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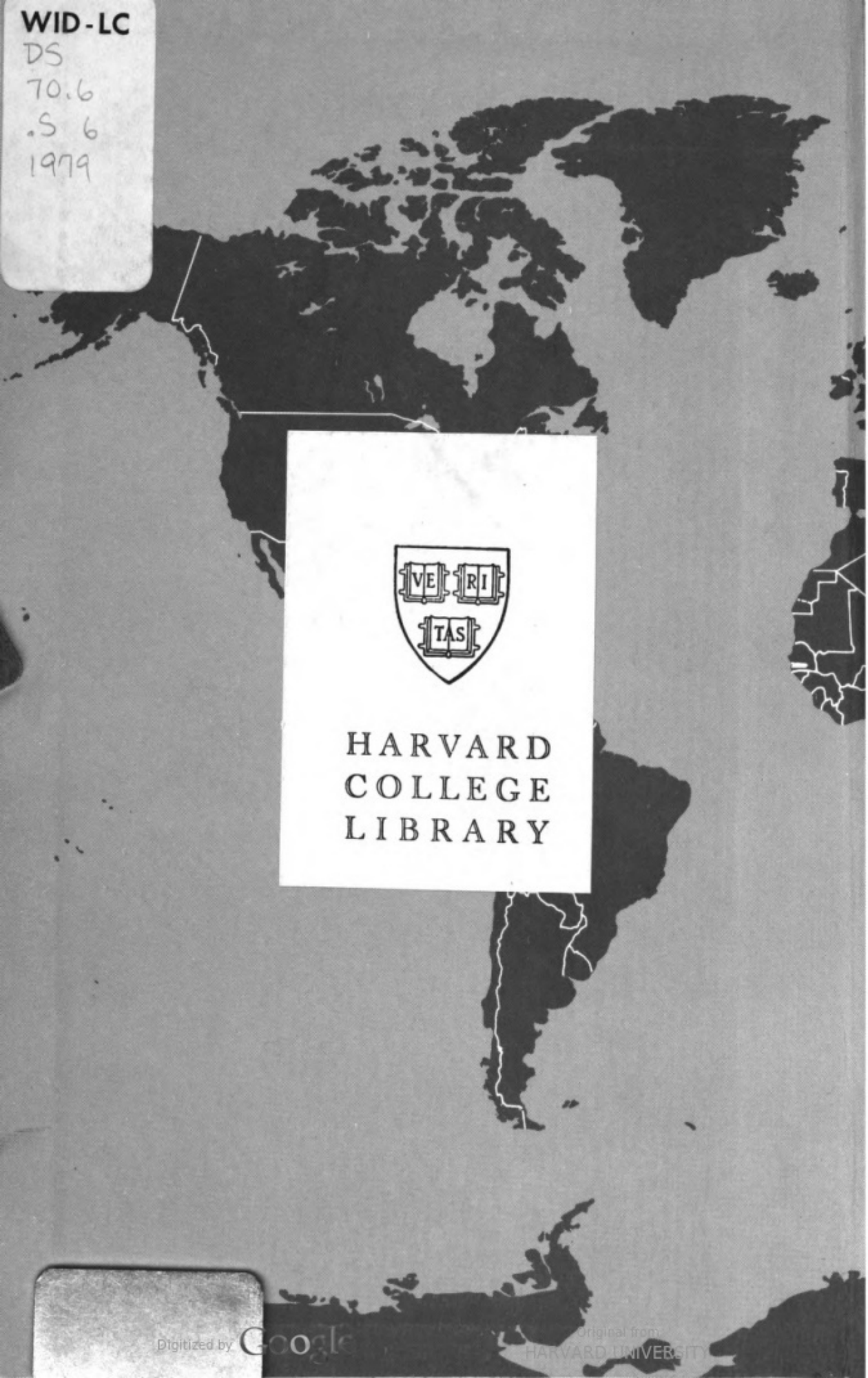

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a country study

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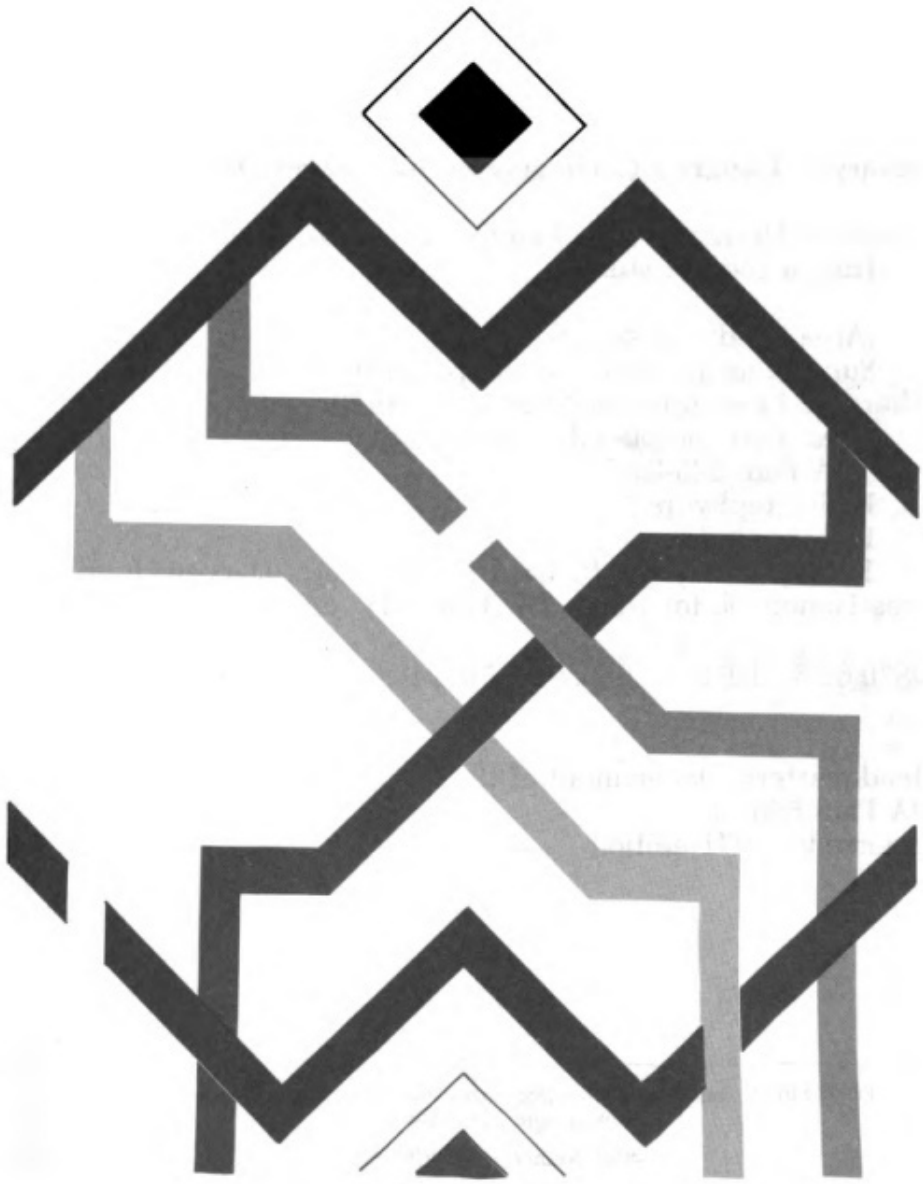
The American University
Edited by
Richard F. Nyrop
Research Completed
February 1979



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Foreword

This volume is one of a continuing series of books written by Foreign Area Studies, The American University, under the Area Handbook Program. Its title, format, and substance reflect modifications introduced into the series in 1978. The last page of this book provides a listing of other country studies published. Each book in the series deals with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its economic, military, political, and social systems and institutions and examining the interrelationships of those systems and institutions and the ways that they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic insight and understanding of the society under observation, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal of it. The study focuses on historical antecedents and on the cultural, political, and socioeconomic characteristics that contribute to cohesion and cleavage within the society. Particular attention is given to the origins and traditions of the people who make up the society, their dominant beliefs and values, their community of interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with the national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward the social system and political order within which they live.

The contents of the book represent the work of Foreign Area Studies and are not set forth as the official view of the United States government. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual or other changes that readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions.

William Evans–Smith
Director, Foreign Area Studies
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016

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Special thanks are owed to Anne Dedick who, under the direction of Michael T. Graham of The American University Department of Art, designed the cover as well as the illustrations on the title page of each chapter. The inclusion of photographs in this study was made possible by the generosity of various individuals and public and private agencies. We acknowledge our indebtedness especially to those persons who contributed original work not previously published.

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Preface

The period of late 1978 and early 1979 was one of significant change in Iraq's relations with its neighbors and its role in the Arab world. In the aftermath of the Camp David Agreement of September 1978 between Egypt and Israel, which presaged a peace treaty between Israel and the largest and most powerful of the Arab states, Iraq assumed a leadership position in the opposition to Egypt's proposed action. In November a summit meeting of all the Arab states except Egypt was convened in Baghdad to consider a series of proposals made by Iraq.

On March 26, 1979, in Washington, D. C., Egypt's President Anwar al Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed a treaty of peace; President Jimmy Carter, who earlier in the month had visited the two countries in a successful effort to negotiate a treaty acceptable to both parties, signed as a witness. The next day representatives of all Arab states except Djibouti, Egypt, Oman, and Sudan began to arrive in Baghdad for a foreign ministers' conference on the treaty. In addition Yasir Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the chiefs of several other Palestinian organizations participated in the meeting. The resolutions that were finally adopted itemized sanctions against Egypt that included the withdrawal of Arab ambassadors from Cairo, the removal of the Arab League headquarters and the headquarters of scores of other Arab organizations from Cairo, and the imposition of stringent economic sanctions against Egypt. Iraq was named chairman of the committee that was formed to supervise implementation of the sanctions.

As a necessary prelude to the summit meeting, Iraq and Syria took the first steps in resolving their long-standing and bitter political disputes. Each country was governed by a branch of the Arab Socialist Baath (Resurrection) Party, and for over a decade each had accused the other of deviance from ideological purity as outlined in the party's charter. In early 1979 the leaders of the two governments were continuing their efforts to conclude a full rapprochement.

Iraq's leadership role in the two conferences placed it back within the mainstream of the community of Arab states, from which Iraq had been isolated for so many years. Its regional prominence will be further enhanced in 1980 when it acts as host for the conference of nonaligned states.

In addition the revolution in neighboring Iran was of great potential significance to Iraq. The overthrow of the monarchy was orchestrated by leaders of Iran's Shiite (see Glossary) Muslims, in particular by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who lived in exile in An Najaf, Iraq, from 1964 until late 1978, when the Iraqi government expelled him, apparently at the request of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Over half of the Iraqi population adhere to Shiite Islam,

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making Iraq the only Arab state with a Shiite majority. Nevertheless the Sunni (see Glossary) Arab community, constituting less than 25 percent of the population, has traditionally dominated political life in Iraq, and this remained so in early 1979. To what extent, if any, the Shia community in Iraq would heed a call from its coreligionists in Iran to demand political parity was a matter of much speculation but scant specific analysis in early 1979.

Iraq: A Country Study replaces the *Area Handbook for Iraq* that was published in 1969 and a second printing of the 1969 book that was published in 1971. The 1969 publication was written by Nancy W. Al-Any, Donald W. Bernier, Frederica M. Bunge, William Giloane, Irving Kaplan, Rinn-Sup Shinn, Suzanne Teleki, and Harvey H. Smith, who coordinated the work of the other authors. Like its predecessor the present study is an attempt to treat in a compact and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of contemporary Iraqi society. Sources of information included scholarly journals and monographs, official reports of governments and international organizations, foreign and domestic newspapers, numerous periodicals, and interviews with individuals who have special competence on Iraqi and Middle Eastern affairs. Chapter bibliographies appear at the end of the book; brief comments on some of the more valuable sources as possible further reading appear at the end of each chapter. Measurements are given in the metric system; a conversion table is provided to assist those readers who are unfamiliar with metric measurements (see table 1, Appendix A). A Glossary is also included.

The transliteration of Arabic words and phrases posed a particular problem. For many words—such as Muhammad, Muslim, Quran, and shaykh—the authors followed a modified version of the system adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographic Names for British Official Use, known as the BGN/PCGN system. The modification is nonetheless an important one, involving the omission of diacritical markings and hyphens. In numerous instances, however, the names of people and places are so well known by a more conventional spelling that to have used the BGN/PCGN system might have caused confusion. The reader will therefore find Babylon rather than Babil, Kirkuk rather than Karkuk, Mosul rather than Al Mawsil, and Nineveh rather than Ninawa.

The authors adhered to standard historical practice by using the terms *Iran* and *Iranian* rather than the sometimes misleading terms *Persia* and *Persian* that were favored by British writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As appropriate the names of particular Iranian dynasties—such as Achaemenid or Sassanian—and of specific Iranian ethnic or linguistic groups—such as the Persians or Turkomans—were employed.

Arab names are often confusing to the Western reader. Traditionally an individual's full name provided that person's patrilineal

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genealogy for three generations and the individual's tribe or place of origin. For example, a man named Abd al Rahman ibn Qasim ibn Muhammad al Tikriti would be recognized as the son of Qasim, who was the son of Muhammad, and as being from the vicinity of Tikrit, a town about 160 kilometers north by northwest of Baghdad. The man would be addressed as mister (or his title) Abd al Rahman; in spoken Arabic the names are elided, so that the pronunciation would be as though the name were spelled Abdur Rahman, which in fact is the way it is frequently spelled in the Western press and in some journals. Many Arabic names—such as Rahman, Aziz, Ahmad, and Wahid—are designations of the attributes of God. *Abd al* means slave or servant of; *Rahman* means merciful; thus the name literally means the slave or servant of the Merciful (God).

Women's names also frequently indicate patrilineal descent. The word for daughter is *bint*, but this seldom appears in the written name form. Traditionally an Iraqi Arab woman did not take her husband's name at marriage, but that older custom may be giving way to the pattern of the West.

In the early 1970s the Baath Party instructed its members to stop using tribal or regional designations in their names. Foreign observers surmised that the order reflected not only the regime's desire to deemphasize tribal and regional loyalties but also its wish to deflect attention from the fact that several of the most influential members of the party are from the region of Tikrit.

* * *

On July 16, 1979—the eve of the eleventh anniversary of the July 17 Revolution—President Ahmad Hasan al Bakr announced that he was retiring because of ill health. He stated that the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) had selected Saddam Husayn, who since shortly after the 1968 coup d'etat had been recognized as the strong man of the Baath Party, as Bakr's successor. Given the general knowledge of Bakr's poor health, the fact that Saddam Husayn had long been identified as the heir apparent to Bakr's several party and government positions, and the Baath Party's well-known penchant for secrecy, the sudden transfer of power did not at first appear to be other than a typical party procedure designed to catch its real or imagined opponents off guard.

Rumors of a coup attempt nevertheless spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, and on July 28 the official Iraqi News Agency confirmed that "a treacherous and lowly plot perpetrated by a gang disloyal to the party and revolution has been discovered." The report went on to state that the conspiracy had been led by five men who at the time the plot was discovered were members of the Regional Command of the Baath Party and of the RCC, the two most powerful political and governmental organizations.

On August 8—nearly six months after research and writing on this study were completed—the government of Iraq announced that "the death sentence by firing squad was carried out this morn-

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ing against a handful of criminals who conspired against the party, the revolution, and the country's higher interests." The government broadcast noted that "the execution was attended by the comrade president, members of the special court, the comrade members of the investigation committee, and leading party cadres."

Immediately after the executions Saddam Husayn addressed a mass public rally that had been convened to support and celebrate the executions. He stated that for five years the five ringleaders had been "in contact with a foreign side" that had supplied funds and instructions; Saddam Husayn declared that the RCC had decided that "it is not in the pan-Arab interest to expose [the identity of the foreign power] now."

Saddam Husayn informed the rally that when on July 12 the RCC became aware of the group's activities, former President Bakr ordered the interrogation of one of the coup leaders, Muhi Abd al Husayn Mashhadi, who was serving as the secretary general of the RCC. Saddam Husayn then described how at a closed meeting of the Regional Congress of the Baath Party on July 22, Mashhadi confessed the details of the conspiracy and identified his coconspirators, most of whom were present and who were at once arrested and led from the meeting hall. Among those named were Adnan Husayn al Hamdani, chief of the presidential office and deputy prime minister in the new cabinet formed by Saddam Husayn on July 17; Muhammad Mahjub, minister of education in that cabinet; two former cabinet ministers and an army general. The public confession was videotaped and was subsequently shown to numerous lower branches of the party.

Speculation began at once as to the identity of the "foreign side" that Saddam Husayn had refused to identify. A few days earlier, on August 5, a quasi-official Egyptian newspaper had published what it claimed were "the full facts about the Iraqi coup and the role of the Syrian president in plotting the coup." The newspaper asserted that during his public confession Mashhadi had named Syria's President Hafiz al Assad as having financed the coup group and as having promised military support in an effort to thwart Saddam Husayn's succession to the presidency. Assad categorically denied the accusation and dispatched his foreign minister and the military chief of staff to Baghdad to assure Saddam Husayn in person that Syria had not been involved in the conspiracy in any form.

Other foreign observers tended to conclude that neither the official Iraqi version of events nor the Egyptian newspaper account contained the full story but that the two versions were not necessarily in contradiction. Several foreign observers—particularly experienced journalists reporting in the *Financial Times* of London, the *New York Times*, and the *Manchester Guardian*—expressed more interest in why the conspirators were seeking to overthrow Saddam Husayn. Although several hypotheses were set

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forth, there were in mid-August some favored lines of speculation. One was that Saddam Husayn was committed to the increasing centralization of power in the hands of his family and his most intimate associates, most of whom, like Saddam Husayn and Bakr, are from the vicinity of the town of Tikrit. An example of this consolidation of power was Saddam Husayn's appointment of his maternal half-brother as the chief of the national intelligence and security agency. Another line of reasoning focused on the reputed discord within the RCC vis à vis the Shiite community. According to David Hirst of the *Manchester Guardian,* four of the five key conspirators were Shiites. Patrick Cockburn of the *Financial Times,* however, asserted that only one was a Shiite. An editorial in *Le Monde* of Paris concluded that Saddam Husayn "has put his regime on an irreversible road to repression." *Le Monde* cited renewed and heightened repressive acts against the Kurds, the Communist Party, and the Shiite majority community, and noted that with the retirement of Bakr, the quiescence of the military wing of the party was no longer certain and that its "disappearance could herald a period of uncertainty for Iraq."

The foregoing varying analyses of the events and their possible meaning highlight again the hazards of seeking to predict the future of this volatile and secretive society. The overthrow of the monarchy in Iran in early 1979 and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1979 unleashed new forces of disequilibrium in the Middle East. In late August analysts could only conjecture as to the impact of the violent transfer of power in Baghdad on such vital issues as the ongoing Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement and the emerging role of Iraq as a leader among the Arab states. But it will be on these and related matters that attention will be focused in the early 1980s.

Richard F. Nyrop

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Country Profile

Country

Formal Name: Republic of Iraq.
Short Form: Iraq.
Term for Citizens: Iraqis.
Capital: Baghdad.

Geography

Size: Iraq government sources report 438,446 square kilometers, but United States sources give figures as high as 447,000 square kilometers; roughly the size of California.
Topography: Country divided into four major regions: desert in west and southwest; rolling upland between upper Euphrates and Tigris rivers; highlands in north and northeast; and alluvial plain in central and southeast sections.

Society

Population: Slightly over 12 million in early 1979, plus about

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149,000 Iraqis residing abroad. Annual growth rate estimated at 3.3 percent or higher.

Education: Rapidly growing enrollment in tuition-free public schools. School system consists of six years of primary (elementary), three years of intermediate secondary, and three years of intermediate preparatory. Five major universities and numerous teacher training schools and institutes and vocational and technical institutes, all owned and operated by government. Continuing shortage of adequately trained teachers, but facilities steadily increasing, especially in major urban areas. Literacy estimated at between 25 and 40 percent by outside observers, although the Iraq government suggests figures ranging as high as 70 percent.

Health: Gastrointestional ailments, trachoma, and infectious diseases prevalent. Considerable progress has been made in control of cholera and malaria. Continuing shortage of modern trained medical and paramedical personnel, especially in the more remote rural areas.

Religious and Ethnic Divisions: Estimated 93 to 95 percent of the population adhere to some form of Islam. Between 50 and 55 percent are Shiites (see Glossary), and most Shiites are Arabs; remainder consists of Iranians, Kurds, and other minority groups. Perhaps 25 percent of the population are Sunni (see Glossary) Arabs and about 18 percent Sunni Kurds. Population includes small scattered settlements of Christians, Yazidis, Jews, and Mandaeans (see fig. 8, ch. 2).

Languages: Arabic is official language and mother tongue for about 71 percent of the population, understood by majority of others. Kurdish is official language in governorates of As Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil. Turkic, Armenian, and Farsi spoken by minorities. English reportedly most widely used foreign language.

Government and Politics

Government: In accordance with Provisional Constitution of July 16, 1970, executive and legislative powers exercised by president and Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) respectively. Although provided for in Constitution, National Assembly had not been formed as of early 1979, at which time there were tentative signs that the regime might set up formal consultative or advisory organs for the purpose of gauging grass-roots sentiments toward the government.

Politics: Political system was under firm control of Arab Socialist Baath (Resurrection) Party (Baath Party). Party's high command, called Regional Command, was headed by two dominant personalities, President Ahmad Hasan al Bakr and Saddam Husayn, vice chairman of the RCC (see Preface). Government and political leadership interchangeable because the members of Regional Command also represented on RCC. Political competition took place largely within the power structure controlled by Baath Party. Political activities, where they existed, carried out within

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framework of Progressive National Front (PNF), of which the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) was a participant. There were also Kurdish organizations within the PNF. Politics of opposition outside the PNF for all practical purposes banned.

Administrative Divisions: Eighteen governorates or provinces, each divided into districts and subdistricts. Limited self-rule was granted to the Kurds in three northern governorates officially known as Autonomous Region and popularly known as Kurdistan (land of the Kurds).

Judicial System: Administratively under the direction of the Ministry of Justice but otherwise theoretically independent of government control. Court of Cassation, highest court of land, is responsible for judicial performance carried out by civil, criminal, religious, and special courts. Country divided into five judicial districts.

International Affairs: Nonaligned but ideologically in sympathy with the "progressive" causes espoused by Soviet Union and its East European allies and many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Maintained a hard-line position with regard to question of peace in Middle East. A treaty of friendship and cooperation signed with Soviet Union in July 1972. Diplomatic relations with United States, severed in June 1967, remained suspended as of early 1979; but relations at commercial and technical levels continued. United States interests in Iraq were represented by Belgium in Baghdad; those of Iraq in the United States, by India in Washington.

Economy

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): US$15.5 billion in 1976 (US$1,300 per capita). Growth exceedingly high in 1970s because of rapid rise in crude oil prices.

Oil Industry: Main sector, contributing over 50 percent of GDP in 1976. Production of crude oil averaged 2.49 million barrels a day in 1977, and revenues were US$9.6 billion. In 1977 Iraq was world's fifth largest producer and fourth largest oil exporter.

Agriculture: Employed about half of labor force in late 1970s. Wheat and barley main crops. Dates famous and important export.

Manufacturing: Largely food processing and textiles but production beginning of more sophisticated commodities, such as chemicals, petrochemicals, and iron and steel. Nearly all large, modern plants owned by government.

Exports: US$157 million (other than crude oil) in 1977. Dates and refined petroleum products were major commodities.

Imports: US$3.9 billion in 1977. Some foods but largely machinery and equipment (54 percent) and materials for processing and construction industry.

Major Trade Areas: Western Europe and to lesser extent Eastern Europe and Soviet Union.

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Exchange Rate: US$3.39 equaled ID1 (for value of the Iraqi dinar—see Glossary) in 1977.
Roads: 11,859 kilometers in 1977, of which 6,566 kilometers paved. Main population and economic centers linked.
Railroads: 1,589 kilometers in 1977, of which 1,129 kilometers were standard gauge and remainder was meter gauge.
Ports: Basra handled bulk of country's dry cargo, but new ports at Umm Qasr and Az Zubayr of increasing importance.
Pipelines: Local lines to Persian Gulf and international pipelines via Turkey and Syria to Mediterranean terminals permitted Iraq to export crude oil from either area. Small pipelines distributed refined products to major consuming areas.
Airports: Twenty-four airfields with permanent-surface runways. Two international airports.

