

# Rebuilding the Ba’thist State:

Party, Tribe, and Administrative Control in Authoritarian Iraq,  
1991–1996

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In March of 1991, just weeks after the U.S. and its coalition partners began efforts to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, spontaneous protests erupted across southern, and later northern, Iraq. The protest uprisings were leaderless, widespread, and a reflection of deep-seated dissatisfaction with the regime’s disastrous foreign policy choices over the last decade.<sup>1</sup> In private conversations with his advisors during the course of the uprisings, Saddam Hussein emphasized that Baghdad was to be defended at all costs and tasked his underlings with preparing to defend the capital.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later, the Ba’thist regime was in a vastly improved strategic position. A study issued by Iraqi intelligence in 2001 focused on external threats to the state, suggesting domestic enemies were largely subdued.<sup>3</sup> The report pointed to the fact that the Ba’th Party had been in power for more than thirty years, survived wars and major challenges, and had emerged stronger and better prepared to confront its enemies. The report suggested that the “real” threat facing the Iraqi state was a war for existence against external enemies, like Iran and Israel. While we cannot know if the report’s findings reflected a realistic understanding of challenges to the Ba’thist regime at that time, the conclusions of the report proved to be right; two years later, the Iraqi regime was toppled by a foreign actor rather than due to domestic uprisings, the regime’s most significant threat just one decade earlier.

Scholars have also pointed to the fact that by the early 2000s the Ba’thist regime had consolidated power in ways that contrasted sharply with profound political vulnerabilities in the early 1990s. Dimitrov and Sassoon argue that “it is doubtful that the [Ba’thist] regime would have collapsed on its own if the [U.S.] invasion had not taken place” and that “the Iraqi regime was secure in its ability to control any serious

opposition.”<sup>4</sup> This article focuses on state building efforts in Iraq during a critical period for the Ba’thists, after the regime-threatening popular uprisings in 1991 but before the arrival of the first Oil-for-Food shipments in 1997. The Iraqi regime—crippled by economic sanctions—was forced to engage in state building with limited financial resources and damaged legitimacy. As a result, the period between 1991 and 1996 represents a crucial one for understanding how authoritarian regimes make political investments when stakes are high but revenues limited.

In particular, I examine two strategies deployed by the Ba’thist regime as it sought to rebuild state control after 1991. Both of these policies involved investment in local elites, suggestive of an indirect rule approach that reflected a tactical break from previous regime strategies that sought to engage in more direct forms of rule. In rural areas, the Ba’thist regime delegated authority to tribal shaykhs in the realms of security and governance, particularly in border regions where state authority was difficult to extend. While Hussein’s “neo-tribalism” has been carefully described in existing work,<sup>5</sup> the availability of Iraqi archival resources provides an opportunity to understand these processes to a greater extent than previously possible. The archival evidence I examine suggests that partnerships with tribal shaykhs, while a feature of pre-1991 Ba’thist strategy, became increasingly common and allowed the regime to economize on governance at a time when international sanctions imposed financial constraints on the state.

I also find that the Ba’thist regime engaged in differentiated party mobilization strategies sub-nationally within Iraq. The Ba’thists were worried about maintaining control in cities, especially those far from Baghdad. While Baghdad was heavily defended and housed troops that might be deployed to nearby cities, regime officials were concerned about the capacities of security services in urban areas further from the capital. Urban areas distant from Baghdad were also closer to Iraq’s border with hostile neighbors, creating opportunities for outside actors to foment rebellion. Qualitative evidence suggests that the Ba’thist regime was deeply concerned about the possibility of urban-based riots since Iraqi cities were epicenters for the 1991 Uprisings. Quantitative evidence from a panel dataset of party membership across Iraqi provinces during the 1990s provides evidence for this pattern of urban political consolidation.

My findings suggest that when facing major challenges under binding economic constraints, authoritarian regimes seek to devolve political authority to local elites in a bid to economize on the costs of governance. At the same time, spatial considerations determine how the authoritarian regime chooses to make investments in local actors. Geography plays a key role in the arguments I make about indirect rule. Rural areas pose a governance challenge given the high cost of monitoring and policing regions that have low population density and difficult geography. Tribal leaders in Iraq were well-placed to engage in monitoring and policing activities given their local social networks. When considering the Ba’th Party’s investment in Iraq’s “second cities,” regime strategies reflected concerns about vulnerabilities in urban areas, especially cities close to hostile foreign powers.

These findings connect to existing work in comparative politics on how authoritarian regimes exert political authority. Lee argues that the problem of incomplete domestic sovereignty, defined as the absence of effective state authority

over territory, has negative consequences in terms of the maintenance of security and social order.<sup>6</sup> As a result, states seek to consolidate power in ways that take into account how hostile neighbors might engage in foreign interference.<sup>7</sup> The empowerment of local, especially rural, leaders has long been a strategy deployed by regimes, including in the Iraqi case.<sup>8</sup> This article combines ideas of indirect rule with a critical geography perspective to understand how states consolidate political authority in ways that reflect both financial constraints and concerns about geographic vulnerabilities.<sup>9</sup>

## **Strategies of Authoritarian State Building**

There exist wide forms of variation in the qualities associated with statehood, which is typically defined as monopoly over the means of violence and the ability of the state to make and implement policies.<sup>10</sup> State building refers to the development of the institutions of governance which seek to increase the state's ability to generate rule of law, to govern effectively, and to create and implement policy. This article considers the state building strategies of an autocratic regime under stress and, specifically, the types of mobilization activities that contributed to the reconsolidation of political power in Ba'thist Iraq under Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi regime provides unparalleled opportunities for analysis of an authoritarian regime due to the availability of documents captured in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

The empirical evidence provided in this article relies on two archival collections. The Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) at the National Defense University housed documents and transcripts of audio files captured in Iraq as part of the Iraq War (2003–2011).<sup>11</sup> I also use documents from the Iraqi Ba'th Party, a collection housed at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, including statistics aggregated from the School Registers—an annual inventory of information about Iraqi students—and files from the Ministry of Information.<sup>12</sup> The Ba'th Regional Command Collection (BRCC) includes correspondence, reports, membership files, investigatory dossiers, and administrative files relating to the governance of Iraq.

The Iraqi case is also interesting from a state building perspective for reasons that go beyond the unique opportunities associated with data availability. In particular, the Iraqi experience speaks to the challenges of state building in developing countries, including those with forms of sub-national differentiation in terms of tribalism, ethnicity, and state capacity.

**Local Institutions and Indirect Rule** Governance is not the exclusive domain of centralized state authorities but, instead, is shared with sub-national groups and their leaders who exercise influence within their communities. As a result, regimes are concerned with elite management as they seek to exercise influence over local social and political actors.

