

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
National Foreign Assessment Center  
31 October 1978

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Government In Iraq

PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS

In the ten years the Baath Party has ruled Iraq, it has brought a relative measure of stability and unity to a country long known for its instability, disunity, and high level of political violence. There are elaborate institutional mechanisms which ostensibly represent the divergent ethnic and political groups in Iraqi society and politics, but real power lies with President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, Revolutionary Command Council Deputy Chairman Saddam Husayn, and a few close advisers.

--Bakr and Saddam Husayn are in firm control of the country. They use economic and political carrots-and-sticks to create an impression of national solidarity and widespread support for the government, but their power is dependent on their control of the party and the state security and intelligence organizations, and on the acquiescence of the military.

--The relationship between Bakr and Saddam is one marked more by consensus on major issues than conflict over who wields power. They share close

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family ties and a common perception of the direction Iraq's policies should take. Their primary concerns are the stability of the regime, the unity of the country, and military and economic independence.

- Saddam's position has been strengthened considerably in the past four years. The ailing President Bakr apparently has willingly relinquished much of the conduct of government to the younger and healthier Saddam. Saddam, in turn, has orchestrated major governmental and party reorganizations which have consolidated his hold on both institutions and virtually assure his succession to the presidency.
- Institutions like the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), once the dominant governmental body, and the Baath Party's Regional Command, the party's policy-making body, have only a limited input in the decision-making process. They have symbolic importance, however, and could play a decisive role in any succession crisis.
- The party and the government are dominated, for the most part, by the country's Sunni Arab minority. Promotions and awards are frequently dependent more on family and village ties and personal loyalty than on party service.
- Although Communists and Kurds are represented in the Cabinet and the National Front, their presence is essentially cosmetic. There is no power-sharing and no room for political dissent.
- Saddam Husayn appears to rely on a half-dozen advisers, including Defense Minister Talfah, his brother-in-law, for advice on economic planning, military reorganization, and oil affairs. He seems to have no special consultant on foreign affairs and has developed no discernible relations of trust with anyone in either the government or the party.

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--Bakr and Saddam Husayn have few rivals for power.  
The opposition--be it Communist, Kurd, rival Baath-  
ist, or military--seems to be in disarray, unable to  
mount an effective challenge to Saddam or alter the  
present governmental or political structure.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Baath Party of Iraq seized power in July 1968, few observers gave it much chance of success. In the previous decade, Iraqis had witnessed the murder of their Hashimite king and his prime minister Nuri al-Said in the streets of Baghdad, four coups, and a protracted rebellion by the Kurds. Once a member of CENTO and a staunch ally of Great Britain, Iraq in the ten years since the 1958 revolution had become isolated from both the Arab and non-Arab world. It was a country perceived by many as doomed to political instability and disunity, an easy target for manipulation by internal forces and external pressures.

Contrary to these expectations, the Baath Party in the decade it has ruled Iraq has brought a measure of stability and unity to the country. Its leaders have modernized the country's military forces, ended the chronic threat posed by the rebellious Kurds, reduced tensions with some of its traditionally hostile neighbors, introduced agrarian reforms and industrial modernization, and nationalized the country's primary resource, oil. At the same time, they instituted repressive measures to ensure the regime's safety and began a ruthless pursuit of all possible opposition elements.

Iraq today has a constitution, the promise of a national assembly, and occasional, allegedly democratic, local party elections. It is ruled by a president and a Revolutionary Command Council, with elaborate mechanisms to guarantee the rights of Iraq's political and ethnic minorities--the Popular and Progressive National Front created in 1973, a separate executive council for the Autonomous Region (the official euphemism for the predominantly Kurdish provinces in northern Iraq) established in 1974, and a vice-president chosen from the Kurdish minority, first appointed in 1974.

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Much of this is political fiction. In fact, Iraq's government is a closed system ruled more by Deputy Chairman\* Saddam Husayn than President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr; there is no room for either power-sharing or dissent. Kurdish vice-president Taha Marut is a figurehead who cannot succeed the president in the event of his death, while the Autonomous Region's executive council is powerless to make any meaningful decisions. At the same time, an extra-governmental body--the Regional Command of the Iraqi Baath Party, the party's policymaking body--has also wielded an inordinate amount of power since the revolution.

#### Bakr and Saddam Husayn

Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Husayn have ruled Iraq since 1968 and controlled the Iraqi Baath Party since 1966. They owe their survival to support from the military, control of the party apparatus and its ruthless intelligence network, and their adroit manipulation of their rivals for power. Despite speculation over the years on the level and extent of discord between the two, Bakr's relations with Saddam are marked more by consensus than conflict. They share close family ties\*\* and a common perception of the direction Iraq's policies should take. Publicly, they both talk in vague, jargon-laden terms about Baathist principles of unity, independence, and socialism, and decry the forces of evil which threaten to encircle the Arab world. Their primary concerns are the stability of the regime, the unity of the country,

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\*The RCC ostensibly "elects" the president of Iraq but the institutional method of choosing the second-in-command is unclear. Bakr himself appointed Saddam to his current posts. While the terminology preferred by Iraq's leadership is confusing, Bakr is president of the republic and chairman of the RCC; Saddam is deputy chairman of the RCC and, in effect, functions as a vice president; the constitution was changed in the early 1970s so that he alone can stand in for the president in his absence and succeed him in the event of his death. The Kurdish titular vice president is sheer tokenism.

\*\*The involved relationship is set forth in a footnote on page 19.

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and military and economic independence; they are as were their non-Baathist predecessors, "Iraq Firsters."

