The Prospects of the Shia Insurgency Movement in Iraq

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INTRODUCTION

Following the end of the Gulf War in 1991, two major insurgencies erupted within Iraq. The Kurdish uprising received considerable attention (and support) within popular, academic and policy-making channels. The uprising among the Shia in the south, however, garnered less attention and certainly much less support. The outcomes of each movement also varied considerably; although not fully successful, the Kurdish movement did succeed in carving out some degree of autonomy for its area. On the other hand, the uprising in the South was crushed. This article is intended to describe the events in the Shia insurgency, the antecedents of the movement and prospects for the future.

The Shia insurgency represents an interesting case in which one group of Muslims have used symbols and ideology from their branch of Islam to mobilize opposition to a different group of Muslims. Together with the cases of Iran and Lebanon, the Iraqi Shia insurgency also displays the important - verging on critical - role of the Shia religious establishment in Shia insurgent movements. Finally, this insurgency emphasizes the economic, social and political roots of popular dissatisfaction that can be mobilized using religious ideology.

Beyond the religious elements of the Shia insurgent movement, several theoretical models of insurgency would suggest that Iraq was ripe for a popular uprising in 1991. It met both of Theda Skocpol's criteria of losing a major war and of facing sudden economic reversal.[1] As will be discussed, the Shia population in Iraq certainly could be described as facing both relative and, in many cases, absolute deprivation.[2] From the perspective of many Shia, there likely was a "rational actor" component; the best possible choice for securing their future was rebellion against the regime.[3] Finally, there was a relatively cohesive Shia community, providing the foundation for revolutionary organization.[4] All the models suggested strong revolutionary potential among the Shia population of Iraq.

THE 1991 UPRISING

The Shia resistance assumed its most intense form following the end of the Gulf War (DESERT STORM). One journalist with good Islamic resistance sources noted that the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq's (SCIRI - the Tehran-based insurgent leadership group) strategic plan for a successful Shia uprising was a "running series of political demonstrations at a time of crisis," followed by unification of the populace against the regime and winning over the army to the opposition; only then was there to be an armed revolt. The rapid pace of events during and immediately after the Gulf War

negated this strategy, however. Almost all Iraqi forces, with the exception of most Republican Guard units, in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations collapsed in the face of Coalition air and ground attacks. Virtually any semblance of unit cohesion among the Iraqi forces disintegrated. By the end of February 1991, Southern Iraqis could view an Iraqi military that was in shambles and a seemingly overwhelming Coalition military presence "just over the horizon." A seeming power vacuum had developed in the south and, in March, a number of Shia areas exploded into active insurrection.

The March 1991 uprising caught the Shia leadership unprepared, as displayed by the chaotic course of the newly energized insurgency.[5] Major unrest started first in Basrah on 2 March.[6] Most of the fighting around Basra reportedly was led by retreating soldiers, and almost all the soldiers in the area took part.[7] Deserters also apparently played a significant role. The fighting spread very quickly from town to town in a very uncoordinated manner. By the 5th, over twelve towns in southern Iraq reportedly were in the hands of the rebels. The situation had reached sufficient seriousness by 7 March that the regime publicly acknowledged the unrest. Further signaling the government's concern, Saddam Hussein named his cousin as the new chief of internal security, and the government expelled almost all foreign journalists from the country.[8] Baghdad responded forcefully to the turmoil, sending its remaining Republican Guard units to both the north and south of the country, together with a reported increased public security presence in Baghdad.

Despite some bitter fighting, the government was able to put down the southern rebellion relatively quickly. On 16 March, Saddam Hussein, apparently believing the situation controllable, addressed the Iraqi public and indirectly confirmed the size of the earlier unrest by blaming it on "herds of rancorous traitors" assisted by "mobs who have strayed from the right path."[9] The government media reflected Baghdad's confidence in the regime's stability by "interviewing" both witnesses and participants in the uprising who described "killing, looting, stealing, and setting buildings, cars, and government buildings on fire."[10] By 28 March, the government had retaken all the towns held by the insurgents in the south. By the 30th, it apparently felt the situation was sufficiently calm that it reportedly began moving Republican Guard units to the north to respond to the Kurdish fighting.[11]

The fighting was marked by extreme brutality on both sides. Although most attention in the West was directed toward the atrocities committed by the government forces, the rebels also committed their share of atrocities. They killed virtually any Ba'ath Party official they could find, and also massacred the families and relatives of government officials.[12] The rebels' actions reached such an extreme that a senior Iraqi cleric associated with the opposition issued a fatwa (religious decree) calling for more humane treatment of prisoners and the end of unnecessary killings.[13] Government forces were equally (if not more) brutal than the rebels. There were numerous reports of mass hangings of suspected rebels and atrocities against both insurgents and civilians.[14] Generally, no quarter was given by either side.

Given the chaos in the area, estimates of the number of insurgents and overall casualties vary widely. One source claims that around the city of Karbala alone, there were 50,000 insurgents.[15] An opposition official claimed up to 125,000 fighters against the regime.[16] The SCIRI reportedly moved "several thousand" soldiers from Iran into Iraq to support the uprising after it began.[17] Their presence seemed to have little impact on the results of the fighting, however. Despite the lack of hard numbers for insurgent strength, it is clear that the unrest was very widespread. The number of casualties from the fighting is equally uncertain. One Arab doctor who toured the area shortly after the unrest subsided estimated that 50,000 to 60,000 had been killed.[18] One reflection of the turmoil was the high number of refugees created by the fighting. At the beginning of April, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees made an official count of 50,000 Iraqi refugees in Iran, mostly from southern Iraq.[19] The number of internally displaced Iraqis was almost certainly much higher.[20]

One key issue marked the rebellion. Despite earlier (and later) moves toward unifying the Iraqi opposition, the Shia leadership and insurgents during the uprising raised exclusively Shia goals. The most common slogan heard during the rebellion was "Jafari (Shia) Rule." Moreover, when the SCIRI finally did begin to try to exert leadership over the course of the insurgency (well after its beginning), the military command issued orders that "all Iraqi armed forces should submit to and obey [SCIRI] orders . . . no ideas except the rightful Islamic ones should be disseminated . . . "[21] Combined with widespread executions of both minor Ba'ath officials and suspected collaborators, the Shia calls for a Shia government isolated them from potential collaboration with non-Shias. More importantly, the lack of effective planning and leadership precluded the spread of insurgent activity to Baghdad. Although some small-scale unrest among the Shia areas of Baghdad was reported, it was easily contained by the regime.

The 1991 revolt should not be viewed in isolation. It was the culmination of a history of Shia unrest in Iraq. The following sections are intended to provide the background for assessing the reasons for and possible future of Shia opposition in Iraq. This article will use Bard O'Neill's six variables for examining insurgent strategies and outcomes: human and physical environment, popular support, organization, unity, external support and government response.[22] Four of the factors generally favored the insurgent movement. Unity remained somewhat problematic for the insurgents. The final variable of government response, however, appears to be the key reason for the crushing of the insurgency. The Iraqi government's willingness and capability to use brutal and calibrated repression has thus far contained the Shia opposition movement.

ENVIRONMENT

Shia unrest in Iraq may be viewed as a reaction to an aggrieved majority reacting to minority rule. Shia Arabs represent somewhere over 54 percent of the population of Iraq.[23] Although the Shia are viewed - and, more importantly, view themselves - as a distinct and separate group, the widespread existence of Shia in Iraq is actually a relatively recent phenomenon.

The majority of conversions to Shi'ism occurred in the nineteenth century. Several factors were involved in the conversions from Sunnism to Shi'ism. During the eighteenth century, Persian ulama (religious scholars) and religious students arrived in the southern Iraqi shrine cities in large numbers, largely due to difficulties between the religious establishment and the regime in Persia. Although some of this migration was later reversed, even by 1919, there were an estimated 80,000 Persians in Iraq.[24] Throughout this period, the Iranians in Iraq were granted considerable extraterritorial privileges.

