

MERIA

THE MAKING OF SADDAM'S EXECUTIONERS: A MANUAL OF OPPRESSION BY PROCEDURES

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This article, based on official Iraqi documents,(1) examines the numerous procedures of oppression used by the Ba'thi regime of Saddam Hussein to rule Iraq. Planned by the regime's higher echelons and coordinated among state and party institutions, these procedures reveal how the regime sought to intimidate some citizens while turning others into accomplices.

Since its inception as a modern state, Iraq has been riven by ethnic, religious, tribal, social, and political problems, arising in no small part from the country's deficient sense of national legitimacy and integration. The minority Sunni rulers of Baghdad sought to handle this problem by asserting a strong central government authority throughout the state. The military emerged as a crucial instrument in the wielding of power in the 1930s. Imbued by deep nationalist feelings and aspirations for pan-Arab unity, Iraqi officers were behind the coups and counter-coups of 1936-1941.(2)

But at the same time, the clashes of rival parties and factions constantly disrupted Iraqi stability. Even after the monarchy's overthrow in 1958, there followed a decade of ideological clashes and conspiracies to seize power.

When the Ba'th took control in 1968, it was determined to end this era and to sustain its own rule forever. The new regime thus created parallel state structures to ensure its control. But the party itself came under the grip of the same security men it catapulted to prominence. By controlling Iraq's security apparatus, Saddam emerged as the lord of Iraq in the mid-1970s.

Building on past experience, Saddam asserted his rule by combining a system of

generous rewards and harsh punishments with a relentless drive to exploit Iraq's divisions and forging a symbiosis of tribal traditions, Ba'th doctrine and his personality cult. Saddam was not unique as a person but his comprehensive and methodical procedures of oppression were unique. He based his survival on the regime's ability to atomize Iraq's civil society, including the family unit, and in turning many Iraqis into accomplices and oppressors. These formed a class of their own irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation and included Saddam's willing and unwilling executioners. While the latter participated in Saddam's misdeeds under pressure and distress, the former, represented mainly by the security forces, were ready and bold participants.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: THE PATH TO POWER

Saddam Hussein hails from an area rigorously governed by tribal traditions and customs, enforcing a spirit of courage and intrepidity in the face of adversity and harsh conditions. Survival and revenge are the twin pillars of this tribal edifice. Situated on the banks of the Tigris river, Tikrit is the home of the three tribes: al-Nasir, Sultan and 'Ajil, from which Hussein descends, with al-Nasir being his direct pedigree.

At the center of tribal traditions are the rituals every member of these tribes goes through to encourage a courageous and remorseless character. Special emphasis is placed on upbringing. Children are raised by their aunts or uncles so as to be free from motherly influence and tender feelings. At a certain age, the youth are forced to slit the throats of chicken to get accustomed to scenes of blood, ride horses and fire from a special rifle, which recoils sharply, to show their manliness. Peace is maintained among the tribes according to a delicate balance of power. Intra-tribal murders are not condoned and every murder case is settled by paying a specified ransom to the family of the deceased. Yet murders outside the tribes do not entail special arrangement. For example, settling a murder case involving a Kurd requires no ransom fee. Saddam's upbringing, like other Tikritis, was based on these traditions and values.(3)

Saddam was born into a country glued together by the British in the 1920s to serve their interests. Arising from the ashes of the Ottoman empire, Iraq comprised the three former Ottoman provinces of Mosul with its Kurdish Sunni majority, Baghdad with its Arab Sunni majority, and Basra with its Arab Sh'ia majority. The British favored Arab Sunnis and entrusted the Hashemite family (allies of Britain and descendents of the Prophet) to rule Iraq. From the beginning, the Hashemite monarchy lacked legitimacy because of its close ties with colonial Britain and its narrow social base of support.

Leading a coalition of Free Officers, modeled on Egypt's Free Officers' movement, General Abd al-Karim Qasim staged a coup ending the Hashemite monarchy in July 1958. Qasim attempted to impress on Iraq an identity based on strident Arab nationalism and domestic social reform. Sustaining his rule and implementing his plan required a reorganization of the army as well as the

state. He based himself at the Ministry of Defense instead of the prime minister's office and selected trustworthy military cadres and demoted or retired senior officers whose loyalty and ideology he distrusted. He and other army officers occupied the main posts in the new government and the army moved to the center of Iraqi politics.

Saddam's initial rise to prominence came after his participation in a failed Ba'th Party attempt to assassinate Qasim in October 1959. This era played an important role in shaping Saddam's political outlook by showing how a constant struggle among forces, influenced by external powers or ideologies, shook the country and eventually subverted Qasim's rule. Indeed, Qasim's own coalition quickly broke into competing factions along political, ethnic, social and religious lines. This polarization also affected the army.