Their differences are more generational at this point than political, a contrast of styles and skills marked by the differences in their ages, temperaments, and background. To Bakr and his generation, educated in the 1930s and 1940s and experienced in military, legal, or teaching professions, Baathism offered a vague theory of Arab nationalism and unity, an explanation of the country's ills, and a rallying point for opposition to the unpopular Hashimite regime. The enemy was clearly British colonialism and a feudal political and economic system. To Saddam's generation, coming to political awareness in the late 1950s and 1960s, Baathism offered a different view. It now appealed to young men like Saddam, whose only known enemies were other Baathists, whose only experiences were in clandestine activity, and whose knowledge of the world outside Iraq and the making of foreign and domestic policies came for the most part from party tracts.

#### Bakr as President

A devout Sunni Muslim, Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr represents the more traditional and conservative values in a system which prides itself on its radical political stances and socialist economics. He was born in the village of Tikrit in 1912, the son of a farmer, and graduated from the Baghdad Teacher's College in 1932. In 1938 he took advantage of the government's opening up of the military to enter the Royal Military College. He joined the Baath Party in the mid-1950s and participated in the 14 July 1958 revolution which overthrew the Hashimite monarchy.

From the 1958 revolution to the 1968 coup which brought the Baath Party to power in Iraq, Bakr was involved in countless plots against successive Iraqi governments. He served as prime minister in the short-lived Baath government of February-October 1963 and was appointed vice-president in the regime which overthrew the Baathists that fall. The position in the post-Baathist regime was nominal and abolished the

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following January. Refusing to accept either an assignment in the Foreign Ministry--tantamount to exile--or actual exile in Beirut, Bakr retired temporarily from politics.

A respected and competent military officer, an Arab nationalist, and a party moderate, Bakr continued to attract the support of military men of similar views and during the mid-1960s rebuilt the Baath Party in Iraq. Since the party has been in power, he has managed to retain the officers' support while working with the civilian faction of the party, led by Saddam Husayn, to restrict the role of the military in the government.

How much power Bakr wields is unclear. He is, at 66, president of the republic, chairman of the RCC, prime minister, field marshal and supreme commander of the armed forces, secretary-general of the BPI Regional Command, and deputy secretary-general of the party's National Command. His function appears to be mainly ceremonial, however. Aged and in poor health--

25X6 [REDACTED] he has relinquished much of the conduct of governmental and party affairs to the younger and healthier Saddam. A stroke in 1976 and the deaths of several close family members, including his sister, youngest son, and son-in-law in the winter of 1977-78 may have contributed to a further deterioration in his health. Bakr remains, however, the important symbol of continuity and consensus in a system which has yet to experience its first major transition of power.

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#### Saddam Husayn's Background

Less popular, and occasionally less visible, is Saddam Husayn, Bakr's deputy and "nephew." Saddam's career and political style offer a distinct contrast to those of Bakr. He was born in Tikrit in 1937, the son of poor peasants. A complex man who apparently trusts no one, he earned a reputation for courage, ruthlessness, and shrewdness early in life. His political rite-of-passage was his participation in a 1959 assassination attempt on then Prime Minister Qasim. From that

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attempt until the 1968 coup, Saddam was either in exile or prison. While in exile, he supported Bakr in the bitter factional feuds which were dividing the party. With Bakr, he reorganized the party in Iraq following the 1966 split with the Syrian Baathists, and used his position as deputy secretary and his control of the party's security apparatus to eliminate those who opposed him and Bakr. In 1969 Bakr appointed Saddam deputy chairman of the RCC. For the next several years, the two worked together, first to eliminate the more extreme leftist elements from the party, and then to isolate and eliminate rightist military rivals.

Relations between Bakr and Saddam have been strained over the years by policy and personnel differences. They apparently disagreed, for example, over the conduct of the Kurdish rebellion of 1974-1975; Bakr reportedly was uncomfortable with Saddam's decision to press for a final military solution. They have disagreed on the degree of support to be extended to other Arab countries and for the Palestinian fedayeen. Their supporters constantly jockey against each other for positions of power. Their bases of support are different, too. Where Bakr's support has come from the senior military officers, Arab nationalists and non-party members, Saddam's support comes from the junior military ranks and the party rank-and-file.

Bakr and Saddam are careful not to challenge each other directly or openly. They may in the past have mistrusted each other, but neither has been willing to risk an open confrontation which could split the party and threaten the survival of the regime. Saddam is careful not to upstage Bakr and has encouraged the creation of a "cult of personality" around the "struggler president." He is solicitous of Bakr and apparently spends much time with him, discussing issues and giving the appearance of consensus on all major decisions. They are determined not to repeat the mistakes of the 1960s, when open confrontation between party leaders, between military and civilian factions, and between Iraqi and non-Iraqi Baathists nearly destroyed the party and invited the counter-coup of 1963.

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### The Deputy as Decisionmaker

In the past four years Saddam Husayn has made several major domestic and foreign policy decisions which have represented major shifts in Iraq's policies. These include the decisions to reopen the Kurdish war; to sign the 1975 accord with Iran (in which Iraq gave up its claim to Arab Khuzistan and the Shatt al-Arab in exchange for Iran's agreement to end its support for the Kurds); to normalize relations with Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Gulf states; to begin a policy of arms diversification which could ultimately reduce Iraq's heavy dependence on the Soviet Union; and to expand trade relations with non-Communist Bloc nations. In the past two years he has reorganized both party and governmental structures and redefined the party's relationship with the government.

If these decisions represented an about-face in Iraq's domestic and foreign policies, they also reflected a new assertiveness and self-confidence on Saddam's part. Since 1974 Saddam has maintained almost total control of Iraq's government and the Baath Party. He is deputy chairman of the RCC, and deputy secretary-general of the Baath Party's Regional and National Commands. All institutions of the government and the party are subordinate to him, and he has, in the past four years, installed loyalists in a majority of positions in the RCC, the Regional Command, and the Cabinet.