National Security

Armed Forces (December 1978): Army—200,000; navy—4,000; air force—28,000 (including 10,000 in Air Defense Command). Compulsory two-year conscription for males. Reserves—250,000 (estimate).
Combat Units and Major Equipment (December 1978): Army—three armored divisions, two mechanized divisions, four infantry divisions, four independent brigades; 2,400 medium tanks, 1,500 armored fighting vehicles. Navy—thirty-five vessels including fourteen Osa-class patrol boats with Styx missiles. Air force—371 combat aircraft in twenty squadrons.
Military Budget: Fiscal year (FY) 1978 ID500.2 million—27 percent of ordinary government expenditures.
Police, Paramilitary, and State Security Organizations: Popular Army—100,000 (1978 estimate); Border Guards and Mobile Force—50,000 together (1978 estimate); Futuwah (paramilitary youth organization), Department of General Intelligence, regular civil police force—sizes unknown.

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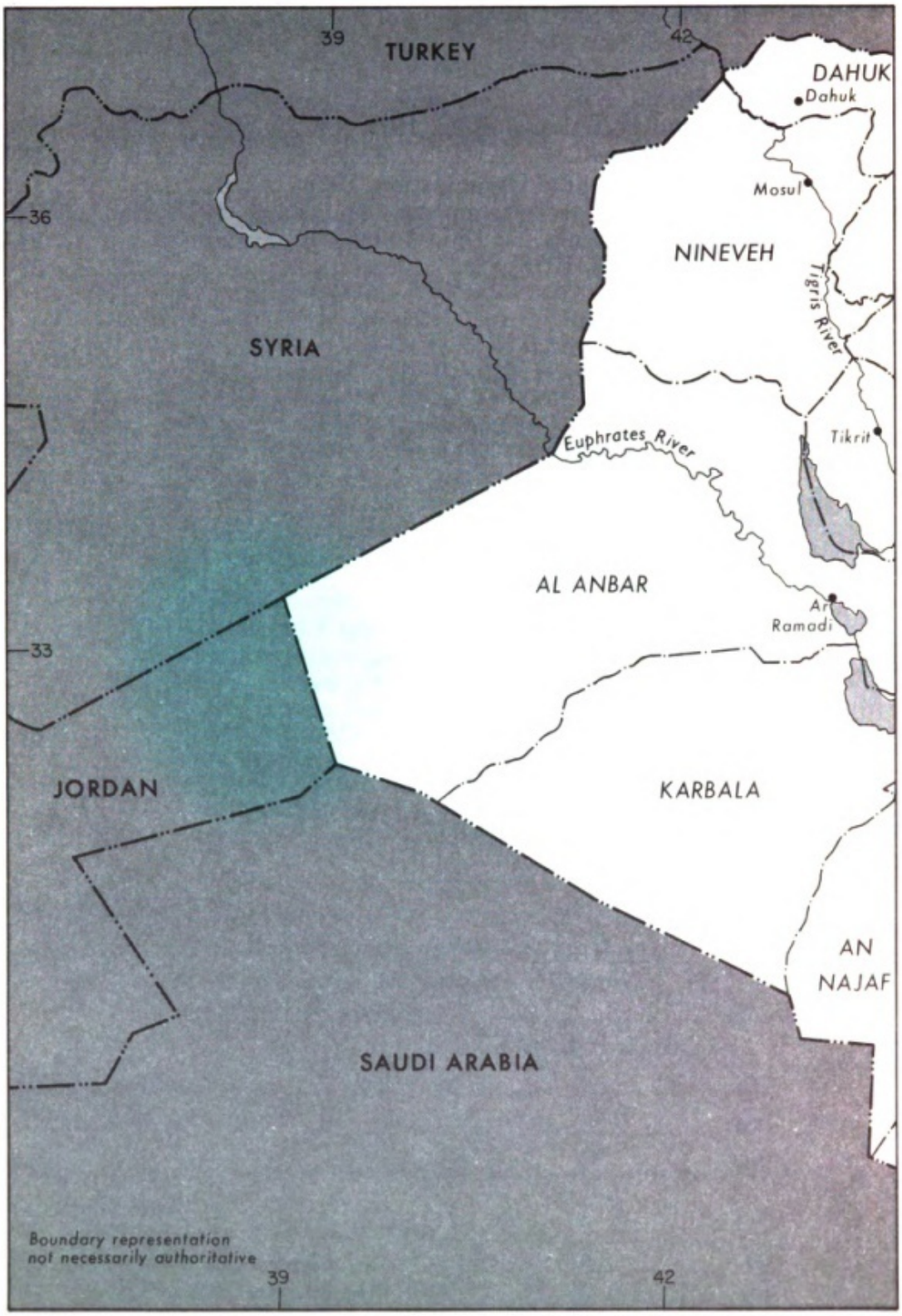

Figure 1. Administrative Divisions, 1979

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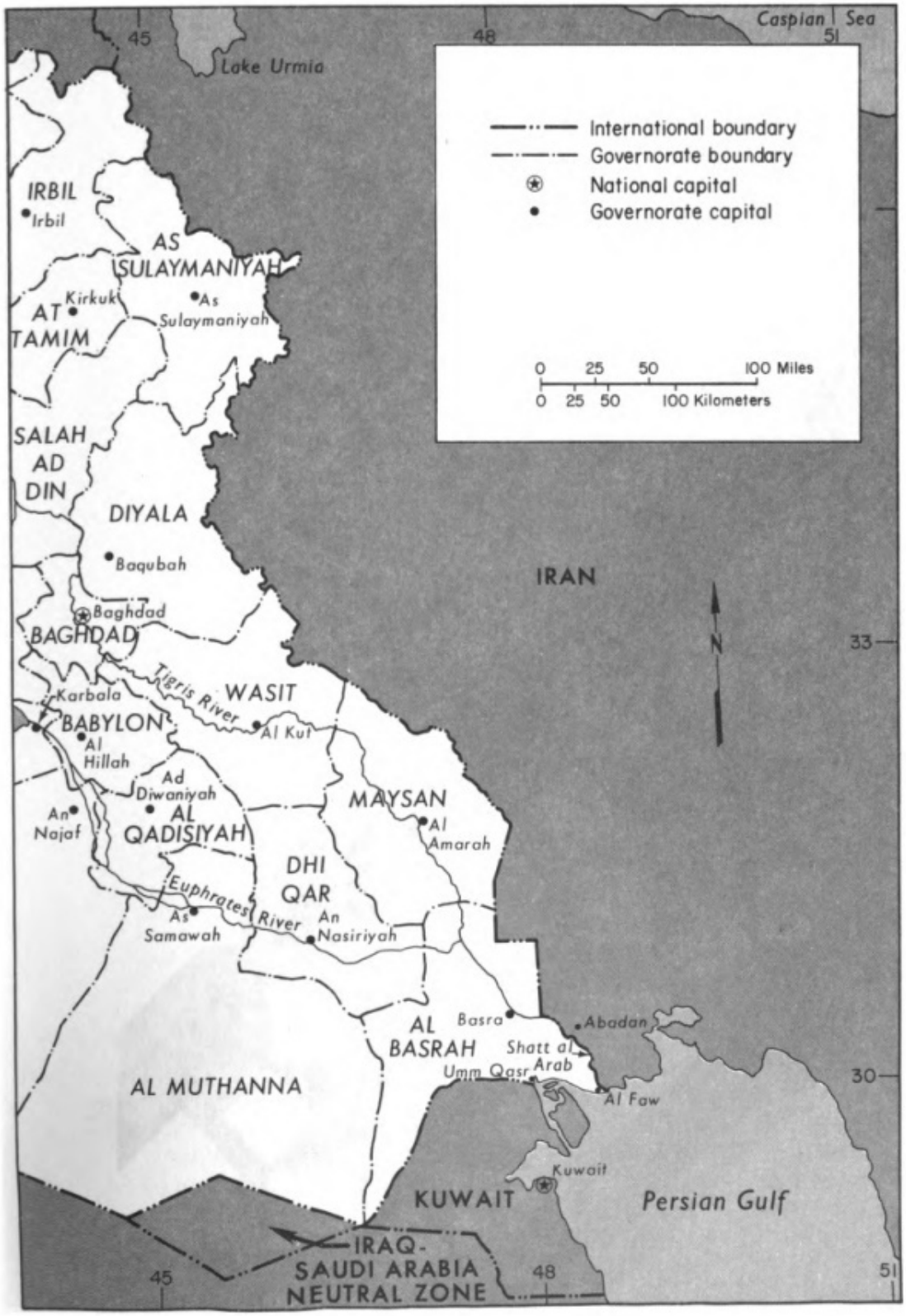

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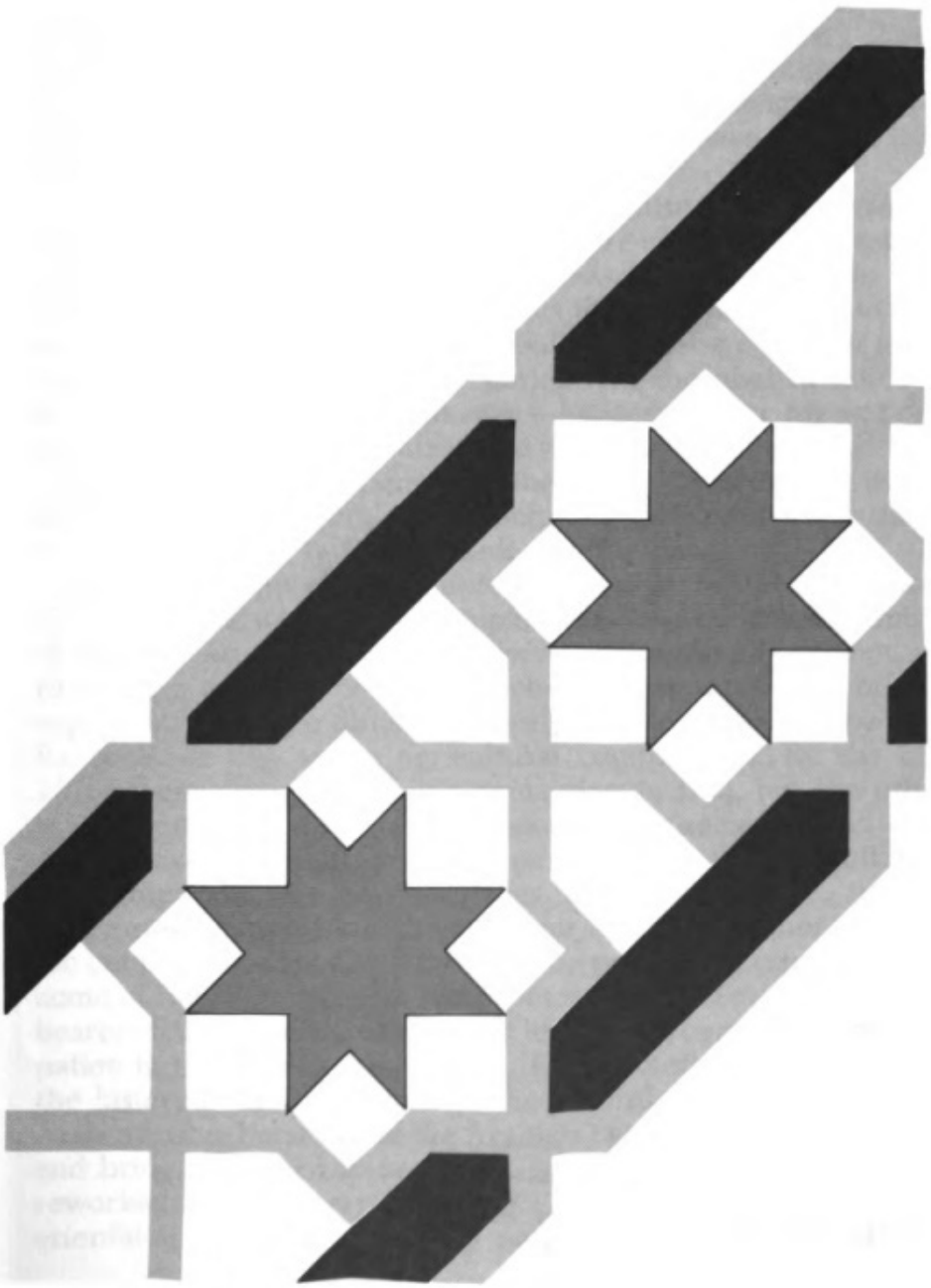
Chapter 1. Historical Setting



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IRAQ, A REPUBLIC since the coup d'etat of 1958 that ended the reign of King Faisal II, became a sovereign, independent state in 1932. Although the modern state is therefore quite young, the history of the land and its people dates back 5,000 years to when ancient Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers) was witness to the first civilization to appear in the Near East, that of Sumer. Mesopotamia was blessed with more than adequate rainfall and other water resources, chiefly the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Allowed to flow unchecked the Tigris and the Euphrates wrought destruction in terrible floods that inundated whole towns. When the rivers were controlled by irrigation dikes and other waterworks, the land became extremely fertile. So lush and fertile was Mesopotamia in the ancient period that many have thought it to be the site of the Garden of Eden.

Mesopotamia's water resources made it attractive and therefore vulnerable to invasions as well as to more subtle but no less destructive migrations. There are few peoples of the Middle East who have not added to the ethnic mix that has characterized Iraq since the ancient period. Mesopotamia's cities were another great beacon for the people of the period. All the ancient cities of Sumer, Babylon, and Assyria were located within present-day Iraqi territory, and Iraq contains the world's richest known archaeological remains. Historians describe the rulers of Assyria as the world's first imperialists, and as such they added numerous slaves from distant lands to Iraq's ethnic melting pot.

Important themes of Iraqi history appear in the ancient period. The conflict between settled people *(hadr)* and beduin, a leitmotif of Middle Eastern history, was already strong in the ancient period. When a central power neglected to keep the waterworks in repair, land fell into disuse, and beduin attacked settled peoples for precious and scarce agricultural commodities. By the late 1970s there were few beduin remaining in Iraq, but the other major theme of Iraqi history to appear in the ancient world—the dichotomy of competition and cooperation with Syria—continued to be important (see Foreign Policy, ch. 4).

For most Iraqis it is not the grandeur of ancient Sumer or Babylon but the magnificence of its medieval period that represents the acme of the country's past achievement. Iraq identifies itself as a bearer of Arab tradition because of its thirteen centuries of participation in the Muslim Arab world. The most significant event for the history of Iraq occurred in the seventh century A.D. when Arab warriors burst out of the Arabian Peninsula to conquer Iraq and bring it under the aegis of Islamic law. Islam overlaid and reworked almost every aspect of the area's cultural and social orientation and so completely transformed the world view of

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Iraq's Muslims that any conscious memory of their ancient ways was completely obliterated.

During the period of the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) Iraq became the scene of one of the most glorious flowerings of Islamic civilization, producing many of its finest poets, scientists, philosophers, and jurists. Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate, was for five centuries the leading city of the world. The memory of those days when Baghdad ruled most of the civilized world evokes more than nostalgia and pride. Many scholars see in the pan-Arab yearnings of the Arab Socialist Baath (Resurrection) Party (Baath Party) the attempt at a conscious imitation of one of the few times in history when Iraq not only ruled itself but also was the acknowledged leader of the Arab and Muslim world.

Despite the destruction wrought by the Mongols in the thirteenth century and the stultifying centuries of Ottoman rule that followed, the past has continued to express itself in subtle details of social life and outlook that still distinguish the arabized Iraqi majority on the Mesopotamian plain from Arab populations elsewhere in the Middle East. There are aspects of community life in Iraq and a characteristic approach to the problems of government, technology, and economic organization that in degree or kind set off the country from its neighbors with whom the majority of its people nonetheless share common Muslim traditions and faith as well as the Arabic language, an especially powerful bond.

With the exception of the eastern boundary of the middle and lower Tigris-Euphrates river valleys, Iraq's 1979 frontiers are not based on natural features. Rather they are the result of war and diplomacy. Iraq was a Mandate of Britain, a status conferred on it by the Allies, who divided the territories of the Ottoman Empire among themselves after the defeat of Ottoman Turkey in World War I. The new country's boundaries were drawn with little correspondence to the physical location of ethnic and religious groups. Iraq's history in the twentieth century is therefore replete with the repetition of difficulties caused by the drawing of perimeters that included such diverse elements as large numbers of both Sunni (see Glossary) and Shia (or Shiite—see Glossary) Muslims as well as perhaps one-fourth of the Sunni Kurdish population of the Middle East.

Although over 90 percent of the population—estimated at about 12,070,000 in early 1979—are Muslims and over 70 percent speak Arabic as their mother tongue, the society is a heterogeneous one. Between 50 and 55 percent of the Muslims adhere to the tenets of Shiite Islam—the decidedly smaller of the two major branches of Islam—making Iraq the only Arab state with a Shiite majority (see Islam, ch. 2). Most of the Shiites live in southern Iraq; and although before the land reform instituted by the Abd al Karim Qasim government in 1959 there were Shiite landlords, most were landless peasants (see Agriculture, ch. 3). Most of the Shiites are Arabs, but because the holiest cities of Shiite Islam—An Najaf,

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Kufah, and Karbala—are located in Iraq, over the centuries numerous Iranians have settled in or near those cities and have retained their languages and customs. Shiites formed a substantial minority in Baghdad in the late 1970s, but the only major city in the country with a Shiite majority was Basra (see fig. 1). Because for decades the Shiites have had limited access to the schools and government positions that in the late 1970s continued to be available chiefly in the Sunni-dominated urban regions, the Shiites in early 1979 remained a disadvantaged majority (see Sunni-Shia Distribution and Significance, ch. 2).

The Sunnis, accounting for something over 40 percent of the total population, are divided into two sharply distinct communities: Arabs and Kurds. The Kurds constitute about 18 percent of the total population and thus nearly half of the Sunni population. Kurdish is an Indo-Iranian tongue and therefore differs markedly from Arabic, a Semitic language (see The People, ch. 2). From the early 1920s to the 1970s the Kurds resisted, often in sustained and temporarily successful guerrilla campaigns, integration into the Arab-dominated state and absorption into the Arab-oriented society (see The Kurds as a Threat to National Integrity, ch. 5). In March 1970 the Kurds and the central government reached an agreement that provides a measure of Kurdish autonomy in the governorates of As Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil, and in 1974 the essence of the agreement was incorporated in the Provisional Constitution (see Kurdish Autonomy, ch. 4). Moreover, when in 1975 Iran and Iraq achieved a rapprochement that settled a serious boundary dispute concerning the Shatt al Arab, Iran agreed also to terminate the military aid and assistance it had been providing to the Iraqi Kurds (see The Kurdish War and the Iraq-Iran Treaty, this ch.; Geography and Population, ch. 2). Although in early 1979 there were occasional unconfirmed reports of sporadic and isolated Kurdish guerrilla activity, foreign observers doubted that the Kurds possessed the military capability to mount a meaningful armed rebellion without considerable outside assistance.

Sunni Arabs have, with only infrequent interruptions, been the dominant indigenous political element, even during the long periods of foreign rule. The British, who governed Iraq from 1920 to 1932 under the League of Nations Mandate, imported Faisal ibn Husayn, a Hashimite from the Hejaz in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, and established him as the king, and the British and the king relied on Sunni notables to form the various governments (see World War I and the British Mandate, this ch.). During the period of the monarchy after independence (1932–58) the cabinets were almost completely composed of a small body representative of the traditional Sunni elite. As the scholar Abid al-Marayati has observed, forty-five cabinets were formed during the monarchical period with a total of only twelve different prime ministers. Those twelve individuals occupied a total of 123 ministerial posts. One of the dramatic changes after the 1958 coup was

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the entrance of some middle- and lower-class Iraqis into political life. The chief political leaders since then have all been from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. But with rare exceptions the leaders in 1979 were, as before, from the Sunni community.

For the great majority of the people Iraqi society's recent past is seen as a struggle for national freedom—first against the Ottoman Turks, later against the British, and finally against "Western imperialism" and Israel, which Iraq describes as the creation of Western imperialism. The native heroes vary with the ethnic and religious affiliation of the viewer, but a majority of the people share a common suspicion of all non-Arabs. History thus becomes an active factor in the contemporary scene and an instrument available to and used by political contenders. The anti-Western sentiments aroused during and since the British Mandate worked to the disadvantage of the Hashimite monarchy (1921–58) with which it was associated and to any political leader seeking to maintain an alignment with the West.

The platform of the ruling Baath Party was designed by its founder Michel Aflaq, a Damascene Christian, as a solution to the chronic problems besetting a multigroup society. A common Arab identity as the end result of thirteen centuries of Islamic civilization was ideally to obliterate other differences including nationality. The Baath was the first left-wing, pan-Arab party, and as such it had wide appeal.

The Baath has come in conflict, however, with the many who were more exclusively nationalistic in outlook. Since the execution of Qasim in 1963 subsequent governments have all been pan-Arab to one degree or another, adding to the discomfort of the Shiites who fear (with historical precedent to do so) the submergence of the already Sunni-ruled state into an even larger transnational body of Sunnis.

The army has continued to be a persistent factor in postrepublican Iraqi history and politics, as is the case in much of the Middle East. Iraq was subject to centuries of foreign rule and hence was deprived of the experience of self-government. Moreover, given the deep-seated cleavages within the society, Iraq continued to experience difficulties in generating political consensus and appeared unable to develop procedures for resolving internal conflicts other than through rule by decree and the frequent use of repressive measures. The political leaders are cognizant of the importance of the loyalty of the army and have kept it the preserve of the Sunni elite of the Baath Party (see Armed Forces and Society, ch. 5).

The dominant role of the military in turn has contributed to Iraq's failure to develop a multiparty system (see Power Elite, ch. 4). Repression and purges, usually carried out both by and in the army as a common feature of the new regimes, have discouraged political expression even on those rare occasions when it was permissible. Discussing this aspect of Iraqi life, Middle Eastern expert

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Majid Khadduri has noted that "the people of Iraq . . . seem to be prepared to tolerate restrictions on individual freedom and achieve an equitable distribution of wealth rather than to tolerate disparity between classes."

While foreign observers generally are optimistic that a broader representation of the citizen body in its political life may eventually occur, their common perception of Iraq's contemporary situation may be best stated by the outstanding scholars Edith and E. F. Penrose: "Iraq has been, and . . . remains, in a state of arrested political development. Politics, in the constructive sense of free public debate and popular participation, is non-existent while the exercise of political power in government is autocratic, and has become increasingly ruthless, depending on the army, lacking the legitimacy either of tradition or of popular endorsement."

Some Western scholars have suggested that two traditional, recurring, yet countervailing impulses operate in most Arab societies: one, an attraction to—almost a search for—a dynamic leader who identifies and interprets problems and then articulates the correct solutions; the other, a strongly felt need for and insistence on consensus in selecting leaders and in reaching important decisions. With some minor modifications, Iraq in the late 1970s appeared to fit that mold. On the one hand two men, rather than one, dominated governmental and political affairs. President Ahmad Hasan al Bakr was not only chief of state and head of government but also—and of more importance—the commander in chief of the armed forces, chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), and secretary general of the Regional Command of the Baath Party (see The Baath Party, ch. 4). Saddam Husayn was vice chairman of the RCC, deputy secretary general of the party, the nation's political strongman, and Bakr's presumed successor. These two dominated the party; the party controlled the RCC; and the RCC, through the Council of Ministers, governed the nation (see Preface).

On the other hand there were indications of collegial decision-making that limited the freedom of action of and yet was used by Bakr and Saddam Husayn. In late 1978 an Iraqi official asserted that when the RCC was considering an issue of national importance there "must be a showing of hands" before a decision could be reached. The law governing the operations of the RCC provides for a two-thirds majority of its twenty-two members. Yet foreign observers, albeit with little concrete evidence, speculated that on truly vital matters Bakr and Saddam Husayn carefully sought to secure the consensus of the other leaders; that is, they worked for a unanimous vote as an illustration of party and RCC solidarity and as a process for ensuring support by RCC members for RCC policy.

Among the issues that were of continuing priority to the nation's leaders was the use of funds from the country's oil exports. By the mid-1970s the oil industry accounted for over 50 percent of the

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gross domestic product (GDP), about 82 percent of budget revenues, and over 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings (see The Oil Industry, ch. 3). In 1977 foreign journalists reported estimates that placed Iraq's oil reserves at over 95 billion barrels (see barrels per day—Glossary), which if true would place Iraq second only to Saudi Arabia's 150 billion barrels. United States government sources and American petroleum industry sources, however, estimated Iraq's reserves at over 36 billion barrels. The reserves and the oil industry have been owned and operated by the government since nationalization in 1972 (see Nationalization of the Foreign-Owned Oil Companies, ch. 3).

As a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Iraq played an active role in the OPEC deliberations in 1973 and 1974 that led to a quadrupling of international oil prices (see Appendix B). The sharp jump in oil revenues and GDP after 1973 turned Iraq almost overnight from a poor developing country into one much richer in terms of per capita GDP. The increase largely removed the financial constraints on domestic growth, but it did not alter quickly the income and living conditions of the average Iraqi. Time and change were needed to transform the sudden boost in revenues into jobs, production, and income. It was much easier to convert oil revenues into buildings and machinery, particularly when whole plants were purchased from foreign suppliers; Iraqis had been doing this for many years.

