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**The Iraqi Opposition:  
Struggling To Make  
a Difference**



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September 1993

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**The Iraqi Opposition:  
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*Intelligence Research Paper*

This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office  
of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis with  
contributions by [Redacted]

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[Redacted] It was coordi-  
nated with the Directorate of Operations, [Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
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**The Iraqi Opposition:  
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**Key Findings**

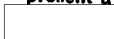
*Information available  
as of 1 September 1993  
was used in this report.*

Iraqi opposition groups are not likely to achieve lasting unity, amass broad domestic support, or develop enough military and political clout to depose President Saddam Husayn or play a dominant role in Iraq after he is gone unless many hurdles can be overcome. After nearly three years of halting progress toward unity, Iraqi dissidents are struggling to articulate a national agenda that goes beyond their stated mutual wish to overthrow Saddam. [redacted] shows that the movement consistently is plagued by divergent goals, personal rivalries, and interference by neighbors—particularly Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. To become a more effective opposition, these groups would have to formulate a program that appeals to a broad array of Iraqis, assuage Arab Sunni fears, and demonstrate an ability to carry out coordinated political and military operations inside Iraq. [redacted]

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Strong Western support, especially for the Iraqi National Congress (INC), has prompted unprecedented cooperation among major opposition groups, raised the opposition's international profile, and enabled it to develop into an instrument of pressure on the Baghdad regime. This support has allowed the INC to achieve some modest initial goals, including antiregime political and propaganda operations. Despite these advances, we believe the many difficulties facing the Iraqi opposition will severely limit its ability to become more than one of many pressures on Saddam's regime or to present a credible alternative to his regime for the foreseeable future.



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The Iraqi opposition movement comprises numerous ethnic, political, and religious groups based principally in Middle Eastern and Western capitals. Most Sunni and Shia opposition leaders have been exiled from Iraq for many years and have little popular support, military capability, or public recognition inside the country. Their ideologies and plans often reflect the national and regional goals of their backers. These backers frequently vie for control of individual groups and for greater influence over the opposition movement as a whole. Since the Gulf war the number of new and splinter groups, individual dissidents, and umbrella organizations has burgeoned, complicating efforts to unite and intensifying competition between sponsors. [redacted]

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Iraqi Kurds, shaped by a long history of resistance to the central government, are the most powerful and organized opposition to Saddam Husayn and have the most cohesive support inside Iraq. That support is ethnic and

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regionally based. The Kurdish groups do not have a countrywide appeal based on a program or ideology. [redacted]

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The Kurds have had some success since the Gulf war in asserting their political autonomy from Baghdad and forming institutions of government and local administration, including a Kurdish legislature, Council of Ministers, and a nominally unified Kurdish opposition front. The primary Kurdish leaders, Mas'ud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, compete with each other for leadership of the Kurds and the allegiance of smaller Kurdish political and tribal groups. [redacted]

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Despite the Kurds' success in asserting their autonomy, their long history of internecine squabbling suggests their unity will remain vulnerable to recurring personal rivalries, interference by Iran and Turkey, and economic and military pressure by Baghdad. The regime's economic embargo of northern Iraq and its impeding of UN humanitarian and security activities there could motivate some Kurdish leaders to break ranks and seek an accommodation with Baghdad to ensure the survival and well-being of their own faction. Moreover, Kurdish unity depends on Western political support and the protection afforded by Operation Provide Comfort and the coalition-imposed no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel. We believe a significant reduction in such support would cause some Kurds, particularly Mas'ud Barzani, to reopen negotiations with the government. [redacted]

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Exiled Arab Shia groups represent a larger percentage of Iraq's population than any other branch of the opposition, but [redacted]

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[redacted] they are highly factionalized, heavily influenced by Iran, and wary of Western intentions and other dissidents. Tehran created the largest Shia opposition group—the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq—headed by Iraqi cleric Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim. Tehran also holds sway over the second-largest group, the divided Da'wa Party [redacted] Tehran provides these and other groups substantial financial, political, and military support as well as access across the Iranian border to Shia areas in southern Iraq. Tehran's [redacted]

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[redacted] support several Iraqi Shia military forces in Iran and maintain contacts with rebel units in southern Iraq. Nevertheless, the Iraqi Shia rebels' lack of unity and military coordination has kept them from advancing beyond small-scale hit-and-run attacks against regime forces. [redacted]

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Tehran's dominance of its Iraqi opposition clients has fragmented the exiled Shia opposition and alienated many Iraqi Shias who, like their Arab Sunni countrymen, fear domination by Iran. [redacted]

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[redacted] many Iraqi Shias oppose the Iranian system of radical Shia clerical rule and resent Tehran's perceived aspira-

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tions to create an Iraqi regime in its own image. Sharp disagreements over the extent to which to submit to Iran's control have split the Da'wa Party.

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Other exiled Iraqi opposition groups are plagued by acute rivalries, divergent agendas, and competition for sponsors. These groups comprise a broad range of secular, religious, political, and ethnic groups based in London, Damascus, and Saudi Arabia. Many of these dissidents began publicly to oppose Saddam during the Gulf crisis and are perceived by many Iraqis and sponsors as opportunists eager to enrich themselves with Western and Arab support. [Redacted] None have a significant following inside Iraq, and we believe they could play important roles in a new regime only if most of the current Ba'hist military and political apparatus is swept away with Saddam. [Redacted]

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Meddling by regional sponsors decreases the chances the opposition can succeed against Saddam. Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia compete for control of individual groups and greater influence over the opposition movement. Although each wants Saddam's downfall, all have expressed doubt that the opposition will achieve enough unity, military strength, or influence to threaten Saddam's hold on power. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Damascus, Tehran, and Riyadh will continue to support the opposition in hopes of toppling Saddam and bringing about a regime more favorable to their own interests, but [Redacted] using Iraqi dissidents to undermine the goals of rival sponsors will be a top priority. [Redacted]

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Saddam's campaign of terrorism, intimidation, and propaganda is a persistent threat to opposition activities inside Iraq and abroad. Iraqi operatives have carried out assassinations and bombings against dissidents in northern Iraq and Jordan. Many Iraqi Arab Sunnis are receptive to Saddam's propaganda that portrays the opposition as traitors and Western lackeys bent on partitioning Iraq. [Redacted] Saddam is showering some Shia and Kurdish tribal leaders with cash, gifts, and weapons in exchange for their support against opposition parties, rebels, and dissident tribes. [Redacted]

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Most exiled dissidents believe the Western-backed INC represents their best chance for unifying and keeping pressure on Saddam. As long as the INC can stay together, we believe it will serve as a thorn in Saddam's side and a rallying point for disaffected Iraqis abroad. It includes most major

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Kurdish, Shia, and independent groups and has made rapid progress toward organizing its leadership and policy committees and articulating a pluralistic, democratic agenda. [Redacted]

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Despite this progress, the INC faces serious challenges to its viability. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Arab Sunnis, Shias, and regional sponsors fear Kurdish aspirations for self-determination and federalism—which are part of the INC platform—will divide the opposition and lead to the fragmentation of Iraq. They say that Damascus, Tehran, and Ankara have pressed their opposition clients to oppose the INC's federalism policy. Arab Sunni and Shia groups seek a more proportionate representation in the INC's Presidential Council and Executive Committee, and some Shias want a more Islamic agenda. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] The INC has taken steps to assuage regional concerns about the Kurds and to include more Shias and Sunnis, but [Redacted]

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[Redacted] such measures have not eliminated these contentious issues and suggest they will provide a continual underlying source of tension. [Redacted]

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Saddam's ouster—if and when it comes—is likely to find Iraqi oppositionists still arguing over basic issues and unable to implement a coordinated plan for a post-Saddam government. A sustained period of unity before Saddam's departure would help the opposition build credibility abroad and influence inside Iraq, but it has a long way to go to develop the political and military muscle necessary to make it a viable political entity. The struggle for power that would emerge in Iraq makes it unlikely that Saddam would be succeeded by the kind of pluralistic, parliamentary, democratic government envisioned by the INC. [Redacted]

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Opposition competition for power in a post-Saddam regime could contribute to protracted instability in Iraq. In a worst case scenario, opposition demands, rivalries, and military moves could increase domestic tensions or lead to violence that a new and possibly weaker regime would find difficult to control and eventually cause a partitioning of the country—at least temporarily—into ethnic and sectarian enclaves. Despite the stated intent of almost all opposition leaders to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, their demonstrated lack of coordination would limit their ability to stem widespread unrest. [Redacted]

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The complete disintegration of Iraq is not inevitable. International economic pressure, fear of losing Western support, and fear of domination by Iraq's neighbors could help prevent a slide into chaos. Some opposition leaders, particularly those with strong domestic constituencies like the Kurds, could play important roles in post-Saddam Iraq. [Redacted]

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**Scope Note**

This paper deals only with Iraqis who have announced themselves as oppositionists and operate in exile. The Iraqis who are most likely to topple Saddam are those close to him in his regime, security forces, or the Iraqi military. Consideration of these oppositionists [Redacted] [Redacted] is beyond the scope of this paper. [Redacted]

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Figure 1  
Shia and Kurdish Majority Areas, September 1993



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**The Iraqi Opposition:  
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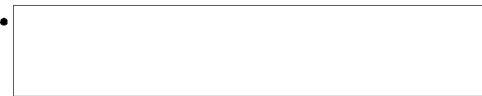
Since the Gulf war, Iraqi opposition groups have enjoyed broad international attention and Western support in their struggle to overthrow the regime of President Saddam Husayn. Baghdad's weakness and strong Western backing of the dissidents have allowed them to organize and carry out antiregime political and propaganda operations. Several factors have given impetus to the opposition movement:

- The Kurds control territory inside Iraq, giving the opposition a domestic base for their political, propaganda, and possibly military operations against the regime.
- The Turks have provided the Iraqi opposition with access to northern Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have given individual groups a regional base of operations in their respective capitals.

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- UN sanctions keep Saddam's regime isolated.
- Baghdad's repeated defiance of UN demands and Saddam's diplomatic and military miscalculations help keep international pressure on Baghdad and sustain foreign interest in the opposition.
- Operation Provide Comfort has deterred the Iraqi Army from crushing the Kurds and eliminating northern Iraq as a base of operations for the opposition.
- The Iraqi military has been unable to crush the low-level insurgency in the south or eliminate the many clandestine Shia opposition cells that emerged after the Gulf war.
- Low morale among Iraq's regular Army troops causes a small number of defections to the opposition in northern Iraq and allows the opposition, particularly the Kurds, to collect intelligence through disgruntled Iraqi soldiers.

In part as a result of these factors, the opposition, under the auspices of the Western-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC), has made unprecedented progress toward unity over the last year. The INC has weathered numerous attempts by neighboring states to manipulate it or gain overall control of the opposition. INC unity and strong Western support have helped individual groups, especially the Kurds, to spurn Baghdad's overtures. Western—particularly US—support has included financial aid, frequent meetings between opposition representatives and senior Western officials, media attention to the opposition's plight, and Western political pressure on Middle Eastern states to receive INC delegations. Saudi and Kuwaiti decisions to receive such delegations have bolstered INC hopes that other governments in the region will follow suit. Efforts by Baghdad to discredit, intimidate, or eliminate INC leaders suggest that Saddam considers the group a nuisance and is trying to remove potential threats from the organization.



- Iraq's economy is worsening along with the public mood, stirring popular anger against Saddam's regime.

Despite these advances, the Iraqi opposition must overcome numerous hurdles before it can present a significant challenge to Saddam. After nearly three

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years of conferences, committee meetings, group mergers, and soliciting foreign support, Iraqi opposition groups are still trying to agree on and implement a unified agenda that goes beyond their wish to overthrow Saddam Husayn. The opposition broadly consists of three groups—Kurds, Shias, and independent nationalists—who are at least tactically committed to cooperation against Saddam, especially under the auspices of the INC. Competing political, ethnic, and religious agendas; personal rivalries; and meddling by foreign sponsors—particularly Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia—impede progress toward unity, hinder the establishment of coordinated political and military efforts against the regime, and prevent the growth of credibility in the opposition among the Iraqi populace.

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**Many Groups With Divergent Goals**

The Iraqi Kurds have the most powerful and politically organized opposition to Saddam Husayn inside and outside Iraq. They are the least assimilated major ethnic community in Iraq, have a long history of opposition to the central government, and are the only group to obtain any autonomy from Saddam's Ba'thist regime. A review of their actions over the past two years indicates that the Kurds have tried to take advantage of their de facto autonomy since the Gulf war to build Kurdish unity, broaden foreign support, reorganize Kurdish government—including the formation of a Kurdish legislature and Council of Ministers—and revive their economy and culture.

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The two main Kurdish opposition groups, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have a long history of rivalry. KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani and PUK chief Jalal Talabani have often differed on their goals for Iraqi Kurdistan and on how to deal with Baghdad and foreign sponsors:

- Barzani [redacted] has only recently begun to cooperate more closely with the West.

