The Iraqi Ba’ath Party:
Plans to Return to Power, and Recent Activities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With only five months until elections in Iraq, legitimate Sunni representation is sadly lagging behind Shia. To prevent being sidelined by the large, well-organized Shia parties, the Sunni population is in need of a strong advocate. The most experienced Sunnis are former Ba’athists, who face daunting challenges in reentering the political sphere. De-Ba’athification efforts, a growing bitterness towards the Coalition in regards to their present situation, and a large opposition from Shias and Kurds are keeping former Ba’athists, even those guilty of any crime, from having much of an effect on recent politics. Although there has been very little overt political activity by the Ba’ath party, reporting indicates that its former members are still very much in the Iraqi arena, and making efforts to regain the status they previously held.

Since the fall of Saddam Husayn’s regime and the banning of the Iraqi Ba’ath party, the party has splintered into separate movements, each with the similar aim of restoring the political power of the organization, albeit through different means and philosophies. It would be easiest to classify them as two distinct followings – one political and one military, each with different facets within itself. The first one is committed to using the political process to gain influence in the new, democratically-structured government. It is unclear if this following would be content with sharing power in a true democracy, or if they ultimately aim to establish complete dominance. The second, more reported on movement, will use any means necessary to establish complete political dominance in Iraq.

Although the movements are classified as two separate entities, they have the same ultimate goal of returning to power, and do work together, sometimes sharing resources or personnel. The splintering and subsequent intermingling of the Ba’athist movements have complicated efforts to distinguish between former members of the Ba’ath party who seek to recreate the former regime, and those who are willing to participate in the political process peacefully. This ambiguity can be clarified by looking at the origins of the Iraq Ba’ath party. Historically, Ba’athists have operated in secret, and used violence to gain and maintain power. It was through coups in 1963 and 1968 that the Iraqi Ba’ath party initially seized power.

Ba’athists now are likely to follow a two-pronged strategy of supporting and encouraging the insurgency while attempting to infiltrate emerging Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) institutions. Ba’athists hope that fomenting the insurgency will force
an early withdrawal of Coalition Forces (CF). If the IIG or subsequent Iraqi government fail to restore acceptable living conditions, large segments of the Iraqi population could welcome a change in government, creating an opening for a Ba'athist coup. Following a Coalition withdrawal, an upsurge in Ba'athist insurgent and political activities against the Iraq government is likely. The fact that there has been little reporting and no explicit political activity taken by the Ba'ath party supports this view.

(S/NF) The new Iraqi Ba'ath party, under whatever name it reemerges, has been using various outside resources in order to fulfill their objective of returning to power. Between complacency from the Syrian government and open support from the Syrian Ba'ath party, Syria has played a role in the new party's activities. According to a small number of reports, Iran also has provided support the new Iraqi Ba'ath party, usually in the form of weapons and funding. Islamic extremists, who might not normally have anything to do with the socialist Ba'ath party, have been seen to cooperate at least loosely with the Ba'ath reemergence movement in order to conduct attacks.

The Ba'ath party reemergence, whether the side committed to political means or the militant side, will use infiltration as a means to slowly gain power. This is a way to ensure that its members have access to the inner workings of the government, even if the overall movement does not gain widespread support. Ba'athists have already rescinded a prohibition on joining the IIG or security organizations, and directed members to embed themselves in the fledgling Iraqi government in preparation for retaking control. During the May-June timeframe, new members were instructed to seek to obtain positions within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Industry. In April, Fawzi al Rawi, an Iraqi Ba'ath leader in Syria, urged members to use personal connections to infiltrate the government, especially the security forces and military (Defense Analysis Report August 2004). Staff General Talait Abid Gayeb, member of the new Ba'ath party, was instructed by the party to accept the position of Iraqi National Guard (ING) commander in Baqubah, in order to take control of the ING. Reports such as these indicate that the Ba'ath party is positioning itself to possibly stage a future coup and regain their lost control.