At times pragmatic and calculating in his approach to government decisionmaking, Saddam can also be opportunistic and vengeful. These conflicting characteristics are evident in his deliberate and cautious approach to improving relations with Iran and the conservative Gulf states while maintaining rigid opposition to reconciliation with Baathist Syria and to any negotiated settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, his singular reliance on boyhood cronies not known for their intellectual competence or abilities, and his relentless pursuit of "enemies of the state."

Saddam is proud, ambitious, and competitive, a man in search of prestige, power, and influence. He would like to play a major role in Arab and Gulf affairs and would like

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Iraq to be accepted as a legitimate and responsible partner in the formulation of Arab and Gulf strategies. However, he is unable, perhaps because of party constraints, or unwilling because of his personal and long-range perspectives, to pay the price such acceptance requires.

Saddam believes Iraq should be independent, non-aligned, socialist, and anti-imperialist in its foreign policies. This has had an interesting impact on Iraq's relations with the USSR and explains Baghdad's recent push for a prominent position in the non-aligned movement. Saddam was, to a large extent, the prime mover in Iraq's signing a Treaty of Friendship with Moscow in 1972. Despite Soviet dominance over Iraq's military and technical assistance programs, however, Saddam never acceded to Soviet wishes that the Iraqi Communist Party be accorded a wider representation in the government and a share of political power. Rather, he has insisted on Soviet recognition of Iraqi sovereignty and on treatment as an equal, not a client, state. The execution of at least 21 Iraqi Communists in the military in spring 1978 for conspiring to overthrow the government further served to warn Moscow that it exercises no influence on Iraq's internal affairs.

#### Institutional Mechanisms

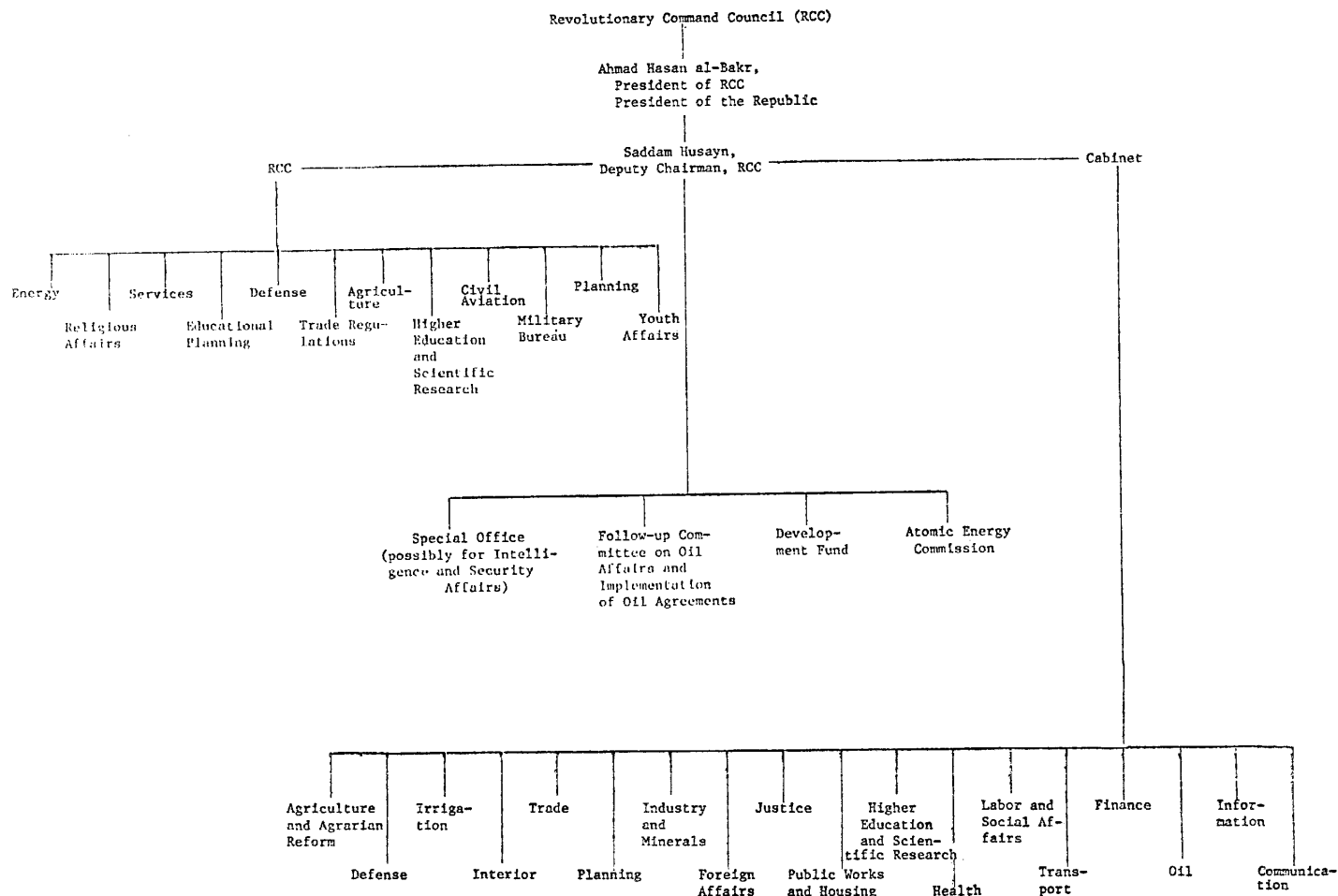
Two institutions play decisive roles in the decisionmaking process in Iraq--the Revolutionary Command Council and the Regional Command of the Baath Party. Other institutions, including the Popular and Progressive National Front, the Cabinet, and the Baath Party's National Command, have only a limited political significance; they are used by the leadership for "show" purposes, for their propaganda value, and, to a great extent, as a means for the government to maintain unofficial contacts with politically unsavory external groups.