Largely owing to their strong economic support from followers in Iran, the Iranian religious figures in Iraq had a major impact on revitalizing southern Iraq. This was particularly true of the two principal shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf. Both cities became major centers not only of religious significance but also economic centers for the surrounding region. Karbala in particular acquired a strong Persian character and a majority Iranian population; Najaf, on the other hand, continued to be controlled by Iraqi tribal leaders.[25] The rise of these two Shia-controlled cities had a major impact on the tribes living in southern Iraq, with these tribal groups forming the majority of the population of the area. During the late eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century, most of the tribes converted to Shi'ism, leading to significant disruptions in tribal patterns and to the growth of southern Iraq as the major area of Shia population.

The actual internalization of Shia beliefs, however, remained subject to considerable doubt: "the conversion to Shi'ism did not pervade the former social and moral values of the tribesmen."[26] Many of the previously existing tribal social systems and religious practices continued to have significant impact. At the same time, a number of Shia religious observances that were a vital part of the Iranian Shia culture were either modified or largely ignored in Iraq. Nevertheless, events involving the religious establishment in Iran continued to have impact on Iraqi Shias. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution was reflected by increased political activism by ulama in Iraq. The Iraqi ulama were particularly active in the early 1900s in calling for jihad against foreign encroachments in Islamic countries.[27] Such activism culminated in the 1920 revolt against the British in Iraq, which saw significant clerical activism and incitement, among both Shia and Sunni ulama.[28]

After the formation of the modern Iraqi state, the Iraqi Shia ulama saw a steady erosion of power. This was due partially to a series of disputes over who would be the supreme leader of the ulama within Iraq. The ulama also continued political agitation that proved largely fruitless. Their series of political misadventures not only alienated them from the government, but also displayed their ultimate political impotence. Also, in the face of religious opposition, the Iraqi government expelled a number of Iranian ulama in the 1920s, leading to further weakness and splits within the religious establishment. This led to the increased importance of Shia tribal leaders vis-ˆ-vis the religious establishment, and to the decreasing significance of the shrine cities in Iraqi politics.

Economic issues also played a role in the relative weakness of the ulama. In comparison with Iran, the religious endowments and religiously-owned property in Iraq remained limited in scope and value. In the 1920s and 1930s, Shia religious endowments

increasingly came under the control of the government, rather than being controlled independently.[29] Perhaps even more critically, there was no significant Shia merchant class to support the ulama. This was partially due to the overall nature of the Iraqi economy in the nineteenth century, which was largely "transit trade" with few economic benefits to Iraq proper.[30] The merchant class in general was not terribly prosperous in historical Iraq. More directly, the major merchants in Iraq historically were not Shia. Using figures for the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, which included the most significant businessmen in Iraq, for 1938-39, the most significant single group of merchants was Jewish, with Shia businesses a very distant second.[31]

The role of the Jewish merchant class obviously was sharply curtailed in the late 1940s with the establishment of Israel, but their economic stratum was filled predominantly by Sunni Iraqis rather than Shia.[32] Clearly, there were some significant Shia merchants. The point, however, is that the Iraqi merchant class never developed an independent identity and power structure vis-â-vis the government comparable to the Iranian case. The religious establishment could not count upon an established merchant class for economic and political support. There is little evidence that the Shia merchants found any particular convergence of interests with the ulama or that they provided a high level of support for the ulama. As a result, many senior Iraqi mujtahids (religious leaders) had to rely on foreign, particularly Iranian, economic support, which clearly was subject to considerable fluctuation.[33]

The decreasing importance of the ulama was reflected in their drop in numbers. In 1918, there were 6,000 theological students in Najaf, the main holy city. By 1957, the number had dropped to 1,954, of whom only 326 were Iraqis.[34] Moreover, the ulama gained a reputation for being out of touch with the modernizing trends of Iraqi society. This was particularly noticeable in the field of education. As Iraq began a major drive to extend secular education in the 1920s and 1930s, the ulama actively fought against the formation of secular schools and discouraged parents from sending their children to these schools.[35] Such efforts were largely in vain, however, and the Shia religious schools continued to decline.

Despite the relative lack of power of the Shia ulama during the pre-Ba'ath period in Iraq prior to 1968, the Shia developed as a relatively cohesive community. This process was facilitated by the tribal background of most Shia, providing both kinship ties and at least the remnants of societal organization. These communal ties were further solidified as a result of shared Shia grievances.

The Shia communities in the south generally were not afforded the same economic support as were the Sunni areas in the center of the country. Shia generally comprised the lower economic stratum of Iraq, and there was a widespread belief among them that their economic advancement was blocked as a deliberate strategy by the Sunni ruling class.[36] The Shia also were not afforded the same political opportunities as the Sunni. Although there were a number of Shia in the government during the monarchy, the perception (largely accurate) was that the Sunni retained the most significant political positions for themselves, along with dominating the officer corps.[37] To some degree, the paucity of

Shia in the government could be ascribed to early rulings by the ulama that the faithful should not participate in a government that might be illegitimate.[38] The subsequent Ba'ath government only intensified the lack of Shia political participation. Although the short-lived Ba'ath government of 1963 had significant Shia participation, with four Arab Shia in senior positions out of eight, this was not the case in the established Ba'ath government of 1968 in which none of the 15 members of the Revolutionary Command Council was Shia.[39] This decreased representation was also reflected at lower levels of leadership in which up to 1963, of the 53 top Ba'ath leaders, 53.8 percent were Shia. The comparable figure for the post-1963 Shia leaders was 5.7 percent.[40] This precipitous drop in Shia membership after 1963 likely was the result of lessons learned by the Ba'athist senior leaders in their short-lived 1963 government (to be discussed below); party leaders evidently determined that a smaller, more cohesive leadership structure of closely trusted allies likely would be more able to seize and hold power. This likely was a rational strategy for a conspiratorial group in the environment of Iraq at that time. As with other Iraqi parties and groups vying for power, the Ba'athists found the Shia to be expendable in terms of political support. Given the number of grievances by the Shia, and the lack of response of the various governments to their complaints, the Shia formed a population that was conducive to insurgency.

One other environmental factor affecting the course of insurgency must be noted. This was the role of demographics. The Shia population of Iraq was concentrated in the south, and increasingly in Baghdad. Central Iraq was almost exclusively Sunni, while the north was largely Kurdish. The vast majority of Kurds were (and are) Sunni, with a small minority Shia, but religious bases have played no role in their political struggles. This segmentation of Iraq into what might be viewed as religious sectors had several possible impacts on the potential for and conduct of insurgencies. From potential insurgent leaders' perspectives, it provided a concentration of population with shared interests and potential grievances, enhancing the possibility of mobilizing the people in support of insurgencies. At the same time, however, it provided the government some advantages in controlling insurgencies through the same concentration of population. Unless the potential insurgents could unify both confessional and ethnic groups, the government could focus all its forces and energies on one area.

The role of Baghdad deserves special mention. It grew very rapidly in this century, from a population of about 150,000 in 1908 to about 1.5 million in 1965; it potentially reached over 2.5 million in 1977.[41] Although on a smaller scale, the city of Basrah in the south also underwent such exponential growth. The majority of this population increase was the result of migration of peasants and tribesmen from rural areas to the city. Such migration was particularly pronounced among the Shia. The percentage of Shia among Baghdad's population before World War I was about 20 percent, but by 1958, it had grown to over 50 percent.[42] The majority of the Shia lived in an area called Al Thawrah (later renamed Saddam City); this area was marked by a high density of poor families and very primitive living conditions. Both the poor living conditions and the social dislocation provided a population ripe for mobilization by groups offering the potential for social improvements.