Into the Political Arena

Democratic Reform Party

(S/NF) The Democratic Reform Party (variants Hizb al Islah, and Reform and Justice Party / "al Islah Wa Adallah") rejects Saddam's form of Ba'athism, and aims to bring back traditional, pre-Saddam "proper" Ba'athist ideology, using the Syrian Ba'ath Party as a model. This group appeals to older, tribally-connected former Ba'athists from outside Iraq. Its leaders are mainly those who dissented from the Iraqi Ba'ath party and fled to Syria during the former regime. They receive guidance and funding from the
Syrian government, and have professional and familial ties to the IIG. The group was reportedly called the Iraqi National Movement until January 2004.

(U) An article in Iraqi press on 11 September 2004 discussed the reforming of the Ba'ath party into a new organization "The Islah" and its activities in Iraq. A former Ba'athist is cited as having participated in secret negotiations with Coalition Forces, and saying that the Iraqi Ba'athists have begun a reconciliation process with the Ba'ath parties in Syria and Jordan.

(S//NF) As of [_____] 2004, [_____] reestablish the Iraqi Trade Unions Confederation, and [_____] the "Men of Letters Club" in Babil be reestablished to be used as a vehicle to promote Ba'athist philosophy, and as a recruiting ground to gather politically independent persons into the New Iraqi Ba'ath Party. (COMMENT: During Saddam's regime, the "Men of Letters Club" in Babylon was a cultural/literary forum where men gathered to write and appreciate poetry and essays and to discuss philosophy.)
National Front of Iraqi Tribes

Sheikh Hussan Zaydan Khalat al Lihibi, a former Mukhabarat officer and division commander for the Iraqi Army, is the head of the National Front of Iraqi Tribes (NFIT), or “al Jabhah al Wataniyah Li Ahsayr al Iraq.” It is an alias under which the new Ba’ath Party establishes offices in southern areas and gathers former Ba’athists into the party by financially rewarding them. The “al-Diwan” [Tribal House] newspaper is a political daily published by NFIT which serves as a mouthpiece for the new Ba’athist ideology.

Lihibi is offering large amounts of money to join an anti-coalition/IIIG organization, called a Jebha, or “fighting unit” in Arabic (possibly al Jabhah al Wataniyah Li Ahsayr, or NFIT). Financial support is coming from various places, including elements in Syria (NFI).

In mid July, Syrian President Bashar al Asad reportedly asked from Lihibi for a delegation of 20 individuals opposed to the coalition and new Iraqi government to discuss funding for insurgency activities.
The Basrah office of Hizb al Islah is called the Consolidated Front Block of Iraqi Clans, (al Jabha al Mowahhadah Le'ashaer al Iraq, possibly the same as NFIT). Lt General Shakir Jiad al Amara is the head of this office, and Lihibi is associated with the office. Other reports also list al Amara as the head of the Field Officers Group (FOG), and of the Free Officers and Civilians Movement (FOCM). The Baghdad office of al Islah is named Support of the Iraqi Clans, or "Takatuf al A'assha'ar al Iraqiah". Maj Gen Manaf Abd al Hassan Mubarak is the leader of this office, assisted by Fen Abbas al Dulaimi and Falah Mehdi al Bahaj. Other reporting lists Mubarak as the head of the Iraqi Tribal Association (ITA), and Bahaj as the leader of the Basrah office.

In January, al Amara reportedly chaired a meeting of 200 former officers. The intent of the meeting was to identify individuals with military experience who could offer advice in order to help the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC, now the Iraqi National Guard, ING) evolve into an effective force for the defense of Iraq.

Meetings were held in late May and early June, one at the office of NFIT, between representatives of various tribal organizations. The meetings were aimed at creating a united tribal organization to oppose Coalition forces in Iraq. Participants included Sheikh Abd al Sami' Al Ubaydi of the NFIT, who represented al Lihibi; Taib Abd al Karim (probably al Ani, reported leader of Hizb al Islah); and representatives of the Supreme Council of Iraqi Sheikhs, the Presidency of Iraqi Tribes Solidarity, and the Democratic Gathering of Iraqi Tribes, among others. Disagreements over funding and the exact form of political resistance likely contribute to the inability of this gathering to have any real effect; however, due to the connections to the new Ba'ath party present in these organizations, this might be a vehicle of the party to influence large numbers of people.