#### The Revolutionary Command Council

A relatively important body at the time of the 1968 coup, the RCC has functioned in recent years more as a decision-approver than a decisionmaker. The top legislative and executive body in the government, the RCC promulgates laws, approves

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CHART 1: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS--THE GOVERNMENT.



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development plans and programs, discusses budgetary, defense, and foreign policy matters, and approves all treaties and international agreements. RCC members hold their positions because of their support for the leadership, and/or their importance in party politics. RCC bureaus are each headed by a member of the Council.

If the RCC seems not to play a substantive role in the day-to-day decisionmaking process, it does have a symbolic importance and could be a powerful force in determining control of the government in a succession crisis. The RCC "elects" from among its own members the president of the republic and its deputy chairman, who acts as head of state during the president's absence and succeeds him in case of death. While the mechanics of a transfer of power have never been tested, control of the RCC could determine the succession.

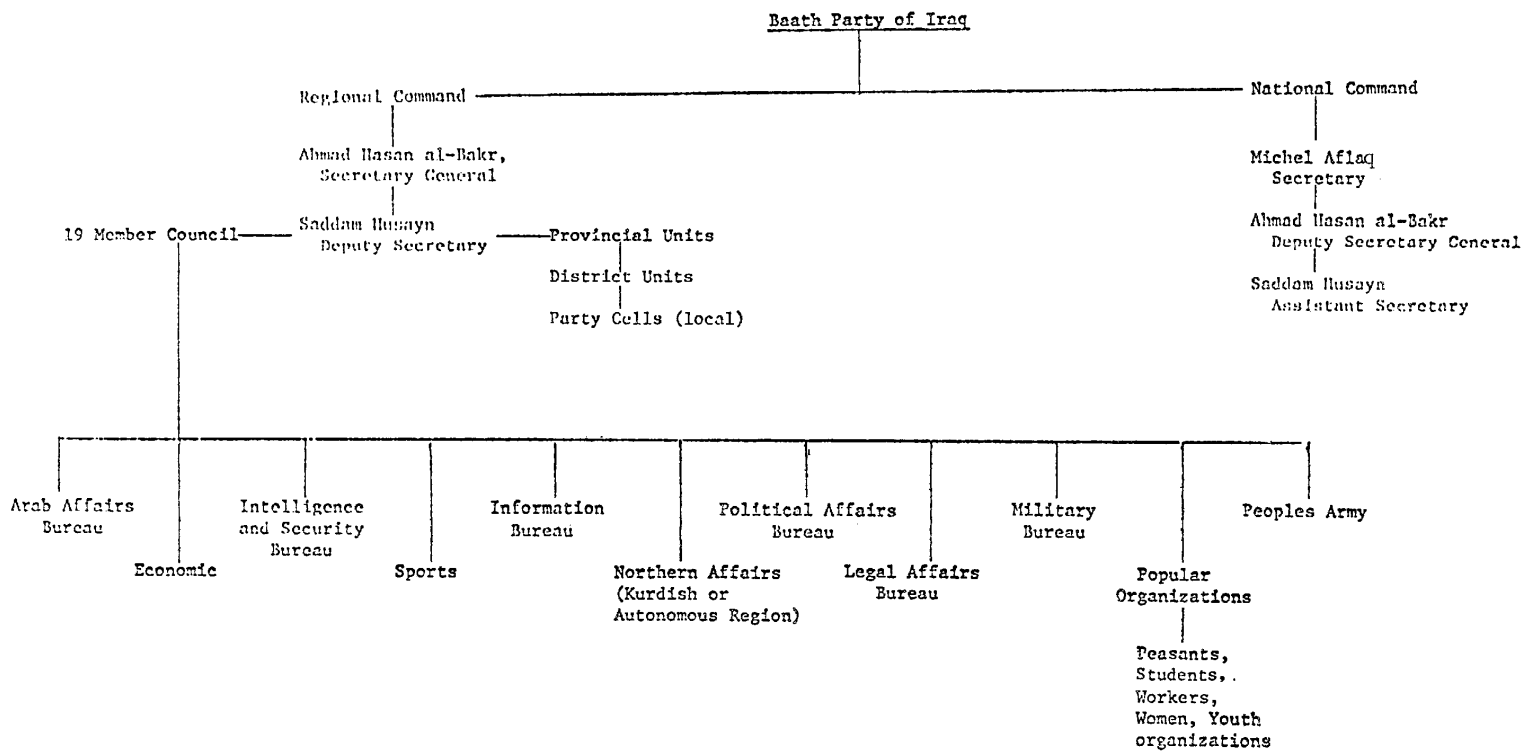
This may have been the primary reason for the government's reorganization of the RCC in September 1977. At that time, the RCC was expanded from five to 22, adding all the members of the Baath Party's Regional Command. The move brought the RCC directly under party control, enhanced Saddam Husayn's position by upgrading his supporters in the party, and further isolated potential sources of the opposition on the RCC.

#### The Party

The Baath Party of Iraq has two top-level components--the Regional Command, which is the policymaking and executive arm of the party, and the National Command, which is composed of both Iraqi and non-Iraqi members and is responsible for

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CHART 2: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS--THE PARTY.



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pan-Arab affairs and contacts with international political movements.\*

The relationship between the party and the government has always been a symbiotic one. In the past, the BPI has disavowed any direct role in the government. This posture allowed the party the fiction of independence from government actions and the freedom--rarely exercised--to criticize government policies. Saddam Husayn put an end to this fiction when he institutionalized the Baath role in government by appointing all members of the Regional Command to the RCC.