Movements clamoring for Arab nationalism and unity--represented mainly by Nasserists and the Ba'th party--and movements for social change--represented by the Iraqi Communist party--took center stage. Qasim used the Communists to contain the Arab nationalists but kept them away from sensitive power centers in the government or armed forces. Soon, due to his wariness of the communists' influence within the armed forces, Qasim also forced out Communist officers. Given his weakened support base and an unpopular government campaign against the Kurds, Qasim was toppled by a Nationalist/Ba'thist coalition, led by General Abd al-Salam 'Arif, in February 1963.

One immediate consequence of the new coup was the rise of some Tikriti Ba'thi senior figures to prominent positions.(4) This rise coincided with a deadly purge of Communist soldiers initiated by the Ba'thists. However, the Bathists' victory was short-lived. 'Arif outmaneuvered and prevented them from consolidating power,

then removed them in a counter-coup in November 1963. This episode in Ba'ithi history destroyed any internal democracy. Nor would it let the army be the arena for political conflict. Next time, the Ba'ith party was determined to destroy all rivals and monopolize all power so as not to fall again. It was ready for a ruthless Ba'ithization of Iraqi society and the armed forces.

Ironically, the removal of the Ba'ith from the 'Arif regime, coupled with the assumption of the Ba'ith Party to power in Syria, enhanced the position within the party of some Tikritis including Saddam Hussein and Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr. In early 1964, Michel Aflaq, a Syrian who was co-founder and main ideologue of the Ba'ith Party and secretary-general of its National Command, made Saddam secretary of a newly constituted Iraqi Regional Command. Bakr and Saddam participated in a major reorganization of the party, while at the same time fighting the 'Arif regime.

In July 1965, divisions within the Iraqi government's ranks culminated in the mass resignation of Nasserist ministers. Less than a year later, 'Arif died in obscure circumstances when his helicopter crashed on its way to Basra in April 1966. A military-civilian confrontation ensued, and the rival factions could not agree on a presidential candidate other than 'Abd al-Rahman 'Arif, brother of the late president. The second 'Arif regime was torn from its beginning by power struggles among the nationalists on one side, and between the civilians and the military on the other. Weakened by these struggles, the regime became increasingly isolated. At the same time, it, like its predecessor, tried to strengthen the security apparatus and subject Iraqis to widespread surveillance.

On July 17, 1968 dissident army officers with the help of the Ba'ith Party carried out a military coup. A Revolutionary Command Council (RCC)

was established to assume authority and the new government drew its members from the Ba'ith Party and dissident officers.(5) Although Bakr took over the presidency, the officers assumed many ministerial posts including the premiership. This power sharing arrangement did not sit well with the Ba'ith Party's ambitions and before long, on July 30, it carried out a new coup removing the officers from power.

Once it regained power, the Ba'ith Party set about imposing its ideological, political and administrative control over society and state, particularly the army. One lesson the Ba'ithists drew from the past decade was that the army constituted a principal threat. This was compounded by the lack of faith the party had in the existing security forces. Consequently, the new rulers began a systematic campaign rooting out potential opposition in the army and recruiting into its higher echelons loyal Ba'ithist officers.

In addition, they gave Saddam the task of creating an independent security apparatus whose task would be to eliminate dissidents and groups that could form an opposition. Out of this attempt to penetrate and monitor state and society, a deliberate plan to create parallel structures to control the state and all other organs of civil society emerged. Central to this plan was the attempt to imbue Iraq's society with Ba'ithi pan-Arab nationalist doctrine.(6) But contrary to its ideological commitments to socialism and modernity, the new regime relied more on tribal solidarity than party loyalty. In this respect, thanks to his tribal affiliation to Bakr, Saddam was appointed, in November 1969, vice-president of the republic and deputy chairman of the RCC.