As of early August, al Islah was reportedly disaffected by the policies and composition of the IIG, but had resigned themselves to the "fact of occupation" that they believed the IIG represented. Consequently, respected senior members of Hizb al-Islah believed the time had come to negotiate their return to Iraq.

Military Side of Ba'ath Reemergence

The military side of the Ba'ath Party reemergence, frequently called the New Regional Command (NRC) (COMMENT: the former Iraqi Ba'ath party was formally called the Iraq Regional Command), is headed by Izzat Ibrahim al Duri, and is the principal actor in the current insurgency. This part of the reemergence is led by older Ba'athists loyal to the former regime who stayed in Iraq and now work clandestinely to support the resistance. It is also the larger, more amorphous, more active of the two reemergence efforts, political and military. This half includes the insurgent group Hizb al Awda (the Return Party) and appeals to the young, those without familial ties to the former regime, Sunni tribes in Iraq, and former Fedayeen Saddam. A meeting held just
prior to the capture of Saddam focused on creating an umbrella structure for the many Sunni groups resisting the Coalition and placing them under the leadership of Jaish Muhammad (NFI). This military movement of the Ba'ath Party considers itself to be at war with the Coalition and IOI. Its stated political goals are the unity of the Arab-speaking nations, liberty, and socialism. A primary aim of this movement was the liberation of Palestine; to this aim was added the liberation of Iraq.

Primary leaders in this Ba'ath Party are Abd al Baqi Abd al Karim al Sa'dun, Muhammad Younis Ahmad al Badrani, and Rashid Kasim Ta'an, each regional commanders in the former Iraqi Ba'ath Party. Fadil Abd al Karim al Mashiadani was deputy to Ahmad, and a former regional commander. Hasan Hashim al Dulaymi, reportedly in Syria, is also part of the command structure.

Abd al Baqi Abd al Karim al Sa'dun

He was also, as of October 2003, one of the reported leaders of the National Iraqi Liberation Front (NILF), an anti-Coalition network that was headed by Saddam. The other leaders in the front were reported as Rashid Ta'an and Khamis al Sirhan al Muhammad. In late September 2003, Saddam sent Sa'dun, whose family holds much influence in the area, to southern Iraq to prevent the export of Iraqi oil, and to maintain relations with Muqtada al Sadr, a militant Shia cleric.

Around February 2004, Sa'dun reportedly went to southern Iraq to organize the new Ba'ath party, and met with Sadr while pretending to be a member of the Mahdi Army. Sa'dun manipulated Sadr into conducting attacks in the south (NFL); however, when Sadr started claiming that all of Iraq supported him, the new Ba'ath party pulled all support. In fact, they issued an order for all members to halt operations while the August fighting was going on in Najaf. The strategy behind this was to allow CP to destroy Sadr; and to avoid the appearance that they support the Mahdi Army.

From 29-31 August, Sa'dun attended an opposition conference in Beirut, Lebanon as the representative of the Iraqi Ba'ath party. Other attendees at the conference, which was funded by France, included Hasan Nasrallah, leader of Lebanese Hizballah, the leader of Syrian Intelligence, a representative from the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), representatives of Sadr, representatives of the Muslim Ulema Council (MUC), among others.