Strategies of indirect rule are frequently associated with devolution of administrative power to traditional authorities who are responsible for the management and supervision of diverse constituencies. Local actors often enjoy an informational

advantage relative to central governments within communities given the way social networks convey community-level knowledge. Empowering local administrators can also co-opt them by giving these actors a stake in the established order. Whereas strategies of direct rule lead individuals to be dependent on the state, indirect rule often encourages groups to become dependent on the state.<sup>13</sup> Empowerment of local officials may involve tradeoffs for regimes, however, especially if locally powerful actors pursue their own interests at the expenses of regime objectives.<sup>14</sup> Hechter argues that the only way the center can ever know if local actors are following directives is through monitoring, but that “both geographic and cultural distance sharply increases its costs.”<sup>15</sup>

Understanding how central authority relates to local collectivities is challenging given the variation that exists across community-level institutions. In addition to cross-sectional variation in these relationships, the connection between central and local actors can also change over time. Charrad identifies three patterns for how states relate to local patrimonial institutions; she finds local power brokers can be marginalized, integrated, or can shift between marginalization and integration.<sup>16</sup> Unlike other Middle Eastern countries which tend to see consistent patterns of decentralized authority, Charrad argues that Iraq observed a considerable shift over time from marginalization to integration of local patrimonial institutions.

Charrad’s observation about the Iraqi case points to how the Ba’thist regime engaged in a remaking of the structure of elites despite a long preference for employing strategies of direct rule. During the 1970s and 1980s, the regime sought to create direct connections between the state and the citizenry, using the Ba’th Party and its delegates as intermediaries. Scholars point to the fact that by the late 1970s, the Ba’th Party had expanded party membership, going from a “tightly knit avant garde into a mass organization.”<sup>17</sup> But what happened when direct rule became prohibitively expensive given the financial burdens facing the Iraqi state? Direct rule approaches tend to be costly and were only sustainable when Hussein was able to grow the size of the Iraqi state and the military with oil revenue.<sup>18</sup> I argue that Iraqi state authority was re-consolidated in the 1990s through the empowerment of tribal brokers and party elites who emerged as particularly influential in areas where the state struggled to extend territorial control, or the regime was exposed to the possibility of foreign meddling.

**Critical Geography Approaches to State Building** The choice to delegate authority to local rulers is also impacted by concerns about a country’s differentiated geography. The failure of states to control their peripheries has long been used to explain locations of political violence outbreak.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, geographic conditions are highly deterministic of insurgent mobilization and associated state violence.<sup>20</sup> Rural areas, especially border regions, reflect security concerns that are distinct from those found in urban areas. Kalyvas describes rural areas as challenging to govern for a variety of reasons, including the ability of combatants to hide without being reported as well as widespread participation in anti-state activities, like banditry and smuggling.<sup>21</sup>

Spatial factors strongly influence how regimes think about the operational aspects of exposure to civil unrest. Herbst argues that government forces prefer to have an avenue for continual retreat without which they might be completely encircled by rebel forces.<sup>22</sup> Control over roadways can also sustain the expansion of military operations. Zhukov argues that logistical constraints are critically important in the study of civil war since insurgents' tactics are shaped by their access to vital infrastructure, like roadways.<sup>23</sup> Regimes may also be concerned about external actors, fearing the ways that foreign meddling can feed social disorder to areas that are geographically isolated. Foreign interference by hostile neighbors can degrade central authority and prevent state consolidation through the use of subversion or coercion.<sup>24</sup> States attempt to counteract the efforts of hostile states by increasing markers of domestic sovereignty in the targeted regions.<sup>25</sup>

Ron focuses on differentiated state control within a polity and draws a distinction between "frontiers" and "ghettos," both of which represent governance challenges.<sup>26</sup> While frontier areas are "perched on the edge of core states," in ghettos citizens are marginalized but can be controlled through the use of "police-style methods."<sup>27</sup> Wallace points to the dangers of cities for authoritarian stability since they can be "prone to disruptions via barricades, transforming key nodes in transportation networks into strongholds for resisters."<sup>28</sup> Cities are locations of collective action potential, and protests can be damaging to autocrats.<sup>29</sup> The state building strategies that are described in this article address concerns about both urban and rural security threats.

## **Rebuilding State Control: Iraq after 1991**

The origins of the 1991 Uprisings are widely discussed in a number of studies.<sup>30</sup> In this section, I discuss how the uprisings unfolded from the vantage point of the Ba'athist regime, as well as how these events informed the formulation of a government response designed to avoid social disruption in the future. I consider constraints on state capacity building during the early 1990s, as well as elite deliberations regarding how to rebuild state control in the wake of an unexpected and politically damaging set of events.

*The 1991 Uprisings* In the months and weeks before the uprisings, Iraqi officials appear to have been blind to the possibility of widespread, violent popular dissatisfaction. A meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council in 1990 had Hussein and other high-level regime leadership in attendance.<sup>31</sup> Over the course of the meeting, a number of subjects were discussed, including civil defense readiness instructions to be conveyed both through the Ba'ath Party and on television. Hussein shared his belief that Iraqis, many of whom were known to be carrying weapons, would harm any enemy actors who appeared within Iraq.<sup>32</sup> Little did he know that the weapons that the regime had issued to citizens as part of civil defense would be used against the Ba'athists in a popular rebellion that spread across Iraqi governorates.

The thought of urban protests were far from the minds of Iraqi officials when crowds, some of which were led by retreating military officers, attacked representatives of the Ba'athist regime.<sup>33</sup> In late February of 1991, unrest emerged near Basra. By early March, Ba'ath Party headquarters and party officials were attacked by mobs as uprisings spread to major cities of southern Iraq. Low-ranking Ba'ath Party officials often joined the protests rather than be killed by rioters.<sup>34</sup> Shortly thereafter, Kurdish Iraqis in the northern parts of the country also rebelled. While the southern protests were largely spontaneous, leaderless revolts, the northern uprising was more planned, organized by Kurdish groups that seized the opportunity provided by regime weakness.

As northern towns began to fall into rebel hands this created logistical problems for the Ba'athist regime. When the northern towns of Ranya and Chamchamal fell to rebels, the regime lost access to transportation routes between Sulaymaniyah, a major northern city, and rebel-held cities, creating concerns about connection to state support and compatriots.<sup>35</sup> According to one memorandum, feelings of isolation greatly damaged the mental state of regime affiliates within Sulaymaniyah.<sup>36</sup> Regime memoranda reflected a deep concern about maintaining connections to regime-controlled parts of the country via major roadways. For example, government reporting describes Tamim (i.e., Kirkuk) governorate as being surrounded by rebels on three sides but that because the Kirkuk-Tikrit highway was still open, this access provided a critical lifeline for regime affiliates.<sup>37</sup>

Memoranda from officials of the General Security directorate offer important details about the fall of Sulaymaniyah into rebel hands.<sup>38</sup> According to these memoranda, the rebels focused on taking control of state buildings including Ba'ath Party, security, and governorate offices. After less than one hour of fighting, the party and governorate offices fell to protesters while the security directorate resisted for longer, making use of heavy weapons that had been procured from Iraqi military stocks. Despite thousands of rebels surrounding the security directorate, resistance continued for three days, only to end after security sector agents ran out of ammunition. After being overrun, a committee was established to conduct trials of Sulaymaniyah security directorate officials, as well as Ba'ath Party representatives and the mayor of Sulaymaniyah. Executions of officials followed, extending to the killing of the mayor's daughter and the son of the Sulaymaniyah educational director. Iraq's northern provinces were able to break away from the Ba'athist regime after almost every major northern city fell to the rebels. The U.S. enforcement of a no-fly zone over northern Iraq provided the Kurdish rebels with protection from Iraqi attacks by air.