The party was so confident in its drive to Ba'ithize Iraq's society that it publicly declared its aims to impose and maintain its total ideological and political hegemony over state and society during its 1974 conference.(7)

This obsession was not limited to indoctrinating Iraqis and crushing dissent. It was stridently chauvinistic as well. In 1970 the regime opened the Ottoman archives, in which Iraqis were classified as either Ottoman or Persian subjects, and launched a campaign of mass expulsion against all Iraqis of Persian "origin." This campaign reached its apex in early 1980 when Saddam, within the context of subduing the Islamist opposition led by the Da'wa party, issued several RCC decrees, including RCC decree 22/23/1807 of March 11, 1980 and RCC decree 666 of May 7, 1980, stipulating the deportation and revocation of Iraqi citizenship from Iraqis of "Persian" origin.(8) The magnitude of this campaign was so large that the regime established detention centers for such Iraqis between the ages of 18 and 28.(9)

Saddam's role in implementing the party's program was critical. Thanks to his control of the security apparatus, he was able to wield the real power in the parallel organizations that lay behind the state's facade. In addition, although his power base relied on his Tikriti connection, he did not shy away from eliminating any claim to leadership within his extended tribe, let alone within Ba'thi circles.(10) But Saddam's power was not confined to the use of terror. He mastered the party's system of severe punishments and generous financial rewards and promotions not only to ensure loyalty but also to lure supporters. In this respect, the party's and, in particular, Saddam's access to Iraq's riches following the rise in oil prices after 1973 enabled him to allocate and distribute the dividends of this wealth. Party control over the state was completed in 1977 when the Ba'th Regional Command was merged with the RCC and all Regional Command members became state ministers. At the same time, while Bakr was Iraq's president, Saddam effectively controlled the state.

In April 1979, Saddam succeeded Bakr and masterminded the purge of the Ba'th party and RCC from perceived disloyal and/or critical members. With the onset of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 Saddam launched a new era of rule in Iraq best described by Kanan Makiya as the "republic of fear."

OPPRESSION BY PROCEDURES: TRANSFORMING IRAQI SOCIETY

The war with Iran marked a major change in the nature of the Iraqi regime and how it ruled. During the first half of the 1980s, Saddam strove to make Iraq a fiefdom for the Tikritis. Tikritis filled the most sensitive posts in the state and especially in the security apparatus. Simultaneously, Saddam began usurping the power of the Ba'th party and turning it into an organization of mobilization, indoctrination and control, especially of domestic threats.

They directed the party that supervised the creation of the parallel structures of the regime and catapulted many Tikritis to high positions in the security services. But the real change, the focus of this paper, came in how Saddam managed to fragment and atomize Iraq's civil society by imposing a comprehensive and methodical repressive system on Iraqis and by seeking to turn them into accomplices of the regime and executioners of its policies. This policy systematically targeted civil society in general and its nucleus, the family, in particular. In other words, if you were not affiliated with the regime, including the Ba'th, or an informer for it, you would face physical and subsistence hardship.

Thanks to this policy there exists no civil or societal structure outside those of the regime and the Ba'th party. In this way, the regime makes sure, as expressed in Ba'th dogma, that the party remains the vanguard and basis of society, making Saddam the lynchpin upon which Iraq's existence hinges. Correspondingly, the

Ba'th became a medium through which Saddam's cult of personality was nurtured.

At this point, it is important to outline the procedures the regime employed to achieve its goal. In order for any Iraqi to have a certain job, become an agent of a company, acquire a sales license, or practice a profession, his application cannot be processed before it is reviewed and approved by the General Directorate of Security, known as Security or in Iraqi parlance Amn.(11) Among the security apparatus, the General Directorate of Security deals with domestic threats, including recruiting Iraqis. Approval is solely based on the applicant's readiness to "cooperate" with security and thus become an informer.

The minute an application is filled, a copy is sent to the provincial Directorate of Security, which orders a comprehensive background check on the applicant from both the *Mukhtar* (chief of village) and the directorate of Security where he resides. As specified by Security, the *Mukhtar* has to provide extensive information, including his "nationality" (Kurdish, Sunni, or Shi'a), political orientation, the names of people with whom he usually associates, his attitude and his family's attitude toward the regime, and whether he or any relatives have in the past opposed the regime.

At the same time, the local Directorate of Security conducts its own investigation of the applicant, based on specific questions from headquarters. As shown for example, in the Sulaimaniya Directorate of Security's letter number QSH/10971 of September 7, 1986, the questions are almost identical to those provided to the *mukhtar* with the addition of whether local security "has cooperated with the applicant in the interest of security work."(12)

A personal data sheet is then created for him containing the information provided both by the *mukhtar* and local security. Next, Security, either at the provincial or district level, summons the applicant to its

headquarters and tries to recruit him. At the end of the interview, Security demands from the applicant a written pledge indicating whether he will or will not cooperate.(13) Security then creates a file on him and assigns it to a security officer who will be his handler. It also requests that the applicant write an initial report about any information he has on the opposition, saboteurs (including any within his family) and deserters. After vetting all the information, Security then judges whether he is qualified for the job.