In 1979 the central economic problem was efficient operation of those projects in which so much had been invested. The major radical measures of the past—land reform and nationalization of much of the economy—were primarily political acts undertaken to remove groups that posed a threat to the regime in power. Removal of the groups also deprived Iraq of their managerial skills, however. The governments since 1958 have attempted to supply the missing economic functions, and the results of these attempts have ranged from modest to unimpressive. A basic assumption of land reform, for example, was that land ownership would stimulate a cultivator's long-term interest in the soil's condition and productivity and hence result in greater production. Developments since 1958 have not only largely thwarted this basic concept but have appeared as well to alienate even further the farmer's interest in the land he tilled.

The large investments made in plants and equipment in the 1970s will add to economic production as they are completed. A certain growth of output is thus ensured by continuing investments. But significant economic development, growth of personal income, improved social services, and reduction of the disparity in living conditions that posed a threat to the social fabric required much better management and greater efficiency in operations throughout the economy. Government officials acknowledged these shortcomings and began a program in late 1976 to improve management and coordination, but more time and effort would be

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required before Iraq realized the economic potential frequently ascribed to it.

Ancient Mesopotamia

Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Assyria

Contemporary Iraq occupies the territory that traditionally has been viewed by historians as the site of the earliest civilizations of the ancient Near East. Geographically modern Iraq is the Mesopotamia of the Old Testament and other more ancient Near Eastern texts. In Western mythology and in its religious tradition, the land of Mesopotamia in the ancient period was a land of lush vegetation, abundant wildlife, and copious if unpredictable water resources. As such it attracted people from neighboring but less hospitable areas at a very early date. By 6000 B.C. Mesopotamia had been settled, chiefly by migrants from the Turkish and Iranian highlands. By 3500 B.C. the complex and highly influential civilization of Sumer had developed a confederation of city-states in the marshy area north of the Persian Gulf (see fig. 2).

The Sumerians are widely believed to have been the first cereal agriculturists and the first people to develop a form of writing based on phonogramic as well as pictorial signs. Most important of the city-states of Sumer were Uruk, Eridu, Kish, Lagash, Agade, Akshak, Larsa, and Ur, birthplace of the prophet Abraham. The cities had populations ranging between 15,000 and 250,000.

The base of Sumer's economy was a highly developed agricultural system that boasted refined irrigation and water control systems. Because the Sumerians possessed the technical ability to control the flows of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, daily life in Sumer lacked many of the horrors attendant on other ancient civilizations. Gavin Young describes Sumer as a kind of paradise: "The green, well-watered gardens, orchards and seemingly endless date-forests of Sumer; the gloriously intricate cobweb of canals and dykes that made Mesopotamia the granary of the near east; prosperous farmers with their thousands upon thousands of sheep and cattle; singing boatmen in the giant reeds fishing and hunting undisturbed: such was the golden prospect when southern Iraq was young."

By the middle of the third millennium the Sumerians had developed the wheeled chariot. At approximately the same time the Sumerians—who had refined the use of copper—discovered that tin and copper when smelted together produced bronze, a new, more durable, and much harder metal. The wheeled chariot and bronze weapons became increasingly important as the Sumerians developed the institution of kingship, and individual city-states began to vie for supremacy.

Although Mesopotamia enjoyed adequate rainfall and alluvial soil, climatic changes were highly irregular, unlike conditions in Egypt, the other great civilization of the time. Heavy rainfalls and violent storms often caused flooding that destroyed the mud and

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Source: Based on information from George Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, Cleveland, 1965.

Figure 2. Ancient Mesopotamia

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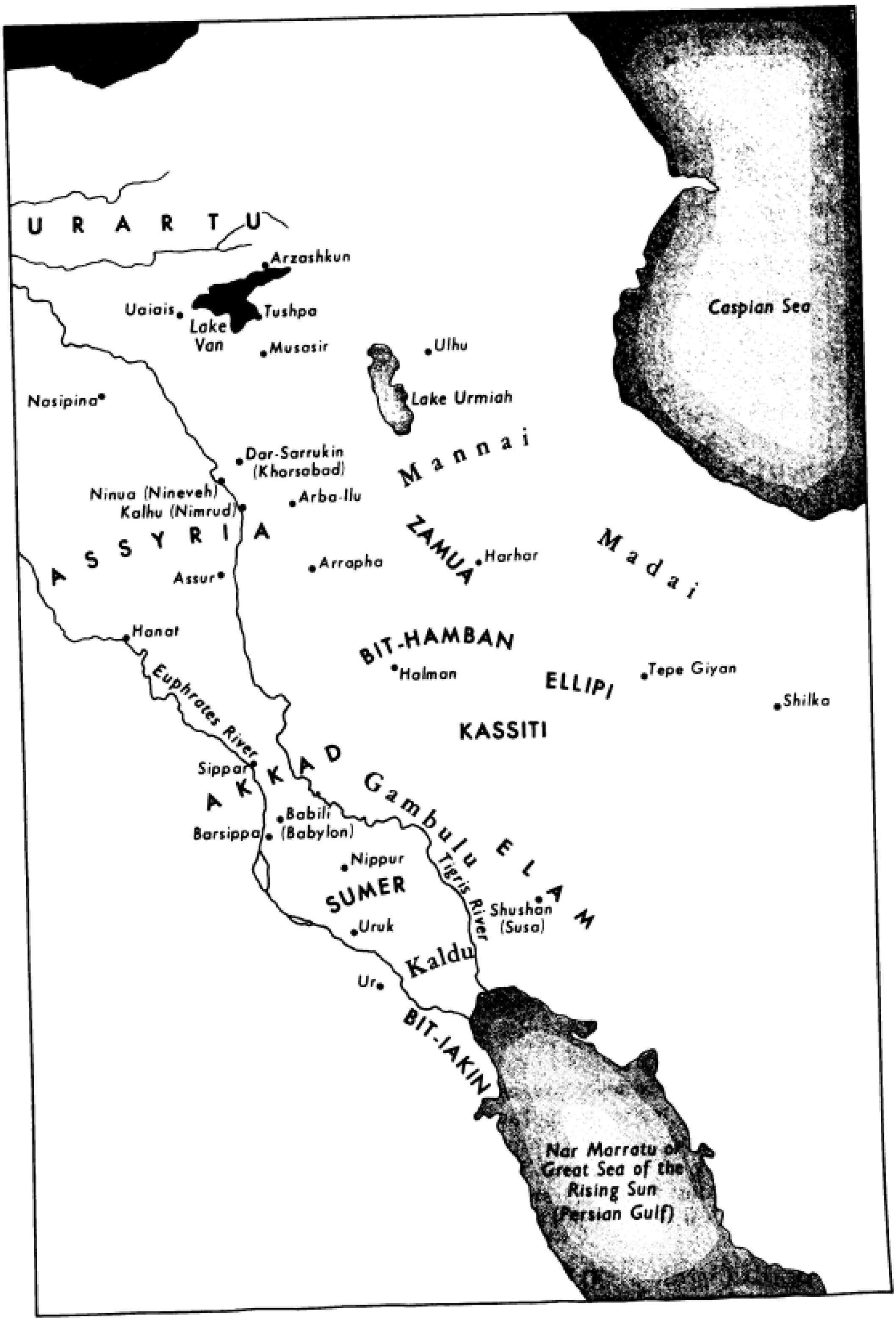

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clay settlements. In an effort to appease the unpredictable gods to whom such activities were attributed, the Sumerians developed elaborate religious rituals and a powerful priesthood to intervene with the gods. Because all property belonged to the gods, decisions relating to land rentals, other agricultural questions, trade, commercial relations, and war were determined by the priesthood. The priests ruled from their temples, called ziggurats, which were essentially artificial mountains of sunbaked brick built in staircases that tapered toward the top. One ziggurat survives at Ur.

Because the well-being of the community was dependent on a close observation of natural phenomena, scientific or protoscientific activities occupied much of the priests' time. Each of the gods was believed to be represented by a number. A legacy of the Sumerians was their use of the number sixty, sacred to the god An, as their basic calculation. The minutes of an hour and the notational degrees of a circle were Sumerian concepts.

In approximately 3500 B.C. an unusually severe and wide-ranging flood decimated the area. Fearful that such a disaster would happen again, the Sumerians (and the Babylonians after them) wrote obsessively of the flood and the angered gods who caused it. One man, Utnapishtim, and his family were saved, along with animals and plant life that one of the gods had ordered him to take into his ark. Sometime after the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2110–2010 B.C.) was invaded by eastern nomads, the patriarch Abraham departed for the area now known as Turkey with his family and effects. He also took with him the legends of the land, and part of the legacy of the Mesopotamians to the Israelites—Abraham's decendants—was the story of Utnapishtim, which is the prototype for all Near Eastern inundation stories.

The genius of the Sumerians is most easily seen in the development of the world's first epics. The most famous and the one that has survived most completely is the Epic of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, a moving story of the king's devastating sorrow at the death of his friend and of his consequent search for immortality. The epic of Gilgamesh, who actually ruled in approximately 2700 B.C., is evidence of the intellectual sophistication of these people. The unknown author wrote:

> Fearing death I roam over the steppe;
> The matter of my friend rests heavy upon me.
> How can I be silent? How can I be still?
> My friend whom I loved, has turned to clay.
> Must I, too, like him, lay me down
> Not to rise again for ever and ever?

In approximately 2300 B.C. a Semitic-speaking people north of Sumer in the land called Akkad conquered Sumer. Their leader was Sargon I, who has the reputation of being the first imperialist in history. Sargon maintained Sumerian institutions and ruled

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through troops and representatives. Akkadian supremacy was dislodged, however, by invasions of the Guti from the east. Sumerian city-states rallied, and the Guti were defeated by the king of Ur. Under its next king, Ur was able to establish hegemony over much of Mesopotamia. By 2000 B.C., however, the combined attacks of the Amorites, Semitic-speaking people from the west, and the Elamites from the east had destroyed the Third Dynasty of Ur. The invaders nevertheless became heir to and carried on the Sumero-Akkadian cultural legacy.

The Amorites established cities on the Tigris and Euphrates and made Babylon, a town to the north, their capital. During the time of their sixth ruler, King Hammurabi (1792–1750), Babylonian rule was firmly established in most of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. Hammurabi, in addition to conquering or subduing local princes, issued in a period of peace and prosperity during his forty-three-year rule. Hammurabi's great achievement was the issuance of a law code designed "To cause justice to prevail in the country, to destroy the wicked and the evil, that the strong may not oppress the weak." The Code of Hammurabi, not the earliest to appear in the Near East but certainly the most complete, dealt with land tenure, rent, the position of women, marriage, divorce, inheritance, contracts, control of public order, administration of justice, wages, and labor conditions.

Beginning in approximately 1600 B.C. Indo-European-speaking tribes invaded India; others settled in Iran and Europe. One of these groups, the Hittites, allied itself with the Kassites, a people of unknown origins, and conquered and destroyed Babylon in approximately 1600 B.C. Kassite rule persisted until the twelfth century B.C. when their civilization was devastated by Elamites from Iran.

One of the cities that flourished in the middle of the Tigris Valley in the third millennium was that of Ashur, named after the sun-god of the Assyrians—Semitic speakers who for a brief period in the thirteenth century were able to occupy Babylon. Invasions of iron-producing peoples into the Near East and the Aegean region in approximately 1200 disrupted the indigenous empires of Mesopotamia, but eventually the Assyrians were able to capitalize on the new power alignments in the region. Because of what has been called "the barbarous and unspeakable cruelty of the Assyrians," the names of such Assyrian kings as Ashurnasirpal, Tiglath-Pileser, Sennacherib, and Ashurbanipal continue to evoke images of powerful, militarily brilliant, but brutally savage conquerors.

The Assyrians began to expand to the west in the early part of the ninth century B.C. By 859 Assyrians reached the Mediterranean, where they occupied Phoenician cities. Damascus and Babylon fell to the next generations of Assyrian rulers. During the eighth century control over their empire appeared tenuous, but Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) seized the throne and rapidly subdued Assyria's neighbors, captured Syria, and crowned himself

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King of Babylon. He developed a highly proficient war machine by creating a permanent standing army under the administration of a permanent bureaucracy, the first instance of a regular army in history. Sennacherib (704–681) built a new capital, Nineveh, on the Tigris River, destroyed Babylon where its citizens had risen in revolt, and made Judah a vassal state. He proclaimed himself "the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters." His son conquered Egypt where revolts against Assyria's harsh rule were continuous.

Ashurnasirpal describes how he dealt with rebellion, which was to visit atrocities on the civilian as well as the military: "I built a pillar over against his city gate and I flayed all the chiefs who revolted and I covered the pillar with their skins. Some I walled up within the pillar, some I impaled upon the pillar on stakes, and others I bound to stakes round the pillar. . . . And I cut the limbs of the officers, of the royal officers who had rebelled."

In 612 revolts of subject peoples combined with the allied forces of two new kingdoms, the Medes and the Chaldeans (Neo-Babylonians), effectively extinguished Assyrian power and razed Nineveh. The hatred that the Assyrians inspired, particularly for their policy of wholesale resettlement of subject peoples, was sufficiently great to ensure that little trace of Assyrian rule remained two years later. The Assyrians used the visual arts to depict their many conquests, and Assyrian friezes, executed in minute detail, remain the best artifacts of Assyrian civilization.

The Chaldeans became heir to Assyrian power in 612 and conquered formerly Assyrian-held lands in Syria and Palestine. King Nebuchadnezzar (605–562) conquered the kingdom of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem in 586. The Chaldeans were conscious of their ancient past and sought to reestablish Babylon as the most magnificent city of the Near East. It was during the Chaldean period that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, famed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, were created. Because of an estrangement of the priesthood from the king, the monarchy was severely weakened and unable to withstand the rising power of Achaemenid Iran. In 539 Babylon fell to Cyrus the Great (550–530) who, in addition to incorporating Babylon into the Iranian empire, released the Jews who had been held in captivity there.

Iranian and Greek Intrusions

Mesopotamia, for 2,000 years a stronghold of Semitic-speaking peoples, now fell to Indo-European rule that persisted for 1,176 years. With the exception that calendars were incised with the name of the Iranian king, few Babylonians were affected initially by the change from independent status to an Iranian colony. Satraps, representatives of the Iranian king, ruled in a fashion similar to that of Babylonian governors. The Babylonians, however, were quick to join in the general rebellion of Iranian colonies after the death of the Iranian monarch Cambyses in 522. According to

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Babylon Wall
Courtesy Iraqi Press Office, Washington, D.C.

historian Georges Roux, the Babylonian rebels were men "in whose hearts the flame of freedom was still burning high." Darius (520–485) boasted that his general, Vindafarna, was able to capture the rebels and impale the ringleaders. During Darius' long and ruthlessly efficient reign Babylon remained quiescent. In 482, however, the Babylonians made a last attempt to oust the Iranian rulers. The rebels were unsuccessful, and the repression that followed was great. In addition to the death by torture of those who had taken part in the uprising, Babylon itself was severely damaged.

Most significant for the future of Iraq was the decline of critical services in the infrastructure. The nature of the land of Mesopotamia and of the Tigris River was such that only a strong central power could command and organize labor to ensure that dams and dikes were built and kept in repair, so that arable land neither flooded nor reverted to desert. The first Iranian kings to rule Iraq had conscientiously followed Mesopotamian practices in regard to the land, but between 485 B.C. and the conquest by Alexander the Great in 331 very little in Babylon was attended to. And in Assyria, for instance, only one city was intact; the rest had become villages or were in ruins. Trade was greatly reduced because the established trade route from Sardis to Susa did not go through Babylonia. Furthermore the Iranians, much closer to the Orient, were able to absorb trade from India and other eastern points. Babylonia and Assyria, together forming the ninth satrapy, became economically isolated and therefore poor. Their poverty was ex-

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acerbated by the immense taxes levied on them. In addition to the extortionate demands of the local administrators, they owed to the Iranian crown 1,000 talents of silver a year and had the responsibility of feeding the Iranian court for four months every year.

Under Iranian rule the already ethnically varied Mesopotamian population underwent increased change. In addition to the many ethnic groups that had filtered into Iraq voluntarily or by enslavement during its periods of self-rule, Iranians were now added to the population. Because of Darius' decree that Aramaic was the official language of the empire, Mesopotamian languages were used only by an ever-decreasing number of scholars and eventually disappeared.

When the Iranian forces stationed in Babylon surrendered to Alexander in 331, all of Babylonia hailed him as a liberator, partially because of the respect he displayed toward Babylonian tradition, such as the worship of their chief god, Marduk. Alexander's grandiose schemes for Babylon included making it one of the two seats of his empire, rendering the Euphrates navigable to the Persian Gulf, and building a great port there. Alexander's plans for Babylon never came to fruition. On his return from his expedition to the Indus River he fell ill, most probably from malaria contracted in Babylon, and died there on June 13, 323, at the age of thirty-two. In the politically chaotic period after Alexander's death, his generals fought for and divided up his empire. Many of the battles between the Greek generals were fought on Babylonian soil, and there "was weeping and mourning in the land." In the latter half of the Greek period campaigns for Phoenician ports removed Babylonia from the sphere of action. The city of Babylon lost its preeminence as the center of the civilized world as political and economic activity shifted to the Mediterranean, where it was destined to remain for many centuries.

Despite the fact that Alexander's major plans for Mesopotamia were unfulfilled and that his generals did little that was positive for Mesopotamia, the effects of the Greek occupation were noteworthy. Alexander and his successors built scores of cities in the Near East on the model of Greek city-states. One of the most important was Seleucia on the Tigris. The hellenization of the area included the introduction of Western deities, Western art forms, and Western thought. Business revived in Mesopotamia because one of the Greek trade routes ran through the new cities. Mesopotamia exported barley, wheat, dates, wool, and bitumen; the city of Seleucia itself exported spices, gold, precious stones, and ivory. Cultural interchange between Greek and Mesopotamian scholars was responsible for the saving of many Mesopotamian scientific, especially astronomical, texts.

In 126 B.C. the Parthians, an intelligent and nomadic people who had migrated from the steppes of Turkestan to northeast Iran, finally captured the Tigris-Euphrates river valley. Having previously conquered Iran, the Parthians, or Arsacids as they came

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to be known, were able to control all trade between the East and the Greco-Roman world. Usually they chose to retain existing social institutions and to live in preexistent cities. Mesopotamia was immeasurably enriched by this, the mildest of all foreign occupations of the region. The population of Mesopotamia was enormously enlarged chiefly by Arabs, Iranians, and Aramaens. With the exception of the Roman occupation under Trajan and Septimus Severus, the Arsacids ruled until a new force of native Iranian rulers, the Sassanians, conquered the region in A.D. 227.

Little data are available on the Sassanian occupation, which persisted to 636. It is known that the north was devastated by battles fought between Romans and Sassanians. It appears that with few exceptions Mesopotamia was neglected. By the time the enfeebled Sassanian Empire fell before the most significant conquest of all—that of Muslim Arab warriors—Mesopotamia was in ruins, and Sumero-Akkadian civilization was entirely extinguished. The Sassanians had neglected the canals and irrigation ditches vital for agriculture and the continuation of water and therefore of livability to the cities. Without dikes the rivers flooded the land and made parts of it sterile. To quote Roux, "the ancient cities of Iraq were rapidly buried beneath the sand of the desert and the silt of the valley."

Mesopotamian culture nevertheless passed on many traditions to the West, some of which were preserved via the conquests of Alexander. In addition to the basic principles of mathematics and astronomy, the coronation of kings and symbols such as the tree of life, the Maltese Cross, and the crescent are part of its legacy.

The Arab Conquest and the Coming of Islam

The power that toppled the Sassanians came from an unexpected source as far as the Iranians were concerned. Arabs and Iranians were known to each other because of their mutual trading activities and because for a brief period Yemen, in southern Arabia, was an Iranian satrapy. The Iranians also knew that Arabs, a tribally oriented people, had never been organized under the rule of a single power and were at a primitive level of military development.

Events in Arabia changed rapidly and dramatically in the sixth century when a member of the Hashimite clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe of Mecca claimed prophethood and began gathering adherents for the monotheistic religion of Islam that had been revealed to him (see Religious Life, ch. 2). The conversion of Arabia proved to be the most difficult of the Islamic conquests because of the entrenched tribalism of the area. Within one year of the death of the Prophet Muhammad in A.D. 632, however, Arabia was secure enough for the Prophet's secular successor Abu Bakr, the first caliph, to begin the campaign against the Byzantine and Sassanian empires.

Islamic forays into Iraq began during the reign of Abu Bakr

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(632–634). In 634 an army of 18,000 Arab tribesmen, under the leadership of the brilliant general Khalid ibn al Walid (aptly nicknamed "The Sword of Islam"), reached the perimeter of the Euphrates delta. Although the occupying Iranian force was vastly superior in techniques and numbers, its soldiers were militarily exhausted after their unremitting campaigns against the Byzantines. Sassanian troops fought ineffectually, lacking sufficient reinforcement to do more. The first battle of the Arab campaign became known as the Battle of the Chains because Iranian soldiers were reputedly chained together so that they could not flee. Khalid offered the Iraqis an ultimatum: "Accept the faith and you are safe; otherwise pay tribute. If you refuse to do either, you have only yourself to blame. A people is already upon you, loving death as you love life."

Most of the tribes of Iraq were Christian at the time of the Islamic conquest. They decided to pay the jizya, the tax required of non-Muslims living in Muslim-ruled areas, and were not further disturbed. In the meantime the Iranians under their hero Rustam rallied and attacked the Arabs at Hirah, west of the Euphrates, where they suffered a devastating defeat. The next year the Arabs defeated the Iranians at the battle of Boweib. Finally in May 636 at Al Qadisiyah, a village south of Baghdad on the Euphrates, Rustam was killed and the Iranians, who outnumbered the Arabs six to one, were decisively beaten. From Al Qadisiyah the Arabs pushed on to the Sassanian capitol at Ctesiphon (Madain). The fleeing Sassanians had no time to carry with them their fabulous imperial treasure, and it became the booty of the Arabs, whose histories are hyperbolic in description of it.

The Islamic conquest was aided by the fact that both the Byzantine and Sassanian empires were culturally and socially bankrupt, and the native populations had little to lose by cooperating with the conquering power. Because Muslim warriors were at this time fighting a jihad (holy war)—as they perceived it—they were regulated by religious law that strictly prohibited rape and the killing of women, children, religious leaders, or anyone who had not actually engaged in warfare. Further the Muslim warriors had come to conquer and settle a land under Islamic law. It was not in their economic interest to destroy or pillage unnecessarily and indiscriminately.

Umar (caliph from 634 to 644) ordered the founding of two garrisons *(amsar)* to protect this important territory: Kufah, named as the capital of Iraq, and Basra, which was also to be a port. Umar also organized the administration of the conquered Iranian lands. Acting on the advice of an Iranian, Umar continued the Sassanian office of the divan—an institution to control income and expenditure, one that would be used henceforth throughout the lands of the Islamic conquest. *Dihqans,* minor revenue collection officials under the Sassanians, retained their function of assessing and collecting taxes. Tax collectors in Iraq had never enjoyed

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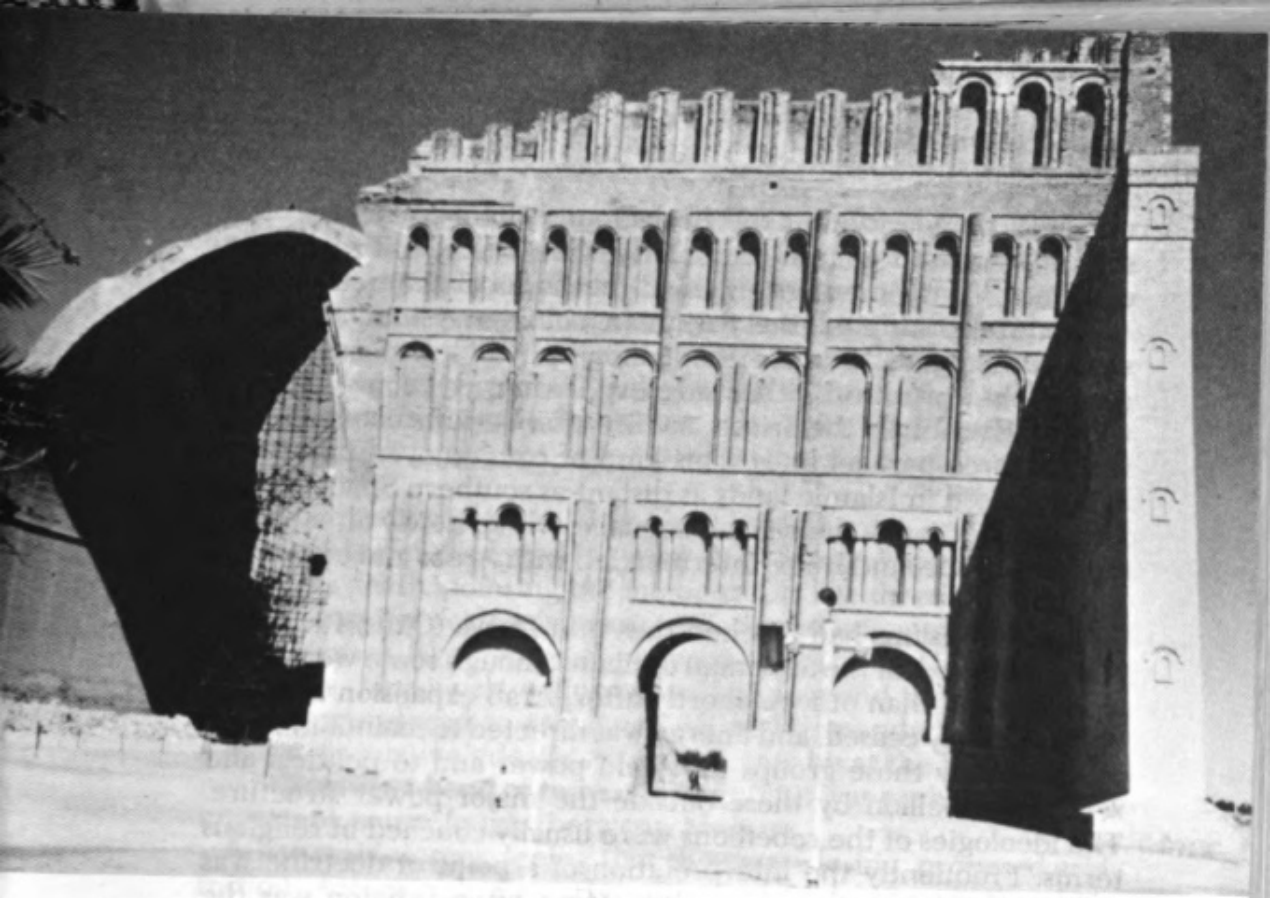

Arch of Ctesiphon
Courtesy Iraqi Press Office, Washington, D.C.

