

ISIS Success in Iraq:
A Movement 40 Years in the Making

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Abstract

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In June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)¹ took the world by surprise when they began forcibly taking control of large swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria. Since then, policy makers, intelligence agencies, media, and academics have been scrambling to find ways to combat the momentum that ISIS has gained in their quest to establish an Islamic State in the Middle East. This paper will examine ISIS and its ability to build an army and enlist the support of native Iraqis who have joined their fight, or at the very least, refrained from resisting their occupation in many Iraqi cities and provinces.

In order to understand ISIS, it is imperative that the history of Iraq be examined to show that the rise of the militant group is not solely a result of contemporary problems; rather, it is a movement that is nearly 40 years in the making. This thesis examines Iraqi history from 1968 to present to find the historical cleavages that ISIS exploited to succeed in taking and maintaining control of territory in Iraq.

¹ The self-proclaimed Islamic State has been referred to by many names including ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), and Daesh (al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq wa al-Sham). For the purposes of this paper, we will use the term ISIS to reference the group.

Section I:

Introduction

In June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)² took the world by surprise when they began forcibly taking control of large swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria. Since then, policy makers, intelligence agencies, media, and academics have been scrambling to find ways to combat the momentum that ISIS has gained in their quest to establish an Islamic State in the Middle East. This paper will examine ISIS and its ability to build an army and enlist the support of native Iraqis who have joined their fight, or at the very least, refrained from resisting their occupation in many Iraqi cities and provinces.

In order to understand ISIS, it is imperative that the history of Iraq be examined to show that the rise of the militant group is not solely a result of contemporary problems; rather, it is a movement that is nearly 40 years in the making. This paper is organized as follows:

² The self-proclaimed Islamic State has been referred to by many names including ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), and Daesh (al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq wa al-Sham). For the purposes of this paper, we will use the term ISIS to reference the group.

Section II begins with the rise of Saddam Hussein to the office of President of Iraq from 1968-1979. In this period, Hussein built a powerful security apparatus that he used to eliminate any dissenters, people disloyal to the Ba'th Party, or individuals that he viewed as a threat. From 1979-2003, the term of Saddam Hussein's presidency, he established a culture of fear and submission in order to control the population while simultaneously building social welfare programs that created an incentive for the population to remain loyal. In this period of time parallels can be drawn between the actions of President Saddam Hussein and ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The section will finish by looking to the lead up to the U.S. invasion and the disregard that Saddam Hussein showed for the potential loss of Iraqi lives as the U.S. called for him to step down or face a costly war.

Section III looks at the invasion of Iraq by U.S. and coalition forces in 2003. Of particular interest in this section is the damage that was done to the Iraqi infrastructure, military, and people. Through the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq, sources and moments of radicalization began to emerge, showing points in time where the historical seeds for the future ISIS were planted. The section concludes by highlighting the key weaknesses and vulnerabilities left behind in Iraq and explores the cleavages that ISIS exploited to begin their movement.

Section IV turns to post-U.S. occupation Iraq and the ISIS rise to power. Of key importance is the U.S. transition out of Iraq and the subsequent events in the Maliki administration that led to the divide and near collapse of the Iraqi government. As the central government collapsed, ISIS gained a foothold in Iraq through the radical actions of the organization's leadership and later, the larger displaced Sunni population. Using similar tactics to the Saddam Hussein regime, ISIS came to control the people of northern Iraq. This section also

examines the structure, theology, and methods of the ISIS organization, the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and why ISIS tactics have been successful in Iraq thus far and have been relatively unopposed in many places.

Ultimately, this paper seeks to show how Iraq, as a country, from the 1968 Ba'th Party coup and the rise of Saddam Hussein was shaped and constructed in a way that would eventually create a chasm that groups such as ISIS could exploit. Following the Ba'th Party coup, Saddam Hussein entered the Iraqi political scene where he began to build a security apparatus that would root out and punish any individuals believed to be conspiring against the government. Through time, this apparatus that he had built created a culture of fear that the Iraqi population accepted as normal through his time as president, the U.S. and coalition invasion of 2003, and after the coalition withdrawal in 2011. This culture of fear left Iraq in a state that was conducive to a militant group such as ISIS.

Throughout Iraqi history, a cyclical pattern emerges from 1968 to present where society is built up and standards of living are improved, followed by a period of near complete destruction of societal progress, and again, back to a state of relative improvement. In 1968, when the Ba'thist coup took place, Iraq as a country was able to stabilize after a decade of coup d'états that continued to shake the foundation of the political system. When oil revenues were exponentially increased, the revenue generated was used to improve social programs and conditions for the population. As conditions continued to improve, Iraq entered a long and costly war with Iran that would lead to the deterioration of society and the return of a low standard of living for most Iraqis. This process of deterioration continued to progressively get worse as Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait and was subsequently pushed back by the U.S. and allied forces

during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Following this conflict, sanctions were placed against Iraq for their believed development of a nuclear weapons program. These sanctions crippled the Iraqi economy and led to infrastructure deterioration and the general inability to continue to pay for expensive social welfare programs. These programs were not improved before the U.S. and coalition forces invaded Iraq in 2003.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom began, the Iraqi political system was in turmoil and the population was held together by threats of violence at the hands of the Saddam Hussein regime. As the U.S. and coalition began their invasion of Iraq, mass bombing campaigns and heavy troop movements further exacerbated an already failing infrastructure. As the war dragged on, some construction efforts improved basic services but much of society did not see improvements to their standards of living. As the U.S. occupation of Iraq ended and the withdrawal took place, the state was riddled with serious factional disputes that left the country polarized and easily toppled by an organized opponent willing to take drastic measures to seize control.

The space created by decades of war, an occupation that did more to tear apart Iraqi society than improve it, and the radicalization of people out of desperation gave ISIS room to operate. For ISIS to succeed in Iraq, it was only a matter of providing basic services to the population to gain their support or threaten violence against their opposition. Overall, the current economic and political climate in Iraq has left a large portion of the population of northern Iraq with three choices: flee their homes and become refugees, defy ISIS and face death by execution, or submit to the will of ISIS and become a compliant and complicit resident; a reality that many Iraqis have faced before.

Limitations to Study

As a non-Arabic speaker, it is necessary to rely upon materials that have been translated from their original Arabic to English. This is a limiting factor in that it creates a dependence on work that has been translated without the ability to verify the accuracy of the translations. This also limits the material available to that which has been referenced by other English-speaking, usually Western, scholars.

With regards to relying on works that are produced exclusively in English, there is inevitably a research bias that leads to an inclination to lean on what is familiar and understandable and to accept it as truth. It would be negligent to fail to recognize the inherent bias that all scholars and academics have toward relying on their own understanding. This leaves the possibility that this work may be Orientalist in nature, despite best attempts and efforts to present a conscious and objective take on the subject matter. While this piece looks to the Saddam Hussein era to understand the historical constructs of Iraqi society that gave rise to a group like ISIS, it does not underscore or downplay the repercussions of the U.S. invasions, occupations, and the overall destruction caused by lengthy and catastrophic wars. On the contrary, the legacies of Desert Storm, sanctions, and the Iraq War have, arguably, caused the most destruction in contemporary Iraqi history.

Another major limitation to this study is the contemporary nature of ISIS and this movement, which has left a void in the literature and reference materials. For much of Section IV, fewer scholarly works are cited (such as news articles and military analyses) due to the delayed nature of the information available.

Section II:

1968-2003: Saddam Hussein and the Ba'th Party in Iraq

“From a small seed, a mighty trunk may grow.”

-Aeschylus

In order to understand the inclination of Iraqis toward joining ISIS, it is necessary to first look to the culture and conditions that Iraqis lived under prior to U.S. intervention in 1991, and later during 2003. In looking at this, it is possible to draw parallels between the conditions that the Iraqi people lived with under Saddam Hussein from 1968-2003, to those that the people are currently living under in ISIS controlled territories.

Iraq Before 1968

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, Iraq became a mandate under British control. The British installed King Faisal whose family would rule Iraq until their overthrow by

a military coup led by General Abdul Karim Kassem.³ This coup sparked a decade of unrest that would see four new governments before the Ba'th Party took control in 1968.

1968 Ba'th Party Coup and Saddam Hussein's Rise to the Presidency

In 1968, the Ba'th Party, under the leadership of Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr overthrew Iraqi President Abdul Rahman 'Arif to take control of the Iraqi government. This coup was the fourth of its kind in 10 years, but unlike the three before, it had the staying power that the Iraqi people had been lacking. Since the Ba'th revolution was not a popular revolution, those in power had to “re-educate” the population about the ways of the Ba'th Party by striking fear into the hearts of all who stood against them.⁴

At the time of the revolution, Saddam Hussein was a relatively unknown figure in the eyes of the public, and even in some parts of the Ba'th Party. Being from Tikrit, he benefited from being a part of the powerful network of Sunni Arabs from Baghdad and Tikrit that had been appointed to high-level leadership positions after the coup.⁵ Serving as the enigmatic vice chair of the Republican Guard under al-Bakr, Saddam became the second most powerful man in Iraq, despite his relatively unknown status.⁶ His role for the first decade following the Ba'th Party

³ King Faisal II was a member of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq that ruled from 1921-1958. The Hashemite monarchy was installed by the Allies following World War I. During the July 14, 1958 coup, Faisal ordered the Royal Guard to offer no resistance against incoming insurgents and surrendered himself. Faisal was gunned down on July 14, 1958 when surrendering himself.

⁴ The Ba'thist coup of 1968 was led by members of the Ba'th Party and the Iraqi military. Following the coup, Ba'th Party leaders assumed positions of power without the input of the people. An interim constitution was drafted that established the leadership structure of the new Iraqi government and was issued to the people without discussion. Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 39.

⁵ Tikrit falls within the “Sunni triangle” consisting of Baghdad in the south, Mosul in the north, and Rumba in the east. Tikrit was known for Army officers who rose to power within the Ba'th Party. In the early 20th century, many impoverished Tikritis left to find a new home and opportunity in Baghdad which led to the rise of a Tikriti power network. Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 38.

⁶ Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers), 1999, 75.

coup remained relatively secretive. Very few people knew of him and the role that he played in the government outside of those who had had direct encounters with him. This allowed him the freedom to build his expansive security apparatus and to eliminate those who stood in his way or threatened his rise to power.

Beginning in 1968, positions within the government were systematically purged of unwanted non-Ba'thists by President al-Bakr and Saddam. Many who were removed from their positions were either retired or fired and immediately arrested for various crimes. An example of this practice is Faisal al-Ansari who was retired from his position as Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, which he was appointed to following the 'second Ba'thist revolution,' only to find himself arrested and sentenced to 12 years in prison for conspiracy.⁷

Throughout the first two years in control of the government, Saddam Hussein, serving as the vice chair of the Republican Guard, and the Ba'th Party developed an elaborate system to seek out, remove, and prosecute any individuals believed to be disloyal to the party. He set up a National Security Bureau that coordinated the three intelligence agencies: General Security, the General Intelligence Department, and Military Intelligence.⁸ These agencies were responsible for "keeping tabs on the Ba'th and other political parties; suppressing Shi'a and Kurdish opposition; monitoring subversive activities and conducting counterespionage; maintaining surveillance of all embassies and other foreign missions inside Iraq and monitoring Iraqi embassies abroad; collecting intelligence abroad; conducting sabotage and subversion against hostile states and aiding the groups and individuals opposed to their regimes; and establishing contacts with the

⁷ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 40.

⁸ Dilip Hiro, *Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002), 57.

anti regime groups in the countries hostile to Baghdad.”⁹ Individuals found to be disloyal to the government or the Ba’th Party were tortured using methods such as electric shock to the genitals, caning the soles of feet, immersing an individual’s head in hot water for an extended period of time, or administering a slow acting lethal poison.¹⁰ These cases and methods set an example for those who considered standing against the party; disloyalty wouldn’t be tolerated. Saddam Hussein’s security apparatus swiftly grew in effectiveness, as he was unafraid of executing people in order to show how serious he was about maintaining firm control of the government.

In September 1968, a special “Revolutionary Court” was set up in order to try those accused of plotting against the Ba'th Party and its newly formed government.¹¹ While some were given jail time, others were not so lucky. Many were executed for their crimes, some without so much as the benefit of a trial. Thus began the life of fear for the Iraqi people as their lives could change in an instant at the mere accusation of plotting against the government.

In the coming months, demonstrations of the brutality of Saddam and his security apparatus took place in the streets of Baghdad. In January 1969, the Iraqi government made an example of a group of Iraqi Jews that were accused of passing intelligence to Israel and plotting to overthrow the government by hanging them for their crimes.¹²

Saddam’s hunt for “spies” and “plotters” was not exclusive to Iraqi Jews. His persecution extended to Muslims and Christians alike. Just a month after executing the Iraqi Jews, Saddam

⁹ Ibid, 58.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 41.

¹² Ibid, 43.

continued his purge through the ranks by executing seven people in the streets, followed by fourteen more only two months later.¹³ In each instance, people were encouraged to come and watch as the brutality was carried out.

The Ba'thist regime was gaining a reputation for its brutality, using fear and executions of masses as a means of shaping foreign policy. In what appeared to have been attempts to show the Iranian Shah that Iraq was unafraid of him and his military power, the government carried out a series of executions in 1969 in the southern border city of Basra. In January 1970, the Iraqi government announced that it had foiled an attempted coup manufactured by Iran, the CIA, and the Zionists. Over 50 conspirators surrendered and were tried the same day in a special court convened specifically for the occasion. Fifteen were sentenced to prison while 37 were sentenced to death by their own Iranian weapons that they had been carrying when they were captured.¹⁴

As the search for dissenters within the government apparatus became more frequent, a different type of control soon reached the general public. Ba'thist militias patrolled the streets while raids on private homes were conducted at random and in the middle of the night.¹⁵ The average Iraqi received the message: the security apparatus was in control and it had a long reach.

In November 1969, Saddam turned his focus to the elimination of his most dangerous internal competitors. One of the areas that Saddam was weakest in was military, as he, himself, had never served. Two prominent figures in the military at the time were Hardan al-Tikriti,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 44.