Detailed military analysis describes how the southern rebellion was eventually subdued. Telegrams coming into Baghdad from the General Military Intelligence Directorate, the Armed Forces General Command, and the Republican Guard regarding the southern rebellion suggested that the main battlefronts were urban and that units of between 30 and 150 army, police, and Ba'ath Party operatives were engaged in the retaking of neighborhoods. Rebels were armed with a variety of weapons, including AK-47s, as well as hand-held communications devices.<sup>39</sup>

Concerns about topography played an important role in how military units considered their approach to cities for quelling revolts. Military analysis from that time suggested that southern cities surrounded by open land would be accessible to armored and mechanized units.<sup>40</sup> Road quality and suitability for different vehicle types were topics discussed, including the number of total road lanes. The factors that might hinder access included date palm orchards, particularly in locations where trees were planted close together, as well as swampy or flooded areas. Crowded city districts were viewed as a hindrance to the movement of mechanized vehicles. Much of this analysis reflected concerns about how the military and security forces might approach urban areas for quelling future riots. In the regime's assessment of internal enemies, rebels might benefit from their ability to establish positions outside of cities to blockade the progress of military units.

Almost as soon as the uprisings were pacified, societal actors sought to distance themselves from the rebellion to avoid regime retribution. A telegram from tribal leaders in Nasiriyyah governorate on March 20 asserted strong tribal support for Hussein as well as a readiness to kill conspirators.<sup>41</sup> A meeting between Hussein and tribal leaders reflected a belief that local actors needed to strongly signal their loyalty to him.<sup>42</sup> In that meeting, Hussein said he was not upset with the tribes because they had cracked down on the riots and that the protesters had not come from well known (i.e., tribal) families. Hussein said that there would be no punishment for tribal actors who hunted down enemies of the state.

**Formulating a Response** Regime efforts to formulate a response to the uprisings took place in the shadow of deep and binding economic constraints, as well as a vivid awareness of the regime's shortfalls with regard to its conduct and performance during the uprisings. Indeed, the state of crisis was even acknowledged in open media and during the 10th Regional Congress of the Ba'th Party.<sup>43</sup> Most of the deliberations took place internally, however, outside of the public view. Conversations between regime insiders during this critical period were recorded by the Ba'thists, providing scholars with a window into how the regime developed its response. This section focuses on two factors that weighed heavily on the minds of regime strategists as they considered policies for reestablishing political and administrative control. The first related to the impact of the economic embargo on options for re-establishing state authority. The second involved regime efforts to understand more about how and why the uprisings emerged in the first place with the goal of avoiding such a politically dangerous situation again in the future.

***Sanctions as a Constraint on State Building*** When UN Resolution 661 was passed in August of 1990, neither Iraqi nor international actors had a sense that the sanctions would last for thirteen years and result in tens of thousands of deaths as a result of malnutrition and disease. From the 1970s through 1990, Iraqis had grown accustomed to a relatively large state sector that provided public goods to a broad swath

of the country's population.<sup>44</sup> In September of 1990, the government introduced monthly food rations that became a vital source of nourishment for Iraqis during the sanctions period.<sup>45</sup> While the rations system helped avoid the outright starvation of millions, there is little doubt that sanctions had a devastating impact on the quality of life and well-being of Iraqis across social classes. Indeed, the Iraqi economy was on the verge of collapse when the Oil-for-Food program was approved in 1996,<sup>46</sup> with food and medicine starting to arrive in early 1997.

The economic, social, and political implications of the embargo were widely discussed by Hussein and his inner circle. During a meeting in December of 1991, Izzat Ibrahim raised the question of how to handle the political implications of sanctions, which were thought to be disastrous for the regime.<sup>47</sup> Ibrahim expressed concerns about the morale of the Iraqi people and suggested that the Ba'th Party leadership cutback on the consumption of meat in order to set a good example for the citizenry through their personal austerity. A meeting between Hussein and his ministers in April of 1992 focused on the black market, the need for frugality during the embargo, and concerns about the dollar-dinar exchange rate.<sup>48</sup> In a meeting between Hussein and his ministers in 1994, skyrocketing inflation and measurement of economic indicators were topics of discussion.<sup>49</sup>

A study prepared by the Ba'th Party Division Command examined economic sanctions and their effects on the values of Iraqi society.<sup>50</sup> The report argued that the economic blockade had led to an increase in crimes, including thefts, kidnappings, fraud, forgeries, and crimes of morality.<sup>51</sup> The study identified major shortfalls of important, previously imported, commodities, like cooking oil, meat, fish, sugar, and milk.<sup>52</sup> According to the report, Iraq was producing only about one-third of its food needs and needed to import the other two-thirds.<sup>53</sup>

***Lessons Learned from the Uprisings*** Beyond discussing the effects of the economic embargo, the Ba'thist leadership also engaged in considerable hand wringing in an attempt to understand both the underlying determinants of the 1991 Uprisings as well as the regime's failures in terms of tactical response and preparation. In a meeting with high-ranking military leaders, Hussein offered his own interpretation of events.<sup>54</sup> He began by suggesting that the American destruction of the Iraqi army set the stage for the events that followed, particularly on the psychological state of the armed forces and their sense of defeat.

Hussein convened a meeting with a number of high-ranking officials from the Republican Guard, Air Force, and Defense ministry in order to reflect on mismanagement associated with the military withdrawal from Kuwait.<sup>55</sup> There was a strong desire to engage in self-assessment and to consider what the events revealed about weaknesses in military leadership. Logistics and effective communication appeared to have been key problem areas. Some commanders and fighters had not received orders, either in writing or by telephone. As a result, the withdrawal from Kuwait was not well organized and at different points during the exit, military leaders were not even sure

where Republican Guard units were physically located. Where withdrawal orders did exist, they were not followed, creating deadly backups on critical roadways.<sup>56</sup>

During these internal discussions, challenges associated with managing Basra, an epicenter of the rebellion, were frequently discussed. The uprisings in Basra were described as unlike those anywhere else and that it was possible that Basra might have been lost with the command sitting in Baghdad, unable to do anything about it.<sup>57</sup> Hussein also spoke directly about the security situation in Baghdad. He said that while there had been some troubles in Baghdad, because the institutions of the state were well represented there, protests were repressed immediately, unlike in more distant cities.<sup>58</sup>

A Ba'th Party Regional Command meeting in December of 1991 sought to assess the regime's political situation. The Ba'th Party was thought to be responsible for both the failures and the successes of the regime.<sup>59</sup> Saddam Hussein discussed the future of the party and said that a first mission was to effectively reconstruct the party, perhaps even decreasing the total number of members in order to improve members' quality and competence.<sup>60</sup> This new strategy would suggest that Ba'th Party members at the upper leadership levels would serve as core contributors.