**Table 1  
Major Iraqi Opposition Groups at a Glance**

Group	Leaders	Description
<b>Kurdish</b>		
Kurdish Democratic Party	Mas'ud Barzani	Kurdish, tribal
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan	Jalal Talabani	Kurdish, socialist
Unity Party of Kurdistan	Sami Abd al-Rahman Mahmud Ali Uthman Mulahsim Shiwan	Kurdish, socialist
Kurdish Tribal Society	Jawhar Husayn Surchi	Kurdish, tribal
Kurdish Communist Party	Aziz Muhammad	Kurdish, Communist
<b>Shia</b>		
Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq	Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim	Arab Shia
Da'wa Party	Muhammad Mahdi al-Asifi	Arab Shia
Islamic Action Organization	Muhammad Taqi Mudarisi	Arab Shia
Jund al-Imam	Abdallah Shirazi	Arab Shia
Iraqi Hizbollah	Haytham Mahfuz	Arab Shia
<b>Independent/Nationalist</b>		
Independent Iraqi Alliance	Talib al-Shabit Hasan al-Naqib	Independent, Sunni, Shia
Iraqi National Union	Iyad al-Alawi Salah al-Shaikhly	Independent, Sunni, Shia
Free Iraq Council	Sa'd Salih Jahir	Independent, secularist
Iraqi Socialist Party	Mubdir al-Ways	Independent, socialist
Ba'th Party	Mahdi al-Uhaydi	Nationalist
Iraqi Free Officers' Movement	Hasan al-Naqib	Arab Sunni, nationalist
Iraqi National Turkoman Party	Muzafir Arslan	Independent, Turkoman

Over the years he has turned to Iran, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, Syria as his primary backers.

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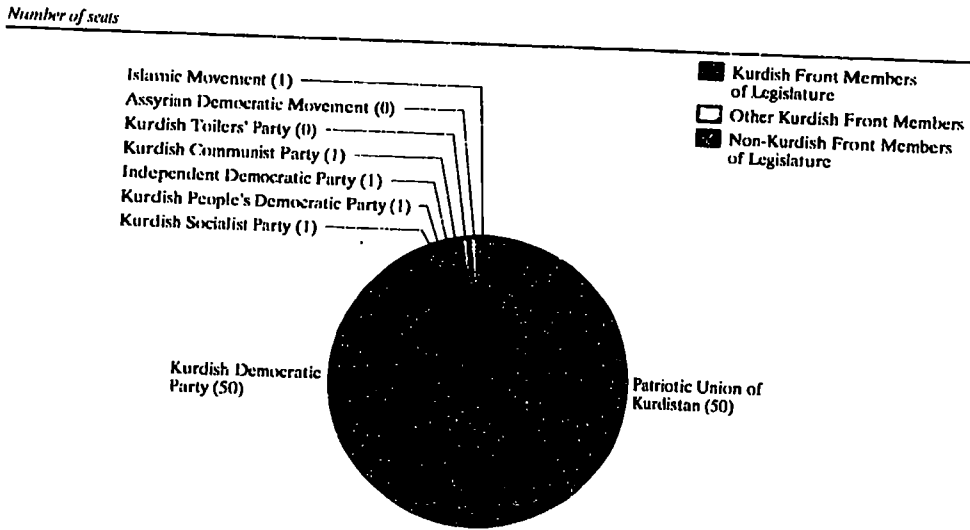
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**Figure 2**  
**Iraq: Kurdish Front Members and Their Place in the Kurdish Legislature**



Note: The Kurdish Front, founded in 1988, comprises the Kurdish Democratic Party, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Kurdish Communist Party, Kurdish Socialist Party, Kurdish People's Democratic Party, Kurdish Toolers' Party, Assyrian Democratic Movement, and Independent Democratic Party (Basok). Of these eight groups, only the first two won enough votes in May 1992 to qualify for seats in the Kurdish legislature. None of the remain-

ing six netted more than 4 percent of the vote, well below the 7 percent minimum agreed on before the election. Nevertheless, after the election, Kurdish leaders agreed to expand the legislature from 100 to 105 seats and gave a seat to four of the remaining Front groups, as well as one to a non-Kurdish Front group, the Islamic Movement.

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At a press conference in August 1993, Barzani did not rule out the possibility of talks with the Baghdad regime, if conditions warranted.

\* Talabani is well known for his more cosmopolitan, Westernized, and leftist orientation.

[Redacted] Barzani has shown a greater readiness than Talabani to deal directly with and accept support from Saddam [Redacted]

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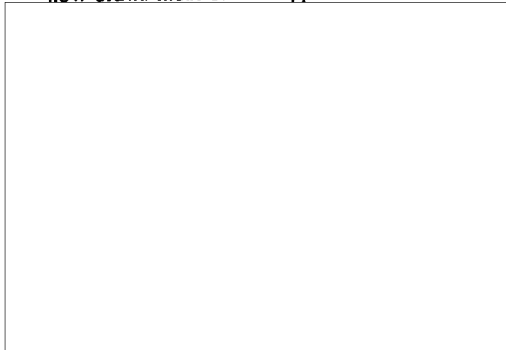


Figure 3. Iraqi Kurds vote in Kurdish-run legislative election, May 1992.

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Before the Gulf war he moved between Syria and Iran as his primary backers, but he now draws most of his support from the West.



We believe Barzani's and Talabani's willingness to cooperate with each other against Saddam is due in large part to strong Western support and protection. The presence of Provide Comfort forces in Turkey since the Gulf war has helped them sustain unprecedented political unity and expand Kurdish autonomy and enabled them to spurn repeated Iraqi offers to break with the rest of the opposition and negotiate a new autonomy agreement. Their cooperation has given them significant leverage with less powerful and less organized opposition blocs, making them the most effective players in the Iraqi opposition movement.

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Kurdish unity is symbolized by the eight-group Kurdish Front, which oversees most Iraqi Kurdish political, military, and economic matters in northern Iraq. Barzani and Talabani hold sway over the Front by virtue of their leadership of the two most powerful Kurdish rebel forces. Their strong control occasionally frustrates the smaller groups in the body, some of which merged in 1992 to increase their leverage in Kurdish affairs. The effort has been unproductive, and some of the smaller groups have now aligned themselves with one of the two main parties.

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Most Iraqi Shias oppose the regime of Saddam Husayn. Iraqi Shia discontent is rooted in centuries of religious and political differences with Iraq's minority Arab Sunni Muslims, who traditionally have dominated the government and military, plus years of political disfranchisement and harsh repression by Saddam. The Shia opposition comprises diverse exile groups based in Iran, Syria, and London, as well as many small, indigenous Iraqi rebel cells known mainly through announcements of their activities in Iran-based opposition press reports and broadcasts. The three largest and most politically active Iraqi Shia groups are the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an umbrella organization founded by Iran in 1982 and headed by Iraqi Shia cleric Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim, the Da'wa Party of Muhammad Mahdi al-Asifi, and the Islamic Action Organization led by Muhammad Taqi Mudarisi. All are staunchly anti-Saddam, and all are based in Tehran. Most Iraqi Shia groups support the coalition-imposed no-fly zone over southern Iraq as a first step toward protecting them from Saddam.

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These groups advocate a UN-sponsored security zone in southern Iraq to provide Iraqi Shias relief from government ground attacks and Baghdad's economic blockade.

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The Shia factions find more to divide them than unite them, including the nature and orientation of a post-Saddam regime. Infighting, factionalism, and Iraqi repression have kept the Iraqi Shia opposition from building unified support inside Iraq.

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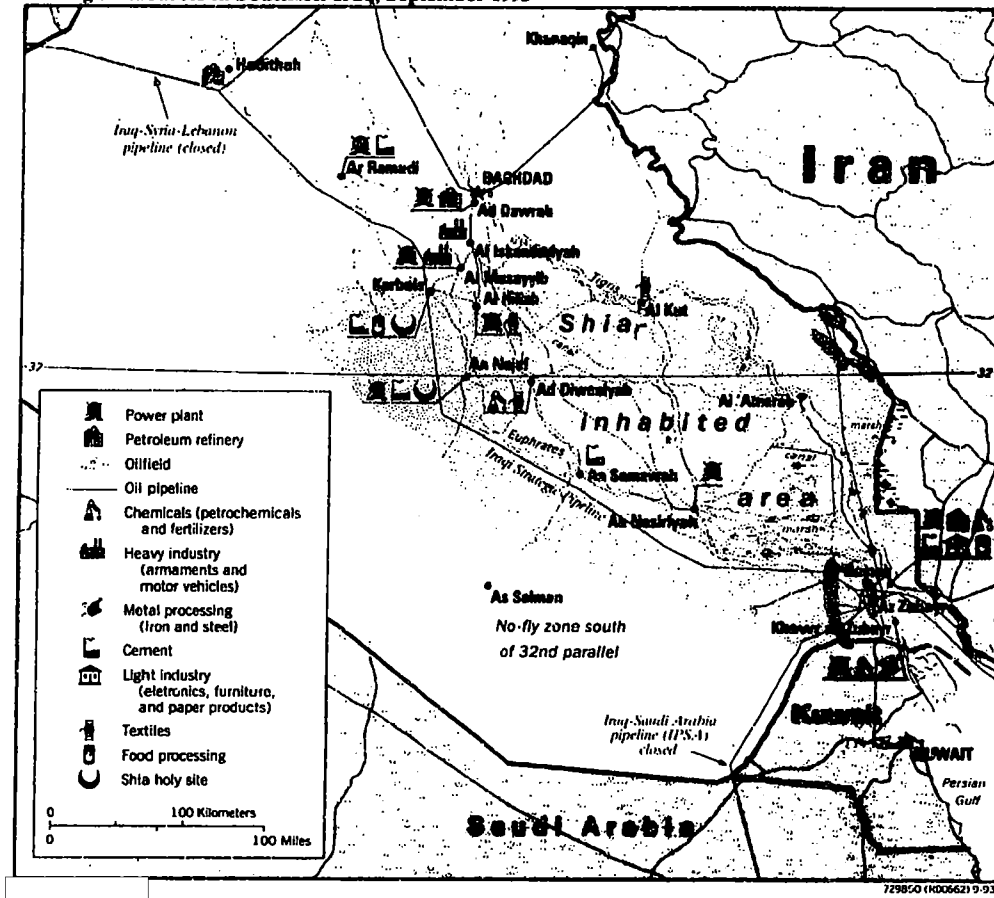


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Figure 5  
Strategic Resources in Southern Iraq, September 1993



Unlike the Kurds, Iraqi Shias control no territory inside Iraq. Most rebel activity is now limited to small-scale, hit-and-run attacks against Iraqi troops, convoys, and water diversion projects in the marsh areas, which are encircled by government forces. The Iraqi Army controls all major cities and roads, oil resources, and industries. The coalition-enforced no-fly zone below the 32nd parallel has not prevented government shelling and burning Shia villages and efforts to dry the marshes. Attempts to drive rebels out of the marshes also displace civilians and destroy their fishing- and agriculture-based livelihood.

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**Figure 6**  
**Selected Iraqi Opposition Groups: Divergent Interests and Agendas**

Strong  Moderate  Weak

	Constituency		Political, Religious, Social Orientation					Support for Key Issues	
	Sunni Muslim	Shia Muslim	Tribal Orientation	Secular	Islamic	Democratic/Patriotic	Socialist or Marxist	Kurdish Federalism	Territorial Integrity of Iraq
Kurdish Democratic Party	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Unity Party of Kurdistan	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Kurdish Tribal Society	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Da'wa Party	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Iraqi Hizballah	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Islamic Action Organization	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Jund al-Imam	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Independent Iraqi Alliance	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Iraqi National Union	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Free Iraq Council	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Iraqi Socialist Party	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Ba'th Party	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Iraqi Free Officers' Movement	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Kurdish Communist Party	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong
Iraqi National Turkoman Party	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong

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The traditional aim of some of these Tehran-based groups to establish an Iranian-style Islamic government in Iraq has cost them the support of many nationalistic and secular Iraqi Shias, as well as support among Kurdish and Arab Sunni opposition groups. Many Iraqi Arab Shias share their Arab Sunni countrymen's deep-rooted and oft-repeated fear of Iranian domination and have publicly stated that they prefer a united Iraq free of Iranian influence.

exiled Iraqi Shias have repeatedly stressed their Iraqi nationalism and independence from Iran despite their reliance on Iran as their primary source of support and safehaven. The persistent divisiveness among Shia factions helped Baghdad to crush the uprising in southern Iraq after the Gulf war and has since prevented Shia insurgents from organizing more than small hit-and-run attacks against regime forces there.

The third broad category of Iraqi oppositionists, **nationalists and independents in exile**, comprises a wide array of groups and individuals from divergent backgrounds, most of whom have been out of Iraq for many years. This category includes individual Arab Sunnis and Shias, Kurds, Islamic activists and secularists, former Ba'thist officials and military officers, businessmen, and intellectuals. Although some of the individuals have public recognition, contacts, or small followings inside Iraq, none have the sizable support enjoyed by the major Kurdish and Shia groups.

many Iraqis view these groups and individuals as opportunists interested primarily in enriching themselves with Arab and Western support.

Many of the nationalists and independents in exile began to publicly oppose Saddam's regime only after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Most are based in London, Damascus, or Riyadh and have representatives elsewhere in Europe and the United States.