Muhammad Younis Ahmad

Muhammad Younis Ahmad, was born in northern Iraq, lives in Syria, and travels often across the border into Iraq. Not only is he a high-ranking leader in the Iraqi insurgency, but he is also actively involved in the reorganization of the Iraqi Ba'ath party. During the aforementioned meeting just prior to the capture of Saddam, Ahmad assumed duties for local party reconstitution within the Sunni triangle and subsequently initiated the reconstitution in local towns around Diyala Province. Concrete party structure and operations began to surface in May/June 2004, centered on the cities of Tikrit, Fallujah, Ramadi, and Samarra.
On 4 August 2004, Ahmad traveled from Syria to Mosul and met with Subhi al Milliya and Mahmud al Batta' to plan attacks against IPS and Coalition forces. Ahmad is closely associated with various terrorist cells in Mosul, and coordinates with Syria for finances. His groups are responsible for attacks on various government buildings, weapons trafficking, and IEDs. Additionally, his groups recruit youths to follow the Ba'ath party under the flag of Al Awda. Ahmad has also been trying to recruit Ba'athist exiles in Jordan. He and Mahdi al Ubaydi have reportedly been successful in bringing together those Ba'athists who were exiled before the fall of the regime with Saddam loyalists. Ahmad owns the Damascus-based Suqur Company. This company smuggles oil into Syria in exchange for weapons and logistical support. This is possibly done through Dr. Sultan Hamed Suwadie, who manages insurgent activities of the Ba'ath Party Iraqi Chapter from his office in Damascus, including transferring weapons from Syria to Iraq.

Rashid Ta'an Kazim

Rashid Ta'an Kazim is reportedly the leader of Hizb al Awda. This party is very widespread, with members reportedly in Jordan, Syria, Qaim, Diyala, Mosul, Ramadi, and Baghdad. Al Awda, sometimes referred to as the Assassinations Party, is generally reported as an insurgent group, which aims to attack and ultimately remove Coalition Forces (CF), destabilize Iraq, and reestablish the Ba'ath party under a new name. Al Awda members are also to involve themselves in politics under the Awda name in order to garner support and to counter pro-coalition, pro-IIG parties. There is also a reported military wing of al Awda, Jaish Muhammad Fatha's Army, which has united existing anti-Iraq forces in Mosul, but has for unknown reasons denounced the Zarqawi network and al Qaida. Contrasting reporting states that al Awda, formed by Duri, one of the few overtly religious Muslims in the former regime, is an Islamic extremist organization. The leadership of the party might be FRE, but active participants are allegedly primarily Islamic extremists.

Satan Farhan

Satan Farhan is listed as a military commander in the new Ba'ath party. He reportedly commands a branch of the new Ba'ath party called the Islamic Wing, which is composed of Saddam Fedayeen and reinforced by foreign fighters (NFI). He promotes attacks and recruiting in Diyala. He organized the political sector of Diyala into seven groups, none of which were active as of early September 2004 due to surveillance of the members (NFI). Farhan organized special groups to conduct attacks against people cooperating with CF, ING, the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), and the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). Farhan has met with sheikhs in order to garner support for the Ba'ath party. The party in Diyala also allegedly forced the IIP to withdraw from the new government, and intends to disrupt the upcoming elections.
(ISI/NF) According to the New Ba'ath Party is a secret organization in Baghdad, and is supported by Syria. The leaders in this group are all close to Izzat Ibrahim al Duri, the overall leader of the military movement. Leaders include Qays al Qaysi, Thabit al Duri, Awdat Abd al Rahmand Ahmad al Duri (a relative of Izzat), Munir Nuri al Junabi (Awdat’s husband), Sa’d Nuri al Janabi (Munir’s brother), and BG Ra’d Ni’ma al Duri (Izzat’s nephew).

(U) According to a FBIS article from 19 September 2004, Saddam created a secret elite group in 1998, when threat of an invasion seemed sure. This group was intended to carry out guerilla warfare, and is now playing a large part in the insurgency. This group is not linked to al Qaida or Zarqawi, and operates on Arab nationalism and pride.

(ISI/NF) As of late August 2004, Iraqi Ba’ath party leadership was attempting to form a national army in Iraq. This nascent army coordinated with and received support from Muhammad Younis Ahmad. Ibrahim Yusif Turki al Jabburi, a ranking member of the party’s political leadership, appointed Staff Maj Gen Abd al Sattar Aziz Fandi as the commander of the Ba’ath party army in Mosul.

(ISI/NF) A small group of this military aspect of the reemergence is comprised of former Ba’athists living in Jordan, Syrian, and Lebanon. It is led by Izz al Din Muhammad Hasan al Majid, a relative of Saddam, and Raghad Saddam Husayn, Saddam’s daughter. This group provides the resistance with money and ideological support. According to Saddam’s daughter provided 200,000,000 USD to the Ba’ath Party in Iraq to fund insurgency operations.