During a meeting with military commanders in February of 1992, Hussein continued to reflect on the uprisings, expressing his continued shock that he had been betrayed by the Iraqi people.<sup>61</sup> He said that he took personal responsibility for having put so much trust in the citizenry, but that the uprisings would never have happened if there had been proper guidance provided by the Ba'th Party. Hussein went on to emphasize the importance of combatting internal enemies in Iraqi cities.<sup>62</sup> The 1991 Uprisings had demonstrated the weakness of the Ba'th Party, particularly in urban areas.

## **Rebuilding State Strength**

Constraints associated with the economic embargo meant that state-building strategies premised on expensive forms of direct rule were not only beyond the financial capabilities of the regime, but also less effective than the Ba'thists had believed. Discussions within the Ba'thist elite pointed to a more selective focusing of resources in ways that reflected security vulnerabilities revealed during the 1991 Uprisings. This section investigates the qualitative and quantitative archival evidence for two policies that emerged as part of the Ba'thist regime's efforts at rebuilding state strength.

The first strategy involved the empowerment of tribal intermediaries, particularly for rebuilding state strength in rural areas and border regions. In this setting, tribal shaykhs were viewed by the regime as societal actors who had the ability to administer communities through their information networks and local authority. The second strategy involved investment in Ba'th Party recruitment in cities like Basra and Mosul, major urban centers located relatively far from the capital, but close to states hostile to Iraq. The regime's relative over-investment in Iraq's "second cities" reflected deep concerns about the vulnerabilities of urban spaces to popular revolt, as well as regime fears that foreign actors might seek influence in those locations.

The strategies that I discuss in no way exhaust the regime's efforts at state building in the wake of the uprisings. Indeed, a number of different policies were pursued to counter the regime's myriad vulnerabilities. Elsewhere, I provide empirical evidence about the Ba'thists use of privileged bureaucratic status during the 1990s to distribute rewards to loyal segments of the Iraqi population.<sup>63</sup> Scholars have also argued that the Iraqi regime sought to bolster its Islamic credentials in the 1990s through the introduction of religious bans and prohibitions<sup>64</sup> and the cultivation of state-sponsored religious elite.<sup>65</sup> Nor is my goal to say that 1991 represents a radical break in governance style. Recent scholarship has demonstrated important forms of continuity between the 1990s and earlier periods, including the fact that the Ba'th Party continued to play a vital role in governance.<sup>66</sup> Rather, my argument rests on the idea that governance strategies shifted in ways that reflected an increasing sensitivity on the part of the regime to both financial constraints and the linkages between geography and political power.

**Empowering Tribal Elites** The basic inclination of the Ba'thist regime before 1991 was to oppose the cultivation of sub-national social rifts, particularly those that were seen as encouraging divisions within Iraq's diverse society.<sup>67</sup> When the Iraqi Ba'thists first seized power, they "vowed to eradicate tribalism," which was viewed by the regime as a "reactionary vestige of imperialism."<sup>68</sup> Yet there were contradictions in the Ba'thist approach to tribal identity. Saddam Hussein socialized tribal shaykhs, turning them into tools of the regime, while at the same time the security apparatus and the Ba'th Party integrated larger numbers of tribal actors, including the security apparatus and the Ba'th Party.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, tribes were long incorporated into the political apparatus of the Ba'thist regime, even if they took on greater relevance after 1991. During the 1980s, the regime publicly supported tribal shaykhs who pledged to back Saddam Hussein.<sup>70</sup> According to one analyst, Hussein was forced to incorporate tribal structures into the regime during the Iran-Iraq War, as the regime needed tribal political support as well as young tribesmen for draftees into the army.<sup>71</sup> Scholarship that draws on the Iraqi archives also suggests that during the 1980s, there was broad regime engagement with tribes. Blaydes discusses the incorporation of Kurdish and Yezidi tribesmen into the state security apparatus.<sup>72</sup> Faust argues that Hussein curried favor with tribal leaders and mobilized them throughout his presidency, even if tribal incorporation took place in a more public way after 1991.<sup>73</sup>

A number of scholarly accounts point to changes in the relationship between the Ba'thist regime and tribalism in the period after the uprisings. Haddad argues that reliance on tribal elites "became a systematic feature" of the political system.<sup>74</sup> This change in policy was driven by the severe nature of the internal threat as well as the expenses associated with previous "direct rule" strategies of governance. Because the uprisings showed the Ba'th Party to be politically weak and unable to effectively confront the rebels, tribes were seen as crucial agents to secure the Iraqi countryside.<sup>75</sup> For Baram, "the destruction of much of the Iraqi army in the Gulf War made the

shaykhs' local militias useful in that they saved the regime from having to spread its armed forces too thinly."<sup>76</sup> The Ba'athist regime went from rhetorically opposing local patrimonial networks, like tribes, to integrating them into the structure of the state.<sup>77</sup>

What did tribal shaykhs expect to receive from their participation? From the point of view of the tribes, there were benefits from offering one's allegiance to the regime, including money, land, and political influence.<sup>78</sup> In exchange for taking over aspects of policing and provision of justice, tribal allies of the regime received weapons including light arms, rocket launchers, and mortars.<sup>79</sup> Tribal leaders also enjoyed forms of autonomy including the ability to settle disputes in their own areas.<sup>80</sup> Many of the tribal groups that were empowered were smaller tribes,<sup>81</sup> with the effect of increasing their prominence and providing them with opportunities for patronage and influence they would not have otherwise enjoyed.

