



THE ISLAMIC DA'WA PARTY: PAST DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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The invasion of Iraq and its subsequent occupation by U.S.-led forces has allowed the majority Shi'a population to assert itself politically. Much of the debate regarding their political development has focused on the role of the religious scholars, at the expense of other Shi'a political groups. The Da'wa party is the main party not headed by a scholar, and has the longest history of organized communal political activity. The persecution it suffered under Saddam Hussein and the sacrifices it made have earned it support amongst the Shi'a population, but its fractious nature and the other Shi'a political groupings will make it difficult for the party to regain its former influence amongst the Shi'a.

The emergence of a strong political consciousness amongst the Shi'a of Iraq following the defeat of the Sunni-dominated Ba'thist regime of Saddam Hussein has focused attention on the importance of communal identity in shaping the political development of states within the region. The increased political role that the Iraqi Shi'a are seeking after decades of political repression is also of interest to other regional states who possess politically under-represented Shi'a minorities themselves. In the case of Iraq, most examinations of the Shi'a community's political development have concentrated on the leading role played by religious scholars (*'ulama*, sing. *'alim*) such as Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim (following the assassination of his brother Muhammad Baqir) and Muqtada al-Sadr. These *'ulama*, along with other less publicly prominent scholars, are instrumental in representing elements of the Shi'a community and highlight the potential political power of this group. Indeed, not since the Iranian revolution of 1979 has the question of Shi'a political development, and the place of the *'ulama* within it, been of such interest internationally.

This concentration on the political role played by the Shi'a *'ulama* however,

hides the fact that they are but one agent of political change. Political representation amongst the Shi'a community within the Middle East has generally been characterized by one of three models: clerical political leadership as exemplified by the Iranian model based on Ayatollah Khomeini's notion of *wilayat al-faqih* (governorship of the jurist), non-clerical control of sectarian organizations such as Nabih Berr's Amal Movement in Lebanon,(1) or participation in secular parties advocating radical changes to the political and economic *status quo*, often represented by leftist groups such as the communist party.(2) Within Iraq however, another model of political representation is emerging--a blending of scholars and non-scholars within a political organization that supports technocratic rule in accordance with the tenets of Islam. That model is championed by *Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Call Party).

BACKGROUND

The origins of *Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya* (hereafter referred to as *al-Da'wa*) are far from clear. Its emergence occurred during a period of intellectual and organizational attempts to find a way of expressing Shi'a Muslims' desire for

political rule in accordance with the tenets of Islam, much of which was driven by the *'ulama*. From the anti-British revolts in Najaf in 1918 to the *madrassa* reform movement of the 1930s led by Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar,(3) the *'ulama* played a prominent role. In a regional context, the emergence of the party was, initially at least, a response by selected Iraqi Shi'a *'ulama* to what they saw as the growing threat posed by the secular forces of Arab nationalism and leftist political ideology. In its specifically Iraqi context, the emergence of *al-Da'wa* can best be linked to the freedom of action given to, and support received by, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) following the rise to power of Abd al-Karim Qasim in 1958. Large sections of the *'ulama* opposed Qasim for the secularizing measures he undertook that threatened the scholars' power base. In particular, they virulently opposed Qasim's land reform measures that broke ". . . the economic and political power of the Iraqi landlords, [who were] major backers of the clerical establishment."(4)

The *'ulama* felt under attack not only legislatively, but also ideologically. The attraction of the leftist parties that advocated a change to the *status quo* was attractive to many Shi'a, and the relevance of Islamic jurisprudential study was increasingly questioned. The degree to which the *'ulama* felt that the place of Islam within society was under threat is illustrated by the fact that between 1918 and 1957 the number of students in the Najaf *hawza* (centers for juristic learning) had fallen from 6,000 to less than 2,000 (of whom only 326 were Iraqi).(5) Concern at the decline of the place of religion in society was the impetus for some *'ulama* to seek a compact between scholars and lay people to work towards the wider adoption of Islam amongst the general population (hence the selection of the term *da'wa*, which is the call to adopt Islam as the true faith). The actual date for the emergence of *al-Da'wa* is not clear. Most academic scholars place its

emergence as occurring in 1958, although according to *al-Jihad* (the Iraqi Islamic movement's weekly newspaper), the party was organized in October 1957.(6)