Applicants who decline to cooperate with Security will not be considered for the job and become both suspects and targets of the regime's reprisals. On the other hand, besides approving their applications, Security rewards its new informers on the basis of the importance of the information that they provide.(14) By this comprehensive system, the regime not only deepened the fragmentation of society but also forced many Iraqis to become informers and spies.

EDUCATION AS A SYSTEM FOR CONTROL AND RECRUITMENT

The Ba'th party places great emphasis on pedagogy. It is through education that the Ba'th highlights and perpetuates its dogma. But in Iraq under Saddam, the education system emerged not only as a means to indoctrinate students with Ba'thi ideology but also as a way to monitor and recruit both teachers and students. Saddam gradually eroded the power, independence and purpose of the Ba'th party by turning it into an organization whose main function was to monitor society and secure the regime against domestic threats. The party became controlled by the same security apparatus it created to control state organs. This is illustrated, as we shall see, by the methodical and categorical rules the party imposed at the behest of the security apparatus on Iraq's educational system.

These rules attempt to deny education and work to students and teachers who do not embrace Ba'thi ideology with the cult of Saddam at its center, decline Ba'th membership and cooperation with Security, and have relatives associated with saboteurs. All this is foisted on a system already adopting a discriminatory educational policy based on ethnic and religious affiliation. In addition, in the General Directorate of Security's telegram number 62439 of November 11, 1980, the Directorate established a branch, codenamed M85, to monitor the activities of students throughout their academic life including at universities.(15)

At this point it is important to note that the Ba'th party, besides its central headquarters in the capital, has headquarters on the governate (provincial) level (called Section), on the district level (called Branch), and on the sub-district level (called Division). Within the party there are several bureaus, including the Bureau of Youth and Students. Following Security guidelines, this Bureau keeps registers on all schools and in which politically related information on students and their families is regularly recorded and updated.

A sample register, issued by the Ba'th party, Bureau of Youth and Students of Sulaiminya Secondary School for Girls, contained the following categories:

1. Name
2. Date and Place of Birth
3. Nationality
4. Religion
5. Current Residence
6. Political Orientation
 - 6-1 Type
 - 6-2 Party Rank
 - 6-3 Division
 - 6-4 Name of Person in Charge
7. Profession of the Father
8. Birth Place
9. Birth Place of Grandfather

10. Contribution to Qadisiyat Saddam [Iran-Iraq war]
11. Attitude toward Training
12. Number of Father's Citizenship Certificate
13. Name of *Mukhtar* [village chief]
14. Reputation [political attitudes] of Student and Family
15. Student's Grade Average for Last Year
16. Comments(16)

As illustrated by this register, the Ba'th keeps extensive records on every student with the main objective of monitoring and recruiting them. Once students are recruited, they become part of the whole surveillance system. Students that engage in activities considered threatening to national security (such as demonstrating) will have their records "marked" and sent to the General Directorate of Security, which in turns orders that their applications to higher learning institutions be rejected.(17) In addition to that, the Ba'th regularly sends all registers to their corresponding provincial Directorate of Security, which compiles them and then sends lists comprising the names of secondary school graduates applying for admission into Iraqi universities to all Security branches. Every branch will receive the list of students residing in its sector. Along with the lists, Security orders that every branch mark the nationality of every student according to a color code: Red for Kurds, Yellow for Muslim Arabs, Green for Christians, and the word Turkmen would be written next to the names of members of that community.(18)

Another process to recruit teachers parallels the one to recruit students. The Ba'th launches periodic campaigns to recruit "independent" teachers, including recent politically independent graduates. Every teacher is required to write a pledge indicating whether he will join the party.(19) Subsequently, at the order of the Qutr's (in Ba'th lexicon Iraq as a region)

Secretary Bureau, in conjunction with Security, the Ba'th creates lists of teachers who refused Ba'th membership and passes them on to Security.(20) In addition, the party orders that a special form be created for every teacher on the list, which includes information about the teacher such as: political orientation; whether he has first or second degree relatives who are either sentenced, executed, or with the opposition; name of the Ba'th Party member who tried to recruit the teacher.(21)

Finally, the party orders that the teachers who refused Ba'th membership be dismissed from the teaching profession.(22) Equally significant, Security orders the dismissal of teachers who it designates as "unqualified" to teach. This designation is tied to the regime's policy of collective punishment whereby teachers who have family members overseas, who are considered "escapees", are dismissed.(23) It goes without saying that many teachers and students join the Ba'th Party and thus are compelled to engage in activities—including spying on others--supporting the regime.