¹⁵ Ibid, 45.

Minister of the Interior and Deputy Premier, and Salih Mahdi Ammash, Defense Minister.¹⁶ Both figures were highly regarded in the party and military for their distinguished records of service. Saddam recognized that he could not execute a direct attack on the two without committing to a suicide mission, so he decided on a strategy that would pit one against the other in order to discredit them both in the eyes of al-Bakr.

In an effort to shake the President's confidence in al-Tikriti and Ammash, he began to plant the seed that both men had their eyes on his Presidential spot.¹⁷ Saddam then isolated both by driving a wedge between them and other prominent members of the military, promising their posts to others if they supported his plan. The fate of the two was finally sealed when President al-Bakr absorbed al-Tikriti's duties as Deputy Premier into his own Presidential responsibilities while promoting both to the position of joint-Vice President.¹⁸ From there, Saddam accused the two of not supporting the Ba'th Party's commitment to the Arab people in order to smear both individual's names and reputations and have them sent to be Ambassadors at foreign posts.

These types of plots to eliminate those who threatened him became commonplace for Saddam Hussein in the 1970s. After gaining control of the military, he then turned to the civilian sector to continue purges. Beginning with the Minister of Culture, Saddam systematically eliminated each of his enemies and allies that threatened his rise to power.¹⁹ With him, there was no such thing as loyalty to one another. This was apparent when he targeted Abd al-Karim al-

¹⁶ Ibid, 48.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See Appendix I for a detailed chart of the purges of high-ranking officers, Ba'thist Old Guard and politicians of ministerial or higher rank between 1968 and 1979.

Shaykhli, a member of the RCC and an individual with a longstanding friendship with Saddam. Despite the fact that al-Shaykhli had at one point saved him from being arrested and likely killed, al-Shaykhli was not immune to the systematic purges of the 70s.

Throughout the 1970s, Ba'th Party leaders worked to establish Iraq as a single party state. The leadership sought to consolidate all forms of state functions and governance, ranging from labor unions to women's groups, under the banner of the Ba'th Party.²⁰ Using his principles of *tahrīb*, "terror," and *targhib*, "enticement," Saddam developed a socialist state apparatus that provided many programs to advance and improve the lives of all citizens while simultaneously creating a security state.²¹ These programs were aimed at improving the standard of living for all Iraqis to curb any desires to rise against the government and force another coup d'état.

In order to pay for evolving social programs such as spreading electricity to rural villages across the country, an eradication of illiteracy campaign, and a modern healthcare system, Saddam had to find the means to pay for it. On June 1, 1972, Iraq announced that it would nationalize the Iraq Petroleum Company and that it would soon be taken control of by the Iraq National Oil Company.²² This move was lucrative for the Iraqi government as the Ba'th Party then controlled the billions that the oil industry generated annually. In order to elevate his political status, Saddam Hussein became the head of the newly formed Iraq National Oil Company's steering committee, allowing him to dictate oil production for the country. In 1973,

²⁰ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 410.

²¹ Terror and enticement were Saddam's institutionalized forms of ruling. Saddam was a modernizing leader who recognized the efficacy that providing benefits for the people could have while still ensuring that the population respected him and the lengths that he was willing to go to in order to maintain control. Dilip Hiro, *Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002), 98.

²² Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 57.

after a worldwide oil crisis, the price per barrel of oil soared from \$3 to \$12, creating a large influx of profits for oil-rich Iraq. By 1975, the annual income generated from oil revenues jumped from \$75 million in 1972 to \$8 billion per year.²³ This allowed the government to continue to expand their efforts to modernize the country at a more rapid rate.

Through the social programs that the Iraqi government adopted, the lives of most Iraqis were significantly improved. These improvements came at a price though. While the infrastructure, social welfare system, and incomes were all growing, so too was the security apparatus designed by Saddam Hussein. Given the benefits that many Iraqis were receiving as a result of the newly created and improved services and the retribution that they would face if they acted out against the government, the logical choice for many Iraqis was to pursue self-preservation and look the other way at the humanitarian crisis that was emerging.²⁴

By 1976, Saddam found himself in control of nearly all aspects of society. He had purged the party of those who challenged his leadership, tightened his control on the military and the security apparatus, nationalized oil, and defeated a Kurdish uprising. All that stood in his way in his rise to the top was President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr. In the late 1970s, following a heart attack, al-Bakr was in ailing health and was forced to defer many of his responsibilities to Saddam Hussein, leaving Saddam as the de facto leader of Iraq.

While serving as the Vice Chair of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the entity that controlled much of Iraqi government, Saddam moved to further remove the barriers between the Ba'th Party and the RCC by appointing all senior Ba'th Party leaders to the RCC

²³ Dilip Hiro, *Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War*, (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 27.

²⁴ Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, Austin, 2015), 23.

ruling council.²⁵ In this consolidation of power, Saddam Hussein was able to collect a number of titles and positions within the government, including Lieutenant General in the military, leaving President al-Bakr effectively obsolete and without a place.²⁶

On July 16, 1979, after an announcement by al-Bakr that he would be resigning from his post due to illness, Saddam Hussein became the President, Secretary General of the Ba'th Party, chairman of the RCC, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Iraq.²⁷ Former President al-Bakr was placed under house arrest where he would live out the final three years of his life before dying in 1982.

Saddam Hussein: Cult of Personality

On July 18, 1979, just two days after al-Bakr announced that he would be resigning as President, Saddam Hussein called a closed meeting of the top 400 members of the RCC and Ba'th Party.²⁸ When all were present, Saddam showed a video of an RCC member confessing to taking part in a Syrian plot to overthrow the new President.²⁹ At the conclusion of this video, Saddam, while smoking a large cigar, called the names of one-third of those present who were suspected of taking part in this plot and had security haul them out of the room. A series of secret trials were conducted for the accused party members who were deemed to be conspirators and

²⁵ The RCC was established following the 1968 Ba'thist coup and served as the ultimate decision making body in Iraq all the way up until the 2003 invasion. The committee had a Chair and a Vice Chair tasked with overseeing the decision making process. The RCC was effectively the executive and legislative authority in Iraq. William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 410.

²⁶ "Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified September 2, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Ahmad-Hasan-al-Bakr>.

²⁷ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 410.

²⁸ Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 171.

²⁹ Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, Austin, 2015), 40.

traitors. 22 people were later sentenced to death by firing squad made up of the remaining RCC members.³⁰ Members were selected for the firing squad based on their relationships with the accused. Family members were selected to execute family members and neighbors to execute neighbors. In using these members to carry out the executions, Saddam was able to gain the complicity of senior party members in his new and brutal way forward.

From the time that Saddam Hussein took the office of President of Iraq, he used the approach of ruling with an iron fist in an effort to control the population and keep them from rising up against him. Much like historical authoritarian leaders such as Lenin and Stalin, Saddam built a cult of personality that bolstered his status in the public arena. Throughout the 1980s, the image of Saddam Hussein permeated all aspects of society. Where he had been a man in the shadows under al-Bakr, as the new President he was elevated to near prophet status. Images of Saddam could be found on Iraqi currency, his handwriting on the nation's flag, and statues of him littered the country; all a testament to the man that Saddam wanted his people to see.

As President, Saddam rewrote Iraqi history to cement himself as the central actor from the time of the Ba'th Party coup of 1968 until his overthrow in 2003. In the 1982 Iraqi Ninth Congress Report, Saddam's name, nicknames, and titles were mentioned over 1,000 times; a stark contrast to the 1974 report that mentions him only once.³¹ In this new account of history, Saddam led the first tank that stormed the Republican Palace in 1968, he was the true mastermind behind the coup, he had solved the Kurdish problem, and he had developed the

³⁰ Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 72.

³¹ Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'athification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 41-42.

armed forces, among many other things.³² In this way, Saddam and his “cult of personality”³³ became a mythologized symbol of the nation, people, and party.³⁴

Iran-Iraq War

Prior to the 1970s and the Ba'th Party's rise to power, grievances between the Sunni and the Shi'a community were less noticeable on the country's landscape, though still present. Following the conclusion of WWII, many Shi'as migrated from the rural south where they had traditionally lived with their tribes and familial units, to urban Baghdad.³⁵ Those who relocated became more integrated into Iraqi society while those that remained in the south grew more distant from the population and continued to be heavily influenced by the Shi'a ulama. “The ulama opposed the Ba'th Party on three grounds: its secularism, its refusal to appoint Shi'as to higher echelons of the government or party, and its attempts to dominate all organizations within society, including religious institutions.”³⁶

Between 1977 and 1979, the Shi'a population of the south began a popular resistance party called the *al-Da'wa* (Islamic Call), which formed large protests that called for the overthrow of the Ba'th Party regime. The demonstrations caused alarm within the party and government leadership and, in 1979, 5,000 protesters were arrested and many executed, proving

³² Ibid.

³³ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958 From Revolution to Dictatorship*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2001, 176.

³⁴ Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 41-42.

³⁵ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 411-412.

³⁶ Ibid, 412.

that the regime was willing to quell popular uprisings through violence and fear.³⁷ At the same time these executions were taking place, a major revolution was happening in Iran to overthrow the Shah and install a theocratic (Shi'a) Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

After the overthrow of the Shah in Iran, and the uprisings of the Shi'a population in southern Iraq, Saddam Hussein believed that his regime was in jeopardy of being challenged and that the transitional period of leadership in Iran would offer him an opportunity to advance his mission of becoming a regional leader.³⁸ Prior to the Iranian Revolution, Iran had been one of the largest military powers in the region, as the Shah had spent considerable amounts of time and money to revolutionize the military's structure, training, and equipment. The Iranian coup created a military vulnerability that Saddam could exploit by invading before the military could be solidified under the newly installed Ayatollah.

On September 22, 1980, Saddam Hussein ordered a full-scale air invasion to destroy ten Iranian air fields followed by a ground invasion the next day of three border military targets. When these attacks failed to issue a short and decisive military defeat, Iran and Iraq fell into a prolonged and catastrophic war. What Saddam thought would only last a few days and end in mediation, lasted from 1980 to 1988. The war between Iran and Iraq would be the longest conventional war of the 20th century, costing the two countries hundreds of billions of dollars and nearly a million of lives.³⁹

³⁷ Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 77.

³⁸ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 28.

³⁹ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 415.

The disputes between the two countries ranged from the cultural conflict of Persians v. Arabs, to border disputes, and ultimately to the fear of the call issued by Khomeini for an Islamic uprising that would overthrow sitting governments and install an Islamic government in every region of the Middle East.⁴⁰ The costly war that ended in 1988 with the objectives unaccomplished by either side, resulted in a large debt that left funds that were desperately needed for reconstruction efforts unavailable. It was estimated that the Iraqi debt accrued over the duration of the war was approximately \$60 billion. This amount did not account for what it would cost to reconstruct the damaged infrastructure that needed to be repaired as a result of the war.⁴¹

During the war, the Iraqi army grew from 190,000 people to nearly 1 million, establishing the country as a dominant military force.⁴² The increase in the force size also gave rise to the glorification of military service in society. Saddam Hussein was seen frequently on national television wearing an Iraqi military uniform, signaling his close ties to the military and further demonstrating his firm grip on total power and control.⁴³

The war came to a conclusion on August 20, 1988 when Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini signed a ceasefire agreement and agreed to enter peace talks in Geneva.⁴⁴ Due to the end of the war arising from a UN ceasefire agreement, neither Iran nor Iraq emerged as a clear winner despite the cost that both had bore over the course of the eight year war. What had

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 82.

⁴² William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 419.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 82.

emerged was the understanding that Saddam Hussein would stop at nothing to ensure the survival of his regime. Between 1985 and 1988, Saddam had launched several chemical weapon and scud missile attacks on civilian targets in Iranian cities.⁴⁵

An emergent problem that evolved from the Iran-Iraq War was a rising number of deserters. In 1983, it was estimated that there had been approximately 48,000 deserters, a number that Saddam Hussein blamed on the Kurdish population of Iraq.⁴⁶ In 1985, deserters were given a window in time to surrender themselves under Presidential pardon lest they be punished by strict laws that required that the right ear be cut off for first time offenders and both ears for second time offenders as well as a tattoo on the forehead of a minus sign.⁴⁷

At the end of the war in 1988, Saddam Hussein found himself commanding an army of over 1 million men with no mission to speak of. In 1989, military forces were reduced by 200,000 troops, a plan that backfired when many of the released soldiers found themselves brawling in the streets mere days or weeks after their discharge.⁴⁸

As Saddam found himself with a crisis of military size, he also found himself desperate to generate enough revenue to continue to feed the people. In 1989, Kuwait and other oil producing Gulf states dropped the price of oil from nearly \$20 per barrel to \$12, reducing the oil revenue in Iraq from \$26 billion to only \$14 billion in a year.⁴⁹ With the declining price of oil coupled with

⁴⁵ Ibid, 80-81.

⁴⁶ Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 153.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 261.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 259.

an army and population that he could no longer sustain, Saddam soon found himself in the perfect storm of conditions that would ultimately lead Iraq back into war just three years after the Iran-Iraq cease fire.

Out of Iran, Into Kuwait

On August 2, 1990, just two years after the official end of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion of the oil-rich country of Kuwait in an attempt to relieve himself of the suffocating debt from the long war.⁵⁰ Following the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam believed that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia should have forgiven the Iraqi debt, an act that neither did.⁵¹ The attack was purely offensive and was guised as a response to the tensions over border disputes, escalation of U.S. policies and presence in the Middle East, and controversy over oil prices and production. The conquest itself took only 24 hours to complete and Iraq found itself occupying the small country with relative ease. What was initially an unopposed invasion and occupation of the Gulf state rapidly developed into a conflict between the Iraqi military and a coalition of U.S. and regional Arab forces.

Soon after the occupation began, the international community along with the Arab League condemned the attack, issuing a series of UN resolutions calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.⁵² Most notable was UN Resolution 678, which gave the unconditional withdrawal date of January 15, 1991.⁵³ By November 8, 1990, President George

⁵⁰ Other reasons are cited as causes for the war including accusations that Kuwait and the UAE were overstepping their oil quotes and that the Kuwaitis had stolen the Rumailiaa oilfield which spanned the border.