The actual mechanism for the emergence of the party is also not fully agreed upon. Certainly its early formative period was dominated by the dynamic young *'alim* from a prestigious scholarly family, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. He, along with a group of similarly minded youthful *'ulama* sought to redress the declining place of Islam within Iraqi society and chose *al-Da'wa* as the means by which to achieve this. The scholar Joyce Wiley claims that the party emerged directly from meetings in al-Sadr's home,(7) while Aziz names the founder as another scholar, Mahdi al-Hakim (son of the most senior Shi'a scholar of the period, Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim) who subsequently introduced al-Sadr to the movement before al-Sadr became its head.(8) A third version has the party emerging from the *Jama't al-'Ulama* (Society of 'Ulama) which was itself formed around 1958.(9) Whatever the sequence of events, al-Sadr became the intellectual force behind the party and a key architect in determining its structure. However, al-Sadr's official role within the party has often been questioned, and it has been alleged that both al-Sadr and Mahdi al-Hakim withdrew from any official position within *al-Da'wa* at the behest of Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim. Al-Hakim was supposedly concerned about potential backlash for the *'ulama* should they hold official political positions in the face of opposition from the communists and Arab nationalists.(10)

Al-Da'wa has experienced three distinct periods of development following its emergence: early expansion, followed by repression and a move to militancy, and finally an underground and expatriate existence. The expansion phase continued until 1968, particularly following the rise to power of Abd al-Salam 'Arif in 1963. The fact that the *'ulama* had sought to

discredit the government of al-Qasim and supported the crackdown on the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) meant that the 'Arif regime allowed the Islamist movement some freedom of action following its accession to power. *Al-Da'wa* sought to expand its membership base outside of Najaf, and were particularly effective in targeting educated lay people who the party saw as the drivers of societal change,(11) as well as working class Shi'a from *Madina al-Thawra* (the impoverished eastern Baghdad area, later known as *Madina al-Saddam* and then *Madina al-Sadr*). These groups were the same ones who had been attracted to the ICP but who were increasingly disillusioned regarding its ability to bring about change to their societal circumstances.(12) Of particular note was the effort expended to attract female members to the cause, largely through the efforts of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's sister Bint al-Huda, who organized study groups for pious women.(13)

The accession to power of the Ba'thists under Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr in 1968 signaled the commencement of the second phase of *al-Da'wa's* development. The Ba'thists initiated a crackdown on Shi'a political activism, driven in part by the secular nature of the Ba'thist ideology and in part by their view of a politicized Shi'a as a threat to the stability of the regime. During the 1970s, the Shi'a journal *Risalat al-Islam* was shut down, a number of religious educational institutions were closed, and a law was enacted that obligated Iraqi students of the *hawza* to undertake national military service. The Ba'thists then began specifically targeting *al-Da'wa* members, arresting and imprisoning them from 1972 onwards. In 1973, the alleged head of *al-Da'wa's* Baghdad branch was killed in prison, and one year later, 75 *al-Da'wa* members were arrested and sentenced to death by the Ba'thist revolutionary court.(14) In 1975, the government canceled the annual procession from

Najaf to Karbala (known as *marad al-ras*).

Although subject to repressive measures throughout the 1970s, large-scale opposition to the government by *al-Da'wa* can really be traced to what became known as the Safar Intifada of February 1977. Despite the government's ban on the celebration of *marad al-ras*, *al-Da'wa* organized the procession in 1977, which was subsequently attacked by police. This, in turn, led to massive protests in southern Iraq by the Shi'a and large-scale arrests. The militancy of *al-Da'wa* against what it saw as an increasingly anti-Islamic government was given a fillip as a result of the 1979 Iranian revolution, which served as an exemplar of what a committed scholarly leadership could achieve. Certainly, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr was inspired by these events and sought to take advantage of the impetus it provided. In order to orchestrate a centrally directed Shi'a opposition, he ". . . sent dozens of his students to the different areas of Iraq. A special committee was formed by [Sadr] for that purpose."(15) By this stage, confrontation between the Ba'thist regime and *al-Da'wa* became more pronounced. By late 1979, *al-Da'wa* had formed a military wing (later called *Shahid al-Sadr*), and on March 30, 1980, the Revolutionary Command Council retrospectively made *al-Da'wa* a proscribed organization, membership of which incurred the death penalty.(16) In response, *al-Da'wa* launched an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Tariq Aziz, a close aide of Saddam Hussein, on April 1, 1980. As a consequence, the Ba'thist regime apprehended and later executed Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his sister Bint al-Huda on April 9.