ORGANIZATION AND UNITY

Shia political unrest and insurgent activities can be usefully divided into three periods. The first happened under the British mandate and monarchical rule from World War I through 1958. The second occurred in the period of military rule, including the short-lived Ba'ath regime of 1963, until 1968, and the third during the consolidation of the Ba'ath regime in 1968. Each period was marked by different dynamics and differing forms of Shia political organization and activities.

During World War I and the subsequent British mandate, the Shia ulama were very active in urging pro-nationalistic and anti-British actions. When the British invaded Iraq (then called Mesopotamia) during World War I, the ulama declared a holy war and actively solicited tribesmen to join forces in an effort to repel the British. Despite some initially heavy fighting, the British eventually succeeded in occupying all of Iraq and took control of it after the war. The ulama remained very active in opposing the British. In 1919, the principal Shia mujtahid, Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, issued a religious decree (fatwa) stating that "none but Muslims have any right to rule over Muslims"; this was followed by other ulama calling for an independent Arab government ruled by a descendant of the Prophet.[43] There were also joint Shia-Sunni political activities. The increasing unrest led to a tribal revolt in 1920. This revolt was largely confined to the Shia tribesmen, with very few Sunni tribes participating. The revolt did have the effect, however, of convincing the British to appoint Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, as king of Iraq.

Although this move ostensibly satisfied one of the demands of the ulama, in that Iraq was now "ruled" by a Muslim, the clear lack of Faisal's independence quickly became evident. The ulama continued their agitation for an independent Iraq with increased Shia participation in government.[44] They also issued religious decrees against a mandatory relationship with Britain. In response to their agitation, the British expelled a number of the senior ulama, who had to sign agreements to abstain from politics in order to return to Iraq. Although there were scattered outbreaks of Shia tribal violence in the 1930s, the ulama generally were relatively quiescent in the 1930s through early 1950s. This tendency was even further strengthened by the supreme mujtahid, Muhammad Burujirdi (who lived in Qom, Iran), who in 1950 prohibited political activity by all Shia ulama and threatened the equivalent of excommunication for those who engaged in politics.[45]

One very significant issue that emerged during this period, involving both the overall Shia population and the ulama, was the rise of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). Given the low socioeconomic status of many Shia, the ICP was attractive to many Shia, particularly considering the relative lack of mobilization efforts by the ulama. Although the ICP was not overwhelmingly Shia, the Shia were well-represented in the party, most especially at the lower echelons. ICP cadres spent considerable time and effort in ideological proselytizing among the Shia migrants to Baghdad.

Beginning particularly in the mid-1940s, the ulama began speaking out against communism and requesting help in fighting its spread. Clearly, they generally found the rise of the communist party to be more threatening to their interests than the actions of the British-influenced government. They seemed to be willing to cooperate with a

government that they viewed at best as being of questionable legitimacy in order to oppose a more dangerous enemy. Beyond the theological and philosophical differences with communism, the Shia religious establishment almost certainly viewed the ICP as directly attacking their influence and power, given the large number of Shia in the party.

The overthrow of the monarchy and the 1958 assumption of power of Abdal Karim Qasim, an army officer, tied together the Shia anti-communist movement and anti-government trends. Qasim used the ICP as one of the mobilizing tools of his regime, and communist influence on the government increased significantly. Rhetorical attacks on the communists were now joined with similar attacks on the government for permitting the communists to gain influence. The Qasim regime, in the meantime, was in fact addressing some of the needs of Shia, including low-income housing and a new water system in Karbala, new roads in the south and promotion of Shia in the government and army.[46] Nevertheless, the ulama continued their pressure on the government to reduce the power of the ICP with a virtual flurry of religious decrees, including labeling adherence to communism as being "one of the greatest sins;" declaring that the religious observances of communist Muslims were not acceptable to God; prohibiting buying meat from communist butchers; and prohibiting inheritance by a communist from a Muslim father.[47] The ulama pressure began to have an influence on Qasim, who withdrew much of his support from the ICP. Subsequently, "several thousand" communist party members and supporters, mostly in Sunni areas, were murdered or forced to flee.[48]

In 1963, the Qasim regime was overthrown by a coup led by army officers and the Ba'ath Party. In response to the coup, a large number of ICP members and supporters took to the streets. The new government launched an offensive against suspected communists, with about 10,000 arrested and many executed.[49] Shia clergy were active in the anti-communist efforts and assisted the new government in quashing "communist" resistance.[50] The new government was short-lived, being overthrown in November 1963 by Arab nationalist army officers. From 1963 to 1968, Iraq was ruled by Abdul Salam Arif and, after his death in a helicopter crash, his brother Abdul Rahman Arif. This regime undertook widespread nationalization of private companies, a move that created considerable opposition among the Shia ulama, both because of their interpretation of Islamic precepts and because a number of the businesses nationalized were owned by Shia who had provided religious endowments to the Shia religious establishment. With the nationalizations, the ulama lost yet another source of funding.

In July 1968, the Ba'athists seized power once again, with Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr as president. Within a short period of time, Saddam Hussein became the clear power within the regime, but he did not assume the office of president until 1979. From virtually the start of the Ba'athist regime, it was actively at odds with the Shia religious establishment. While governmental actions will be discussed more fully below, it is important to stress that the government moved aggressively and heavy handedly against any possible Shia unrest. As a result, it initially may have provoked more resistance than it precluded. Beyond the government actions directly against the Shia, the Ba'ath regime provided a more general threat to the ulama and religious Shia by a policy strongly emphasizing secularization of the country. A Ba'ath official described the regime's policy as: "In this

country your own personal religion is up to you, but the religion of the Ba'ath party is obligatory."[51] Hussein also stressed the need to restrict the role of religion: "We have to oppose the institutionalization of religion in the state and the society and to oppose the movement of the revolution into religion. We should return to the roots of our religion but not introduce it into politics."[52] In speeches and interviews, Saddam Hussein generally avoided any mention of religion, and continued to stress pan-Arabism and socialism.[53]

The level of secularization attempted by the Ba'athists clearly was viewed as a threat by the Shia religious establishment, and several Shia opposition movements developed.[54] Even before the Ba'athist regime assumed power, several Shia groups began organizational efforts. Such groups included al-Dawah, the Islamic Task Organization, founded in 1961, and the Followers, established in 1962. A number of other groups were formed, but most were short-lived and of limited significance, and later merged with the predominant groups. The Ba'ath regime's activities reenergized Shia opposition, and the Shia groups reportedly gained a significant number of recruits.

By the late 1970s and 1980s, there were two major Shia insurgent groups in Iraq: al-Dawah al Islamiah (the Islamic Call) and the Mujahidin (Holy Warriors). Al-Dawah was formed in the late 1950s or early 1960s; the exact date is subject to some debate since the organization emerged from a series of discussion groups whose initial aims principally were to revive Islam within Iraq. Clerics became convinced that religion was suffering serious erosion as secularism gained strength. Al-Dawah's early history was marked principally by an emphasis on theological issues, but it became increasingly politically active around the time of the Iranian Revolution. It was a larger and better funded organization, but the Mujahidin conducted more armed operations during this period. To a large extent, al-Dawah focused on political and ideological issues, while the Mujahidin served as the military arm of the struggle.