⁵¹ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 7.

⁵² Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 36.

⁵³ Ibid.

H.W. Bush had gathered a coalition of 28 countries, including Egypt, Syria, and Morocco, to militarily oppose Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Army's occupation. The U.S. then launched "Operation Desert Shield," an operation that amassed 400,000 troops in Saudi Arabia to protect the border and oil fields and wait for orders from the President to invade Kuwait and push Saddam back into Iraq.⁵⁴

While the U.S. was looking to the international community and the American public for support of an operation to oppose Saddam in Kuwait, Saddam Hussein was looking to the Iraqi public to support his own actions. The first appeal or justification for the war drew on the perceived historical claim to Kuwait as it was only separated from Iraq because of the British drawn borders in the post-World War I Middle East.⁵⁵ The second justification came in the form of a perceived right of access to the Persian Gulf through Kuwait since Iraq had protected the border during the Iran-Iraq War from an Iranian invasion just a few years prior.⁵⁶ In his desperation, Saddam attempted to draw on the Pan-Arabist sentiment of the region, linking the withdrawal of his forces from Kuwait to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories, Lebanon, and Syria.⁵⁷

When his attempts to gain the support of the international community failed and the January 15, 1991 deadline approached, it appeared that war with the U.S. and coalition forces was inevitable. By January 16, Saddam Hussein had sent an estimated 1.5 million troops to

⁵⁴ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 480-482.

⁵⁵ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 260.

⁵⁶ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 37.

⁵⁷ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 260.

Kuwait.⁵⁸ Among them were six divisions of his elite Republican Guard and approximately 9% of the entire population of Iraq. Despite the large number of troops deployed to fight in Kuwait, the overwhelming understanding was that “the depleted Iraqi military was ill prepared for the new war technologies the coalition forces unleashed against it.”⁵⁹

“Operation Desert Shield” became “Operation Desert Storm” on January 16, 1991 and lasted a total of 42 days until a ceasefire was signed on February 28, 1991. As the number of deployed U.S. troops rose to 500,000, coalition forces launched the initial military phases of the operation, aimed at liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation and driving Saddam Hussein’s forces back into Iraqi territory.⁶⁰ The first phase of Desert Storm lasted from January 16 to February 24 and was an air campaign designed to damage and destroy key Iraqi infrastructure components and military command centers using precision guided missiles. The inadvertent “collateral damage” of the air attacks were Iraqi civilian casualties, largely women and children in many instances. At the realization of the damage that the campaign was causing, the Iraqi Ambassador to the UN issued a statement saying, “If the high-altitude bombings against Iraq are not stopped, we [will] have no choice but to resort to using weapons of mass destruction.”⁶¹ These claims signaled to the international community that Iraq was building and stockpiling chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

⁵⁸ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 38.

⁵⁹ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 127.

⁶⁰ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 483.

⁶¹ Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 260.

Despite the Soviet Union's attempts to broker a peace treaty between the U.S. and Iraq, the U.S. and coalition forces launched the ground component of the campaign on February 24, 1991. After just two days of ground war, the RCC ordered troop withdrawal from Kuwait.⁶² At this withdrawal, the U.S. blocked all routes out of Kuwait and bombarded surrendering troops before they could retreat to Iraq for 48 hours before declaring a decisive victory and signing a ceasefire on February 28, 1991.⁶³ For the U.S. and coalition forces, the casualties sustained were limited to just 139.

The post-war reality of the damage inflicted on Iraq and parts of Kuwait following the brutal air campaign and ground war were borderline apocalyptic in nature. According to Tony Clifton, a reporter for Newsweek embedded in the Tiger Brigade that did much of the bombing, "Apocalyptic language was not merely a cynical tool employed by the regime. It reflected the violence of the occupation of Kuwait and the ferocity of the air campaign against retreating Iraqi soldiers."⁶⁴ In a report that later emerged, more damage was done to the civilian infrastructure than to military arsenals and targets.⁶⁵

With the end of the war came the demands of the U.S. and Britain, with the help of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN, for Iraq to end its production of weapons of mass destruction and submit to IAEA inspections of all possible production sites. While Saddam Hussein initially seemed to cooperate with such demands by submitting a list of

⁶² The exact number of Iraqi casualties is unknown but estimated between 10,000 and 35,000, sometimes quoted as high as 150,000, depending on the source.

⁶³ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 39.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 132.

⁶⁵ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam, The Politics of Intervention in Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 157.

all weapons of mass destruction said to be in the possession of the regime, he later reneged on his commitment to comply with IAEA inspectors by ordering troops to obstruct these inspections.⁶⁶ Thus began the years of back and forth attempts at gaining unlimited and unfettered access to the entirety of the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction program. Where progress was seemingly made in the face of sanctions, embargoes, and resolutions, the end result was an outcry over the violation of Iraqi sovereignty by Saddam Hussein and a subsequent halt to such inspections.

Post-Gulf War Iraq

The embarrassing defeat in Desert Storm coupled with destruction and devastation caused by U.S. air raids left water purification plants, sewage treatments systems, electrical power stations, and irrigation systems in ruins.⁶⁷ Much of the damage that was caused in and around Baghdad was repaired relatively quickly, but the infrastructure of outlying cities and towns were repaired very slowly or, in some cases, not at all. The extent of the infrastructure damage could be seen and felt in the loss of 90% of the total electrical capacity country-wide by the end of the campaign.⁶⁸ Sanctions against Iraq crippled the economy and left people in desperate need of the basic necessities such as food and medical supplies. The lacking sewage and water treatment plants were of primary concern as diseases in the water from both poor

⁶⁶ Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 316.

⁶⁷ Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 149
William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 489.

⁶⁸ Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 242.

chemical treatment and illegal waste dumping into the water supply began to cause high child mortality rates and increased sickness in adults.⁶⁹

Despite his illusive behavior and actions on the international stage that led the increase of sanctions against Iraq, Saddam Hussein continued to rule the Iraqi people with an iron fist. As George Washington University professor Dina Khoury stated, “The war, the ensuing uprising, and the UN-imposed sanctions did not destroy the regime, but they did deplete state institutions, weaken and transform the Ba'th Party, and, perhaps most important, decimate the fabric of Iraqi society.”⁷⁰ Saddam’s surveillance and security programs continued to become more robust as tensions increased from within the population. The regime ruthlessly persecuted suspected opponents and discouraged dissent through the threat of violence against traitors and their families.

In March 1991, after the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, popular uprisings against the regime began taking place in many provinces called, collectively, the *intifada*. The mythical story of the beginning of the *intifada* is that it was sparked by a soldier who, fleeing the battlefields of Kuwait, shot at an image of Saddam Hussein as an act of defiance against the leader who had sent him and his comrades into battle. While the story cannot be confirmed, the myth captures an important truth about the uprisings in Basra and parts of the south: “It was fueled by returning soldiers who were hungry, defeated, bedraggled, and tired of being at war.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 490.

⁷⁰ Dina R. Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2013), 123.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 133.

It is important to note that, while much of the *intifada* took place in the southern Shi'a dominated region and northern Kurdish region, the uprisings were non-sectarian in nature.

In response to the *intifada*, Saddam Hussein launched full-scale attacks on any individuals or groups that could be linked to any uprisings against the government. In these attacks, the security apparatus that was constructed earlier in Saddam's career was used to root out any traitors, deserters, movement organizers, and individuals involved in the uprisings. Within hours of learning of the uprisings in Basra and Nassiriya, Saddam appointed Ali Hassan al-Majid, his cousin, to the position of Minister of the Interior and gave him instructions "to crush the centre of treason and perfidy."⁷²

Due to the lack of organization, support, and allies who would come to their aid, the uprisings failed to succeed in overthrowing the Saddam Hussein regime. In all, thousands were killed in the uprisings. The estimated number of people killed in the Shi'a south range from 50,000 to 300,000.⁷³ For their crimes, nurses who had aided insurgents were molested, whole families of traitors were thrown out of helicopters alive, and those suspected of being a part of the uprisings were either branded on their foreheads or had their ears removed. In the case of Army officers who were suspected of sympathizing with the insurgents, many were executed without a trial for their crimes.⁷⁴ Despite the constant calls for help from the Shi'a and Kurds during the *intifada*, the U.S. and outside world prioritized the search for an Iraqi weapons of mass destruction program over the thousands who were dying at the hands of the Ba'thist regime.

⁷² Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 309.

⁷³ Ibid, 312.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

After being driven out of Kuwait, Iraq found itself crippled by the sanctions that were imposed by the U.S. and UN in 1990, leaving the people suffering the most. Many attempts were made by all sides (U.S., Britain, UN, and Saddam Hussein to an extent) to find a middle ground that would satisfy all parties in order to reach an agreement that would lead to the easing of sanctions, but Saddam Hussein repeatedly refused to allow IAEA and UNSCOM inspectors into the sites that were believed to house Iraq's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction or components of an outlawed weapons facility.

Throughout the 1990s, the people continued to suffer as the basic necessities for sustaining human life deteriorated. Due to a damaged infrastructure from U.S. bombings of Iraqi cities over skirmishes between Saddam and, then, President Clinton, there was no drinking water, electricity was intermittent, and all remnants of modern life were nowhere to be found.⁷⁵ Food scarcity was a problem for most of the population, especially following the Iraqi government's food rationing program was introduced, aimed at conserving what little food the country did have. At one point, the government allotted just 1,000 calories worth of food per day, per person.⁷⁶ Even more suffering came at the degradation of the once modernized medical system that had been reduced to single doctors who were responsible for tens-of thousands with little to no medical supplies.

Outside of the U.S. and U.K., many countries such as France and Russia were in favor of loosening or lifting the sanctions altogether due to the widespread internal suffering that was a byproduct of the crippled economy. The U.S. and U.K., however, saw Saddam Hussein's

⁷⁵ Ibid, 334.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

continued use of his own people's suffering as pawns or political ploy to garner the support of the international community and refused to lift the sanctions until he complied with their demands.

Amidst a country whose population was starving, impoverished, and dying due to the repercussions of the sanctions that continued to deprive the nation of the basic necessities to sustain its people, the ruling elites of Iraq continued to live with no luxuries spared. Sanction busters, led by Saddam's two sons Uday and Qusay, continued to smuggle oil out of Iraq and import expensive luxury items for those closest to the regime within the Ba'th Party.⁷⁷ The regime itself reportedly amassed a fortune equaling roughly \$10.9 billion while the population suffered. They did so by charging illicit surcharges on barrels of oil that were part of the UN "oil-for-food" program, receiving kick-backs of up to 10% on UN sanctioned imports, and exporting petroleum to parties outside of the UN mandate.⁷⁸ This economic success from smuggling networks allowed the regime to continue to control the population through programs like the food-rationing program while still garnering more public support in solidarity of the suffering inflicted by sanctions imposed by foreign actors.⁷⁹ For the remainder of the 20th century, the Ba'th Party, with Saddam at the helm, showed no signs of losing power.

9/11/2001 and Tensions for Saddam Hussein

⁷⁷ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 490.

⁷⁸ Sassoon. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*. Pg. 248.

⁷⁹ In 1991, the Iraqi government introduced a food rationing program that was aimed at addressing the threat of mass starvation. Through the program the Iraqi government would provide food staples to the people but the problem was that the food issued was well below the standard number of calories and protein per person. For many, the food that was allotted only lasted between half to two-thirds of the month. Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 168.

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S., under the leadership of President George W. Bush, launched its Global War on Terrorism. The initial campaign began with the invasion of Afghanistan, aimed at capturing Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network that planned and carried out the attacks on the U.S. Though there was no established connection between the attacks on September 11th and Saddam Hussein, the Ba'th Party, or Iraq, President Bush and U.S. policy makers quickly turned their attention to Iraq in 2002.⁸⁰

In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush used the term “Axis of Evil” to describe three countries that were accused of helping terrorism and seeking, producing, or stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. The countries that Bush focused on were Iran, North Korea, and Iraq. Bush’s focus on Iraq was, arguably harshest, saying,

“Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving bodies of mothers, huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.”⁸¹

Following this address, Saddam Hussein was officially notified by the U.S. and President Bush that he would need to take extreme action on the international stage or he would soon find himself invaded by U.S. and coalition forces.

⁸⁰ Dilip Hiro, *Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002), 177-178.

⁸¹ George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address,” U.S. Congress, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2002.

Though there are many speculations as to why the U.S. shifted its attention to Iraq, the justification widely accepted for this pivot is attributed to the wide spread belief that Iraq was still manufacturing and stock-piling weapons of mass destruction.

On November 8th, 2002, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1441, calling for Iraq to disclose its stock-pile of weapons of mass destruction and allow unrestricted access to all sites requested for inspection by IAEA inspectors.⁸² By the end of November, inspectors had returned to Iraq and, according to Swedish diplomat Hans Blix who led the weapons inspections, “conducted the most far-ranging and effective inspections of Iraq to date.”⁸³

For Saddam Hussein, surrendering was not an option, despite pressures for him to step down mounting. In an attempt to avoid a long, costly, and bloody war, Saudi officials offered to secure amnesty for Saddam and other top Iraqi officials if they would resign their posts.⁸⁴ This idea was of no interest to Saddam who, in February 2003, spoke with CBS reporter Dan Rather, asserting that Iraq was the “cradle of civilization” and would remain standing against any foreign military.⁸⁵

As inspectors were called upon to give a progress report on their inspections, Secretary of State Colin Powell was making his argument to the UN Security Council for the use of force in Iraq. To Powell, the idea of Iraq and al Qaeda joining forces to put weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a rogue Islamic militancy group was not a far stretch. In drawing connections

⁸² William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 545.