The execution of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and subsequent proscription of the party in 1980 marks the commencement of the third phase in *al-Da'wa's* history. As will be discussed later, many *al-Da'wa* members fled Iraq

to the safety of their co-religionists in Iran. Those who stayed in Iraq formed a clandestine organization based on a cellular structure to ensure their survival. They maintained their militancy against the Ba'hist regime, by now under the control of Saddam Hussein. Major assassination attempts were carried out by *al-Da'wa* against Saddam Hussein himself in 1982 and 1987, and it is alleged that the 1996 assassination attempt against Saddam's son Uday was also carried out by *al-Da'wa*.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The ideological outlook of the party owes much to the intellectual work of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, a large part of which was outlined in his major literary contributions of the 1960s and 1970s. At the heart of his, along with many other scholars', concern is the need to institute the rule of God on earth. In the Shi'a context, there is also the role to be played by the *'ulama* (or more specifically the *marja'iyya*) as successors in jurisprudential expertise to the twelve imams of the Shi'a faith.(17) The practical manifestation of how this theory of governance should be put into practice is the essence of the differences that exist between Shi'a political groups. In the case of *al-Da'wa*, al-Sadr laid out four mandatory principles of governance in his 1975 work, *Islamic Political System*. These were:

1. Absolute sovereignty belongs to God.
2. Islamic injunctions are the basis of legislation. The legislative authority may enact any law not repugnant to Islam.
3. The people, as vice-regents of Allah, are entrusted with legislative and executive powers.
4. The jurist holding religious authority represents Islam. By confirming legislative and executive actions, he gives them legality.(18)

The success of the Iranian revolution, and the creation of the Islamic Republic

of Iran, caused a reappraisal of the role of the *'ulama* in the political process. Al-Sadr himself was vitally interested in the practical manifestation of an Islamic state, and offered his views on its political system in a work composed in 1979, *Preliminary Legal Note on the Project of a Constitution for the Islamic Republic in Iran*. His views on the relative authority of the supreme jurist saw a balance between consultation (*shura*) and the oversight role of the *'ulama*. In practical terms, Sadr envisaged that political control would be ". . .exercised through the election by the people of the head of the executive power, after confirmation by the *marja'iyya*,(19) and through the election of a parliament, which is in charge of confirming the members of government appointed by the Executive, and passing appropriate legislation to fill up the discretionary area."(20)

Al-Sadr's mention of the *marja'iyya* as an institution is important as the subsequent rise to power of Khomeini shows the dominance of a single source of emulation (*marja'*, pl. *maraji'*) to whom all owe allegiance. This model, it can be argued, was peculiar to the time but unlikely to maintain its universality given the competing *maraji'*. The central role of the *marja'* certainly heavily influenced the political orientation of the party. A 1981 *al-Da'wa* publication illustrates how the party had defined a role for a single *marja'*. It stated that:

Delegating decision-making to the jurist does not mean monopolizing it without consulting qualified people and experts. . . devolving governance to the jurist in no way means that he will be the actual ruler or president of the republic, for instance. He may assign execution to whoever is elected by the community while assuming the role of supervisor and guide. Thus practical convergence is

achieved between the two notions of *shura* and *wilayat al-faqih*.(21)

Al-Da'wa's attraction to the concept of *wilayat al-faqih*, and particularly its members' loyalties to the Iranian Supreme Leader, has been a constant source of tension within the party and the basis of many of its internal disagreements. The years immediately following the Iranian revolution and the proscription of the party within Iraq represent the zenith of this concept's influence within the party. Since that time, however, the party has tended towards an institutionalization of non-clerical technocratic leadership, with a collective *marja'iyya* forming a body of jurisprudential review and advice.