The core of al-Dawah was a group of clerics, both of Iraqi and Iranian origin.[55] The Mujahidin leaders, on the other hand, have come more from graduates of modern schools and colleges.[56] Both groups, however, have stated that their philosophy is drawn from the writings and preachings of Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr. Al-Sadr stressed the need to return to Islam for both individual and societal progress. He also emphasized that Islam was compatible with modern societies, and in fact was necessary to build a just society that would avoid exploitation. In 1979, al-Sadr gave his vision of an Islamic government. This included belief that sovereignty belongs to God; the basis of legislation is Islam, but that the legislature can pass any law that is compatible with Islam; the people are entrusted with power; and the ulama should serve as the interpreters of law.[57] The state is responsible for providing knowledge of Islam, enacting and enforcing Islamic law and maintaining social justice.[58]

In comparison to many of the Iraqi Shia ulama, al-Sadr was very progressive and reached out to the more secularized educated Shia.[59] His writings tended to minimize purely Shia references, apparently in an attempt to minimize Shia- Sunni differences while stressing the overarching nature of Islam.[60] In fact, shortly before his execution in 1980, al-Sadr

reportedly said, "We must all defend the Islamic flag whatever its sectarian colour."[61] As Chibli Mallat notes, however, al-Sadr had significant difficulties in bridging the philosophical gap between Sunnism and Shi'ism.[62]

The growth of Shia unrest appears to be tied closely with deteriorating economic conditions of the Shia populace.[63] Also, the core areas of support for the insurgent movements tended to be urban areas with a significant population of recent migrants from the countryside. Although as noted, the Iranian Revolution gave a major boost to Iraqi Shia activism, the Ba'ath regime faced Shia unrest even before Khomeini's success. Particularly notable were the disturbances of 1977, in which "tens of thousands" of Shia participated.[64] In February of that year, large crowds of Shia, some apparently armed, congregated in Najaf and Karbala, with calls for the regime's overthrow. The army had to be used to put down the unrest. The exact causes of the disturbances are murky, but they represented a significant challenge to the regime.[65]

Beginning in 1979, all Islamic groups came under the putative umbrella of the Islamic Liberation Movement, which issued a manifesto calling for "all means" to resist the regime.[66] The regime's response was even further repression, including execution of ulama and their family members and imprisonment of a large number of potential followers. The Shia resistance movement was largely decapitated, with the surviving leaders fleeing into exile, particularly Iran. This almost certainly disrupted mobilizational and organizational efforts of Shia anti-regime activities.

Nevertheless, there were a number of attacks on government officials and installations. The extent, severity and impact of these attacks remains subject to some doubt. The regime generally was able to prevent media attention to insurgent activities, while the insurgents obviously exaggerated their exploits. There also seemed to be little coherent overall strategy in target selection; most attacks seemed to be independently selected and conducted by individual insurgent cells with little overarching plan. Despite leadership problems, there were a series of insurgent activities creating a number of government casualties.[67] There is little evidence that the scope of such attacks intensified significantly after the start of the Iran-Iraq War. Again, however, this might be a result of increased foreign media controls in Iraq after the war began rather than the actual situation.

In 1982, al-Dawah, the Mujahidin and smaller Shia groups met in Tehran and founded the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.[68] This group was intended to coordinate anti-regime activities and to provide a basis for common strategies. Overall, however, its record has been less than impressive. Although not formally renouncing its membership, al-Dawah has stopped cooperating with SCIRI. Within Iraq itself, SCIRI commonly has been viewed as essentially a tool of Iran, especially since all its leadership is based in Iran.

Apparently recognizing the weakness of the Shia opposition as an independent movement, Shia leaders agreed to cooperate with other opposition movements in an attempt to oust the Ba'athists. By one count, in 1991 there were some 70 opposition groups in exile.[69] Each of these groupings has a very specific agenda, with the only

unifying force being opposition to Saddam. In the past, they have been bitterly divided over their grand visions of Iraq in the future. During and after the war, these groups were cajoled, primarily by the US and Britain, to form an umbrella united opposition movement to Saddam. Several conferences and meetings were held, but little came from these meetings. On several occasions in fact, the groups could not even make it through the meetings without public ruptures developing.

Ostensibly, an umbrella organization called the Iraqi National Congress finally was agreed to in an effort to coordinate the opposition. Current INC documents call for the overthrow of the present regime, while establishing "a democratic, constitutional, parliamentary and pluralistic" government that maintains "territorial integrity."[70] Clearly, these somewhat boilerplate goals represent a series of compromises that do not reflect traditional objectives such as Kurdish independence or Shia Islamic government. The leadership council likewise represents the secular trend within the opposition.[71] The major achievement to date of the INC was the election of a 234 member National Assembly in October 1992. However, despite some meetings and calls for a united struggle, there is no evidence that this group has had any practical effect whatsoever. In many ways, the rhetoric and activities of its members, most of whose leaders live in London, are somewhat analogous to the White Russian emigres of the 1920s.

POPULAR SUPPORT

There clearly has been a significant group of Shia with grievances that could provide a population base for an insurgency. The 1977 unrest suggests that at least for a time, mobilization of a significant segment of the population was entirely possible. Nevertheless, such widespread mobilization in fact did not occur during the Iran-Iraq War. Despite extensive Iranian propaganda directed to the Shia, no mass uprising took place. Moreover, the army, in which Shia comprised the majority of enlisted soldiers,[72] did not collapse, and in fact fought relatively well once the campaigning shifted to defending Iraqi territory against Iranian counterattacks.[73]

Particularly in the early fighting in Iran, the Iraqis suffered a large number of prisoners and some desertions. Some prisoners and deserters defected to the Iranian side to fight against the Iraqi government. As with most issues involving Iraq, the actual number of Iraqis who fought on the Iranian side is very uncertain, but was unlikely to have been more than a few thousand.[74] The numbers certainly did not suggest an army under collapse. Moreover, the Iranians generally organized most of the defectors into regular military units, whose fighting ability was not notable. The Iraqis were organized into the so-called Badr Corps, consisting of an infantry division, artillery division and an armored division, all understrength. Only some of the Iraqis were organized into a guerrilla organization, where they might have had the most impact. This also gave the Iraqi regime a valuable propaganda tool: opponents of the regime, whether Shia, Sunni, or Kurdish, were not opposing the regime in power, but instead were "traitors" to the Iraqi nation.[75]

The overall relative cohesion of the Iraqi army and the willingness of its predominant Shia base to fight for the regime took a number of analysts at the time by some surprise.

The Iraqi government, however, proved itself quite adept at using nationalist and patriotic themes in motivating Shia to view themselves first as Iraqis. This particularly was the case after the fighting moved into Iraq itself. Abbas Kelidar provides a good description of Shia perceptions of their situation: "The Shiis of Iraq, whose history and background are different from their coreligionists in Iran, object to having their ethnic identity and national affiliation continuously questioned by the Sunni political establishment as well as the ideologues of Arab nationalism."[76]

In general, there were three main groups supporting the Shia insurgency during the Iran-Iraq War: the clergy, students and intellectuals and the urban poor. To a large degree, the clergy formed the intellectual and political basis of the movement, while the students and intellectuals tended to be the military arm. The urban poor obviously constitute by far the largest potential population base for an insurgency, but "[a]s actual members of Islamic groups, the urban poor have probably never outnumbered the young intelligentsia."[77] With the exception of a handful of demonstrations, the urban poor have not played a major role in Islamic unrest. Other social groups, such as peasants and merchants, also were largely absent from Islamic unrest.

The post-DESERT STORM uprising clearly was considerably broader than the insurgent activity during the Iran-Iraq War. The earlier operations had been characterized by activities carried out by small cells of the resistance, or in some cases, apparently individual actions. Most typically, these cells launched attempted assassinations or quick raids. Little attention seemed to be paid to mobilizing groups of supporters or to holding areas, even temporarily, for the propaganda value. The 1991 operations, on the other hand, involved considerable mobilization, with a significant portion being what might be termed self-mobilization and attempts to hold territory.