Several of the smaller groups and individuals have merged in hopes of increasing their leverage and effectiveness in the opposition movement. The Free Iraq Council, Independent Iraqi Alliance, and Iraqi National Union were formed from such mergers. Many of the groups

were part of the London branch of the Joint Action Committee founded in Syria in December 1990.

The Joint Action Committee was overshadowed by the INC, whose Western backing has given some of these exiled oppositionists prominent roles alongside senior Kurdish and Shia leaders.

**Vulnerable to Fragmentation**

Personal rivalries among oppositionists, differing ideologies, and ethnic differences inhibit the coalescence of the factions into a powerful force against Saddam. Organizations like the INC have tapped successfully the widespread and deep-seated hatred of Saddam to bring most of the opposition factions together under one roof. Divisive factors slow the INC's progress toward establishing and promoting a clear strategy for Saddam's removal and replacement.

Some leaders have a long history of rivalry, and the advent of the INC has sparked competition among others. Kurdish leaders Mas'ud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, for example, have competed for most of the last three decades for dominance over the Iraqi Kurds. Over the years their relationship has been marked by periods of uneasy cooperation against the Baghdad regime bounded by intense competition and military conflict between their Kurdish supporters. Several times during the Iran-Iraq war, Barzani and Talabani each sided with Saddam's regime against the other. The resurgence of the Kurdish Front and formation of the INC have led to unprecedented cooperation between the two, but the seeds of renewed competition are not far below the surface. Barzani and Talabani maintain separate political and military entities within the Kurdish Front, cultivate their own ties to foreign sponsors, and compete for the support of smaller Kurdish groups.

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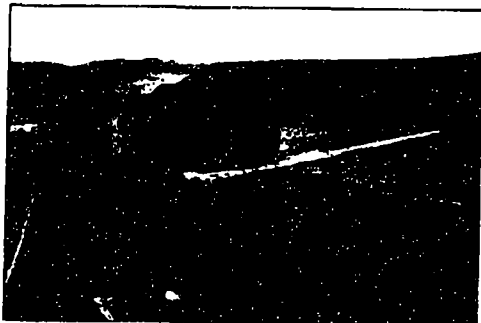
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**Personal Rivalries Hinder Kurdish Military Unity**



Kurdish peshmerga fighters training on a 1950s vintage 106-mm recoilless rifle, their most effective antitank weapon.



Kurdish recruits training at the United Peshmerga camp near As Sulaymaniyah for special duty as bodyguards for Jalal Talabani.

Competing loyalties and equipment shortfalls are likely to hinder Kurdish efforts to establish a unified military.

[Redacted] will face the challenge of:

slow progress in building the force, but overall control of the recruits still rests with individual Kurdish opposition leaders.

- Shifting allegiance away from individuals and groups to the institution.
- Operating effectively between two rival Kurdish leaders whose strong inclination will be to compete for influence over the force.

• Forging a unified force out of many rival locally based militias. For example, [Redacted]

[Redacted] in November 1992 [Redacted] militia leaders were unwilling to cede control of their troops to an apolitical united Kurdish force.

[Redacted] The Kurds have since made

The militias now possess little more than light weaponry, and Kurdish leaders will appeal increasingly to the West, particularly the United States, for military and logistic support.

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The growth of the opposition movement since the Gulf war has intensified the competition for personal power among dissidents. A prime example of this is Ahmad Chalabi, whose aggressive leadership of the INC has been a recurring source of controversy. Chalabi is a wealthy London-based dissident.

[Redacted] He is chairman of the INC Executive

Committee and is its former spokesman. He coordinated and drafted the INC's platform and is largely responsible for its early successes in organizing and balancing many competing agendas.

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**Kurdish Federalism: Sowing the Seeds of Separatism**



Popular sentiment for an independent Kurdistan runs deep in some areas of northern Iraq. A member of Jalal Talabani's PUK in As Sulaymaniyah proudly displays a homemade wheel cover showing the Kurdish flag and a map of greater Kurdistan.

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The Kurdish legislature voted in October 1992 in favor of a separate Kurdish state within a federated Iraq. The idea appears popular among Iraqi Kurds, many of whom are reluctant to abandon traditional Kurdish aspirations for full independence. Jalal Talabani is a longtime proponent of Kurdish federalism but has been pushing his ideas more forcefully since 1990. He has said publicly that past Kurdish autonomy agreements with the central government failed to address the Kurds' national and territorial claims or to adequately consider their unique ethnic and cultural status in Iraq. He supports Kurdish self-determination within a united Iraq and an ambiguously defined "federal" relationship with the central government. KDP leader Barzani has also championed the idea since the Vienna meeting of the Iraqi National Congress in June 1992, but he defines federalism

as an enhanced version of the 1970 Kurdish-Iraqi autonomy agreement.

Although Barzani shows less enthusiasm for federalism than Talabani, he argues the Kurds must take advantage of their leading role in the Iraqi opposition to expand their autonomy and has said that he fears the Kurds will be forgotten or betrayed soon after Saddam is gone. Some of Talabani's and Barzani's statements about federalism appear to leave the door open for a later shift toward independence.

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Kurdish federalism has been a volatile issue in the INC and is likely to be a future source of opposition strife. Jalal Talabani obtained INC endorsement of his position in June 1992, but only after he pledged the Kurds would not secede from a united Iraq. About 45 percent of the representatives at the INC Vienna conference opposed Talabani's views, and the issue was a source of contention at subsequent INC gatherings in northern Iraq in September and October 1992.

In a tactical compromise to keep the issue from dividing the fledgling INC, the Kurds toned down their federalist rhetoric in late October. The Kurds agreed to officially postpone INC consideration of the issue until a post-Saddam referendum could be taken in exchange for a guarantee that other opposition groups would "respect" the Kurds' right to determine their future relations with the rest of the country.

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Despite the compromise, we anticipate that achieving and extending a federal system will remain a top Kurdish priority. Kurdish leaders have been careful to publicly declare their consent to remain

Throughout the first year of the INC's

existence, Chalabi's detractors complained that his leadership was discouraging Iraqi domestic and foreign support and alienating some independent

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*within a united, federated Iraq, but they continue behind the scenes to seek opportunities to press their federalist demands and to probe regional and international reactions to greater Kurdish independence.*

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*To keep pressure on fellow dissidents, Mas'ud Barzani in late 1992 appeared to leave the door open to Saddam's offer to implement a "federal" system in northern Iraq if the Kurds sever ties to the rest of the opposition. Barzani publicly rejected Saddam's offer but asked Saddam to specify his terms.*

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*Despite the Kurds' and INC efforts to reassure outsiders of their commitment to the unity of Iraq, neighboring states and key oppositionists have voiced suspicions that the Kurds will push for full independence from Iraq. The INC compromise did not mollify Iran, Syria, or Turkey, whose foreign ministers have met several times over the last year to discuss developments in northern Iraq and to coordinate their efforts to counter Iraqi Kurdish and INC moves. The issue remains a source of tension between Ankara and Iraqi Kurds despite growing ties. The issue played a part in Ankara's decision in 1993 to renew political ties to Baghdad by sending a charge back to the Iraqi capital. Renewed Kurdish emphasis on the subject could hasten Turkey's termination of Provide Comfort II. SAIRI, the Islamic Action Organization, and other Shia groups are also wary of the Kurds' intentions and have warned that the issue will remain a threat to opposition unity.*

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oppositionists. The controversy came to a head just before the third INC meeting in northern Iraq in February 1993, at which time a new spokesman was elected to help lower Chalabi's profile and

silence his critics.

Nevertheless, Chalabi remains chairman of the Executive Committee, and his background and leadership style will continue to be a source of tension between INC members and a convenient target of criticism from other dissidents, regional governments, and Saddam's propagandists.

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Other opposition leaders

are examples of personal ambition and competition among dissidents:

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many see the opposition movement more as a vehicle for personal aggrandizement than a crusade against Saddam.

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Differing ideologies hinder the coalescence of the various factions into a powerful force against Saddam. Divergent secular and clerical viewpoints have been a source of contention at numerous opposition meetings, including those held by the INC. Shias participating in INC conferences in northern Iraq have acquiesced to the body's policy statements that minimize Islamic interests and emphasize democratic ideals, suggesting some have moderated or temporarily shelved traditional hopes for an Islamic state in Iraq. Many Shia oppositionists, particularly the Da'wa Party and the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), have strong religious aspirations and have pushed hard for a more Islamic agenda [Redacted]

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Possible future efforts to press the INC more forcefully for religious concessions could deepen Shia differences and further undermine opposition unity. Many exiled Iraqi dissidents regard SAIRI leader Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim as the premier Shia leader because of his longstanding leadership of the largest Iraqi Shia umbrella organization. Other Shias—both inside and outside Iraq—resent his close ties to Iran's radical clerical regime, and some will look to other prominent Shias, particularly the more moderate London-based Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum or the eventual successor to the late Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Kho'i, to represent their interests [Redacted]

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Kurdish advocacy of self-determination and a Kurdish state within a federated Iraq will continue to be a stumblingblock for the opposition over the medium and long term. Kurdish self-determination and federalism are part of the INC platform, but criticism by opposition members and neighboring states forced the INC to shelve discussion of these ideas soon after its founding [Redacted]

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Some Arab Sunni and nationalist groups backed by Syria and Saudi Arabia continue to boycott the INC to protest these policies and formed small umbrella groups to rival

[Redacted]

Despite the Kurds' assurances that they do not intend to secede from Iraq, other opposition groups and regional sponsors continue to express suspicion that Kurdish federalist rhetoric masks a deeper intent to pursue full independence that would lead to the partition of Iraq.

[Redacted]

Ethnic and sectarian suspicions between dissidents are a source of fragmentation. Friction between Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, Sunnis, and Shias are deeply rooted in Iraq, and relations among opposition groups are marred by these historic tensions. The INC has faced serious disagreements over proportional representation of its constituent groups. The most serious confrontation occurred over Shia complaints of underrepresentation in the Presidential Council and Executive Committee.

[Redacted]

SAIRI temporarily suspended its membership in early 1993 until the INC expanded Shia membership on the Executive Committee. The compromise may have temporarily assuaged Shia concerns about underrepresentation, but Shia representation in the INC remains far below the percentage of Shias in Iraq's overall population. The oft-repeated demand of Da'wa and SAIRI for a greater share in opposition decisionmaking shows that the issue is far from resolved [Redacted]

Other ethnic and religious groups are fighting for a greater say in the opposition. Arab Sunni nationalists based in Syria are withholding support for the INC because of its stance on Kurdish self-determination [Redacted]

To attract Arab Sunni support inside Iraq, the INC in February 1993 added several Sunnis to its Executive Committee. Muzafir Arslan, head of the Turkey-backed Iraqi National Turkoman Party and member of the INC Executive Committee, has voiced similar concerns about underrepresentation of Turkomans in the INC [Redacted]

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(b)(3) [redacted] and hinted he would pull out if Turkoman representation were not expanded.

**Hindered by Meddling Sponsors**

The diverse goals of sponsors in the region have sparked competition for control of individual groups and greater influence in the opposition movement, reducing the chances for unity, coordinated action, and success against Saddam. Syria's and Iran's longtime provision of support and safe-haven to many exiled groups has bought them varying degrees of influence over the agendas and activities of their respective clients. Since the Gulf war, Saudi Arabia has also tried to woo and control opposition clients, but [redacted]

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[redacted] Riyadh has succeeded only in further fracturing the movement. These sponsors have attempted to manipulate or undermine the INC, and Syria and Saudi Arabia formed rival umbrella organizations that they can control. All three have said their involvement with the opposition is motivated by a wish to bring down Saddam, but [redacted]

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[redacted] They appear more interested in using the opposition to advance their own interests and thwart those of rival sponsors:

- As Baghdad's longtime principal Arab rival, Syria's intent is to replace Saddam with a regime of Ba'thist military officers or Arab Sunni nationalists sympathetic to Damascus [redacted]

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[redacted] Damascus fears an opposition victory led by other elements would contribute to Iraq's disintegration and create several unstable and possibly hostile entities on its eastern border. Syria competes with Iran for influence over Iraqi Shia groups to broaden its sway over the opposition movement as a whole.

