout Shia population. The most important opposition party was Ad Dawah al Islamiyah (the Islamic Call), popularly known as Ad Dawah, which originally had been established by Shia clergy in the early 1960s. After the Baath came to power in 1968, Ad Dawah opposed the regime's secular policies, and consequently many prominent clergy associated with the party, as well as some who had no connections to Ad Dawah, were persecuted. In 1979, apparently to contain any radicalization of the Iraqi Shia clergy like that which had occurred in Iran, the regime arrested and subsequently executed Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as Sadr, the country's most respected Shia leader. Sadr's precise relationship to Ad Dawah was not established, but his death precipitated widespread, violent demonstrations and acts of sabotage. Ad Dawah was banned in 1980, and membership in the organization was made a capital offense. After the war with Iran had begun, Ad Dawah and other Shia political groups reorganized in exile in Europe and in Iran.

In late 1982, the Iranian authorities encouraged the Iraqi Shia parties to unite under one umbrella group known as the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI). Headquartered in Tehran, SAIRI was under the chairmanship of Muhammad Baqir al Hakim, a prominent clergyman whose father had been the leading ayatollah of Iraq in the 1960s. SAIRI's aim was to promote the cause of Islamic revolution in Iraq by overthrowing the Baathist regime. To further that objective, in 1983 SAIRI

established a government-in-exile. SAIRI's activities brought harsh reprisals against members of the extended Hakim family still living in Iraq but were generally ineffective in undermining the political controls of the Baath. Another opposition element included in SAIRI was the Organization of Islamic Action, headed by Iraqi-born Muhammad Taqi al Mudarrissi.

## **Mass Media**

In early 1988, all radio and television broadcasting in Iraq was controlled by the government. Radio Iraq had both domestic and foreign services. The domestic service broadcast in Arabic, Kurdish, Syriac, and Turkoman; the foreign service, in English, French, German, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu. Two radio stations based in Baghdad broadcast all day, and they could be picked up by the overwhelming majority of the estimated 2.5 million radio receivers in the country. There were also separate radio stations with programs in Kurdish and Persian.

Baghdad Television was the main government television station. It broadcast over two channels throughout the day. Government-owned commercial television stations also broadcast from Basra, Kirkuk, Mosul, and nineteen other locations for an average of six hours a day. A Kurdish-language television station aired programs for eight hours each day. There were an estimated 750,000 privately owned television sets in the country in 1986, the latest year for which such statistics were available.

In 1988 there were six national daily newspapers, all of which were published in Baghdad. One of these papers, the *Baghdad Observer*, was published in English; it had an estimated circulation of 220,000. Another daily, *Al Iraq*, with a circulation of about 30,000, was published in Kurdish. The largest of the four Arabic-language dailies was *Al Jumhuriya*, which had a circulation of approximately 220,000. *Ath Thawra*, with a circulation of about 22,000, was the official organ of the Baath Party. There were also seven weekly papers, all published in Baghdad. The government's Iraqi News Agency (INA) distributed news to the foreign press based in, or passing through, Iraq.

Although Article 26 of the Provisional Constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and publication "within the limits of the law," newspapers, books, and other publications were subject to censorship. The Ministry of Guidance monitored published material to ensure that all writing was "in line with the nationalist and progressive line of the revolution." The Ministry of Culture and Information's National House for Publishing and Distributing

Advertising had the sole authority to import and to distribute all foreign newspapers, magazines, and periodicals.

## **Foreign Policy**

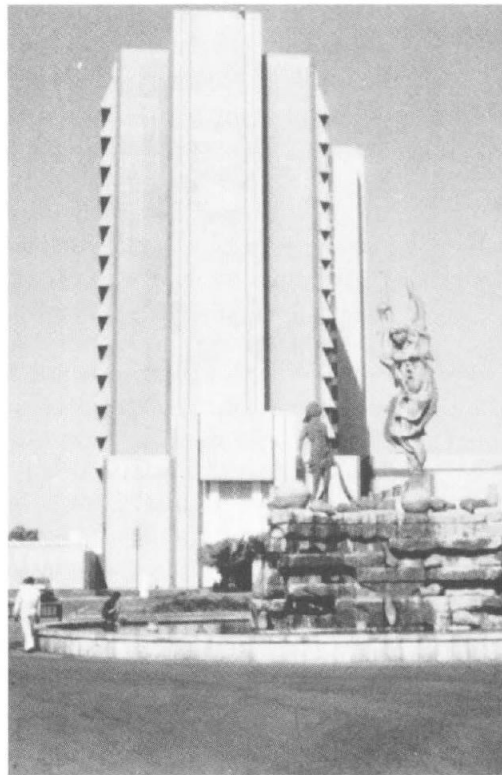
Iraq's relations with other countries and with international organizations are supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1988 the minister of foreign affairs was Tariq Aziz, who had served in that post since 1983. Aziz was a member of the RCC and an influential leader of the Baath Party. Before becoming minister of foreign affairs, he had been director of the party's foreign affairs bureau. Aziz, Saddam Husayn, and the other members of the RCC formulated foreign policy, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bureaucracy implemented RCC directives. The Baath maintained control over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and over all Iraqi diplomatic missions outside the country through its party cells that operated throughout the ministry and in all embassies abroad.

In 1988 Iraq's main foreign policy issue was the war with Iran. This war had begun in September 1980, when Saddam Husayn sent Iraqi forces across the Shatt al Arab into southwestern Iran (see *Iran-Iraq Conflict*, ch. 1). Although the reasons for Saddam Husayn's decision to invade Iran were complicated, the leaders of the Baath Party had long resented Iranian hegemony in the Persian Gulf region and had especially resented the perceived Iranian interference in Iraq's internal affairs both before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. They may have thought that the revolutionary turmoil in Tehran would enable Iraq to achieve a quick victory. Their objectives were to halt any potential foreign assistance to the Shias and to the Kurdish opponents of the regime and to end Iranian domination of the area. The Baathists believed a weakened Iran would be incapable of posing a security threat and could not undermine Iraq's efforts to exercise the regional influence that had been blocked by non-Arab Iran since the mid-1960s. Although the Iraqis failed to obtain the expected easy victory, the war initially went well for them. By early 1982, however, the Iraqi occupation forces were on the defensive and were being forced to retreat from some of their forward lines. In June 1982, Saddam Husayn ordered most of the Iraqi units to withdraw from Iranian territory; after that time, the Baathist government tried to obtain a cease-fire based on a return of all armed personnel to the international borders that prevailed as of September 21, 1979.

Iran did not accept Iraq's offer to negotiate an end to the war. Similarly, it rejected a July 1982 United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. Subsequently, Iranian forces invaded Iraq by crossing the Shatt al Arab



*Khalafa Street, Baghdad  
Courtesy Ronald L. Kuipers*



*Rashid Hotel, Baghdad  
Courtesy Ronald L. Kuipers*

in the south and by capturing some mountain passes in the north. To discourage Iran's offensive, the Iraqi air force initiated bombing raids over several Iranian cities and towns. The air raids brought Iranian retaliation, which included the aerial bombing of Baghdad. Although Iraq eventually pushed back and contained the Iranian advances, it was not able to force Iranian troops completely out of Iraqi territory. The perceived threat to Iraq in the summer of 1982 thus was serious enough to force Saddam Husayn to request the Non-Aligned Movement to change the venue of its scheduled September meeting from Baghdad to India; nevertheless, since the fall of 1982, the ground conflict had generally been a stalemated war of attrition—although Iran made small but demoralizing territorial advances as a result of its massive offensives in the reed marshes north of Basra in 1984 and in 1985, in Al Faw Peninsula in early 1986, and in the outskirts of Basra during January and February 1987. In addition, as of early 1988 the government had lost control of several mountainous districts in Kurdistan where, since 1983, dissident Kurds have cooperated militarily with Iran.

Saddam Husayn's government has maintained consistently since the summer of 1982 that Iraq wants a negotiated end to the war based upon the status quo ante. Iran's stated conditions for ceasing hostilities, namely the removal of Saddam Husayn and the Baath from power, however, have been unacceptable. The main objective of the regime became the extrication of the country from the war with as little additional damage as possible. To further this goal, Iraq has used various diplomatic, economic, and military strategies; none of these had been successful in bringing about a cease-fire as of early 1988 (see Introduction).

Although the war was a heavy burden on Iraq politically, economically, and socially, the most profound consequence of the war's prolongation was its impact on the patterns of Iraq's foreign relations. Whereas trends toward a moderation of the Baath Party's ideological approach to foreign affairs were evident before 1980, the war helped to accelerate these trends. Two of the most dramatic changes were in Iraq's relationships with the Soviet Union and with the United States. During the course of the war Iraq moved away from the close friendship with the Soviet Union that had persisted throughout the 1970s, and it initiated a rapprochement with the United States. Iraq also sought to ally itself with Kuwait and with Saudi Arabia, two neighboring countries with which there had been considerable friction during much of the 1970s. The alignment with these countries was accompanied by a more moderate Iraqi approach to other Arab countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, which previously Iraq had perceived as hostile.

## **The Soviet Union**

When the Baath Party came to power in 1968, relations between Iraq and the West were strained. The Baathists believed that most Western countries, and particularly the United States, opposed the goal of Arab unity. The Baathists viewed the 1948 partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel as evidence of an imperialist plot to keep the Arabs divided. Refusal to recognize Israel and support for the reestablishment of Palestine consequently became central tenets of Baath ideology. The party based Iraq's relations with other countries on those countries' attitudes toward the Palestinian issue. The Soviet Union, which had supported the Arabs during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War and again during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, was regarded as having an acceptable position on the Palestine issue. Thus, the Baath cultivated relations with Moscow to counter the perceived hostility of the United States.

In 1972 the Baathist regime signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. Article 1 stated that the treaty's objective was to develop broad cooperation between Iraq and the Soviet Union in economic, trade, scientific, technical, and other fields on the basis of "respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in one another's internal affairs." Under the treaty, Iraq obtained extensive technical assistance and military equipment from the Soviet Union.

Despite the importance that both the Bakr and the Saddam Husayn governments attached to the relationship with the Soviet Union, they were reluctant to have Iraq become too closely entangled with the Soviet Union or with its sphere of influence. Ideologically, the Baath Party espoused nonalignment vis-à-vis the superpower rivalry, and the party perceived Iraq as being part of the Non-Aligned Movement. Indeed, as early as 1974, the more pragmatic elements in the party advocated broadening relations with the West to counterbalance those with the East and to ensure that Iraq maintained a genuine nonaligned status. The dramatic increase in oil revenues following the December 1973 quadrupling of prices by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) provided the government with the financial resources to expand economic relations with numerous private and public enterprises in Western Europe, Japan, and the United States. Iraq also was able to diversify its source of weapons by purchasing arms from France.

The major impetus for Iraq's retreat from its close relationship with the Soviet Union was not economic, despite Iraq's increasing commercial ties with the West, but political. Iraqis were shocked

by the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and Saddam Husayn's government took a lead among the Arab states in condemning the invasion. Additional strain was placed on Iraqi-Soviet relations in the fall of 1980, when the Soviet Union cut off arms shipments to Iraq (and to Iran) as part of its efforts to induce a cease-fire. This action angered Saddam Husayn and his colleagues, because Iraq had already paid more than US\$1 billion dollars for the interdicted weapons. Although Moscow resumed arms supplies to Iraq in the summer of 1982, following the Iranian advance into Iraqi territory, Iraqi leaders remained bitter over the initial halt.

Despite Iraq's apparent ambivalence about its relationship with the Soviet Union, in early 1988 relations remained correct. The Soviets were still the main source of weapons for the Iraqi military, a fact that restrained public criticism. Nevertheless, the Saddam Husayn government generally suspected that the Soviet Union was more interested in gaining influence in Iran than in preserving its friendship with Iraq. Consequently, Iraqi leaders were skeptical of Soviet declarations that Moscow was trying to persuade Iran to agree to a cease-fire. They expressed disappointment in late 1987 that the Soviet Union had not exerted sufficient pressure upon Iran to force it to cooperate with the UN Security Council cease-fire resolution of July 1987.

## **The West**

Iraq's disappointment in its relations with the Soviet Union gradually led to a tilt toward the West. This process began as early as 1974 when prominent Baathists such as Bakr, Saddam Husayn, and Aziz expressed the need for a more pragmatic, less ideological approach to relations with "the Western capitalist world." For example, the government stated in January 1974 that the West was not composed "totally of enemies and imperialists," that some countries were relatively moderate, and that there were contradictions among the principal Western nations. These views became the basis on which the regime established generally cordial relations with Britain, Italy, France, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), and Japan.

Iraq's closest ties were with France, which came to rank second to the Soviet Union as a source of foreign weapons. Iraq imported billions of dollars worth of French capital and consumer goods during the 1970s and signed several agreements with French companies for technical assistance on development projects. A major project was the Osiraq (Osiris-Iraq) nuclear reactor, which French engineers were helping to construct at Tuwaittha near Baghdad



before it was bombed by Israel in June 1981. Because Iraq was a signatory to the nuclear weapons Nonproliferation Treaty and had previously agreed to permit on-site inspections of its nuclear energy facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency and because France expected to reap considerable economic benefits from Iraqi goodwill, France agreed to assist in the reconstruction of the nuclear power station; however, as of early 1988 no major reconstruction work had been undertaken.

Economic links with France became especially important after the war with Iran had begun. Arms purchases from France, for example, continued in the 1980 to 1982 period when the Soviet Union was withholding weapons supplies. France also provided Iraq generous credits, estimated at US\$7 billion, during 1980 to 1983 when oil revenues were severely reduced on account of the war-related decline in exports. To demonstrate its support further, in 1983 France provided Iraq with advanced weapons, including Exocet missiles and Super Etendard jets, which Iraq subsequently used for attacks on Iranian oil loading facilities and on tankers carrying Iranian oil.

Iraq's ties with the United States developed more slowly, primarily because the Baathists were antagonistic to the close United States-Israeli relationship. Relations had been severed following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, before the Baath came to power, but after 1968 the government became interested in acquiring American technology for its development programs. State organizations were therefore permitted to negotiate economic contracts, primarily with private American firms. In discussing the United States during the 1970s, the government emphasized, however, that its ties were economic, not political, and that these economic relations involving the United States were with "companies," not between the two countries.

Even though Iraqi interest in American technical expertise was strong, prior to 1980 the government did not seem to be seriously interested in reestablishing diplomatic relations with the United States. The Baath Party viewed the efforts by the United States to achieve "step-by-step" interim agreements between Israel and the Arab countries and the diplomatic process that led to the Camp David Accords as calculated attempts to perpetuate Arab disunity. Consequently, Iraq took a leading role in organizing Arab opposition to the diplomatic initiatives of the United States. After Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Iraq succeeded in getting members of the League of Arab States (Arab League) to vote unanimously for Egypt's expulsion from the organization.

Concern about the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted Iraq to reexamine seriously the nature of its relationship with the United States. This process led to a gradual warming of relations between the two countries. In 1981 Iraq and the United States engaged in low-level, official talks on matters of mutual interest such as trade and regional security. The following year the United States extended credits to Iraq for the purchase of American agricultural commodities, the first time this had been done since 1967. More significant, in 1983 the Baathist government hosted a United States special Middle East envoy, the highest-ranking American official to visit Baghdad in more than sixteen years. In 1984, when the United States inaugurated "Operation Staunch" to halt shipment of arms to Iran by third countries, no similar embargo was attempted against Iraq because Saddam Husayn's government had expressed its desire to negotiate an end to the war. All of these initiatives prepared the ground for Iraq and the United States to reestablish diplomatic relations in November 1984.

In early 1988, Iraq's relations with the United States were generally cordial. The relationship had been strained at the end of 1986 when it was revealed that the United States had secretly sold arms to Iran during 1985 and 1986, and a crisis occurred in May 1987 when an Iraqi pilot bombed an American naval ship in the Persian Gulf, a ship he mistakenly thought to be involved in Iran-related commerce. Nevertheless, the two countries had weathered these problems by mid-1987. Although lingering suspicions about the United States remained, Iraq welcomed greater, even if indirect, American diplomatic and military pressure in trying to end the war with Iran. For the most part, the government of Saddam Husayn believed the United States supported its position that the war was being prolonged only because of Iranian intransigence.

### **The Persian Gulf Countries**

Iraq's closest relations in 1988 were with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. This was a reversal of the pattern of relations that had persisted in the 1970s. The original Baathist view of the Arabian Peninsula shaykhdoms was that they were regimes that had been set up by the imperialist powers to serve their own interests. This attitude was reinforced in the period between 1968 and 1971, when Britain was preparing the countries of Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for complete independence. Iraq wished to have an influence on the governments that would come to power, and it provided clandestine assistance to various groups opposed to the

pro-British rulers. Iraqi support of dissident movements was particularly evident in Oman, where an organized guerrilla force was fighting the government from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s.