Hatra
Courtesy Iraqi Press Office, Washington, D.C.

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universal popularity, but the Arabs found them particularly noisome, "by reason of their nationality, their office, and their over-efficiency. . . . 'remembering even the husks of the rice'."

The Arabs adopted the Sassanian coinage system and thus, strangely enough, retained the iconography of a Zoroastrian fire altar with a priest on either side even when the coins were reminted. Eventually the priests and fire altar became conventionalized as three parallel lines. This kind of coin enjoyed popularity and was used in Islamic lands as distant as southern Spain. Arabic replaced Persian as the official language, which slowly filtered into common usage, and Iraqis intermarried with Arabs and converted to Islam.

By 650 Muslims had reached the Amu Darya (Oxus) River and had conquered all the Sassanian domains, though some were more strongly held than others. Shortly after, Arab expansion and conquest virtually ceased, and energy was directed to maintaining the status quo by those groups that held power and to political and religious rebellion by those outside the major power structure. The ideologies of the rebellions were usually couched in religious terms. Frequently the interpretation of a point of doctrine was sufficient to spark armed warfare. More often religion was the rationalization for dissatisfactions that might more adequately be described as nationalistic or cultural in nature.

The Sunni-Shia Controversy

The most critical problem that faced the young Islamic community revolved around the rightful successor to the office of caliph. A key figure was Ali ibn Abu Talib, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law by virtue of his marrying the prophet's only surviving issue, Fatima.

Uthman, the third orthodox caliph, had encountered opposition during and after his election to the caliphate. Ali had been the other contender for the caliphate, but his pietism seemed certain to dislodge vested-interest groups that perceived the more conservative Uthman as more likely to continue the policies of the previous caliph, Umar. Discontent increased, as did the formal opposition to Uthman led by Ali, whose opposition to Uthman was based on religious grounds. He claimed that innovations had been introduced that were not consonant with Quranic directives. For most of the other members of the opposition, economics was the key factor, but this too acquired religious overtones.

As a result of the rapid military expansion of the Islamic movement financial troubles beset Uthman. Many beduin had offered themselves for military service in Iraq and Egypt. Their abstemious and hard life contrasted with the leisured life of many in the Hejaz—in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula—who were enjoying the benefits of conquest. The volunteer soldiers questioned the allocation of lands and distribution of revenues and pensions. In Ali they found a ready spokesman.

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Groups of malcontents eventually left Iraq and Egypt to seek redress at Medina in the Hejaz. Reforms were promised to them, but on the return journey to their posts they intercepted a message to the governor of Egypt commanding that the rebels be punished. The rebels turned riotous and besieged Uthman in his home in Medina, eventually slaying him. Uthman's slayer was a Muslim and a son of the first caliph, Abu Bakr. The Muslim world was shaken. Ali had not taken part in the siege and was chosen caliph.

Two opponents of Ali then enlisted Aisha, a widow of the Prophet Muhammad, and together they demanded lex talionis for Uthman's death, pointing the finger at Ali. The three went to Iraq to seek support for their cause. Ali's forces engaged theirs near Basra. Aisha's two companions were killed, and Ali was clearly victorious. Muawiyah, a kinsman of Uthman and the governor of Syria, then refused to recognize Ali and demanded the right to avenge his relative's death. Ali's forces met his at the Plain of Siffin near the largest bend of the Euphrates. This was perhaps the most important battle fought between Muslims.

Muawiyah's forces, seeing that they were losing, proposed arbitration. Accordingly two arbitrators had to decide whether Uthman's death had been deserved, which would give his slayer status as an executioner rather than as a murderer and would remove the claims of Uthman's relatives. Their decision was against Ali, who then protested that the verdict was not in accordance with sharia (Islamic law) and declared his intention of resuming the battle.

Ali's decision came too late for the more extreme of his followers. Citing the Quranic injunction to fight rebels until they obey, his followers insisted that Ali was morally wrong to submit to arbitration, which would be the judgment of men as opposed to the judgment of God that would have been revealed by the outcome of the battle. Those who felt this strongly withdrew. Known as Kharajites from the verb *kharaja* (to go out), they seceded, an action that had far-reaching political effects on the Islamic community in the centuries ahead. Before resuming his dispute with Muawiyah, Ali appealed to the Kharajites; when the appeal failed, he massacred many of them. Most of Ali's forces deserted him, furious at his treatment of pious Muslims, and Ali was forced to return to Kufah—about 150 kilometers south of Baghdad—and await developments within the Islamic community.

A number of leaders of the community met at Adruh in Jordan, and the same two arbitrators of Siffin worked on a solution to the succession problem. At last it was announced that neither Ali nor Muawiyah should be caliph, and Abd Allah, a son of Umar, was proposed. The meeting terminated in confusion, and no final decision was reached. Both Ali and Muawiyah bided their time in their separate governorships: Muawiyah (who had been declared caliph by some of his supporters) in newly conquered Egypt and Ali in

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Iraq. Muawiyah fomented discontent among those only partially committed to Ali. While praying in a mosque at Kufah, Ali was murdered by a Kharajite; Muawiyah induced Ali's eldest son, Hasan, to renounce his claim. Hasan died shortly thereafter, probably of consumption, but the Shiites later claimed that he had been poisoned and dubbed him Lord of all Martyrs. Muawiyah was declared caliph by the majority of the Islamic community. He became the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty; its capital was at Damascus.

The importance of these events for the history of Islam cannot be overemphasized. They created the greatest of the Islamic schisms, between the party of Ali (the Shiat Ali, known in the West as Shiites or Shias) and the upholders of Muawiyah (the Ahl al Sunna, the Sunnis), who believe they are the followers of orthodoxy. In most Muslim countries where both sects are present, the minority tends to suffer and seldom resigns itself to the ruling power since to do so would be a matter of religious disobedience. Iraq is the one constant exception to this rule. In the 1970s Shias continued to constitute a decided majority, but Iraq remained, as it always had, under the rule of a Sunni elite.

Ali's unnatural death ensured the future of the Shiite movement and quickened its momentum. With the single exception of the Prophet Muhammad no man has had a greater impact on Islamic history. The Shiite declaration of faith is: "There is no God but God; Muhammad is his Prophet and Ali is the Saint of God." Yazid I, Muawiyah's son and successor in 680, was unable to contain the opposition that his strong father had vigorously quelled. Several groups rose against him, partly out of hatred at a strong government and partly because they thought a more rigorously theocratic government would satisfy their needs. Husayn, Ali's second son, refused to pay the commanded homage and fled to Mecca, where he was asked to lead the Shiites—mostly Iraqis—in a revolt against Yazid I. Ubayd Allah, governor of Kufah, discovered the plot and sent detachments to dissuade him. At Karbala in Iraq, Husayn's band of 200 men and women, unwilling to surrender, was finally cut down by perhaps 4,000 Umayyad troops. Yazid I received Husayn's head, and Husayn's death on the 10th of Muharram (October 10, 680) continues to be observed as a day of mourning for all Shiites.

Ali's burial place at An Najaf, some 130 kilometers south of Baghdad, and Husayn's at Karbala, some eighty kilometers southwest of Baghdad, are holy places of pilgrimage for Shiites, many of whom feel that a pilgrimage to both sites is equal to a pilgrimage to Mecca (see Religious Life, ch. 2).

During his caliphate Ali had made Kufah the capital of the empire. The transfer of power to Syria and its capital at Damascus aroused envy among the Iraqis because of the loss in prestige. The desire to regain preeminence prompted numerous rebellions in Iraq against Umayyad rule. Only men of unusual ability were sent

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to be governors of Basra and Kufah. One of the most able was Ziyad ibn Abihi, who was initially governor of Basra and later also of Kufah. Ziyad divided the Kufans into four groups (not based on tribal affiliation) and appointed a leader for each one. He also dispatched 50,000 beduin to Khorasan (in northeast Iran), the easternmost province of the empire, which was under the jurisdiction of the cities of Basra and Kufah.

The Iraqis once again became restive when rival claimants for the Umayyad caliphate waged civil war between 687 and 692. General al Hajjaj was sent to restore order in Iraq. Arriving in Kufah unexpectedly he mounted the pulpit of the mosque and delivered a short speech that has since become famous: "I see heads ripe for cutting. People of Iraq, I shall not let myself be crushed like a soft fig. . . . The Commander of the Faithful has drawn the arrows from his quiver and tested the wood, and has found that I am the hardest. . . . And so, by Allah, I will strip you as men strip the bark from the trees. . . . I will beat you as straying camels are beaten." He pacified Iraq and encouraged both agriculture and education.

The Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258)

Many of the unsuccessful insurrectionists of Iraq and Iran had fled to Khorasan in addition to the 50,000 beduin who had been sent there by Ziyad. There, at the city of Merv (present-day Mary in the Soviet Union), a faction that supported a descendant of the Prophet's uncle, Al Abbas, was able to organize the rebels under the battle cry, "The House of Hashim." Hashim, the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather, was an ancestor of both the Shia line and the Al Abbas line, and the Shiites therefore actively supported the group leader, Abu Muslim. In 747 Abu Muslim's army attacked the Umayyads and occupied Iraq. In 750 Abd al Abbas (not a Shiite) was established in Baghdad as the first caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. Supporters of the Abbasids called the line "the blessed dynasty" and presented themselves to the people as divine right rulers who were initiators of a new era of justice and prosperity. Their political policies were, however, remarkably similar to those of the Umayyads.

During the reign of its first seven caliphs, Baghdad became the center of power where Arab and Iranian cultures mingled to produce a blaze of philosophical, scientific, and literary glory. This era is remembered throughout the Arab world and by Iraqis in particular as the pinnacle of the Islamic past (see fig. 3). This particular Iraqi memory is perceived by many scholars to have strongly influenced the Baath Party's articulation of the necessity and desirability of Arab unity under, of course, the aegis of Baghdad once again (see The Baath Party, ch. 4).

It was the second Abbasid caliph, Mansur (754–775), who designed and ordered constructed the famous round city of Baghdad. Within fifty years the population outgrew the city walls as

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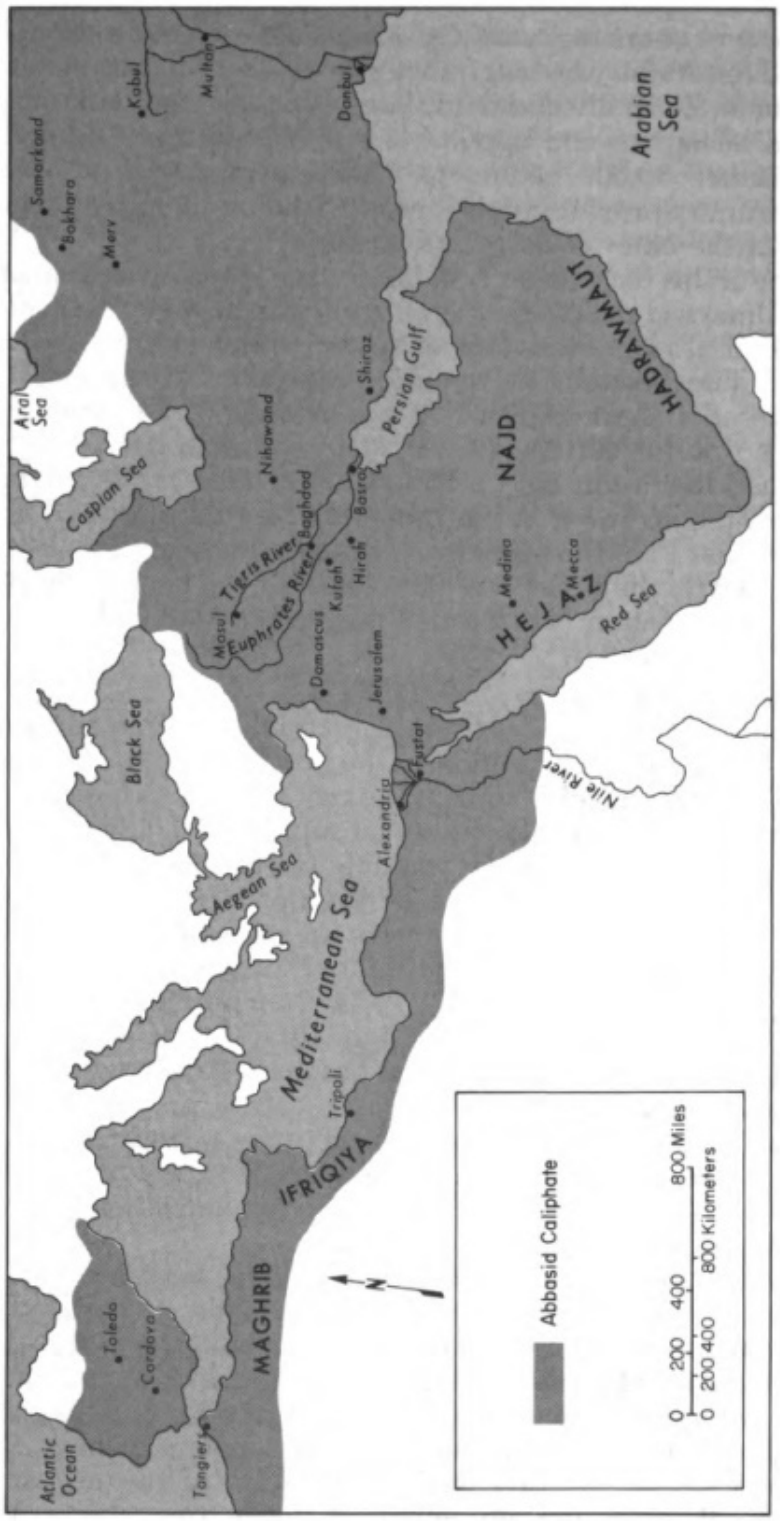

Source: Based on information from Philip K. Hitti, *Makers of Arab History*, New York, 1968, p. 56.

Figure 3. The Abbasid Caliphate, A. D. 750

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people thronged to the capital to become part of the Abbasid's enormous bureaucracy or to engage in trade. Baghdad became a vast emporium of trade linking Asia and the Mediterranean. By the reign of Mansur's grandson, Harun al Rashid (786–806), Baghdad was second in size only to Constantinople. Baghdad was able to feed its enormous population as well as to export large quantities of grain because the political administration realized the importance of controlling the flows of the Tigris and Euphrates. In addition to reconstructing canals, dikes, and reservoirs, the Abbasids drained the swamps around Baghdad making the city malaria free.

Harun al Rashid, the caliph of the *Arabian Nights,* actively supported intellectual pursuits, but the great flowering of Arabic culture that is credited to the Abbasids reached its apogee during the reign of his son, Mamun. Harun al Rashid initiated relationships with those outside of the Muslim world and is known to have sent Charlemagne, his contemporary in Europe, the gift of a baby elephant.

After the death of Harun al Rashid quarreling between his sons, Amin and Mamun, over the succession to the caliphate soon erupted into civil war. Amin was backed by the Iraqis, while Mamun had the support of the Iranians. Mamun (813–833) also had the support of the garrison at Khorasan and thus was able to take Baghdad in 813. Although Sunni Muslims, the Abbasids had hoped that by astute and stern rule they would be able to contain Shia resentment at yet another dynasty of Sunni rule. The Iranians, many of whom were Shia, had hoped that Mamun would make his capital in their own country, possibly at Merv. Mamun eventually realized that the Iraqi Shiites would never countenance the loss of prestige and economic power if they no longer had capital status and so resettled in Baghdad.

Disappointed, the Iranians began to break away from Abbasid control. A series of local dynasties appeared: the Tahirids in 820, the Saffirids in 867, and the Saminids in 892. The process repeated itself in the West: Spain broke away in 756, Morocco in 788, Tunisia in 800, and Egypt in 868. In Iraq there was trouble in the south. In 869 Ali ibn Muhammad (Ali the Abominable) founded a state of black slaves known as Zanj. The former slaves brought a large part of southern Iraq and southwestern Iran under their control and in the process enslaved many of their former masters. The Zanj Rebellion, as it came to be known, was finally put down in 883 but not before it had caused great suffering.

The decay of Abbasid power was prompted by the Sunni-Shia split that had weakened the effectiveness of Islam as a single unifying force and as a sanction for a single political authority. Although the intermingling of various linguistic and cultural groups contributed greatly to the enrichment of Islamic civilization, it was also a source of great tension.

In addition to the cleavage between Arabs and Iranians and

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between Sunnis and Shias the growing prominence of Turks in military and political affairs gave cause for discontent and rivalry at court. Nomadic, Turkic-speaking warriors had been moving out of central Asia into Transoxiana (i.e., across the Oxus River) for more than a millennium. The Abbasid caliphs began importing these people as slave warriors (Mamluks) early in the ninth century. The imperial palace guards of the Abbasids were Mamluks who were originally commanded by free Iraqi officers. By 833, however, Mamluks themselves were officers and gradually, because of their greater military proficiency and dedication, they began to occupy high positions at court. The mother of Caliph Mutasim (who came to power in 833) had been a Turkish slave, and her influence was substantial. By the tenth century the Turkish commanders, no longer checked by their Iranian and Arab rivals at court, were able to appoint and depose caliphs. For the first time the political power of the caliphate was separated from its religious function. The Mamluks continued to permit caliphs to come to power because of the importance of the office as a symbol for legitimizing claims to authority.

In 945 after subjugating western Iran a military family known as the Buwayhids, from the Daylamite Mountains south of the Caspian, occupied Baghdad. The Buwayhids were Shia but continued to permit Sunni Abbasid caliphs, only shadowy symbols of spiritual authority, to ascend to the throne. The humiliation of the caliphate at being manipulated by Shias, and by Iranian ones at that, was immense.

The Buwayhids were ousted in 1055 by another group of Turkic speakers, the Seljuks. The Seljuks were the ruling clan of the Kinik group of the Oghuz, or Ghuzz, Turks, who lived north of the Oxus River. Their leader, Tughril Beg, turned his warriors first against the local ruler in Khorasan. He moved south and then west, conquering but not wasting the cities in his path. In 1055 the caliph in Baghdad gave Tughril Beg robes, gifts, and the title King of the East. Because the Seljuks were Sunni, their rule was welcomed in Baghdad. They treated the caliphs with respect, but the latter continued to be only figureheads.

There were several lines of Seljuks; the main line controlled the area from the Bosphorus to Chinese Turkestan until approximately 1155. The Seljuks continued to expand their territories, but they were content to let Iraqis and Iranians administer and rule their own lands. One Seljuk, Malek Shah, extended Turkish rule to the countries of the eastern Mediterranean, Asia Minor, and parts of Arabia. During his rule Iraq and Iran enjoyed a cultural and scientific renaissance, largely attributed to his brilliant Iranian vizier Nizam al Mulk, one of the most skillful administrators in history. An astronomical observatory was established in which Omar Khayyam did much of his experimentation for a new calendar, and religious schools were built in all the major towns. Abu Hamid al Ghazali, one of the greatest Islamic theologians, and

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other eminent scholars were brought to the Seljuk capital at Baghdad and were encouraged and supported in their work.

After the death of Malek Shah in 1092, Seljuk power disintegrated as petty dynasties appeared throughout Iraq and Iran, and rival claimants to Seljuk rule dispatched each other. Between 1118 and 1194 nine Seljuk sultans ruled Baghdad; only one died a natural death. The atabegs (see Glossary) who initially had been major-domos for the Seljuks began to assert themselves, and several founded local dynasties. At Mosul an atabeg originated the Zangid dynasty, which was instrumental in encouraging Muslims to oppose the invasions of the Christian Crusaders. Tughril (1177–94), the last Seljuk sultan of Iraq, was defeated and killed by the leader of a Turkish dynasty, the Khwarizm shahs, who lived south of the Aral Sea. Before his successor could establish Khwarizm rule in Iraq, Baghdad was overrun by the Mongol horde.

The Mongol Invasions

A powerful leader, Temujin, had brought together a majority of the Mongol tribes and lead them on a devastating sweep through China. About this time he changed his name to Genghis (Chinghiz) Khan (world conqueror). In 1219 he turned his 700,000 forces west and quickly devastated Bokhara, Samarkand, Balkh, Merv (all in present-day Soviet Union), and Nishapur (present-day Neyshabur, Iran), where he slaughtered every living thing. Before his death in 1227 he had reached western Azarbaijan in Iran pillaging and burning cities along the way.

After Genghis' death the area enjoyed a brief respite that ended with the arrival of Hulagu Khan (1217–65), Genghis' grandson. In 1258 he seized Baghdad and killed the last Abbasid caliph. While in Baghdad Hulagu made a pyramid of the skulls of Baghdad's scholars, religious leaders, and poets and deliberately destroyed what remained of Iraq's canal headworks. The material and artistic production of centuries was swept away (see Population, ch. 2). Iraq became a neglected frontier province ruled from the Mongol capital of Tabriz in Iran.

After the death in 1335 of the last great Mongol khan, Abu Said, also known as Bahadur the Brave, who had mounted the throne at the age of twelve, a period of political confusion ensued in Iraq until a local petty dynasty, the Jalayirids, seized power and ruled until the beginning of the fifteenth century. Jalayirid rule was abruptly checked by the rising power of a Mongol, Timur Lang (Tamerlane), who had been atabeg of the reigning prince of Samarkand. In 1401 he sacked Baghdad and massacred many of its inhabitants. Tamerlane killed thousands of Iraqis and devastated hundreds of towns. Like Hulagu, Tamerlane had a penchant for building pyramids of skulls. Despite a showy display of Sunni piety, Tamerlane's rule virtually extinguished Islamic scholarship and Islamic arts in all areas with the exception of his capital, Samarkand.

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In Iraq political chaos, severe economic depression, and social disintegration followed in the wake of the Mongol invasion. Baghdad, so long a center of trade, rapidly lost its commercial importance. A major preoccupation of the governmental authorities had been to keep the peace in order to maintain agricultural production essential to the whole economy of Iraq. As central controls weakened, nomadic tribes encroached on settled areas. This conflict between nomadic and settled tribes, which has been a leitmotif of Middle Eastern history, intensified after the death of Tamerlane in 1405.

The rising power of the new native Safavid dynasty (1502–1794) in Iran was able to capitalize on conditions in Iraq. Its founder Ismail Shah (1502–24) conquered Iraq in 1509. The Safavids were the first to declare Shiite Islam the religion of Iran. The Sunni Ottoman Turks who ruled from Istanbul were concerned that Shiism would spread to Anatolia (Asia Minor), via Iraq, thus posing a threat to Ottoman control. Sultan Selim the Grim attacked Ismail's forces in 1514. Selim was the first in a line of many Ottoman sultans to engage the Safavids in a series of protracted wars that lasted until 1639. By 1535, however, Baghdad had been conquered by the sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. Iraq would remain under Sunni Ottoman control until 1916 with only a brief interlude of Safavid rule from 1623 to 1638. The political and religious hub of the Islamic world was thus shifted for the first time out of the Islamic heartlands to the Sublime Porte (see Glossary) in Istanbul (see fig. 4).