- [redacted] Iran's primary aim is to use its Iraqi Shia clients and its contacts with Iraqi Kurds to

gain influence inside Iraq, particularly in a post-Saddam regime. Tehran has tried to lure Iraqi Kurdish opposition leaders into cooperating against Iranian Kurdish dissidents based in northern Iraq. [redacted]

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[redacted]

- [redacted] Saudi Arabia's involvement with the opposition is aimed at ensuring the continuation of Arab Sunni rule in Iraq and preventing the fragmentation of the country—which could leave a large, Iranian-backed Shia enclave on Saudi Arabia's northern border. [redacted]

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**Syria**

Until the formation of the INC, Syria was a leading sponsor and main base of operations for many opposition groups. The principal beneficiaries of Syrian support [redacted]

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[redacted] have been Sunni Arab nationalist groups such as the Iraqi Ba'th Party, Iraqi Free Officers' Movement, and a handful of former Iraqi officials, all with past ties to Iraq's ruling elite. [redacted]

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Syria's influence over opposition affairs reached its peak with the formation of the Damascus-based Joint Action Committee in late 1990, but its zenith was short lived. Despite several unity conferences, which included many of the groups that now make up the INC, the committee became mired in ideological differences and failed to agree on a unified

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**The Joint Action Committee: Failure To Form a More Perfect Union**

The Joint Action Committee of the Iraqi Opposition, founded in Damascus in late December 1990, was the first serious effort by Iraqi opposition groups to forge a common political program and present an alternative to the regime of Saddam Husayn. [redacted]

[redacted] The group's 18 charter members included most of the major Kurdish, Arab Sunni, Shia, and independent Iraqi opposition groups. The group's five-member executive body included representatives from the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Da'wa Party, Iraqi Communist Party, Ba'th Party, and Kurdish Front. A London-based branch of the committee, formed in January 1991, included members from the original 18 groups, but it quickly expanded to include more independent groups and individuals. [redacted]

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From its inception the Joint Action Committee was hampered by many of the problems that traditionally have rendered the Iraqi opposition ineffective. The Damascus-based branch was dominated by Syria, which continually struggled with Iran for control of the organization's agenda and the loyalty of Iraqi Shia groups. Competing political interests, factional bickering, personal squabbles, poor leadership coordination, a scarcity of Arab and Western support, and a general inability to agree on a plan of action also hindered the group. The Kurds' decision in mid-1991 to accept Baghdad's offer to negotiate a new autonomy agreement put their participation in doubt, angered Damascus and other committee members, and dealt a major blow to the group's unity. [redacted]

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The focal point of the committee's manifesto was a call for Saddam's overthrow and replacement with a liberal, democratic Iraqi government. The committee also advocated establishment of an interim national unity government, an end to all forms of repression, and implementation of a host of political, religious, and human rights. Three subsequent conferences in March, June, and December 1991 succeeded in expanding the committee's membership to 25 groups and forming numerous subcommittees, but they did not progress far beyond the group's original platform. [redacted]

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By late 1991 many dissidents were becoming increasingly frustrated with the committee's inability to agree on an agenda and plan of action. In early 1992, Ahmad Chalabi and other London representatives began planning a conference to enhance opposition unity, elect new leaders, include more opposition groups and individuals, and formulate a new agenda. The conference in Vienna in June 1992 created a new organization, the Iraqi National Congress, effectively ending the Joint Action Committee and dealing a serious setback to Syria's efforts to control the Iraqi opposition. [redacted]

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agenda. Moreover, an effort by Kurds—key players in the group—to reach a separate autonomy deal with Baghdad in the spring of 1991 dealt a serious blow to the committee's unity efforts. [redacted]

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[redacted] Syrian competition with Iran has fractured some groups. [redacted]

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Despite the Joint Action Committee's failure, Syria remains active in trying to manipulate the opposition movement. [redacted]

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Damascus has tried to use its influence with Da'wa, the Ba'th Party, and Communist groups to obstruct INC efforts to unify.

Frustration over its failure to control the INC, opposition to INC support for Kurdish federalism—which it fears would hasten Iraq's fragmentation—and disappointment over a general loss of influence to Western sponsors prompted Damascus in early 1993 to sponsor a small rival organization headed by its own clients, according to press reports.

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Damascus remained openly hostile toward the INC even after Tehran began encouraging its Shia clients to join and after Riyadh received an INC delegation. Repeated efforts by INC leaders to win Syrian support have failed.

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Damascus continues efforts to cobble together a broad-based umbrella group led by pro-Syrian Ba'thists.

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**Iran**

Iran's extensive support for Tehran-based Shia groups gives it significant influence over the policies and military activities of these groups and leverage in their relationship with the rest of the Iraqi opposition.

Iran as the single largest provider of aid to exiled Iraqi Shia opposition groups and to rebel groups operating in southern Iraq. Iran provides these groups with financial, political, intelligence, and military support as well as training and access to Shia areas of southern Iraq for subversive operations:

- The Supreme Assembly, Da'wa Party, and Islamic Action Organization are the primary beneficiaries of Iranian safehaven and support.

- Iran also provides limited support to some Damascus- and London-based Shia groups, primarily factions of the Da'wa Party.

Tehran's influence with these groups has been a source of recurring friction between them, but most Iraqi Shia groups lack the necessary outside funding or alternative means of gaining access to southern Iraq to enable them to act independently of their Iranian sponsor.

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In a tactical move to improve ties to Baghdad, the INC, and the West, Tehran recently has tried to play down its control of the Iraqi Shia opposition and has reduced support to the Shia rebels operating in southern Iraq. Since the failure of the Iraqi Shia uprising in 1991—during which Iran openly sent aid and Iranian personnel into Iraq—Tehran has focused on giving covert aid.

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Despite efforts to keep a low profile, Iran's influence over Iraqi Shia groups remains strong.

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We believe Tehran's encouragement of Iraqi Shia groups to increase their involvement in the INC is aimed at helping Iran maintain influence.

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in opposition affairs and to monitor the West's involvement with the INC.

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[Redacted]

Even while it is encouraging its clients to cooperate with the INC, Iran has signaled its willingness to restrict their activities to suit its political purposes.

[Redacted]

Iranian officials' opposition to the US and coalition presence in the region is motivating them to cultivate ties to Kurdish opposition leaders to monitor US and Kurdish intentions, to lure opposition leaders away from the West, and to increase Iran's influence over Kurdish affairs in northern Iraq.

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[Redacted]

The officials promised humanitarian aid and economic assistance in exchange for Kurdish cooperation

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[Redacted]

**Saudi Arabia**

Since the Gulf war, Riyadh has tried repeatedly to woo opposition clients from other regional and Western backers and to sponsor opposition gatherings to gain more direct control over the movement.

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Other Saudi efforts have contributed to the opposition's lack of unity and effectiveness. In April 1993, Riyadh sponsored a new London-based umbrella organization called the Iraqi Central Committee for Dialogue and Followup.

The committee comprises a handful of independent groups and Saudi- and Syrian-backed former Iraqi officials and nationalists—most of them Arab Sunni Muslims.

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**Dependent on Western Support**

Many Iraqi oppositionists are looking to the INC as the best vehicle for achieving unity, but we believe the Congress's success in attracting members and forging a consensus is in large part because of its strong Western backing and does not indicate that the members will adjust their divergent goals for the sake of long-term cooperation.

[Redacted]

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Western support of the INC was crucial in the decision of Iran to allow groups under its control to attend INC gatherings in northern Iraq.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed discussion of the history, strengths, and weaknesses of the INC.

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# POOR QUALITY PAGE



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factional maneuvering, backbiting, and competition for foreign support.

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There are several reasons for the attraction of these divergent groups to Western support. Western financial and political support provides many Iraqi dissidents an alternative to meddling regional sponsors. Since the Gulf war, several groups and individuals who formerly depended heavily on regional sponsors have weakened old ties and drawn closer to the West. Jalal Talabani, Mas'ud Barzani, Hasan al-Naqib, and some London-based independents are among those who have decreased their dependence on Syria and Iran in pursuit of Western support. Western backing has given these and other dissidents unprecedented access to senior Western officials, international media, and Middle Eastern governments. The opposition has achieved levels of cooperation under the Western-backed INC that far exceed previous halfhearted attempts by Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia to unify them. Moreover, Western backing gives opposition groups a legitimacy that they have not achieved inside Iraq. If and when Saddam's regime falls, Western support and pressure on a successor regime could help some Iraqi oppositionists play a role in shaping the post-Saddam government that they could not have hoped for under limited regional sponsorship.

Kurdish leaders, at the risk of damaging INC unity, recently hinted they may restart negotiations with Baghdad unless the United States increased assistance to the Kurds, according to press reports. Saddam's continuing propaganda that the INC is merely a Western puppet will reduce its credibility among some Iraqis.

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**Lacking Credibility Inside Iraq**

A significant obstacle to the opposition's making a difference inside Iraq is its general lack of a broad popular following there. Aside from the Kurds, most other opposition groups have no sizable or unified support in Iraq.

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many Iraqis, Sunni and Shia alike, have little regard for opposition elements outside the country. Most exiled Iraqi dissidents have not been in Iraq for many years and

have little influence or public recognition there. Many groups claim to have broad contacts with and pledges of loyalty from Iraqi military officers and units, but there is no indication that any of these contacts has resulted in significant antiregime operations.

[Redacted]

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Domestic support for the opposition is lacking among Iraq's Arab Sunnis, who control the government, Army, and security services.

Saddam has made a priority of protecting elite Arab Sunnis—particularly in the security services and senior

Current levels of Western support for the INC have enabled it to build unity, raise its international profile, and help it become a political and propaganda nuisance for Saddam. In our view, this support is insufficient to enable the group to achieve its goals of overthrowing Saddam Husayn and installing a democratic, pluralistic government in Baghdad. Even if Western support were substantially increased, the INC would face formidable political, military, and propaganda challenges from Saddam. Moreover, the INC would have to overcome the strong internal differences and outside pressures that have rendered the opposition feckless and which persist despite Western backing. Disagreements over basic ideological issues make progress toward a unified agenda slow and arduous. Many Iraqis and regional sponsors view the exiled dissidents as opportunists who engage in

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### **A Historical Perspective on Regime Changes in Iraq**

Iraq has undergone at least seven major power shifts and numerous failed coups since it gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1932. Most changes have been violent, and all have been instigated by the military—either unilaterally or in concert with Iraq-based political leaders. In contrast, no opposition group based outside the country has effected a political change inside. Several coups inspired or supported by neighboring states have similarly failed. Even the Ba'th Party, which was founded outside Iraq, took 25 years and one failed coup to build a well-organized clandestine political network inside Iraq and recruit the key military and political figures necessary to make a successful play for power in 1968. Many Iraqis and regional observers believe the absence of known and respected military officers in the ranks of the Iraqi opposition will be a major hindrance to the opposition's success. A brief survey of the military's involvement in political change in Iraq supports this conclusion:

- In October 1936, Gen. Baqr Sidqi led a military coup that brought leftist reformers into the government and set the precedent for military involvement in Iraqi politics.
- Less than a year later a cabal of Arab nationalist Army officers assassinated Sidqi, removed the leftists from the government, and gradually returned to power the promonarchy politicians who had previously governed Iraq.
- In April 1941 a coup by nationalist military officers led by former Prime Minister Rashid Ali forced the UK-backed regent and pro-UK politicians to flee Iraq. Within a month, UK troops reestablished control, Rashid Ali and his generals fled to Iran, and many of his supporters were jailed or executed.
- In July 1958 a small group of Army officers, led by Abd al-Karim Qasim, revolted and assassinated the young King, the regent, and longtime Prime Minister Nuri al-Said.
- In February 1963, Qasim was killed in a military coup led by moderate Army officers and the Ba'th Party. A non-Ba'thist Abd al-Salam Muhammad Arif was appointed president.
- Nine months of bitter infighting between moderate and radical Ba'thist factions eroded the party's control of the government. In November 1963, Arif, backed by a group of moderate Army officers, seized control and ousted the Ba'thists in Iraq's first bloodless coup.
- In July 1968 a group of young officers collaborated with the Ba'th Party to overthrow the Arif government. Non-Ba'thist officers who participated in the coup were ousted in turn by their Ba'thist coconspirators, led by Gen. Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Husayn.

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ranks of the military—from the worst of the hardships of life in postwar Iraq. Saddam has succeeded in playing on his Sunni constituents' fears that the opposition is only a front for Western efforts to partition the country and destroy the Arab Sunni heartland. Such propaganda would play an even more important role in rallying Arab Sunni support behind Saddam if an opposition with a large Kurdish and Shia representation increased its ability to threaten the regime.

### **Challenged by Iraqi Countermeasures**

Saddam is using his pervasive security services to eliminate or intimidate dissidents at home and abroad. Iraqi intelligence has a reputation for carrying out brutal, little-disguised assassinations to

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frighten potential dissenters. Baghdad is suspected in several grisly assassinations of Saddam's opponents in Amman, Jordan during 1992.

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protecting him from coup plots over the years, and every plot that is thwarted increases his aura of invincibility and the ability of the services to deter other would-be plotters.

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Iraqi operatives have carried out several bombings and assassinations of opposition figures in the north and attempted numerous other bombings.

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Other attempts by Baghdad to undermine Kurdish dissidents or separate them from the rest of the opposition include:

Saddam works against the opposition by employing well-practiced propaganda and public relations schemes to win the loyalties of Iraqis at home.

[Redacted]

many of Saddam's Sunni constituents approve of his harsh repression of Shias and Kurds—whom they believe would do the same to Arab Sunnis if given the chance.

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- Dispatching emissaries to Kurdish leaders with offers to restart autonomy negotiations and to implement "federalism" in Iraq.

[Redacted]

**Outlook**

- Maintaining an economic embargo, conducting terrorism against UN relief convoys, and canceling the 25-dinar note, which accelerated deterioration of the Kurdish economy.

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[Redacted]

Difficulties in sustaining unity and conducting large-scale coordinated operations make it unlikely that the Iraqi opposition by itself will force Saddam from power.