The scope of the popular resistance following DESERT STORM took all observers (apparently including the Iraqi Shia opposition leaders in Iran) by surprise. Several factors may account for the relatively narrow Shia insurgent activities in the earlier war as compared to 1991. The shock of the virtual disintegration of the Iraqi army in an extremely short period in 1991 may have led to a perceived vacuum of regime ability to repress the opposition. At the very least, the utter disorganization of the Iraqi army meant that it would take the regime time to respond to a rebellion, giving the insurgents some time in which to organize and mobilize. Allied forces were very close to much of the area of the uprising, perhaps leading the insurgents to believe that US or other foreign forces would intervene on their behalf. The presence of large numbers of Iraqi soldiers and deserters in the area provided a cadre of militarily trained fighters.

The differing nature of external propaganda may have played at least a contributing role. US propaganda during the Gulf War stressed relatively narrow goals, primarily calling for the Iraqi people to remove Saddam Hussein, but stressing the need to retain Iraq's sovereignty and existence as a unitary state. Iranian propaganda on the other hand was much harsher and broader, calling for the destruction of the regime.[78] The vituperousness of the Iranian propaganda was such that it may actually have played into the hands of the Iraqi regime, allowing Baghdad to claim that Iran was determined to destroy the entire

nation of Iraq. Anecdotal reports from the period of the Iran-Iraq War strongly indicate that a large number of Iraqis, including Shia, were convinced that they had to support the regime in order to preserve the Iraqi nation. Finally, southern Iraq was a principal battlefield in both wars, and had seen considerable destruction. Although unmeasurable given the paucity of independent pollsters in Iraq, the Shia and other Iraqis in the south may finally have grown sufficiently weary of Saddam's military misadventures that almost anything, including armed revolt, seemed preferable to his continued rule.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Iraqi regime publicly was highly intent on implementing modernization and secularization of the country as an integral part of the Ba'athist ideology. It clearly identified Shia groups as a potential obstacle to these goals, and reacted forcefully to the possible threat posed by the Shia. Virtually from the start of the regime, it began severe repression against the Shia. Two principal means of repression were used: arrests and executions, and expulsion of "Iranians." It also closed the Shia Kufa University in Najaf, together with seizing all the school's funds. In 1969, the regime banned religious processions, confiscated religious endowments, imposed censorship on religious publications, allowed sale of liquor in Shia holy cities, abolished religious schools and teaching of Islam in government schools, and stopped the recitation of the Quran on radio and television.[79] In 1970, the Iraqi government began to stress Iraq's pre-Islamic past, including re-naming the country's districts to pre-Islamic names. These moves may be compared to similar efforts by the Shah in Iran. In March 1978, Baghdad took over control of all Shia revenues.[80]

The Iraqi regime displayed little reluctance to arrest and, in many cases execute, Shia opposition leaders and members. In marked contrast to the Shah's hesitancy, the Ba'ath government also targeted religious figures at all levels. Beyond arresting clerics, the regime also imprisoned their entire families. In March 1980, the government issued a decree making it a capital offense to be a member of al-Dawah.[81] From 1974 to 1985, at least 50 clerics were executed by the government, with several others in exile being assassinated.[82] The most prominent and significant execution was that of Baqir al-Sadr in 1980. The total number of executions and those Shia killed in disturbances against the government is very inexact, with estimates between 1,000 and 30,000.[83]

Expulsions of Iraqis of Iranian origin became a common governmental tactic. As previously noted, in the nineteenth century there was considerable Iranian presence in Iraq. Intermarriage and permanent settlement became common. Iraqi citizenship documents continued to list about two million Iraqis as being "of Iranian origin;" such persons could have come from families having lived in Iraq for generations.[84] As of 1968, there were an estimated 22,860 persons with Iranian passports living in Iraq.[85] In 1968-69, 20,000 "Iranians" were expelled; in 1971, 40,000 Fayliya Kurds (the only Shia Kurds) and 60,000 other Iraqi Shia were expelled; in 1980, 30,000; and 20,000 in 1981-82.[86] Internal expulsions also were used; in 1976, about 200,000 Kurds were exiled to the Shia south.[87] It is of course difficult to determine whether Saddam's major fear was of the

expellees' Iranian origin or of their Shi'ism. In practical terms, the motivations were likely a combination of the two.

At the same time, however, the regime began pumping considerable money into religious accounts for refurbishing shrines and mosques, and increased funding for pilgrims. The government also expanded funding for such projects as electrification and health care for Shia areas. Political concessions also were made to the Shia. In June 1982, a party congress elected a new regional command for the Ba'ath Party. The new members were mostly Shia, and gave Shia at least a plurality on the regional command. It must be noted, however, that these new members were not seated on the Regional Command Council, the actual decision-making organ of the Iraqi regime.[88] Likewise, in the 1980 and 1984 elections, the regime guaranteed that at least 40 percent of those elected to the National Assembly would be Shia and that the Speaker would be a Shia.[89] Unsurprisingly, the National Assembly has virtually no real power.

Saddam also began to stress his personal religiosity. He laced public statements with religious references and praise of historical Shia religious examples. He began appearing in Shia areas in traditional robes while offering gifts such as television sets to the residents. Saddam's trump card was his public production in 1979 of a genealogical table "proving" that he was a direct descendant of Ali and Mohammed.[90] While it is certainly far from apparent that such moves convinced anyone of Saddam's sincerity, they at least suggested some moderation in the regime's overt hostility to Shi'ism in general.

The government's response to the 1991 uprising followed a similar pattern of sharp repression, and some political and economic concessions. The brutality with which loyal military units put down the rebellion was noteworthy even for Iraq. The presence of soldiers and deserters among the insurgents likely stiffened the resistance to the regime, since these soldiers were unlikely to trust the tender mercies of the government. Likely recognizing this, Saddam issued a blanket amnesty of deserters in late March. Whether this had much effect on the military insurgents and whether in fact all deserters escaped execution is unknown, but it provided at least one tool for the regime to split some of the insurgents away from the movement. One difficulty facing the army in putting down the unrest was the terrain, which in southern Iraq is very marshy and suitable for insurgent activity. At the same time, however, the geographic narrowness enabled the military to seal off the operational area and methodically hunt down the insurgents.[91] The combination of extensive ground forces and the use of helicopters - which in retrospect were mistakenly not prohibited by the allied coalition - allowed the regime to quash the insurgency in about a month. After relative calm returned to the area, the regime provided an increased level of economic support to the Shia region. One aspect of this aid was rebuilding cities damaged or destroyed in the fighting. Reports from the area indicated that at least in the cases of Karbala and Najaf, much of the inner city reconstruction opened up the area and provided wider streets and less congestion. Not coincidentally, this would also make it easier for movement of the tanks and armored personnel carriers of the security forces.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

As already indicated, Iran has been the major supporter of Shia opposition movements in Iraq. Since most aspects of this support have already been discussed, only a few points will be noted here. Since the Shia opposition leadership is based largely in Iran, Tehran clearly has significant influence over the Iraqi Shia leaders. Members and followers of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq receive logistical, financial, training and propaganda support from Iran, and it is very unlikely that they can follow a course not approved by the Iranian regime. The SCIRI itself has remained largely aloof from the non-Shia opposition groups, especially since many of the other groups are backed by Western governments opposed by Iran.[92] The extent to which the Iranian government will agree to cooperate with non-Shia opposition groups is very questionable. Since some Shia are involved with the Western-supported groups, there is the clear prospect for a split among the Shia opposition leaders.

In addition to its other support for the SCIRI, Iran has provided military equipment and training. There have been no indications, however, that Iranian forces have participated directly in SCIRI-led operations within Iraq.[93] Cross-border operations by Iranian forces have focused on brief raids on some Kurdish groups and Iranian exile groups along the border. These have all been conventional military operations directed against what Tehran views as specific internal security threats. The Iranian government has shown no indication of wanting to participate in more extensive support of Iraqi Shia opposition.