The Baathist perception of Iran's role in the Persian Gulf was an important factor in Iraqi views of the Arabian Peninsula states. In 1969 Iran, which was then providing aid to dissident Iraqi Kurds, unilaterally abrogated a 1937 treaty that had established the Shatt al Arab boundary along the low water on the Iranian shore; in 1971 Iran forcibly occupied three small islands in the lower gulf near the approaches to the Strait of Hormuz; and by 1972 Iran was again giving assistance to antigovernment Kurds. As Iraq became increasingly concerned about Iranian policies, it tried to enlist the cooperation of the Arab monarchies in an effort to keep the Persian Gulf independent of Iranian influence. Iraq believed it was possible to collaborate with the Arab kings and shaykhs because the latter had proven their Arab nationalism by participating in the 1973 oil boycott against the Western countries supporting Israel. Despite Iraq's new friendliness, the rulers in countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia did not easily forget their suspicions of Iraqi radicalism. Nevertheless, political discussions were initiated, and progress was made toward resolving disputes over borders, over oil pricing policy, and over support for subversion.

By the time the Islamic Revolution occurred in Iran in 1979, Iraq had succeeded in establishing generally correct relations with the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. The war with Iran served as a catalyst to develop these relations even further. Although the Gulf states proclaimed their neutrality in the war, in practice they gave Iraq crucial financial support. The unexpected prolongation of the war and the closing of Iraqi ports early in the war had produced a severe economic crunch by the beginning of 1981. In response, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE all provided loans to help replace revenues that Iraq had lost because of the decline of its oil exports. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were particularly generous, providing an estimated US\$50 billion in interest-free loans up through 1987. In addition, a major portion of Iraq's nonmilitary imports were shipped to Kuwaiti harbors, then transported overland to Iraq. Saudi Arabia also agreed to provide to Iraqi contract customers part of its own oil from the Neutral Zone, jurisdiction over which it shared with Iraq; it was understood that Iraq would repay this oil "loan" after the war had ended.

### **Iraq and Other Arab Countries**

The war with Iran changed the Baathist perception of what constituted the principal threat to Arab unity. Prior to 1980, the Baath

leaders had identified Zionism as the main danger to Arab nationalism. After the war had begun, Iranian nationalism was perceived as the primary force threatening the Arabs. Under the pressures of war, Iraq became reconciled with Egypt and moderated its once-uncompromising stance on Israel. This reconciliation was ironic, because Iraq had taken the lead in 1978 and in 1979 in ostracizing Egypt for recognizing Israel and for signing a separate peace treaty with the latter state. The war with Iran helped to transform Egypt from an excoriated traitor into a much-appreciated ally. Factories in Egypt produced munitions and spare parts for the Iraqi army, and Egyptian workers filled some of the labor shortages created by the mobilization of so many Iraqi men. As early as 1984, Iraq publicly called for Egypt's readmission into pan-Arab councils, and in 1987 Iraq was one of the countries leading the effort to have Egypt readmitted to the Arab League.

The Baath also abandoned its former hostility to countries such as Jordan, Morocco, and the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen). On a smaller scale than Egypt, Jordan provided Iraq with tanks and with laborers, and it served as a transshipment point for goods intended for Iraq.

The most ideologically significant consequence of the war was the evolution of Baathist views on the issue of Palestine. Prior to 1980, Iraq had opposed any negotiations that might lead to the creation of a Palestinian state on the Israeli-occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip on the ground that these territories constituted only part of historic Palestine. Accordingly, Iraq supported the most extreme Palestinian guerrilla groups, the so-called "rejectionist" factions, and was hostile toward the mainstream Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Thus, Iraq provided financial and military aid to such forces as George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Palestine Liberation Front, and the Arab Liberation Front. The latter group had actually been founded by the Baath in 1969. In addition, Iraq was widely believed to have links to various Palestinian terrorist groups such as the "Special Operations Branch" of the PFLP, Black June, the Arab Organization of the 15th May, and the Abu Nidal Organization.

Beginning in 1980, Iraq gradually retreated from its long-held position that there could never be any recognition of Israel. In 1983 Baath leaders accepted the de facto partition of pre-1948 Palestine by stating publicly that there could be negotiations with Israel for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Consequently, Iraq cut its ties to the extremist Palestinian factions, including that of Abu Nidal, who was expelled from the country in November; he subsequently established new headquarters in Syria. Iraq shifted

its support to the mainstream Palestinian groups that advocated negotiations for a Palestinian state. Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah organization was permitted to reopen an office in Baghdad. Arafat, whose proposed assassination for alleged treason against the Palestinians had been clandestinely supported by Iraq in the late 1970s, was even invited to visit the country. This shift represented a fundamental revolution in the thinking of the Iraqi Baath. In effect, by 1986 the Baath Party was saying that the Palestinians had to determine for themselves the nature of their relationship with Israel.

Iraq's most bitter foreign relationship was with the rival Baath government in Syria. Although there were periods of amity between the two governments—such as the one immediately after the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the one in October 1978, when Iraq and Syria both opposed Egypt's plans for a separate peace with Israel—the governments generally were hostile to one another. Relations began to deteriorate once again at the end of 1980 following the outbreak of the war with Iran. Syria criticized Iraq for diverting Arab attention from the real enemy (Israel) and for attacking a regime (Iran) supportive of the Arab cause. Relations worsened throughout 1981 as each country accused the other of assisting antiregime political groups. In April 1982, Syria closed its borders with Iraq and cut off the flow of Iraqi oil through the pipeline that traversed Syrian territory to ports on the Mediterranean Sea. The cessation of Iraqi oil exports via this pipeline was a severe economic blow; Iraq interpreted the move as a confirmation of Syria's *de facto* alliance with Iran in the war.

The hostility between Iraq and Syria has been a source of concern to the other Arab states. King Hussein of Jordan, in particular, tried to reconcile the Iraqi and Syrian leaders. Although his efforts to mediate a meeting between Saddam Husayn and Syrian president Hafiz al Assad were finally realized in early 1987, these private discussions did not lead to substantive progress in resolving the issues that divided the two countries. Intense diplomatic efforts by Jordan and by Saudi Arabia also resulted in the attendance of both presidents, Husayn and Assad, at the Arab League summit in Amman in November 1987. The Iraqis were irritated, however, that Syria used its influence to prevent the conference from adopting sanctions against Iran. The animosities that have divided the rival Iraqi and Syrian factions of the Baath appeared to be as firmly rooted as ever in early 1988.

### **Relations with Other Countries**

In 1988 Iraq maintained cordial relations with Turkey, its non-Arab neighbor to the north. Turkey served as an important

transshipment point for both Iraqi oil exports and its commodity imports. A pipeline transported oil from the northern oil fields of Iraq through Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea. Trucks carrying a variety of European manufactured goods used Turkish highways to bring imports into Iraq. There was also trade between Turkey and Iraq, the former selling Iraq small arms, produce, and textiles. In addition, Iraq and Turkey have cooperated in suppressing Kurdish guerrilla activities in their common border area.

Outside the Middle East, Iraq maintained correct relations with other countries. Iraq identified itself as part of the Non-Aligned Movement of primarily African and Asian nations, actively participated in its deliberations during the late 1970s, and successfully lobbied to have Baghdad chosen as the site for its September 1982 conference. Although significant resources were expended to prepare facilities for the conference, and Saddam Husayn would have emerged from the meeting as a recognized leader of the Nonaligned Movement, genuine fears of an Iranian bombing of the capital during the summer of 1982 forced the government reluctantly to request that the venue of the conference be transferred to New Delhi. Since that time, preoccupation with the war against Iran, which also is a member of the Nonaligned Movement, has tended to restrict the scope of Iraqi participation in that organization.

### **Participation in International Organizations**

Iraq is a member of the UN and of its affiliated agencies. It also is a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Iraqi Red Crescent is affiliated with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Iraq is one of the founding members of OPEC. Iraq also belongs to several pan-Arab organizations including the Arab League and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

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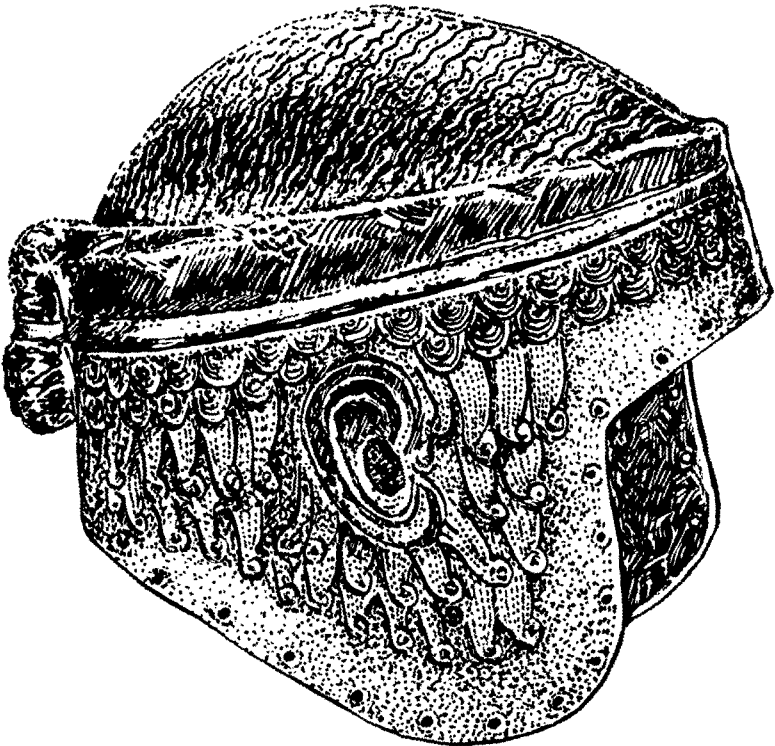
A good overview of Iraqi politics from the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958 until the mid-1980s is Phebe Marr's *The Modern History of Iraq*. An excellent source for details about Iraqi politics during the first ten years of Baath Party rule is Majid Khadduri's *Socialist Iraq*. The social origins of the Baath leaders are exhaustively examined in Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*. An analysis of the early years of Saddam Husayn's presidency is Christine Moss Helms's study *Iraq, Eastern Flank of the Arab World*. Tim Niblock edited a collection of

essays on the state of politics at the beginning of the 1980s called *Iraq: The Contemporary State*. For background on the war with Iran see Jasim Abdulghani, *Iraq and Iran: The Years of Crisis*. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography).





## Chapter 5. National Security



*The golden helmet of Maskalam-dug, king of Ur, ca. 2450 B.C.*

**SOCIAL UPHEAVALS HAVE PLAYED** a major role in Iraq's perception of its national security. Internal political instability, coupled with recurrent revolts by the Kurdish minority, mobilized the energies of successive regimes to crush opposition forces and to restore order. During the mid- and late 1970s, however, the Baath (Arab Socialist Resurrection) Party leaders succeeded in establishing a revolutionary government, which temporarily subdued the Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq and, using repressive measures, consolidated its power.

The higher prices of petroleum following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, and the Arab oil embargo, resulted in an accumulation of wealth that enabled Iraq to expand its armed forces in an attempt to match, in strength as well as in strategic importance, the capacity of its neighbor, Iran. Having signed a border treaty with Tehran in 1975, Baghdad assumed that its search for military parity would not result in conflict, in particular because the two states enjoyed economic prosperity; however, regional events, ranging from the Soviet Union's expulsion from Egypt in 1972 to Egypt's eventual expulsion from the League of Arab States (Arab League) in 1979, following the signing of the separate Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, strengthened Baghdad's resolve to make a bid for regional leadership. Armed with modern weapons and with sophisticated equipment from the Soviet Union and France, Iraq gained a sense of invincibility and, when the opportunity arose, implemented its resolve. Threatened by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and by its potential influence on Iraq's majority Shia (see Glossary) population, Iraq attacked Iran on September 22, 1980.

For most of the 1980s, Iraq has been preoccupied with that war. In contrast to the first forty years of Iraqi independence, when the military participated in several coups, the Iraqi armed forces demonstrated growing professionalism in the 1980s by limiting their direct role in the country's political life. The armed forces' loyalty has also been assured by the Baath Party, however, which—after conducting purges against the military during the 1970s—continued to maintain a close eye on every aspect of military life and national security in the late 1980s.

### **National Security Concerns**

Like most developing states, but perhaps to a greater extent because of internal schisms, Iraq was plagued with insecurity and

with political instability after independence in 1932. When Britain and France redrew boundaries throughout the Middle East following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the region that eventually became Iraq (under the Sykes-Picot Agreement) included a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups with little sense of national unity (see World War I and the British Mandate, ch. 1). The absence of nation-building elements encouraged various sectors of Iraqi society to oppose the establishment of central authority, often for personal and ideological reasons. Consequently, clandestine activities against the state's budding political and military institutions threatened Iraq's political leaders. Insecurity arising from domestic opposition to the state was compounded by Iraq's long-standing isolation from neighboring countries because of ideological rivalries, ethnic and religious differences, and competition for influence in the Persian Gulf. The Iraqi political agenda was further burdened in the late 1970s by the newly inherited Arab leadership role that came with Egypt's isolation in the wake of the Camp David Accords and the ensuing separate Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty.

The Baath Party that ruled Iraq in early 1988 came to power in July 1968 determined to restore order to a country where political turmoil was the norm (see *The Emergence of Saddam Husayn, 1968-79*, ch. 1). Despite several coup attempts during the intervening twenty years, notably in 1970 and in 1973, the Baath successfully ended the political turbulence of the 1950s and the 1960s. Yet, this level of stability was achieved only through harsh methods imposed by an increasingly disciplined, if intolerant, party. Anti-state conspirators, including fellow Baathists, were rushed into exile, were kept under house arrest, or were executed. Actual or alleged coup attempts were forcefully put down and were followed by systematic purges of the bureaucracy and the armed forces; moreover, the party's vigilance on internal security was supported by a thorough indoctrination program to gain and to maintain formerly uncertain loyalties, both within the armed forces and in the civilian population.

Baathist success in maintaining internal security resulted partly from its 1975 limited victory against the Kurds (see *People*, ch. 2; *Internal Security*, this ch.). The Iraqi-Iranian border agreement of March 1975, subsequently formalized in the Baghdad Treaty in June 1975, resolved a number of disputes between the two states. Its provisions ended Iranian support for Iraqi Kurds, whose struggles for autonomy had troubled Iraqi governments since 1932. Bolstered by this limited success, Baghdad adopted a variety of measures in the succeeding decade in order to emerge from its

political isolation and assert its strategic value. The 1970s closed under a cloud of insecurity, however, as the Baathists took stock of the revolutionary Islamic regime in Tehran. Threatened by Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini's repeated calls to Iraqi Shias to follow in the Iranian people's footsteps by overthrowing usurpers of power, the Baathist leadership embarked on an adventurous war. Seven years later, Baghdad was nowhere near its objective, and it was struggling to avoid a military defeat. Nevertheless, the Baath Party continued to maintain its influence in Iraq throughout the early and mid-1980s. For the most part, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and its chairman, President Saddam Husayn (also seen as Hussein), maintained their political positions through repressive means and by what was justified as a defensive Iraqi war against a perceived threat. Foreign observers believed that the government remained vulnerable to challenges to its authority because of the lack of any legitimate means of political dissent and because of the reverberations of a war of attrition with mounting casualties.

Iraq had enjoyed a relatively favorable national security situation in the late 1970s, but practically all its perceived politico-military gains were lost after it attacked Iran in 1980, and in 1988 Iraq faced serious economic and military difficulties.

## **The Regular Armed Forces**

### **Size, Equipment, and Organization**

During the late 1970s and the mid-1980s, the Iraqi armed forces underwent many changes in size, structure, arms supplies, hierarchy, deployment, and political character. Headquartered in Baghdad, the army—of an estimated 1.7 million or more Iraqis, including reserves (actual numbers not available) and paramilitary—in 1987 had seven corps, five armored divisions (each with one armored brigade and one mechanized brigade), and three mechanized divisions (each with one armored brigade and two or more mechanized brigades). An expanded Presidential Guard Force was composed of three armored brigades, one infantry brigade, and one commando brigade. There were also thirty infantry divisions, composed of the People's Army (Al Jaysh ash Shaabi—also cited as the Popular Army or People's Militia) brigades and the reserve brigades, as well as six Special Forces brigades.