Certainly the emergence of SCIRI (Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) was precipitated by differing concepts of the role of the *faqih* (jurisprudent) amongst *al-Da'wa* members. SCIRI was established by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, a prominent *al-Da'wa* member and highly regarded *'alim*. Al-Hakim was an advocate of Khomeini's vision of *wilayat al-faqih*, and consequently established extremely close relations with the Iranian government. Whilst many *al-Da'wa* members followed al-Hakim's lead, others refused to acknowledge Ayatollah Khomeini as their *marja'*, and sought to maintain their independence from Iranian political and ideological control. This latter group has constituted the Tehran branch of *al-Da'wa*. Although both *al-Da'wa* and SCIRI have maintained good relations throughout, there have been occasional tensions over the differing roles each believe that the *'ulama* are to play.

ORGANIZATION

As with all secretive organizations, the structure of the party is difficult to outline with absolute certainty. The essence of the party is the body charged with juridical oversight of party decisions,

ensuring that its direction is in accordance with the tenets of Islam. There is no evidence that such a body existed in a formal sense during al-Sadr's life, and he may well have represented its functions in a practical sense largely on his own. After the death of al-Sadr, however, a formalized *al-majlis al-fiqhi* (Council of Jurisprudence) was established in 1982.(22)

The most powerful element of *al-Da'wa* is the Congress (*mu'tamar*), which is held every two years and at which the new leadership is elected. The party is comprised of several bureaus, the two most important of which are the political bureau and the military bureau.(23) *Al-majlis al-fiqhi* fills the role that the judicial oversight body was designed to do in al-Sadr's concept of Islamic government. The political leadership of *al-Da'wa* consists of lay Shi'a, thereby maintaining the separation of jurisprudential oversight from the political executive.

The degree of power wielded by the Congress in general, and the political bureau in particular, has been put to the test on a number of occasions. It is the outcomes of these confrontations that illustrate the degree to which the party has moved away from any affiliation with an Iranian form of Shi'a governance as a model for its future development. In 1987, for example, Sayyid Kazim al-Ha'iri, a noted *'alim* and prominent member of *al-Da'wa*, disagreed with what he considered to be a subordinate role for the *'ulama* within the organization, and sought a subordination of the Tehran branch of the party to the Supreme Leader in Iran.(24) This did not occur and, in consequence, Sayyid al-Ha'iri left the party.(25) More recently, the party has had to again discipline members exhibiting pro-Iranian loyalties. In 1998, the party's Tehran spokesman, Muhammad Mahdi al'Asifi, expressed his allegiance (*bay'a*) to the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in a book he released. Such an expression of

loyalty had not been cleared by either the political bureau or the Congress, and al-'Asifi was suspended from the party as a result.(26)

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Al-Da'wa has also been influential and active in Shi'a communities outside Iraq. Much of this is due to the fact that the crackdown on the party, and the expulsion of non-Iraqis from the *hawza*, forced members of *al-Da'wa* either back to their countries of origin, or to seek protection in safer environments. It was for this reason that branches of the party were established in Teheran, Damascus and London following the proscription of the party by Saddam Hussein in 1980. Lebanese members of *al-Da'wa* had returned to their country from the early 1970s, where they maintained a network of followers, rather than a distinct branch of the party. Many of them were members of the Amal movement, given that the leadership of Musa al-Sadr reflected much of his cousin Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's ideology.

Some *al-Da'wa* members also left Iraq and established an office in Damascus. From here they were active for a time in the Joint Action Committee, a forum for Damascus-based Iraqi opposition groups that was later to form the basis of the Iraqi National Congress. Jawad al-Maliki, a Damascus-based *al-Da'wa* spokesman headed the first national Iraqi opposition group meeting in Beirut in 1991. The current head of the Baghdad office of *al-Da'wa*, Abd al-Anizi, also spent his time in exile working from the Damascus office.(27) Support for *al-Da'wa* was also strong in Kuwait, and much of the party's financial resources were located there.(28) Given the support of both France and the United States for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, the bombing of both the French and United States embassies in Kuwait City in 1983 was also blamed on *al-Da'wa*, and the members involved who were arrested by authorities were subsequently referred to

as the "*Da'wa* 17." The party has been at pains to distance itself from these actions, and claims that Iranian security agents had taken over the *al-Da'wa* cell in Kuwait and were responsible for these attacks.(29)