The Ottoman Period: 1534–1918

During the four centuries of Ottoman occupation Iraq was divided into three and sometimes four vilayets, or provinces. The three vilayets of greatest importance were Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra. Governors, called pashas, administered each vilayet and were directly answerable to the Sublime Porte. However, during the first period of Ottoman rule, from 1534 to 1621, their control of Iraq was tenuous. There were large areas where the Ottomans had not penetrated, and in those regions where Ottoman representatives did rule, they did so capriciously with little direction from Istanbul.

In 1623 the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas (1587–1629) seized Baghdad, and the Safavids held Iraq until 1638. During this period of Iranian rule the Sunni population was decimated by torture, murder, and enslavement. As Joseph Malone writes, "The new Persian regime put heavy demands on its chroniclers in terms adequate to describe either the hatred which inspired it or the barbarity which the hatred produced."

In addition to the Iranian desire to control the Shiite holy places in Iraq, Baghdad had become for the Iranians the symbol of empire. Whoever could hold Baghdad was a force to be reckoned with. The Ottomans wanted Iraq as a Sunni-controlled buffer state

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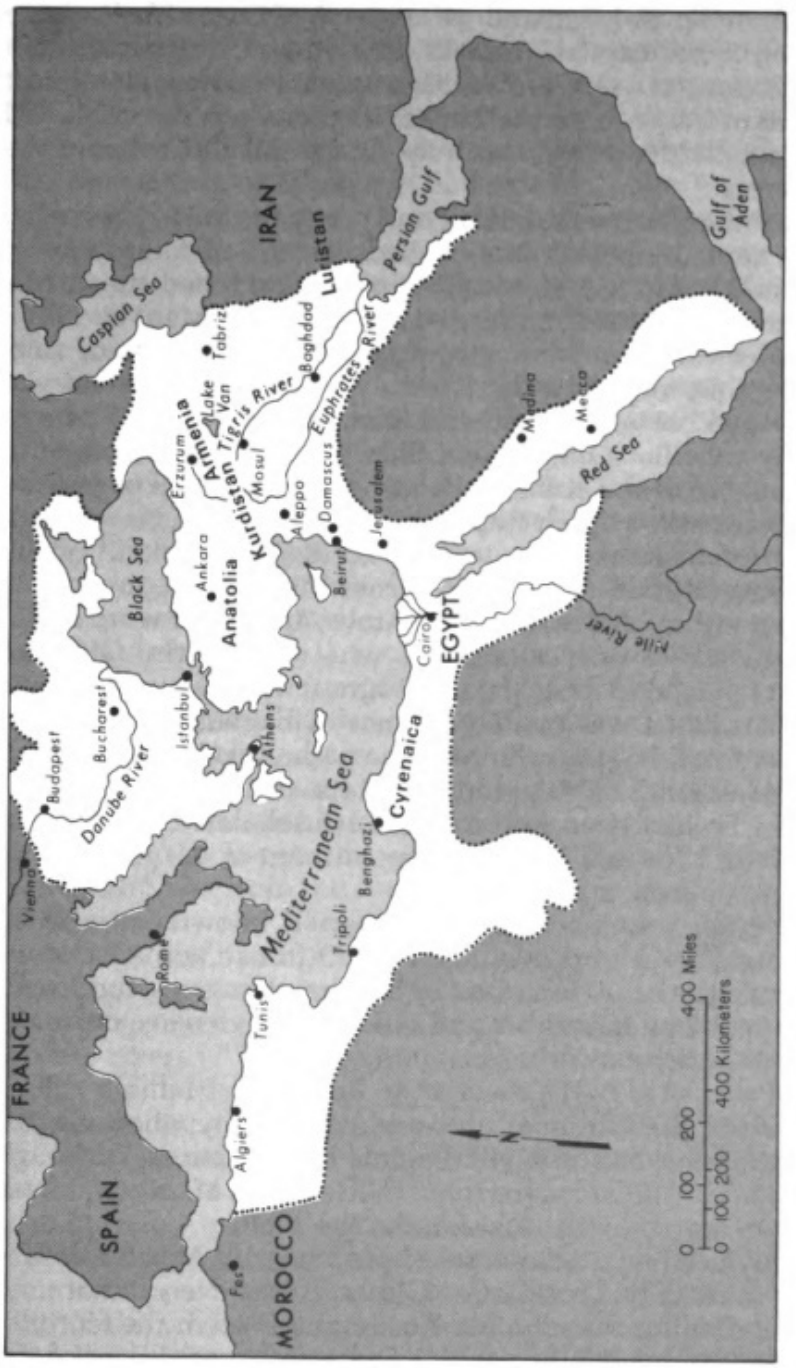

Source: Based on information from Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey*, Englewood Cliffs, 1968, p. 51; and Philip K. Hitti, *The Near East in History*, New York, 1961, p. 334.

Figure 4. The Ottoman Empire in the Mid-Seventeenth Century

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between Anatolia and Iran and were aware of the symbolic value of the old Abbasid capital. In 1638 the dynamic Ottoman sultan Murad IV executed a series of brilliant military maneuvers against the Safavids in Iraq. Murad's seizure of Baghdad was accomplished only with much bloodshed, the Iraqi Arabs and Kurds being the chief sufferers.

Once regained Iraq was difficult and costly for the Ottomans to hold. The nomadic population swelled because of migrations of beduin from Najd in the Arabian Peninsula, and it became impossible to curb beduin raids on settled areas. The constant and divisive factor of religious politics complicated the process of rule. Northern Iraqis, including the Kurds, were Sunni; Baghdad was evenly divided between Sunni and Shia; and the south, home of perennially rebellious chiefs, was Shia. In the late seventeenth century the rise of the Kurdish Baban dynasty, which organized Kurdish resistance, made it impossible for the Ottomans to maintain even nominal suzerainty over Iraqi Kurdistan (land of the Kurds). Between 1625 and 1668 and from 1694 to 1701 the marshlands, home of the Madan or Marsh Arabs, and Basra were exclusively in the hands of local shaykhs who ignored the Ottoman governor of Baghdad (see Major Geographical Features, ch. 2). When Hasan Pasha was made governor of Baghdad in 1704, he instituted a unique system whereby the pashalik passed to his son, then to the husbands of his granddaughters, and finally to Mamluk governors who had been raised in the households of the pashas. Thus between 1704 and 1831 the appointment of the governor of Baghdad was purely a local concern.

The Georgian Mamluk rulers of this period, known as the slave-pashas, were a great improvement over Ottoman administrators. Ottoman rule has been described by Stephen Longrigg and Frank Stoakes as "corrupt, maladroit, and rapacious, high office normally for sale, self-enrichment the prevailing motive."

Daoud Pasha (1817–31), the last of Baghdad's Mamluk rulers, surrendered to the Ottoman's representative only when plague, flood, and famine had brought Baghdad to its knees. Although both Basra and Baghdad were ruled by Georgian Mamluks, Mosul was ruled by an eminent local family, the Jalilis.

Each province had a unique set of problems. In Mosul rule was difficult because of the Yazidis (see Glossary) who even at that time had a reputation for ferocity; the Kurds who lived in the foothills; and the locusts and famines, which were an integral part of the Iraqi experience in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In addition to Sunni Muslim Arabs and Sunni Kurds, large numbers of Christians, the majority of whom were Nestorian, lived in the north around Mosul. Many were merchants, but a considerable number were village cultivators.

Baghdad's difficulties came chiefly from marauding tribesmen, both Sunni and Shia, who steadfastly refused to recognize any authority but their own. In this period the power of the great tribal

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confederations—the Anaiza, Shammar, Dhafir, Muntafiq, Chaab, Bani Lam, and Zubaid—was consolidated since there was no effective central authority to check their growth. Baghdad also had to grapple with sporadic attacks from Sunni Wahhabi (see Glossary) warriors from Najd who in 1802 attacked and virtually destroyed the Shia shrine of Husayn at Karbala.

Basra's fortunes were dependent on those of the Europeans who used the city as a commercial entrepôt. The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British had all established agencies there, and the business of the city attracted many foreigners, particularly Indians and Iranians. Basra also had large communities of Jews and of Armenian Christians. The slave, coffee, and silk trades kept everyone in business. However, periodic famine, pestilence, and foreign invasion limited the city's growth.

Two new sultans in Istanbul, Selim III (1789–1807) and Mahmud II (1808–39), initiated a series of administrative and military reforms that strengthened the Ottoman position. Mahmud was sufficiently organized in 1831 to send Ali Ridha Pasha to retake the three provinces of Iraq from its local rulers. True reform that could be felt in Iraqi vilayets was the work of Midhat Pasha (1869–72). Within three years Midhat began a newspaper, a hospital, schools, and munitions factories. He instituted conscription for the army and established city councils and a postal service. A major effort was made to settle tribesmen. After his death reforms continued to be enacted but more slowly.

Much of the impetus for reform came from the example of the Europeans and from the desire of the Ottomans to appear modern in European eyes. The British had had a consulate at Baghdad since 1802 and the French shortly after, and European interest in modernizing Iraq to accommodate and facilitate their commercial interests coincided with Ottoman reforms. Steamboats appeared on the rivers in 1836, and the telegraph was introduced in 1861.

Externally the decline of Ottoman rule after the eighteenth century coincided with the rise of European seapower and the worldwide competition among European powers for commercial benefits and for spheres of influence. The impact of this rivalry was not fully felt in Iraq, however, until after 1899 when Germany obtained from the Ottomans a concession to build a railroad from Konya in southwest Turkey to Baghdad; in 1902 Germany received the additional right to build a line from Baghdad to Basra. The British feared that this scheme of the rising and politically hostile German power would interfere with their vital lines of communication to India via Iran and Afghanistan, menacing British oil interests in Iran and perhaps even India itself. And although Russia was at odds with Britain because of mutually conflicting interests in Iran, Russia became willing to compromise with Britain because of the greater fear of Germany. Russia's major desire was for warm-water ports, but it also wished to consolidate its strategic position wherever possible in view of the humiliating

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defeat sustained in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. Accordingly a compromise settlement known as the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was signed, which was directed in part against Germany. Part of the pact included the division of Iran into spheres of influence.

After the 1907 entente the Germans and the British became the primary contenders for influence in Iraq. Because of strong British objections, for example, German plans to make Kuwait the terminus of the Berlin-Baghdad-Basra railroad were abandoned in June 1914. On another occasion the British combined with the ruler of Kuwait, Abd al Aziz—the powerful shaykh of the Saud clan in Arabia—and a semi-independent local Iraqi ruling group to prevent a reassertion of the pro-German Ottoman power in the lower delta area around Basra.

Encouraged by the Young Turks Revolution of 1908, nationalists in Iraq stepped up their political activity. Iraqi nationalists met in Cairo with the Ottoman Decentralization Party, which was founded in 1912, and many Iraqis joined the Young Arab Society, which moved to Beirut in 1913. Because of its greater exposure to Westerners who encouraged the nationalists, Basra became the center from which Iraqi nationalists began to demand a measure of autonomy.

In 1911 Sayid Talib al Naqib, an important landlord from Basra, founded Jimyat al Basra al Islahiya (The Reformist League of Basra), which produced a newspaper, *Al Dustur.* Under the guise of a literary club, Al Nadi al Adabi (The Literary Club) was formed at Baghdad. Its newspaper *Al Nahda* discussed issues relating to Arab nationalism. In Istanbul Iraqi students began secret societies. Two of the most important were Al Alam al Akhdar (The Green Banner) and Al Yadd al Sawda (The Black Hand). The Black Hand was avowedly a terrorist organization that planned to assassinate any Arab leaders who appeared opposed to Arab independence. A compromise organization, Al Ahd (The Covenant), was founded in 1913 by Ali al Misri. Its platform was internal autonomy within an Ottoman federation.

World War I and the British Mandate

Iraqi nationalism was alive by 1914 but hardly articulate. Educated upper- and middle-class Arabs in many parts of the Middle East and particularly in the Levant (see Glossary) had become politically conscious to the extent that they were beginning to question the overlordship of the Ottomans, but there was not yet any organization or program. The outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire, the "sick man of Europe," and Britain and its allies checked Iraqi nationalism for a time. The Iraqis were for the most part passive observers of the war fought on their land for their land. Britain was especially concerned to protect British oil production in southern Iran, which dated only from 1912. From India the British sent a force that landed in the Shaat al Arab and

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quickly and bloodlessly occupied Basra. By the summer of 1915 British forces were well established at towns in the south. Emboldened, the British under General Charles Townshend attempted to take Baghdad in the autumn. The unsuccessful effort brought retaliation from the Turks who besieged the British garrison at Al Kut for 140 days. In April 1916 the garrison was forced to surrender unconditionally.

The British quickly regrouped their forces, which they renamed the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. Ports, bases, roads, railroads, and communications were secured, and General Stanley Maude began a forward movement in December 1916. Baghdad was netted in March 1917, and the next spring the British began to take the north. Mosul was occupied in October, and before the end of 1918 the British held the whole of Iraq.

On capturing Baghdad, Maude proclaimed that Britain intended to return to Iraq some control of its own affairs, stressing that this step would pave the way for ending the subjection to alien rule that the Iraqis had experienced since the latter days of the Abbasid caliphate. The proclamation was in accordance with the encouragement the British had given to Arab nationalists, such as Jafar al Askari, his brother Nuri as Said, and Jamil al Midfai, who sought emancipation from Ottoman rule. The nationalists had supported the Allied powers in expectation of the defeat of the Ottomans and the freedom many nationalists assumed would come with an Allied victory.

During the war the course of events in Iraq was greatly influenced by the Hashimite family of Husayn ibn Ali, sharif of Mecca, who claimed descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Aspiring to become king of an independent Arab kingdom, Husayn had broken with the Ottomans, to whom he had been vassal, and thrown in his lot with the British. The British, anxious for his support, gave Husayn reason to believe that he would have their endorsement at the cessation of hostilities. Accordingly in June 1916 Husayn and his sons led the revolt of the Arabs, marching northward in conjunction with the British into Transjordan, Palestine, and Syria.

Anticipating the fulfillment of Allied pledges, Husayn's son, Prince Faisal, then head of a new Arab regime set up in Damascus with British support and later destined to become modern Iraq's first king, arrived in Paris in 1919 as chief spokesman of the Arab cause. Much to his disappointment Faisal found that the Allied powers were less than enthusiastic about Arab independence and were contemplating the notion of a mandate as a compromise for former Ottoman territories.

At the Paris Peace Conference Iraq was disposed of under Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant and formally made a Class A Mandate entrusted to Britain. This award was completed on April 25, 1920, at the San Remo Conference in Italy. Palestine was also placed under British Mandate and Syria under French

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Mandate. Faisal, who had been proclaimed king of Syria by a Syrian national congress in Damascus in March 1920, was ejected by the French in July of the same year.

The civil government of postwar Iraq was originally headed by Chief Political Officer Sir Percy Cox and his deputy, Colonel Arnold Talbot Wilson. To them came the task of dealing with Iraq's age-old problems, compounded by some new ones. The British were confronted with demands from villagers that the tribes be restrained and demands from tribes that their titles to tribal territories be confirmed and the amount of land held be extended. Merchants demanded more effective legal procedures, courts, and laws to protect their activities and interests. Municipal authorities appealed for defined powers and grants-in-aid in addition to the establishment of public welfare and educational facilities. Landlords pressed for grants of land, for the building of canals and roads, and for the provision of tested seeds and livestock.

The holy cities of An Najaf and Karbala in the Middle Euphrates and their satellite tribes were in a state of near anarchy, which was not eased by British reprisals after the murder of a British officer in An Najaf. The Anaiza, Shammar, and Jubur tribes of the western desert were beset by violent infighting. British administration had yet to be established in the mountains of Kurdistan. And from the Hakkari Mountains beyond Iraq's northern frontier and from the plains of Urmiya in Iran, thousands of Assyrians—Nestorian Christians—began to pour into Iraqi territory seeking refuge from Turkish savagery.

More striking than all other problems was the growing anger of the nationalists who felt betrayed at being accorded Mandate status, which they viewed as a flimsy disguise for colonialism. The experienced Cox had been compelled to delegate governance of the country to Wilson, who governed Iraq with the paternalism that typified British rule in India. The young Wilson, impatient to establish an efficient administration, used experienced Indians to the exclusion of Iraqis for subordinate positions within the administration, which added humiliation to Iraqi discontent.

Three important anticolonial secret societies had been formed in Iraq during 1918 and 1919. At An Najaf, Jimyat al Nahda al Islamiya (The League of the Islamic Awakening) was organized; it had numerous and varied members including ulama (religious leaders), journalists, landlords, and tribal leaders. It was the Jimyat that assassinated a British officer in the hope that the killing would act as a catalyst for a general rebellion at Iraq's other holy city, Karbala. Al Jimya al Wataniya al Islamiya (The Muslim National League) was formed with the object of organizing and mobilizing the population for major resistance. In February 1919 in Baghdad, Haras al Istiqlal (The Guardians of Independence) was formed, which represented a coalition of Shiite merchants, Sunni teachers and civil servants, Sunni and Shia ulama, and Iraqi officers. The Istiqlal had member groups in Karbala, An Najaf, Al Kut, and Al Hillah.

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There had been local outbreaks against British rule even before the news reached Iraq that the country had been given only the status of a Mandate. The death of an important Shiite *mujtahid* (religious scholar) in early May 1920 provided an opportunity for Sunni and Shia ulama to put aside their differences as the memorial services metamorphosed into political rallies. Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, fell later in the month of May and once again, through the medium of nationalistic poetry and oratory, the people were exhorted to throw off the bonds of imperialism. Violent demonstrations and strikes followed the British arrest of several leaders.

When the news of the Mandate reached Iraq late in May, a group of Iraqi delegates met with Wilson and demanded independence. They were dismissed by Wilson as a "handful of ungrateful politicians." Political activity was stepped up and the grand *mujtahid* of Karbala, Imam Shirazi, and his son, Mirza Muhammad Riza, began to organize the effort in earnest. Arab flags were made and distributed, and pamphlets were handed out urging the tribes to prepare for revolt. Riza acted as liaison between insurgents in An Najaf, Karbala, and the tribal confederations. Shirazi then issued a *fatwa* (religious ruling), pointing out that it is against Islamic law for Muslims to countenance being ruled by non-Muslims, and called for a jihad against the British. The British became engaged on several fronts simultaneously.

By July 1920 Mosul was in rebellion against British rule, and the insurrection moved south down the Euphrates River valley. The southern tribes who cherished their long-held political autonomy needed little inducement to join in the fray. They did not cooperate in an organized effort against the British, however, which limited the effect of the revolt. For three months the country was in a state of anarchy; order was restored only with great difficulty and the assistance of Royal Air Force bombers. British forces were obliged to send for reinforcements from India and Iran.

The Iraqis with pride called this episode Al-Thawra al Iraqqia al Kubra, the Great Iraqi Revolution. There were many important local shaykhs and urban notables who remained aloof from the insurrection, as did the Iraqi police and security forces. Nevertheless the revolt gave dramatic evidence of Iraqi dissatisfaction with British rule and marked the debut of Iraqi nationalism.

The British people, citing the cost to Britain in both lives and money, demanded the reduction of commitments in Iraq. In response to that demand the military regime was replaced by a provisional Arab government assisted by British advisers and answerable to the supreme authority of the high commissioner for Iraq, Cox. The new administration served as a channel of communication between the British and the restive population and gave an opportunity for Iraqi leaders to come forward to prepare the way for eventual self-government.

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The provisional government was relatively successful, partially because of the large number of trained Iraqi administrators who returned home when the French ejected Faisal from Syria. Like all earlier Iraqi governments, it was not representative, composed as it was chiefly of Sunni Arabs. Most important among the personalities to emerge were Naqib, Askari, and Nuri.

In the autumn of 1921 such notables as Winston Churchill, Gertrude Bell (a British official in the region during and after World War I), T.E. Lawrence, and H. St. John Philby as well as Cox and Wilson began to plan Iraq's future. A monarchy was decided on as the only possible government for Iraq, and Faisal was chosen to be the first monarch. A plebiscite of one question was carefully arranged, which had a return of 96 percent in favor of Faisal. Because Faisal traced his descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad and because his ancestors had held political authority in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina since the tenth century, he was endowed with traditional Arab standards of political legitimacy that he could invoke to install himself as Iraq's first modern monarch. Faisal's leadership qualities, in addition to his achievements as a leader in the Arab emancipation movement, earned him the support of most levels of Iraqi society. Nationalists, including former Iraqi officers in the Ottoman army who had given weight to the 1916 revolt against the Turks, felt that with Faisal they had the best chance to build a national government.

His candidacy, however, was not sponsored from within Iraq but rather sponsored by the British to repay Hashimite assistance in World War I. The British also knew that Faisal would cooperate with them. The endorsement of a plebiscite was insurance that Faisal would not be seen as merely a British puppet. There was no way, however, that the plebiscite could have failed to return Faisal. The plebiscite has been described as "politics running on wheels greased with extremely well-melted grease." Faisal's ceremonial accession took place on August 23, 1921.

Faisal and a few Iraqi politicians, chief of whom was Faisal's close friend, Nuri, began to rule with the new, more subtle assistance of British advisers. The British ground troops were pulled out of Iraq and replaced by the Royal Air Force stationed to the west of Baghdad. A preliminary constitution was drafted, government offices were organized, and the country was divided into fourteen liwas (provinces or governorates) each administered by a governor. Security was improved, and modest improvements were made in education, which included the publication of history books that made no reference to the Iraqi rebellion of 1920. As Amal Vinogradov writes, "modern Iraq began in 1921 but neither the British nor their protégés felt safe or at ease." In a letter to her father shortly after the accession of Faisal, Bell, who played a key role during World War I and the Mandate period, wrote, "You may rely on one thing—I'll never engage in creating a king again; it is too great a strain. Sir Percy and I, as we drove home, felt we

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had jumped another hedge, but we agreed that we were in a very stiff country."

The British decided that a treaty was in order and began preparing the field. Nationalists continued to be adamant that the British presence in Iraq should be limited. The *mujtahids* of An Najaf and Karbala added Shiite theocratic sentiment to the demands of urban Sunnis that Faisal not compromise Iraq by promising a twenty-year commitment to a foreign power. Faisal chose a moderate approach in dealing with the British to avoid a repetition of his experience in Syria, but he was disappointed by the contents of the treaty and complained, "This is not the kind of treaty which Mr. Churchill promised me in London." Nevertheless the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of October 10, 1922, embodied the provisions of the Mandate, albeit softened by giving Iraq limited control in the spheres of both foreign and domestic affairs.

After the treaty was signed Iraq readied itself for the country-wide elections that had been provided for by publishing the Electoral Law in May 1922. There were important changes in the government at this time. Cox resigned his position as high commissioner to Sir Henry Dobbs, and Iraq's aging Prime Minister, Abd al Rahman al Gailani, stepped down and was replaced by Abd al Muhsin al Saadun. In April 1923 Abd al Muhsin signed a protocol that shortened the treaty period to four years. As a result of the elections Abd al Muhsin was replaced by Askari, a veteran of the Arab rebellion and an early supporter of Faisal.

The elected constitutional assembly met for the first time in March 1924 and formally ratified the treaty despite strong (and sometimes physical) opposition on the part of many in the assembly. The assembly also accepted the Organic Law that declared Iraq to be a sovereign state with a representative system of government and a hereditary constitutional monarchy (see Constitutional Development, this ch.). Yasin al Hashimi, a former Turkish corps commander, then replaced Askari as premier.

In 1925 the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded, and consuls to Iraq were appointed from many nations, some of which recognized Iraq because of pressure from Britain. The British connection was also extremely helpful, if not indispensable, in the matter of the Mosul vilayet to which Turkey put forth claims in 1923 at the first Lausanne Conference. Britain, representing Iraq, opposed Turkey's claim, and the matter was referred to the League of Nations. The situation was complicated by the fact that the Mosul vilayet contained many Kurds who had staunchly resisted the rule of both Turkey and Iraq. The Turks had contributed to keeping the area around Mosul in a state of anarchy from 1921 to 1924; this was only ended in early 1925 by the eviction from the area of the most troublesome individuals.

The League of Nations decided in favor of Iraq but suggested that the four years of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty be extended to twenty-five as a protection for the Kurdish minority who intensely

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distrusted the Iraqi government. The Iraqis were also to give due regard to Kurdish sensibilities in matters of culture and language. Although reluctant to do so, the assembly ratified the treaty in January 1926. Turkey was eventually reconciled to the loss by being promised one-tenth of any oil revenues that might accrue in the area, and a tripartite Anglo-Turco-Iraqi treaty was signed in July 1926. This settlement was to have important repercussions, both positive and negative, for the future of Iraq. Vast oil revenues would accrue from the Mosul liwa; but the inclusion of a large number of Kurds in Iraqi territory added the problems of dealing with yet another minority, and this one was well armed, continually restless, and had a long tradition of hating Arabs.