The party monitors the government on two levels:

- Through the appointment of party members and sympathizers to key positions in the administration, the military, the police, and intelligence agencies. Since the 1968 revolution, party members have dominated the RCC and have held all important ministerial and diplomatic posts. On the provincial level, governors and important administrators are chosen from party ranks, these poses serving as training grounds for young Baathists on their way up to higher level government positions.
- Through party bureaus which are used to rally support for government decisions, guide "mass" organizations, and indoctrinate cadres in the proper party line. In addition, the bureaus could conceivably be used to criticize or urge modification of government policies with which the party

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\*Until 1966, the Baath movement was centered in Damascus and had one National Command, and at least on paper, a series of regional (country) commands. That year, the Syrians purged the party of party founder Michel Aflaq and several Iraqis, two of whom--Bakr and Saddam Husayn--returned to Iraq to form the Baath Party of Iraq. Damascus maintains its own separate and distinct regional and national commands and clandestine faction of Iraqis opposed to Bakr and Saddam Husayn. Iraq, in turn, offers safe haven to anti-Assad Syrian political exiles and supports clandestine organizations working for the overthrow of the Syrian Baathists.

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is unhappy. Each bureau is headed by a Regional Command member who no doubt reports directly to Saddam.

Our information on the inner workings of the party is scanty. We know little about the election mechanism, for example, except that elections are held occasionally at the local level, and we have little reliable reporting on the issues which may divide the party. Nor is much known about the size, composition, or recruitment process of the Baath Party. In the 1960s the party was, of necessity, small and clandestine, its members primarily young civil servants, teachers, and intellectuals. Although they have been in power ten years, and are relatively secure in their control of the country, party leaders have not relaxed either their secrecy or their scrutiny of members. The party continues to maintain a highly centralized and authoritarian structure. Uncompromising, determined, and often ruthless, party leaders have not hesitated to use violence to suppress any hint of opposition or internal dissent. Intraparty feuds and periodic purges have eliminated many of the party's early members and those suspected of unorthodox thinking. The party probably remains small. A 1972 estimate placed party membership at 5,000-9,000 but there may now be as many as 50,000 party members.

The bulk of the party's membership is probably Sunni Arab, although there are Shiah and a few Christians at the higher levels of the party. Attempts are apparently under way to recruit Kurdish and other minority members as well. Baathism, with its emphasis on Arab unity and socialism, has a limited appeal for Iraq's non-Sunni Arab majority, who tend to be suspicious of schemes which suggest linkage with other Sunni states or who perceive threats to their traditional social patterns or economic activities.\*

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\*Of Iraq's 12 million people, 25 percent are Sunni Arabs centered in Baghdad and northwest Iraq, 20 percent are Kurds living primarily in the northeast, and 55 percent are Shiah Arabs living south and east of Baghdad. Rivalries between the two major sects of Islam have been a divisive factor throughout Iraqi history while the Kurds have been in an almost continual state of revolt since 1919. Baathists from Tikrit, home village of Bakr and Saddam, appear to have an inordinate degree of influence and privilege in a system which recognizes kinship connections and personal loyalty above even party ties.

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The party seeks recruits in schools and universities and offers special assistance to students and young military officers joining the party. It has established youth cadres in the provinces which emphasize "correct" training and party indoctrination. Party membership is a necessary credential for advancement in the government, the military, the professions, and perhaps even in parts of the private sector of the economy.

We know more about the Baathists who are members of the Regional Command. Excluding the 66-year-old Bakr, their average age is 40. Most of them have university degrees in law, education, or medicine, but limited experience outside the party. Their appearance on the national scene is usually sudden although some have served brief tours as Saddam Husayn's Chief of Office; the occasional fall from grace, such as that of RCC and Regional Command member Fulayyih Hasan al-Jasim in early 1977, is precipitous and dramatic. Their status in the party depends very much on their years of service in the trenches and their personal loyalty to Bakr or, more importantly, to Saddam. All are members of the RCC and eight also hold Cabinet posts.

Three party organizations are especially important to the regime:

- The Military Bureau monitors the armed forces, approves all promotions, awards and assignments, and watches for signs of political unreliability. Headed by RCC and Regional Command member Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, its members include Defense Minister Adnan Khayrallah Talfah, Intelligence Director Sadun Shakir, and the commanders of the Baghdad Garrison and the 10th Brigade. Control of the Garrison and the Brigade--both important contributors to past Iraqi coups--is essential to regime security.
- The Intelligence Bureau is a powerful and secret organization concerned primarily with internal security, foreign political subversion, assassination, and information gathering.

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--The People's Army, while not a bureau of the party, is a potentially important party arm. Headed by RCC and Regional Command member Taha Yasin Ramadhan, the People's Army was set up in 1975 to replace the discredited National Guard. While its role in party politics is not clear, it could provide a base of support for Ramadhan, a long-time rival of Saddam Husayn. The purpose of the People's Army is to protect the party and the government and to assist the police and armed forces "in carrying out their national and pan-Arab duties." The fact that it is organized along paramilitary lines and is being trained by Baath army officers and Cuban and North Korean military advisers, leaves open the possibility of external as well as internal use. (Some of the Iraqi "volunteers" used in Lebanon during the 1976 fighting and after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March 1978 may have been members of the People's Army.) However, the primary purpose of the army--whose military capabilities are marginal at best--is as much to protect the regime from the military as it is to cooperate with it. The force--which probably numbers about 125,000--has units at the provincial and local level. Units of 600 have been stationed at all major garrisons and airbases.\*

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The National Command, an organization of Iraqi and non-Iraqi Baathists separate and in theory superior to the Regional Command, is used by the regime to provide support to and maintain contacts with various liberation front organizations while allowing the government to disavow any such contacts. Headed by 68-year-old Baath Party founder and Syrian exile Michel Aflaq, the National Command was composed almost entirely of Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese Baathists until September 1977. It has a passive role in formulating party policy, having little power to act outside the framework of Iraqi government programs. However, it has occasionally taken advantage of internal political problems to press hard-line positions in support of radical Palestinian and Arab causes and against improved relations with Syria or the US.