This growth in the manpower and equipment inventories of the Iraqi armed forces was facilitated by Iraq's capacity to pay for a large standing army and was occasioned by Iraq's need to fight a war with Iran, a determined and much larger neighbor. Whereas

in 1978 active-duty military personnel numbered fewer than 200,000, and the military was equipped with some of the most sophisticated weaponry of the Soviet military arsenal, by 1987 the quality of offensive weapons had improved dramatically, and the number of men under arms had increased almost fourfold (see table 10, Appendix).

Army equipment inventories increased significantly during the mid-1980s. Whereas in 1977 the army possessed approximately 2,400 tanks, including several hundred T-62 models, in 1987 the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that Iraq deployed about 4,500 tanks, including advanced versions of the T-72. Other army equipment included about 4,000 armored vehicles, more than 3,000 towed and self-propelled artillery pieces, a number of FROG-7 and Scud-B surface-to-surface missiles with a range of up to 300 kilometers, and an array of approximately 4,000 (some self-propelled) anti-aircraft guns. The vast majority of the army's equipment inventory was of Soviet manufacture, although French and Brazilian equipment in particular continued to be acquired in Iraq's ongoing attempt to diversify its sources of armaments (see table 11, Appendix). This mammoth arsenal gave Iraq a clear-cut advantage over Iran in 1987. Iraq had an advantage of more than four to one in tanks (4,500 to 1,000); four to one in armored vehicles (4,000 to 1,000); and two to one in artillery and anti-aircraft pieces (7,330 to 3,000). Despite this quantitative and qualitative superiority, the Iraqi army by the end of 1987 had not risked its strength in a final and decisive battle to win the war.

Headquartered in Basra, the 5,000-man navy was the smallest branch of the armed forces in early 1988, and, in contrast to the Iranian navy, had played virtually no role in the war. Iraq's second naval facility at Umm Qasr took on added importance after 1980, in particular because the Shatt al Arab waterway, which leads into Basra, was the scene of extensive fighting. It was at Umm Qasr that most of the Iraqi navy's active vessels were based in early 1988. Between 1977 and 1987, Iraq purchased from the Soviet Union eight fast-attack OSA-class patrol boats—each equipped with Styx surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). In late 1986, Iraq obtained from Italy four Lupo class frigates, and six Wadi Assad class corvettes equipped with Otomat-2 SSMs. Although the four frigates and the six corvettes was held in Italy under an embargo imposed by the Italian government, these purchases signaled Iraq's intention to upgrade its naval power. Observers speculated that the end of the war with Iran could be followed by a rapid expansion of the Iraqi navy, which could exercise its influence in northern Persian Gulf waters (see table 12, Appendix).

In 1987 the Iraqi air force consisted of 40,000 men, of whom about 10,000 were attached to its subordinate Air Defense Command. The air force was headquartered in Baghdad, and major bases were located at Basra, H-3 (site of a pump station on the oil pipeline in western Iraq), Kirkuk, Mosul, Rashid, and Ash Shuaybah. Iraq's more than 500 combat aircraft were formed into two bomber squadrons, eleven fighter-ground attack squadrons, five interceptor squadrons, and one counterinsurgency squadron of 10 to 30 aircraft each. Support aircraft included two transport squadrons. As many as ten helicopter squadrons were also operational, although these formed the Army Air Corps. The Air Defense Command piloted the MiG-25, MiG-21, and various Mirage interceptors and manned Iraq's considerable inventory of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).

The equipment of the air force and the army's air corps, like that of the other services, was primarily of Soviet manufacture. After 1980, however, in an effort to diversify its sources of advanced armaments, Iraq turned to France for Mirage fighters and for attack helicopters. Between 1982 and 1987, Iraq received or ordered a variety of equipment from France, including more than 100 Mirage F-1s, about 100 Gazelle, Super-Frelon, and Alouette helicopters, and a variety of air-to-surface and air-to-air missiles, including Exocets. Other attack helicopters purchased included the Soviet Hind equipped with AT-2 Swatter, and BO-105s equipped with AS-11 antitank guided weapons. In addition, Iraq bought seventy F-7 (Chinese version of the MiG-21) fighters, assembled in Egypt. Thus Iraq's overall airpower was considerable (see table 13, Appendix).

Although Iraq expanded its arms inventory, its war efforts may have been hindered by poor military judgment and by lack of resolve. Saddam Husayn was the country's head of state and premier as well as the chairman of both the RCC and the Baath Party; moreover, in 1984 he assumed the rank of field marshal and appointed himself commander in chief of the Iraqi armed forces. Iraqi propaganda statements claimed that Saddam Husayn had "developed new military ideas and theories of global importance," but few Western military analysts gave credence to such claims. Since 1980 General Adnan Khairallah, who served as both deputy commander in chief of the armed forces and minister of defense, was the highest officer in the military chain of command. In 1987 he also assumed the position of deputy prime minister. His multiple roles reflected the predominance of the army in the organizational structure of the armed forces. Sattar Ahmad Jassin was appointed secretary general of defense and adjutant of the armed forces in 1985. General Abd al Jabar Shanshal assumed the position

of chief of the armed forces general staff in 1984. Frequent changes at the general staff level indicated to foreign observers that Iraq's military failures were primarily the result of poor leadership and an overly rigid command structure. Defective leadership was evident in the lack of clear orders and in the poor responses by the army in the occupation of Susangerd. In October 1980, armored units twice advanced and withdrew from the city, and later in the same operation, the army abandoned strategic positions near Dezful. Rigid control of junior officers and of noncommissioned officers (NCOs) frustrated their initiative and may have been the reason for the high casualty figures in the infantry, where initiative and spontaneity in decision making can be of paramount importance. The command structure reportedly was even more inflexible and slow in the People's Army detachments, where political commanders routinely made military decisions.

### **Manpower and Training**

Historically, under Turkish rule, Iraqi conscripts were often transported to distant locations within the vast Ottoman Empire, and they were not allowed to return home for many years. During the early years of independence, conditions of service were nearly as onerous: pay was irregular, troops were misused, and retention beyond the compulsory period remained a common practice. Throughout modern history, the majority of conscripts have fulfilled much of their service obligation in the rugged mountains of northern Iraq, where conditions were Spartan at best and were often very dangerous. Although conditions improved markedly during the 1970s, and conscription was no longer as widely resented as it had been for more than a century, there were still draft dodgers, and they were routinely court-martialed and executed in public.

In the past, deferments and exemptions from conscription were usually granted generously. Until 1958 exemptions could be bought. In 1988 deferments were still available to full-time students, to hardship cases, and to those with brothers serving in the military. The increase in manpower needs created by the rapid growth of the army after 1973 and the war with Iran after 1980 resulted in a tightening of previously liberal exemption policies, however. In 1987 observers estimated that a total of 3 million Iraqi males, aged eighteen to forty-five, were fit for military service. An additional 2 million Iraqi females in the same age group were potentially available for military service.

Males were liable to conscription until the age of forty-five. In 1980 the two-year compulsory period of service was extended without specific time limitations, to support the war effort; many



trained technicians started serving as long as five years. A man could also volunteer—for a two-year term that could be extended by periods of two years—as an alternative to conscription or for additional service at any time between ages eighteen and forty-three. After two years of compulsory active service, both conscripts and volunteers were obliged to spend eighteen years in a reserve unit. These reserve units received intensive training during the mid-1980s because many reservists were called up to fill manpower shortages caused by the Iran-Iraq War and to relieve temporarily those on active duty.

Although women were not conscripted, under a law passed in 1977 they could be commissioned as officers if they held a health-related university degree, and they could be appointed as warrant officers or NCOs in army medical institutes if they were qualified nurses. The vast majority of women in the armed forces held administrative or medical-related positions, but an increasing number of women performed in combat functions after 1981. Women were serving in combat roles both in the air force and in the Air Defense Command in 1987. This integration of women into the military reflected the shortage of trained males.

Most army officers came from the Military College in Baghdad, which was founded in 1924. Candidates for the college were physically qualified, secondary-school graduates of Iraqi nationality, who had demonstrated political loyalty. Cadets were divided into two groups, combatant (combat arms) and administrative (technology and administration). They studied common subjects during the first two years, and they specialized according to their group designation in the final year. On graduation cadets received commissions as second lieutenants in the regular army. Some were granted higher ranks because of voluntary service on the war front.

Another source of army officers was the Reserve College founded in 1952. This school enrolled two classes annually, one for those who held professional degrees, such as medicine and pharmacy, and one for secondary-school graduates. During the 1970s, approximately 2,000 reserve officers were graduated each year; those with professional degrees were commissioned as second lieutenants, and those without a college education were appointed as warrant officers. The army also maintained a system of service schools for training in combat arms as well as in technical and administrative services. Most of those schools, located in or near Baghdad, have conducted additional courses for both officers and NCOs since 1980. Since 1928 the army has also maintained a two-year staff college to train selected officers in all services for command and staff positions.

In mid-1977 the navy opened its own officer training academy. This comparatively new institution was called the Arabian Gulf Academy for Naval Studies. Since 1933 the air force has maintained its own college as a source of officer personnel. In 1971 the college was moved from Rashid Airbase (southeast of Baghdad) to Tikrit. It offered administrative and flight training courses as well as training for technical specialists. (Iraqi officers and pilots received training in several foreign countries as well in the 1970s; pilots were trained in India and in France, and especially in the Soviet Union.)

The highest level of military training in Iraq was a one-year course conducted at Al Bakr University for Higher Military Studies (also called the War College) in Baghdad, founded in 1977. At the War College, high-ranking officers studied modern theories and methods of warfare in preparation for assuming top command and staff positions in the armed forces. Little was known about the content of Iraq's military training, although political and ideological indoctrination appeared to accompany military training at all levels. In any case, the seven years of combat in the Iran-Iraq War could only have enhanced technical skills; many of these officers presumably applied their theoretical training in conducting the war. By Western accounts, however, the battlefield performance of military leaders did not reflect sophisticated grasp of strategy and tactics (see *The Iran-Iraq War*, this ch.).

### **Conditions of Service and Morale**

Conditions of service in the Iraqi army historically have been poor. In addition to receiving low and irregular pay, during much of the country's modern history Iraqi soldiers were involved in a costly and unpopular war with Kurdish rebels. Having to fight the Kurds caused morale problems and desertions, particularly among the army's Kurdish recruits, and on at least two occasions between 1975 and 1979 the government offered amnesties to all soldiers and security personnel who had deserted during Kurdish conflicts. Between 1975 and 1980, Baghdad made some progress in solving long-standing morale problems and in improving conditions of service. The 1975 victory against the Kurds and increased oil income contributed to these improvements. A reversal recurred in 1981, however, when many of the Iraqi military failed to cope with combat stress, and thousands experienced psychological problems because of their war experiences. The surrender rate was also high, as prisoner-of-war statistics indicated, and that further demoralized loyal troops.

In 1975 Baghdad adopted a comprehensive Military Service and Pension Law that established pay scales, allowances, benefits, and retirement pay designed to attract officers and enlisted men from the civilian sector. A second lieutenant was authorized ID65 (ID or Iraqi dinar—for value of dinar, see Glossary) a month as base pay, with an increase of ID20 for each higher rank. Moreover, an adjustable cost-of-living allowance was established, as was a family allowance amounting to a 5 percent increase in salary for each dependent. Service allowances were also granted to those with special skills or duties. Retirement pay was commensurate with rank and with civilian retirement benefits, and indemnities were established for the families of soldiers disabled or killed in action.

After the military defeats of 1982, the entire chain of command suffered low morale. On several occasions, signs of mutiny in opposition to the war emerged. According to unverified Iraqi dissident reports, the number of deserters reached 100,000, and in central and in southern Iraq, they formed armed groups that were opposed to the regime. Many soldiers refused to fight in Kurdistan, and many more joined the armed Kurdish resistance movement.

### **Military Justice System**

Both political offenders and ordinary criminal offenders in the armed forces were tried in the military courts, but Iraq's military courts had no jurisdiction over civilians accused of security-related crimes. Such cases were reviewed by revolutionary courts. Military tribunals were held in camera and were often summary in nature. Although little information was available in early 1988, observers believed that the system of military justice differed little from the system in operation at the time of the 1968 Baath Revolution. At that time a permanent military court of at least five members was usually established at each division headquarters and wherever large concentrations of nondivision troops were stationed. In addition, emergency military courts could be set up in combat areas to expedite the trial of offenders there. Such courts usually consisted of three members, a president with the rank of lieutenant colonel and two members with the rank of major or above.

The highest court was the Military Court of Cassation, which sat in Baghdad. It was appointed by the minister of defense and was composed of a president with the rank of brigadier general or above and two members with the rank of colonel or above. Appeals from the sentences of lower military courts were heard in the Military Court of Cassation; it also conducted trials of the first instance of senior officers.

A number of changes were introduced into the Penal Code of the Popular Army since 1980. Law No. 32 of 1982, for example, made several offenses by service personnel punishable by death. In its 1985 report, Amnesty International noted that RCC Resolution No. 1370 reaffirmed the death penalty for various offenses. These included fleeing or defaulting from military service, conspiring against the state, espionage, and joining the Ad Dawah al Islamiyah (the Islamic Call), commonly referred to as Ad Dawah.

### **Uniforms and Rank Insignia**

In the late 1980s, Iraqi uniforms consisted of service and field attire for both summer and winter and a dress uniform and mess jacket for officers. The winter service dress uniform, of olive drab wool, consisted of a single-breasted coat having patch pockets with flaps, a khaki shirt and tie, and trousers that were usually cuffless. The summer uniform was similar but was made of light tan material. The winter field uniform consisted of an olive drab shirt, wool trousers, and a waist-length jacket. The summer field uniform was identical in style but was made of lighter material. Both field uniforms included a web belt, a beret or helmet, and high-top shoes.

Commissioned officers' rank insignia were identical for the army and for the air force except that shoulder boards were olive drab for the army and were blue for the air force. Naval officer rank insignia consisted of gold stripes worn on the lower sleeve. Army and air force enlisted personnel wore stripes on the sleeve to designate rank, while the top noncommissioned officer rank, sergeant major and chief master sergeant, respectively, consisted of a gold bar on top of the shoulders (see fig. 12 and fig. 13).

### **Paramilitary Forces**

In 1987 the People's Army (Al Jaysh ash Shaabi—also cited as the Popular Army or People's Militia), standing at an estimated 650,000, approached the regular armed forces' manpower strength. Officially, it was the Iraqi Baath Party Militia and included a special youth section. Formed in 1970, the People's Army grew rapidly, and by 1977 it was estimated to have 50,000 active members. Subsequently, a phenomenal growth, giving the militia extensive internal security functions, occurred. Whereas its original purpose was to give the Baath Party an active role in every town and village, the People's Army in 1981 began its most ambitious task to date, the support of the regular armed forces.

The official functions of the People's Army were to act as back-up to the regular armed forces in times of war and to safeguard revolutionary achievements, to promote mass consciousness, to

consolidate national unity, and to bolster the relationship between the people and the army in times of peace. The People's Army dispatched units to Iraqi Kurdistan before 1980 and to Lebanon to fight with Palestinian guerrillas during the 1975-76 Civil War. Foreign observers concluded, however, that the primary function of the People's Army was political in nature; first, to enlist popular support for the Baath Party, and second, to act as a counterweight against any coup attempts by the regular armed forces.





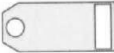




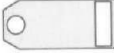
Beginning in 1974, Taha Yasin Ramadan, a close associate of President Saddam Husayn, commanded the People's Army, which was responsible for internal security. The command of such a large military establishment gave Ramadan so much power, however, that some foreign observers speculated that the primary function of his second in command was to keep him from using the People's Army as a personal power base.

People's Army members were recruited from among both women and men (who had completed their regular army service) eighteen years of age and older. It was unclear whether or not Baath Party membership was a prerequisite—especially after 1981, when the numerical strength of the People's Army ballooned—but, clearly, party indoctrination was at least as important as military training. Members usually underwent a two-month annual training period, and they were paid from party funds. Although the extent of their training was unknown in early 1988, all recruits were instructed in the use of a rifle. Graduates were responsible for guarding government buildings and installations, and they were concentrated around sensitive centers in major towns. Militia members possessed some sophisticated arms, and it was possible that disgruntled officers contemplating a challenge to Saddam Husayn could rally the support of a force of such militiamen.