The large numbers of *al-Da'wa* members who fled to Iran in the wake of Saddam Hussein's proscription of the party, and the ongoing battle amongst *al-Da'wa* as to the efficacy of Iranian concepts of *wilayat al-faqih* has already been discussed. However, not all *al-Da'wa* members remained in Iran to continue the opposition against the Ba'thists. The constant tension between Iranian concepts of an Islamic state and those held by *al-Da'wa* forced some members of the party further afield in order to establish their political independence from the host country. Current Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) member, Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, fled to Iran during the Ba'thist crackdown on *al-Da'wa* in 1980, but moved to London in 1989 in an effort to establish a Shi'a political direction less dominated by Iranian views.

The attraction of many members to Khomeini's concept of *wilayat al-faqih*, along with the desire to support the nascent Iranian revolution in the face of invasion by Iraq had repercussions for *al-Da'wa*. In Lebanon, the increasingly secular outlook of Amal after the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr in Libya, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and Amal leader Nabih Berri's participation in the 1982 National Salvation Committee, all conspired to force many Lebanese *al-Da'wa* members to seek more activist Shi'a political models. This is reflected in the fact that three of the nine delegates that founded Hizballah in 1982 were members of *al-Da'wa*.(30) In addition Shaykh Ibrahim al-Amin, Amal's representative in post-revolutionary Iran (and an *al-Da'wa* member from his Najaf days) returned to Lebanon and recruited many *al-Da'wa* members into Hizballah.

AL-DAWA'S FUTURE IN IRAQ

Regardless of the tribulations that the party has faced in the past, the U.S. invasion of Iraq has presented *al-Da'wa* with an opportunity to implement the vision of Islamic governance that it has pursued for over 40 years. However, its ability to succeed in this endeavour is open to question. Certainly the sacrifices the party made in resisting the Ba'th regime over the years is respected within Iraq, and a source of strength within the party itself. As the party's official organ *Al-Da'wa* noted in August 2003, ". . . the priorities of the (Governing Councils) Presidency are measured by the level of sacrifices made by the Islamic Da'wa Party." (31) The party also maintained an active presence within Iraq even after 1980 although, to ensure their survival, they maintained a high degree of secrecy and a cellular organizational structure. This has given them a pre-existing support base and organizational infrastructure that they can build upon. This was aided by the inclusion of two of their members, Ibrahim al-Ja'far and Abd al-Zahra Uthman (better known as Izz al-Din Salim - the former head of the Basra *al-Da'wa* branch) in the IGC. The death of Uthman at the hands of a suicide bomber in May this year whilst he held the rotating presidency of the Council, although tragic, is unlikely to adversely affect the role of *al-Da'wa* in Iraq's political future. Although under physical threat from extremist elements within Iraq, its leaders still regard the other Shi'a political groups as its main political threat given that they will vie for the same constituency during elections.

The fact that both al-Ja'far and Uthman were non-scholars has allowed the party to give practical voice to its claim that they are committed to technocratic governance within an Islamic state. This also continues a trend since the early 1980s of greater participation by lay Shi'a in the senior leadership of the party. As well as an increasing role for lay Shi'a, *al-Da'wa* has

been careful to portray themselves as a genuinely independent Iraqi nationalist movement, particularly since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini removed a competing source of allegiance for party members. This independence has also been reflected in the party's attitude to the U.S. intervention in Iraq. Although the party met with Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. special envoy for Iraq, it refused to join any U.S.-sponsored opposition group. Similarly, whilst it acknowledges the obvious realities of the U.S. occupation (and participates in the IGC) *al-Da'wa* also insists on the earliest possible transfer of political authority to Iraqis and the withdrawal of United States forces.

The reputation that *al-Da'wa* possesses and can use to its political advantage is, however, offset by several limitations. The first of these is the expansion of Iraqi Shi'a political movements. Unlike the situation that existed in Iraq before its proscription in 1980, *al-Da'wa* faces competition for political authority from other groups from within the Iraqi Shi'a community, particularly from SCIRI and the Sadrists. Both of these groups also advocate Islamic governance, although *al-Da'wa* differs from the other two in not giving allegiance to a single *marja'*. Given that exiled al-Da'wa members founded SCIRI, and that the Sadrists have emerged very rapidly from within Iraq itself, the support base from which *al-Da'wa* can draw new followers is also uncertain. Whereas much of the party's rank and file came from the impoverished *Madina ath-Thawra* section of Baghdad (subsequently re-named *Madina al-Saddam*), that area is now referred to as *Madina al-Sadr* and is dominated by supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr.