⁸³ Shiva Balaghi, *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 143.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 145.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 146.

between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, Powell said, “They say Saddam Hussein’s secular tyranny and al Qaeda’s religious tyranny do not mix. I am not comforted by this though. Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and al Qaeda together, enough so al Qaeda could learn how to build more sophisticated bombs and learn how to forge documents, and enough so that al Qaeda could turn to Iraq for help in acquiring expertise on weapons of mass destruction.”⁸⁶

On March 17, 2003 at 8:01 PM, President George W. Bush spoke from the White House to the international community saying,

“Today, no nation can possibly claim that Iraq has disarmed. And it will not disarm so long as Saddam Hussein holds power. For the last four-and-a-half months, the United States and our allies have worked within the Security Council to enforce that Council's long-standing demands... In recent days, some governments in the Middle East have been doing their part. They have delivered public and private messages urging the dictator to leave Iraq, so that disarmament can proceed peacefully. He has thus far refused. All the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign nationals -- including journalists and inspectors -- should leave Iraq immediately.”⁸⁷

When Saddam Hussein did not abdicate as Bush had demanded, U.S. forces executed operations that had long since been in the works by military strategists and planners.

⁸⁶ Ibid,147.

⁸⁷ George W. Bush, “President Bush Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours,” Speech from the Oval Office, Washington, D.C., March 17, 2003.

Section III:

2003-2011: U.S. Led Invasion and the Destruction of Iraq

“We went into Iraq because Saddam Hussein refused to account for his weapons of mass destruction, consistently violated UN resolutions, and in a post-9/11 world, no American president could afford to give Saddam Hussein the benefit of the doubt.”

-Peter T. King

Invasion and Collapse of the Iraqi Opposition

On March 19, 2003 at 10:16 PM, after months of allusions to a war with Saddam Hussein, President George W. Bush addressed the American people to announce that U.S. forces launched had their initial invasion of Iraq.⁸⁸ Bush spoke of the bravery of the young men and women who were entering the Middle East as part of the Global War on Terrorism, saying,

⁸⁸ Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 89.

“To all the men and women of the United States Armed Forces now in the Middle East, the peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you. That trust is well placed.

The enemies you confront will come to know your skill and bravery. The people you liberate will witness the honorable and decent spirit of the American military. In this conflict, America faces an enemy who has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality. Saddam Hussein has placed Iraqi troops and equipment in civilian areas, attempting to use innocent men, women and children as shields for his own military -- a final atrocity against his people.”⁸⁹

Operations began through the air with an assault by two F-117A “Stealth” fighters carrying 2,000-pound bombs, followed by Tomahawk cruise missile attacks.⁹⁰ Altogether, the initial bombing campaign targeted 3,000 sites over the course of several days. The ground invasion began on March 20, 2003 with thousands of vehicles from the Third Infantry Division striking border outposts.⁹¹ The objectives of these first days of major combat operations were to secure the southern oil fields and the bridges across the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Nasiriyah.⁹² These river crossings were strategically significant as they served as a pass-through for coalition forces as they began their march to the outskirts of southern Baghdad. Along the way, coalition forces faced spotty attacks by Iraqi opposition

⁸⁹ George W. Bush, “President Bush Addresses the Nation on Iraqi Invasion,” Speech from the Oval Office, Washington, D.C., March 19, 2003.

⁹⁰ Thomas Donnelly, *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 2004), 53.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 54.

⁹² *Ibid*, 53.



forces loyal to Saddam; though many had abandoned their posts as U.S. and coalition forces began their invasion. Much of the opposition to the invasion came in the form of guerrilla attacks and irregular warfare, taking advantage of the sand storm weather conditions as cover for firefights.⁹³

⁹³ Ibid, 61-62.

As coalition forces closed in on Baghdad, they faced one final obstacle, the Karbala Gap, which led to a battle between the coalition and Iraqi forces. As U.S. forces reached the Karbala Gap, air attacks were launched to provide cover for ground forces as they crossed the Euphrates bridge.⁹⁴ As a testament to the overwhelming power of the air assaults, enemy forces were not encountered until forces reached the town of Karbala. Throughout the Gap and Karbala itself, coalition forces raced to remove charges from many of the bridges and infrastructure points that they needed in order to keep lines open for forces to reach Baghdad safely. In many cases, engineers were able to remove the explosives in time, but in others, the infrastructure suffered severe damage.⁹⁵ The battle of the Karbala Gap lasted two days in total and the coalition success enabled them the access that they needed to forge a relatively unobstructed path to the capital city.

The final push from Karbala to Baghdad took until April 3, 2003, when coalition forces launched their final assault on the city in an effort to cause the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime.⁹⁶ The first step was to take control of Saddam International Airport in a bloody battle that lasted over 24 hours. At first light on April 5, 2003, street-by-street attacks began in the city limits of Baghdad. The strategy was to enter Baghdad in overwhelming numbers as a show of force that would prove to enemy combatants that the reign of Saddam Hussein was over and their resistance was futile and unnecessary. The maneuver was unsuccessful in dissuading the

⁹⁴ Ibid, 69.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 77-78.

resistance, as hundreds lined the streets with small arms and RPGs, seemingly “waiting to die” at the hands of the U.S. forces as they marched on to the heart of the capital.⁹⁷

On April 8th, 2003, coalition forces had officially taken control of the city of Baghdad, landing American aircraft at what was then dubbed Baghdad International Airport. As of April 9th, Saddam Hussein was officially a fugitive and his regime no longer in control of the country.⁹⁸

With regards to the size of forces, the U.S. military contributed fewer troops to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 than they had in 1991 for Operation Desert Storm. When in the planning phases of operations, policy makers and analysts had figured that for every 1,000 Iraqis, the U.S. would need to commit 43 soldiers or police officers in order to keep the peace in a post-invasion scenario.⁹⁹ According to this scenario, the U.S. should have committed 400,000-500,000 troops to maintain the peace after the invasion. In the middle of the invasion, the U.S. had 116,000 soldiers in country and a total of 310,000 troops in theater.¹⁰⁰ For this reason, after the initial invasion of Iraq, U.S. and coalition forces struggled to maintain law and order while the country fell to a state of chaos with looting and destruction of symbols of the fallen regime happening throughout Baghdad.

Damage and Destruction of Infrastructure

⁹⁷ Ibid, 79-80.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 84.

⁹⁹ Rick Fawn and Raymond Hinnebusch, *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences* (Boulder: Lynne Ripener Publishers, 2006), 213.

¹⁰⁰ In country means that troops were in the actual country being referenced. In this instance, in country means Iraq. In theater means an area in which military operations are being carried out. In this instance, in theater consists of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf. Ibid.

As Baghdad fell into a state of disarray, coalition forces were faced with the need to draft a new strategy that would restore order to the country. The invasion, in particular the air assaults on Baghdad and outlying cities, had caused catastrophic damage to an already ailing infrastructure as a result of crippling sanctions and decades of war. During the invasion, heavy tanks and vehicles passing through the streets caused the fracture of fragile water and sewage pipes.¹⁰¹ As a result, water supplies became sparse and intermittent in many areas.

The once hailed electrical grids that had been developed in the 1980s had decayed over the years leading up to the invasion. After the invasion, electricity production dropped and many received twelve hours or less of power per day in Baghdad, while outlying cities received closer to three hours per day.¹⁰² The larger issue caused by the drop in the availability of electricity was that things that required the use of electrical power to function, could no longer do so. In the case of fuel, the spotty availability of electricity caused fuel shortages and wait times of up to five hours to fill up a tank of gasoline.¹⁰³

In an effort to “rebuild Iraq,” reconstruction contracts were issued to foreign companies such as Halliburton whose primary focus was to rebuild the oil infrastructure to continue production for foreign exports. The plans did not seem to take into consideration that the fleet of skilled laborers residing in Iraq were better equipped than imported coalition laborers to repair the damage caused by the invasion. Rather, the failing middle class continued to suffer and struggle to find the basic necessities required to sustain life for themselves and their families.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 230.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

These actions forged a deep seated animosity for the foreign occupiers who seemingly cared more about rebuilding the components of Iraqi infrastructure that were in their own national interests rather than rebuilding the middle class.

De-Ba'thification

In May 2003, President Bush appointed a new ambassador to Iraq, L. Paul Bremer to head a Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).¹⁰⁴ As the new leader of the CPA, Bremer was charged with building a sustainable Iraqi government and establishing post-invasion security and stability for Iraq. In order to do this, the CPA undertook measures to convince Iraqis that the country would not fall back into an authoritarian state.

Bremer's first act as leader of the CPA was to enact Coalition Provisional Authority Order #1, titled the "De-Ba'thification of Iraqi Society." The order, passed down on May 16, 2003, called for the top four levels of Ba'th Party members and leaders to be excluded from holding positions in the new government. The order also mandated that the top three levels of every ministry were to be reviewed and investigated for any possible ties or connections to the Ba'th Party.¹⁰⁵ The purpose of this order was to ensure that Party loyalists were removed from their positions of power and not able to organize and topple the new government as it was forming. At the time of the regime collapse, the Ba'th Party consisted of more than one million members in all aspects of government and security.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ James Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*, New York: The RAND Corporation, 2009, 12-13.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 112

¹⁰⁶ Zaki Chehab, *Iraq Ablaze: Inside the Insurgency*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006, 62.

As the de-Ba'thification was taking place, Bremer, in an attempt to ensure the population that it was the Iraqis that were in charge of these efforts and not the U.S. or the CPA, created the High National De-Ba'thification Commission. In doing so, Bremer turned over control of the de-Ba'thification orders to the Iraqi Governing Council, an entity that took a harder line on the order than the CPA had previously.¹⁰⁷ The first two orders of the Commission were to revoke any exceptions that the CPA had previously granted and to further expand the reach of the order to include public activities and positions in institutions of civil society, press, and the media.¹⁰⁸

All totaled, the CPA's De-Ba'thification Order removed 30,000-50,000¹⁰⁹ Ba'th Party members from their positions in government and ministries that were considered to be "true believers" and adherents to Saddam's regime.¹¹⁰ Some of these individuals were allowed to appeal their dismissal and were permitted to return to work after their hearings. The collateral damages of the De-Ba'thification Order were the individuals who had joined the Ba'th Party out of necessity in order to gain and maintain employment. The portion of Iraqi society that was most affected was the education system because teachers were considered the propagators of the Ba'th Party message due to their influence on the education of youth and were thus required to join the Ba'th Party in order to hold their posts.

¹⁰⁷ James Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*, New York: The RAND Corporation, 2009, 117.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 117.

¹⁰⁹ The exact number of Ba'thists that were removed from their offices ranges based on the source of information. Some U.S. military publications place the number closer to 30,000, other publications that are more anti-Iraq War place the number as high as 70-90,000.

¹¹⁰ Charles Ferguson, *No End in Sight: Iraq's Decent into Chaos* (New York: Public Affairs), 2008, 147-8. (<http://pfiffner.gmu.edu/files/pdfs/Articles/CPA%20Orders,%20Iraq%20PDF.pdf> Page 79)

The objectives and purposes of the De-Ba'thification Order were initially supported by a 94.6% majority of individuals polled, as it removed Party loyalists from power and showed the people that Saddam and his regime would not soon return to their posts.¹¹¹ This initial report of support by the population later became a problematic as it was unclear who was being polled and if the Sunni population was accurately represented in that number.

Disbanding the Military

On May 23, 2003, just six days after the De-Ba'thification Order was issued, Bremer announced CPA Order #2, the “Dissolution of Entities”. The new order mandated that the former Iraqi Army be disbanded along with the security and intelligence infrastructure that served under Saddam Hussein in favor of the creation of a New Iraqi Army. At the time of the fall of Saddam Hussein, security forces included 385,000 members of the military, 285,000 police officers, and 50,000 in other presidential security forces; totaling 720,000 people who faced the possibility of unemployment.¹¹² In a note to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Bremmer wrote that the disbanding of the Ministry of Defense and the old armed forces left only 230,000 soldiers unemployed.¹¹³ The discrepancy in overall numbers is of importance in this case because it seems to be indicative of an overall misunderstanding in the security situation and the potentially catastrophic implications of the decision to disband the military at the time.

¹¹¹ According to polling reported by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies, 94.6% of initial Iraqis surveyed supported the removal of Ba'thists from public office. It is possible that the polling represents the Shi'a population to the exclusion of many Sunnis residents.

¹¹² James P. Pfiffner, “U.S. Blunders in Iraq: De-Ba'thification and Disbanding the Army,” *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 1 (2010): 80.

¹¹³ James Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*, New York: The RAND Corporation, 2009, 59.

With disbanding came the decision of whether or not to continue to pay the former soldiers a stipend while the CPA decided how it would rebuild the Iraqi Army. The ultimate decision was to pay the former soldiers stipends but the issuance of these funds took months, leading to mass demonstrations by former military personnel. The delay pushed a large population of trained, unemployed, and hostile individuals to act out against the U.S. occupiers who had allowed former soldiers to keep their service weapons. This decision proved to be grave as the first wave of attacks began soon after, marking the beginning of the Sunni Insurgency.¹¹⁴

Sectarian Violence

On August 7, 2003, militants planted a car bomb outside of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad, killing 11 and wounding 65.¹¹⁵ Many of the violent attacks that would follow were carried out by groups that were made up of displaced members of the disbanded military. The security situation continued to grow worse for both the U.S. and the Iraqi people. On August 28, 2003, an assessment was done for Secretary Rumsfeld that stated, “the emerging threat and attacks against the Iraqi infrastructure are reaching a level that requires immediate and unprecedented action. We are losing the consent of the Iraqi people by failing to meet their expectations in some of the most basic areas of life support. As such, we risk losing the peace.”¹¹⁶

Following the implementation of CPA Order #1 and #2, hundred of thousands of Iraqis, the majority of whom were Sunni, were removed from their posts for their affiliation with the

¹¹⁴ The Sunni Insurgency was a period of resistance to the U.S. occupation when there was an upsurge in violence by the Sunni tribes and groups that continued until 2006 when a full-scale Iraqi civil war broke out.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Donnelly, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 2004, 99.

¹¹⁶ James Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*, New York: The RAND Corporation, 2009, 101.

former Ba'th Party. The result was a large group of marginalized individuals, resentful of the coalition occupation and control of Iraq.

As the violence and attacks raged on, it was becoming clear that there was a deep level of animosity and hatred toward the American occupation by the larger Sunni population. On March 31, 2004, insurgents burned and mutilated the bodies of four Blackwater¹¹⁷ security personnel in the streets of Fallujah.¹¹⁸ This incident was a demonstration of the hatred that many Iraqis felt toward the American presence in Iraq.