The collaborative efforts of British officers and Iraqi bureaucrats and politicians produced an Iraq in the 1920s that had an active, albeit immature, political life. During this period the power of the *mujtahids* waned, and because Shia *mujtahids* had usually represented their coreligionists' interests, it meant that the urban Shiites in particular were less represented than before. Shiites did enter the cabinet, however. The most noteworthy during the 1920s were Abd al Husayn al Chalabi, Muhammad al Sadr, Muhammad Ridha al Shabibi, and Salih Jabr.

Sunnis, accustomed to a monopoly of power in Iraq, resented the desire for greater representation by the Shias. Most of these Sunnis were connected to one of the plethora of "parties" that appeared in the 1920s: the "Nationalist," the "People's," the "Free," the "Awakening," the "Popular," and the "National Independence." These parties had little in the way of a platform exclusive of the general desire for independence from the British. Rather the parties were merely vehicles for the advancement of a few personalities. To belong to a party meant that one supported the founder of it in elections. Nevertheless many Iraqis were active in the political life of the country. Minorities, although hardly having proportionate representation, did make their appearance in the cabinet. There were several Christian ministers, and the first minister of finance, Sasun Haskail, was a Jew.

In December 1927 a treaty more favorable to the Iraqis was presented to them but remained unratified because of the desire by nationalists for an unconditional promise of independence. This was made by the new high commissioner Sir Gilbert Clayton in 1929. The confusion occasioned by the sudden death of Clayton and the suicide of Abd al Muhsin delayed the writing of a new treaty. A new treaty eventually was signed on June 30, 1930, by the new prime minister, Nuri. The treaty supported unconditionally the admission of Iraq into the League of Nations and opened negotiations with the Iraqi government toward a treaty of alliance defining future relations between the two countries. This move was precipitated by the Labour Party coming to power in London. This change of regime was paralleled by the emergence of a liberal nationalist government in Baghdad under Nuri, who British

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authorities believed was capable of leading the country to self-rule.

A new pact called the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was signed in June 1930, which provided for the establishment of a "close alliance" and for "full and frank consultations between them in all matters of foreign policy" and mutual assistance in case of war. Iraq granted the British the use of air bases near Basra and at Al Habbaniyah and the right to move troops across the country. The treaty, of twenty-five years' duration, was to come into force on Iraq's admission to the League of Nations.

Although the nationalists in Iraq took a different view, the British military occupation of Iraq from 1915 to 1920 and the British Mandate from 1920 to 1932 had a beneficial effect on many of the institutions of the young country. In addition to the retention of Mosul Province, the stabilization of Iraq's frontiers, and the establishment of the monarchy, the British assisted in drawing up the constitution, the design of the elected assembly, and the organization of the least corrupt governmental bureaucracy ever to appear in Iraq. Law courts with revised legal codes were installed throughout the country, a modern police force was begun, and a modern, if small, Iraqi army was established. A new currency was introduced, the Turkish land revenue system was amended, and an income tax was established. Trade and young industries received government support, and agricultural improvements, including the erection of controlled-flow irrigation works, substantially increased output.

Among the most important of the developments during the Mandate period was the oil concession covering northern and central Iraq that the Iraqi government contracted to the Turkish Petroleum Company in 1925. By 1927 the company had located large reserves in an area near Kirkuk. A pipeline from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean was begun with terminals at Haifa in Palestine and Tripoli in Lebanon. In 1923 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company discovered smaller amounts of oil at Naft Khaneh, about 120 kilometers northeast of Baghdad, and this was also under exploitation by the end of the Mandate. The discovery and exploitation of this immense natural asset was the single most important development on which the future of Iraq would depend.

Communications within Iraq were vastly improved. The Basra-Baghdad-Kirkuk and the Baghdad-Sharqat railroad lines were repaired and extended. A highway was laid linking Baghdad with Beirut and Damascus. Some river bridges were built and others planned. Iraq joined the Universal Postal Union in 1929 and expanded its internal and external telegraph system. An airport was built at Baghdad and landing strips at Basra and Ar Rutbah in the far west near the borders with Syria and Transjordan. The port of Basra, which the British army created during the war, was maintained; dredging was done at the Al Faw bar, which for the first time enabled deep-draught vessels to use this port.

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The few social services that existed before the Mandate were almost the exclusive preserve of Islamic philanthropic institutions. During the Mandate modest educational advances were made; elementary, secondary, and technical schools were established, as were a handful of colleges for law, medicine, theology, and engineering. Hospitals or clinics were established in all towns of any size, and programs to combat epidemic diseases were begun. Neither the educational nor health care systems, minimal as they were, answered the needs of Iraq's citizens, but they were a beginning on which the independent state of Iraq could build.

Iraq as an Independent Monarchy: 1932–58

On October 13, 1932, Iraq became a sovereign, independent state and was admitted to the League of Nations. None of the problems inherent in a state that is a mosaic society composed of many minorities had been solved by the date of Iraq's independence. Attempting to mold this fragmented society into a group, the British had endeavored to integrate into the ruling Sunni elite important Shia personalities, particularly tribal chiefs and religious figures. Kurdish and Turkoman chieftains, in addition to notables from the Jewish and Christian communities, were also installed in the military as well as in civilian positions. This important precedent continued into independence as a member from each minority community was given a cabinet post. As Abbas Kelidar notes, "Cabinet government became an assortment of unstable communal coalitions."

The Sunni-Shia conflict, a problem that had been with Iraq since the domination of the Umayyad caliphate in A.D.650, continued to plague the forces that attempted to mold Iraq into a political community. The Shia tribes of the southern Euphrates joined with urban Shias in fearing the possibility of complete Sunni domination in the government. This fear was well founded because there was a disproportionate number of Sunnis in administrative positions; they had been favored by the Ottomans and thus had much more administrative experience. However, many of the more traditional Sunnis were also at odds with the government, perceiving Faisal's 1916 revolt against the Ottoman sultan-caliph as an impious act because, according to Islamic political philosophy, acts against a Muslim authority are justified only when that authority ceases to uphold sharia. And some Sunnis were Turkophile for purely political reasons; particularly because they wished to supplant the British influence and the Hashimite dynasty, which they perceived to be an extension of British rule. Most important among this group were Rashid Ali, Naji Shaukat, and Hikmat Suleiman. Additionally almost every minority group was opposed to the government because it represented the accession of another Arab dynasty.

In 1932 the two most vociferous minorities were the Kurds (Sunni Muslims) and the Assyrians. The restless Kurds, the major-

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ity of whom lived in the area around Mosul, were long noted for their fierce spirit of independence and of separatism. During the Ottoman occupation of the Mosul vilayet, the Kurds had supported the Ottomans in exchange for a measure of local autonomy and had remained loyal to the Ottomans during World War I. In an effort to placate the Kurds during the tumultuous year of 1920, the Allied powers and Turkey had conditionally agreed to the establishment of "an independent Kurdish state" to be known as Kurdistan. The state was to be carved out of the predominantely Kurdish areas that bordered on Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. When political conditions in Turkey changed under Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk), the Kurdish scheme was abandoned, and the Kurds resorted to a series of anti-Kemal revolts in Turkey.

During the years from 1922 to 1924 the Kurds engaged in a series of revolts as the British attempted to encroach on areas of traditional Kurdish autonomy. When the League of Nations awarded Mosul to Iraq in 1925, Kurdish hostility increased because the Kurds preferred Turkish to Arab rule. The Iraqi government maintained an uneasy peace with the Kurds in the first year of independence.

The relationship of the Iraqi government with the Assyrians, however, was more openly mutually hostile in 1932 and 1933. As a result of the frontier settlements with Turkey, approximately three-fourths of the Assyrians who had sided with the British during World War I now found themselves citizens of Iraq, a situation that was objectionable and dangerous to them. Thousands of Assyrians had been incorporated into the Iraq Levies, a British-paid and British-officered force separate from the regular Iraq army. They had been encouraged by the British to consider themselves superior to the majority of Arab Iraqis by virtue of their profession of Christianity. Pro-British, they had been apprehensive of the coming of independence to Iraq. The Assyrians were concerned not only because of the Iraqi Arabs but also because the British had used them for retaliatory operations against the Kurds in whose lands they had chiefly settled. They therefore feared Kurdish reprisals once the British were no longer in power.

The Assyrians had sought a region of their own where they hoped to form a nation-state. When no unoccupied area sufficiently large could be found, the Assyrians continued to insist that at the very least their patriarch, the Mar Shamun, be given some temporal authority. This demand was flatly refused by both the British and the Iraqis. In response the Assyrians, who had been permitted by the British to retain their weapons after the dissolution of the Iraq Levies, flaunted their strength and refused to recognize the government. In retaliation the Iraqi government held the Mar Shamun under virtual house arrest in mid-1933, making his release contingent on his signing a document renouncing forever any claims to temporal authority. During July some 800 armed Assyrians headed for the Syrian border, for reasons that

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have never been explained, where they were repelled by the Syrians. During this time King Faisal was outside of the country for reasons of health. In the meantime interior minister Suleiman had, according to scholarly sources, adopted a policy aimed at the elimination of the Assyrians. This policy was apparently implemented by a Kurd, General Bakr Sidqi, who, after engaging in several clashes with the Assyrians, permitted his men to kill some 300 Assyrians, including women and children, at the Assyrian village of Simel (Sumayyil). Faisal was aghast at the news and returned to Iraq on August 2. Ignored by the cabinet, he left for Berne for medical treatment. He died there on September 8.

Faisal was succeeded by his twenty-one-year-old son, Ghazi, an ardent but inexperienced Arab nationalist. Faisal's death meant the loss of the main stabilizing personality in politics and the one figure with sufficient prestige to draw the politicians together around a concept of national interest. Faisal had been able to balance nationalist and British pressures within the framework of the Anglo-Iraqi alliance. Ghazi was unable to control either the increasing factionalism stemming from tribal and communal tensions or the clamor of voices against Britain's dominant influence in Iraqi affairs. The political climate of Iraq in the early 1930s was characterized by the numerous cliques that surrounded prominent political personalities, by a small, self-serving ruling class drawn chiefly from the families of ruling tribal shaykhs and landowners, and by an intelligentsia composed of students, lawyers, physicians, ex-officers, and journalists. The press was perhaps the least responsible of all the groups. It was marked by an ill-informed xenophobia that chose to play up the divisions rather than any unity that might have existed among the various factions.

The years during which no stability was provided by royal authority were also years of increased desire for an effective role of government in promoting national welfare. There was a growing demand during the 1930s for general reform, including measures in the spheres of land improvement and distribution, roadbuilding, irrigation, commerce, industry, public health, and communications. Some politicians, seeking to capitalize on these demands and to lead the growing intelligentsia, responded with liberal and social democratic slogans and programs, while others looked to the emerging authoritarian governments in Europe as models for Iraqi development along vaguely fascist or communist lines. In this situation the military, a necessary ingredient for maintaining power in the Middle East, began to inject itself into the political scene.

Given the divisive and potentially violent nature of Iraqi society, the establishment of a national army was crucial. In a memorandum to his cabinet ministers Faisal had pointed out that while more than 100,000 rifles were in private hands, the Iraqi army could produce only 15,000. Thus it became critical to increase the size and efficiency of the army so that it could at least match the

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forces that might appear in local rebellions. Because such a national institution was as vulnerable as any other in Iraq to sectarian, ethnic, and communal pressures, the government attempted to maintain the officer corps as the preserve of the Sunni Arab elite. This policy proved impractical, especially because most of the minorities had more military experience than did the Sunni Arabs. It was natural, therefore, that the same forces that appeared in the society at large would also be manifested within the army.

In 1936 Iraq experienced its first coup d'etat at the hands of the military, which was also the first coup d'etat in the modern history of the Arab states. The agents of the coup—General Bakr Sidqi and two politicians, Suleiman and Abu Timman, who were Turkoman and Shia respectively, represented a minority response to the pan-Arab Sunni government of Hashimi. The Hashimi government was the most successful and longest lived (eighteen months) of the eight governments that came and went during the reign of King Ghazi (September 1933 to April 1939). Hashimi had used Bakr Sidqi to repress tribal insurrections and then had proceeded to attend to some of Iraq's many development needs. An agricultural and industrial bank was opened, the development of municipal infrastructures promoted, conscription enforced, a labor code formulated, and irrigation headworks constructed. Hashimi's government was nationalistic and pan-Arab in platform but was resented by many because of its authoritarianism and its staunching of honest dissent. Suleiman, a reformist, sought to engineer an alliance of other reformists and minority elements within the army. The political sensitivities of the reformists ran the gamut from Communism, to orthodox and unorthodox socialism, to more moderate positions. Most of the more moderate formed themselves into the Ahali group named after their newspaper.

After Bakr Sidqi moved against Baghdad, Suleiman formed an Ahali cabinet. Hashimi and Rashid Ali were banished, and Nuri fled to Egypt. In the course of the assault on Baghdad Nuri's brother-in-law, Minister of Defense Askari, had been slaughtered, and Nuri vowed vengeance. Suleiman's government was sanctioned by King Ghazi even though it had achieved power unconstitutionally. The Ahali-Suleiman-army alliance was of short duration, however. Bakr Sidqi's excesses alienated both his civilian and military supporters, and he was finally murdered by a military group in August 1937. Suleiman withdrew from the Ahali, which had become increasingly unpopular because its support of land reform threatened certain vested interests. Financial difficulties impeded development, but there were some achievements in communications and in irrigation projects.

This government proved no more supportive of civil liberties than its predecessors. The only solid achievement of the Suleiman government consisted of the agreements it made with other states. In 1936 the Treaty of Alliance was signed with Saudi Arabia.

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In July 1937 Iraq signed a treaty with Iran temporarily settling a long-held dispute over the Shatt al Arab. In 1937 Iraq also joined the Saadabad Pact, essentially a mutual defense treaty, with Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

The precedent of the military coup had been established in Iraq; between 1936 and 1941 it was to experience seven coups d'etat, which tended to be motivated chiefly by personal goals rather than political issues. A coup d'etat in 1938 against the government of Midfai, successor to Suleiman, placed Nuri as premier and Rashid Ali as head of the Royal Divan, an unlikely alliance made possible only by the bond of hatred they both had for Suleiman and his clique.

In April 1939 King Ghazi was killed in an automobile accident and succeeded by his infant son, Faisal II. Ghazi's first cousin, Amir Abd al Illah, was made regent. Another coup in February placed Nuri in power once again, but his position was fragile, and his government lasted only a month because of the extreme internal conflict being generated as World War II approached.

Since 1937 relations with Britain had deteriorated, chiefly because of Iraqi resentment of British policy in the British Mandate over Palestine, which added many more politicians to the nationalist cause. The Germans had capitalized on this and hoped that Iraq would eventually be wooed to the Axis cause. The Iraqis severed diplomatic relations with Germany in 1939, as they were obliged to do because of their treaty obligations with Britain. Rashid Ali, an ardent anglophobe in the interest of nationalism, had succeeded Nuri as prime minister and was reluctant to break completely with the Axis powers, which were more successful militarily than the Allies in 1940. Rashid Ali, under pressure from the more extreme of Iraqi nationalists, had refused to sever relations with Italy, and it was known that the Italian legation in Baghdad was an important center of anti-British activity. Rashid Ali had also imposed restrictions on British troop movements in Iraq.

The regent and Nuri, both proponents of close cooperation with Britain, opposed Rashid Ali's policies, and the regent pressed him to resign and refused to dissolve a chamber that was unfavorable to pro-Axis sympathies. Rashid Ali's response to this pressure was to convince the army that a fifth military intervention was called for. On this occasion Rashid Ali was barely in power one month when disaffected forces within the army placed General Taha al Hashimi at the head of government. Rashid Ali made peace with the army as the regent, and Nuri fled to Transjordan. This 1941 coup was called the Golden Square uprising because of the dominant influence of four Iraqi generals. Rashid Ali then found himself at the head of a military government to which he quickly appointed an ultranationalistic civilian cabinet. Britain declined to recognize this government.

When Iraq answered British requests in April 1941 for troop

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landings in Iraq with only conditional assent, the British retaliated by landing forces at Basra, justifying this second occupation of Iraq by citing Rashid Ali's violation of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. Many Iraqis, still in the flush of their recently won independence, regarded the move as an attempt to restore British rule. They rallied to the support of the Iraqi army, which received a number of aircraft from the Axis powers. The Germans were preoccupied with campaigns in Crete and preparations for the invasions of the Soviet Union, however, and could spare little assistance to Iraq. As the British steadily advanced, Rashid Ali and his government fled to Egypt, and an armistice was signed May 30. Shortly after Abd al Illah returned as regent, and Rashid Ali and the four generals were tried in absentia and sentenced to death. The generals returned to Iraq and were subsequently executed, but Rashid Ali remained in exile.

In January 1943 Iraq declared war on the Axis powers under the terms of the 1930 treaty with Britain. For the remainder of the war Iraq was completely cooperative with the British under the successive governments of Nuri (1941–44) and Hamdi al Pachachi (1944–46). Iraq became a base for the military occupation of Iran and of the Levant.

In March 1945 Iraq became a founding member of the League of Arab States (Arab League), which also included Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the Yemen. The Arab League was designed to promote "cooperation in economic, cultural, social, and other matters" in a loose framework of Arab unity. Postwar Iraq, however, did not regain the preeminence it enjoyed in the Arab world before the war, which it had had as a result of its early independence. In December 1945 Iraq joined the United Nations (UN).

Internally a prominent feature of postwar politics was the continued dominance of men whose names had appeared regularly on cabinet lists since independence. Chief among them was that tirelesss campaigner, Nuri, who sought to maintain stable government through firm and frequently autocratic measures. He favored alignment with Britain and the West and attempted to modernize the country gradually by the use of rapidly increasing oil revenues. Though not always prime minister, he was consistently recognized as the ultimate arbiter in affairs of state and, together with Abd al Illah, personified the government.

Men who entered political life after 1946 found Nuri and the regent out of sympathy with their liberal, reformist sentiments. Even before the end of the war nationalists had been demanding the restoration of political activity, which had been banned during the war in the interests of the security of the state. It was not until the government of Tawfiq Suwaidi (February–March 1946) that political parties were permitted to form. Within a short period six parties formed, and they soon became sufficiently vociferous against the government that the government closed or curtailed

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the activities of the more extreme of the left. During the postwar years the first Shiite prime minister to hold office, Salih Jabr (1947–48), was elected, largely through the offices of Nuri. The most notable event of Jabr's government was the signing in January 1948 of a new treaty with Britain to replace that of 1930. By its terms Britain was to evacuate its air bases at Ash Shuwaybah and Al Habbaniyah, and a board composed of Iraqis and British would decide on all defense matters of mutual interest. The people were not prepared for the terms of the treaty, and rioting broke out in Baghdad of sufficient strength and duration to cause Iraq to repudiate the treaty. The rioting against the treaty continues to be celebrated as Al Watbah, the glorious uprising.

Iraq bitterly objected to the UN decision of 1947 to partition Palestine and sent several hundred recruits to the Arab-Israeli war that began May 15, 1948. After the war began Iraq added between 8,000 and 10,000 troops of the regular army that they withdrew in April 1949. Many Iraqi Jews emigrated to Israel after the war, particularly during 1951 and 1952 when about 120,000 moved to Israel.

One development of the Arab-Israeli war that hurt Iraq until nationalization of the oil industry was the disconnection of its southern oil pipeline to the Mediterranean at the Jordan-Israel frontier. The years between 1948 and 1953 were economically difficult also because of bad harvests and the expenses of war. In 1952, already agitated by the country's depressed economic situation, the populace in several cities began to riot, ostensibly enraged because demands for direct elections had not been met. The government cracked down by declaring martial law, dissolving political parties, and arresting many opponents of the government.

Although there was no immediate benefit, Iraq's expansion of the oil industry boded well for its future. In 1949 new pipelines were built to Tripoli and in 1952 to Baniyas in Syria. The National Development Board, created in 1950, became a ministry in 1953, a change necessitated by rapidly increasing revenues as a result of a 1952 agreement whereby the oil companies ceded 50 percent of profits before taxes to the government. Financially sound for virtually the first time since independence, Iraq initiated several development projects, the most important of which were the flood control and irrigation works opened in 1956 at Samarra on the Tigris and Ar Ramadi on the Euphrates.

Although Iraq opposed the creation of Israel in 1948, its external orientation was strongly pro-Western in postwar years. In April 1954 the nation accepted military assistance from the United States; in January 1955, during one of Nuri's premierships, diplomatic relations were suspended with the Soviet Union. Additionally in February 1955 Iraq and Turkey signed a mutual defense and cooperation treaty (popularly known as the Baghdad Pact) that Britain acceded to in April, promising also to terminate the

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Martyr's Mosque, Baghdad
Courtesy Middle East Photographic Archive, London

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1930 agreement and to evacuate its air bases. Pakistan and Iran joined during the autumn, thus completing a defensive cordon running along part of the Soviet Union's southern frontier.

Antigovernment sentiments continued to grow as Iraq aligned itself with the West. These sentiments were also precipitated by government corruption and the limited political expression available to the Iraqi public as a result of Nuri's maintaining the equivalent of a police state. Pan-Arab nationalism as a popular ideology of the masses and middle class became a strong rallying ground for the many in Iraq who aspired to closer relations with other Arab states. This trend accelerated after the British and French armed intervention against Egypt in the Suez crisis of October and November 1956 and Israel's temporary seizure of the Sinai Peninsula. At home the oil revenues, widely publicized by the government as the means by which Iraq would become prosperous, appeared to many to enrich only the already affluent officials and landlords. To these criticisms were added the new resentments caused by the authoritarian tactics employed by the government. Opposition politicians were denied access to power by controlled elections and in many cases were branded as subversive and were deported. Iraq's pro-Western policy culminated in the formation of the Arab Federation (Iraq and Jordan) on February 14, 1958, as a counterweight to the avowed neutralist but anti-Western United Arab Republic (UAR) of Egypt and Syria that had been formed on February 1, 1958. The federation was designed to strengthen the two Hashimite royal families of Iraq and Jordan.

Republican Iraq

The 1958 Revolution and the End of the Monarchy

The kingdom of the Hashimite family in Iraq was overthrown on July 14, 1958, in a swift predawn coup executed by officers of the 19th Brigade under the leadership of Brigadier Abd al Karim Qasim and Colonel Abd al Salam Arif. According to later statements by Qasim, he had planned such a move for many years. The coup—the July 14 Revolution, or 1958 Revolution as the Iraqis have called it since—met virtually no opposition. King Faisal II and Abd al Illah were executed, as were many others in the royal family. Nuri was also killed after attempting to escape disguised as a veiled woman.

The proclamations of the revolution brought crowds of people into the streets of Baghdad cheering the deaths of Iraq's two "strong men," Nuri and Abd al Illah. The young king's death was regretted because he was regarded as a helpless bystander in the intrigues of Iraqi politics, but he was not mourned. In the ensuing mob demonstrations against the old order, the British embassy was severely damaged by angry crowds.

The leaders of the new regime, who declared their nation a republic, envisioned a reformed, egalitarian, and democratic Iraq, united in spirit with the Arab world and committed to a

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foreign policy of nonalignment. Qasim declared his determination to resist all foreign ideologies whether "Communist, American, British or Fascist." Amnesty was declared for political prisoners, and exiled opponents of the old regime were invited to return home. When they did, however, the government dealt severely with the more than 100 leading supporters of the ousted regime. These acts on the part of the new government were entirely within the Iraqi political tradition and suggested the trend of future events.

Within one month the new government was recognized by most states. The Qasim government was troubled, however, by divisive rivalry within its ranks and by serious internal threats to its survival. Many young people, government officials and civilians alike, became disillusioned by Qasim's inability to consolidate authority and bring about any improvement in either political life or material prosperity. The first open split came two months after the revolution when Deputy Prime Minister Arif, who was in sympathy with the influential Baath Party, declared himself in favor of establishing closer ties with the UAR. Qasim first dismissed and then arrested Arif, charging him with activities detrimental to Iraq's interests. A propaganda war ensued between Egypt and Iraq, which Qasim stepped up when an unsuccessful Baathist anti-Qasim plot was discovered that was rumored to have been organized with foreign assistance. Arif was brought to trial on treason charges and condemned to death in January 1959; he was subsequently pardoned in December 1962.