[Redacted]

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Kurdish militias and Shia rebels are adept at small hit-and-run attacks on isolated regime targets, but they are no match for the larger, better trained, and better equipped Iraqi military. Even during the Kurdish and Shia uprisings in 1991, when the government was at its weakest, the rebels could not hold territory in the face of coordinated regime

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Saddam's security services have been effective at

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counterattacks. An opposition plan to encroach on government-held territory or attack major cities such as Mosul, Karkuk, or Al Basrah would alarm the Arab Sunni heartland and cause many Sunnis to rally behind Saddam. Many Shias, who comprise the majority of the rank and file of Iraq's regular Army, would be swayed by Saddam's argument that an opposition victory would divide the country and lead to foreign domination. [redacted]

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Nevertheless, some opposition groups, particularly Iraq-based Kurdish and Shia rebels, could add to the pressures on Saddam and contribute to his downfall by sustaining low-level insurgencies that drain regime security resources and erode military morale. [redacted]

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[redacted] Large numbers of officers and soldiers deserted or defected to the opposition during the uprisings in 1991 and some would do so again, although we believe the opposition exaggerates the extent of its contacts and support in the Iraqi military. The INC has the potential to keep political pressure on Saddam by lobbying foreign governments, highlighting Iraqi human rights abuses, and increasing contacts with disaffected Iraqis, particularly military officers. [redacted]

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Strong Western political and financial support will be crucial if the opposition is to sustain even fragile unity, increase pressure on the current regime, or play a role in a post-Saddam government. Independent and nationalist groups and individuals based outside Iraq will depend on Western support to give them a level of prominence, leverage, and recognition in the opposition and the region that they would otherwise lack. Without such backing, squabbling and competition for sponsors would increase and leave many of these groups more exposed to manipulation by Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. [redacted]

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Kurdish opposition groups, whose territorial holdings, domestic support, political unity, and comparative military strength make them critical to the success of the INC, are particularly vulnerable to

any decrease in Western support or protection.

[redacted] the Kurds view Operation Provide Comfort and the coalition-enforced no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel as essential to keep Saddam from launching a major offensive to retake Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Iraq. We believe on the basis of past behavior that without such protection Kurdish unity would quickly degenerate, and some Kurdish leaders would seek an accommodation with Baghdad to forestall reprisals, protect their interests, and preserve a measure of Kurdish autonomy. Iraqi Kurds probably would receive little help from Turkey in keeping Saddam at bay once Operation Provide Comfort ended. Turkey fears that Kurdish federalist rhetoric will lead to independence and fuel greater separatism among its own Kurds.

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**Shaky Transition After Saddam**

Despite strong Western support and progress toward unity, Saddam's ouster—if and when it comes—could find exiled Iraqi oppositionists still arguing over basic issues. Once Saddam is gone, a principal point of opposition unity—hatred of him—would cease to exist. Deep-rooted ideological differences and personal rivalries would be likely to resurface and hinder the opposition's ability to implement a coordinated plan for a post-Saddam government. If Saddam were deposed in a military coup, some opposition groups or leaders would try to make separate deals with a new regime to protect their own interests, often at the expense of erstwhile allies within the opposition movement. [redacted]

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A sustained period of opposition unity before Saddam's ouster would help to gain some recognition among Iraqi citizens, but it might still leave the opposition with an enormous domestic credibility problem if it were not the agent of his fall.

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Many Iraqis would continue to view most of the exiled dissidents, particularly those who waited until the Gulf crisis to take a public stand against Saddam, as opportunists and traitors. To relieve these suspicions, opposition members would have to formulate an agenda that appeals to a broad array of Iraqis and assuages Arab Sunni fears that an opposition takeover would threaten their lives, families, and fortunes. They also would have to demonstrate an ability to carry out coordinated political and military operations inside Iraq that would discredit the ruling Tikriti elite, attract popular support, and help dispel the predominant perception that they are divided, ineffectual, and controlled by foreign interests. [redacted]

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Few if any post-Saddam contenders, either from the current Baghdad establishment or from among exiled oppositionists, would have the broad popular support to rule uncontested. Considerable time could pass before a strong leader emerged or rival leaders came to a political and military accommodation. In a worst case scenario, competition between rival ethnic groups and their associated opposition parties could quickly sharpen, contribute to domestic tensions or violence, and lead to a temporary partitioning of the country. We believe many Kurds hold traditional aspirations for independence and would push strongly for Kurdish self-determination in a post-Saddam Iraq. Iraqi Shias resent years of harsh Ba'thist repression, and Saddam's departure probably would unleash a wave of revenge attacks and bloodletting. In the event of a coup against Saddam, a weak central government or a divided military would face serious difficulty in quelling a rebellion on the scale of the domestic unrest that occurred during the Kurdish and Shia uprisings in 1991. If a new central authority could not extend its control over the north and south, a de facto partitioning into ethnic and sectarian enclaves could occur. Despite the stated intention of most opposition leaders to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, their difficulty in sustaining unity and coordinating their activities would limit their ability to contend with widespread violence. [redacted]

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Regardless of the circumstances of Saddam's departure, the political disintegration of Iraq is not inevitable, because there are strong regional political forces and domestic social and economic factors that could help prevent a slide into chaos. No opposition group would want to risk losing Western and regional support. The difficulty of sustaining an isolated, landlocked Kurdish state among hostile neighbors probably would temper Kurdish demands for independence. Fear of subversion, intervention, or domination by Iraq's neighbors—especially Iran, Turkey, and Syria—would be strong motivation for opposition factions to seek a political settlement with the new regime that preserved national unity. [redacted]

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It is unlikely that Saddam would be succeeded by the kind of pluralistic, parliamentary, democratic government promised by most INC members. Even if a successor military regime survives the chaos of the immediate post-Saddam period, movement toward a representative form of government is likely to be protracted and arduous at best. Opposition leaders most likely to participate in a post-Saddam regime would be those with sizable domestic support, namely the Kurds and Shias. Although Mas'ud Barzani, Jalal Talabani, and Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim would be the main candidates, many less important opposition figures and tribal leaders with local support would also vie for influence with the new regime. Many of the long-exiled dissidents probably would have a chance of participating only if the opposition helped precipitate the regime's downfall and if a large number of current Ba'thist and Tikriti political and military leaders were swept from power along with Saddam. [redacted]

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**Appendix A**

**The Iraqi National Congress:  
The Opposition's Best Hope**

The Iraqi National Congress (INC) has made more progress in its first year than any Iraqi opposition umbrella group toward building unity and articulating a pluralistic, democratic national agenda. The organization has weathered repeated efforts by regional opposition sponsors and rival dissidents to undermine its unity, has succeeded in keeping key Kurdish and Shia groups in its ranks, and has made visible progress toward organizing its leadership and policy committees. Nevertheless, the INC faces serious challenges to its viability, including lack of support from Iraq's neighbors, low credibility inside Iraq, persistent internal squabbling and competing interests, and ineffective coordination among key leaders. [redacted]

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The INC was founded in Vienna in June 1992 by a group of 150 mostly London-based and Kurdish dissidents. One of the prime movers behind the conference was Ahmad Chalabi, former head of the London Joint Action Committee, who played a key role in organizing the meeting, crafting its agenda and final communique [redacted]

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The delegates elected a 17-member Executive Committee and agreed on a final statement that called for Saddam's overthrow and pleaded for increased Western support and media coverage of their plight. These initial successes were overshadowed by other contentious issues. Damascus, Riyadh, and Tehran kept the Sunni nationalist and Shia groups under their control away from the meeting, detracting from INC unity efforts. The Kurds, particularly Jalal Talabani, caused a stir by pressing hard for INC recognition of the Kurds' right to self-determination—a right that the group recognized only after the Kurds agreed not to secede from Iraq. [redacted]



Figure 8. Soon after the founding of the Iraqi National Congress in June 1992, Congress leaders visited Washington to lobby for support. The delegation, shown outside the White House, included (left to right) Laith Kubba, Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum, Salah al-Shaikhi, Mas'ud Barzani, Arif Abd al-Razzaq—no longer an INC member—and Hushyar Zihari, assistant to Mas'ud Barzani. Not shown, but also in attendance, were Jalal Talabani and Barham Salih, Talabani's representative in the United States. [redacted]

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Subsequent INC conferences improved the group's organizational structure and made progress toward unity, but the group encountered stiff regional opposition and internal struggles. Four meetings have been held on Iraqi soil—an unprecedented opposition accomplishment—under Kurdish protection:

- A conference in September 1992 of 100 delegates reaffirmed the liberal, democratic principles set forth in the Vienna meeting. Syria and Iran, apparently concerned about further loss of influence within the opposition, directed their respective Arab Sunni and Shia clients to attend the meetings, enabling the INC to significantly

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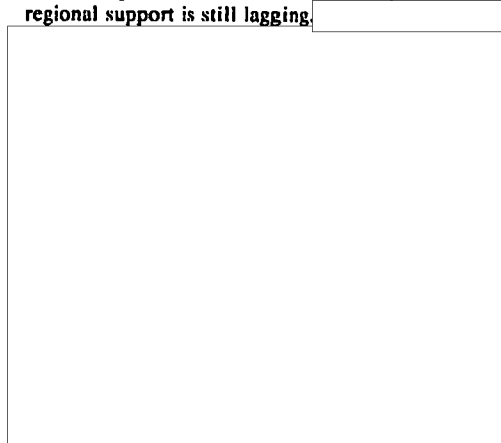
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expand its membership and begin debate on the percentage of each party's representation in the organization.

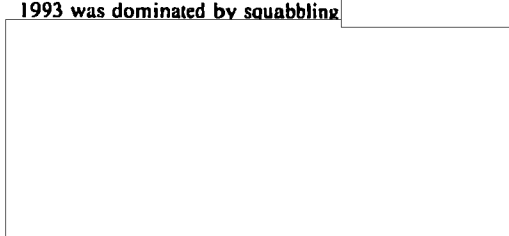
- The next meeting in late October 1992 elected leadership bodies and attempted to settle the contentious issues of Kurdish federalism and ethnic representation. The delegates elected a three-man Presidential Council comprising Kurdish leader Mas'ud Barzani, London-based Shia cleric Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum, and Arab Sunni and former Iraqi Gen. Hasan al-Naqib. They also created a 300-member General Assembly and expanded the size of the Executive Committee to 26. Syrian-backed groups that attended the first meeting in northern Iraq renewed their boycott of the INC over the issue of Kurdish federalism. Despite the small size of these groups, their absence highlighted the INC's lack of appeal to Arab Sunni elites in Iraq. Iranian-backed Shia groups attended, but they complained bitterly about Shia underrepresentation in the Presidential Council and Executive Committee. Shia leader Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim declined a position in the presidential troika. The conference officially postponed discussion of the issues of Kurdish federalism and self-determination until a referendum could be held in a free post-Saddam Iraq.
- Several problems arose soon after the October conference. Syria and Iran quickly criticized the meeting, which did little to assuage their concerns about Kurdish and Western domination of the opposition. Damascus, Tehran, and Ankara soon organized a series of ministerial-level meetings to discuss the issue under the broad heading of developments in northern Iraq. Tehran-sponsored groups loudly criticized the INC for continued refusal to increase Shia representation. Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) anger over the issue led it to suspend its membership in January 1993. INC members and critics began increasingly to criticize INC spokesman and Executive Committee chairman Ahmad Chalabi. Some charged his sordid background and self-serving leadership style hindered INC credibility and engendered personal squabbles.

- The third conference in northern Iraq in February 1993 sought to put some of these issues to rest and succeeded in making modest gains. A compromise was reached on the issue of underrepresentation, whereby the Executive Committee was expanded by five members, including one Shia and two Sunnis. Two seats were left vacant in hopes of attracting Damascus-based Iraqi nationalists to rejoin. A 25-member Advisory Council was created to include members who were upset at having been excluded from other leadership bodies. To silence INC critics and reduce infighting, conference leaders replaced Ahmad Chalabi, the INC's controversial spokesman, with the lesser known Arab Sunni Salah al-Shaikhly.

- The INC's international credibility got a boost in April 1993 when the Presidential Council was received by senior US and UK officials, but regional support is still lagging.



- A fourth INC meeting in northern Iraq in August 1993 was dominated by squabbling.

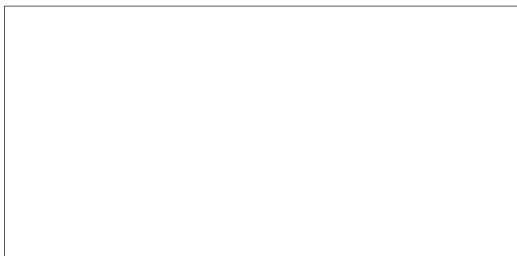
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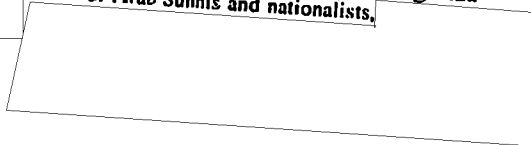
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For example, Arab Shias still compose less than 26 percent of the Executive Committee, far below the 60 to 65 percent of Shias in Iraq's overall population. Neighboring states are wary of INC intentions or are openly hostile. Syria and Saudi Arabia have formed rival, albeit weak, organizations of Arab Sunnis and nationalists.



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Despite its successes, the INC faces formidable obstacles in its push for unity and credibility

the group lacks sizable support among Iraqi Arab Sunnis. After a shaky start, SAIRI reaffirmed its participation in the INC, but the issue of representation remains a point of contention for Shias, Sunnis, and some smaller ethnically based groups.