To eliminate the National Command's predilection for embarrassing the government and to bring it firmly under regime control, Saddam Husayn in September 1977 ordered several changes in the Command's structure. Aflaq remained the titular head of the Command but several non-Iraqis were dismissed from leadership positions and replaced by Bakr, Saddam, and four members of the RCC and Regional Command.\* In addition, the Command was required to keep all its funds in Iraqi banks and to stop its efforts to influence Iraqi foreign policy through support of clandestine operations in other Arab countries and through contacts with foreign officials. It was also required to clear all ideological statements with the Regional Command.

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\*Bakr and Saddam Husayn now rank second and third respectively in the National Command's hierarchy. The other Iraqis are Izzat Ibrahim, Ramadhan, Naim Haddad, and Tariq Aziz. Non-Iraqi members are Shibli al-Aysami (Syria), Munif al-Razzaz (Jordan), Abd al-Majid al-Rafii (Lebanon), Ali Ghannam (Saudi Arabia), Qasim Sallam (North Yemen), and Badriddin Mudathir (Sudan).

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### Coalition Politics and the National Front

The National Front, a coalition of Baathists, Communists, and pro-administration Kurds, was established in 1973 under terms of an accord which also promised to set up a national assembly, a permanent constitution approved by public referendum, and a council of ministers. The Front was to represent all legitimate political parties in a common organization to give the impression of national unity and to win support from potentially dissident factions. The Communists joined, under Soviet urging but with great misgivings, and thereby became a legitimate political party. The Kurdish Democratic Party, consisting of followers of Kurdish nationalist leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani, refused to join.

Baathist intentions in setting up the National Front were more cosmetic than substantive. Despite the promises of power-sharing outlined in the 1973 accord, the regime was not about to share power with any group. Decisionmaking would remain the preserve of the Baathists, with the National Front holding desultory and inconsequential reviews of policy.

The Cabinet remains the only other vestige of coalition politics in Iraq. Its 29 members include two Communists--Transport Minister Mukarram Talabani and Minister of State Amir Abdallah--and six Kurds--including Vice President Taha Maruf, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Babakr Bashdari, and Minister of State Ubaydallah Barzani (a son of Mullah Mustafa Barzani). Saddam Husayn has appointed several skilled technocrats to important posts--Finance Minister Fawzi al-Qaysi is a good example--but the majority of Cabinet posts are held by Baathist stalwarts who seem to have minimal expertise in their fields but who are getting maximum exposure in a variety of government slots.

### The Individual Supporters

In addition to Bakr and Saddam Husayn, there are two groups of individuals who have the potential to exercise power and influence decisionmaking--an inner circle of advisers who hold sensitive positions in the RCC and a second-level group of Baath bureaucrats who hold multiple positions in the party and the government.

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### The Succession Advisers

In the first category are Interior Minister Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, Defense Minister Adnan Khayrallah Talfah, and Director of General Intelligence Sadun Shakir. Each owes his position to his long-time service to the party and to deep personal ties to Bakr and Saddam Husayn. The first two are possible successors to Saddam Husayn, the latter plays an important advisory role on succession and internal issues.

In addition to his RCC and cabinet post, Izzat Ibrahim holds positions on the Baath Party's Regional and National Commands, is chairman of the party's powerful Military Bureau and the RCC's Higher Educational Council, and is a member of the Follow-up Committee on Oil. The first civilian to be appointed to the sensitive Interior Ministry, he frequently represents the regime on important diplomatic missions abroad and on tours within the country. A tall, red-haired Sunni Arab in his late 30s, Ibrahim was an early convert to Baathism.  He was appointed to the RCC in 1969 and is one of the very few survivors of the original government still in favor with both Bakr and Saddam.

Ibrahim's influence is probably extensive. As interior minister he appoints and supervises provincial and local government officials and controls all police and security organizations. As head of the party's Military Bureau, he monitors political activities and party support among the military and approves promotions and transfers of personnel.

Adnan Khayrallah Talfah--son-in-law of Bakr and brother-in-law of Saddam Husayn--owes his recent appointments to the RCC, the Baath Party's Regional Command and Military Bureau, and as Defense Minister (a post held by Bakr himself since a 1973 coup attempt) more to his close family ties than to his

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military capability or political astuteness.\* The 38-year-old professional soldier, a man not known for his humility, could be an important factor in any succession crisis. Although his relative youth, lack of combat experience, and role in advising Saddam on purges of incompetent and politically unreliable elements from the armed forces are probably considered liabilities in the eyes of the military, still the regime may be counting on the fact that senior military officers, always considered loyal to Bakr, could conceivably transfer those loyalties to his hand-picked successor. This acceptance would then smooth the way for a Saddam-Talfah succession.

Although he does not figure in the succession issue directly, and holds posts only on the RCC and the Regional Command, Sadun Shakir's career in security and intelligence has made him one of the most powerful figures in Iraq and a close adviser to Saddam. A party member since he was 16, the 38-year-old Shakir has long played the role of protector of the party leadership. During the 1960s, he was responsible for security arrangements for the party's leaders and, after the 1968 coup, headed the Public Relations Bureau, the party's security apparatus which was responsible for counterintelligence, internal security, interrogations (in which torture was a standard method), and political assassinations abroad.

#### The Policy Advisers

In addition to Ibrahim, Talfah and Shakir, Saddam Husayn relies on several Cabinet ministers for advice on economic planning, oil policy, foreign affairs and party matters. These men--party technocrats for the most part whom Saddam trusts for their organizational skills and personal loyalty--hold multiple positions in the party and the government.