Dawisha argues that the Ba'athist regime's cultivation of tribal allies paid rapid dividends at a time when the support base of the regime was narrowing.<sup>82</sup> For example, in August of 1992, anti-regime disturbances in southern Iraq were quickly put down by government forces with the help of local tribes.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, some observers have speculated that given the weakened state of central authority, tribal shaykhs could have ordered revolts that could have successfully toppled the Ba'athist regime.<sup>84</sup>

To what extent does the existing literature on Iraqi "neo-tribalism" relate to the internal Ba'ath Party documents?<sup>85</sup> Even before the opening of the Ba'ath Party archives, much could be inferred about the shift to the growing relevance of tribal actors based on Iraqi media, including the appearance of tribal personalities on television, state promotion of tribal networks, and announcements regarding treaties with tribes.<sup>86</sup> Beyond that, Dawisha observes that in the 1990s the tribal revival was also reflected in an increasing number of people attaching tribal affiliation to their names.<sup>87</sup> While the internal documents mirror a number of the themes discussed in the previous scholarship, internal regime deliberations provide additional information about the considerations of state officials as well as the mechanisms by which tribal policies were implemented.<sup>88</sup>

In these deliberations, Hussein expressed his belief that tribal elites would make effective allies of the regime. Hussein asserted that he could understand tribes and tribalism.<sup>89</sup> He said that tribal leaders should be assigned weapons to do their duties, but that these weapons needed to be carefully tracked. A discussion ensued regarding how to effectively engage with tribal agents. Ultimately, Hussein directed his staff to meet with tribal leaders in conjunction with military troops.<sup>90</sup> In a separate meeting between Hussein and the Revolution Command Council, tribes and tribalism were a major topic of discussion.<sup>91</sup> In particular, tribal engagement was seen as an avenue for countering the negative effects of economic sanctions.

A General Security Directorate report provides an extensive discussion about strategies for dealing with tribes.<sup>92</sup> The report describes regime objectives including instilling nationalist sentiment and a feeling of moral obligation among tribesmen; ending behaviors disruptive from the perspective of the state; improving relations between tribal leaders and Ba'ath Party officials; incorporating the sons of tribal leaders into government positions; and empowering tribes to combat crime and protect national

borders. The report concedes that tribes were deployed in new roles as a direct response to the “Page of Treason and Treachery,” regime jargon for the 1991 Uprisings.<sup>93</sup> According to Faust, incorporating tribesmen into the Ba’thist state strengthened the regime’s “reach by extending its authority through tribal sheikhs and their networks of tribesmen.”<sup>94</sup>

Tribes were considered by the regime to play a leading role in providing security and stability.<sup>95</sup> For example, tribal leaders were tasked with dealing with lawlessness in difficult to control areas. One internal Iraqi document describes cooperation between the Ba’th Party and tribal actors known to control rural road crossings in Maysan and Wasit; the cooperative effort led to the killing of alleged criminals.<sup>96</sup> During non-crisis periods, the tribal leaders were asked to create a peaceful environment and cultivate a positive attitude toward the state through clearing their areas of deviant actors while simultaneously socially rehabilitating those who had deviated from regime expectations.<sup>97</sup> Tribal elites were responsible for educating and energizing the members of their tribe regarding their duties toward the state as well as discouraging deviant behaviors and keeping tabs on actors with questionable allegiance to the state.<sup>98</sup> Tribal elites were also encouraged to reduce economic inequality within the tribe and to work within the constraints of regime policies to strengthen the state.

Tribal leaders were to be carefully selected. A good candidate would need to enjoy political support from the Ba’th Party, as well as from members of their tribe.<sup>99</sup> In particular, their social status had to resemble their “official” status (*vis-à-vis* the state), and they had to possess a clean history and a high level of capability.<sup>100</sup> Tribal policies were also to be implemented in a systematic way. A number of best practices were outlined regarding how to categorize the tribes: establish a council to ensure consensual decision making, adopt a principle of holding the tribal leaders responsible for mistakes within the tribal territory, and establish forms of competition between tribal groups to achieve good outcomes from the perspective of the regime. Regime documents explicitly discuss the evaluation of tribal shaykhs as a function of both the size of the group managed as well as whether or not the shaykh participated in formal, national events.<sup>101</sup> In some cases, a tribal shaykh could be moved from category B to category A if they were cooperative with the Ba’th Party.<sup>102</sup>

Additional regime reporting sought to provide detailed information about the composition of Iraqi tribes. This included information about each tribe, the villages where the tribe was most represented, as well as if there were any Communists or adherents of Wahhabi or Sufi Islam within the tribe.<sup>103</sup> Other files provide rosters of tribe members as well as correspondence about tribal issues.<sup>104</sup> According to regime reporting, tribes were considered an important part of the Arab social structure; that tribal peoples were characterized by their generosity, courage, and honesty; and that as a political entity, tribes command group members to abide by its rules and customs.<sup>105</sup> Tribal leaders were responsible for keeping a logbook with the names of members and dignitaries.

A General Military Intelligence Directorate study from 1995 revisited the issue of tribes and tribal engagement four years after the 1991 Uprisings.<sup>106</sup> The report

suggested that tribes were given responsibility for working against destructive societal actors, protecting roadways, evaluating the bravery of tribal agents, and coordinating with local mayors to combat acts of aggression against the state. In one case, tribal affiliates notified the regime about an alleged Iranian incursion into Iraq during which time tribal affiliates were able to thwart the alleged Iranian agents.<sup>107</sup> According to Baram, tribal actors served as “guardians of the frontier.”<sup>108</sup>

However, empowering tribal elites also unleashed the potential for other forms of internal conflict. For example, elevating tribal leaders to key regime allies created incentives for local patrimonial actors to compete with one another as they sought recognition from the state. Disputes regarding who would get to be the leader of a particular tribe became increasingly important, sometimes even generating conflict. One memorandum from the Karbala security directorate to the General Security Directorate sought to deal with a dispute between a tribal leader and his cousin regarding who would be recognized as tribal chief. Two individuals could not share tribal leadership, as this was believed to create friction and reduce accountability. Tribal leaders sometimes also fought over who had the chance to enjoy an audience with Saddam Hussein.<sup>109</sup>

By the mid-1990s, the regime became increasingly concerned with adjudicating conflicts between prospective tribal leaders. For example, a letter sent from a tribal leader to the Office of Tribal Affairs requested confirmation of his status as leader.<sup>110</sup> In a memorandum from a tribal shaykh to Hussein, he introduces himself as the leader of a clan in Wasit and says that, on behalf of himself and the members of his tribe, he had claims to agricultural lands.<sup>111</sup> Correspondence between the Ba’th Party and tribal leaders associated with the Shammar tribe promised the support of Shammari sons to the regime.<sup>112</sup>

According to Davis, over the course of the 1990s, “Saddam rehabilitated tribalism ... by inviting tribal shaykhs to serve as rural government officials in lieu of Ba’th Party members.”<sup>113</sup> Tribes were promoted and organized to serve the Ba’th Party through a reliance on social and traditional culture.<sup>114</sup> The regime’s reliance on tribal affiliation offered particular influence in rural areas, but urban areas had proved to be especially difficult for the regime to control in 1991, suggesting the need for multiple approaches to the challenge of state building.