Futuwah (Youth Vanguard) was a paramilitary organization for secondary-school students founded by the Baath Party in 1975. Boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and eighteen could join Futuwah and receive training in light arms, in the use of grenades, and in civil defense work. By early 1988, several thousand Iraqi youth had volunteered for Futuwah training, and they had been organized into youth platoons. Unverified reports claimed that some People's Army units and Futuwah units were dispatched to the war front for short periods of time in 1983 and 1985. Visitors to Baghdad in the 1980s, however, reported that most civil defense activities in the capital were performed by young People's Army members.

IRAQI RANK	MULAZIM	MULAZIM AWWAL	NAQIB	RAID	MUGADDAM	AQID	AMID	LIWA	FARIQ	FARIQ AWWAL	MUSHIR
<b>ARMY</b>											
	U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL	GENERAL OF THE ARMY
<b>AIR FORCE</b>											
	U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL	GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE
<b>NAVY</b>											
	U.S. RANK TITLES	ENSIGN	LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE	LIEUTENANT COMMANDER	COMMANDER	CAPTAIN	COMMODORE ADMIRAL	REAR ADMIRAL	VICE ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL	FLEET ADMIRAL

*Figure 12. Officer Ranks and Insignia, 1987*

IRAQI RANK	JUNDI	JUNDI AWWAL	NAIB ARIF	ARIF	RAIS URAFA	NAIB DABIT
<b>ARMY</b>	NO INSIGNIA					
U.S. RANK TITLES	BASIC PRIVATE	PRIVATE/PRIVATE 1ST CLASS	CORPORAL	SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT/ SERGEANT 1ST CLASS	SERGEANT MAJOR
<b>IRAQI RANK</b>	JUNDI	JUNDI AWWAL	NAIB ARIF	ARIF	RAIS URAFA	NAIB DABIT
<b>AIR FORCE</b>	NO INSIGNIA					
U.S. RANK TITLES	AIRMAN BASIC	AIRMAN/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS	SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT	TECHNICAL SERGEANT/ MASTER SERGEANT	CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
<b>IRAQI RANK</b>	JUNDI	JUNDI AWWAL	NAIB ARIF	ARIF	RAIS URAFA	NAIB DABIT
<b>NAVY</b>	NO INSIGNIA	INSIGNIA NOT KNOWN	INSIGNIA NOT KNOWN	INSIGNIA NOT KNOWN	INSIGNIA NOT KNOWN	INSIGNIA NOT KNOWN
U.S. RANK TITLES	SEAMAN RECRUIT	SEAMAN APPRENTICE/SEAMAN	PETTY OFFICER 3D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 2D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS/ CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

## **Foreign Military Ties**

### **Military Ties Prior to the Iran-Iraq War**

Iraq's armed forces were heavily dependent on foreign military assistance after the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. In 1921 British Mandate authorities undertook the training of Iraqi soldiers who had served under the Ottomans. The British reorganized the former Ottoman units into a force designed to uphold internal law and order and to serve British interests by putting down frequent tribal revolts. Until 1958 British officers guided the development of the armed forces, and British influence was reflected in the organization, training, and equipment of the Iraqi military. Senior Iraqi officers regularly were sent to Britain or to India to receive advanced training. Iraq's generally Western-oriented military posture throughout this period culminated in the 1955 Baghdad Pact.

The revolution of July 14, 1958, and the coming to power of Abd al Karim Qasim completely altered Iraq's military orientation. Disagreement with the British (and with the Western world's) stance vis-à-vis Israel and growing pan-Arab sentiment led Qasim to abrogate the Baghdad Pact and to turn to the Soviet Union for arms. Since 1959 the Soviet Union has been Iraq's chief arms supplier and its most essential foreign military tie. In April 1972, the two states signed a fifteen-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in which Iraq and the Soviet Union agreed to "continue to develop cooperation in the strengthening of the defense capabilities of each."

By no means, however, was Iraq a "satellite" of the Soviet Union. Baghdad consistently insisted on its independence in policy making, and on a number of key issues, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, Syria's role in Lebanon, and the Nonaligned Movement, the two states held opposing views. Furthermore, Iraq's Baathist ideology remained fundamentally antithetical to communism. As a further sign of its staunch independence, Iraq insisted on its freedom to purchase weapons from Western sources, and in 1980 it demonstrated its intention to diversify its source of armaments. Although France and Britain both had sold some arms to Iraq during the 1966 to 1968 regime of Abd ar Rahman Arif, between 1974 and 1980 Iraq increased its purchases from France by acquiring helicopters, antitank missiles, and high performance Mirage jet fighters.

Despite these expressions of Iraqi independence, both mutual interests and practical necessity dictated the Iraqi air forces's reliance



on Soviet support. Total Soviet military aid to Iraq between 1958 and 1974 was estimated at the equivalent of US\$1.6 billion; in 1975 alone such Soviet aid was estimated at US\$1 billion. Soviet deliveries of military hardware of increasingly higher quality between 1976 and 1980 were estimated at US\$5 billion. In 1977, for example, Iraq ordered the Ilyushin Il-76 long-range jet transport, the first such Soviet aircraft provided to a foreign state. Until 1980 nearly 1,200 Soviet and East European advisers, as well as 150 Cuban advisers, were in Iraq. Iraqi military personnel were also trained in the use of SAMs, and observers estimated that between 1958 and 1980, nearly 5,000 Iraqis received military training in the Soviet Union.

Although receiving arms and training from foreign sources itself, Iraq provided some military aid to irregular units engaged in pro-Iraqi "national liberation movements" in the Middle East and in Africa prior to 1980. Most of this aid was in monetary grants and in armaments, which amounted to more than US\$600 million annually. Pro-Iraqi Palestinian groups, such as the Arab Liberation Front, received the bulk of the aid, but several African organizations, including the Eritrean Liberation Front, also received some. Volunteer Iraqi soldiers fought on the side of Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon on at least two occasions, in 1976 against Syrian troops and in March 1978 against Israeli troops.

### **The Iran-Iraq War and the Quest for New Sources of Arms**

As a result of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq was obliged to extend its search for arms in 1981. By the time the war entered its eighth year in September 1987, Iraq had become the world's biggest single arms market. In addition to its purchases from the Soviet Union and France, Iraq sought to buy armaments from China, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), Italy, Brazil, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Egypt, among others. The United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency estimated in 1987 that Iraq had imported about US\$24 billion worth of military equipment during the period from 1981 to 1985.

### **Arms from the Soviet Union**

From 1972 to 1979, the percentage of Iraq's military equipment supplied by the Soviet Union declined from 95 to 63 percent. Even so, in 1987 the Soviet Union, having provided more than US\$8 billion worth of weapons since 1980, was Iraq's most important arms supplier. In its 1987 annual study, *Soviet Military Power*, the United States Department of Defense stated that, while maintaining official neutrality in the Iran-Iraq War, the Soviet Union had

provided extensive military assistance to Iraq and, at the same time, continued its efforts to gain leverage on Iran. In early 1987, Moscow delivered a squadron of twenty-four MiG-29 Fulcrums to Baghdad. Considered the most advanced fighter in the Soviet arsenal, the MiG-29 previously had been provided only to Syria and India. The decision to export the MiG-29 to Iraq also assured Iraq a more advantageous payment schedule than any offered by the West and it reflected Soviet support for one of its traditional allies in the Middle East. Caught in a financial crisis, Baghdad welcomed the low-interest loans Moscow extended for this equipment.

Although the Soviets might not receive payments for several years, the sale of military hardware remained a critical source of revenue for them, and they have tried to retain Iraq as a customer. In May 1987, for example, the Soviets provided Iraq with better financial terms in a successful effort to prevent Iraq from buying sixty French Mirage 2000 fighters for an estimated US\$3 billion. An additional US\$3 billion in sales of helicopters and radar equipment may also have been denied to the French, although it was not possible to determine whether the Soviets agreed to fulfill both requirements. In early 1988, Iraq owed the Soviet Union between US\$8 billion and US\$10 billion in military debts alone.

### **Arms from France**

France became a major military supplier to Iraq after 1975 as the two countries improved their political relations. In order to obtain petroleum imports from the Middle East and strengthen its traditional ties with Arab and Muslim countries, France wanted a politico-military bridge between Paris and Baghdad.

Between 1977 and 1987, France contracted to sell a total of 133 Mirage F-1 fighters to Iraq. The first transfer occurred in 1978, when France supplied eighteen Mirage F-1 interceptors and thirty helicopters, and even agreed to an Iraqi share in the production of the Mirage 2000 in a US\$2 billion arms deal. In 1983 another twenty-nine Mirage F-1s were exported to Baghdad. And in an unprecedented move, France "loaned" Iraq five Super-Etendard attack aircraft, equipped with Exocet AM39 air-to-surface missiles, from its own naval inventory. The Super-Etendards were used extensively in the 1984 tanker war before being replaced by several F-1s. The final batch of twenty-nine F-1s was ordered in September 1985 at a cost of more than US\$500 million, a part of which was paid in crude oil.

In 1987 the Paris-based *Le Monde* estimated that, between 1981 and 1985, the value of French arms transfers to Iraq was US\$5.1 billion, which represented 40 percent of total French arms exports.

France, however, was forced to reschedule payment on most of its loans to Iraq because of Iraq's hard-pressed wartime economy and did so willingly because of its longer range strategic interests. French president François Mitterand was quoted as saying that French assistance was really aimed at keeping Iraq from losing the war. Iraqi debts to France were estimated at US\$3 billion in 1987.

French military sales to Iraq were important for at least two reasons. First, they represented high-performance items. Iraq received attack helicopters, missiles, military vehicles, and artillery pieces from France. Iraq also bought more than 400 Exocet AM39 air-to-surface missiles and at least 200 AS30 laser-guided missiles between 1983 and 1986. Second, unlike most other suppliers, France adopted an independent and unambiguous arms sales policy toward Iraq. France did not tie French arms commitments to Baghdad's politico-military actions, and it openly traded with Iraq even when Iranian-inspired terrorists took French hostages in Lebanon. In late 1987, however, the French softened their Persian Gulf policy, and they consummated a deal with Tehran involving the exchange of hostages for detained diplomatic personnel. It was impossible in early 1988 to determine whether France would curtail its arms exports to Iraq in conjunction with this agreement.

### **The Search for Nuclear Technology**

On June 7, 1981, Israeli air force planes flew over Jordanian, Saudi, and Iraqi airspace to attack and destroy an Iraqi nuclear facility near Baghdad. In a statement issued after the raid, the Israeli government stated that it had discovered from "sources of unquestioned reliability" that Iraq was producing nuclear bombs at the Osiraq (acronym for Osiris-Iraq) plant, and, for this reason, Israel had initiated a preemptive strike. Baghdad, however, reiterated a previous statement that the French atomic reactor was designed for research and for the eventual production of electricity.

The attack raised a number of questions of interpretation regarding international legal concepts. Those who approved of the raid argued that the Israelis had engaged in an act of legitimate self-defense justifiable under international law and under Article 51 of the charter of the United Nations (UN). Critics contended that the Israeli claims about Iraq's future capabilities were hasty and ill-considered and asserted that the idea of anticipatory self-defense was rejected by the community of states. In the midst of this controversy, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) came under fire from individuals and from governments who complained that the Vienna-based UN agency had failed to alert the world to developments at Osiraq. IAEA officials denied these charges and

reaffirmed their position on the Iraqi reactor, that is, that no weapons had been manufactured at Osiraq and that Iraqi officials had regularly cooperated with agency inspectors. They also pointed out that Iraq was a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (informally called the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT) and that Baghdad had complied with all IAEA guidelines. The Israeli nuclear facility at Dimona, it was pointed out, was not under IAEA safeguards, because Israel had not signed the NPT and had refused to open its facilities to UN inspections.

After the raid, Baghdad announced that it planned to rebuild the destroyed facility. Although France agreed in principle to provide technical assistance, no definitive timetable had been announced as of early 1988.

## **The Iran-Iraq War**

Of the many conflicts in progress around the world in early 1988, the Iran-Iraq War was by far the bloodiest and the costliest. The Iran-Iraq War was multifaceted and included religious schisms, border disputes, and political differences. Conflicts contributing to the outbreak of hostilities ranged from centuries-old Sunni-versus-Shia (for Sunni—see Glossary) and Arab-versus-Persian religious and ethnic disputes to a personal animosity between Saddam Husayn and Ayatollah Khomeini. Above all, Iraq launched the war in an effort to consolidate its rising power in the Arab world and to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state. Phebe Marr, a noted analyst of Iraqi affairs, stated that “the war was more immediately the result of poor political judgement and miscalculation on the part of Saddam Hussein,” and “the decision to invade, taken at a moment of Iranian weakness, was Saddam’s” (see *The Iran-Iraq Conflict*, ch. 1).

Iraq and Iran had engaged in border clashes for many years and had revived the dormant Shatt al Arab waterway dispute in 1979. Iraq claimed the 200-kilometer channel up to the Iranian shore as its territory, while Iran insisted that the thalweg—a line running down the middle of the waterway—negotiated last in 1975, was the official border. The Iraqis, especially the Baath leadership, regarded the 1975 treaty as merely a truce, not a definitive settlement.

The Iraqis also perceived revolutionary Iran’s Islamic agenda as threatening to their pan-Arabism. Khomeini, bitter over his expulsion from Iraq in 1977 after fifteen years in An Najaf, vowed to avenge Shia victims of Baathist repression. Baghdad became more confident, however, as it watched the once invincible Imperial Iranian Army disintegrate, as most of its highest ranking officers

were executed. In Khuzestan (Arabistan to the Iraqis), Iraqi intelligence officers incited riots over labor disputes, and in the Kurdish region, a new rebellion caused the Khomeini government severe troubles.

As the Baathists planned their military campaign, they had every reason to be confident. Not only did the Iranians lack cohesive leadership, but the Iranian armed forces, according to Iraqi intelligence estimates, also lacked spare parts for their American-made equipment. Baghdad, on the other hand, possessed fully equipped and trained forces. Morale was running high. Against Iran's armed forces, including the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guard) troops, led by religious mullahs with little or no military experience, the Iraqis could muster twelve complete mechanized divisions, equipped with the latest Soviet matériel. In addition, the area across the Shatt al Arab posed no major obstacles, particularly for an army equipped with Soviet river-crossing equipment. Iraqi commanders correctly assumed that crossing sites on the Khardeh and Karun rivers were lightly defended against their mechanized armor divisions; moreover, Iraqi intelligence sources reported that Iranian forces in Khuzestan, which had formerly included two divisions distributed among Ahvaz, Dezful, and Abadan, now consisted of only a number of ill-equipped battalion-sized formations. Tehran was further disadvantaged because the area was controlled by the Regional 1st Corps headquartered at Bakhtaran (formerly Kermanshah), whereas operational control was directed from the capital. In the year following the shah's overthrow, only a handful of company-sized tank units had been operative, and the rest of the armored equipment had been poorly maintained.

For Iraqi planners, the only uncertainty was the fighting ability of the Iranian air force, equipped with some of the most sophisticated American-made aircraft. Despite the execution of key air force commanders and pilots, the Iranian air force had displayed its might during local riots and demonstrations. The air force was also active in the wake of the failed United States attempt to rescue American hostages in April 1980. This show of force had impressed Iraqi decision makers to such an extent that they decided to launch a massive preemptive air strike on Iranian air bases in an effort similar to the one that Israel employed during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

### **Iraqi Offensives, 1980–82**

On September 22, 1980, formations of Iraqi MiG-23s and MiG-21s attacked Iran's air bases at Mehrabad and Doshen-Tappen (both near Tehran), as well as Tabriz, Bakhtaran,

Ahvaz, Dezful, Urmia (sometimes cited as Urumiyeh), Hamadan, Sanandaj, and Abadan. Iranian defenses were caught by surprise, but the Iraqi raids failed because Iranian jets were protected in specially strengthened hangars and because bombs designed to destroy runways did not totally incapacitate Iran's very large airfields. Within hours, Iranian F-4 Phantoms took off from the same bases, successfully attacked strategically important targets close to major Iraqi cities, and returned home with very few losses.

Concurrently with its air attack, Iraq ordered six of its divisions across the border into Iran, where they drove as far as eight kilometers inland and occupied 1,000 square kilometers of Iranian territory. As a diversionary move, a mechanized division overwhelmed the border garrison at Qasr-e Shirin, while five armored and mechanized divisions invaded Khuzestan on two axes, one crossing over the Shatt al Arab near Basra, which led to the siege and eventual occupation of Khorramshahr, and the second heading for Susangerd, which had Ahvaz, the major military base in Khuzestan, as its objective. In addition, Dehloran and several other towns were targeted and were rapidly occupied to prevent reinforcement from Bakhtaran and from Tehran. By mid-October, a full division advanced through Khuzestan headed for Khorramshahr and Abadan and the strategic oil fields nearby (see fig. 14).