In an attempt to curb the violence that had risen in Iraq, the CPA announced its plan that they called the Light Footprint; a plan that meant that American forces would retreat to large bases and only engage with enemy forces in extreme cases. This new way forward functioned to slow the rate of violence in Iraq and showed the CPA potential that the coalition might be able to successfully turn over the government by the 2004 deadline set by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Meanwhile in southern Iraq, the Mahdi Army under the leadership of Muqtada al-Sadr made a deal with the Americans after a long and bloody campaign against the U.S. The deal stipulated that the Shia militia would not oppose the Americans if they bought back weapons for nearly \$1.2 million and issued nearly \$330 million in reconstruction funds.¹¹⁹ In a similar agreement to the one made with the Mahdi Army, U.S. forces also made a deal with the Sunni

¹¹⁷ Blackwater is a private American military company and consulting company. The company was hired initially to protect the CPA but remained in Iraq until 2007 when its license to operate was revoked for killing 17 Iraqi civilians. The license was again reinstated in 2008 by the U.S. government but denied by the Iraqi government. Their presence in Iraq was highly contested and controversial.

¹¹⁸ Bruce R. Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006)*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008, 11.

¹¹⁹ Harold M. North, *Hunting Muqtada: Iraq's Most Dangerous Man*, New York: iUniverse, 2009, 212.

“Sons of Iraq” (SOI). In the agreement, U.S. forces enlisted the services of 103,000 Sunni fighters to combat al-Qaeda forces in Iraq; a program that cost the U.S. \$400 million.¹²⁰

In February 2006, after the bombing of the Shi’a Al Askari Mosque, major Iraqi-on-Iraqi sectarian violence broke out. To help to quell the violence between the two groups, the U.S. began the “surge” which committed an additional 30,000 troops to blunt the momentum of the insurgent groups and restore order and discipline.¹²¹ This brought troops out from big bases and into the cities for the first time during the occupation. As the “surge” drew on into 2008, overall violence continued to decrease and sectarian violence seemed to be slowing. This was in part due to the Iraqi government adopting laws aimed at reconciling the differences between Sunnis and Shi’as and allowing the Sunnis to reclaim positions in the government and cabinets; a grievance that dated back to the original de-Ba’thification of the government.

Reformation attempts of the Iraqi Government

While security and stability were the focus of the initial months of the occupation of Iraq, turning the country back to the Iraqi people quickly became the next priority for the CPA and U.S. leadership. The initial target date for transitioning the government from CPA leadership to a new Iraqi government was set by Secretary Rumsfeld. This goal was seemingly met when, in

¹²⁰ The deal made with the Sons of Iraq took place in 2008 and lasted until the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. The continued employment of the Sons of Iraq to combat the Sunni insurgency was a point of contention with the Shi’a government. *Losing Iraq*, produced by Michael Kirk, Jim Gilmore, and Mike Wiser (2014; Boston: Frontline/PBS), Film.

¹²¹ Kenneth Katzman and Carla E. Humud, “Iraq: Politics and Governance,” *The Congressional Research Service*, last updated March 9, 2016, 5. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf>.

June 2004, an interim government was appointed by the CPA with a Shi'a Prime Minister, Iyad al-Allawi, and Sunni President, Ghazi al-Yawar.¹²²

In January 2005, the first parliamentary elections were held to form a 275-seat transitional National Assembly that would be responsible for producing and ratifying a new constitution and for holding elections for a permanent government.¹²³ The elections were held on a partisan basis, where voters voted only on "political entities," not on individual representatives. At this point, the majority of the Sunni population was embittered with the way that the government was taking shape and with the way that Sunnis were being treated. This led to a large portion of the Sunni population boycotting the election. On election day, only about 20% of Sunnis turned out to vote, resulting in a lack of representation in the newly formed government; Sunnis winning only 17 seats.¹²⁴

In October 2005, the new constitution established by the transitional National Assembly went to a popular vote. Despite an attempted veto by the Sunni provinces of Anbar and Salahuddin, the constitution passed, winning by a narrow margin.¹²⁵ At the time, there was an increased sense of urgency on behalf of the U.S. to find someone who could take over the Iraqi government so that U.S. troops could withdraw. The year 2006 brought the newly formed government a leader; a little known politician named Nuri al-Maliki. For the U.S., Maliki appeared to be a leader that they could turn the government over to but there was still a deep

¹²² Bruce P. Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006)* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), 11.

¹²³ Kenneth Katzman and Carla E. Hamud, "Iraq: Politics and Governance," *Congressional Research Service*, 2-3. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf>

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 4.

divide within the country between the Sunni and Shi'a populations. With the Sunnis still feeling displaced, violence in Iraq began to intensify and the U.S. was forced to reassess their position on the newly formed government.

In 2009, elections were conducted for a second time and resulted in a reelection of Nuri al-Maliki as Prime Minister of Iraq. With the second government taking form, the U.S. signed a security agreement with Iraq that stipulated that the U.S. would complete its withdraw by the end of 2011.

Withdrawal from Iraq

On October 21, 2011, President Obama announced that the U.S. and Iraq had reached an agreement that the U.S. forces would leave Iraq by the end of 2011.¹²⁶ As part of the agreement, the U.S. would transition out of Iraq, leaving Maliki to lead the Iraqi military of roughly 800,000 soldiers, police personnel, and other military forces. The U.S. would still continue its support by maintaining the flow of arms to the Iraqis.¹²⁷ It was estimated in 2014 that 80% of the military was Shi'a Muslim, further dividing the population along sectarian lines.¹²⁸

As combat missions were drawing to an end and troops were leaving Iraq, the U.S. did a final reassessment of its original agreement to have troops out of Iraq by the end of 2011. Fears were mounting of Iranian influence gaining support with the Shi'as, of Iraqi forces being ill prepared to maintain control in the absence of the U.S., and of deeply rooted sectarian rifts growing. The U.S. attempted to extend the agreed upon withdrawal date to 2012. Attempts to

¹²⁶ Ibid, 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 10.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

negotiate this new deadline failed and the U.S. withdrew its forces as scheduled despite many indications that the withdrawal was premature.

When the U.S. withdrew from Iraq, violence was overall very low though many resistance groups still remained operational. Sectarian and political grievances that had led to the Sunni insurgency remained unresolved and soon caused divides among the people. These sectarian divides came to a head when, just one day following the official U.S. withdrawal, (December 12, 2011) the Shi'a government, under the leadership of Maliki, issued an arrest warrant for the Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi for allegations that he ordered his security staff to carry out assassination plans.¹²⁹ When Hashimi heard this, he fled to Turkey where he reportedly still remains.¹³⁰

The persecution of Hashimi was only the beginning of the targeting of Sunni leaders by the Maliki government. It was becoming apparent that Maliki was working to consolidate power around himself and other Shi'a leaders in the Iraqi government. In late 2012, Maliki ordered the arrest of 10 bodyguards of the Sunni Finance Minister, Rafi al-Issawi.¹³¹ This action sparked an unrest and anti-Maliki demonstrations in Sunni dominated cities and the Sunni districts of Baghdad.¹³² The unrest continued into 2013 and caused destabilization and chaos that ISIS would soon take advantage of to begin its offensive through Iraq.

¹²⁹ Kenneth Katzman and Carla E. Hamud, "Iraq: Politics and Governance," *Congressional Research Service*, 20. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf>

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Section IV:

2011-Present: U.S. Withdraws, Enter ISIS

Post-U.S. Occupation Iraq

Following the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, there were approximately 800,000 military and security forces actively working around the country.¹³³ When the U.S. had fully withdrawn, Maliki began to replace commanders of the armed forces with individuals who were loyal to him and his party. These positions were seen by the new commanders as “financial and political rewards.”¹³⁴ By 2014, 80% of the military Shi’a Muslim, a fact that meant many Sunni Muslims felt that the Iraqi Security Forces were merely an “occupation force.”¹³⁵

In 2012 and 2013, unrest flared in as the Shi’a Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and Sunni President Jalal Talabani struggled for control on the international stage. As

¹³³ Kenneth Katzman and Carla E. Humud, “Iraq: Politics and Governance,” *The Congressional Research Service*, last updated March 9, 2016, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf>, 16.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

elections neared in 2013, police forces were accused of using excessive force against Sunni protestors, sparking an increase from Sunni insurgent groups (ISIS included).¹³⁶ When Nuri al-Maliki was elected to another term and immediately issued an arrest warrant for another prominent Sunni leader, parliamentarian Ahmad al-Alwani, insurgent groups began a mass opposition in the form of attacks on Iraqi Security Forces in Sunni dominated cities and provinces. By the end of 2013, ISIS fighters had begun their assault on Ramadi, Fallujah, and other Anbar cities.¹³⁷

Evolution of ISIS

ISIS was born out of the group Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in 2003 under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.¹³⁸ The group is an Islamist militant group that originated in Jordan and operates under the banner of Sunni brand of Salafi Islam. The Salafist movement gets its name from the Arabic word *salaf* meaning “predecessor” or “ancestor,” referring to the first three generations of Islamic leadership. The Salafists base their principles on a popular hadith of the Prophet: “The people of my generation are the best, then those who come after them, and then those of the next generation.”¹³⁹

Salafi Islam is practiced in many countries but is most popular in Saudi Arabia where it is called Wahhabism. It is from this form of Salafism that ISIS draws many of its beliefs and practices and where many believe the organization’s extremist practices are derived. In their

¹³⁶ Ibid, 23.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 24.

¹³⁸ Because ISIS is such a new phenomenon and very little literature has been published to-date, it is difficult to know much about the organization with absolute certainty. Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 13.

¹³⁹ Sahih Bukhari 5:57:2.

efforts to return Islam to the days of its ancestors, ISIS has used Wahhabi tenets to commit violent acts to purify the community of believers.

Zarqawi, who was known to use beheadings and executions to shock the world and display his brutality, established the leadership style and ultra-violent ways that have been seen in today's ISIS campaigns.¹⁴⁰ In 2004, as Zarqawi's group grew and evolved, they swore their allegiance to Osama bin Laden, who was believed to be in Afghanistan at the time, in an online statement saying,

“Let it be known that Jama’at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad pledges both its leaders and its soldiers to the mujahid commander, Sheikh “Osama bin Laden” in word and in deed and to jihad for the sake of God until there is no more discord among the ranks of Islam and all of the religion turns toward God.”¹⁴¹

Following this pledge in 2003, Jama’at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad underwent major changes in their organizational structure as al-Qaeda accepted them into their network and made them their frontrunner in Iraq. The group became known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and began a highly active campaign during the Iraqi insurgency following the American invasion of Iraq.

In 2006, as the U.S. campaign in Iraq proceeded and increased in violence and brutality, AQI was called upon to carry out attacks against the U.S. forces and assets throughout the country. During the course of the war, in an attempt at unifying all of the Sunni insurgents in Iraq, AQI joined forces with other Sunni Iraqi insurgent groups to form the Mujahideen Shura

¹⁴⁰ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 30.

¹⁴¹ Jeffrey Pool, “Zarqawi’s Pledge of Allegiance to al-Qaeda,” *Terrorism Monitor* 2, no. 11 (2004), doi: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=27305#.VzEAaTbSZiY.

Council (MSC).¹⁴² One of the groups that made up the MSC was the small militant group called the Jama'at Jaysh Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaah, led by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi serving as the head of the *sharia* committee.¹⁴³

In 2006, AQI suffered the death of its leader, Zarqawi, who was killed in a U.S. air raid on a market in al-Rahman.¹⁴⁴ Zarqawi was succeeded in leadership by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi who led the group to join with other insurgent groups to form the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).¹⁴⁵ Baghdadi's organization existed to oppose the American occupation of Iraq and was responsible for attacks against U.S. troops in the region. In March 2010, just months before his death, Baghdadi helped to organize the boycott of parliamentary elections; an action that further destabilized the country in his absence.

Much like Zarqawi before him, Baghdadi was known for his brutality and violent practices. During the four years that Abu Omar al-Baghdadi led ISI, the group found great success and increased their organization's size by drawing in more displaced Sunnis who found themselves increasingly disenfranchised by the Shi'a dominated government.

In 2010, like Zarqawi, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was killed in a U.S. air raid of a safe house in the Anbar province.¹⁴⁶ Also killed in this attack was Baghdadi's second in command, Abu Ayyub al-Masri. Both the U.S. and the Iraqi government boasted about the death of these two

¹⁴² Christopher M. Blanchard and Carla E. Humud, "The Islamic State and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, last modified February 9, 2016, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43612.pdf>, 8.

¹⁴³ Archana Dalmia, "What Made IS Founder Baghdadi a Fundamentalist: Was He a Reluctant Fundamentalist or a Savage One?" *DailyO.com*, last modified November 14, 2014, <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/what-made-is-founder-baghdadi-a-fundamentalist/story/1/660.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 61.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 63-64.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 115.

leaders saying, “The death of these two terrorists is potentially the most significant blow to al-Qaeda since the beginning of the insurgency.”¹⁴⁷ While the death of its leaders was a blow to the organization, ISI wasted little time in naming a new leader. On May 16, 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, previously known as Alwwad al-Badari, was named the leader of ISI.¹⁴⁸ At this point, the new leader was little known by outsiders and the international community. Baghdadi resumed operations where his predecessor left off nearly immediately following the US troop withdrawal in 2011 when ISI carried out a large scale IED and car bomb operation across Baghdad.¹⁴⁹

Under Baghdadi’s leadership, ISI flourished and found a great deal of success as they carried out missions in both Syria and Iraq. Much of the strength of the organization can be attributed to the many former high-ranking Ba’thist leaders who made a home within the ISI ranks. Many of those who joined ISI were former members of Saddam’s army who had been displaced by CPA Order #2. Those who left the Iraqi military to join ISI had advanced military training and were capable of developing complex military strategies to counter the American occupation of Iraq.

In April 2013, ISI announced that it would merge with Jabhat al-Nusra (a fact that would later be of contention with other Sunni insurgent groups) and change its name to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria depending on the translation)

¹⁴⁷ “Al Qaeda Confirms Death of 2 Top Leaders,” *CNN.com*, last modified April 25, 2010, <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/04/25/iraq.militant.leaders.killed/>.