**Party Development in Iraq’s “Second Cities”** During a meeting of high-level officials in February of 1992, a concerned Ba’thist raised worries about reliance on tribes for safeguarding the regime. The comrade asked whether the social groups being discussed fit a conventional definition of “tribe” and suggested that perhaps the tribe members on whom the regime was relying were just people who had agreed to fight alongside the Ba’th Party. The same individual pointed out that tribal allies were particularly valuable in sparsely populated border areas. He argued that these “tribal” allies may fight alongside the Ba’th Party, but that it would be dangerous to take their commitment for granted.<sup>115</sup> Another Ba’thist suggested that the way to think about the regime’s tribal allies was to imagine that they formed a security belt, or zone, around

Iraqi cities. Tribal allies, while relatively weak inside cities, had the capacity to surround urban areas, supporting the state and regime.<sup>116</sup>

In the same meeting, the Ba'athists struggled with formulating a strategy for controlling city dwellers themselves.<sup>117</sup> Urban residents were described as having low moral values, a contrast to the purported honesty and integrity of tribesmen. During the course of the meeting, it was suggested that maintaining control of Baghdad was critical for the regime. Yet, Baghdad was also the location of the regime's greatest strength. Hussein expressed his belief that the Iranian enemy would enjoy a profound success if they could control the city of Basra. The Ba'athists also suggested that should riots occur in Mosul, the regime would be exposed to Iranian, Syrian, and Turkish intervention. Security forces would need to be ready to mobilize should rebellion occur there.<sup>118</sup>

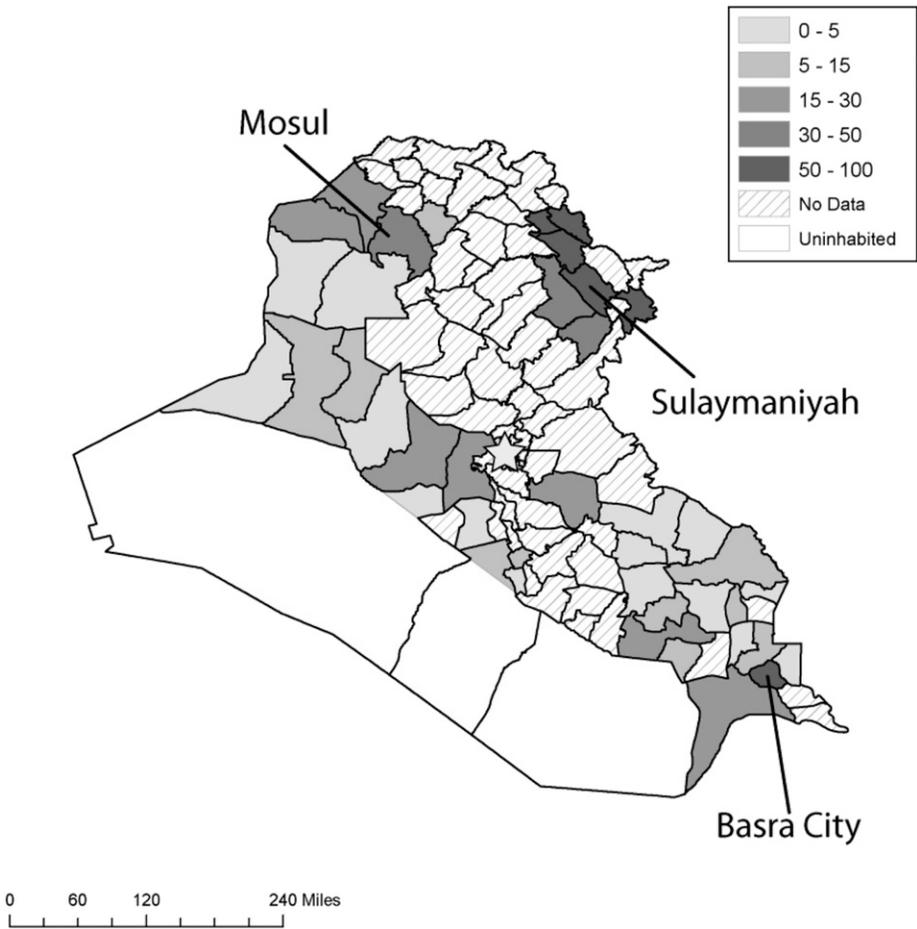
The transcript of this meeting suggests that the Ba'athists recognized that reliance on tribal agents would be insufficient to secure the regime, in and of itself. Additional, complementary strategies would be required. Officials began to discuss how to shore up the Ba'ath Party itself, the regime institution that had been the primary organ of regime political control before 1991.<sup>119</sup>

The Ba'ath Party response in the face of the 1991 Uprisings has been described as a "near-total failure."<sup>120</sup> Given the state of paranoia that existed within the regime regarding the possibility of a repeat of a rebellion, it was determined that the regime needed emergency planning and coordination, particularly among party stalwarts in critical locations.<sup>121</sup> These individuals would need to be able to respond quickly in urgent situations and have access to expensive emergency equipment, like arms and motorcycles. The Ba'ath Party would be forced to concentrate on developing strength in those areas where acts of sabotage might begin and be most dangerous.<sup>122</sup> In a meeting of the Iraqi National Command, Hussein stressed the importance of cultivating the Ba'ath Party with the goal of ensuring party loyalty.<sup>123</sup> Other internal government deliberations suggest that tribal actors were to be empowered, but not at the expense of the Ba'ath Party.<sup>124</sup>

Data from the School Registers suggest some of the places that were most likely to have been rebellion hot spots. The Registers included information about students and their families, including the political orientation of the student. Political orientation in this context identified students as either being Ba'athist or politically independent (*mustaqill*). While the vast majority of students are identified in the Registers as Ba'athists, there are students who are identified as independent, and the percentage of politically independent students varies cross-sectionally within Iraq.

Figure 1 provides information on the spatial variation in politically independent high school students for the 1987–1988 academic year, just a few years before the 1991 Uprisings.<sup>125</sup> Although there exists considerable missingness in the geographic coverage of this variable, a few patterns emerge. The cities of Basra, Sulaymaniyah, and Mosul appear to have the highest percentages of politically independent high school students. These cities were also the largest in Iraq, after Baghdad. Data from the 1987 Iraqi national census suggest that Baghdad, with 3.8 million residents, was by far the

**Figure 1** Cities with Large Numbers of Politically Independent High School Students, 1987–88



country’s largest city. Mosul, Basra, and Sulaymaniyah may be considered Iraq’s “second cities,” with 660,000, 400,000 and 360,000 residents, respectively.