Some clues as to future Iranian support tactics for Iraqi Shia may be offered by news accounts and editorials from Iran. Since DESERT STORM, there has been some slight difference of tone in Iranian propaganda, with the broadcasts more specifically directed against the Iraqi regime itself and somewhat less focusing specifically on the necessity for Shia revolts. This would fit in with Tehran's attempts to improve relations with other Gulf countries, most of whom are concerned about their own Shia. Tehran also has stressed the need to maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq (another key goal of other Gulf states) with both the regime and the SCIRI head, Baqer al-Hakim, emphasizing the need for a unitary Iraq.[94] The Iranian regime also has combined its propaganda efforts against the US and Iraq, charging that US actions have hurt the Iraqi people as much as Baghdad's.[95]

The role of Saudi Arabia is very significant in the possible success of Shia insurgencies, both because it borders the principal Shia areas of Iraq and because of Riyadh's opposition to Saddam Hussein (at least since 1990). However, the Saudis, always preoccupied with controlling their own Shias, have shown no inclination to support Shia rebellions in Southern Iraq. This was particularly true after reports surfaced that the Iranians were actively supporting the rebels.[96]

Riyadh has faced its own problems with Saudi Shia. There have been two Shia uprisings in Saudi Arabia. The first, contemporaneous with the Iranian Revolution, occurred in November 1979. An estimated 90,000 demonstrators carrying portraits of Khomeini rioted during religious ceremonies, which were held despite being banned by the Saudi government. Riyadh moved a reported 20,000 troops to the province to restore order.[97] An unknown number of persons, reportedly including some National Guard soldiers,

were killed during the unrest.[98] Similar disturbances recurred in February 1980, when Shia demonstrated in commemoration of the anniversary of Khomeini's rise to power. There was considerable property damage during the riots, and four people reportedly were killed.[99] These incidents, although relatively minor in overall stability, almost certainly have dissuaded the Saudi government from support of the Iraqi Shia.

The final external actors in possible Shia insurgencies are the Western countries, primarily the US. Although the US has tried to craft an opposition movement to the Iraqi regime, Washington clearly has kept a considerable distance from the Shia insurgent groups. Shortly after the Gulf War, the allied coalition established both Iraqi no-fly zones and safe areas in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds. The Shia south initially was not offered such protection, and considerable time elapsed before a no-fly zone was established in the south. Despite the fact that some public discussion occurred regarding setting up Shia protected areas in the south, no decision to do so was actually ever made. At least in part, this was due to a US government assessment that the Shia would not succeed in their uprising.[100]

In general, the US seemingly has maintained a hands-off policy toward the mainstream Shia opposition. Washington has supported some Shia political figures as part of the Iraqi National Congress, but these individuals do not have the same degree of influence among the Shia as some of the leaders of the SCIRI. Given the current state of US relations with Iran, and the nervousness of some American allies among the Gulf States regarding their Shia, it is very unlikely that any US administration will provide any significant support for a Shia-based insurgency.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

Shia insurgent operations, together with harsh government responses, have continued since the 1991 uprising. Most insurgent operations have reverted to the pre-1991 pattern of sporadic attacks against Iraqi government buildings, officials and small groups of security forces.[101] More widespread unrest occasionally flares, such as that following the assassination of a senior Shia cleric and his sons in February 1999. Numerous protests reportedly erupted, with Iraqi security forces killing some of the protesters and arresting large numbers.[102] The government reportedly routinely responds to potential unrest through torture and executions.[103] Although insurgent operations and popular protests have ebbed and flowed, they generally have been controlled by the government.

The Shia clearly are a group with insurgency potential within Iraq. Their proportion of the population and long-standing grievances provide a strong population base for mobilization against the regime. The events of 1991 emphasize this point, with virtually anomic violence with leaders scrambling to catch up. Unfortunately for their cause, however, the attempts at Shia insurgency demonstrate one central point: effective, severe repression can in fact work against an insurgency. The Iraqi regime's willingness to use extraordinarily brutal repressive measures, followed by the granting of some benefits to the Shia populace, thus far has been a successful strategy. It is highly probable that such a strategy will continue to succeed as long as the current regime maintains its other support

bases. A severe weakening of the regime through Saddam's death, military coup or major external shock would likely reignite Shia opposition movements against a government with reduced repressive capabilities. Pending that eventuality, however, the status quo will probably remain.

Endnotes

1. Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

2. For detailed discussions of relative deprivation theories, see Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). Also germane is Davies's "j-curve" theory; all Iraqis faced economic reversals as a result of two disastrous wars after experiencing some earlier economic gains. James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," American Sociological Review 6, no. 1 (February 1962), pp. 5-19.

3. Taylor provides a model of "thin-rational" decision-making in Michael Taylor, "Rationality and Revolutionary Collective Action," in Michael Taylor, ed., Rationality and Revolution (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For an interesting variant of this approach, dealing with the "moral economy" of peasants' demands for the right to subsistence, see James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

4. For the importance of communities in organization, see Craig Jackson Calhoun, "The Radicalism of Tradition and the Question of Class Struggle," in Taylor, ed., Rationality and Revolution.

5. Faleh Abd al-Jabbar, "Why the Uprising Failed," Middle East International 22, no. 3 (May/June 1992), pp. 3-8. Yitzhak Nakash, The Shi'is of Iraq (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 276, offers a similar assessment of the lack of preparation of the leadership for the uprising. Officials within SCIRI publicly provided counterclaims on whether or not the group was supporting the revolt. See Middle East International 395, no. 8 (March 1991), p. 5. A principal Shia opposition leader, Mohammed Bakr Hakim also noted that the revolt was "not an organized act," Washington Post, 13 March 1991, p. A24.

6. The chronology used in this article is based on that provided in Joseph S. Nye Jr and Roger K. Smith, eds., After the Storm: Lessons from the Gulf War (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1992), pp. 342-47. Given the chaos in the area, some dates are approximations, with some authors providing dates that might vary by a few days.

7. Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, 1990-91: The Iraq-Kuwait Conflict and its Implications (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 191.

8. New York Times, 7 March 1991, p. A1.

9. FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service), 18 March 1991, Baghdad Domestic Service.

10. FBIS, 18 March and 19 March 1991.

11. Washington Post, 30 March 1991.

12. Middle East International 398 (19 April 1991), p. 10. Also, Khadduri and Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, p. 193.

13. Ibid., p. 193.

14. Washington Post, 13 March 1991, p. A24; 14 March, p. A1; 26 March, p. A1; 31 March, A1. Witnesses described "hundreds" killed by hanging, including some hanged from tank barrels. Some eyewitnesses reported seeing the motto "No Shiites after today" painted on a number of tanks. US soldiers in the area also described viewing (at a distance) attacks on civilians and treating victims of obvious torture. Opposition sources also claimed that both poison gas and napalm were used against the population (Washington Post, 10 March 1991, p. A1; FBIS, 19 March 1991). US intelligence sources reportedly intercepted messages authorizing the use of gas against the rebels (New York Times, 9 March 1991, p. 1), but there is no credible evidence that gas was used. This may be because of US warnings that the use of gas would result in a US military response (Ibid.).

15. Khadduri and Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, p. 194.

16. New York Times, 6 March 1991, p. A14.

17. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, p. 277. Khadduri and Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, also state (p. 193) that there was some involvement by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the rebellion. Given the normal pattern of operations by the IRGC, however, any involvement by the Revolutionary Guards likely was limited to trainers and perhaps some advisors.