Stability was also affected by friction between nationalists and the growing number of Iraqi Communists. Originally tolerated by Qasim—apparently as a counterweight against the powerful pan-Arab Baathists and pro-Nasser groups—the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) rapidly gained influence after 1958 by infiltrating nearly all social and political organizations, including government agencies. The ICP functioned through certain professional organizations and also through a militia known as the People's Resistance Force. When fighting broke out in Kirkuk between Turkomans and Kurds, who were supported by the People's Resistance Force, Qasim charged the People's Resistance Force with responsibility for the deaths that occurred and ordered the People's Resistance Force disbanded; he also restricted other ICP activities. Meanwhile opposition from the pro-Nasser group continued unabated as indicated by an assassination attempt by Baathists in October 1959 on Qasim's life in which he was shot and wounded.

Qasim had no particular ideology, with the exception of his xenophobia, but he sought to win public support by accelerating economic development and agrarian reform. His aims were frustrated, however, by bureaucratic delays and mismanagement in addition to the Kurdish rebellion that broke out in September 1961. Also many of Qasim's stated objectives did not come to fruition because of the immense amount of time and energy he

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devoted to denouncing Egypt's President Gamal Abdul Nasser. The stance of Iraq became, however, decidedly pro-Soviet during his regime. He reestablished diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, denounced and abrogated the Baghdad Pact, and increased Iraq's relations with communist countries.

Growing disenchantment with Qasim's personal dictatorship—he was known in Iraq as "Sole Leader," a title he gladly accepted—and mounting pan-Arab sentiments culminated in the overthrow of Qasim's regime on February 8, 1963. Qasim was executed the next day, but the urban poor whom Qasim had ardently courted remained for many years unconvinced of his execution and looked for his return as a mahdi (messiah).

The Kurdish Rebellion of 1961–63

During the course of his rule Qasim had sought to enlist Kurdish sympathies for his regime. He personally invited the leader of the Kurdish opposition, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, to return from his exile of many years in the Soviet Union. Qasim had completely underestimated the Kurdish desire for autonomy and showed no interest in ceding the land the Kurds needed to create a Kurdistan. Barzani realized this by the end of 1960 and began consolidating his position in the northern highlands. In March 1961 Barzani in his role as president of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, a party he established after his return from exile, led large numbers of Kurds in rebellion against the government. Later in the same month he proclaimed the existence of the independent state of Kurdistan. It appeared that the Kurds did have a de facto state, controlling as they did more than 400 kilometers of mountainous terrain along the Iraqi-Turkish and Iraqi-Iranian frontiers. During the course of 1962 the Kurds consolidated their positions. Each spring and summer of these years the central government won territory from the Kurds that they lost again each autumn. The Iraqis used airpower, rockets, tanks, and napalm, but the Kurds were masters of guerrilla tactics and frequently were able to isolate and cut off supplies to the Iraqis' northern garrisons. By December 1963 the Kurds were as far south as Khanaqin, about 150 kilometers northeast of Baghdad, and were close to holding the chief road linking Iraq to Iran. The cost to the Iraqi government was approximately US$60 million a year.

A cease-fire took place in February 1964, as a result of negotiations at As Sulaymaniyah. The government assured the Kurds that their national claims would be appropriately recognized in a new provisional constitution and that there would be a general amnesty for all the Kurdish insurrectionists. The Kurds replied that they would wait for the government's promise to be kept before they laid down their arms.

Coups, Coup Attempts, and Foreign Policy: 1963–68

In the meantime Iraq had experienced two coups. The February 1963 coup that had ousted Qasim was carried out by members

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of the Baath Party who were aided by their supporters and sympathizers within the armed forces. The National Council of Revolutionary Command (also known as the National Revolutionary Command) was established as the highest policymaking body. Its slogan was "unity, independence, freedom." Brigadier Ahmad Hasan al Bakr, a Baathist leader, became prime minister, and Arif was elevated to the nominal position of president. Within the party, however, dissension quickly arose between those who favored a pro-Nasser line and those who opted for a pro-Syrian policy.

The Baath Party had been founded in Syria in the early 1940s. It described itself as dedicated to the ideals of Arab unity, freedom, and socialism. In Iraq, however, members of the Baath, who were numerous, were divided between those who favored a union with Egypt and those who were violently opposed to it. For a brief period after the February coup there was a move to create a United Arab Republic that would consist of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. However, after a pro-Nasser revolt in Damascus in July 1963—which was vigorously suppressed—there was a complete deterioration of Egypt-Syrian relations.

President Arif, who was pro-Nasser, then directed a military coup against the Baath itself on November 18, 1963. A new national council of revolutionary command was established, a nonparty organ that placed the most important political powers in the hands of Arif, who remained president. Arif immediately declared the Baath Party illegal and went about the usual Iraqi postcoup activity of "cleansing" the country of enemies, i.e., those who opposed Arif.

Externally the new government sought friendly relations with all nations and in particular with Nasser's Egypt. During 1964 steps were taken to hasten the integration of the military, economic, social, cultural, and information policies of Iraq and Egypt; this was expected to lead to the political union of the two nations in 1966. In Iraq this process was called "Egyptianization without the Egyptians." In May 1964 the Joint Presidency Council was formed, and in December the Unified Political Command was established to expedite the ultimate constitutional union of the two.

The Interim Constitution was proclaimed in May 1964, declaring Iraq a republic that was a "democratic, socialist state, deriving the principles of its democracy and socialism from the Arab heritage and the spirit of Islam" (see Constitutional Development, this ch.). In July 1964 Arif announced that henceforth all political parties would coalesce to form the Iraqi Arab Socialist Union. More important for the future of Iraq, he also announced that insurance companies, all banks, and such essential industries as steel, cement, and construction—along with the tobacco industry, tanneries, and flour mills—would be nationalized. Essentially Arif

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was copying the socialist program that President Nasser had initiated in Egypt in 1961.

As the time drew near for the proposed union with Egypt, however, it appeared that Arif had lost his enthusiasm for the merger. A number of pro-Nasser ministers were dismissed, and others resigned. Nevertheless the new prime minister, Brigadier Arif Abd al Razzaq, was pro-Nasser. Observing President Arif's move from the Nasser camp, Razzaq staged an unsuccessful coup d'etat in September 1965, his first month in office.

In April 1966 Arif was killed in a helicopter crash, and his brother Major General Abd al Rahman Arif, with the approval of the National Defense Council and the cabinet, was installed in office. In June 1966 Razzaq, who had fled to Egypt, made another unsuccessful coup attempt. It is an important feature of Iraqi politics in the modern period that the majority of coups or coup attempts came from those who worked closely with the regimes against which the coups were directed.

After Razzaq's first coup attempt Arif had appointed Abd al Rahman Bazzaz to head the government. Bazzaz was the first civilian prime minister since the days of the monarchy. Although he was an Arab nationalist, Bazzaz' position on this issue as well as his economic position was moderate. He described his course of action as "prudent socialism." He endeavored to make the Five-Year Economic Plan (1965–69) viable, to streamline the bureaucracy, and to encourage private and foreign investment. Even though the economy was on the upgrade in 1965, the pace of development was slow because of the tremendous cost of the Kurdish campaigns, an unworkable land "reform" program, and a series of failures or near failures of grain crops (see Agriculture, ch. 3). Lacking sound economic advice Iraq, in both the private and the public sector, had embarked on capital-intensive and high-technology industrial development for which it was ill suited. Landlords continued to dominate the agricultural sector, giving peasants little incentive to remain on the farms, and thus there was a continual drift of the poor to urban centers. Additionally much needed social legislation had inflated labor costs and this, combined with population increases, resulted in a decline of the number of wage earners proportionate to the population. This coincided with an increase in the service sector of those working in parttime and/or menial occupations who were paid wages hardly sufficient to stave off starvation.

A solution to the Kurdish problem remained the government's top priority. The cease-fire of February 1964 was but a brief interlude before hostilities resumed. Casualties on both sides were particularly numerous during the 1965–66 winter campaign. The need for some rapprochement with the Kurds increased as skirmishes between government forces and the Kurds took place on the Iran-Iraq border. Violations of Iran's frontiers exacerbated already tense relations between Iran and Iraq,

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which progressively worsened during the first half of 1966.

In June 1966 Prime Minister Bazzaz, after providing emergency relief to the Kurds, formulated new proposals toward a settlement of the conflict. Amnesty was extended; in Kurdish areas the Kurdish language was to have a status equal to Arabic; and Kurds were to administer their educational, health, and municipal institutions. Early elections wherein Kurds would have proportional representation in national as well as provincial assemblies were planned. The Kurds were also promised equal opportunity in government hiring. Finally the 15,000 Kurdish armed forces were to be dissolved. When Barzani indicated that these proposals met with his approval, it was widely assumed that the Kurdish conflict had been ended.

Despite Bazzaz' many achievements he had numerous critics in Iraq. The army disliked the idea of conciliation with the Kurds, and the political left and intelligentsia were critical of the rapprochement that Bazzaz had initiated with Saudi Arabia and Iran. President Arif yielded to pressure and asked for Bazzaz' resignation. His successor, General Naji Taleb, a pro-Nasserite, had been instrumental in the 1958 revolution. Taleb and his large faction perceived the Kurdish peace plan as a potential detriment to plans for Arab unity by diluting the Arab character of the nation. Arif remained firm, however, that Bazzaz' policies be continued, and the president visited Kurdish areas where he promised the appointment of Kurds to ministerial rank. The cabinet of May 1967 had more Kurds than ever before.

Arif also sought to amplify the better relations with Iran that had been initiated by Bazzaz. He visited Tehran in the spring of 1967, and at the conclusion of the visit it was announced that the countries were to hold more meetings aimed at a joint oil exploration in the Naft-e Shah and Naft Khaneh border regions. They also agreed to continue negotiations on the collection of tolls and navigation rights on the Shatt al Arab and on the demarcation of the Persian Gulf's continental shelf, which would be critical if oil were to be discovered there. Trade and cultural agreements were also planned for. This rapprochement was significant in terms of the Kurdish situation, because the Kurds were thereby denied access to their traditional place of asylum and recovery from Iraqi onslaughts.

During the winter of 1966–67 Arif was faced with a crisis emanating from a new source, Syria. The Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) transported oil from its northern fields to Mediterranean ports via pipelines in Syria. In 1966 Syria claimed that the IPC had been underpaying Syria based on their 1955 agreement. In compensation Syria demanded back payments and immediately increased the transit fee it charged IPC. When the IPC did not accede to Syrian demands, Syria impounded IPC property, including some 500 kilometers of pipeline, numerous pumping stations, and the installations at Baniyas. In the opinion of many analysts of

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Iraqi affairs the Syrian dispute with the IPC was a ploy, the basis of which was political rather than economic in nature. Joseph Malone writes, "The Syrian Baathist regime welcomed an opportunity to divert attention from its domestic problems and the IPC crisis was incorporated into a feverish propaganda featuring monopolies, imperialism and Zionism."

In December Iraqi oil ceased to flow to its Mediterranean ports with a significant loss in revenue to Iraq. Prime Minister Taleb met with Syrian officials in Damascus, where it was suggested that the presence of more Baathists in the Iraqi cabinet might make Syria less intractable. In March 1967 a new agreement was signed between the IPC and the Syrian government wherein Syria received larger fees for oil transported across its lands. Iraq also renegotiated its agreement with the IPC (see The Oil Industry, ch. 3).

The loss of revenue to Iraq restricted the government's ability to implement important projects, particularly in the agricultural sector, and increased the animosity of President Arif's opposition, which stood far to the left of his position. Taleb resigned, and Arif briefly headed the government, which in May 1967 included representatives of the various minorities. During this period Arif continued the policy of former Prime Minister Bazzaz of improving diplomatic relations with Iraq's neighbors. Overtures of friendship were extended to Turkey, which had been cool to Iraq since the dispute over the Mosul region during the British Mandate; relations with Iran continued to improve.

Arif's diplomatic advances were forgotten with the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli June 1967 War. The Iraqi government cooperated with other Arab states and moved troops to Jordan. Iraqi airfields were included in Israeli preemptive strikes on June 5 (see National Security Concerns, ch. 5). Iraq broke diplomatic relations with the United States and Britain for their alleged support of Israel. Iraq called a meeting of the oil-producing Arab states and recommended an oil embargo against the United States and Britain that was accepted by the other Arab states.

After the war Arif resigned as premier to enable him to attend the many meetings held in the Arab world to formulate a postwar policy. Arif participated in the Khartoum Conference where the oil-producing Arab states agreed to assist those Arab states most hurt by the war. Gradually relations with the West improved, and oil embargoes were lifted. Diplomatic relations with Britain resumed in May 1968, although relations with the United States remained broken. As a result of President Charles de Gaulle's condemnation of Israel during the war, relations between Iraq and France were warm. Arif made an official visit to Paris in February 1968, and in April France announced that over the 1969–73 period it would supply Iraq with fifty-four Mirage jet aircraft.

General Tahir Yahya, who had been appointed prime minister when Arif resigned, headed a cabinet that, catering to the coun-

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try's postwar mood, was almost exclusively left in its political orientation. Notably absent from the cabinet's concerns was any program to implement promises made to the Kurds. And by the end of 1967 Barzani was once again threatening revolt.

In an attempt to garner greater popular support for their regime, Arif and Yahya relaxed the civil restraints placed on the universities. Far from being appeased, the intelligentsia used this rare opportunity for free speech by denouncing the government and calling for a more stringent anti-Israel line. The army, an enemy of the Arif governments because of their attempted conciliation of the Kurds, was purged several times in an effort to root out the most dissident members. When ICP members began to coordinate their activities with Baathists, it was clear that it was only a matter of time until the Arif government was overthrown.

The Baathist Coup of 1968

The first of the post-Arif coups d'etat occurred on July 17, 1968. The leaders of the bloodless coup were a combination of civilian and military Baathists and other more conservative military leaders. Arif was deposed and sent into exile; Prime Minister Yahya was imprisoned on corruption charges. General Ahmad Hasan al Bakr, who had become prime minister after the 1963 coup, became president, Colonel Abd al Razaq al Nayif, prime minister, and Colonel Ibrahim al Daud, minister of defense. There were also two Kurds in the initial cabinet, a placatory gesture made in the hopes of broadening the regime's base of support. Although a coalition was deemed necessary to effect an initial coup, President Bakr and his closest colleagues—chief among whom was Saddam Husayn al Tikriti—planned from the beginning to rid the cabinet of non-Baathist elements. Bakr's cousin, Colonel Hammad Shihab al Tikriti, who later became chief of staff and minister of defense, was ordered to continue his march on Baghdad, begun before the coup.

On July 30 Shihab and other Baathist officers staged another coup. The cabinet was dismissed for its "reactionary tendencies," and President Bakr took on the added posts of prime minister, commander in chief, and chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The core of the RCC completely excluded moderate or conservative elements and thus alienated many citizens who would otherwise have supported an anti-Arif movement. The RCC became the essential governing unit of the country and was directed, in collaboration with Bakr, by Saddam Husayn, who had distinguished himself by an assassination attempt on Qasim in 1959. Other key figures were General Hardan al Tikriti, minister of defense; General Salih Mahdi Ammash, minister of interior; General Shihab, chief of the general staff; and Colonel Saadun Ghaidan. Bakr, Hardan, Saddam Husayn, and Shihab shared, in addition to their political beliefs, a common origin in the vicinity of the village of Tikriti.

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than two months after the formation of the Bakr government coalition of pro-Nasser elements, Arif supporters, and conservatives from the military attempted another coup. This event provided the rationale for the numerous purges directed by Bakr and Saddam Husayn against the opposition, which was extensive. Allegations against enemies of the regime ranged from accusations of Zionist sympathies to complicity with American and British intelligence services. Through the remainder of 1968 and 1969 trials of "spies" were continual as were private and public executions, many of which were televised. Among the victims were Nasser al Hani, a former foreign minister, and former Prime Minister Bazzaz, who was tortured but eventually permitted to leave Iraq for hospitalization in London. Freedom of speech was entirely absent, and many Western professionals were expelled from the country. The purging and suppression of the opposition, traditional features of Iraqi political life, became hallmarks of Bakr's rule.

Civil unrest was most notable in Kurdish areas. In October 1968 hostilities directed by Barzani broke out for the first time since the June 1966 cease-fire, and they picked up momentum during the next winter and spring. In March 1969 the Kurds attacked IPC installations at Kirkuk; attempts by the Iraqi army and air force to quell the rebellion were unsuccessful. The government attributed Kurdish successes to aid from Iran and Israel. Meanwhile Barzani sought UN mediation and announced to the Iraqi government that only the creation of an autonomous Kurdish state would satisfy Kurdish demands.

The Kurdish Settlement

Before the government would negotiate with Barzani, it attempted to split the Kurdish movement by giving support to Kurdish leaders opposed to Barzani—Jalal Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad. They were invited to Baghdad and permitted to publish a newspaper; eventually they collaborated with government forces against Barzani. It soon became apparent, however, that Talabani and Ahmad had the support of only a small minority of Kurds, and the government was finally forced to negotiate with Barzani.

In March 1970 the RCC and Barzani announced that a fifteen-article peace plan had been agreed on. The peace plan was essentially a restatement of the Bazzaz-Kurdish settlement that had never been implemented. The plan provided that there would be five Kurdish cabinet appointments; there would be Kurdish administrators and officials in areas of great Kurdish concentration; the Kurdish language, in addition to Arabic, would be the official language in Kurdish areas; and the provisional constitution would include Kurdish rights. The Kurds were immediately pacified by the settlement, particularly as Barzani was permitted to retain his 15,000 Kurdish troops, which then became an official Iraqi frontier

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force called the Pesh Merga (those who face death). The plan, however, was not completely satisfactory because the legal status of the Kurdish territory remained unresolved. At the time of the signing of the peace plan Barzani's forces controlled territory from Zakhu in the north to Halabjah in the southeast and already had de facto Kurdish administration in most of the towns of the area. Barzani's group, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), was granted official recognition as the legitimate representative of the Kurdish people.

The government had conceded to Kurdish demands to bring a measure of stability to the country and to better utilize a large part of the army, which of necessity had been deployed in the north. Although the settlement did bring a measure of temporary stability, it also sharpened differences within the RCC. The vice-president, General Ammash, who was also campaigning for nationalization of the IPC, headed the group opposed to conciliation with the Kurds. In March 1971 one of Ammash's cohorts was assassinated while in Kuwait. Six months later Ammash and Abd al Karim Shaikly, the foreign minister, were relieved of their posts. At the same time Saddam Husayn emerged as the vice chairman of the RCC, while retaining his post as deputy secretary general of Iraq's Regional Baath Party. This move was necessitated in part by the steady decline in Bakr's health. (For a variety of reasons, the RCC ordered its members and the press to discontinue the use of regional or tribal designations in their names; as examples, Saddam Husayn dropped "al Tikriti," and another RCC member, Taha Yasin Ramadan, dropped "al Jazrawi.")

Saddam Husayn concentrated on solutions to Iraq's deepening economic difficulties caused by an expensive foreign policy, an inordinately costly internal security set up, and a resumption of difficulties with the Kurds. A full year after the Kurdish settlement there had been few implementations of the government's official policy toward the Kurds. Barzani demanded that a minimum of 10 percent of the national budget be devoted to development in Kurdish areas. He also wished to see Kurdish representation in the RCC, aware that it was in this body, and not in the cabinet, that power was vested.

Iraq had increased taxes on its crude oil, but this revenue was not sufficient to offset inflation (see Role of Government, ch. 3). The Soviet Union was able to increase its ties with Iraq as a result of the latter's economic difficulties. By mid-1971 the Soviet Union had already undertaken several development projects in Iraq and had agreed to bring the Ar Rumaylah oil field into production (see The Oil Industry, ch. 3).

Iraq in 1972 was also seeking a new arrangement with the IPC whereby the Iraqi government would become the major shareholder. This was in line with the determination of members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to partic-

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ipate in the ownership of oil companies operating in their countries (see Appendix B). Iraq was particularly insistent because under the agreement concluded at San Remo in 1920 Iraq had been promised 20-percent participation, which had never been honored. In addition to participation in ownership, Iraq also desired among other things that IPC offices be relocated in Baghdad (as opposed to London); that there be an agreement between IPC and the government on an oil development policy; and that there be a continuous audit.

By March 1972 IPC and the Basra Petroleum Company (BPC) accepted the principle of 20-percent participation. In the spring deliveries of oil from Mediterranean ports fell to about half the production capacity, which the Iraqis interpreted as a pressure tactic; they therefore offered the IPC and BPC the ultimatum of restoring fuel productivity or losing the concession. Proposals from the companies were inadequate, and on June 1, 1972, the government nationalized the IPC and set up the Iraqi Company for Oil Operation (ICOO) to replace IPC in the north (see Nationalization of Foreign-Owned Oil Companies, ch. 3).

By January 1971 most of Iraq's 20,000 estimated troops had been removed from Jordan but, in spite of the extreme position Iraq continued to advocate on the Palestinian issue, Radio Cairo reported that as of March 1971 Iraqi contributions to the Palestine Liberation Army had ceased. During the first half of 1971 it appeared that Iraq desired to reduce its self-imposed isolation from the majority of Arab states caused by the government's denunciation of even the idea of a Middle Eastern peace proposal. Jordan's 1970 attack on Palestinian guerrillas within its borders incited Iraq to denounce Jordan, however, and demand its expulsion from the Arab League as well as forbidding Jordan's participation in the Eighth International Baghdad Fair. Iraq, however, did not permit its own troops in Jordan to aid the Palestinians (see Iraq and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, ch. 5).

Relations with Iran deteriorated during the same period. Iraq accused Iran of aiding Kurdish insurrectionists as well as of contributing to an attempted coup in 1970. Iran, in turn, accused Iraqi Baathists of complicity in an attempted coup against the shah. In November 1971 Iraq broke diplomatic relations with Iran when Iran seized the two Tunbs Islands in the Persian Gulf.

Relations with the West, with the exception of France, remained poor. The Soviet Union remained Iraq's closest non-Arab ally, particularly when the Soviets began to supply Iraq with large amounts of military equipment (see Foreign Military Ties, ch. 5). In March 1972 Iraq signed the fifteen-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. Wary of too great a dependence on the Soviet Union, however, in July 1972 President Bakr indicated that he was not opposed to better relations with Western countries, and the United States accordingly opened an interests section in Baghdad (see Foreign Policy, ch. 4).

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In July 1973 an unsuccessful coup attempt by a civilian faction within the Baath Party led by Nazim Kazzar, the chief of the Security Police, resulted in the death of General Shihab, minister of defense. The RCC subsequently amended the Provisional Constitution to give the president greater power. Another result of the coup attempt was the formation of the Progressive National Front between the Baath and the ICP (see The Politics of Alliance: The Progressive National Front (PNF), ch. 4).

The outbreak of the October 1973 War once again altered Iraq's foreign relations. Because President Anwar al Sadat of Egypt had not consulted Iraq before the onset of hostilities, Iraq withdrew its land forces from the Syrian front as soon as the cease-fire went into effect. As a further snub, Iraq refused to attend the November 1973 Arab summit in Algeria.

At Iran's initiation diplomatic relations were resumed in October 1973, but relations had deteriorated by early 1974 as a result of fighting along the frontier. Normal relations were restored with the help of a UN mediator only to break down again by August. Several meetings between Iraqi and Iranian diplomats in Istanbul failed to produce an accord. Eventually, however, the situation with the Kurds brought the two countries together.

Another document of great importance is the National Action Charter that was proclaimed by President Bakr on November 15, 1971. The charter was intended to serve as a basis for negotiations for further cooperation and the establishment of a front between the Baath Party and the ICP. The United National Front, set up in 1957, which included among others the Baath and the ICP, had assisted in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958. In the years between the abolition of the monarchy and the Baath revolution of 1968, however, the national front existed primarily in name alone because of the intense rivalry between ICP members and Baathists. After 1968, secure in their position, the Baathists initiated a rapprochement with the ICP and invited discussions on the National Action Charter published in the Iraqi press.

The charter called for unity among the various parties resting on principles "providing for intensification of struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction, enabling the masses to lead their battle, the availability of absolute revolutionary democratic atmosphere, liquidation of all manifestations of oppression against the masses and their cultural institutions, liquidation of all forms of imperialistic influence, and closing doors forever against the imperialistic states' heinous attempts at exploiting the current conditions in the Arab homeland to stage a come-back and occupy new political and economic positions." Certain specific steps to achieve these principles were enumerated, among which were the promulgation of a permanent constitution, autonomy for the Kurds, the betterment of living and working conditions by implementing suitable agricultural and industrial projects, and the development

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of a foreign policy designed to protect the best interests of the Arab people.

In discussions after the promulgation of the charter, Saddam Husayn and Tariq Aziz represented the Baathists, and Aziz Muhammad and Amir Abd Allah represented the ICP. By March 3, 1972, an agreement on the basic principles to be contained in the charter was reached, and the two parties then formulated the internal regulations of the front. They stipulated that the front was a form of revolutionary union among progressive parties and groups who had agreed to work toward the accomplishment of the goals stated in the charter. A central executive committee called the High Committee of the Progressive National Front was established as the principal executive organ.