It is also notable that while Baghdad sits squarely in the center of Iraq, many of Iraq’s “second cities” are located closer to the country’s borders. Basra, for instance, is close to the Kuwaiti border and within close proximity of Iran, a country against which Iraq fought a protracted eight-year war. Sulaymaniyah is also located close to the border with Iran; Mosul is within relative proximity of both Turkey and Syria, countries with which Ba’thist Iraq has had difficult and strained relations.<sup>126</sup> All three cities are also relatively distant from Baghdad, making it difficult for security services located in the

capital to reach party cadre in emergency circumstances, particularly if roads were to become blocked. Cities close to the border might easily become surrounded by hostile powers, risking the “beaching” of party cadre in the event of a rebellion. Although Sulaymaniyah was lost to the regime following the uprisings, the Ba’thists were concerned with how to ensure control in Basra and Mosul and recognized that reliance on tribal actors would be insufficient in these cities.<sup>127</sup>

Concerns about another urban rebellion suggested the need to invest in the party apparatus, particularly in “second cities” where the regime was vulnerable. From an empirical perspective, this implies that the Ba’th Party would make the biggest investments in developing loyal party cadre in cities like Basra and Mosul, urban areas that were located relatively far from Baghdad and close to neighboring, hostile states. This hypothesis is tested with data on the size of the Ba’th Party cadre at different levels for two years, 1991 and 1996.<sup>128</sup> I use a difference-in-differences (DID) empirical strategy to examine if those locations saw disproportionate increases in party growth consistent with a “second cities” strategy of state investment.

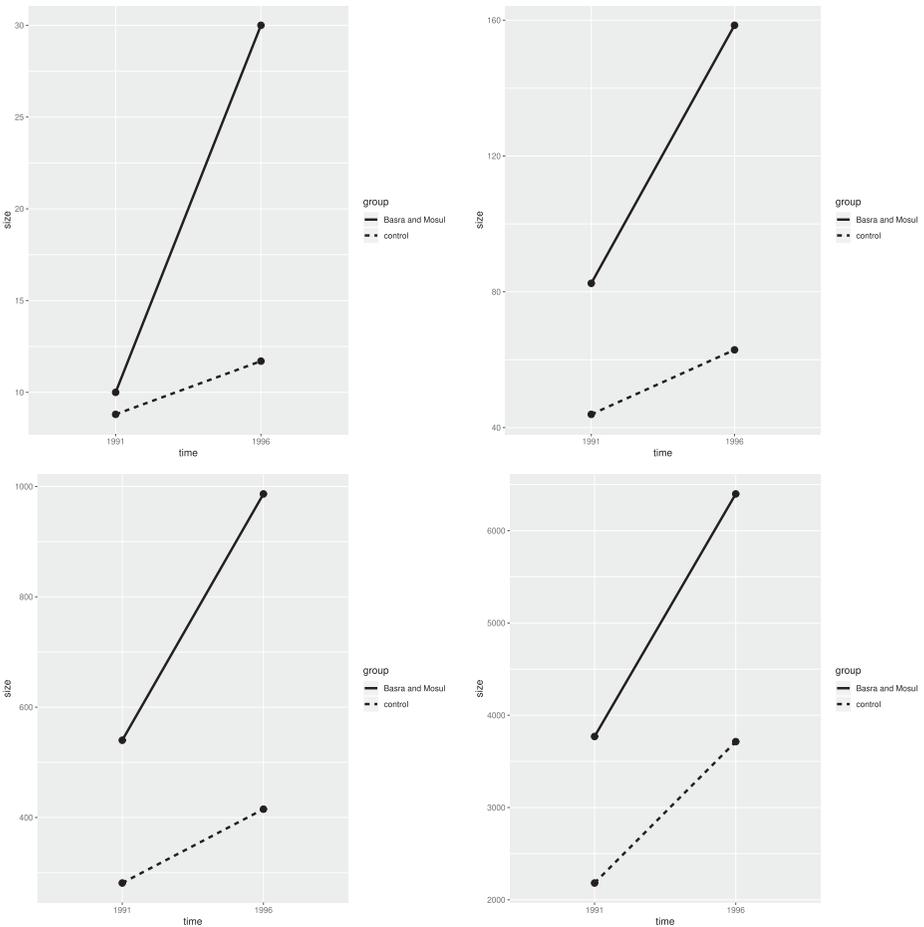
Because the Ba’th Party was hierarchical in structure, it is possible to interrogate the extent to which this pattern existed at different levels of the party structure. Table 1 reports the results of four regressions for data at the department, branch, team, and member levels where each successive level is less exclusive (department is most exclusive). The “second cities” effect is large and statistically significant for all specifications except the member level. In that specification, the coefficient is positive, but the effect is not statistically significant. These results suggest a particular interest in making investments at the higher levels of the Ba’th Party in these locations, rather than filling out the ranks with many lower-level party members. The findings are consistent with Sassoon who emphasizes that while the majority of party affiliates, particularly those at lower levels, played a minimal role, the “upper echelons of membership” were deeply involved in the execution of regime policy.<sup>129</sup>

**Table 1** Coefficient Estimates for DID Regression Analyses at Different Levels of Party Organization

	<b>Department</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Member</b>
“Second Cities”	1.222 (3.616)	38.556 (19.825)	258.667 (122.067)	1587.889 (1095.562)
1996	2.889 (1.167)	19.000 (8.866)	133.722 (54.590)	1531.944 (489.950)
“Second Cities”*1996	17.111 (5.113)	57.000 (28.037)	312.778 (172.629)	1096.556 (1549.358)
Constant	8.778 (1.143)	43.944 (6.269)	281.333 (38.601)	2182.111 (346.447)
Observations	40	40	40	40
R <sup>2</sup>	49.2	49.6	50.4	36.4

Figure 2 provides a graphical depiction of these results. The upper-left quadrant shows the difference in department-level membership for Basra and Mosul compared to all other districts. While these figures were similar in 1991 (around 9 or 10), by 1996 the number jumps to an average of 30 for Basra and Mosul, but grows just modestly for other regions in Iraq. The counterfactual expected membership number for Basra and Mosul is 13, assuming no differential party investment. A similar pattern is observed for other, less elite levels of party membership, though the steepness of the slope flattens for lower levels within the party. In other words, the “second cities” effect is most intense

**Figure 2** Difference in Membership Size between Iraq’s “Second Cities” of Basra and Mosul Compared to the Rest of Iraq across Different Ba’th Party Levels (department, upper-left; branch, upper-right; team, lower-left; member, lower-right)



for the highest levels of the party and flattening out at lower levels, suggesting an investment of the regime's limited resources in cultivating the most dedicated party cadre. To what extent are similar results observed for other cities and regions? There is no statistically significant effect of greater party investment in either southern districts (i.e., those areas most impacted by the southern uprisings) or for Iraq's "Shrine Cities" of Najaf and Karbala.<sup>130</sup>

These findings relate to the existing literature on how to appoint and manage local officials for the Iraqi case and beyond. Within the Iraqi context, the regime shifted from an approach that favored recruiting large numbers of low-level party cadre to one that reflected a more careful appointment of senior officials.<sup>131</sup> This approach may have been a by-product of concerns about defections, leading to larger investments in high-ranking officials in key locations.<sup>132</sup> These findings are also consistent with Hassan who offers a "theory of strategic postings," which suggests that internal security concerns play a crucial role in the placement of loyal officers.<sup>133</sup>