¹⁴⁸ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 116.

¹⁴⁹ Richard Barrett, “The Islamic State,” *The Soufan Group*, last modified November 2014, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>, 12.

after expanding its operations into Syria.¹⁵⁰ The group continued to grow in numbers, wealth, and prosperity under Baghdadi's leadership. In December 2013, ISIL began a large-scale attack, beginning in the al-Anbar province of Iraq and taking up large swaths of territory along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

By February 2014, after attempting, without success, to discourage the joining of ISI and al-Nusra and in opposition to its extremist and barbaric methods and tactics, al-Qaeda's general command cut ties with ISIL.¹⁵¹ It is then that the world began to take notice and heed warnings that ISIL was capturing large parts of Iraq and Syria and forcing the surrender and conversion of all those who stood in their way.¹⁵² As the group was gaining power by the day, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant would henceforth be known as only the Islamic State. In a statement issued by Baghdadi, he proclaimed the group a new Caliphate and he would be the self-declared caliph to be known as Amir al-Mu'minin Caliph Ibrahim.¹⁵³

Leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is currently one of the world's most prominent extremist leaders, but it is believed that until around 2003, he was a relatively quiet and studious religious

¹⁵⁰ Michael Jenkins, "The Dynamics of Syria's Civil War," *Rand Corporation*, accessed May 11, 2016, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE115/RAND_PE115.pdf.

¹⁵¹ Oliver Holmes, "Al Qaeda Breaks Link with Syrian Militant Group ISIL," *Reuters.com*, February 3, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/03/us-syria-crisis-qaeda-idUSBREA120NS20140203>.

¹⁵² While some portions of the intelligence and academic communities may have been acutely aware of the group's progress, mainstream journalists didn't turn their attention and focus to ISIS until June 2014 when the group began their assault on Iraq.

¹⁵³ Richard Barrett, "The Islamic State," *The Soufan Group*, last modified November 2014, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>, 13.

scholar.¹⁵⁴ Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Baghdadi was imprisoned in Camp Bucca for ten months in 2004.¹⁵⁵ Some believe that in this time, Baghdadi became radicalized and was drawn into militancy by his fellow prisoners whom he used to create a broad network of contacts.

When Baghdadi began his leadership of ISI, he brought with him a “cult of personality” that showed in his many grandiose ideas and plans. Despite the competing nature of Saddam’s secular Ba’th Party and Baghdadi’s Salafist Sunni ideology, many of the ideas and practices that Baghdadi has adopted have been similar to that of Saddam Hussein. Some of these ideas are:

- Both held a similar animosity toward the Shi’a population and went to great lengths to suppress, terrorize, or slaughter them.
- Both maintained their control of the population through large, public displays of violence (i.e. beheadings, executions, beatings, etc.), which instilled fear in the people and kept them in submission and compliance.
- Both launched campaigns that were aimed at gaining larger portions of territory through any means necessary, usually through forceful takeover or acts of war.¹⁵⁶
- Both exploited the needs of the people and positioned themselves as the sole providers of the basic necessities for the population.

¹⁵⁴ William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

¹⁵⁵ Some sources report that Baghdadi was imprisoned in Camp Bucca for considerably longer than the claimed ten month period. Others place his time served as 2005-2009 though the majority believe his time was less than a year.

¹⁵⁶ In Saddam Hussein’s case, this can be seen in his attempts at gaining territory in the Iran-Iraq War and in his invasion of Kuwait. For ISIS, this can be seen in their origins in Syria and the destruction of the border between Iraq and Syria in 2014.

Much like Saddam Hussein, Baghdadi has been described as having a “cult of personality” that has made him an effective and engaging leader. From a young age, Baghdadi was a religious leader, teaching children Qur’anic chanting and serving as a reciter for the local mosque that his father taught at.¹⁵⁷ Following high school, Baghdadi went to the University of Baghdad to study the Qur’an and continued on to Saddam University where he studied Islamic Studies and received a master’s in Qur’anic recitation.¹⁵⁸ This background in religious studies helped Baghdadi immensely as it gave him the legitimacy needed to lead ISIS and gain adherents from all around the world who believed in the group’s goal of creating a single Islamic state.

The emergence of Baghdadi as a radicalized leader has been traced back to his ten-month imprisonment in Camp Bucca in 2004 where he is said to have been a leader in the American-run prison. In Camp Bucca, Baghdadi had the opportunity to network with ex-Ba’thist leaders who had been imprisoned for fighting against the American occupation. In an article published by the *Guardian*, a former prisoner recalls his time with Baghdadi in Camp Bucca saying, “Every time there was a problem in the camp, he was at the center of it. He wanted to be the head of the prison—and when I look back now, he was using a policy of conquer and divide to get what he wanted, which was status. And it worked.”¹⁵⁹ At its peak, Camp Bucca housed 24,000 prisoners, many of them Sunni Arabs who had served in Saddam Hussein’s Ba’th Party.¹⁶⁰ The importance

¹⁵⁷ William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

of the network that was built in Camp Bucca can be seen in the command structure of ISIS where eight of the senior leaders were at one point imprisoned in Camp Bucca.¹⁶¹

After his release from Camp Bucca, Baghdadi took a position with al-Qaeda and operated inside Syria while he continued his religious schooling. When al-Qaeda in Iraq created an umbrella organization for jihadist groups opposing the American occupation, Baghdadi and his organization at the time were among the first to join, along with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The concept of the Islamic State was originally Zarqawi's and, when he was killed in a U.S. airstrike, his successors (including Baghdadi) continued with his plans when they created ISI.¹⁶² Before Zarqawi's death, Baghdadi had the opportunity to observe Zarqawi's brutal methods in action and understand the efficacy of his indiscriminate use of violence against all who he deemed to be *infidels*.

Once ISI was firmly in control of Syria in 2010, Baghdadi began to set his sights on further expansion and pursued the ultimate goal of creating an Islamic State that transcended all boundaries; especially those created by Great Britain and the Allied Forces' Sykes-Picot agreement following World War I.¹⁶³ When Baghdadi declared the Islamic State a Caliphate with himself as Caliph¹⁶⁴ in 2014, he gave himself the space to operate more freely and make more

¹⁶¹ Richard Barrett, "The Islamic State," *The Soufan Group*, last modified November 2014, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>, 20.

¹⁶² William McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State," *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

¹⁶³ Richard Falk, "A New World Order? ISIS and the Sykes-Picot Backlash," *ForeignPolicyJournal.com*, last modified December 26, 2015, <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/12/26/a-new-world-order-isis-and-the-sykes-picot-backlash/>.

¹⁶⁴ The supreme Muslim civil and religious ruler, regarded as the successor of Muhammad. The caliph ruled in Baghdad until 1258 and then in Egypt until the Ottoman conquest of 1517; the title was then held by the Ottoman sultans until it was abolished in 1924 by Atatürk.

autonomous decisions. Where he was merely a leader before, Baghdadi immediately became a nearly infallible figure to most subordinates who could order the assassination of any who opposed him. Much like Saddam, Baghdadi has been able to use his security department to root out any opposition to his plans and crush the will of those who might rise up against him. This can be seen in the ISIS takeover of Mosul where many senior ex-Ba'thists were executed for standing against ISIS in the fight for Mosul.¹⁶⁵

Ultimately, what we see in Baghdadi and ISIS is the leader of an organization that is well-organized, well-funded, technologically savvy, and able to both understand and exploit the weaknesses of the populations that they look to dominate. ISIS is a more coordinated version of the Sunni insurgency that opposed the U.S. occupation after the fall of Saddam Hussein with a stronger, more charismatic leader. Baghdadi reaches disaffected populations, gives them a sense of home within his organization, and uses their loyalty to carry out his larger plans no matter the consequences.

Structure of Governing

As ISIS continues to gain territory in Iraq and Syria every day, the group has built a leadership structure that governs all matters. Though Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the most prominent figure in the ISIS leadership structure, there are two deputies that reside under him for each garrison, Iraq and Syria. Under both deputies there are 12 governors for each garrison

¹⁶⁵ Richard Barrett, "The Islamic State," *The Soufan Group*, last modified November 2014, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>, 20.

respectively and eight councils who advise on matters of finance, military, leadership, and intelligence, among others.¹⁶⁶

The hierarchy of ISIS contains the following positions:

- **Caliph:** The self-declared “leader” of the Muslim *ummah* (community) who is reportedly a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad and a former religious scholar.¹⁶⁷ Baghdadi’s role as Caliph has been highly contested among the Islamic *ummah* and considered void due to his lack of endorsement from the entire Muslim population; a prerequisite for being a Caliph in Sunni Islam.
- **Shura Council:** Religious mentors to the Caliph, Baghdadi, who ensure that the deputies, governors, and local councils adhere to ISIS’s strict version of Islam. Should any leader diverge from the tenants of ISIS, the Shura Council can censure and remove them from their appointment.
- **Deputies:** Along with the Caliph, the two deputies comprise the executive branch of the state. The deputies advise Baghdadi and serve as the liaison between the Caliph and the local leadership by delivering orders to the various sub-states within the caliphate who then instruct local leadership on how to implement the orders of the executive branch.

¹⁶⁶ For a chart that outlines the structure of ISIS and its different levels of leadership and councils, see Appendix III. Gregor Aisch, Joe Burgess, C.J. Chivers, Alicia Parlapiano, Sergio Peçanha, Archie Tse, Derek Watkins and Karen Yourish, “How ISIS Works,” *NYTimes.com*, last updated September 16, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/16/world/middleeast/how-isis-works.html?action=click&contentCollection=Middle%20East&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=Marginalia&pgtype=article>.

¹⁶⁷ “Baghdadi’s Sunni forefathers claimed to descend from the Prophet Muhammad through the Shiite leaders buried in Samarra’s golden-domed shrine. Baghdadi’s lineage is one instance of the many overlapping religious identities in Iraq that belie the supposedly eternal divide between Sunnis and Shiites.” William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

- **Governors:** In charge of the sub-states of Iraq and Syria that relay messages from the executive branch to the various councils at the local levels. Responsible for aiding localities in their implementation of the executive branch order.
- **Councils:** Comprised of many former members of Saddam Hussein's disbanded army. Each council is responsible for a specific component of government including financial, security, and media matters. Councils also advise governors and deputies in their field on recommended actions.

The structure that ISIS has developed demonstrates the organization's growing strength and the desire to create a fully functional state, capable of governing, providing services, and protecting its people and territory. Many factors have and will play in to their success or failure as a state such as the support of the general population, their ability to provide uninterrupted services, and the amount of time they spend establishing a state.

Another noteworthy characteristic about the structure of ISIS is the way that the state has been built allows for compartmentalization. Though governors are important components of the leadership makeup, the 12 governors do not make direct contact with Baghdadi, just as the local council members do not have direct contact with the deputies. This structure allows for an insulated hierarchy, which lessens the likelihood of infiltration by outsiders and thus, the likelihood of Baghdadi being arrested or assassinated.

Theology of ISIS

The fundamental beliefs of ISIS are difficult to nail down but from what is known about the group currently, their theology and ideology is based in Sunni tenants and is an evolution of Salafist Islam. In the first days of the ISIS insurgency through Iraq in early 2014, ISIS destroyed

many tombs and mosques throughout the region.¹⁶⁸ This is believed to have been “an unchecked outburst of extreme Wahhabism” as the actions are based on the belief that idol worship is heretic in nature and is *shirk*.¹⁶⁹ The ideologies that ISIS follows are similar to that of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood of the 1920s in that they believe that drawing borders between nations is un-Islamic. To the Muslim Brotherhood (and ISIS currently), being Muslim is the most important part of an individual’s identity and that identity should unite the people under one Islamic nation.¹⁷⁰ This is consistent with the ISIS name, the declaration of a caliphate, and their destruction of the border between Iraq and Syria along the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers.

ISIS has begun a campaign in all of their captured territories to mobilize a religious police that is responsible for enforcing Sharia Law.¹⁷¹ Under the law, religious police patrol the streets looking for violations of their specific brand of Islam such as not conducting the five mandatory daily prayers and not completely veiling the face and body for women. Punishment under the law has ranged from having valuables confiscated to capital punishment; killing by

¹⁶⁸ These mosques included the Mosque of the Prophet Yunus, Mar Behnam Monastery, and a Shi’a mosque in Baghdad in April 2016, among several others throughout Iraq and the region. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150901-isis-destruction-looting-ancient-sites-iraq-syria-archaeology/>

¹⁶⁹ In Islam, *shirk* is the sin of practicing polytheism or idolatry and is a sin that is unforgivable if unpardoned before death. According to Islamic tradition, Allah may forgive any sin at death except *shirk*. Irfan al-Alawi, “Extreme Wahhabism on Display in Shrine Destruction in Mosul,” *Gatestone Institute*, last updated August 4, 2014, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4574/jonah-shrine-destruction>.

¹⁷⁰ “The Two –isms of the Middle East,” *aljazeera.com*, last updated February 4, 2008, <http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/arabunity/2008/02/200852518534468346.html>.

¹⁷¹ ISIS reportedly has two forms of religious police: *hisbah* who are responsible for patrolling the entire population and the *Khansaa Brigade* who are responsible specifically for policing the female population. Fazel Hawramy, Shalaw Mohammed, and Kareem Shaheen, “Life Under ISIS in Raqqa and Mosul: ‘We’re Living in a Giant Prison,’” *TheGuardian.com*, last updated December 9, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/09/life-under-isis-raqqa-mosul-giant-prison-syria-iraq>.

beheading, stoning, and hanging.¹⁷² In many cities, ISIS has destroyed, in very conspicuous ways, churches and non-Sunni mosques as a warning sign of what will happen if people do not join them.¹⁷³

The larger goal of ISIS has been to create an Islamic state that operates under the caliphate system, led by a caliph who is a successor of the Prophet. In July 2013, a biography of Baghdadi was released by a Bahraini ideologue who traced the lineage of Baghdadi to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁷⁴ This fact gains him little more legitimacy in Sunni Islam but is a fact that has gained him some respect in some factions of the larger Muslim community. In public speeches, Baghdadi has demanded that all Muslims declare their allegiance to him and to ISIS. He has used religious jurisprudence (or *fiqh*) to call for Muslims to pledge their allegiance to him and the state, though this has been highly contested by leaders of the Islamic *ummah* and his actions deemed against Islam.¹⁷⁵

Use of Violence

ISIS's extreme violence is of concern to both the people living in Iraq and for the international community. Bernard Haykel, a Princeton University professor, contrasts ISIS with

¹⁷² Heather Saul, "ISIS Publishes Penal Code Listing Amputation, Crucifixion, and Stoning as Punishments - and Vows to Vigilantly Enforce Them," *Independent.co.uk*, last modified January 22, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-publishes-penal-code-listing-amputation-crucifixion-and-stoning-as-punishments-and-vows-to-9994878.html>.