SADDAM AND SECURITY

Nowhere is the collusion of many Iraqis with the regime more pronounced than in the relationship between Security and the regime in general, and Saddam in particular. Following his assumption of the presidency, Saddam did not relinquish his direct authority over the Security apparatus but remained fully in charge as he expanded and diversified it.(24) In the early 1980s he severed any connection between the Ministry of Interior and the Security apparatus and brought them under the aegis of the Office of the President.(25) Indeed, Saddam personally intervened in many cases involving security officers and informers.(26) In addition to monitoring each other, the apparatus's personnel serve as the ears and eyes of Saddam and, most

importantly, as implementers of his policies.

In addition, Saddam paid close attention to the process of recruiting Security personnel. In addition to recruiting the top personnel mainly from his tribe and affiliated ones within the Sunni triangle in the middle of the country, he put all Security personnel through a careful review process before finally hiring them. After their hire, Security personnel were given strict guidelines. For example, no Security official could marry before Security conducted a background check on the prospective bride and agreed to the marriage.(27)

Equally significant, Saddam granted Security personnel more power than any other state officials. Security officials throughout Iraq answered only to their directors in the provinces, who in turn answered to the director of the apparatus within the office of the president. In other words, governors had no official power whatsoever over Security officials.(28) In practice, a sergeant in Security had more clout than a governor. In return for their total loyalty, Saddam heaped all kinds of rewards on them ranging from specially tailored suits to cash bonuses to plots of land.(29)

Among the Security apparatus, the General Directorate of Security sat on the top of the state hierarchy to monitor and recruit Iraqis as well as suppress opposition. Besides maintaining records on Iraqis, it strove to have the largest number of spies throughout Iraqi society. Not only did it coordinate with the Ba'th or state organs to recruit spies but also aggressively pursued enlisting ordinary as well as influential Iraqis of all types, even within families.(30) Every provincial Directorate of Security tried to establish a network of spies covering the whole province, from village, to quarter, to sub-district, to district. According to official Iraqi documents, including records of payments,

many Iraqis collaborated with Security, providing information in Ba'thi lexicon on "everything that might negatively affect the public welfare," including delicate information on their own families.(31)

Iraqis approached by Security could either cooperate and be generously rewarded or face all kinds of pressure to do so. The method of payment--tangible such as cash or indirect such as promotion--depended on the quality of information. It is worth noting here that the *Mukhtar* (village chief), though not a security official but an agent, played an important role in providing Security with all kinds of information on his community.(32) Building on information provided by the Ba'th and the *Mukhtars*, Security even periodically recorded the new birth statistics throughout every sector of every province, noting the political orientation of the fathers of the newly born.(33)

Equally significant, the regime regularly launched campaigns to recruit informers among the families of saboteurs, a designation that included all those who actively or passively opposed the regime. In reality, these campaigns were part of the psychological warfare that the regime employed on the saboteurs and their families with the dual objectives of creating doubts among them and recruiting some of them. An example of the official instructions that became typical, especially during the 1980s, are included in RCC letter/Northern Affairs Committee number 4/380 of December 12, 1981. This RCC letter decreed that detained saboteurs' family members should be prodded to become good citizens and that some be released so as to create doubts whether they were informers and to encourage others to be recruited.(34)

The security apparatus directed the most horrible actions and atrocities committed by the regime. It was mainly Security that executed, detained, tortured, deported, and displaced Iraqis collectively or

individually. It was also Security that supervised the wholesale elimination of villages deemed "prohibited for security reasons."(35) Its association with the regime was so deep that almost all Security personnel had "blood on their hands." Security participated in grand plans such as operation Termination of Traitors, which culminated in the Anfal campaign, and daily operations running the gamut from executing to displacing Iraqis.(36)

Examples abound. At the order of Saddam, Security officials were at the forefront in pursuing and executing Da'wa (Islamist Shi'a) party members as instructed by RCC decree number 461 of March 31, 1980;(37) in the wholesale deportation of Iraqis of "Iranian origin" as ordered by RCC decree 22/23/1807 of March 11, 1980;(38) in executing deserters and draft dodgers as ordered by Saddam in his letter number 3/2/973/K of June 21, 1984;(39) in liquidating saboteurs and their collaborators;(40) in detaining the families of saboteurs;(41) in detaining the families of those who fled to Iran;(42) and in countless other actions.