Of the sixteen positions within the High Committee, eight are reserved for the Baath, three for the ICP, three for the KDP, and one each for the Progressive Nationalists and the Independent Democrats. The High Committee meets once monthly under the direction of the secretary general of the Regional Baath Party or his deputy. In addition to the High Committee, a secretariat of seven members exists, which supervises study groups and committees.

Constitutional Development

In 1921 the British drafted the text of a constitution, which after necessary modification was approved and signed by King Faisal I in March 1925. Known as the Organic Law of 1925, it remained in effect until the overthrow of the monarchy in July 1958. The Organic Law established a constitutional monarchy within a unitary state and provided for a system of checks and balances. In theory, the Council of Ministers of the executive establishment was accountable to a bicameral parliament, but the legislature was seldom able to control or successfully challenge a policy desired by the executive branch.

Royal authority was no longer absolute under the constitution but, in recognition of the need for a strong executive, the king was given substantial decisionmaking power. He could issue decrees when parliament was not in session and dismiss the prime ministers "if the public interest renders it necessary." The relationship between the king and the Council of Ministers was such that one or the other might prove the stronger, depending on the personalities involved and the events taking place. For example, during his lifetime the preeminence of King Faisal I (reigned 1921–33) was never challenged, but after his death the Council of Ministers, controlled by the prime minister, dominated the national scene.

After the 1958 revolution the regime abrogated the Organic Law and almost immediately promulgated a provisional constitution with the explanation that it would remain in force "during the transitional period until such time as a permanent constitution is

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adopted." The provisional constitution provided for a republican form of government in which the Council of Ministers would enact laws on its own authority.

Although legislation technically required the approval of a three-member council of sovereignty that functioned as the collective "head of state," this approval was only a formality. The constitution guaranteed the independence of the judiciary. Basic civil rights, including freedom of thought and expression, the inviolability of the home, and the protection of private property, were to be safeguarded within limits set by law. Landholding was to be regulated by law.

In addition, the provisional constitution declared Iraq to be a part of the "Arab Nation," a provision implying the intention of cooperation with other Arab states in a manner that had been impossible while the old regime was aligned with Great Britain and the West (see Foreign Policy, ch. 4). It also proclaimed Islam as the state religion and noted that "Arabs and Kurds are considered partners in this nation."

The 1958 provisional constitution was designed primarily to authorize Prime Minister Qasim and his cabinet to mobilize the full resources of government to maintain public order and to implement the reforms considered necessary during the transitional period. Prime Minister Qasim's reformist goals presupposed that the government should assume a strong guiding role in economic and social life but, despite his expressed hope to write a permanent constitution in 1960, political conflict within the governing group and accompanying instability prevented his regime from initiating any effective action at that time.

The provisional constitution of 1958 was superseded in May 1964 by a new fundamental law that was to remain in force during a transitional period of three years from May 1964 or until the promulgation of a permanent constitution. The constitution proclaimed the Republic of Iraq to be "a democratic, socialist state, deriving the principles of its democracy and socialism from the Arab heritage and the spirit of Islam." It described Islam, the state religion, as "the fundamental basis" of the constitution. It also stated that the Iraqi people constitute "a part of the Arab Nation" and expressed the hope for ultimate Arab unity to be achieved initially through a "union with the United Arab Republic."

The constitution directed the state to steer the national economy within the framework of a comprehensive plan based on collaboration between the private and public sectors. Natural resources were declared the property of the state, and landholding was limited by law "in a way that shall not give rise to feudalism." The rights and duties of the citizens were defined and were to apply equally to all regardless of race, origin, language, or religion. The "national rights of the Kurds" were affirmed within the context of "a brotherly national unity." Other principles guaranteed were the freedom of residence, trial through the due process of

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ltion of torture, rights to education, and provisions for
al security benefits.

mber 21, 1968, a new interim constitution was promulgated by the Baathist regime that had seized power in July. On July 16, 1970, that interim charter was replaced by yet another provisional constitution that, as amended in 1973 and 1974, remained in effect in early 1979 (see Constitutional Framework, ch. 4). The first article declares that Iraq is "a sovereign people's democratic republic" the principal aim of which is to achieve "the United Arab State and establish the Socialist System." Iraq is described as being part of the Arab nation and is said to include two principal nationalities: Arab and Kurd. Islam is defined as the state religion, but religious freedom is to be afforded to the adherents of other religions.

Although Arabic is named as the official language of the state, Kurdish was declared to be equally official in the area of high Kurdish concentration. The rights of other minorities to use their languages for religious purposes, for special radiobroadcasts, and in academic institutions are also recognized. One of the most important provisions of the Provisional Constitution is the establishment of limited autonomy "in accordance with what is defined by the law" for areas of Kurdish majority, i.e., the governorates of As Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil (see Local Government, ch. 4).

The Kurdish War and the Iraq-Iran Treaty

On March 11, 1974—the deadline for implementation of the government's agreement with the Kurds—Saddam Husayn, deputy secretary general of the Regional Command of the Baath and vice chairman of the RCC, announced that Iraq would give limited autonomy to the Kurds. The Kurdish Revolutionary Party, a minority Kurdish group led by Abd al Sattar Sharif, indicated its acceptance of the government's offer. Barzani, as head of the KDP, announced that Saddam Husayn's offer fell too short of full governmental participation for the Kurds and refused to accept it. The Pesh Merga began armed insurrection in the north. The RCC then replaced the five Kurds in the cabinet with ones more disposed to accept Saddam Husayn's proposals and appointed Taha Muhi al Din Maruf, a conciliatory Kurd, as vice president of Iraq.

In August 1974 fighting stepped up as the Iraqi government deployed bombers, tanks, and field guns against Kurdish positions. The Pesh Merga, supplied with arms and other necessities from Iran, was able to counter the government's offensives and in the meantime sent its women, children, and old men, estimated by some at 130,000 people, for refuge in Iran. It was therefore to everyone's great astonishment when, at an OPEC meeting in Algiers in March 1975, Iran and Iraq announced that an accord had been signed that "completely eliminated the conflict between two brotherly countries." The accord formally ended the Kurdish war as both countries further agreed to end "infiltrations of a subver-

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sive character." Without Iranian assistance the rebellion of the Kurds could not continue, and Barzani was forced to flee to Tehran. At a cease-fire arranged on March 13, the government announced that amnesty would be granted to all Kurds who laid down their arms by the first of April. Of the 200,000 Kurds who fled to Iran it is estimated that 150,000 returned to Iraq.

The Iraq-Iran accord was formalized by the Baghdad Treaty in June 1975. An important feature of the treaty was what appeared to be the final settlement of the long-standing Shatt al Arab dispute (see Boundaries, ch. 2). The frontier on the Shatt al Arab was defined as the thalweg that follows the middle of the deepest shipping channel. Land frontiers were accepted as those drawn by the 1913 Protocol of Constantinople.

* * *

Probably the best single work on the ancient history of Iraq is George Roux's *Ancient Iraq,* which covers the period from prehistory through the hellenistic period. The article by D. Sourdel, "The Abbasid Caliphate," in *The Cambridge History of Islam* provides an excellent overview of the medieval period. Peter Sluglett's *Britain in Iraq 1914–1932* is a useful study of the Mandate period. Stephen Longrigg's and Frank Stoakes' *Iraq* is a superb work that contains a historical summary of events before independence as well as a detailed account of the period from independence to 1958. Majid Khadduri's *Republican Iraq* is the best single study of Iraqi politics from the 1958 revolution to the Baath coup of 1968. His *Socialist Iraq, A Study in Iraq Politics Since 1968* details events up to 1976. Edith and E. F. Penrose's *Iraq: International Relations and National Development* is a brillant and careful study of the political and economic development of Iraq from its foundation as a state to 1977. An extremely useful article is Abbas Kelidar's "Iraq: the Search for Stability." (For further information see Bibliography.)

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Chapter 2. The Society and its Environment

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Textile pattern of Iraqi design

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IRAQI SOCIETY IS composed of sizable and distinct social groups whose differences and divisions have been only slowly and fitfully challenged by the emergence of a strong, centralized political regime and state apparatus. Moreover there are regional and environmental differences between the scattered mountain villages whose economic base is rain-fed grain crops and the more densely populated riverine communities of the south that are dependent on intricate irrigation and drainage systems for their livelihood.

There also are linguistic and ethnic differences. The most important exception to the Arab character of Iraq is the large Kurdish element; it was estimated to be over 18 percent of the total resident population, which in early 1979 was about 12,070,000. Turkomans and other Turkic-speaking peoples retained an ethnic identity distinct from Arabs and Kurds but accounted for only 2 to 3 percent of the population. There were no reliable estimates of the number of Iranians who have settled around the Shia (see Glossary) holy cities of Karbala and An Najaf or, to a lesser extent, in the commercial centers of Baghdad and Basra; they probably numbered in the tens of thousands.

Divisions along religious lines are deeprooted. Although between 93 and 95 percent of Iraq's population is Muslim, this larger community is composed of Sunnis (see Glossary) and Shiites; the latter, a minority in the Arab world as a whole, constitute an estimated 50 to 55 percent of the population (see The Sunni-Shia Controversy, ch. 1). Of the non-Muslim communities, fragmented Christian sects made up perhaps 3 percent of the population in 1977, concentrated mainly in the governorates of Nineveh and Dahuk. Their rate of increase is probably lower than that of the Muslim majority. The Jewish community, even smaller, was heavily concentrated in urban areas, especially Baghdad. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the defeat of the Arab armies in 1948–49 rendered the situation of Iraqi Jews untenable and led to a mass exodus, chiefly to Israel. Fewer than 5,000 Jews were counted in the 1957 census, and in early 1979 there was no reason to think that the rate of natural increase had compensated for further emigration in the years since.

In the late 1970s social differences based on unequal distribution of power, wealth, and prestige continued to characterize the society as did a considerable cleavage between urban and rural inhabitants. Nevertheless the shifts and developments of the 1960s and 1970s have been profound. The sharp polarization of landlord and tenant, based on the highly concentrated land tenure patterns that developed over the first half of this century, had been supplanted by a less rigid stratification pattern in the countryside, the main features of which were not yet clear. The strong demographic shift to the urban areas (defined as any place having a

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municipal government) has swelled the growth of middle-class and working-class groups. In the opinion of some observers these shifts may gradually assume greater importance in the society than ethnic and, especially, religious differences.

Geography and Population

Boundaries

Iraq's boundaries were, for the most part, fixed by Britain after World War I by combining three vilayets (provinces or governorates) of the former Ottoman Empire into a new political entity (see World War I and the British Mandate, ch. 1). The boundaries are not marked by significant physical features, with the exception of the Shatt al Arab (see fig. 1; fig. 5). The boundaries in the northeast and north cross mountain ranges that are extensions of, respectively, Iran's Zagros mountain range and Turkey's Taurus Mountains. In the west and south Iraq's desert areas merge imperceptibly with the deserts of Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait.

In 1922 British officials concluded the Treaty of Mohammara with Abd al Aziz ibn Abd ar Rahman Al Saud, who in 1932 formed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The treaty provided the basic agreement for the boundary between the eventually independent nations. Also in 1922 the two parties agreed to the creation of the diamond-shaped Neutral Zone of approximately 7,025 square kilometers adjacent to the western tip of Kuwait in which neither Iraq nor Saudi Arabia would build permanent dwellings or installations. Beduin from either country could utilize the limited water and seasonal grazing resources of the zone. In May 1938 Iraq and Saudi Arabia signed an additional agreement regarding the administration of the zone. In April 1975 an agreement signed in Baghdad fixed the borders of the countries; in July there was an agreement providing for the formal division of the Neutral Zone. As of early 1979, however, the zone had not been divided.

The boundary with Kuwait was fixed in a 1913 treaty between the Ottoman Empire and British officials acting on behalf of the Kuwait ruling family, which in 1899 had ceded control over foreign affairs to Britain. That boundary was accepted by Iraq when it became independent in 1932, but in the 1960s and again in the mid-1970s the Iraqi government advanced a claim to parts of Kuwait (see Kuwait, ch. 5). Although Iraq subsequently withdrew this claim, the claim reflected Iraqi concern over its limited access to the sea, which is confined to its approximately seventy-eight-kilometer coastline on the Persian Gulf, known in Iraq as the Arabian Gulf.

The land border with Iran, extending southward from the junction with Turkey, was demarcated in 1914. A treaty negotiated between Iraq and Iran under British auspices in 1937, however, specified that at the head of the Persian Gulf the international boundary would in part be at the low water mark on the Iranian

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side of the Shatt al Arab. These provisions became a source of contention between the two countries; Iran insisted that the 1937 treaty had been imposed on it by "British imperialist pressures," that it was in violation of common international practice, and that the proper boundary was the thalweg. The issue came to a head in 1969 when Iraq in effect told the Iranian government that the Shatt al Arab was an integral part of Iraqi territory and that the waterway might be closed to Iranian shipping. Almost immediately two Iranian ships supported by naval craft traversed the waterway; they met no Iraqi interference. Neither, however, did Iraq indicate a willingness to abandon the 1937 treaty and negotiate a new one.

Through Algerian mediation Iran and Iraq agreed in March 1975 to normalize their relations, and three months later they signed a border treaty in Baghdad (see The Kurdish War and the Iraq-Iran Treaty, ch. 1). The treaty defines the common border along the Shatt al Arab estuary as the thalweg based on depth. It also specifies land frontier lines to run according to maps worked out for the 1914 border agreement.

Major Geographical Features

Most geographers, including those of Iraq's government, discuss the country's geography in terms of four main zones or regions: the desert in the west and southwest; the rolling upland between the upper Tigris and Euphrates rivers; the highlands in the north and northeast; and the alluvial plain through which the Tigris and Euphrates flow. Iraq's official statistical reports give the total land area as 438,446 square kilometers. Official United States publications give larger figures, however, one of slightly over 447,000 square kilometers and another of 445,480 square kilometers.

The desert zone, an area lying west and southwest of the Euphrates River, is a part of the Syrian Desert, which covers sections of Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The region, sparsely inhabited by pastoral nomads, consists of a wide, stony plain interspersed with rare sandy stretches. A widely ramified pattern of wadis—watercourses that are dry most of the year—runs from the border to the Euphrates. Some are over 400 kilometers long and carry brief but torrential floods during the winter rains.

The uplands region between the Tigris north of Samarra and the Euphrates north of Hit is known as Al Jazirah (the island) and is a part of a larger area that extends westward into Syria between the two rivers and into Turkey. Water in the area flows in deeply cut valleys, and irrigation is much more difficult than it is in the lower plain. Much of this zone may be classified as desert.

The northeastern highlands begin just southwest of a line drawn from Mosul to Kirkuk and extend to the borders with Turkey and Iran. High ground, separated by broad, undulating steppes, gives way to mountains ranging from 1,000 to nearly 4,000 meters near the Iranian and Turkish borders. Except for a few valleys, the

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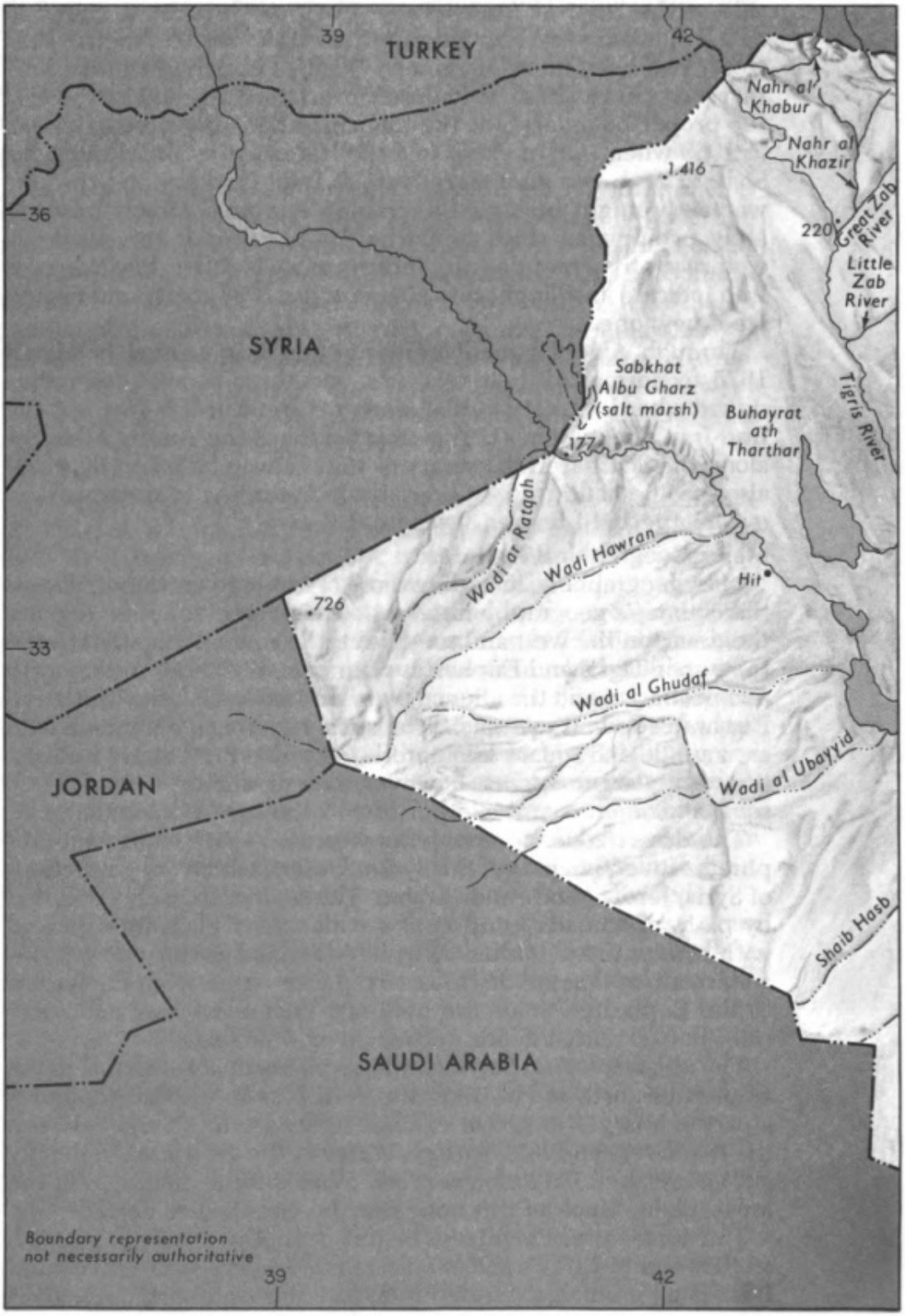

Figure 5. Terrain and River System

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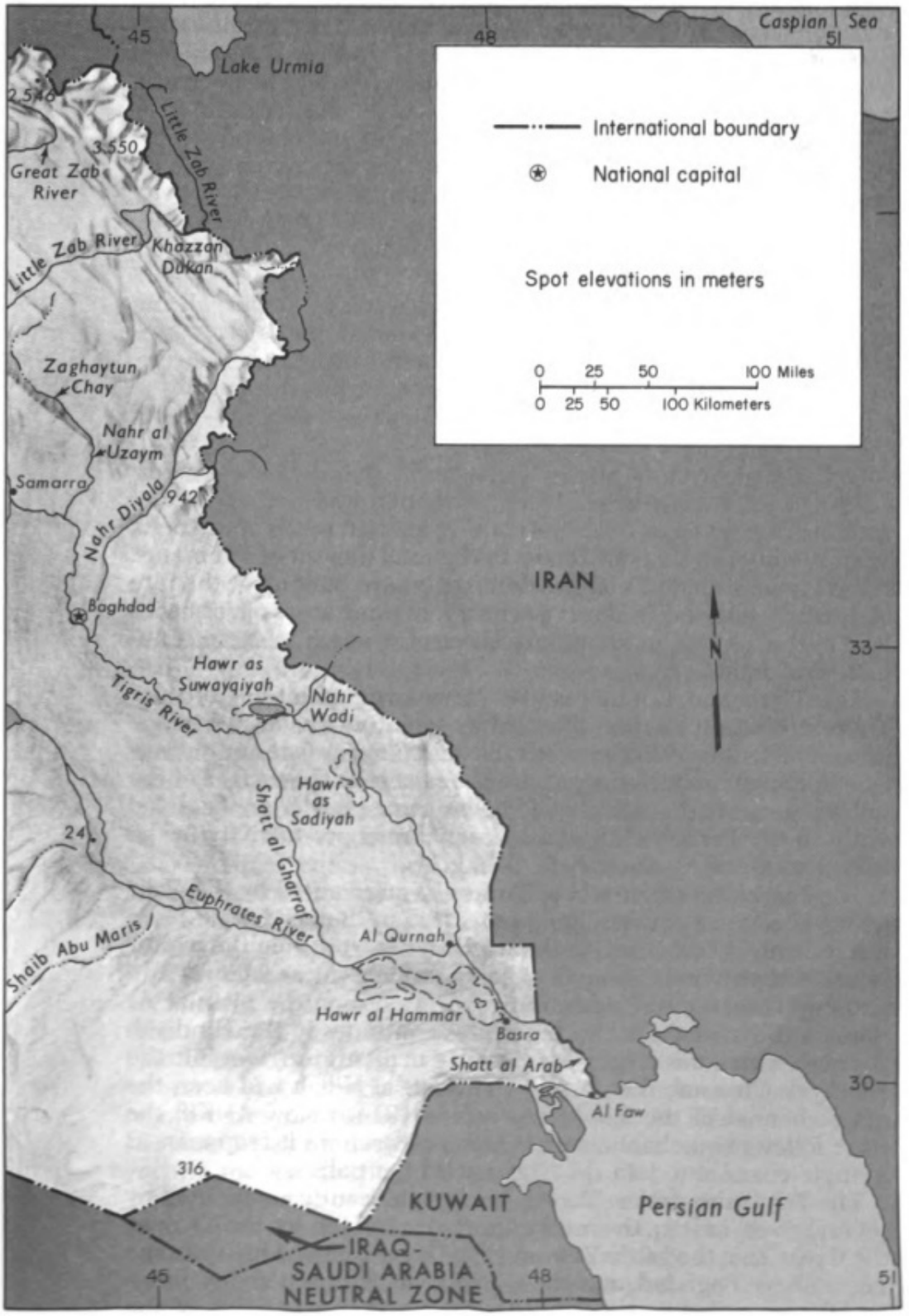

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mountain area proper is suitable only for grazing. In the foothills and steppes, however, adequate soil and rainfall make cultivation possible (see Agriculture, ch. 3). Here, too, are the great oil fields near Mosul and Kirkuk (see The Oil Industry, ch. 3). The northeast is the homeland of most Iraqi Kurds.

The alluvial plain begins north of Baghdad and extends to the Persian Gulf. Here the Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie above the level of the plain in many places, and the whole area is a delta interlaced by the channels of the two rivers and by irrigation canals. Intermittent lakes, fed by the rivers in flood, also characterize southeastern Iraq. A fairly large area (15,600 square kilometers) just above the confluence of the two rivers at Al Qurnah and extending east of the Tigris beyond the Iranian border is marshland, the result of centuries of flooding and inadequate drainage. Much of it is a permanent marsh, but some parts dry out in the early winter, and other parts become marshland only in years of great flood.

Because the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates above their confluence are heavily silt laden, irrigation and fairly frequent flooding deposit large quantities of silty loam in much of the delta area. Windborne silt contributes to the total deposit of sediments. It has been estimated that the delta plains are built up at the rate of nearly twenty centimeters a century. In some areas major floods lead to the deposit, in temporary lakes, of as much as thirty centimeters of mud.

The Tigris and Euphrates also carry large quantities of salts. These, too, are spread on the land by sometimes excessive irrigation and flooding. A high water table and poor surface and subsurface drainage tend to concentrate the salts near the surface of the soil. In general the salinity of the soil increases from Baghdad south to the Persian Gulf and severely limits productivity in the region south of Ar Amarah.

The Euphrates originates in Turkey, is augmented by the Nahr (river) al Khabur in Syria, and enters Iraq in the northwest. Here it is fed only by the wadis of the western desert during the winter rains. It then winds through a gorge, which varies from two to sixteen kilometers in width, until it flows out on the plain at Ar Ramadi. Beyond there the Euphrates continues to the Hindiyah Barrage, which was constructed in 1914 to divert the river into the Hindiyah Channel; the present-day Shatt al Hillah had been the main channel of the Euphrates before 1914. Below Al Kifl the river follows two channels to As Samawah, where it reappears as a single channel to join the Tigris at Al Qurnah.

The Tigris also rises in Turkey but is significantly augmented by several rivers in Iraq, the most important of which are the Khabur, the Great Zab, the Little Zab, and the Uzaym, all of which join the Tigris above Baghdad, and the Diyala, which joins it about thirty-six kilometers below the city. At the Kut Barrage much of the water is diverted into the Shatt al Gharraf, which was once the

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