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**Appendix B**

**Iraq's Dissidents:  
Who They Are and  
What They Want**

**Kurdish Groups**

**Kurdish Democratic Party**

The KDP is the oldest, best known, and largest Iraqi Kurdish opposition party. It was founded by Mullah Mustafa Barzani in 1946 and gained prominence during the Kurdish rebellion in the 1970s. After Mustafa's death in 1979, he was succeeded as KDP leader by his sons Idris—who was killed fighting Iraqi forces in 1987—and Mas'ud. Mas'ud Barzani heads a five-man Politburo that formulates KDP policy and manages the daily administration of the party. The Politburo oversees a 17-member Central Committee that helps formulate policy and manages the party's bureaus and local rebel and support networks. The party is headquartered in Sulah ad Din, Iraq.

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The KDP's primary support inside Iraq traditionally has been among rural, conservative tribal Kurds in the mountainous areas north and northeast of Irbil. The KDP's strong showing in the Kurdish election in May 1992—it received 45 percent of the vote—suggests it has growing backing among city dwellers, unions, and professional groups in areas traditionally dominated by the rival PUK.

[Redacted]

Barzani tried in 1991 to negotiate an autonomy agreement with Baghdad after the Gulf war, drawing strong criticism from other opposition groups and regional sponsors and leading to deep divisions in the Kurdish Front.

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By early 1992, Baghdad's refusal to compromise on major issues, its economic embargo of the Kurds, and opposition from other Kurds to a compromise discouraged Barzani from pursuing further negotiations.

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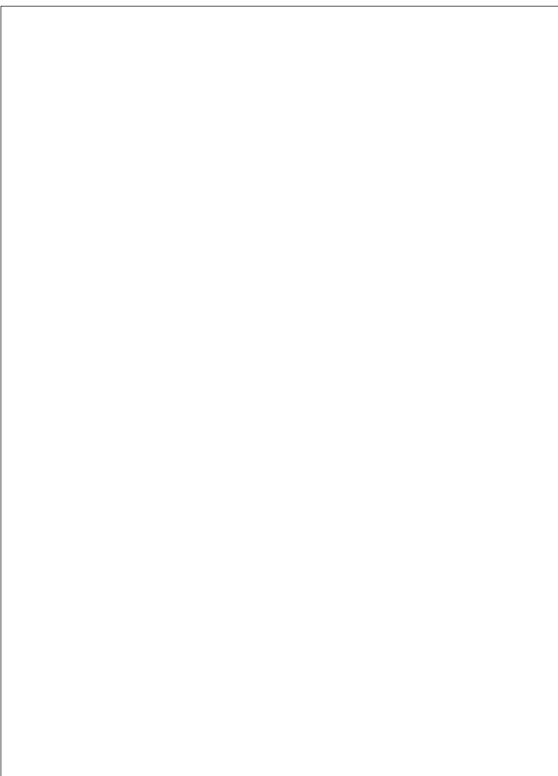
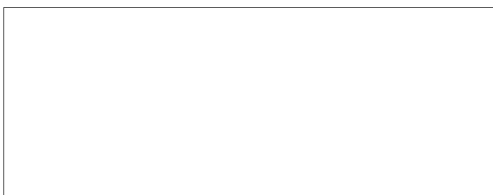
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Barzani has moved to strengthen ties to the West and improve his leadership position in the opposition. The KDP traditionally had received the bulk of its outside support from Iran and Syria. Since the breakdown of autonomy talks with Baghdad in 1991, Barzani has joined Jalal Talabani in pursuing closer ties to Turkey and the West. Barzani participated in the formation of the Western-backed Iraqi National Congress in June 1992 and has accompanied Talabani and other Iraqi opposition representatives on tours of Western and Arab capitals to garner support. He plays a leading role in INC efforts to unify the opposition and organize INC activities based in northern Iraq. In addition, he has moved closer to Talabani by advocating the notion of "federalism" for Kurdistan within a united Iraq.

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**Patriotic Union of Kurdistan**

The PUK, the second-largest Kurdish opposition group, is headed by Jalal Talabani, who has been prominent in the Iraqi Kurdish movement for three decades. Talabani served under Mullah Mustafa Barzani in the early 1960s but broke away in 1964 to form the Kurdish Revolutionary Party. In 1975 this group joined another Kurdish party called the Iraqi Marxist Komalah Party to create the PUK. Talabani, a onetime Marxist, has largely dropped his socialist rhetoric—in part to attract more Western support—but still advocates "social democracy" in Iraq. Before the Gulf crisis, the PUK received most of its support from Syria. The group now depends on Western governments but maintains uneasy ties to Syria and Iran.

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city dwellers and Kurdish intellectuals, although the upheaval of the Gulf war appears to have shifted and blurred traditional lines of support. For example, Kurdish election results showed Barzani has much support in traditional Talabani strongholds, whereas Talabani was strongly backed by many Kurdish tribal leaders in his opposition to Barzani's conduct of the Baghdad autonomy talks.

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The PUK's headquarters is in Shaqlawah, Iraq, and its traditional area of operations is in southern and eastern Kurdistan. Kurdish election results show PUK support to be strongest in the cities of As Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Karkuk. More than the tribal-based KDP, the PUK has appealed largely to

Since the Gulf war, Talabani has aggressively advocated Kurdish self-determination. He opposes Kurdish autonomy as defined by the 1970 Iraqi-Kurdish autonomy agreement and instead favors a vaguely defined "federal" system that would

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give the Kurds substantial independence within a unified Iraq

The INC, pressed hard by Talabani, adopted a policy favoring Kurdish self-determination and federalism within a united Iraq as part of its platform at the Vienna conference in June 1992.

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PUK cooperation with the KDP has grown steadily since the Kurdish election, but longstanding differences remain just below the surface.

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Moreover, recurring PUK-KDP military skirmishes and the PUK's occasional allegations that Barzani maintains ties to and accepts gifts from Saddam show that suspicions run deep.

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**Unity Party of Kurdistan**

The Unity Party of Kurdistan was formed in August 1992 from three smaller Iraqi Kurdish parties seeking to increase their leverage with the larger and better known KDP and PUK. Muhammad Mahmud (Sami) Abd al-Rahman, former leader of the Kurdish People's Democratic Party and the third most prominent Kurdish leader, spearheaded the merger with the Kurdish Socialist Party of Mahmud Ali Uthman and the little-known Independent Democratic Party (Basok) headed by Mulahsim Shiwan.

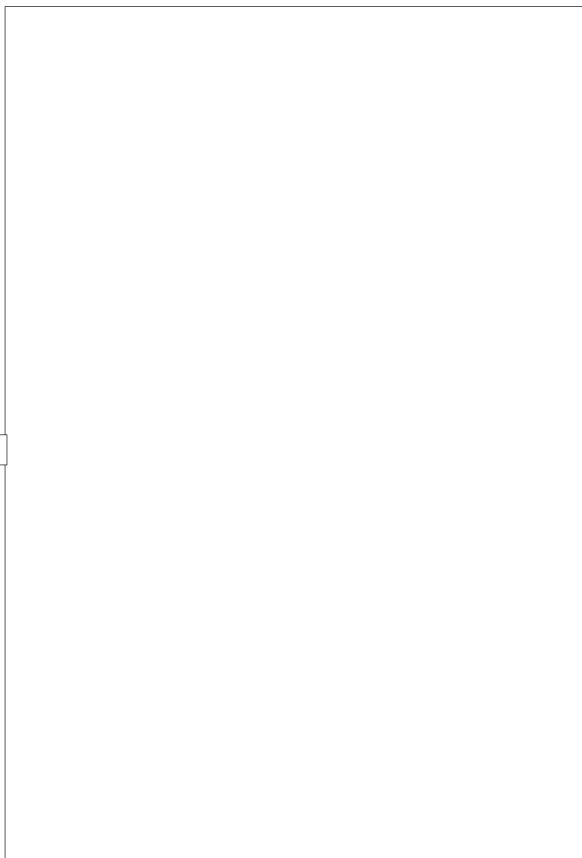
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The Unity Party is led by a three-member Presidential Council as well as a nine-member Politburo and a 24-member Central Committee and reflects the socialist agenda of its three leaders. The party is a member of the Iraqi National Congress. Before the merger, Ra'sul Ma'mand, a senior leader of the Kurdish Socialist Party, broke away from the main group. This faction merged with Jalal Talabani's PUK in February 1993, according to press reports. In July 1993, Sami Abd al-Rahman merged his wing of the party with Mas'ud Barzani's KDP and urged his two coleaders to join the KDP.

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**Kurdish Tribal Society**

The Kurdish Tribal Society was formed by a group of 40 Iraqi Kurdish tribal leaders—unaffiliated with any particular political group—in September 1991 to increase their leverage in Kurdish affairs.

most of the tribes that comprise the society—particularly the Surchi, Harki, and Zebari—were formerly aligned with Baghdad and belonged to regime-backed militia groups called *fursan* or National Defense Battalions. Their subservience to

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(b)(3) Baghdad has earned them the nickname *jash* or donkeys. Leaders of such tribes were handsomely rewarded by Saddam for their willingness to fight Kurdish rebels or to refrain from siding with them. When the Kurdish uprising reemerged in the wake of the Gulf war, these tribes abandoned Saddam and sided with the rebels. [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) This reversal left these tribes vulnerable on two fronts. On the one hand, they are distrusted by the Kurdish Front and have been excluded from its decisionmaking. The KDP has been the most outspoken opponent of the society, perhaps out of concern that it may undercut some of the KDP's support among the tribes. [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] The PUK has been more supportive and may have encouraged the formation of the group as a challenge to the KDP. [redacted]

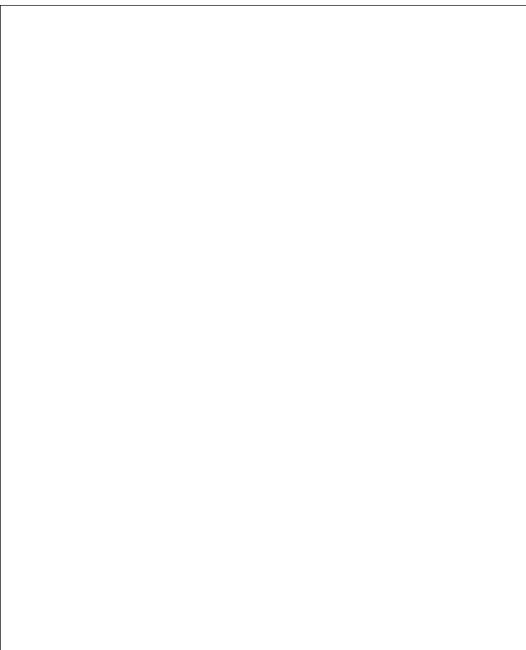
(b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] On the other hand, society members [redacted] fear manipulation or future reprisals by Saddam for their perceived treason. [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) Saddam is lobbying the group's members to regain their support and divide them. Society leaders [redacted] hope their banding together will provide a structure for mutual support and keep individual tribal leaders from accepting Saddam's offers. [redacted] (b)(3)

(b)(1) (b)(3) Although the society claims to support the Kurdish Front militarily, its political views and overall goals diverge significantly from most Front members. [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] group opposes Kurdish autonomy and prefers full integration within Iraq and cooperation with a strong, Sunni-controlled central government. A handful of tribal leaders were ousted from the group for supporting Kurdish self-determination and independence [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] The society opposes the INC because it includes groups that have no support inside Iraq [redacted] Society leaders routinely accuse their rivals, particularly Mas'ud Barzani and Jalal



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Talabani, of corruption, mismanagement of Kurdish interests, and controlling the Kurdish legislature. [redacted]

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**Shia Groups**

**Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq**

The Iran-based Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) is the most prominent Iraqi Shia opposition group. Iran created the organization in 1982 as a 40-group umbrella organization for most Iraqi Shia and some Kurdish dissidents to coordinate their activities and ensure Iranian influence over them. Since 1982, Iranian meddling, factionalism, and infighting have reduced SAIRI's membership to about 15 groups. The Assembly is headed by the Iraqi Arab cleric

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**The Kurdish Front and Legislature**

After the two main Kurdish opposition groups, the most powerful Kurdish organization is the eight-member Kurdish Front. The Front includes the KDP, PUK, Kurdish Communist Party, Kurdish Toilers' Party, Assyrian Democratic Movement, Kurdish Socialist Party, Kurdish People's Democratic Party, and Basok/Independent Democratic Party—the latter three comprising the Unity Party of Kurdistan. Mas'ud Barzani founded the Front in 1988—probably at Syria's behest—to revive the opposition movement after Baghdad crushed the Kurdish rebellion in 1988 and Iran drastically cut its support. Between 1988 and 1990, Kurdish infighting, divergent goals, and limited outside support rendered the organization moribund until it revived during the Gulf crisis. Since the end of the Gulf war, the Front has controlled most of the Kurds' political, military, and economic affairs in northern Iraq and has alienated many tribal groups by excluding them from its decisionmaking. Barzani and Talabani's status as the real powers behind the Front has frustrated other Front members and gave rise to the Unity Party merger. Recurring political and ideological squabbles, personal rivalries, and

occasional military skirmishes between member groups probably will continue to hinder the Front's coordination and effectiveness. [redacted]