Iraq's blitz-like assaults against scattered and demoralized Iranian forces led many observers to think that Baghdad would win the war within a matter of weeks. Indeed, Iraqi troops did capture the Shatt al Arab and did seize a forty-eight-kilometer-wide strip of Iranian territory. But Tehran rejected a settlement offer and held the line against the militarily superior Iraqi force. It refused to accept defeat, and slowly began a series of counteroffensives in January 1981. Iran stopped Iraqi forces on the Karun River and, with limited military stocks, unveiled its "human wave" assaults, which used thousands of Basij (Popular Mobilization Army or People's Army) volunteers. The recapture of Abadan, Iran's first major victory, came in September 1981.

### **Iraqi Retreats, 1982-84**

In March 1982, Tehran launched its Operation Undeniable Victory, which marked a major turning point, as Iran penetrated Iraq's "impenetrable" lines, split Iraq's forces, and forced the Iraqis to retreat. In late June 1982, Baghdad stated its willingness to negotiate a settlement of the war and to withdraw its forces from Iran. Iran refused, and in July 1982 Iran launched Operation Ramadan on Iraqi territory, near Basra. Tehran used Pasdaran forces and Basij volunteers in one of the biggest land battles since 1945. Ranging

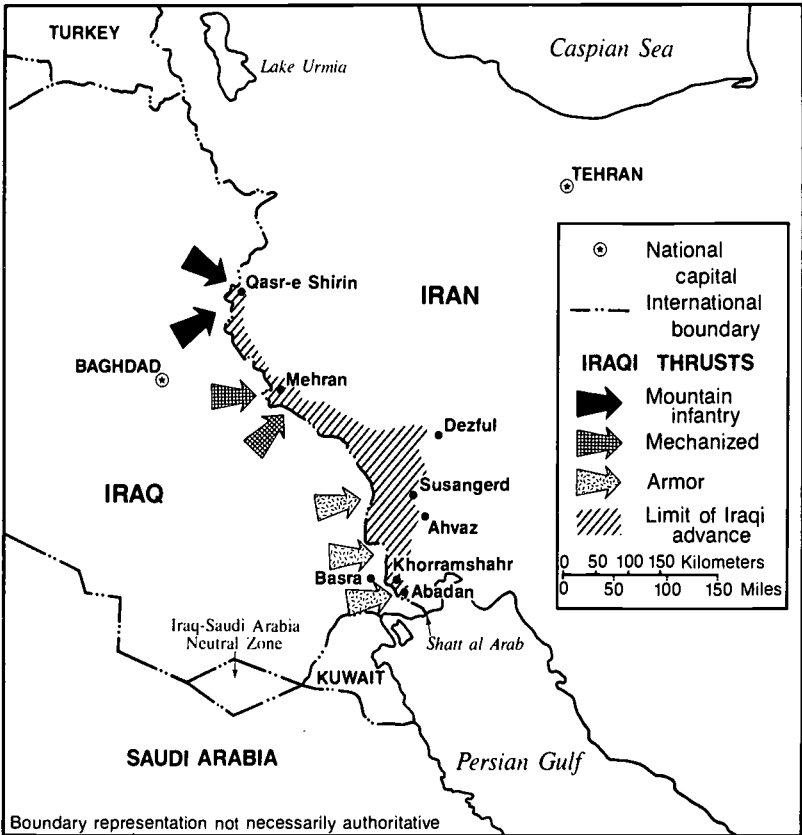
in age from only nine to more than fifty, these eager but relatively untrained soldiers swept over minefields and fortifications to clear safe paths for the tanks. In doing so, the Iranians sustained an immense number of casualties, but they enabled Iran to recover some territory before the Iraqis could repulse the bulk of the invading forces.

By the end of 1982, Iraq had been resupplied with new Soviet matériel, and the ground war entered a new phase. Iraq used newly acquired T-55 tanks and T-62 tanks, BM-21 Stalin Organ rocket launchers, and Mi-24 helicopter gunships to prepare a Soviet-type three-line defense, replete with obstacles, minefields, and fortified positions. The Combat Engineer Corps proved efficient in constructing bridges across water obstacles, in laying minefields, and in preparing new defense lines and fortifications.

In 1983 Iran launched three major, but unsuccessful, human-wave offensives, with huge losses, along the frontier. On February 6, Tehran, using 200,000 "last reserve" Pasdaran troops, attacked along a 40-kilometer stretch near Al Amarah, about 200 kilometers southeast of Baghdad. Backed by air, armor, and artillery support, Iran's six-division thrust was strong enough to break through. In response, Baghdad used massive air attacks, with more than 200 sorties, many flown by attack helicopters. More than 6,000 Iranians were killed that day, while achieving only minute gains. In April 1983, the Mandali-Baghdad north-central sector witnessed fierce fighting, as repeated Iranian attacks were stopped by Iraqi mechanized and infantry divisions. Casualties were very high, and by the end of 1983, an estimated 120,000 Iranians and 60,000 Iraqis had been killed. Despite these losses, in 1983 Iran held a distinct advantage in the attempt to wage and eventually to win the war of attrition.

### **The War of Attrition, 1984-87**

Most foreign military analysts feel that neither Iraq nor Iran has used its modern equipment efficiently. Frequently, sophisticated matériel had been left unused, when a massive modern assault could have won the battle for either side. Tanks and armored vehicles were dug in and used as artillery pieces, instead of being maneuvered to lead or to support an assault. William O. Staudenmaier, a seasoned military analyst, reported that "the land-computing sights on the Iraqi tanks [were] seldom used. This lower[ed] the accuracy of the T-62 tanks to World War II standards." In addition, both sides frequently abandoned heavy equipment in the battle zone because they lacked the skilled technical personnel needed to carry out minor repairs.



*Figure 14. Initial Iraqi Attack on Iran, 1980*

Analysts also assert that the two states' armies have shown little coordination and that some units in the field have been left to fight largely on their own. In this protracted war of attrition, soldiers and officers alike have failed to display initiative or professional expertise in combat. Difficult decisions, which should have had immediate attention, were referred by section commanders to the capitals for action. Except for the predictable bursts on important anniversaries, by the mid-1980s the war was stalemated.

In early 1984, Iran had begun Operation Dawn V, which was meant to split the Iraqi 3rd Army Corps and 4th Army Corps near Basra. In early 1984, an estimated 500,000 Pasdaran and Basij forces, using shallow boats or on foot, moved to within a few kilometers of the strategic Basra-Baghdad waterway. Between February 29 and March 1, in one of the largest battles of the war, the



two armies clashed and inflicted more than 25,000 fatalities on each other. Without armored and air support of their own, the Iranians faced Iraqi tanks, mortars, and helicopter gunships. Within a few weeks, Tehran opened another front in the shallow lakes of the Hawizah Marshes, just east of Al Qurnah, in Iraq, near the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Iraqi forces, using Soviet- and French-made helicopter gunships, inflicted heavy casualties on the five Iranian brigades (15,000 men) in this Battle of Majnun.

Lacking the equipment to open secure passages through Iraqi minefields, and having too few tanks, the Iranian command again resorted to the human-wave tactic. In March 1984, an East European journalist claimed that he "saw tens of thousands of children, roped together in groups of about twenty to prevent the faint-hearted from deserting, make such an attack." The Iranians made little, if any, progress despite these sacrifices. Perhaps as a result of this performance, Tehran, for the first time, used a regular army unit, the 92nd Armored Division, at the Battle of the Marshes a few weeks later.

Within a four-week period between February and March 1984, the Iraqis reportedly killed 40,000 Iranians and lost 9,000 of their own men, but even this was deemed an unacceptable ratio, and in February the Iraqi command ordered the use of chemical weapons. Despite repeated Iraqi denials, between May 1981 and March 1984, Iran charged Iraq with forty uses of chemical weapons. The year 1984 closed with part of the Majnun Islands and a few pockets of Iraqi territory in Iranian hands. Casualties notwithstanding, Tehran had maintained its military posture, while Baghdad was reevaluating its overall strategy.

The major development in 1985 was the increased targeting of population centers and industrial facilities by both combatants. In May Iraq began aircraft attacks, long-range artillery attacks, and surface-to-surface missile attacks on Tehran and on other major Iranian cities. Between August and November, Iraq raided Khark Island forty-four times in a futile attempt to destroy its installations. Iran responded with its own air raids and missile attacks on Baghdad and other Iraqi towns. In addition, Tehran systematized its periodic stop-and-search operations, which were conducted to verify the cargo contents of ships in the Persian Gulf and to seize war matériel destined for Iraq.

The only major ground offensive, involving an estimated 60,000 Iranian troops, occurred in March 1985 near Basra; once again, the assault proved inconclusive except for heavy casualties. In 1986, however, Iraq suffered a major loss in the southern region. On February 9, Iran launched a successful surprise amphibious assault

across the Shatt al Arab and captured the abandoned Iraqi oil port of Al Faw. The occupation of Al Faw, a logistical feat, involved 30,000 regular Iranian soldiers who rapidly entrenched themselves. Saddam Husayn vowed to eliminate the bridgehead "at all costs," and in April 1988 the Iraqis succeeded in regaining the Al Faw Peninsula.

Late in March 1986, the UN secretary general, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, formally accused Iraq of using chemical weapons against Iran. Citing the report of four chemical warfare experts whom the UN had sent to Iran in February and March 1986, the secretary general called on Baghdad to end its violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the use of chemical weapons. The UN report concluded that Iraqi forces had used chemical warfare against Iranian forces; the weapons used included both mustard gas and nerve gas. The report further stated that the use of chemical weapons appeared to be more extensive in 1981 than in 1984. Iraq attempted to deny using chemicals, but the evidence, in the form of many badly burned casualties flown to European hospitals for treatment, was overwhelming. According to a British representative at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in July 1986, Iraqi chemical warfare was responsible for about 10,000 casualties. In March 1988, Iraq was again charged with a major use of chemical warfare while retaking Halabjah, a Kurdish town in northeastern Iraq, near the Iranian border.

Unable in 1986, however, to dislodge the Iranians from Al Faw, the Iraqis went on the offensive; they captured the city of Mehran in May, only to lose it in July 1986. The rest of 1986 witnessed small hit-and-run attacks by both sides, while the Iranians massed almost 500,000 troops for another promised "final offensive," which did not occur. But the Iraqis, perhaps for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities, began a concerted air-strike campaign in July. Heavy attacks on Khark Island forced Iran to rely on makeshift installations farther south in the Gulf at Sirri Island and Larak Island. Thereupon, Iraqi jets, refueling in midair or using a Saudi military base, hit Sirri and Larak. The two belligerents also attacked 111 neutral ships in the Gulf in 1986.

Meanwhile, to help defend itself, Iraq had built impressive fortifications along the 1,200-kilometer war front. Iraq devoted particular attention to the southern city of Basra, where concrete-roofed bunkers, tank- and artillery-firing positions, minefields, and stretches of barbed wire, all shielded by an artificially flooded lake 30 kilometers long and 1,800 meters wide, were constructed. Most visitors to the area acknowledged Iraq's effective use of combat engineering to erect these barriers.



*Iraqi tank outside Khorramshahr, Iran, October 1980  
Courtesy Photri/Lehtikuva*

On December 24, 1986, Iran began another assault on the Basra region. This annual "final offensive" resulted in more than 40,000 dead by mid-January 1987. Although the Iranian push came close to breaking Iraq's last line of defense east of Basra, Tehran was unable to score the decisive breakthrough required to win outright victory, or even to secure relative gains over Iraq.

### **The Tanker War, 1984-87**

Naval operations came to a halt, presumably because Iraq and Iran had lost many of their ships, by early 1981; the lull in the fighting lasted for two years. In March 1984, Iraq initiated sustained naval operations in its self-declared 1,126-kilometer maritime exclusion zone, extending from the mouth of the Shatt al Arab to Iran's port of Bushehr. In 1981 Baghdad had attacked Iranian ports and oil complexes as well as neutral tankers and ships sailing to and from Iran; in 1984 Iraq expanded the so-called tanker war by using French Super-Etendard combat aircraft armed with Exocet missiles. Neutral merchant ships became favorite targets, and the long-range Super-Etendards flew sorties farther south. Seventy-one merchant ships were attacked in 1984 alone, compared with forty-eight in the first three years of the war. Iraq's motives in increasing the tempo included a desire to break the stalemate, presumably by cutting off Iran's oil exports and by thus forcing Tehran to the negotiating table. Repeated Iraqi efforts failed to put Iran's main oil exporting terminal at Khark Island out of commission, however. Iran retaliated by attacking first a Kuwaiti oil tanker near Bahrain on May 13 and then a Saudi tanker in Saudi waters five days later, making it clear that if Iraq continued to interfere with Iran's shipping, no Gulf state would be safe.

These sustained attacks cut Iranian oil exports in half, reduced shipping in the Gulf by 25 percent, led Lloyd's of London to increase its insurance rates on tankers, and slowed Gulf oil supplies to the rest of the world; moreover, the Saudi decision in 1984 to shoot down an Iranian Phantom jet intruding over Saudi territorial waters played an important role in ending both belligerents' attempts to internationalize the tanker war. Iraq and Iran accepted a 1984 UN-sponsored moratorium on the shelling of civilian targets, and Tehran later proposed an extension of the moratorium to include Gulf shipping, a proposal the Iraqis rejected unless it were to include their own Gulf ports.

Iraq began ignoring the moratorium soon after it went into effect and stepped up its air raids on tankers serving Iran and Iranian oil-exporting facilities in 1986 and 1987, attacking even vessels that belonged to the conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf. Iran

responded by escalating its attacks on shipping serving Arab ports in the Gulf. As Kuwaiti vessels made up a large portion of the targets in these retaliatory raids, the Kuwaiti government sought protection from the international community in the fall of 1986. The Soviet Union responded first, agreeing to charter several Soviet tankers to Kuwait in early 1987. Washington, which had been approached first by Kuwait and which had postponed its decision, eventually followed Moscow's lead. United States involvement was sealed by the May 17, 1987, Iraqi missile attack on the USS *Stark*, in which thirty-seven crew members were killed. Baghdad apologized and claimed that the attack was a mistake. Ironically, Washington used the *Stark* incident to blame Iran for escalating the war and sent its own ships to the Gulf to escort eleven Kuwaiti tankers that were "reflagged" with the American flag and had American crews. Iran refrained from attacking the United States naval force directly, but it used various forms of harassment, including mines, hit-and-run attacks by small patrol boats, and periodic stop-and-search operations. On several occasions, Tehran fired its Chinese-made Silkworm missiles on Kuwait from Al Faw Peninsula. When Iranian forces hit the reflagged tanker *Sea Isle City* in October 1987, Washington retaliated by destroying an oil platform in the Rostam field and by using the United States Navy's Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) commandos to blow up a second one nearby.

Within a few weeks of the *Stark* incident, Iraq resumed its raids on tankers but moved its attacks farther south, near the Strait of Hormuz. Washington played a central role in framing UN Security Council Resolution 598 on the Gulf war, passed unanimously on July 20; Western attempts to isolate Iran were frustrated, however, when Tehran rejected the resolution because it did not meet its requirement that Iraq should be punished for initiating the conflict.

In early 1988, the Gulf was a crowded theater of operations. At least ten Western navies and eight regional navies were patrolling the area, the site of weekly incidents in which merchant vessels were crippled. The Arab Ship Repair Yard in Bahrain and its counterpart in Dubayy, United Arab Emirates (UAE), were unable to keep up with the repairs needed by the ships damaged in these attacks.

## **Armed Forces and Society**

### **Status in National Life**

In modern Iraq, the armed forces have intervened in the political life of the state. Military interventions were concentrated in two periods, the first from 1936 to 1941, when there were seven

coups d'état, and the second between 1958 and 1968, when there were five military seizures of power. Because Iraq had a highly developed military institution and chronically weak civilian regimes, the armed forces felt that they alone were capable of providing strong and stable governments; however, personal and ideological factionalization within the armed forces fostered heightened instability and a cycle of coups that culminated in the Baathist takeover on July 17, 1968.

As the leadership in the previous military regime became increasingly fragmented and weak, and as resistance movements grew, Baathist officers, intending to end the cycle of military intervention in the government, carried out a coup. Baath Party officials believed the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and various Kurdish movements were using the military as a vehicle to promote their own interests. Consequently, the Baath decided to weaken the military's political power gradually and to turn the army into a loyal and strong defensive force. Accordingly, they steadily reduced military participation in the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC); whereas the five-member 1968 RCC was composed exclusively of military men, only three of the RCC's twenty-two members in 1978 were active-duty officers.