The party will also need to establish a united front if it is to prove influential within Iraqi politics. *Al-Da'wa* is a notably fractious party given that the forced relocation of party members after the 1980 proscription, and the consequent

pressure from Iranian scholars on the Tehran *al-Da'wa* members, have both placed pressure on the party's ideological construct. Branches of the party in disparate locations adopted separate attitudes to issues such as consultation and relations with other opposition groups. This geographical dislocation and consequent lack of unity within the party will alter now that the Ba'thist regime has been removed. In April of this year a well-regarded *al-Da'wa* 'alim Muhammad Baqir al-Nasri returned to Nasiriyah from his exile in London,(32) and Ibrahim al-Ja'fari likewise returned from exile in England. Whilst al-Nasri is a well-regarded 'alim, he cannot be considered to be the party's *marja'*, as there has not been a universally recognized one since Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. As Dr. Khudayr Ja'far, a member of the *al-Da'wa* politburo pointed out ". . .we do not adopt a single leadership. Some of us follow al-Sadr, while others follow al-Hakim or al-Sistani. The Hawza is one: there is no Hawza that is mute while another speaks."(33)

Another issue that may militate against widespread acceptance of the party is the form of government that it envisages for Iraq. It is known that *al-Da'wa* favors a strong central government for Iraq, rather than a loose federation along confessional or ethnic lines such as some have advocated. This indicates that, although the party recognizes that the demographic diversity of Iraq precludes the import of an Iranian model of governance, they are nonetheless keen to ensure that the governance of the state is in accordance with the tenets of Islam. Only a strong central Islamist government could achieve this. How the various ethnic and religious minorities within the country would accept this is a key question that the party will need to answer, if it has any hope of wielding significant power in the future.

al-Da'wa's attitude to democratic elections is a fundamental question that is still yet to be answered. In the past,

particularly following the execution of al-Sadr and the forced exile of many *al-Da'wa* members in post-revolutionary Iran, the party's attitude reflected the Iranian line. In 1981, the party required that ". . .the person in charge [is] to be a *faqih* (jurist). . . and it does not accept a non-*faqih* to take charge merely because the majority of the nation votes for him."(34) This reflects a widely held criticism of Islamist groups in general. The belief is that, having established national rule in accordance with the precepts of Islam, to subsequently give up government on the basis of an electoral result would be to cede the sovereignty of God to the sovereignty of man. However, the party has moved on from the Iranian-inspired absolutist attitude towards theocratic rule. Ten years after the comment cited above, the party's attitude was much more accepting, reflected in the view of a senior party source who claimed that "[*al-Da'wa*] shall accept everything that the public will accept. Even if they choose a perfectly non-Islamic regime. If they do not choose Islam, this means that they are not prepared for it. If Islam is imposed, it will become an Islamic dictatorship and this would alienate the public."(35) This may in part be a response influenced by the experience of post-revolutionary political rule in neighboring Iran, but is more likely recognition of the fact that there is a diversity in the communal makeup of the Iraqi polity that precludes the adoption of political Islam as the state ideology at present.

CONCLUSION

The Iraqi political stage is becoming increasingly crowded with Shi'a political groups. As the longest established Iraqi Shi'a movement, and having suffered heavily at the hands of the Ba'thists, *al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya* can be forgiven for thinking that they would be entitled to favoritism in becoming the leading Shi'a political movement now that they are able to operate freely. Certainly their elevation

of the political bureau under its non-scholarly leadership has helped to soften *al-Da'wa's* public image within the country, and its representation on the IGC has given it a public profile. Despite this, the party's ability to implement its version of Islamic governance is questionable. *Al-Da'wa* remains fractious after years of dislocation, and its ability to present a unified front, particularly on issues of jurisprudence, remains questionable. There are residual concerns amongst the non-Shi'a Iraqi minority that (along with the other Shi'a Islamist parties) *al-Da'wa's* commitment to long-term democratic rule is doubtful. These concerns revolve around the belief that, once in power, Islamist parties (either Sunni or Shi'a) cannot subsequently cede government to elected non-Islamist parties, as it would entail substituting the rule of God for the rule of the people. The next few years will demonstrate how valid this belief is.