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\*Saddam Husayn is both a cousin to Talfah and married to his sister. Saddam was raised in the Talfah home and considers his uncle and father-in-law, Khayrallah Talfah, to be a second father. Bakr's second wife is a young cousin of Saddam's and a niece of Khayrallah Talfah. Adnan is married to Bakr's daughter.

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Adnan Husayn al-Hamdani, a member of the RCC and the Regional Command, is Planning Minister and secretary of the Follow-up Committee on Oil and Implementation of Agreements, the chief oil-policymaking body which must approve all oil development projects and contracts signed with foreign firms. Intelligent and a capable administrator, Hamdani is a close friend of Saddam and probably is his key adviser on economic planning and oil policy. He is also responsible for the current five-year plan which reflects Saddam's desire for continued economic growth and self-sufficiency.

One of the few Shiahhs in government, Hasan Ali al-Amiri, is a member of the RCC and the Regional Command, and is Trade Minister. He is also a member of the Higher Agricultural Council and the Follow-up Committee on Oil. Ali, an experienced administrator and economist with strong ties to Saddam, often represents Saddam in government and party matters.

Tayih Abd al-Karim is a member of the RCC and the Regional Command, and is Oil Minister and chairman of the Follow-up Committee on Oil. His role appears to be that of speech maker and policy publicist, rather than that of adviser.

Saddam Husayn appears to have no special adviser on foreign policy. He is probably influenced by occasional stirrings of unease within the party on specific issues, such as support for the Palestinians, reconciliation prospects with Syria, improving relations with the so-called reactionary regimes in Iran, Saudi Arabia or Jordan. He may heed National Command member Munif al-Razzaz, author of numerous party tracts on proper Baath relations with the Arab world, on certain issues. He does not appear to rely on Foreign Minister Sadun Hammadi except to publicize administration stances on relations with the US or on general foreign policy issues. He does seem to rely more heavily on Hamid Alwan al-Jabburi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and his current Chief of Office. A ranking member of the Baath Party, Alwan serves as a link between the RCC's Foreign Affairs Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and party officials concerned with foreign policy decisions.

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The absence of any key advisor on foreign affairs suggests several aspects of decisionmaking on such issues. In the first place, Saddam probably does not trust anyone but himself and Bakr to play the pre-eminent role, although Munif al-Razzaz and other party and government officials also meet foreign dignitaries and represent Iraq abroad. Secondly, decisions on foreign policy probably have a lower priority than do decisions on economic policy and internal security. At least two of the major foreign policy decisions Saddam has made in recent years--to improve relations with Iran and Kuwait--can be seen as extensions of domestic needs. Finally, Saddam's lack of experience in foreign affairs, the limited amount of time he has to devote to foreign affairs, the limited amount of time he has to devote to foreign policy matters, and his frequent inability to separate himself from party rhetoric, tend to produce government decisions on foreign policy which are inconsistent with party positions. However, there is a consistency, albeit a muddled one, if Iraq's foreign policy decisions are seen on two levels--the principled, pragmatic, and detached posture Iraq claims to follow officially, and the penchant for subversion and terrorism the regime indulges in clandestinely.

Saddam has two other high-ranking advisers who publicize regime policies and aid him in party matters--Naim Haddad and Tariq Aziz. Both are members of the RCC and the Baath Party's Regional and National Commands. Haddad, a Shiah, is a long-time party loyalist and supporter of Saddam. He is head of the National Front. Tariq Aziz, the only Christian high in the government, serves as the regime's chief propagandist and liaison with the Palestinian organizations. He is probably the author of anonymously written media attacks on issues deemed crucial by Saddam, such as the May articles in the party media criticizing the Communist Party in May 1978.

#### Rivals of Saddam Husayn

Bakr and Saddam Husayn owe their survival to their ability to manipulate their rivals as well as their supporters. As a result, Saddam Husayn appears to have no challenger for his role as successor to Bakr. This appearance may be deceptive, reflecting our lack of basic information on a tightly-controlled police state which places a

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premium on secrecy. Two institutions--the party and the military--sponsor rivals, are able to exert pressure on the regime, and occasionally have an impact on government decisionmaking. This section will focus on these few rivals who represent or take advantage of institutional concerns to pressure the leadership.

Taha Yasin Ramadhan, member of the RCC, the Regional and National Commands, cabinet minister, and head of the Baath Party's paramilitary force, the People's Army, is probably the most serious rival to Saddam. Ramadhan, 40 years old and extremely ambitious, joined the party in the 1950s and has held important party posts since the mid-1960s. He was appointed to the Regional Command in 1966, the RCC in 1969, and at one time headed the party's Military Bureau. Not known for his staunch support of Saddam's policies, Ramadhan has opposed the reorganizational moves which Saddam has orchestrated over the past two years, moves aimed at consolidating Saddam's power and undermining any possible challenges from someone like Ramadhan. Ramadhan's political base is the party; he could use party dissatisfaction with certain government decisions--such as attempts at reconciliation with Syria, involvement in Lebanon, or slowness on economic or agrarian reforms--to attack Saddam.

Ramadhan was rehabilitated in late 1977 when, after a period of open antagonism with Saddam, he led the Iraqi delegation to the Tripoli Conference--called to oppose Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat's peace initiatives toward Israel. Ramadhan received further public attention in February 1978 at ceremonies honoring the founding of the People's Army. This sudden prominence may have been meant as a sign of reconciliation among party leaders, but it most probably reflected the unwillingness of Bakr and Saddam to surface party tensions. It also reflected their reluctance to participate in potentially damaging foreign conferences which could align them with an issue unpopular in party circles. Because the risk factor in attending the Tripoli summit was great, Saddam was more than willing to associate Ramadhan with the public official policy and then wait to assess the domestic damage. If the internal repercussions had discredited Ramadhan, known as a hero of the

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left, then Saddam might have had sufficient cause to remove him--a trick frequently used by Saddam to remove rivals.