During times of national security crises, Saddam gave Security officials and other state officials significant powers to do as they saw fit. In this respect, during the regime's anti-Kurdish campaign of 1987-1988, Saddam not only mobilized a wide range of officials from the lowest to highest ranking but also granted them great leeway to accomplish the mission, that of killing and displacing a large number of Kurds.(43) This, seemingly, was also part of the regime's strategy of spreading the responsibility for actions taken. Indeed, pro-government Kurdish militia, known as *Jahsh* (a pejorative name literally meaning mule) participated actively in attacking their fellow Kurds and in the wholesale destruction of many Kurdish villages during operation Termination of Traitors.(44)

Significantly, this circle of complicity was not confined to Security and state officials, accomplices and spies. The regime did not shy away from attempting to make the victims themselves complicit. According to Office of the President's letter number MH1/2080 of October 14, 1984, Security officials were instructed to commute the death sentences of all Da'wa party members who executed their party colleagues, to life imprisonment.(45) Needless to say, all state officials, including Ba'th party members, were expected to carry out the regime's orders, which included divulging information on one's own family.(46) Otherwise, they could face harsh punishments including execution.(47)

SADDAM'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS?

As shown by official Iraqi documents, Security and a vast network of spies undergirded the Iraqi regime and were not confined to a single ethnicity or religious affiliation. As documents show, while many senior figures of the apparatus were tribally affiliated with Saddam, a significant number of lower ranking members and most informers were not Sunnis. In addition, non-Sunnis, especially Shi'ites, are present at all levels of government, including Saddam's inner circle.(48) Therefore, while it is true that the regime is governed mainly by Tikriti Sunnis, still it is inadequate to define its identity as exclusively or strictly Sunni. He may have thought that the more he spread complicity, the stronger was the sector of Iraqis who supported his rule.

It should be noted that many Iraqis refused to cooperate with the regime, even in the face of threats to their physical or mental well-being. On the same grounds, while it is difficult to estimate the large number of Iraqis who cooperated with the regime, it is clear that this cooperation was largely the result of the regime's policy of

deepening the population's dependence on it for basic services and employment. This alone, however, cannot answer the difficult question as to why so many Iraqis cooperated with the regime.

True, it is the harsh measures Saddam imposed on Iraqis that pressured them into cooperating with the regime. Still, one cannot discount the notion that many state officials, especially Security personnel, were receptive to Saddam's orders in that they efficiently implemented them without wrestling with any moral questions. Importantly, defection from or insubordination in Security, unlike the army, was rare and most disciplinary actions taken by the regime against Security personnel involved civil crimes and infractions such as rape, taking bribes, or stealing.(49)

Thus one can safely argue that Security personnel, along with other senior officials, were Saddam's willing executioners; while for the most part the regime's informers were Saddam's unwilling executioners. Let us not forget that Iraqis have been heavily indoctrinated and militarized under Saddam, nor that Saddam himself is the product of the modern political landscape of the region in general and Iraq in particular, especially since 1958.

It was the confluence of the distressing socio-political conditions of the country with both the strident Ba'th doctrine and the conspiratorial formative experience of the Ba'th Party that produced many Saddams. There was never a shortage of people ready to pledge allegiance to him, creating a class of oppressors and accomplices irrespective of ethnic and/or religious affiliation.

Central to this, Saddam, more than any other Middle Eastern leader, deepened the ethnic, religious, social, and political divides in the country. On the one hand, he intensified the enmity among and between Iraq's communities, thereby creating a common denominator of collective distrust.

This condition served to alleviate the burden of cooperating with the regime in a way Iraqis could justify on the grounds that "if I did not cooperate with the regime others would." And it served to fuel rivalry among Iraqis with the result that they found it more convenient to cooperate with the regime to preempt their competitors from doing so.

At the same time, Saddam brutally forged a symbiosis between tribal traditions, Ba'th ideology, and his personality cult. In addition to appointing a large number of officials on the basis of tribal affiliation and enforcing a tribal code of rule, Saddam fused his personality cult with the Ba'th doctrine so as to become not only the indispensable leader but also the "messiah" leader who finally appeared to save Iraq and the Arab nation. According to Ba'thi literature, "Saddam Hussein is not a traditional leader, he is a defender (combatant), thinker, and a human being possessing leadership qualities unavailable to others...He is unlike any other leader. He fundamentally possesses the talent for leadership, hallowed by inspiration and ingenuity."(50)

In another piece of literature, Saddam's birth is qualified as the coincidence whereby life became transformed into political struggle.(51) Given that the Ba'th original platform had been to assert its hegemony over state and society, Saddam projected himself as a god-like figure to be not only followed but also emulated. Iraqis who thought otherwise would be guilty of both sedition and betraying the leader.