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1. Although it should be noted that Amal and its predecessor Harakat al-Mahrumin (Movement of the Dispossessed) were started by the 'alim Musa al-Sadr.
2. The Shi'a have constituted the largest confessional group within the Lebanese Communist Party for a long time. See Nazih Richani, *Dilemmas of Democracy and Political Parties in Sectarian Societies: the Case of the PSP of Lebanon 1949-1996* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 160. Confirmed during author's interview with Sa'adallah Mazraani, Deputy Secretary-General of the Lebanese Communist party, Beirut, June 6, 2002.

3. Keiko Sakai, "Modernity and Tradition in the Islamic Movements in Iraq: Continuity and Discontinuity in the Role of the 'Ulama," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter 2001), p. 38. Many of al-Dawa's founders, such as Murtada al-Askari and Sayyid Mahdi al-Hakim, were students of al-Muzaffar.
4. Joyce Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1992), p. 33.
5. Fadil Jamali, "The Theological Colleges of Najaf," *The Muslim World*, Vol. L, No. 1 (January 1960), p. 15.
6. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.
8. T.M. Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr in Shi'i Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1993), p. 213.
9. Hanna Batatu, "Shi'i Organisations in Iraq: al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah and al-Mujahidin," in Juan R.I. Cole & Nikki R. Keddie (eds.), *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 197.
10. Sakai, "Modernity and Tradition," p. 41.
11. A good account of recruitment methods for university students can be found in Amatzia Baram, "Two Roads to Revolutionary Shi'ite Fundamentalism in Iraq," in Marty & Appleby (eds.), *The Fundamentalism Project*, Vol. 4, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 540.
12. Yitzhak Nakash, "The Shi'is and the Future of Iraq," *Special Policy Forum Report Number 719*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 4, 2003, p. 1 <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch2003/719.htm>>.
13. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 38.
14. Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr," p. 212.
15. Chibli Mallat "Religious Militancy in Contemporary Iraq: Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr and the Sunni-Shi'a Paradigm,"

Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1988), p. 727.

16. It is claimed that 96 members of al-Da'wa were executed in this month alone.

17. For a broader examination of this area, see Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 63.

18. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 126.

19. The marja'iyya is the collective body of the most highly regarded scholarly sources of emulation (maraji'). Who they are, and how they are to be appointed are questions that would need to be resolved before it could be implemented practically.

20. Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law*, p. 73.

21. Abdul-Halim al-Ruhaimi "The Da'wa Islamic Party: Origins, Actors and Ideology," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar (ed.), *Ayatollah, Sufis and Ideologues: State, Religion and Social Movements in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2002), p. 158.

22. Sakai, "Modernity and Tradition," p. 42.

23. Ibid.

24. Juan Cole "The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Autumn 2003), p. 553.

25. Ruhaimi, "The Da'wa Islamic Party," p. 159.

26. Sakai, "Modernity and Tradition," p. 43.

27. Chicago Tribune, June 3, 2003.

28. A. William Samii, "Shia Political Alternatives in Postwar Iraq," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. X, No. 2 (Summer 2003), p. 95.

29. Mahan Abedin, "Dossier: Hezb al-Da'wah al-Islamiyyah: Islamic Call Party," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (June 2003)

<http://www.meib.org/articles/0306_iraq_d.htm>.

30. Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *Middle East Insight*, May-

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August 1996, p. 38. Of the other six members, three were from Amal and three were independent 'ulama.

31. Al-Da'wa, August 6, 2003 quoted in <<http://memri.org/bin/opener.cgi?Page=archives&ID=SP55403>>.

32. Chicago Tribune, April 15, 2003.

33. Dar al-Hayat, July 15, 2003 <http://english.daralhayat.com/arab_news/07-2003/Article-20030715>.

34. Baram, "Two Roads to Revolutionary Shi'ite Fundamentalism," p. 572.

35. Ibid., p. 574.