¹⁷³ "ISIS Militants Blow Up Prophet Jonas' Tomb in Iraq," *RT.com*, last updated July 27, 2014, <https://www.rt.com/news/175636-iraq-jonah-tomb-mosul/>.

¹⁷⁴ William McCants, "ISIS Leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Family Tree," *Brookings.edu*, last updated September 10, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/09/10-isis-baghdadi-family-tree-mccants>.

¹⁷⁵ Many Muslim leaders have openly condemned the actions of ISIS, calling the group un-Islamic for their use of violence. In September 2014, more than 120 Muslim leaders from across the world released an open letter to Baghdadi outlining each of his offenses and calling on him to cease and desist his actions and return to the religion of mercy. "Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi," *LettertoBaghdadi.com*, last accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com>.

al-Qaeda saying, “For al-Qaeda, violence is a means to an ends, for ISIS it is an ends itself.”¹⁷⁶

While ISIS has used violence as their primary means of operating since the initial days of their conquest, the international community largely began to take note of the barbarity of the group in August 2014, when U.S. journalist James Foley was beheaded by a member of ISIS dressed in all black who demanded that President Barack Obama end all U.S. military operations in Iraq.¹⁷⁷ The video was then posted online and viewed by millions across the world as a symbol of the threat that ISIS posed to the international community.

For Iraqis, these acts of violence had become commonplace as early as June 2014 when ISIS began its large-scale operations by destroying the border crossing between Iraq and Syria in the town Qaim.¹⁷⁸ As ISIS began their march toward the capital city of Baghdad along the Tigris River, reports began to surface that many members of the Iraqi Security Forces had been abandoning their posts before fighting the insurgents.¹⁷⁹¹⁸⁰ In capturing Mosul, hundreds were killed in the fighting, while tens of thousands fled the city. For those who remained in the cities that ISIS came to control, strict punishments were inflicted that were in accordance with

¹⁷⁶ David Kirkpatrick, “ISIS’ Harsh Brand of Islam is Rooted in Austere Saudi Creed,” *NewYorkTimes.com*, September 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/25/world/middleeast/isis-abu-bakr-baghdadi-caliph-wahhabi.html>.

¹⁷⁷ Chelsea J. Carter, “Video Shows ISIS Beheading U.S. Journalist James Foley,” *CNN.com*, August 20, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/19/world/meast/isis-james-foley/>.

¹⁷⁸ “ISIS Takes Control of Border Crossing Between Iraq and Syria,” *TheGuardian.com*, June 21, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/21/isis-iraq-crossing-border-syria>.

¹⁷⁹ Chelsea J. Carter, Salma Abdelaziz, and Mohammed Tawfeeq, “Iraqi Soldiers, Police Drop Weapons, Flee Posts in Portions of Mosul,” *CNN.com*, last updated June 13, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/10/world/meast/iraq-violence/>.

¹⁸⁰ Scholars attribute the rapid collapse of security forces to the rampant cronyism, bribery, kickbacks, and extortion that had left troops demoralized and lacking the requisite skills and intelligence necessary to fight against the insurgents. Keren Fraiman, Austin Long, and Caitlin Talmadge, “Why the Iraqi Army Collapsed (and what can be done about it),” *Project on Middle East Political Science*, 24, June 13, 2014, http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/POMEPS_BriefBooklet24_Iraq_Web.pdf.

Wahhabi Islamic practices; “adulterers were stoned, alcohol drinkers were whipped, thieves had their hands amputated, and “apostates” were executed.”¹⁸¹

Much like Saddam Hussein had done when he took office in 1979, Baghdadi and ISIS carried out mass executions in the streets of the cities that they captured, they pushed homosexuals off the side of towers in the city, and conducted spectacular acts of violence for the public to see.¹⁸² In order to legitimize these acts of violence, Baghdadi has used Islamic law and scripture as he recognized “the utility of brutality in the name of religion.”¹⁸³

For ISIS, much of the violence and extreme behavior has been attributed to the work of Abu Naji Bakr in *The Management of Savagery*. In the book, Bakr outlines how the use of violence is a necessary evil of reviving the caliphate and only the use of violence, as was used in the time of the Prophet, will instill enough fear in the people to force them into submitting to the will of God. According to Bakr, if ISIS is able to manage the savagery, it will not matter if the organization is good or evil, the people will accept them.¹⁸⁴ The work of Bakr is believed to be akin to the ISIS playbook for violence as it covers the many barbaric acts that ISIS has used to

¹⁸¹ William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

¹⁸² “Inside Look at ISIS’ Brutal Persecution of Gays,” *CBSNews.com*, last modified December 2, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-persecution-gay-men-murder-lgbt-muslim-society/>.

¹⁸³ William McCants, “The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Leader of the Islamic State,” *Brookings Institute*, last modified September 1, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2015/thebeliever>.

¹⁸⁴ Abu Naji Bakr, “The Management of Savagery,” last updated May 23, 2006, 27.

force submission ranging from the immolation of the enemy to the public beheadings of the crusaders (Westerners).¹⁸⁵

The Numbers

Collecting numbers of ISIS fighters has been nearly impossible given the current condition of relations with the group. It was estimated that in June 2014 that there were approximately 4,000 fighters operating in Iraq.¹⁸⁶ This number grew exponentially by September, when the CIA released an estimate that there were 20,000-31,500 fighters operating in Iraq and Syria.¹⁸⁷ These numbers are highly contended by other organizations such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights who put the numbers closer to 80,000-100,000 (50,000 in Syria, 30,000 in Iraq)¹⁸⁸ and Reuters who estimates that the numbers are closer to 40,000-60,000.¹⁸⁹

Despite the efforts of an international coalition formed to destroy and degrade ISIS fighting capabilities, the estimated number of fighters still operating in Iraq and Syria has changed little since the beginning of their campaign. Based on U.S. intelligence assessments, in January 2016, the number of ISIS fighters operating in Iraq and Syria was approximately 30,000

¹⁸⁵ Terrence McCoy, "The Calculated Madness of the Islamic State's Horrifying Brutality," *TheWashingtonPost.com*, last updated August 12, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/08/12/the-calculated-madness-of-the-islamic-states-horrifying-brutality/>.

¹⁸⁶ Jessica Lewis, "The Terrorist Army Marching on Baghdad," *TheWallStreetJournal.com*, last updated June 12, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/jessica-lewis-the-terrorist-army-marching-on-baghdad-1402614950>.

¹⁸⁷ "IS has 20,000–31,500 fighters in Iraq and Syria: CIA," *Yahoo.com*, last updated September 11, 2014, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/20-000-31-500-fighters-iraq-syria-cia-230059844.html?ref=gs>.

¹⁸⁸ "Islamic State 'has 50,000 fighters in Syria,'" *AlJazeera.com*, last updated August 19, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/islamic-state-50000-fighters-syria-2014819184258421392.html>.

¹⁸⁹ "ISIS has 100,000 Fighters, Growing Fast – Iraqi Govt Adviser," *RT.com*, last updated August 27, 2014, <https://www.rt.com/news/183048-isis-grow-expand-jihadist/>.

from roughly 100 different countries.¹⁹⁰ Some have challenged these numbers, stating that estimates are low given the amount of territory and people ISIS controls in Iraq and Syria. In Iraq alone, ISIS controls Mosul, Hamdaniya, Tal Afar, al-Hadar, and Ba'aj districts of Ninawa (approximately 1,984,829 people); al-Dibs, Daquq, and Hawija districts of Kirkuk (525,758); al-Qa'im, Rutba, Anah, Hit, and Fallujah districts of Anbar (1,767,686); and al-Sharqat, Tikrit, and Dawr districts of Salafhaddin (367,244).¹⁹¹ With control of each of these territories, ISIS controls approximately 4,645,217 people in Iraq alone.

Given the number of people that are under ISIS control in Iraq, it is reasonable to believe that the estimates of the number of ISIS fighters operating in Iraq is significantly higher than reported. If estimates are correct, it would indicate that less than 1% of the total population under ISIS control is a part of the ISIS regime in both Iraq and Syria. While this is possible, it does not seem likely given the level of discontent that has been expressed for the ISIS theology and their modes of operating.

¹⁹⁰ Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Number of Foreign Fighters Entering Iraq and Syria Drops 90 Percent, Pentagon Says," *WashingtonPost.com*, last updated April 26, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/26/number-of-foreign-fighters-entering-iraq-and-syria-drops-by-90-percent-pentagon-says/>.

¹⁹¹ David Gartenstein-Ross, "How Many Fighters Does the Islamic State Really Have?" *WarontheRocks.com*, last updated February 9, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/how-many-fighters-does-the-islamic-state-really-have/>.

Section V:

Conclusion: Why So Many Iraqis Have Joined ISIS

Effects of the ISIS Crisis in Iraq on the Iraqi People

Since the beginning of the ISIS crisis in Iraq and Syria, the populations of both countries have been affected in profound ways. Many Iraqis have faced the dilemma of whether to flee the war-torn areas that they call home or stay and sacrifice their own safety to remain in ISIS controlled territories. As of June 2015, there were reportedly 3,962,142 internally displaced people throughout Iraq.¹⁹² Refugees and asylum seekers living abroad totaled 519,660, making a grand total of 4,485,881 displaced Iraqis living in and out of the country.¹⁹³ There are currently dozens of non-governmental organizations working across Iraq to serve the displaced populations but, with limited resources and the strict restrictions that ISIS places on humanitarian

¹⁹² “2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile-Iraq,” *UNHCR.org*, last accessed May 17, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

aid workers, it has been impossible to serve the complex needs of all refugees.¹⁹⁴The international community has pledged to continue to support humanitarian aid flowing to the war-torn areas of Iraq. On April 8, 2016, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the U.S. would commit an additional \$155 million in humanitarian support through organizations such as USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Office for Food and Peace, and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.¹⁹⁵

Despite the foreign aid being sent to Iraq to aid the humanitarian crisis, the economic impact has affected Iraqis across the country. In a recent report produced by the World Bank, analysts looked at the effects of the conflict created by ISIS and the associated disintegration of regional trade in the Levant with six countries in particular in mind: Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. In the report, results suggested that in 2015, Iraq and Syria bore the brunt of the effects of the Syrian Civil War and subsequent crisis of ISIS in Iraq. For Iraqis, the projected total loss in per capita welfare due to the effects of war was 16% in 2014.¹⁹⁶ The impact of this loss has been felt by individual Iraqis and has led to desperation, in some cases, to find the means to support themselves and their families. As noted above, millions have chosen to flee ISIS controlled areas in Iraq but many have chosen to remain in their homes leaving the dilemmas of how to continue to provide for their families.

¹⁹⁴ As a policy, ISIS has placed restrictions on foreign aid, workers, and non-governmental organizations. ISIS leaders have recognized the necessity of allowing humanitarian aid to flow to their territories in order to gain some legitimacy as a future state. Examples of the restrictions that the group has placed on humanitarian aid are a strict ban on any labels on food or supplies and a limitation that no international staffs from any organization are to serve in their territories. Armin Rosen, "Here's How ISIS Abuses Humanitarian Aid," *BusinessInsider.com*, last updated February 3, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-isis-abuses-humanitarian-aid-2015-2>.

¹⁹⁵ "Iraq," *USAID.gov*, last updated April 20, 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/crisis/iraq>.

¹⁹⁶ Elena Ianchovichina and Maros Ivanic, "Economic Effects of the Syrian Civil War and the Spread of the Islamic State on the Levant," *Policy Research Working Papers* 7135 (2014): 4, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/12/08/000158349_20141208155229/Rendered/PDF/WPS7135.pdf.

Opportunities in ISIS Controlled Territories

For those who have elected to stay in ISIS controlled territories, opportunities to earn a livable wage outside of the Caliphate are limited. Should an individual choose to join the ISIS fighting forces, their economic opportunities are expanded considerably. Soldiers in the ISIS military can reportedly earn a salary of \$200-600 per month based on the family size and nationality of the soldier.¹⁹⁷ On top of a salary, ISIS fighters are also given free housing that is said to be the confiscated properties of Shi'as, Christians, and other non-Sunnis who have left the controlled areas.¹⁹⁸ ISIS also employs a civilian workforce to maintain administration of the pseudo-state that the group has set up. Civilians can make between \$300-2,000 per month based on the position that they hold in the administration.¹⁹⁹

The point has been made, that in order to combat the growing number of Iraqis joining ISIS and becoming “radicalized,” there must be an alternative to joining the group. In order for this to be the case, there must be job creation within the Iraqi economy that creates a viable and stable alternative to the Iraqi people. In a television interview, State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf stated,

“We’re killing a lot of them (ISIS combatants), and we’re going to keep killing more of them. So are the Egyptians, so are the Jordanians – they’re in this fight with us, but we cannot win this war by killing them. We cannot kill our way out of this war. We need in the medium to longer term to go after the root causes that lead people to join these

¹⁹⁷ Richard Barrett, “The Islamic State,” *The Soufan Group*, last modified November 2014, 45, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

groups, whether it's a lack of opportunity for jobs, whether... I think this just underscores this isn't just a fight in Iraq and Syria and that isn't just a fight about dropping bombs on terrorists. It is about how we stop the causes that lead to extremism.”²⁰⁰

Why Many Iraqis Have Joined ISIS or Resisted Fighting

The question that this paper has sought to answer is ‘Why have native Iraqis joined the ISIS fighting forces rather than rejecting the organization for their brutal ways and harsh brand of Islam?’ When looking at Iraqi history from the days of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’thist regime, it is apparent that the legacy lasting wars has impacted the collective memory of the Iraqi people, leaving historical cleavages in society that allowed ISIS to grow, expand and take over large portions of Iraq. The argument that this paper has sought to make is that there are several primary reasons that native Iraqis have joined ISIS:

- The tactics of the Saddam Hussein regime and the security apparatus that was built while Saddam was in power created a culture of fear among the Iraqi population that would later be exploited by ISIS;
- The Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein and ISIS under the control of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi have had little deference for the cost in Iraqi lives during their time in power;
- The U.S. invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation inflicted catastrophic damage to the Iraqi infrastructure that was never repaired, causing a dramatic decrease in the quality of life of Iraqis, ultimately leading to the radicalization of many Iraqis;

²⁰⁰ “U.S. Cannot Win War Against ISIS by Killing, They Need Job Opportunities – State Department,” *RT.com*, last updated February 19, 2015, <https://www.rt.com/usa/233275-war-against-isis-job-opportunities/>.