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In a precedent setting move to solidify their de facto autonomy from Baghdad, Iraqi Kurds elected a 105-member Legislative Assembly on 19 May 1992. The election was sponsored by all eight parties of the Kurdish Front, but the KDP and PUK control all but five of the legislature's seats. In July 1992 the legislature appointed a 14-member Council of Ministers, which allegedly is responsible for all aspects of Kurdish government and civilian administration. Real control of Kurdish affairs rests in large part with the parties. A KDP-PUK written agreement in September 1992 that claims to cede "complete power" to the legislature gives it some responsibility for administrative and economic affairs but leaves the parties in control of Kurdish military and foreign affairs. [redacted]

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Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim [redacted] SAIIRI's main goal had been to establish an Iranian-style Shia state in Iraq. Although some SAIIRI members are still intent on this goal, Hakim and his representatives have begun to stress themes like Iraqi nationalism, democratic pluralism, and the territorial integrity of Iraq. At the same time, SAIIRI leaders are minimizing their longstanding ties to Iran, which in the past weakened the group's appeal inside Iraq—owing to deeply rooted Iraqi Shia fears of Iranian domination—and cost it broader international support. [redacted]

[redacted] Tehran provides SAIIRI leaders with cars, guards, and houses. Outside Iran, SAIIRI maintains frequent contacts with Syria, although ties have been strained by SAIIRI's participation in the INC. [redacted]

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SAIIRI depends on Iran for political, military, and financial support as well as access to Shia areas of southern Iraq [redacted]

The military arm of SAIIRI is called the Iraqi *Mujahidin*, founded in 1979 and run by Hakim's younger brother, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim. Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security oversees the Iraqi *Mujahidin*. The group is made up of Shia Iraqi Army deserters, former Iraqi prisoners of war from the Iran-Iraq war, and Iraqi refugees of Iranian origin. [redacted]

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**Table 2**  
**Minor Kurdish Parties and Officials**

Group	Leaders
Assyrian Democratic Movement	Yunadam Yusif Kanna
	Lincoln Malik
	Albert Yalda
Independent Democratic Party (Basuk)	Mulahsim Shiwan
Islamic League of Iraqi Fayli Kurds	Abd al-Jalil al-Fayli Abu Ahmad Quais Abu Haydar Fawzi Abu Muhammad Jahar Abu Huda Tariq
Islamic Movement of Kurdistan	Ali Abd al-Aziz
Kurdish Army of Islam	Abbas Shuhin Abu Usama
Kurdish Communist Party	Aziz Muhammad Fakri Karim
Kurdish Mosul Vilayet Council (Also known as Kurdish Conservative Party)	Shaykh Umar al-Surchi
Kurdish People's Democratic Party	Sami Abd al-Rahman
Kurdish Socialist Party	Mahmud Ali Uthman
	Ra'sul Ma'mand
Kurdish Tailors' Party	Kadir Aziz

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Figure 10. Lightly armed Iraqi Mujahidin rebels patrol the marshes in southeastern Iraq, April 1992. Baghdad has nearly completed an extensive water diversion project and several associated causeway projects aimed at drying large areas of the marshes, which provide safehaven and staging areas for rebel hit-and-run attacks against Iraqi forces. Saba Press ©

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Since the failed Shia rebellion of 1991, SAIRI has tried to promote the impression that it is putting political distance between itself and Iran to improve ties to other opposition groups and Arab and Western governments. Hakim began the process in December 1991 when he visited Syria to improve ties to opposition groups based there and to apologize for SAIRI mistakes during the Shia rebellion that presumably included allowing Iran such a prominent role. [Redacted]

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Hakim has visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on several occasions in search of support. SAIRI representatives in Vienna and Damascus have tried

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to assuage US concerns about Iran's control of the organization and to encourage closer US-SAIRI ties. [Redacted]

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SAIRI efforts to put distance between itself and Tehran also stem from real tensions between the two. [Redacted]

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philosophical and ethnic differences between Arab and Persian Shias as an underlying cause for a growing lack of trust between the Tehran government and SAIRI. SAIRI leaders see themselves in competition with Iranian clerics as the standard bearers of the Shia cause in Iraq and [redacted]

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[redacted] their relations with Tehran are strained. Despite these strains, SAIRI's lack of substantial outside funding probably will keep it under Iran's influence for the foreseeable future. [redacted]

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SAIRI's decision to join the INC in late 1992 has enhanced opposition unity, but its public rejection of INC-endorsed Kurdish federalism and temporary suspension of its membership earlier this year to protest Shia underrepresentation suggest its participation could be tenuous. [redacted]

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**Da'wa Party**

Al-Da'wa al-Islamiyyah (The Islamic Call Party), commonly called Da'wa, is the oldest and largest Iraqi Shia dissident group. It was founded in Iraq in the late 1950s by the Iraqi cleric Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr and gained prominence after Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini assumed power in 1979. Saddam's execution of Sadr in 1980 drove the party underground and most of its Iraqi leaders into exile. Baghdad continued its harsh repression of Da'wa members and sympathizers throughout the Iran-Iraq war, but the party revived its political and subversive activities in southern Iraq during the Shia uprising in April 1991. [redacted]

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Da'wa is highly factionalized. The primary faction is the Iraqi Da'wa Party, based in Iran and led by Muhammad Mahdi al-Asifi. The group depends on Iran for financial and other support but also receives contributions from Shias abroad, especially in Pakistan and Europe. [redacted]

[redacted] The Iraqi Da'wa Party is formally under the SAIRI umbrella, but it operates independently of SAIRI and Hakim. The group is a

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**Table 3  
Minor Shia Parties and Officials**

Group	Leaders
Independent Islamic Conference	Abd al-Amir Alwan
Iraqi Hizballah	Haytham Mehruz, Hajj Qathim Abd al-Mahdi
Iraqi Islamic Revolution	
	Dhiya al-Dabas Salim Hasan
Islamic Action Organization	Muhammad Taqi Mudarisi
	Nuri al-Alwan Nazar Haidar Shaykh Muhsin al-Husayni Rida Jawad al-Taqi
Islamic Bloc	Muhammad al-Alusi
Islamic Forces Front	Laili Kubba, Sayyid Husayn Sadr
Islamic Movement Organization	Abu Asra al-Hakim, Ain Najafi
Jund al-Imam (Soldiers of the Imam)	Ahdallah Shirazi, Muhammad Ali Shirazi, Sami al-Badri Khalaf Hammadi Muhammad Alawi Izzat Shahbandar

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**Table 3  
Minor Shia Parties and Officials (continued)**

Group	Leaders
Kho'i Benevolent Foundation	Yusif al-Kho'i, Laith Kubba
Rahitat Ahl al-Bayt (League of the Family of the Prophet)	Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum
Turkish Islamic Movement in Iraq	Abbas Hasan Musa al-Bayati
Union of Islamic Forces	Khalaf Munim Hammadi
	Sayyid Mustafa Jamal al-Din, Akram Musn Hadi, Husayn Akil al-Rikabi, Sa'd Jawad

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member of the Iraqi National Congress. The main branch of the party has traditionally advocated Iranian-style Islamic social revolution, government, and economics.

to the Da'wa leadership there.

Da'wa's longstanding and sharp ideological differences with Iran have led some party members to become more independent and to espouse a more moderate agenda. The major break came in 1990 when part of Da'wa moved much of its political apparatus to London.

Its members are more open to liberal, pro-Western views, no longer insist on complete Islamic rule in Iraq, and favor a pluralistic, democratic state rather than an Iranian-style clerical regime.

Nevertheless, this so-called moderate bloc still receives funding from Iran and is closely tied

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[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

Some Da'wa subgroups have separated almost completely from the major wing of the party because they resent Iran's domination of the movement. One such group is the Islamic Da'wa Party, formed by Muhammad Abd al-Jabbar, Abd al-Halim Ruhaymi, and other party leaders in June 1991.

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[Redacted]

The group insists on complete independence from Iranian interference. To the chagrin of Damascus, the group has joined the main Da'wa bloc in INC efforts to unite the Iraqi opposition.

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[Redacted]

of a free market economy, and use of Iraq's oil wealth to benefit all Iraqis

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Naqib's and Shabib's experience, public recognition, and contacts inside and outside Iraq have enhanced the group's position within the opposition. It is a member of the Iraqi National Congress. Naqib boycotted the first INC meeting in Vienna—probably under Syrian pressure—but was chosen at the meeting in September 1992 in northern Iraq as the Arab Sunni representative on the INC's three-man Presidential Council. Naqib's willingness to defy his Syrian sponsors by joining the INC leadership has strained ties to Damascus.

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**"Independent" and "Nationalist" Groups**

**Independent Iraqi Alliance**

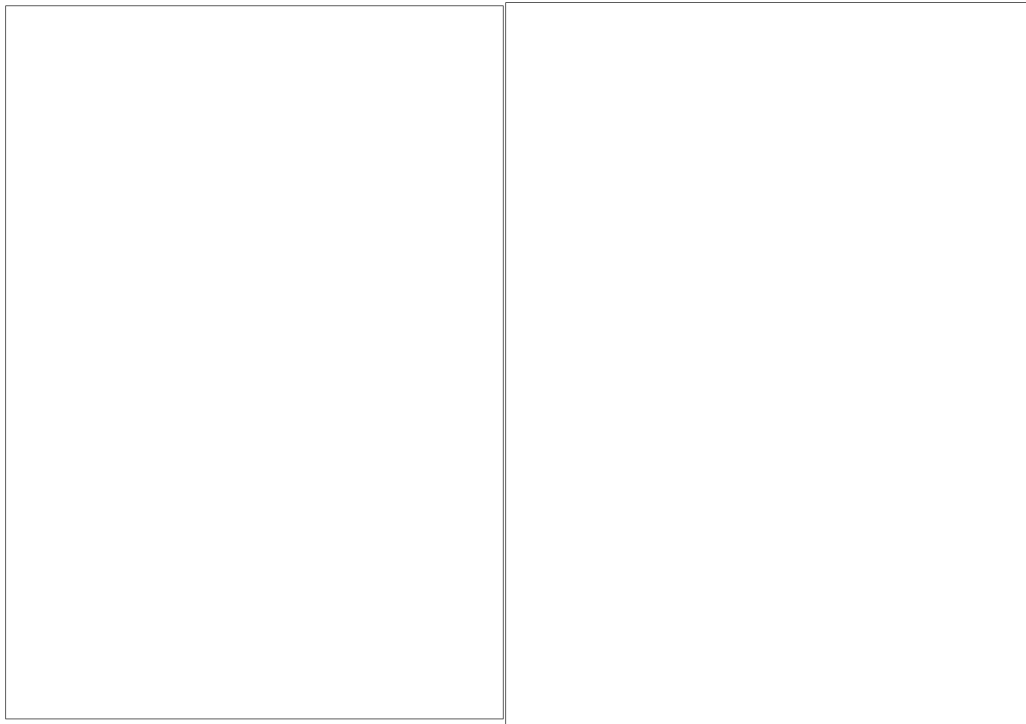
The Independent Iraqi Alliance comprises moderate Shia and Sunni nationalists and former Ba'thists. It was founded in late 1990 by former Iraqi official Talib al-Shabib. In May 1991, Shabib joined forces with the Syrian-backed National Salvation Front of Hasan al-Naqib, with whom Shabib shares leadership. The group claims a fairly liberal agenda that includes support for Arab nationalism, maintaining Iraq's geographical integrity, establishment of a democratic government, free national elections and universal suffrage, establishment

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**Iraqi National Union**

The Iraqi National Union (Wifaq al-Watani), also called the Iraqi National Accord, is an independent London-based group founded by former Iraqi officials Iyad al-Alawi and Salah al-Shaikhly in 1991. Both leaders have been in exile since at least the mid-1970s. A third senior leader of the group, Adnan Muhammad Nuri, is a former Iraqi general. From his base in Turkey, Nuri oversees Wifaq paramilitary operations inside northern Iraq and attempts to recruit Iraqi military officers to join the opposition. The group's stated aims are to institute a pluralistic, democratic government in Iraq, end Iraqi human rights abuses, and maintain the country's geographical integrity.