**Neighborly Help**

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(c)

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SECRET//NOFORN//
Turning to Allah?

(Œ1/NF) It is nothing new for the Iraqi Ba’ath party to use Islam to appeal to a wider audience and to gain more influence. Though under the former regime the law concerning draft political parties forbade the establishment of parties based on religion, the regime was more than willing to use Islam as a source of propaganda. After the Shia uprising in 1991, the regime added the slogan Allahu Akbar (“God is great”) to the Iraqi flag. Party leaders also began to pay deference overtly to Islamic precepts, prefacing speeches with Islamic invocations and liberally adding references to Allah in public remarks. Saddam was more likely in 2001 to invoke statements and examples by the Muslim prophet Muhammad than he was to cite Ba’athism’s founders such as Michel Aflaq—even though the latter remains a venerated icon. Moreover, Saddam directed that the Koran be studied as part of party political indoctrination sessions. Conflicts between the regime and external, as well as internal, opponents are now framed as part of the greater jihad—a buzzword that appealed to the piety of believers but that was unheard in
the 1950s and 1960s. The once-secular Ba'ath Party had turned into, in Saddam's words, "the Party of Faith and the Commander of the Faithful."

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(S/NF) Today, the Ba'ath party is reverting to the same practices of using Islam to further its political goals; along with making strategic alliances with Islamic extremist organizations. Ibrahim Yusif Turki al Jabburi, a prominent member of the party for years during Saddam's regime and one of the most visible figures of the new Ba'ath party, now portrays the Ba'ath party as having an Islamic ideology, although he had never previously been known as an Islamist. Former Regime Element (FRE) insurgents in Samarra are presenting themselves as Salafists to work with the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) in ousting the IIG. A similar situation was occurring in Baqubah, where a majority of the insurgents are former Ba'ath members but took on the appearance of being Salafists in order to garner public support for their destabilization activities. As of mid-August, Ansar al Islam (AI), Ansar al Sunna (AS) and Al Awd were operating in Garwara (MGRS:38SLE6490), with AI controlling and coordinating with the other two groups. All have combined forces in order to conduct attacks. It is assessed that the numerous attacks on MNF on 12 September 2004, for which Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility, were a loosely coordinated effort between FRE and Zarqawi's group. A report that lends support to this assessment, states that multiple insurgent groups - including mujahideen and FRE - planned to conduct attacks in mid-September after a signal from Zarqawi in the press, and agreed to coordinate the attacks to give the impression that they were united (COMMENT: The multiple attacks occurred in mid-September; however, the press release from Zarqawi did not come until soon after the onset). An alliance between FRE and Islamic extremists would serve to pool resources and shore up weaknesses within both sides, such as the lack of indigenous popular support for the Wahabbi side, which the FRE cell does have, and the Wahabbi ability to conduct spectacular attacks (such as VBIEDs) and access to foreign funding, which the FRE cell does not have. Additionally, after CF and ING operations in Tall Afar Ba'ath party members in Mosul began intensively recruiting Islamic extremists to serve as guerillas; volunteers were then sent from Mosul to Tall Afar.

(S/Re) A 9 May 2004 meeting was held between Ba'ath party members, and included representatives from the IIP, the MUC, and Hizballah. The attendants discussed the necessity of unifying their statements regardless of their political agendas. The most important thing was to force America out of the country and punish the US for occupying Iraq. Leading IIP members in Ninawa were present during Ba'ath party meetings in July and August 2004. On 11 August 2004, a group of armed individuals gathered in Baghdad preparing for an attack. The group was comprised of elements of the former Ba'ath party, Kitayab al Ashrin (NFT), Jama'at al Tawhid Wal Jihad (Zarqawi's group in Iraq), and either the IIP or the MUC. Lebanese Hizballah, a Shia Islamist terrorist organization, had intentions to establish a media presence in Iraq as of early September 2004.
According to July 2004 information, the new Ba'ath party has agreed to coordinate financial and human capital aspects of operations with Sheikh Abdullah Janabi from Fallujah (COMMENT: Janabi was reportedly the leader of the Fallujah resistance). In July, an FRE cell in Shifta was collaborating with a Wahabbi cell on the movement and use of ten intended VBIEDs. The FRE cell was led by Abdul Baki, the leader of all Diyala province Ba'athist resistance cells (COMMENT: probably Abd al Baqi Abd al Karim Abdullah al Sa'dun).