- Iraq, following the U.S. withdrawal, was a weakened state with serious factional disputes that left the country polarized and easily toppled by an organized opponent that was willing to take drastic measures to seize control; and
- The current economic and political climate in Iraq has left the population with three choices: flee their homes and become refugees, defy ISIS and face death by execution, or submit to the will of ISIS and become a compliant and complicit resident.

What this analysis is indicative of for the future of Iraq in the presence of ISIS is that in order to dispel their forces, it is imperative that the Iraqi people find a way to unite the population under the flag of Iraq while looking to bridge the artificial divide that exists between Sunnis and Shias. In order for Iraq to have a future free of ISIS and other insurgent groups, a plan must be developed that will help to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure and move Iraq from a post-war country to a fully functional society, allowing the subjugated population to reintegrate into society.

Appendix I

Purges of high-ranking officers, Ba'thist Old Guard, and politicians of ministerial or higher rank

1968-1979²⁰¹

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Abdul Razzaq al-Nayef	July 30, 1968	Arrested, then exiled. First assassination attempt in London 1973. Gunned down in London 1978	Prime minister; member of RCC July 17-30	Army officer	None
Ibrahim al-Daud	July 30, 1968	In Jordan at time. Stayed in exile	Minister of defense; member of RCC, July 17-30	Army officer	None
Nasir al-Hani	November 1968	Taken by group of Baathists at night. Body found in ditch riddled with bullets	Foreign minister	Career diplomat; scholar; literary critic	None

²⁰¹ Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 292-296.

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Ibrahim Faysal al-Ansari	December 1968	Dismissed, then arrested, accused of conspiracy. Sentenced to 12 years imprisonment	Chief of Army General Staff	Army officer	None
Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz	October 1969	Tortured and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for “spying for Israel”	None	Career diplomat and scholar	None
Abdul Aziz al-Uqaili	1969	Arrested and sentenced to death	None	General in Army	None
Hardan al-Tikriti	October 15, 1970	Dismissed from all positions. Assassinated in Kuwait on March 30, 1971	Deputy premier; minister of defense; deputy commander in chief of the Army; member of RCC	Army officer	Ba'thi since 1961
Hasan al-Naqib	October 1970	Dismissed and made Ambassador in Spain. Retired from Army	Deputy chief of Army General Staff	Army officer	Ba'thi after 1958

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Abdullah Sallum al-Samarra'i	1970	Dismissed from all positions, then made ambassador to India	Minister of information; minister of state; member of RCC	Party man	Ba'thi from the 1950s (member Regional Commands)
Salih Mahdi 'Ammash	September 28, 1971	Dismissed from all positions, then made ambassador to Finland	Deputy premier; minister of interior (1968-1970); member of RCC	Army officer	Ba'thi since 1952 (member Regional and Pan-Arab Commands)
Abd al-Karim Mustafa Nasrat	August 1971	Stabbed to death at his house	Minister	Army officer	Ba'thi from late 1950s
Abd al-Karim al- Shaikhli	September 28, 1971	Dismissed and appointed to UN. Later assassinated in his car	Foreign minister; member of RCC	Party worker	Ba'thi (member Regional and Pan-Arab Commands)
Fuad al-Rikkabi	November 1971	Murdered in prison	None	Engineer	Ba'thi since 1950; party leader 1952-1958
Salah 'Umar al-'Ali	1972	Dismissed. Made ambassador to Sweden	Minister of guidance; member of RCC	Party worker	Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Hammad Shehab	June 30, 1973	Killed in Kzar in coup attempt	Minister of defense; chief of Army General Staff; member of RCC	Army officer	Ba'thi after 1968

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Nadhim Kzar	July 8, 1973	Executed	Chief of Internal Security	Party worker	Ba'thi since 1950
Muhammad Fadel	July 9, 1973	Executed	Head of Ba'th Military Bureau	Army officer	Ba'thi
Na'im Haddad	July 1973	Imprisoned	?	Party worker	Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Abd al-Khaliq al-Sammara'i	July 1973	Sentenced to life imprisonment. Shot in July 1979 purges	Member of RCC	Municipal Clerk became party theoretician	Ba'thi (member Regional and Pan-Arab Commands)
Hasan Mustafa	1974-1975	Imprisoned	General in Army	Army officer	Not known
Saddiq Mustafa	1974-1975	Imprisoned	General in Army	Army officer	Not known
Taha Shakarchi	1974-1975	Imprisoned	General in Army	Army officer	Not known
Husain Hayawi	1974-1975	Dismissed. Appointed military attache in Pakistan	Commander of Air Force	Army officer	Not known
Dawood al-Janabi	mid-1970s	Dismissed	Commander of Republican Guard (elite units in Baghdad)	Army officer	Not known

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Dr. ‘Izzat Mustafa	March 1977	Dismissed. Kept under house arrest	Minister of health (1968-69); minister of labour (1976); minister of municipalities (1977); member of RCC (1968-77)	Physician	Ba'thi since late 1940s; early 1950s (member Regional Command)
Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr	July 1979	Placed under house arrest. Gradually stripped of all positions	President; commander in chief of Army; minister of defense (1973-1977)	Army officer	Ba'thi since early 1950s (Secretary General Ba'th Regional Command; member Pan-Arab Command)
Muhyi ‘Abd al-Husain Rashid	July 1979	Forced to “confess” to RCC, then shot along with whole family	Secretary of RCC	Party man	Prominent Ba'thi (member of Pan-Arab Command)
Khaled Abed Osman	July 1979	Executed	Minister of Kurdish affairs; member of RCC		Ba'thi

Name	Date Purged	Method Used	State Position Post 1968	Regular Occupation	Party Affiliation
Adnan Husain	July 1979	Executed	Deputy prime minister and chief of President's Bureau; member of RCC		Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Mohammed Mahjoud	July 1979	Executed	Minster of education; member of RCC		Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Mohammad 'Ayeh	July 1979	Executed	Minister of industry; member of RCC		Ba'thi
Ghanin Abdul Jalil	July 1979	Executed	Chief of vice president's office; member of RCC		Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Muhammed 'Ayish	July 1979	Executed	Member of RCC	Leading party organizer	Ba'thi (member Regional Command)
Adnan Hamdani	July 1979	Executed	Director general of president's office; minister of planning (1976-79); member of RCC and Committee on Oil Affairs	Lawyer and party man	Ba'thi

Appendix II

George W. Bush, March 17, 2003 8:10 PM

My fellow citizens, events in Iraq have now reached the final days of decision. For more than a decade, the United States and other nations have pursued patient and honorable efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime without war. That regime pledged to reveal and destroy all its weapons of mass destruction as a condition for ending the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Since then, the world has engaged in 12 years of diplomacy. We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. We have sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. Our good faith has not been returned.

The Iraqi regime has used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. It has uniformly defied Security Council resolutions demanding full disarmament. Over the years, U.N. weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged, and systematically deceived. Peaceful efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again and again -- because we are not dealing with peaceful men.

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people. The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda.

The danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other.

The United States and other nations did nothing to deserve or invite this threat. But we will do everything to defeat it. Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety. Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed.

The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security. That duty falls to me, as Commander-in-Chief, by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep.

Recognizing the threat to our country, the United States Congress voted overwhelmingly last year to support the use of force against Iraq. America tried to work with the United Nations to address this threat because we wanted to resolve the issue peacefully. We believe in the mission of the United Nations. One reason the U.N. was founded after the second world war was to confront aggressive dictators, actively and early, before they can attack the innocent and destroy the peace.

In the case of Iraq, the Security Council did act, in the early 1990s. Under Resolutions 678 and 687 -- both still in effect -- the United States and our allies are authorized to use force in ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. This is not a question of authority, it is a question of will.

Last September, I went to the U.N. General Assembly and urged the nations of the world to unite and bring an end to this danger. On November 8th, the Security Council unanimously

passed Resolution 1441, finding Iraq in material breach of its obligations, and vowing serious consequences if Iraq did not fully and immediately disarm.

Today, no nation can possibly claim that Iraq has disarmed. And it will not disarm so long as Saddam Hussein holds power. For the last four-and-a-half months, the United States and our allies have worked within the Security Council to enforce that Council's long-standing demands. Yet, some permanent members of the Security Council have publicly announced they will veto any resolution that compels the disarmament of Iraq. These governments share our assessment of the danger, but not our resolve to meet it. Many nations, however, do have the resolve and fortitude to act against this threat to peace, and a broad coalition is now gathering to enforce the just demands of the world. The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours.

In recent days, some governments in the Middle East have been doing their part. They have delivered public and private messages urging the dictator to leave Iraq, so that disarmament can proceed peacefully. He has thus far refused. All the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign nationals -- including journalists and inspectors -- should leave Iraq immediately.

Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast, and I have a message for them. If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you. As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of

aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near.

It is too late for Saddam Hussein to remain in power. It is not too late for the Iraqi military to act with honor and protect your country by permitting the peaceful entry of coalition forces to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Our forces will give Iraqi military units clear instructions on actions they can take to avoid being attacked and destroyed. I urge every member of the Iraqi military and intelligence services, if war comes, do not fight for a dying regime that is not worth your own life.

And all Iraqi military and civilian personnel should listen carefully to this warning. In any conflict, your fate will depend on your action. Do not destroy oil wells, a source of wealth that belongs to the Iraqi people. Do not obey any command to use weapons of mass destruction against anyone, including the Iraqi people. War crimes will be prosecuted. War criminals will be punished. And it will be no defense to say, "I was just following orders."

Should Saddam Hussein choose confrontation, the American people can know that every measure has been taken to avoid war, and every measure will be taken to win it. Americans understand the costs of conflict because we have paid them in the past. War has no certainty, except the certainty of sacrifice.

Yet, the only way to reduce the harm and duration of war is to apply the full force and might of our military, and we are prepared to do so. If Saddam Hussein attempts to cling to power, he will remain a deadly foe until the end. In desperation, he and terrorists groups might try to conduct terrorist operations against the American people and our friends. These attacks are

not inevitable. They are, however, possible. And this very fact underscores the reason we cannot live under the threat of blackmail. The terrorist threat to America and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed.

Our government is on heightened watch against these dangers. Just as we are preparing to ensure victory in Iraq, we are taking further actions to protect our homeland. In recent days, American authorities have expelled from the country certain individuals with ties to Iraqi intelligence services. Among other measures, I have directed additional security of our airports, and increased Coast Guard patrols of major seaports. The Department of Homeland Security is working closely with the nation's governors to increase armed security at critical facilities across America.

Should enemies strike our country, they would be attempting to shift our attention with panic and weaken our morale with fear. In this, they would fail. No act of theirs can alter the course or shake the resolve of this country. We are a peaceful people -- yet we're not a fragile people, and we will not be intimidated by thugs and killers. If our enemies dare to strike us, they and all who have aided them, will face fearful consequences.

We are now acting because the risks of inaction would be far greater. In one year, or five years, the power of Iraq to inflict harm on all free nations would be multiplied many times over. With these capabilities, Saddam Hussein and his terrorist allies could choose the moment of deadly conflict when they are strongest. We choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities.

The cause of peace requires all free nations to recognize new and undeniable realities. In the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to

grow into genocide and global war. In this century, when evil men plot chemical, biological and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this earth.

Terrorists and terror states do not reveal these threats with fair notice, in formal declarations -- and responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self-defense, it is suicide. The security of the world requires disarming Saddam Hussein now. As we enforce the just demands of the world, we will also honor the deepest commitments of our country. Unlike Saddam Hussein, we believe the Iraqi people are deserving and capable of human liberty. And when the dictator has departed, they can set an example to all the Middle East of a vital and peaceful and self-governing nation.

The United States, with other countries, will work to advance liberty and peace in that region. Our goal will not be achieved overnight, but it can come over time. The power and appeal of human liberty is felt in every life and every land. And the greatest power of freedom is to overcome hatred and violence, and turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace.

That is the future we choose. Free nations have a duty to defend our people by uniting against the violent. And tonight, as we have done before, America and our allies accept that responsibility.

Good night, and may God continue to bless America.

END 8:15 P.M. EST²⁰²

²⁰² George W. Bush, "President Bush Addresses the Nation," *WhiteHouseArchives.gov*, last updated March 19, 2003, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>.

Appendix IV
Cycles Observed

1968-2003	2003-2011	2011-Present
Strong leader	No leader	Weak leader -Strong leader
Culture of Fear	Eliminate culture of fear	Culture of fear
Low standard of living -Improved standard of living	Destruction of standard of living -Improved standard of living	Destruction of standard of living -Improved standard of living
Infrastructure development -Destruction of infrastructure	Further destruction of infrastructure -Development of infrastructure	Infrastructure “development” -Radicalization
Militarization	“De-militarization”	Militarization
History as justification	History as justification	History as justification
No alternatives	No alternatives	No alternatives
People as pawns	People as pawns	People as pawns

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