To transform the military into an ideological army (Al Jaysh al Aqidi), the Baath undertook purges of the armed forces and granted military posts to civilians. They also tried to "purify" the armed forces by providing propaganda pamphlets and indoctrination lectures.

To institutionalize its control of the army, the Baath Party adopted an eclectic strategy. First, it restricted admission to military colleges and institutions to members of the Baath Party. Those accepted could expect generous financial rewards if they remained loyal, but, if they did not, they could expect the death penalty. Second, discrimination, in recruitment and in promotion, on religious and nationality grounds was intensified. At one point in 1979, all senior posts were restricted to officers related to Saddam Husayn or to other individuals from Tikrit.

The Ideological Army advocated national socialism, and the Baath Party used the army to fulfill Baath objectives. By 1980 the Ideological Army was an organized, modern force capable of rapid movement and had been strengthened by an overwhelming feeling of historical responsibility. The officers were firmly convinced that theirs was an elite role, that of the leading patriotic force in Iraqi society, and they, too, were inspired to carry out the national "historical mission." In short, the Baathization of the armed forces, based on an indoctrination in national socialism, in reliance on force,



*Iraqi units at Khorramshahr, Iran, October 1980  
Courtesy Photri/Lehtikuva*

and in a vision of this historical mission, completed the emergence of the new army as a national force.

During the 1970s, military officers unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the Baathist regime, however, on at least two occasions. In January 1970, an attempted coup led by two retired officers, Major General Abd al Ghani ar Rawi and Colonel Salih Mahdi as Samarrai, was discovered and thwarted as the conspirators entered the Republican Palace. In June 1973, a plot by Nazim Kazzar, a Shia and the director of internal security, to assassinate President Ahmad Hasan al Bakr and Saddam Husayn was foiled. Kazzar, who resented both Sunni and Tikriti domination of the Baath Party, had taken a prominent part in organizing the massacre of communists in the anarchy that followed the military's seizure of power in February 1963. He had acquired a reputation as a torturer, and the old palace that he had taken over as headquarters was known as "Qasr an Nihayah," the "Palace of the End." Few who entered ever came out, nor did their bodies receive public burial. When his coup plans failed, Kazzar fled toward the Iranian border. Before being apprehended, he killed the minister of defense, Hammad Shihab, who happened to be in the area inspecting border posts. Shortly afterward he was executed. Both coup attempts were followed by summary trials, executions, and purges of the armed forces.

Although rumors about foiled coup attempts have circulated periodically, the most serious attempt to assassinate Saddam Husayn reportedly occurred in 1982, after both a military defeat on the battlefield and an erosion in the economy. On July 11, 1982, the presidential party was traveling through the mixed Shia-Sunni village of Ad Dujayl, about sixty kilometers northeast of Baghdad, when it was surrounded by Shia villagers and held for several hours before it was rescued by the army. Subsequent reports revealed that a number of Saddam's bodyguards and of the villagers were killed. As punishment, the Baath government deported the villagers to Iran and razed their houses.

### **The Sociology of the Military**

The armed forces in 1988 conceivably could have been expected to reflect the varied ethnic, religious, and class components of Iraqi society, because universal male conscription has been compulsory since 1934. To a certain extent the enlisted men did reflect society, especially after seven years of war. Indeed, for the purpose of unifying the diverse minority groups in this extremely heterogeneous country, the armed forces was one of the most important institutions in Iraq. For political reasons, this unification was never fully accomplished, however. Selective recruitment policies for the Military College, for example, were instituted by the British in the 1920s to favor the Sunni Arab community, and this bias was perpetuated by the Sunni political and military elite, which has also tended to dominate the Baath Party. The Shia majority was represented in the officer corps, but in a proportion far below that of their numerical presence in society.

The majority of the officers were of lower middle class urban background; they were the sons of minor government officials and small traders, for whom a career in the military promised considerable social advancement. Family ties to officers also played an important role in the recruitment of new personnel, and in the mid-1980s, Iraq's top military commanders were from the small town of Tikrit on the Euphrates River in the heart of Iraq's Sunni Arab community.

### **The Defense Burden**

Military expenditures before 1980 fluctuated between 15 and 21 percent of the gross national product (GNP—see Glossary). In 1975, for example, Iraq allocated to its defense budget an estimated US\$3 billion, representing 17.4 percent of GNP, whereas in 1979, military expenditures were estimated at US\$6.4 billion, or 14.9 percent of GNP. After 1980, however, defense expenditures skyrocketed,



exceeding 50 percent of GNP by 1982. The 1986 military budget was estimated at US\$11.58 billion.

The war's staggering financial and economic costs have proved to be more severe than anticipated, and, because of them, most large-scale infrastructure development projects have been halted. In 1980 Iraqi revenues from oil exports amounted to US\$20 billion, which, when added to Iraq's estimated US\$35 billion in foreign exchange reserves, permitted the country to sustain rapid increases in military expenditures. By 1984, however, oil revenues were so low that Iraq sought loans from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and from its foreign creditors. In 1986 annual oil revenues were estimated at US\$5 to US\$8 billion, whereas the war cost between US\$600 million and US\$1 billion per month. Military and financial experts estimated that by the end of 1987, Iraq had exhausted its US\$35 billion reserves, and had incurred an additional US\$40 to US\$85 billion debt. Most of the money (US\$30 to US\$60 billion) came from GCC members, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which, some experts believed, may not demand repayment. The Baathist regime adopted a strategy of "guns and butter," trying to absorb the economic shock of the war without imposing undue hardships on the population. Through a subsidy program, the government continued to provide ample food and basic necessities to the population. The policy succeeded, but it also mortgaged the state's future. In early 1988, as the war dragged on and as military expenditures rose, it was difficult to ascertain whether this strategy could be sustained (see Introduction).

### **The Impact of Casualties on the Armed Forces**

Casualty figures in the Iran-Iraq War could not be estimated accurately because neither belligerent permitted independent observers to assist in verifying records, and both belligerents rarely allowed foreign observers to visit combat areas. At the end of 1986, the most frequently cited estimate of casualties since September 1980 was about 1 million—350,000 dead and 650,000 wounded. According to this estimate, 250,000 Iranians and 100,000 Iraqis had been killed, while 500,000 Iranians and 150,000 Iraqis had been wounded. These estimates were probably conservative. Another reliable source claimed that the combined death toll was between 600,000 and 800,000. In 1987, the Iraqi minister of defense reported that as many as 1 million Iranians had been killed and almost 3 million had been wounded, but this was impossible to verify. During large offensives, reports indicated that casualty

figures ranged between 10,000 and 40,000, primarily because of Iran's "human wave" tactics. The impact of this loss of life on both societies was immense as was that of the high number of prisoners of war (POWs). The Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross estimated the number of POWs at nearly 50,000 Iraqis and 10,000 Iranians in early 1988.

For Iraq, the most damaging social repercussion in 1988 was the knowledge that the toll in casualties would continue to increase. Drafting young men, and at times women, from school and from work became unpopular, and the loss of young life weakened the regime. This human drain also created shortages in the labor force. These shortages forced an integration of women into the work force, a move that further disrupted Iraq's traditional social environment.

The war also forced cutbacks in Iraq's economic development, and it wiped out the relative prosperity of the late 1970s. Individuals were pressured to donate savings and gold holdings to the war effort. Experts believed in 1988 that these hardships, endured from 1980 onward, would gradually erode what social cohesion and progress had been achieved over the previous decade, should the war continue for a few more years.

Opposition to the war continued to grow. There were sporadic attempts on the lives of military officers, and especially on the lives of Saddam Husayn's relatives. As funerals in every neighborhood reminded the masses of the realities they faced, Iraqi morale continued to diminish.

### **Treatment of Veterans and Widows**

The regime, at least initially, provided substantial sums of money to the families of war "heroes." Parents received, as a lump payment, enough for a car, a piece of land, and a new house. In addition, a victim's brother was assigned a monthly pension of ID500—which was equivalent in purchasing power to somewhat less than the same amount in US dollars in 1987—and his sister, in keeping with "Iraqi tradition," received a pension of half that amount. A widow and surviving children also received monthly pensions, in addition to a guarantee of free university education for the children.

The government reduced its benefits packages in 1985, especially after revenues declined. Survivors of a soldier killed in battle continued to receive the equivalent of US\$10,000, and veterans received monthly pensions equivalent to US\$500, but women whose husbands and sons were away fighting found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.



*Iraqi soldiers at Qasr-e Shirin, Iran, June 1981  
Courtesy Photri/Lehtikuva*

## **Internal Security**

### **Internal Developments and Security**

In maintaining internal security, the Baath regime focused on three main sources of opposition—the Kurds, living primarily near the borders of Iran and Turkey, the ICP and its splinter factions, and Shia revival movements not in sympathy with Baath socialism. In dealing with these groups, the government tended either to provide them with benefits so as to coopt them into the regime, or to take repressive measures against them.

#### ***The Kurdish Problem***

The Kurdish minority offered the most persistent and militarily effective security threat of Iraq's modern history (see People, ch. 2). Although the Kurds had traditionally opposed any central governments in both Iran and Iraq, most Kurdish leaders initially saw the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran as a possible vehicle for promoting Kurdish aspirations toward self-government. The Iranian government's antiminority attitude, however, along with Iraq's attempts to support the Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), dashed all hopes for a unified Kurdish independent state. The Iraqi and Iranian regimes each chose to support a Kurdish faction opposing the other's government, and this intervention divided the Kurds

along "national" lines. As a result, during the 1980s Kurds in Iraq tended to hope for an Iranian victory in the Iran-Iraq War, while a number of Kurds in Iran thought that an Iraqi victory would best promote their own aspirations. Because most Kurds were Sunni Muslims, however, their enthusiasm for a Shia government in either country was somewhat limited.

Following the outbreak of hostilities and the ensuing stalemate in the Iran-Iraq War, Kurdish opponents of the Iraqi regime revived their armed struggle against Baghdad. In response to deportations, executions, and other atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Baath, the Kurds seemed in the 1980s to have renewed their political consciousness, albeit in a very limited way. Differences between the brothers Masud and Idris Barzani, who led the KDP, and Jalal Talabani, leader of the Iraqi-supported Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), as well as the Kurdish leadership's periodic shifts into progovernment and antigovernment alliances, benefited Baghdad, which could manipulate opposing factions. What the Iraqi government could not afford, however, was to risk the opening of a second hostile front in Kurdistan as long as it was bogged down in its war with Iran. Throughout the 1980s, therefore, Baghdad tolerated the growing strength of the Kurdish resistance, which, despite shortcomings in its leadership, continued its long struggle for independence.

### ***The Iraqi Communists and Baathist Iraq***

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) has seen its fortunes rise and fall repeatedly since its founding by Yusuf Salman Yusuf (known as Comrade Fahd, or the Leopard) in 1934. During the next fifty years, the party's fortunes fluctuated with the successes of particular regimes in Baghdad. Although the ICP was legalized in 1937, and again in 1973, the Baath Party regularly suppressed it after 1963 and outlawed it altogether in 1985 (see *Political Opposition*, ch. 4).

In general, Iraqis rejected communism as contrary to both Islam and Arab nationalism. Yet, the clandestine ICP survived under the repressive policies of the monarchy, which had determined that because of its widespread appeal, the dissemination of communist theory among the armed forces or the police could be punished with death or with penal servitude for life. This persecution under the Hashimite monarchy raised communists to a status near that of martyrs in the eyes of the antimonarchical postrevolutionary leaders plotting the 1958 uprising. Ironically, the ICP was able to use the army to promote its goals and to organize opposition to the monarchy. In August 1949, for example, one of the army units

returning from Palestine smuggled in a stencil printing machine for the ICP.

Between 1958 and 1963, the ICP became closely aligned with the Qasim regime, which used the communist militia organization to suppress its traditional opponents brutally (see Republican Iraq, ch. 1). By 1963 Qasim's former allies, except the ICP, had all deserted him. When he was overthrown in February 1963, the new Baathist leaders carried out a massive purge in which thousands of communists were executed for supporting the hated Qasim. Survivors fled to the relatively isolated mountainous regions of Kurdistan. This first Baathist rise to power was short-lived, however, and under Abd as Salam Arif (1963-66) and his brother, Abd ar Rahman Arif (1966-68), both ICP and Baath cadre members were suppressed, largely because of their close connections with the Communist Party of Egypt and, in turn, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Although the Baath hierarchy had earlier perceived the ICP as a Soviet arm ready to interfere in internal affairs, after the successful 1968 coup d'état, Baath leaders joined ICP officials in calling for a reconciliation of their decade-long rivalry.

This reconciliation was short-lived, however, and in May 1978 Baghdad announced the execution of twenty-one ICP members, allegedly for organizing party cells within the armed forces. Foreign observers contended that the executions, which took place long after the alleged crimes were committed, were calculated to show that the Baath would not tolerate communist penetration of the armed forces with the ultimate aim of seizing control, probably with Soviet assistance. Attempts to organize new communist cells within the armed forces were crushed, as the government argued that according to the 1973 agreement creating the Progressive National Front (PNF), only the Baath Party could organize political activities within the military (see *The Politics of Alliance: The Progressive National Front*, ch. 4). Unverified reports suggested that several hundred members of the armed forces were questioned at that time concerning their possible complicity in what was described as a plot to replace Baath leaders with military officers more sympathetic to the Soviet Union.

Despite several decades of arrests, imprisonments, repression, assassinations, and exile, in the late 1980s the ICP remained a credible force and a constant threat to the Baath leadership. After the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, the ICP came to depend heavily on outside support for its survival. Syria, for example, provided material support to the ICP's struggle against the Saddam Husayn regime, and the Syrian Communist Party cooperated with the ICP in strongly condemning the war with Iran.

In addition to relying more heavily on outside financial and moral support, the ICP initiated significant structural and ideological changes in the 1980s. Four Arab leaders (two Shias, two Sunnis) were dropped from the Politburo, and four Central Committee members were reportedly expelled from the party in 1984. Although the reasons for these changes were not clear, observers speculated at the time that party boss Aziz Muhammad and his Kurdish compatriots had gained control of the ICP and that Kurdish interests therefore outweighed national interests. Muhammad's tenacity in supporting the armed struggle of Iraqi Kurds and in totally opposing the Iran-Iraq War helped to bring about a split in the ICP leadership. His keynote address to the 1985 Fourth Party Congress analyzed in detail the course of the Iran-Iraq War; he assigned partial responsibility for the war to Iran, but he blamed the Baath government in Baghdad for prolonging the conflict. In September 1986, the ICP declared the communists' fight against the Baath regime to be inextricably linked to the achievement of peace between Iraq and Iran. A 1986 joint statement of the Tudeh (the Tudeh Party being the leading Marxist party of Iran) and the ICP called for an end to the war and for establishment of "a just democratic peace with no annexations whatsoever, on the basis of respect for the two countries' state borders at the start of the war, each people's national sovereignty over its territory, and endorsing each people's right to determine the sociopolitical system they desire."

Reliable data on ICP membership were unavailable in early 1988. One 1984 estimate was 2,000 members, but other foreign sources indicated a considerably larger ICP membership. Because it was a clandestine party fighting for the overthrow of the Baathist regime, the ICP's true membership strength may never be known, especially because it directed its organizational efforts through the Kurdish Democratic National Front (DNF). The ICP headquarters was partially destroyed in May 1984 following limited Turkish incursions to help Iraq protect its oil pipeline to and through Turkey and was apparently relocated in territories controlled by the DNF in 1988. Ideologically split and physically mauled, the ICP may have lost much of its strength, and it had no influence in the People's Army, which remained in the hands of the Baath Party.

### ***Impact of the Iranian Revolution on Iraqi Shias***

In 1964 Ayatollah Khomeini was expelled from Iran to Turkey, and he was then granted asylum by Iraq (see *The Iran-Iraq Conflict*, ch. 1). His theological erudition and idealism earned him a significant following in An Najaf, where ulama (religious leaders) and students from throughout the Shia world formed an important

circle of learned men. The Baath socialist regime, however, with its secular, anticlerical stance, was never comfortable with Shia religious leaders and their followers.

Relations between the Iraqi regime and the Shia clerics deteriorated during the Imam Husayn celebrations in February 1977, when police interference in religious processions resulted in massive antigovernment demonstrations in An Najaf and in Karbala. Several thousand participants were arrested, and eight Shia dignitaries, including five members of the clergy, were sentenced to death and were executed. In 1978, in an effort to quell the Shia unrest and to satisfy the shah's request, Baghdad expelled Ayatollah Khomeini, who sought refuge in France.