Yet this does not mean that the mass of Iraqis accepted this worldview in their hearts. Where possible, the regime's officials and agents were targeted for revenge. Informers, especially *Mukhtars*, were constant targets for assassination, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan.(52) Iraqi officials, especially security ones, were targets for both assassination and kidnapping.(53)

But it was the March 1991 uprising that exposed in graphic detail the real views of the people. Rebel Shi'as in the south of Iraq attacked government buildings and facilities and killed many Iraqi and Ba'th officials. Kurdish rebels stormed government headquarters, especially those of security, and murdered Iraqi officials, some of whom were thrown from the roofs of their headquarters before cheering crowds.(54) These actions continued until the government suppressed the uprising with even higher levels of violence.

CONCLUSION

For any post-Saddam regime, one of the most important issues will be deciding where the guilt lies for the former government's violations of human rights and international law. The capture of some of Iraq's archives in 1991 has already shown many things about the regime's operations and responsibilities for these actions. If the regime is overthrown, far more detailed and extensive information on these things will come to light.

Two important principles should be maintained: a clear distinction between the regime's willing and unwilling participants and the avoidance of any bloodbath fueled by a general desire for revenge. Another point, of course, would be that any future regime must be able to provide stability without repeating the mistakes of the past.

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1. During the March 1991 uprising in Iraq, Kurdish opposition groups captured huge quantities of Iraqi

government documents primarily belonging

to Iraqi intelligence. Thanks to efforts by Kanan Makiya and Human Rights Watch, these documents were transferred to the United States where the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took charge of them. Along with government officials, Human Rights Watch/Middle East first examined these documents, which were subsequently given in digital format to the Iraq Research and Documentation Project (IRDP). Supplementing documents possessed

by Makiya, this collection of documents numbering approximately 2.4 million pages is available at URL: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~irdp>>. The term

“oppression by procedures” was first suggested by Hasan Mneimneh.

2. Especially the four colonels Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh, Mahmud Salman, Fahim Sa’id and Kamal Shabib. These officers were behind the Rashid Ali al-Gailani’s coup d’etat in 1941, which was subsequently quelled by British military intervention. The British then restored the Hashemite monarchy.

3. See Hazim al-Amin, “Ala Hadhihi al-Taqaqid Kabara al-Ra’is al-‘Iraqi Fi Baldatihi wa ‘Ashiratihi” (On These Traditions the Iraqi President Grew in His Hometown and Tribe), *al-Hayat*, May 12, 2002.

4. These included Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr as Prime Minister, Tahir Yahya as Chief of Staff, and Hardan al-Tikriti as Commander of the Air Force.

5. The non-Ba’thist dissident officers included Colonel ‘Abd al-Razaq al-Na’if, Chief of Military Intelligence, and Colonel Ibrahim al-Da’ud, Commander of the Republican Guard.

6. Freedom, socialism, and unity formed the three ideological tenets of the Ba’th party.

7. See The Ba’th Arab Socialist Party, The 1968 Revolution in Iraq: Experience and Prospects: The Political Report of the Eighth Congress of the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party in Iraq, January 1974 (London: Ithaca Press, 1979).

8. For the RCC decrees see respectively Iraq Research and Documentation Project-North Iraq Data Set [hereafter IRDP-NIDS] [713267 and 1373111], available at URL: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~irdp>>.

9. IRDP-NIDS [713218].

10. Among the Ba’thi and Tikriti critics that Saddam dealt brutally with was Hardan al-Tikriti.

11. For a guide to Iraqi intelligence organizations, see Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network; A Guide and Analysis," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, Vol.6, No.3 (September 2002).

12. IRDP-NIDS [694310].

13. The pledge, written on official stationary, is usually as follows: “I, the signatory below, came to Security headquarters and pledged to provide all available information that might affect the security and welfare of the Revolution [July revolution] and Regime; otherwise I will be subjected to legal procedures. I signed voluntarily.” IRDP-NIDS [694269].

14. See the following three cases and their respective correspondence. Case one: Security recommends against employing a construction worker after he declined to cooperate with the apparatus. See IRDP-NIDS [694316, 694315, 694318, 694314, 694313]. Case two: Security indicates that it does not object to the employment of an applicant as a fireman after he pledged to cooperate with the apparatus. See IRDP-NIDS [694263, 694261, 694262, 694264, 694266, 694268, 694269, 694260]. Case three: Security indicates that it does

not object to granting an applicant a Kerosene Sales license after he pledged to cooperate with the apparatus. See IRDP-NIDS [692254, 692252, 692260, 692255, 692253].