18. Middle East International 399 (3 May 1991), p. 4. Another witness estimated 5,000 bodies in Basrah alone (Washington Post, 20 March 1991, p. A22), while the Iraqi government media reported "hundreds" of bodies (Washington Post, 18 March 1991, p. A1).

19. Middle East International 397 (5 April 1991), p. 5. Other reports put the actual number of refugees as considerably higher, since not all registered with the UNHCR.

20. Tehran Radio claimed that more than 800,000 refugees were hiding in swamps in southern Iraq, Middle East International 399 (3 May 1991), p. 4. Although any numerical figures are suspect, there was a massive inflow of rebel and civilian refugees into the marsh areas as Iraqi forces put down the revolt.

21. Al-Jabbar, "Why the Uprising Failed," p. 10.

22. Bard E. O'Neill, Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1990), p. 27 passim. The physical environment factor will not be given much attention in this article.

23. Figure is based on the 1947 census. Cited in Joyce N. Wiley, The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), p. 9. This compares with 21 percent of Sunni Arabs and 18 percent of Kurds (both Sunni and Shia). Given the accepted higher birth rate of rural Shia, it is probable that the proportion of Shia population has increased since 1947. Most authors accept a current figure of somewhere around 60 percent Shia population, although no confessional data from recent censuses have been released in Iraq.

24. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, p. 17.

25. Ibid., pp. 20-21. In 1900, Iranians constituted an estimated 75 percent of Karbala's population.

26. Ibid., p. 45. For a more detailed examination of the process of conversion, see Yitzhak Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shi'ism," International Journal of Middle East Studies 26, no. 2 (August 1994), pp. 443-63. Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 41, has a similar assessment, stating that "Islam sat lightly on Bedouins."

27. For details, see Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, pp. 57-61.

28. In an almost unique event, joint Sunni-Shia politically-inspired religious ceremonies were held during this period. See Batatu, Old Social Classes, p. 23.

29. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, pp. 236-37, 252-53.

30. For a detailed examination of nineteenth century Iraqi economy, see Batatu, Old Social Classes, pp. 224-56.

31. Ibid., p. 245 (Table 9-3). The Chamber of Commerce had 498 total members, of which 212 were Iraqi Jewish, 87 Shia, 81 Sunni and 43 Iraqi Christian. Since membership was broken down according to capital, it is possible to gauge the relative worth of the members. Of the two highest capital levels, there were 18 Jewish members and only two Shia members. One interesting anecdote illustrates the relative power of the Jewish and Shia merchants. A Lebanese mujtahid on a visit to Iraq in the 1930s noted that Shia merchants visited religious shrines on Saturdays instead of the normal Fridays. The merchants explained that since Jewish merchants were off on Saturdays, the Shia were forced to take their day off at the same time. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, p. 233.

32. Ibid., pp. 276-81 (Table 9-13).

33. Ibid., p. 230.

34. Batatu, Old Social Classes, p. 189.

35. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, pp. 111-12. There is no evidence of a similar campaign among Sunni clerics, likely because they continued to rely on government support for their positions.

36. For details of economic issues affecting Shia, see Batatu, Old Social Classes, pp. 45-50. She notes that some of the richest families in Iraq this century were Shia, but this certainly did not describe the overall economic lot of the group.

37. For details, see Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, pp. 109-32. For a somewhat more positive assessment of Shia integration into the government, see Batatu, Old Social Classes, passim. Although King Faisal brought more Shia into the government, their actual influence remained very questionable. The monarchy recognized this lack of political participation. In an often-cited memorandum of 1932, Faisal quoted a common Shia saying that "taxes and death are for the Shia while government posts are for the Sunni." Even Batatu notes (p. 47) that the highest percentage reached by Shia in ministerial appointments under the monarchy was 34.7 percent, considerably below their percentage of the population. Moreover, the Shia representation in parliament largely consisted of a block of tribal leaders. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, p. 127.

38. Ibid., pp. 109-10. From 1920 to 1927, the ulama banned participation in the government since it was controlled by Great Britain. Although not universally accepted by educated Shia, these rulings created a lag in Shia governmental participation. Even after the ban was lifted, the ulama continued to display distaste for governmental service among Shia, particularly since a number of Shia governmental officials gained the reputation as modernizers and (at least suspected) secularists.

39. Batatu, Old Social Classes, pp. 968, 1086-88.

40. Ibid., p. 1078.

41. Ibid., p. 35.

42. Nakash, Shi'is of Iraq, p. 97.

43. Wiley, Islamic Movement, pp. 16-17.

44. An example was the 1922 conference in Karbala of about 200 Shia leaders who demanded independence, half of the cabinet and government officials to be Shia and jihad against Wahhabi influence from Saudi Arabia. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 19.

45. Ibid., p. 23.

46. Ibid., p. 34.

47. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

48. Ibid., p. 37.

49. Batatu, Old Social Classes, pp. 988-90.

50. One particularly active cleric in this regard was Muhammed al-Khalisi, who had been brought back to Iraq by the British in 1952 as an ally in their anti-communist efforts. He led a group called the "executioners" who attacked any former ally of Qasim as a communist. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 40.

51. Ofra Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'thi Iraq," Middle Eastern Studies 21, no. 1 (January 1985), p. 2.

52. Saddam Hussein, Nadhra fil Din wa al Turath (Baghdad: Dar al Hurriyah, 1978), p. 12.

53. For a selection of such speeches and interviews, see Saddam Hussein, Al Iraq wa al Siyasah al Dawliyah (Baghdad: Dar al Hurriyah lil Tibaah, 1981).

54. As with the ulama in Iran, there was not a unified clerical opposition, however. Some Shia ulama, most notably Ali Kashif al-Ghita, from a family of religious leaders, supported the regime. See Phebe Marr, The Modern History of Iraq (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985), pp. 237-38.

55. Hanna Batatu, "Shi'i Organizations in Iraq: Al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah and al-Mujahadin," in Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 179-80.

56. Ibid., p. 180.

57. Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Islamic Political System, trans. M.A. Ansari (Karachi: Islamic Seminary, 1982), pp. 75-80.

58. Ibid., pp. 80-84.

59. Wiley, Islamic Movement, pp. 31-32.

60. Chibli Mallat, "Religious Militancy in Contemporary Iraq: Muhammad Baqer al-Sadr and the Sunni-Shia Paradigm," Third World Quarterly 10, no. 2 (April 1988), pp. 707-09.

61. Ibid., p. 714.

62. Ibid., passim. Many Shia opposition leaders apparently concluded that they could not independently gain power apart from cooperation with the Sunni, and occasional cooperative sectarian oppositional moves have been made, to include some rhetorical support for the Shia opposition by one of the leaders of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood. The depth of such cooperation remains very subject to doubt, however.

63. For a statistical analysis of these economic trends, see Batatu, "Shi'i Organizations," pp. 183-84.

64. Estimate is from Bengio, "Shi'is and Politicas," p. 3. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 51, uses an estimate of 30,000.

65. Wiley (who tends to be very sympathetic to the Shia's cause) argues that the Shia were engaged in a religious ceremony and that they did not possess arms. She notes, however, the use of anti-regime slogans. However "religious" the assembly, it clearly was also very politicized and virtually guaranteed a government reaction. News reports from the period also suggest the possession of weapons by some of the Shia, although they obviously were completely outgunned by the regime. Islamic Movement, pp. 51-52.

66. Complete text is in Wiley, Islamic Movement, pp. 162-63.

67. There is not space to give any detailed accounting of insurgent attacks. In general, however, attacks that gained some media attention included several purported attempts on Saddam, an assassination attempt against then-Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, which was one of the putative causi belli for the war against Iran and a series of attacks on lower governmental officials. Although obviously difficult to determine conclusively due to the lack of available media coverage, rather than following a traditional guerrilla strategy of attacks on police posts and smaller targets both for training purposes and to obtain arms, the Shia militants concentrated on high-value, high-visibility targets. The danger with this approach is of course that it engenders significant regime response before a guerrilla group can cope with such a governmental counteroffensive.