If Ramadhan is the party's best hope to rival Saddam, then Sadun Ghaydan al-Ani is probably the military's "candidate." Ghaydan, currently Minister of Communications and a member of the RCC, was commander of the Baghdad Garrison and one of the five senior military officers taking part in the coups of July 1968. He is the only officer--besides Bakr--to have survived in government until now and the only RCC member who is not a member of the Regional Command at the same time. Ghaydan holds no party post. He was appointed to the RCC in July 1968 and served as Interior Minister until 1974 when he was demoted to his current position.

Ghaydan owes his survival to his long-time support for Bakr and his protection of the military's interests, Ramadhan to his party contacts and supporters in the civil service and industrial organizations. Their sources of support are probably too powerful for Saddam Husayn or anyone else to challenge at present. However, Saddam is patient as well as ruthless--he is willing to wait a long time to move against a perceived or a real, enemy.

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### OUTLOOK

The transition of power from Bakr to Saddam Husayn has been successfully under way since 1974. Saddam appears to be secure in his control of the party and the government and, with the appointment of Adnan Khayrallah Talfah as Defense Minister, may have found a solution to his succession problem which both serves his needs and satisfies the armed forces. The opposition--be it Communist, Kurd, rival Baathist or military--seems to be in disarray, unable to mount an effective challenge to Saddam or alter the present balance of power.

Saddam will continue to listen to the military and to the party, as both try to exert some pressure on him to make decisions in favor of broader arms procurement or against reconciliation with Syria. They will have a limited impact on the making of decisions by the government but there is no other institution or personality who will have the almost total control Saddam continues to hold. If there were to be alteration in the power structure--a change of Baathists would seem more likely than overthrow of the party--major decisions made by this regime are likely to stand. For the moment, Saddam's approach to decisionmaking--his intransigence on peace negotiations, his limited opening to the Gulf states, his policies of arms diversification, and exploitation and development of the country's agricultural and oil industries--are decisions the party, government bureaucrats, and the military can all find some satisfaction in pursuing.

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NAME	BPRC	BPNC	CABINET	RCC	OTHER
Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr	X	X	X	X	Su, A, B
Saddam Husayn Abd al-Majid al-Tikriti	X	X		X	Su, A, B
Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri	X	X	X	X	Interior Min, Su,A,B
Sadun Ghaydan al-Qaysi al-Ani			X	X	Communications Min, Su, A
Taha Yassin Ramadhan al-Jazrawi	X	X	X	X	Public Works,Hous Min Head People's Army, B
Naim Haddad	X	X		X	Head PPNF, Sh, A, B
Tayih Abd al-Karim	X		X	X	Oil Min, B, Alawite
Muhammad Mahjub Mahdi	X		X	X	Educ Min, B
Adnan Husayn Abbas al-Hamdani	X		X	X	Planning Min, Sh,A,B
Ghanim Abd al-Jalil	X			X	B
Tahir Tawfiq al-Ani	X			X	B
Abd al-Fattah Muhammad Amin	X			X	B, Su, A
Hasan Ali Al-Amiri	X		X	X	Trade Min, B, Sh, A
Sadun Shakir Mahmud al-Tikriti	X			X	DGI, Su, B, A
Jafar Qasim Hammudi	X			X	B
Abdallah Fadhil Abbas al-Samarrai	X			X	B, Su, A
Tariq Aziz Isa	X	X		X	B, A, X
Adnan Khayrallah Talfah	X		X	X	Defense Min,Su,A,B
Hikmat Ibrahim al-Azzawi	X			X	B
Muhammad Ayish al-Dulaymi	X		X	X	Indy and Min Min, B,A
Burhan al-Din Abd al-Rahman Mustafa	X			X	Su, A, B

BPRC - Baath Party of Iraq/Regional Command  
 BPNC - Baath Party of Iraq/National Command  
 RCC - Revolutionary Command Council  
 A - Arab  
 B - Baathist  
 C - Communist  
 K - Kurd

X - Christian  
 Sh - Shiah  
 Su - Sunni

NAME	BPRC	BPNC	CABINET	RCC	OTHER
Muhi Abd al-Husayn Mashhadi	X			X	A, B, Sh
Abd al-Latif Nassayif Jassim al-Dulaymi			X		B, Agric & Ag Reform Min
Fawzi al-Qaysi			X		Sh, A, Finance Min
Sadun Hammadi			X		B, A, Foreign Min
Riyadh Ibrahim Husayn			X		B, A, Health Min
Isam Abd Ali			X		Higher Educ Min
Sad Qasim Hammudi			X		B, Information Min
Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud Abdallah			X		B, Min Irrigation
Mundhir al-Shawi			X		Justice Min, B
Babakr Mahmud al-Bashdari			X		Lab & Soc Aff Min K
Ahmad Abd al-Sattar al-Juwari			X		MinState, Relig Aff, B
Mukarram Talabani			X		Transport Min, C, K
Karim Mahmud al-Mulla			X		Youth Min, B
Karim Mahmud Shintaf			X		Culture, Arts Min, B
Amir Abdallah al-Ani			X		Min State, Su, A, C
Ubaydallah Barzani			X		Min State, K
Hamid Alwal al-Jabburi			X		MinState For Aff, Su, A, P
Abdallah Ismail Ahmad			X		MinState, K
Abd Al-Aziz Rashid Aqrawi			X		MinState, K
Hashim Hasan Aqrawi			X		MinState, K
Taha Muhyi al-Din Maruf			X		Vice President, K.

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