In another attempt to minimize Shia dissent, the Iraqi government had deported to Iran 60,000 Shias of Iranian origin in 1974. In the months following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Iraqi government deported nearly 35,000 more ethnic Iranians.

Deportations, the suppression of the Shia ulama, and the death under suspicious circumstances of Shia leader Imam Musa as Sadr all contributed to the deterioration of relations between Baathist Iraq and Islamic Iran. The ranking Shia religious leader, Sayyid Abu al Qasim al Khoi, refrained from either sanctioning or opposing the Baath government, but the government feared Sadr because of his leadership qualities and because of his close association with Khomeini.

Beginning in 1980, Iran actively promoted its own revolutionary vision for Iraq. All anti-Iraqi Islamic organizations, including Ad Dawah al Islamiyah, commonly called Ad Dawah (see Political Opposition, ch. 4) and the Organization of Islamic Action were based in Tehran, where they came under the political, religious, and financial influence of the ruling clergy. To control rivalry and infighting among the different groups, Iran helped to set up the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) on November 17, 1982. It was headed by Iraqi cleric Hujjat al Islam Muhammad Baqir al Hakim. Establishing SAIRI was viewed as a step toward unifying the political and military work of all groups and as an attempt to unite them under a single command directly supervised by their Iranian counterparts. In return, SAIRI acknowledged the leadership of Khomeini as the supreme commander of the Islamic nation. Nevertheless, the majority of Iraqi Shias resisted Tehran's control and remained loyal to Iraq.

### **Internal Security in the 1980s**

In addition to the regular armed forces, Iraq's state security system consisted of at least six organizations charged with a wide

variety of security functions. Little was publicly known about these paramilitary and police organizations, but their importance was undisputed. In addition to the People's Army, discussed above, internal security organizations consisted of the Security Troops (or Presidential Guard), the Border Guard, the Frontier Force, the regular civil police, and the Mukhabarat (or Department of General Intelligence).

The Security Troops formed an elite group of 4,800 whose primary task was to protect the Baath leadership in Iraq. Their ranks were filled with the most loyal troops serving in the Iraqi armed forces, whose dedication to Baathism and to Saddam Husayn personally had been tested on numerous occasions. These troops faced considerable danger because the frequent assassination attempts on the president and on his close associates usually meant loss of life among bodyguards. Survivors were generously rewarded, however.

The Frontier Guard and the Mobile Force accounted for an estimated 50,000 additional men within the security system. Unlike the People's Army, these forces consisted of full-time, professional men-at-arms. Frontier Guard personnel were stationed principally in northern Iraq along the borders with Iran, Turkey, and Syria to guard against smuggling and infiltrations. Before 1974 the Frontier Guard was under the control of local Kurds, but, after the defeat of the Kurdish revolt in 1975, it was administered by the central government. The Mobile Force was a strike force used to support the regular police in the event of major internal disorders. It was armed with infantry weapons, with artillery, and with armored vehicles, and it contained commando units trained to deal with guerilla activities.

The regular civil police handled state security in addition to their routine duties of fighting crime, controlling traffic, and the like. After 1982, many of these routine functions were taken over by People's Army "volunteers" to free more able-bodied men for duty on the war front. The regular police were under the Ministry of Interior, and they were commanded by the director of police in Baghdad. There were thought to be several specialized components of the police, including forces assigned exclusively to traffic, to narcotics investigation, and to railroad security. The police operated at least two schools: the Police College for those with secondary degrees and the Police Preparatory School for those without secondary education. Police officers held military ranks identical to those of the regular armed forces, and many were called to serve in the war with Iran.





*Iranian soldiers in a prisoner of war camp at Ar Ramadi, Iraq  
Courtesy International Committee of the Red Cross  
Photo by J.J. Kurz*

The Department of General Intelligence was the most notorious and possibly the most important arm of the state security system. It was created in 1973 after the failed coup attempt by Director of Internal Security Nazim Kazzar. In 1982 the Department of General Intelligence underwent a personnel shake-up. At that time, it was headed by Saadun Shakir, who was an RCC member and, like Saddam Husayn, a Tikriti, and who was assisted by Saddam Husayn's younger half-brother, Barazan Husayn. Foreign observers believed that the president was dissatisfied because the agency had not anticipated the assassination attempt at Ad Dujayl. It was also believed that several separate intelligence networks were incorporated within the department, and that Iraqi intelligence agents operated both at home and abroad in their mission to seek out and eliminate opponents of the Baghdad regime.

### **Incidence of Crime**

The Baathist regime introduced a variety of laws, of which the most important was a 1969 penal code that expanded the definition of crime to include acts detrimental to the political, the economic, and the social goals of the state. Baathist hegemony in the political sphere, for example, was enforced by a law making it a crime to insult the state or its leaders publicly. Economic goals were

also enforced by several laws—a 1970 trade regulation, for example, made both the selling of goods at prices other than those fixed by the state and the production of inferior products felonies. The government's free education program was enforced by a law making it a crime to refuse to participate.

The more traditionally defined kinds of crime, including theft, forgery, bribery, the misappropriation of public funds, and murder, followed the pattern of most developing states. No adequate statistical data for Iraq were available in 1987, however. Amnesty International reported in 1986 that degrading treatment of prisoners, arbitrary arrests, and denial of fair public trials were common. In 1985 and in 1986, several high-ranking officials, including the mayor of Baghdad, were tried for corruption, were found guilty, and were executed. Presumably, the purpose of these sentences was to make it clear that criminals would be punished, regardless of their status.

### **Criminal Justice System**

The regular criminal justice system consisted of courts of first instance (including magistrate courts), courts of sessions, and the Court of Cassation. Major crimes against state security were tried in the revolutionary courts, which operated separately from the regular judicial system. In general this court system followed the French pattern as first introduced during the rule of the Ottoman Turks, although the system had undergone several modifications during the twentieth century. Juries were not used anywhere in the Iraqi criminal court system.

Most petty crimes, or contraventions, which carried penalties of imprisonment from one day to three months or of fines up to ID30, were tried in local magistrate courts. These third-class courts, which were found in all local municipalities, were presided over by municipal council members or by other local administrative officials. First- and second-class criminal matters, which corresponded to felonies and to misdemeanors, respectively, were tried within appropriate penal courts attached to civil courts of first instance, located in provincial capitals and in district and subdistrict centers. Misdemeanors were punishable by three months' to five years' imprisonment; felonies by five years' to life imprisonment or by the death penalty. One judge conducted the trials for criminal matters at each of these courts of original jurisdiction.

In 1986 the six courts of session continued to hold jurisdiction in the most serious criminal matters, and they acted as courts of appeal in relation to lower penal or magistrate courts. Four of these

courts were identical to the civil courts of appeal; two were presided over by local judges from the courts of first instance. Three judges heard cases tried in the courts of session.

The Court of Cassation was the state's highest court for criminal matters. At least three judges were required to be present in its deliberations, and in cases punishable by death, five judges were required. The Court of Cassation also served as the highest court of appeals, and it confirmed, reduced, remitted, or suspended sentences from lower courts. It assumed original jurisdiction over crimes committed by judges or by high-ranking government officials.

The revolutionary courts, composed of three judges, sat permanently in Baghdad to try crimes against the security of the state; these crimes were defined to include espionage, treason, smuggling, and trade in narcotics. Sessions were held *in camera*, and the right of defense reportedly was severely restricted. It was also believed that regular judicial procedures did not apply in these special courts, summary proceedings being common.

On several occasions during the 1970s—after the attempted coups of 1970 and of 1973, after the 1977 riots in An Najaf and in Karbala, and after the 1979 conspiracy against the regime—the RCC decreed the establishment of special temporary tribunals to try large numbers of security offenders *en masse*. Each of these trials was presided over by three or four high government officials who, not being bound by ordinary provisions of criminal law, rendered swift and harsh sentences. In 1970 fifty-two of an estimated ninety accused persons were convicted, and thirty-seven of these were executed during three days of proceedings. It was believed that about thirty-five had been sentenced to death and about twenty had been acquitted, during two days of trials in 1973. In a one-day trial in 1977, eight were sentenced to death, and fifteen were sentenced to life imprisonment; eighty-seven persons were believed to have been acquitted. Thirty-eight Iraqis were executed between May 24 and May 27, 1978. The majority of them were members of the armed forces, guilty of political activity inside the military. An additional twenty-one leading members of the party, including ministers, trade union leaders, and members of the RCC, were tried *in camera* and executed in 1979. In general, those sentenced to death were executed, either by hanging or by firing squad, immediately after the trials.

Administered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the penal system was dominated by the central prison at Abu Ghurayb near Baghdad, which housed several thousand prisoners, and by three smaller branch prisons located in the governorates of Al

Basrah, Babylon, and Nineveh. Additional detention centers were located throughout the country. In early 1988, it was impossible to determine the full number of imprisonments in Iraq.

Internal security was a matter of ongoing concern for Iraq in the late 1980s. The end of the war with Iran would presumably bring opportunities for liberalizing the security restrictions imposed by the Baathist regime.

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English-language literature on the subject of Iraqi national security was scarce in 1988, largely because of the government's almost obsessive secrecy with respect to security affairs and because of the Iran-Iraq War. Frederick W. Axelgard's *Iraq in Transition: A Political, Economic, and Strategic Perspective* was the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of the subject in 1988. Majid Khadduri's *Socialist Iraq*, dealing with military and security affairs in the larger context of post-1968 political developments, continued to be indispensable. Mohammad A. Tarbush's *The Role of the Military in Politics: A Case Study of Iraq to 1941*, and Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, provided invaluable background information. The rapid growth, in both manpower and equipment, of Iraq's armed forces was best documented in the annual *The Military Balance*, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Accounts by Efraim Karsh in *The Iran-Iraq War*, and a series of articles by Anthony H. Cordesman, thoroughly discussed the Iran-Iraq War. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

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*Table 1. Metric Conversion Coefficients and Factors*

When you know	Multiply by	To find
Millimeters .....	0.04	inches
Centimeters .....	0.39	inches
Meters .....	3.3	feet
Kilometers .....	0.62	miles
Hectares (10,000 m <sup>2</sup> ) .....	2.47	acres
Square kilometers .....	0.39	square miles
Cubic meters .....	35.3	cubic feet
Liters .....	0.26	gallons
Kilograms .....	2.2	pounds
Metric tons .....	0.98	long tons
.....	1.1	short tons
.....	2,204	pounds
Degrees Celsius .....	9	degrees Fahrenheit
(Centigrade)	divide by 5 and add 32	

*Table 2. Population Distribution by Governorate, 1987  
(in thousands)*

Administrative Division	Female	Male	Urban	Rural	Total
<b>Governorate</b>					
Al Anbar .....	390	428	538	280	818
Al Basrah .....	438	434	782	90	872
Al Muthanna .....	160	153	163	150	313
Al Qadisiyah .....	280	281	321	240	561
An Najaf .....	362	361	568	155	723
At Tamim .....	255	338	473	120	593
Babylon .....	557	552	669	440	1,109
Baghdad .....	1,890	1,955	3,600	245	3,845
Dhi Qar .....	445	473	468	450	918
Diyala .....	445	455	465	435	900
Karbala .....	229	227	341	115	456
Maysan .....	244	256	275	225	500
Nineveh .....	745	762	982	525	1,507 <sup>1</sup>
Salah ad Din .....	350	374	400	324	724
Wasit .....	225	235	260	200	460
<b>Autonomous Region<sup>2</sup></b>					
As Sulaymaniyah .....	433	510	543	400	943
Dahuk .....	125	168	160	133	293
Irbil .....	340	403	475	268	743
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>7,913<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>8,365<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>11,483</b>	<b>4,795</b>	<b>16,278<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> From October 17, 1987, census; remaining figures are estimates.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary.

Source: Based on information from Joint Publications Research Service, *Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, October 20, 1987, 22, and October 21, 1987, 25.

Table 3. Area and Population Density, 1987

Administrative Division	Land Area (in square kilometers) <sup>1</sup>	Population (in thousands)	Density (persons per square kilometer)
<b>Governorate</b>			
Al Anbar .....	137,723	818	5.9
Al Basrah .....	19,070	872	45.7
Al Muthanna .....	51,029	313	6.1
Al Qadisiyah .....	8,507	561	65.9
An Najaf .....	27,844	723	26.0
At Tamim .....	10,391	593	57.1
Babylon .....	5,258	1,109 <sup>2</sup>	210.9
Baghdad .....	5,159	3,845 <sup>2</sup>	745.3
Dhi Qar .....	13,626	918	67.4
Diyala .....	19,292	900	46.7
Karbala .....	5,034	456	90.6
Maysan .....	14,103	500	35.5
Nineveh .....	37,698	1,507 <sup>2</sup>	40.0
Salah ad Din .....	29,004	724	25.0
Wasit .....	17,308	460	26.6
<b>Autonomous Region <sup>3</sup></b>			
As Sulaymaniyah .....	15,756	943	59.9
Dahuk .....	6,120	293	47.9
Irbil .....	14,471	743	51.3
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>437,393</b>	<b>16,278 <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>37.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> From *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*.

<sup>2</sup> From October 17, 1987, census; remaining figures are estimates.

<sup>3</sup> See Glossary.

Source: Based on information from Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*, Baghdad, n.d., 10; and Joint Publications Research Service, *Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, October 20, 1987, 22 and October 21, 1987, 25.

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*Table 4. Teachers, Students, and Schools,  
School Years 1976-77 to 1985-86, Selected Years*

Level	Number of Teachers	Number of Students		Total Students	Number of Schools
		Female	Male		
<b>Kindergarten</b>					
1976-77	2,291	24,223	27,617	51,840	276
1979-80	3,079	33,156	47,262	80,418	358
1982-83	4,175	38,137	41,319	79,456	507
1985-86	4,657	38,604	42,827	81,431	584
<b>Primary</b>					
1976-77	70,799	687,220	1,259,962	1,947,182	8,156
1979-80	92,644	1,174,866	1,434,067	2,608,933	11,316
1982-83	107,364	1,214,410	1,400,517	2,614,927	10,223
1985-86	118,492	1,258,434	1,554,082	2,812,516	8,127
<b>Secondary</b>					
1976-77	19,471	164,442	387,600	552,042	1,319
1979-80	28,002	271,112	626,588	897,700	1,774
1982-83	32,556	334,897	636,930	971,827	1,977
1985-86	35,051	371,214	660,346	1,031,560	2,238
<b>Vocational <sup>1</sup></b>					
1976-77	1,906	n.a.	n.a.	28,365	82
1979-80	3,928	n.a.	n.a.	4,026	126
1982-83	4,733	n.a.	n.a.	61,383	157
1985-86	6,405	31,252	88,838	120,090	237
<b>Teacher Training Schools <sup>2</sup></b>					
1977-78	666	12,685	4,652	17,337	32
1982-83	1,022	15,936	10,255	26,191	36
1985-86	209	3,355	2,928	6,283	7
<b>Teacher Training Institutes <sup>3</sup></b>					
1977-78	241	3,233	3,019	6,252	13
1982-83	219	3,286	3,197	6,483	7
1985-86	1,202	16,820	11,083	27,903	37
<b>University, College, or Technical Institutes <sup>4</sup></b>					
1976-77	4,008	24,584	56,914	81,498	9
1979-80	5,680	9,298	21,884	31,182	9
1982-83	6,674	10,536	23,626	34,162	9
1985-86	7,616	17,015	36,022	53,037	9

n.a.—not available.

<sup>1</sup> Includes commercial, technical, and agricultural schools.

<sup>2</sup> A three-year course for those who had completed intermediate studies.

<sup>3</sup> A two-year course for secondary school graduates.

<sup>4</sup> Includes Iraqi, other Arab, and foreign faculty and students at University of Baghdad, University of Basra, Foundation of Technical Institutes, University of Mosul, University of Al Mustansiriyah, University of Salah ad Din, University of Technology, and the religious colleges affiliated with the University of Baghdad and the University of Al Mustansiriyah.

Source: Based on information from Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*, Baghdad, n.d., 203-33.