68. Also known as the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

69. Rend Rahim Francke, "The Opposition," in Fran Hazelton, ed., Iraq Since the Gulf War: Prospects for Democracy (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 153. This book was sponsored by the Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq. Khadduri and Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, p. 189, provide a similar estimate of 65 to 70 opposition groups.

70. Current INC documents are available at http://www.inc.org.uk. The most recent statement from the Central Council (9 July 2000) continues to reflect purely secular goals.

71. The first leadership council consisted of a secular Shia banker, a pan-Arab Sunni, a Kurd and a moderate Shia cleric who opposes an Islamic state. Khadduri and Ghareeb,

War in the Gulf, p. 190. The most recently elected leadership council reflects a similar make up. INC Press Statement, 1 November 1999, http://www.inc.org.uk

72. Since the Ba'ath regime did not release census data dealing with religious sects, the exact percentage of Shia in the military during this period is impossible to ascertain precisely. However, at least during the 1950s, the officer corps was predominantly Sunni Arab while the enlisted corps was mostly Shia (Batatu, Old Social Classes, p. 765). A similar pattern almost certainly existed under the Ba'athists. Even if the Shia were only proportional to their population percentage, they would have comprised about 60 percent of the army. Given the normal rule of thumb that the poor and lesser-educated tend to be drafted in a higher percentage than the more affluent, the Shia probably were even more concentrated in the army.

73. For a survey of Iraqi military failures and successes during the war, see Edgar O'Ballance, The Gulf War (London: Brassey's, 1988).

74. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 64, uses a figure of 40,000 Iraqis, including Kurds, who fought for the Iranians. From other sources, this figure, which she obtained from opposition sources, is almost certainly exaggerated. Marr, Modern History of Iraq, p. 300, estimates a total of 50,000 to 60,000 Iraqis taken as prisoners of war; this would suggest that if Wiley is correct, most of the POW's agreed to fight for the Iranians, a very dubious proposition. Even accepting Wiley's high number of defectors, the active strength of the Iraqi military in 1988 was over 750,000 soldiers. See Anthony Cordesman, "The Regional Balance," in Hans Maull and Otto Pick, eds., The Gulf War (New York: St Martin's, 1989), p. 86. As such, defections were significant, but certainly not overwhelming.

75. For example, see FBIS, 10 April 1980 and 21 April 1980, for linkages drawn between al-Dawah and Iran by the Iraqi government. Baghdad also tried to distinguish (and separate) "legitimate" religious opposition from active political opposition. The Iraqi interior minister noted that "the number of misguided supporters [of the opposition] and religious sympathizers is considerable," while arguing that they were being misled into traitorous activities by Iranian agents. FBIS, 16 May 1980.

76. Abbas Kelidar, "The Wars of Saddam Hussein" (review article), Middle Eastern Studies 28, no. 4 (October 1992), p. 794.

77. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 90.

78. The extent of Iranian propaganda is much too broad to cover in detail. FBIS reports from the time of the Iranian Revolution to the present contain virtually daily Iranian propaganda broadcasts into Iraq. Some changes in the tenor of Iranian propaganda will be discussed later.

79. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 47, and Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics," p. 2. The last move may have been the most unusual for a Middle Eastern country; even in the most secular regimes, recitation of the Quran on government media is almost ubiquitous.

80. Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 142.

81. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 55.

82. Ibid., pp. 160-61.

83. Ibid., pp. 62-63. The higher figure appears exaggerated but the lower figure is almost certainly too low. As of 1980, the government had acknowledged having executed 500 al-Dawah members. A mid-range of about 10,000 would seem credible.

84. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p.48.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., pp. 46-58. Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics," p. 11, cites a total of 100,000 expulsions as of 1985.

87. Wiley, Islamic Movement, p. 51. The exile of Kurds to the south may have backfired on the regime. The Kurds reportedly helped arm and incite the Shia in the 1977 disturbances. Lending some credibility to these reports is that the regime allowed the Kurds to return north shortly after the Shia disturbances. Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics," pp. 3-4.

88. Marr, Modern History of Iraq, p. 303. Unsurprisingly, all the new members, including the Shia, were long-time allies of Saddam.

89. Karsh and Rautsi, Saddam Hussein, p. 168.

90. Ibid., pp. 144-45.

91. One myth that arose at the time among many media reports (and some elements of the government) was that the regime began a major project to drain the swamps of the area to more easily attack the insurgents. During this period there were in fact major engineering projects in the marsh area, but they were part of a long-running (and rather grandiose) project called the "Third River" project designed to increase the irrigated areas of Iraq. Although not directly related to security concerns, this project, which is very ecologically questionable, will almost certainly result in significant population transfers in the area that ultimately might aid in population control.

92. Although the SCIRI has at times stressed the need for oppositional unity, such as Hakim's statement on 26 July 1995 reported by the IRNA, there is very little evidence

that such unity is anywhere near being achieved. More recently, the SCIRI sent a letter to the US State Department promising further cooperation with other opposition groups, but the letter is thoroughly lacking in specifics (Letter dated 27 October 1999, http://www.inc.org.uk).

93. Khadduri and Ghareeb, War in the Gulf, p. 193, claim that members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards fought in southern Iraq during the 1991 uprising. Given the normal employment of Revolutionary Guards abroad, such as in Lebanon, any Guards involved in Iraq likely would have been trainers or advisors, and almost certainly would have been very limited in numbers.

94. Tehran Times, 28 December 1995, and IRNA, 22 November 1995, Internet.

95. Tehran Times, 11 September 1996, Internet.

96. Nasser Ibrahim Rashid and Esber Ibrahim Shaheen, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf War (Joplin, MO: IITI, 1992), pp 417-22. This book, almost certainly "vetted" by the Saudi government, if not actually produced by it, spends more space discussing the dangers of an Iranian-backed Shia government in Southern Iraq than it does condemning Saddam for crushing the rebellion. This view is very typical of the attitudes I heard expressed by other Saudis and is likely the stand of the government.

97. Jacob Goldberg, "The Shi'i Minority in Saudi Arabia," in Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 240.

98. R. K. Ramazani, "Shi'ism in the Persian Gulf," in Cole and Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest, pp. 45-46. Goldberg, "Shi'i Minority," p. 240, provides a figure of 17 killed but sources vary widely on their casualty reports.

99. Goldberg, "Shi'i Minority," p. 240.

100. As early as 6 March 1991, Rear Admiral Mike McConnell, the Director of Intelligence for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, predicted that the southern insurgency would be put down. See New York Times, 6 March 1991, p. A14. Other US intelligence assessments concluded that the Shia insurgents lacked a coordinated operational strategy, good communications and logistical support. See New York Times, 11 March 1991, p. A1. Given more direct support provided by the US to the Kurds, the extent to which such assessments about the Shia was a self-fulfilling prophecy remains an interesting issue.

101. For opposition communiquŽs announcing these attacks, see ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sciri/news. As with previous reporting, the accuracy of these reports is of course subject to considerable doubt. One of the more recent confirmable operations was a failed rocket attack against a Baghdad presidential palace in May 2000, for which SCIRI took credit (http://www.shianews.com).

102. Amnesty International, 23 February 1999, http://amnesty.cupboard.org; Shia News, 22 April 2000, http://www.shianews.com.

103. Amnesty International, 24 November 1999, http://amnesty.cupboard.org. One intriguing, but decidedly unconfirmed, account suggests that the Iraqi government also has stepped up its assassination campaign against opposition leaders abroad, including in Iran. http://Stratfor.com, 20 July 2000.