[redacted] As a charter member of the INC, Wifaq leaders serve on the INC Executive Committee. Salah al-Shaikhly was appointed as INC spokesman in February 1993. [redacted]

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[redacted] Wifaq obtains most of its support in the West, although its members have close relations with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The group publishes a newspaper entitled *Baghdad* that it distributes internationally [redacted]

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**Table 4**  
**Other Independent Parties and Officials**

Group	Leaders
Arab National Group	Ahmad Habubi
Arab Organization of Human Rights	Adih al-Jadir
Association of Iraqi Democrats	Salih al-Dugla
	Aziz Ailyan
Ba'ih Party	Mahdi al-Uhaydi
Iraqi Central Committee for Dialogue and Followup	Arif Abd al-Razzaq
	Sa'd Jabir
	Shaykh Mahdi al-Khalissi, Gen. Abdil Amir al-Ubbais, Abd al-Mir Alwan, Bushrn al-Haidary
	Jawhar Husayn Surchi, Arshad Tawfiq
Iraqi Free Officers' Movement	Hasan al-Naqib
Iraqi National Democratic Party	Nabil al-Janabi
Iraqi National Turkoman Party	Muzafir Arslan

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**Table 4  
Other Independent Parties and Officials (continued)**

Group	Leaders
Iraqi Royalists	Ali Bin Hussein
	Kamal Khan
Iraqi Socialist Party	Mubdir al-Ways
National Salvation Council	Shaykh Sami Azarah Majun
Organization of Human Rights in Iraq	Laith Kubba
	Sahib al-Hakim
United Democratic Forces	Aziz al-Habaz, Nuri Abd al-Rahman Husayn

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
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[Redacted]

Party. Jabir publishes an opposition newspaper called *Free Iraq*. The group is plagued by ideological and political divisions [Redacted]

(b)(3)

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**Free Iraq Council**

The Free Iraq Council is a loose grouping of diverse London-based oppositionists, including former Iraqi military officers, politicians, and some Islamic religious leaders. The 23-member council was founded in 1991 by Sa'd Salih Jabir, a liberal democrat from a distinguished Iraqi Shia family and former head of the now defunct New Umma

[Redacted] Nevertheless, Jabir remains active in opposition affairs. He has frequent contact with other opposition groups and Western and Arab governments, particularly Saudi Arabia. [Redacted]

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Jabir has been a harsh critic of the INC and its Executive Committee chairman Ahmad Chalabi. In April 1993 he was appointed spokesman of the Saudi-backed Iraqi Central Committee for Dialogue and Followup.

and Iranian efforts to manipulate the opposition movement. In early 1992 he began to work closely with SAIRI leader Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim despite Hakim's close ties to Tehran.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Jabir has been highly critical of Syrian

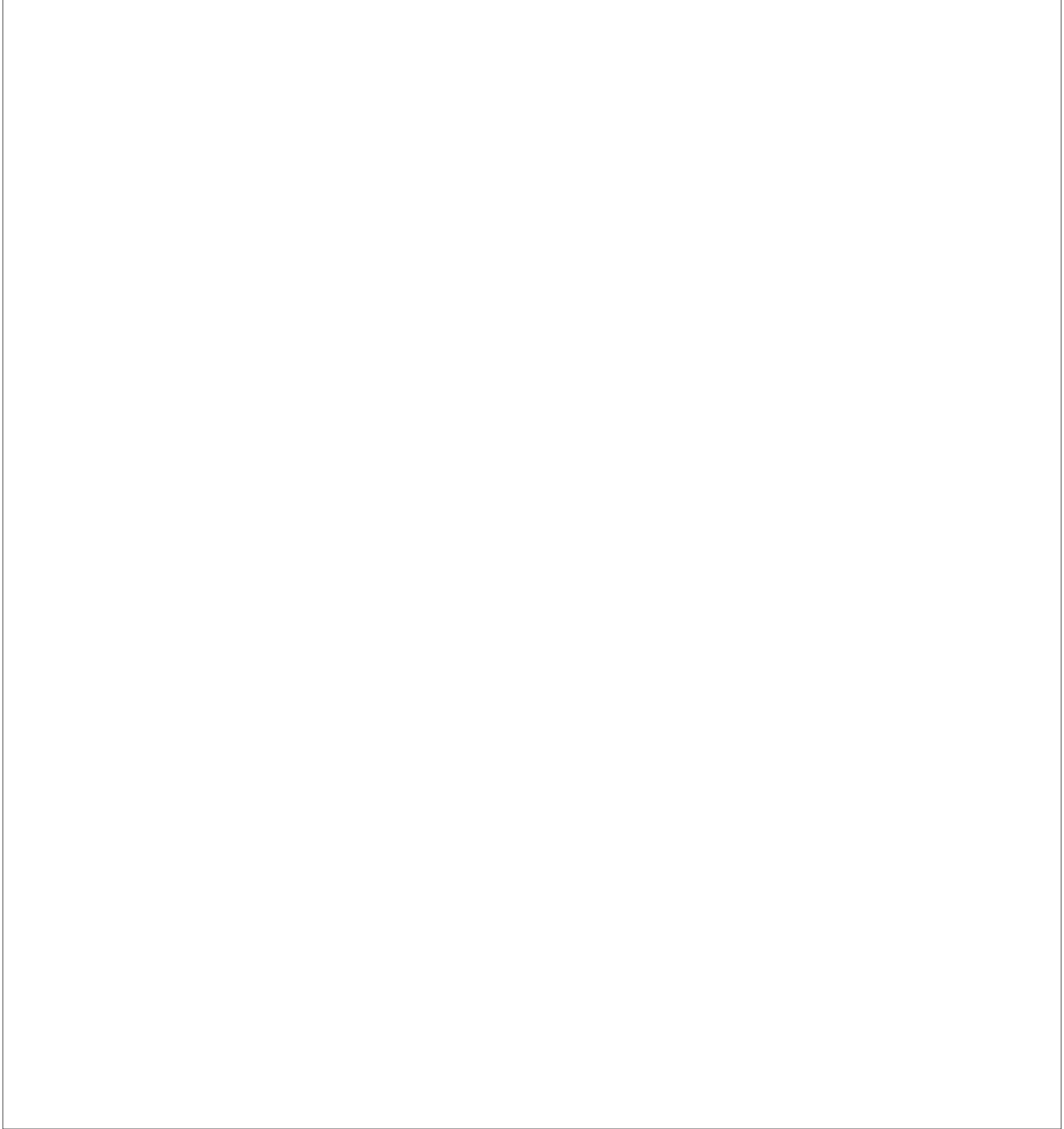
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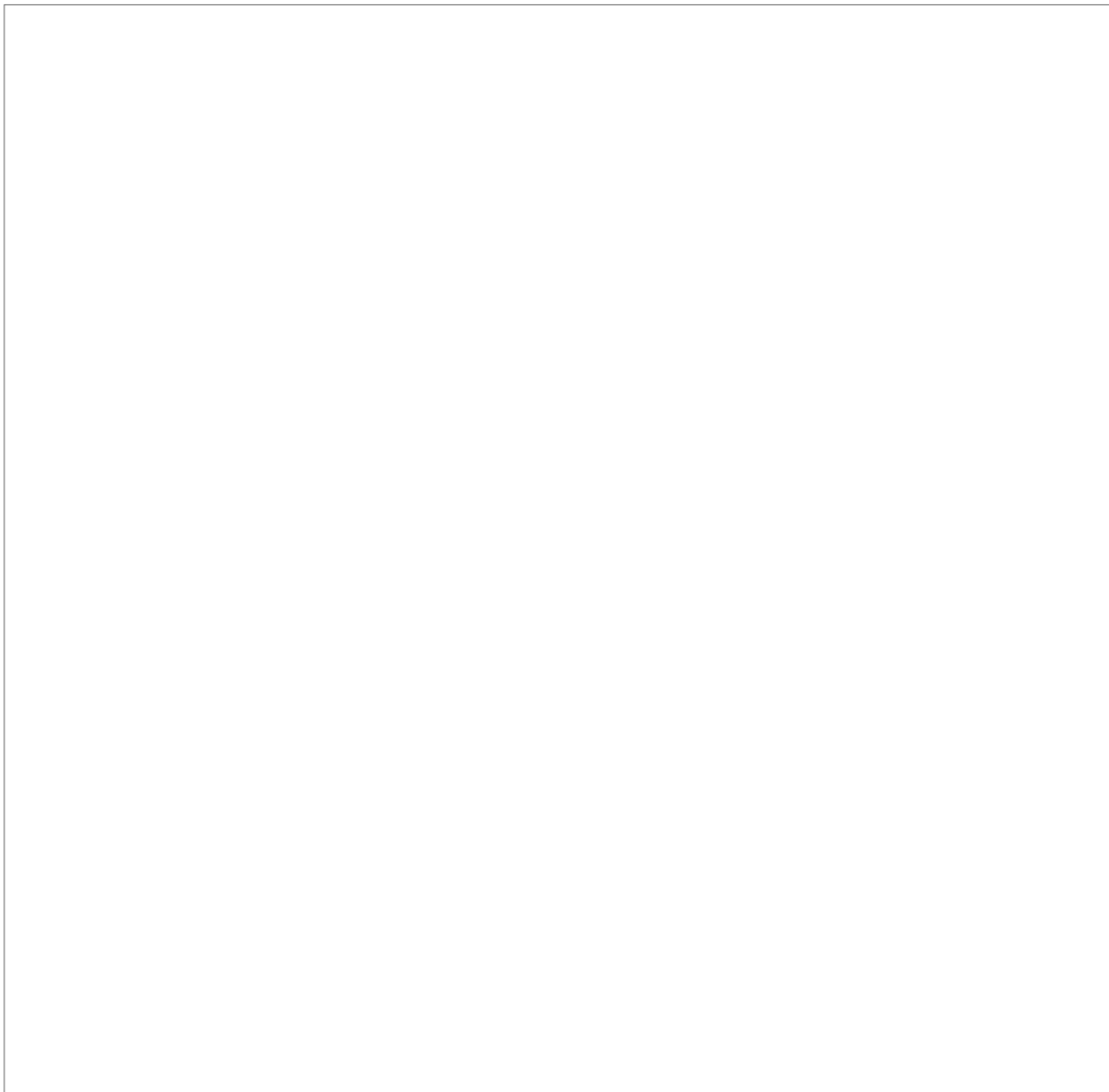
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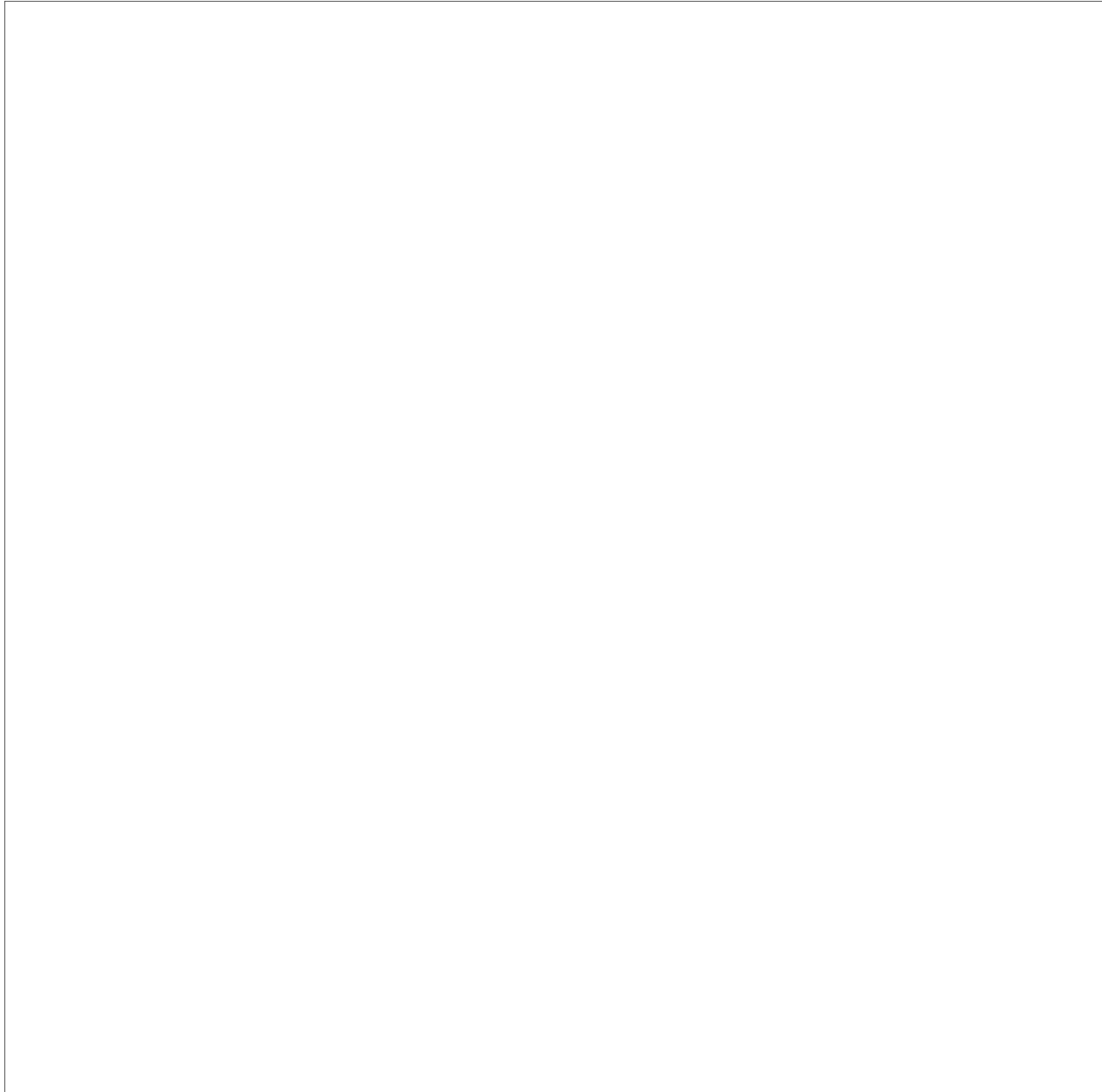


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