15. IRDP-NIDS [1373810].

16. See register of Sulaimaniya Secondary School in IRDP-NIIDS [1270813-1270892].

17. IRDP-NIDS [1042115].

18. IRDP-NIDS [1270981].

19. IRDP-NIDS [322102].

20. IRDP-NIDS [322096, 322091, 322092, 322093].

21. IRDP-NIDS [322104].

22. IRDP-NIDS [322099].

23. IRDP-NIDS [1273159, 1273187, 1273159].

24. For detailed information on the Security apparatus and their functions, see Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2002).

25. See IRDP-NIDS [1346796, 656959].

26. For example, Saddam issued an RCC decree increasing the family's retirement salary of a martyr, who was a *Mukhtar*. See IRDP-NIDS [1393768]. Another example involved Saddam's order to defer the promotion of a Security officer because he committed a "vile action against" a female. See IRDP-NIDS [671762].

27. IRDP-NIDS [696258, 696259, 1402110].

28. IRDP-NIDS [695816].

29. IRDP-NIDS [1165827, 1165659, 1165932].

30. A chilling account is provided by Zainab Al-Suwaij: "On TV, we watched Saddam reward fathers with large cash prizes for turning in sons who had deserted the army. Even children are not spared. When I attended fourth grade in 1981, my teacher called me to the

front of the class and asked: 'Do your parents say anything bad about the government?' The whole class was staring at me. Stunned and scared, I answered, 'No.' But when one of my classmates said in passing that Iran was not so bad, she disappeared the next day, along with her family." Zainab Al-Suwaij, "Iraqi People Yearn to Taste Freedom Again," *USA Today*, January 13, 2003.

31. IRDP-NIDS documents were withheld due to their sensitive nature and implications.

32. No individual can become a *Mukhtar* if he refuses to cooperate with Security.

33. See IRDP-NIDS [328414, 328413].

34. IRDP-NIDS [1430631].

35. IRDP-NIDS [860012-14, 862113-17].

36. For complete details on the regime's 1987-1988 anti-Kurdish campaign, represented by Operation Termination of Traitors, and the huge bureaucracy involved in it, see Robert G. Rabil, "Operation "Termination of Traitors": The Iraqi Regime Through Its Documents," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2002).

37. IRDP-NIDS [1372984].

38. IRDP-NIDS [713267]. See also IRDP-NIDS [1373111, 1372850, 713218, 1395165].

39. IRDP-NIDS [1165878].

40. IRDP-NIDS [1373970, 657347]. See also translated IRDP-NIDS documents on IRDP web-site.

41. IRDP-NIDS [1370817, 1343280, 657347].

42. IRDP-NIDS [717546]. This document, bearing record number 54819 and transmitted to Sulaimaniya Directorate of Security through General Directorate of Security's telegram number 55156 of October 21, 1982, instructs the "following measures

concerning the families of individuals who fled to the side of the Persian enemy:

a- If the escapee is married, then his wife and children will be detained.

b- If the escapee is single, then his father and mother will be detained. In the event they were deceased, the most influential member in the family will be detained.

c- To detain the escapee's brothers who are in the military.

d- The above measures must be applied against families who were detained since the beginning of the war with the Persian foe; continue applying them..."

43. See Rabil, "Operation "Termination of Traitors"".

44. Ibid.

45. IRDP-NIDS [1395012].

46. The level of the regime's penetration of civil society in general and the family in particular is revealed in a letter by Sulaimaniya Directorate of Security in which it congratulates a Security official for surrendering his military deserter brother. See IRDP-NIDS [1394712].

47. IRDP-NIDS [1372648, 322745].

48. Former Prime Minister and deputy minister Muhammad Hama al-Zubeidi, a Shi'a, had been infamously known as Saddam's "Shi'a thug." He was central in brutally suppressing the Shi'a uprising of March 1991 after the Gulf War with tens of thousands killed.

49. Of the thousands of documents the author has been inspecting, none so far has dealt with cases of defection from or insubordination in Security. However, defections did occasionally happen.

50. See Ba'th literature, bearing the title "Valiant Comrade Saddam Hussein, Leader of the Party, Revolution, and March," in IRDP-NIDS [2168409-16].

51. See Ba'th literature, bearing the title "The Role of Leadership and the Fashioning of the Perception of the Ba'th

Labor," in IRDP-NIDS [690632-41].
52. IRDP-NIDS [1393777, 1393636, 1393914].

53. For example, according to several intelligence reports from the General Directorate of Security, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) executed a significant number of prisoners in the Khatay prison in May 1985. See IRDP-NIDS [749176-9].

54. Personal accounts by Kurds. One of the first Security headquarters to be attacked and its officials thrown from windows and balconies was Rania's.