The New Regional Command formalized its cooperation with Arab Nationalist and Islamic groups in Iraq through the creation of the Jihad Supreme Command. This group included the NRC, the MUC, Jaish Muhammad, Jihad al Islami, an unidentified Wahabbi group, and Arab nationalist parties. Its first announcement was issued in July 2004, which combined Quranic verses with Ba'athist terminology.

As of early August, disenfranchised former Ba'ath party members formed new alliances under the banner called the Al Wifaq Party. This party preaches anti-Coalition doctrine, and one of its main goals is to develop a pro-Islamic theocratic state, using violence if necessary to remove Coalition forces from Iraq. The NFIT allegedly received significant funding from the Anzi family, which apparently had ties to Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Ahmad Kubaysi (COMMENT: Kubaysi is a known Sunni extremist from Fallujah), the Gulf States, Europe, and the Sunni Hawza (NFI).

As of early August, Ba'ath representatives meet weekly with Sheikh Mehdi Sumayda'i, the leader of the Iraqi Salafist resistance movement. This movement was an umbrella for several groups of differing political or religious motivations and varying degrees of cooperation, including Salafists, groups associated with Zarqawi, and the Ba'ath resurgence movement. Farhan al-Falahi, a member of the National Iraqi Liberation Front (NILF; group headed by Baqi Sa'dun), was one of the Ba'athists to meet with Sumayda'i.

Sunni extremists are not the only Islamists who have dealings with the new Iraqi Ba'ath party. A mid-August conference, titled "Victory of the Iraqi People", was held in Beirut, Lebanon, in which FRE, Lebanese Hizballah, Syrian Ba'ath members, and a Wahabbi group attended. Hassan Zayda Samarai, head of the insurgent group Jaish Tahrir al Iraq (Army for a Free Iraq, possibly the same as Jaish Muhammad), was one of the FRE attendees. This man is also being considered by Lebanese Hizballah to be the Hizballah front person for a media presence in Iraq.
As has been evidenced, the Ba'ath party is currently very active in Iraq, although most of the activity has been clandestine. Only one recent press release, concerning UN Secretary General Koïs Annan’s comments on the legality of the war, publicizes that the Ba'ath party has not disappeared and is indeed still operating. The two sides to the reemergence – political and military – have been seen to work together, as well as with other entities, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of restoring their absolute power.
E.O. 13526, section 1.4(c)
1450-1500  Walk to 1st AD Welcome ceremony site
1500-1610  1st AD Welcome Home Ceremony  
Notes:
(1) Silver Star Awards - 6  
(2) Presidential Unit Citation Award  
(3) Remarks  
(4) Gift Exchange  
(5) Attendees: Ambassador and Mrs Coats; Acting Sec of the Army Brownlee;  
  GEN and Mrs. Schoomaker, Gen Jones, GEN and Mrs. Bell, Minister President  
  Koch; assorted Federal and State German Government officials.  

Dress- Business Suit Military- Class A/Winter Dress Blues  

1610-1645  Post Ceremony Reception  
Notes:
(1) 400 people attending  
(2) No receiving line  

1645-1650  Enroute to Flight Ops building  
1650-1705  Meeting with LTG SANCHEZ  
1705-1710  Enroute to helipad  
1710-1740  Dpt Wiesbaden to Ramstein AFB via UH 60  
Flight time :30 minutes  
1740-1750  Arrive Ramstein load aircraft  
1750-2050  Depart Ramstein enroute to Andrews via C40  
Flight time 9:00 hours  
Time change - 6 hours  
Notes:
(1) Casual clothes enroute  
(2) Meals served enroute  
2050-2055  Arrive Andrews, AFB