Table 5. Medical Personnel and Facilities, 1985

Administrative Division	Estimated Population (in thousands) <sup>1</sup>	Hospitals	Hospital Beds	Doctors	Paramedics
<b>Governorate</b>					
Al Anbar . . . . .	818	11	825	206	523
Al Basrah . . . . .	872	14	2,212	399	1,562
Al Muthanna . . . . .	313	5	499	499	307
Al Qadisiyah . . . . .	561	11	749	163	435
An Najaf . . . . .	723	8	1,355	207	581
At Tamim . . . . .	593	8	869	146	488
Babylon . . . . .	1,109 <sup>2</sup>	7	859	203	623
Baghdad . . . . .	3,845 <sup>2</sup>	41	10,006	2,145	4,535
Dhi Qar . . . . .	918	15	1,102	160	600
Diyala . . . . .	900	10	836	148	454
Karbala . . . . .	456	4	488	118	287
Maysan . . . . .	500	10	956	126	546
Nineveh . . . . .	1,507 <sup>2</sup>	21	2,223	498	1,011
Salah ad Din . . . . .	724	6	775	125	403
Wasit . . . . .	460	10	590	137	506
<b>Autonomous Region <sup>3</sup></b>					
As Sulaymaniyah . . . . .	943	11	1,187	124	630
Dahuk . . . . .	293	7	490	124	344
Irbil . . . . .	743	17	1,684	196	848
<b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>16,278</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>27,705</b>	<b>5,724</b>	<b>4,683</b>

<sup>1</sup> For 1987.<sup>2</sup> From October 17, 1987, census.<sup>3</sup> See Glossary.

Source: Based on information from Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*, Baghdad, n.d., 192-96; and Joint Publications Research Service, *Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, October 20, 1987, 22 and October 21, 1987, 25.

Table 6. Crude Oil Production and Oil Revenues, 1982-87

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
<b>Production</b>						
(in thousands of barrels per day) . .	972	922	1,203	1,437	1,746	2,076
<b>Revenue</b>						
(in millions of United States dollars) . . . . .	\$10,250*	\$9,650*	\$10,000*	\$11,900*	\$6,813*	\$11,300*

\*Estimated.

Source: Based on information from Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *Economic and Energy Indicators*, June 3, 1988, 9, and *The Middle East and North Africa, 1989*, London: Europa, 1988, 475.

*Table 7. Production and Area of Major Crops, Selected Years, 1981-85*

<i>Crop</i>	Production (in thousands of tons)			Cultivated Area (in thousands of hectares)		
	1981	1983	1985	1981	1983	1985
Wheat .....	902	841	1,406	484.7	512.6	626.6
Barley .....	925	835	1,331	419.5	556.6	579.5
Rice .....	162	111	149	22.9	22.7	24.5
Cotton .....	13	12	7	4.5	5.5	4.3
Tobacco .....	12	14	17	4.8	5.8	6.6
Tomatoes .....	425	439	612	16.4	14.9	19.1
Eggplant .....	83	112	232	3.0	3.8	5.6
Watermelon .....	491	583	757	17.1	18.8	21.9

Source: Based on information from Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*, Baghdad, n.d., 59-64.

*Table 8. Principal Exports and Imports, 1984*

	Exports (in millions of Iraqi dinars*)		Imports (in millions of Iraqi dinars*)
Oil, gas and related products	7,028	Machinery, including aircraft	65,067
Foodstuffs	681	Manufactured goods	48,786
Raw materials (including fertilizers, cement)	287	Foodstuffs	43,828
Manufactured goods	241	Chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and explosives	17,225
		Heating, medical equipment, furniture, and clothes	10,285
Other items	36	Other items	10,653
TOTAL	8,273		195,844

\*For value of the Iraqi dinar—see Glossary.

Source: Based on information from Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, *Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1985*, Baghdad, n.d., 164.

Table 9. *Direction of Trade, 1985-86*  
(in percentages)

Country	1985	1986
<b>Exports</b>		
Brazil	17.7	n.a.
Britain	n.a.	1.2
France	13.0	7.0
Italy	11.0	8.1
Japan	6.0	10.5
Spain	10.7	n.a.
Turkey	8.1	8.1
United States	4.7	5.8
West Germany	n.a.	10.5
Yugoslavia	8.0	8.1
<b>Imports</b>		
Brazil	7.0	n.a.
Britain	6.3	8.0
France	7.5	6.8
Italy	7.6	8.0
Japan	14.4	14.8
Kuwait	4.2	n.a.
Turkey	8.2	9.0
United States	n.a.	5.7
West Germany	9.2	8.0
Yugoslavia	n.a.	4.5

n.a.— not available.

Source: Based on information from the International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics*, cited in the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Iraq*, No. 1, 1987, 2 and No. 1, 1988, 2.

Table 10. *Armed Forces Manpower, Selected Years, 1977-87*

	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987
<b>Armed Forces</b>						
Army	160,000	190,000	210,000 <sup>1</sup>	475,000 <sup>1</sup>	475,000 <sup>1</sup>	475,000
Navy	3,000	4,000	4,250 <sup>1</sup>	4,250 <sup>1</sup>	5,000 <sup>1</sup>	5,000 <sup>1</sup>
Air Force	15,000	18,000	28,000 <sup>1</sup>	28,000 <sup>1</sup>	30,000 <sup>1</sup>	30,000
Air Defense	10,000	10,000	10,000 <sup>1</sup>	10,000 <sup>1</sup>	10,000 <sup>1</sup>	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	188,000	222,000	252,250 <sup>1</sup>	517,250 <sup>1, 2</sup>	520,000 <sup>1</sup>	520,000
<b>Reserves</b>	250,000	250,000	250,000	75,000	75,000	480,000
<b>Paramilitary</b>						
People's Army	50,000	75,000	250,000 <sup>3</sup>	250,000	450,000	650,000
Security Forces	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
Frontier Guard	—	—	—	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

n.a.—not available.

<sup>1</sup> Losses make estimates tentative.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 10,000 armed forces personnel from Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan served in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> 75,000 of these mobilized.

*Table 11. Major Army Equipment, 1987\**

TYPE	DESIGNATION	INVENTORY
Armored fighting vehicles		
Heavy and medium tanks	T-54, T-55, T-62, T-72 T-59, T-69 II Chieftain Mark 3/5, M-60, M-47 M-77	2,790 1,500 150 60
Light tanks	PT-76	100
TOTAL		4,600
Armored vehicles		
Mechanized infantry combat vehicles	BMP	1,000
Reconnaissance vehicles	BRDM-2, FUG-70, ERC-90, MOWAG Roland, EE-9 Cascavel, EE-3 Jararaca	
Armored personnel carriers	BTR-50, BTR-60, BTR-152, OT-62, OT-64, VC-TH (with HOT antitank guided weapons), M-113A1, Panhard M-3, EE-11 Urutu	
TOTAL		4,000
Artillery guns	122mm: D-74; 130mm: M-46, Type 59-1; 155mm: GCT self-propelled.	5
Guns/howitzers	152mm: M-1937; 155mm: G-5, GHN-45	40 40
Howitzers	105mm: M-56 pack; 122mm: D-30 towed, M-1938, M-1974 (2S1); 152mm: M-1943, M-1973 (2S3) self-propelled; 155mm: M-114/M-109 self-propelled	
TOTAL		3,000
Multiple rocket launchers	Includes 122mm: BM-21 127mm: ASTROS II 132mm: BM-13, BM-16	n.a. 60 n.a.
TOTAL		200
Surface-to-surface missiles	FROG-7 Scud-B	30 20
TOTAL		50
Mortars	81mm; 120mm; 160mm	n.a.

Table 11.—Continued.

TYPE	DESIGNATION	INVENTORY
Antitank weapons		
Recoilless rifles	73mm: SPG-9 82mm: B-10 107mm	n.a.
Guns	85mm; 100mm towed; 105mm: JPz	100
Antitank guided weapons	SK-105 self-propelled AT-3 Sagger (including BRDM-2) AT-4 Spigot (reported), SS-11, Milan, HOT	n.a. n.a. n.a.
Army Air Corps, armed helicopters		
Attack helicopters	Mil Mi24 Hind, with AT-2 Swatter	40
	SA-342 Gazelle (some with HOT)	50
	SA-321 Super Frelon (some with Exocet AM-38 ASM)	10
	SA-316B Alouette III, with AS-12 ASM	30
	BO-105, with AS-11 antitank guided weapons	56
	Hughes-530F	26
	Hughes-500D	30
	Hughes-300C	30
TOTAL		272
Transport helicopters		
Heavy	Mi-6 Hook	10
Medium	Mi-8	100
Light	Mi-4	20
	SA-330 Puma	10
TOTAL		140
Air defense weapons		
Guns	23mm: ZSU-23-4 self-propelled; 37mm: M-1939 and twin; 57mm: includes ZSU-57-2 self-propelled; 85mm; 100mm; 130mm	
TOTAL		4,000
Surface-to-air missiles	SA-2	120
	SA-3, SA-6, SA-7, SA-9	150
	Roland	60
TOTAL		300

n.a.—not available.

\*Equipment estimates are tentative because of wartime losses.

Source: Based on information from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*. London, 1987, 100.

*Table 12. Major Navy Equipment, 1987*

Type and Description	Inventory
Frigates	5
4 Lupo class with 8 Otomat-2 SSM, 1 X 8 Albatros/Aspide SAM, 1 helicopter (held in Italy)	
1 Yug (training vessel)	
Corvettes	6
Assad class, all with 1 X 4 Albatros/Aspide SAMs:	
2 with 2 Otomat-2 SSMs, 1 helicopter;	
4 with 6 Otomat-2 SSMs; completed (all 6 held in Italy)	
Fast-attack craft (missiles) OSA class, each with 4 Styx SSMs (6 of model II, 2 of model I)	8
Fast-attack craft (torpedoes) P-6 (may not be operable)	4
Large patrol craft: SO-1	3
Coastal patrol craft: Zhuk (under 100 tons)	5
Minesweepers	8
2 Soviet T-43 (ocean);	
3 Yevgenya (ocean); and	
3 Nestin (inshore/river)	
Amphibious	6
3 Polnocny (LSM <sup>1</sup> )	
3 modern cargo (LST <sup>2</sup> )	
Support ships	5
1 Stromboli class	
2 Poluchat torpedo support;	
1 Agnadeen tanker; and 1 Transport	

<sup>1</sup> Landing ship, medium.

<sup>2</sup> Landing ship tank.

Source: Based on information from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, London, 1987, 100.

Table 13. Major Air Force Equipment, 1987

TYPE	DESIGNATION	INVENTORY
Bombers	Tu-16	8
	Tu-22	7
Fighters	MiG-29	28
	MiG-23BM	40
	Mirage F-1C	40
	Mirage F-1EQ5 (Exocet-equipped)	20
	Mirage F-1EQ-200	23
	F-7 (Chinese version of MiG-21 assembled in Egypt)	70
	Su-7; Su-20 (Su-25 reported)	n.a.
Interceptors	MiG-25	25
	MiG-21	200
	MiG-19	40
	Mirage F-1EQ	30
Reconnaissance	MiG-25	5
Transport aircraft	An-2 Colt	10
	An-12 Cub	10
	An-24 Coke (retiring)	6
	An-26 Curl	2
	Il-76 Candid	19
	Il-14 Crate	19
	DH Heron	1
Trainers	MiG-15, MiG-21, MiG-23U, Su-7U	n.a.
	Mirage F-1BQ	16
	L-29 Delfin	50
	L-39 Albatros	40
	PC-7 Turbo Trainer	50
	EMB-312 Tucano	21
Air-to-air missiles	R-530	n.a.
	R-550 Magic	n.a.
	AA-2, AA-6, AA-7, AA-8	n.a.
Air-to-surface missiles	AS-30 Laser	200
	Armat	n.a.
	Exocet AM-39	542
	AS-4 Kitchen	n.a.
	AS-5 Kelt	n.a.

n.a.—not available.

Source: Based on information from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, London: 1987, 100-1; *The Military Balance, 1986-1987*, London: 1986, 98; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *World Armaments and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbook 1987*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 250-53.





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## Glossary

**Autonomous Region**—Governorates of As Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil, the Kurdish majority area. In this region—popularly known as Kurdistan—Kurdish has status of official language, and residents enjoy limited autonomy from central government.

**atabeg**—Turkish word that during the period of the Ottoman Empire meant governor of a province.

**barrels per day**—Production of crude oil and petroleum products is frequently measured in barrels per day, often abbreviated bpd or bd. A barrel is a volume measure of forty-two United States gallons. Conversion of barrels to metric tons depends on the density of a specific product. About 7.3 barrels of average crude oil, or about 7 barrels of heavy crude oil, weigh 1 metric ton. Light products, such as gasoline and kerosene, average close to eight barrels per metric ton.

**currency**—*See* dinar.

**dinar (ID)**—Currency unit consisting of 1,000 fils or 20 dirhams. When officially introduced at the end of the British mandate (1932), the dinar was equal to, and was linked to, the British pound sterling, which at that time was equal to US\$4.86. Iraqi dinar (ID) equaled US\$4.86 between 1932 and 1949 and after devaluation in 1949, equaled US\$2.80 between 1949 and 1971. Iraq officially uncoupled the dinar from the pound sterling as a gesture of independence in 1959, but the dinar remained at parity with the pound until the British unit of currency was again devalued in 1967. One Iraqi dinar remained equal to US\$2.80 until December 1971, when major realignments of world currencies began. Upon the devaluation of the United States dollar in 1973, the Iraqi dinar appreciated to US\$3.39. It remained at this level until the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980. In 1982 Iraq devalued the dinar by 5 percent, to a value equal to US\$3.22, and sustained this official exchange rate without additional devaluation despite mounting debt. In early 1988, the official dinar-dollar exchange rate was still ID1 to US\$3.22; however, with estimates of the nation's inflation rate ranging from 25 percent to 50 percent per year in 1985 and 1986, the dinar's real transaction value, or black market exchange rate, was far lower—only about half the 1986 official rate.

**Free Officers**—Term applied retroactively to the group of young military officers that planned and carried out the July 14 Revolution in 1958.

**GDP (gross domestic product)**—A value measure of the flow of domestic goods and services produced by an economy over a period of time, such as a year. Only output values of goods for final consumption and for intermediate production are assumed to be included in final prices. GDP is sometimes aggregated and shown at market prices, meaning that indirect taxes and subsidies are included; when these have been eliminated, the result is GDP at factor cost. The word gross indicates that deductions for depreciation of physical assets have not been made.

**GNP (gross national product)**—GDP (*q.v.*) plus the net income or loss stemming from transactions with foreign countries. GNP is the broadest measurement of the output of goods and services by an economy. It can be calculated at market prices, which include indirect taxes and subsidies. Because indirect taxes and subsidies are only transfer payments, GNP is often calculated at factor cost, removing indirect taxes and subsidies.

**hadith**—Tradition based on the precedent of Muhammad's non-divinely revealed words that serves as one of the sources of Islamic law (*sharia*).

**hijra**—Literally to migrate, to sever relations, to leave one's tribe. Throughout the Muslim world *hijra* refers to the migration of Muhammad and his followers to Medina. In this sense the word has come into European languages as *hegira*, and it is usually, and somewhat misleadingly, translated as flight.

**ID**—Iraqi dinar. *See* dinar.

**Imam**—A word used in several senses. In general use and in lower case, it means the leader of congregational prayers; as such it implies no ordination or special spiritual powers beyond sufficient education to carry out this function. It is also used figuratively by many Sunni (*q.v.*) Muslims to mean the leader of the Islamic community. Among Shias (*q.v.*) the word takes on many complex meanings; in general, it indicates that particular descendant of the House of Ali ibn Abu Talib, who is believed to have been God's designated repository of the spiritual authority inherent in that line. The identity of this individual and the means of ascertaining his identity have been major issues causing divisions among Shias.

**International Monetary Fund (IMF)**—Established along with the World Bank in 1945, the IMF is a specialized agency affiliated with the United Nations and is responsible for stabilizing international exchange rates and payments. The main business of the IMF is the provision of loans to its members (including industrialized and developing countries) when they experience

- balance of payments difficulties. These loans frequently carry conditions that require substantial internal economic adjustments by the recipients, most of which are developing countries.
- Levant—Historically, the countries along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean.
- shaykh—Leader or chief. Word of Arabic origin used to mean either a political leader or a learned religious leader. Also used as an honorific.
- Shia, from Shiat Ali, the Party of Ali—A member of the smaller of the two great divisions of Islam. The Shias supported the claims of Ali and his line to presumptive right to the caliphate and to leadership of the Muslim community, and on this issue they divided from the Sunni (*q. v.*) in the great schism within Islam. Later schisms have produced further divisions among the Shias over the identity and the number of Imams (*q. v.*). Shias revere Twelve Imams, the last of whom is believed to be in hiding.
- Shiite—*See* Shia.
- Sunni (from *sunna*, orthodox)—A member of the larger of the two great divisions of Islam. The Sunnis supported the traditional method of election to the caliphate, and they accepted the Umayyad line that began with caliph Muawiyah in 661. On this issue they divided from the Shias (*q. v.*) in the great schism within Islam.





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