One observable implication of my argument is that concerns about external enemies should have loomed large in Iraq during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Evidence from the archival record suggests that Iraqi society was rife with rumors about external threats in this period, many of which dealt specifically with vulnerabilities in Basra and Mosul. And while rumors were not an accurate representation of the actual external threat level to Iraq and its cities, they did provide a window into the mindset of the Iraqi people, and the Ba'hist regime systematically collected and compiled these rumors, suggesting their political value.<sup>134</sup>

For example, Iraqis envisioned a number of vulnerabilities on the country's western borders, particularly given Mosul's location 130 kilometers from Syria and Turkey. Rumors circulated that Turkey was flooding Mosul with counterfeit currency and that enemy aircraft was flying over Mosul to photograph the city's schools, with the goal of bombing those locations in the future.<sup>135</sup> Iraqis were also concerned that Syria, Israel, and Turkey were conspiring to cut water supplies to Iraq.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, multiple rumors reference how other states would use Turkey's shared border with Iraq to damage Iraqi interests. In one case, it was rumored that Israel was planning to occupy northern Iraq, with help from Turkey.<sup>137</sup> Another rumor suggested that Turkish authorities would allow the U.S. Army to march into Iraq across the Turkish border.<sup>138</sup>

Iranian infiltration was a major, persistent theme of Iraqi rumors during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 1997, multiple rumors discussed vulnerabilities related to Iran. Infiltrators were reported to be entering Iraq from Iran.<sup>139</sup> Additional rumors suggested that Iran was gathering Badr Force troops near Basra.<sup>140</sup> During January and February of 1999, multiple rumors discussed an imminent attack on Basra.<sup>141</sup> Later that year, Iraqis expressed concerns about Iran and Iraq going to war, a conflict Iran was predicted to win.<sup>142</sup> Iraqis also conveyed worry that because of the impending war with Iran, men between the ages of seventeen and twenty years old would be drafted.<sup>143</sup> Rumors of this sort continued into late 1999 and early 2000.<sup>144</sup> One rumor circulating around this time reflected a concern that Iran would be able to occupy major Iraqi cities in just eight hours should Iran go to war with Iraq.<sup>145</sup>

An additional set of rumors combined anxiety about Iraq's multiple external vulnerabilities, describing worries about the country becoming encircled by hostile enemies. One rumor suggested that Iraq would suffer a simultaneous attack from multiple sides initiated by the U.S. along with Iranian and Kurdish agents.<sup>146</sup> In such a scenario, Mosul's proximity to the Kurdish autonomous region would provide another form of vulnerability to external actors. An additional rumor suggested that the U.S. would attack Iraq via the Turkish border in the north and via Basra in the south.<sup>147</sup>

By the early 2000s the regime was dedicating funding and attention to projects less clearly related to short-term security needs. For example, the Ba'thists were investing in the development of youth camps,<sup>148</sup> a state building effort that reflected a relatively long time horizon. The early 2000s also witnessed greater regime attention paid to projects seeking to glorify and cater to the vanity of Saddam Hussein. For example, files from Iraq's Ministry of Information describe efforts to write and distribute a book about Saddam Hussein as an athlete and a hero, focused on Hussein's love for sports and the parallels between sports and war.<sup>149</sup> The Ministry of Information was also tasked with coming up with new slogans on the occasion of Hussein's birthday, including April 28 as a happy day for Iraqis, Arabs, and all of humanity; or April as the month of spring and a new sunrise.<sup>150</sup>

## Conclusion

The management of mass political threats is a fundamental task of authoritarian statehood.<sup>151</sup> In the months immediately following the 1991 Uprisings, Saddam Hussein acknowledged to his advisors that the offices and institutions of the state had not been adequately secured in many parts of Iraq.<sup>152</sup> The manifold challenges faced by the regime in the wake of the revolts demanded a shift in state building strategies from direct to more indirect forms of political rule, in part out of recognition that the regime needed local partners in order to exercise control effectively. Indirect rule strategies may have also been less costly at a time when the regime was forced to economize in terms of its disbursements to regime partners. Hussein and the Ba'th Party began by embracing tribal elites to a greater extent in order to manage security in the countryside and in border areas.

Strategies for managing urban areas differed since tribes had only limited influence in cities.<sup>153</sup> I find—using reports from internal Ba'th Party documents—evidence and incentives for a regime strategy of investment in Iraq's "second cities," those major urban areas located at some distance from Baghdad. While Baghdad was the command post for the security services, cities like Basra and Mosul were viewed cautiously since urban areas were the epicenters of the 1991 Uprisings. As cities proximate to hostile states like Iran, Syria, and Turkey, this also made Basra and Mosul potential liabilities for the Ba'thist state given the possibility of foreign meddling. My results suggest that states—knowing the challenge to state building posed by foreign meddling—preempt the effectiveness of anticipated future infringements on sovereignty through strategic investment in regime networks in those places most susceptible to the intervention of external actors.

## NOTES

Many thanks to Tareq Al-Samman and Sarah Al-Ghattas for outstanding research assistance. Mai Hassan, Michael Hechter, David Samuels, Henry Thomson, and Anna Zhang provided helpful comments.

1. Lisa Blaydes, *State of Repression: Iraq under Saddam Hussein* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).
2. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-614, March 1991.
3. CRRC Doc. No. SH-IISX-D-000-360, 2001.
4. Martin Dimitrov and Joseph Sassoon, "State Security, Information, and Repression: A Comparison of Communist Bulgaria and Ba'athist Iraq," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16 (Spring 2014), 30.
5. See, for example, Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991–96," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29 (February 1997), 1–31.
6. Melissa Lee, "The International Politics of Incomplete Sovereignty: How Hostile Neighbors Weaken the State," *International Organization*, 72 (Spring 2018), 283–315.
7. *Ibid.*
8. See, for example, Michael Hechter and Nika Kabiri, "Attaining Social Order in Iraq," in Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud, eds., *Order, Conflict, and Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 50.
9. Critical geography approaches encourage an understanding of space as a political tool, with attention to how spatial arrangements are used to produce oppression.
10. Stephen Krasner and Thomas Risse, "External Actors, State-Building, and Service Provision in Areas of Limited Statehood," *Governance*, 27 (October 2014), 545–67.
11. The collection is described in Kevin Woods, David Palkki, and Mark Stout, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978–2001* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). On the closing of the CRRC, see Michael Gordon, "Archive of Captured Enemy Documents Closes," *New York Times*, Jun. 21, 2015.
12. See Blaydes, for details on how the School Registers were collected.
13. Hechter and Kabiri.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Michael Hechter, *Alien Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2013), 49.
16. Mounira Charrad, "Central and Local Patrimonialism: State-Building in Kin-Based Societies," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 636 (July 2011), 49–68.
17. Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'athist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (New York: Routledge Press, 2010), 31–32.
18. Hechter and Kabiri, 63–64.
19. See Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jeffrey Herbst, "African Militaries and Rebellion: The Political Economy of Threat and Combat Effectiveness," *Journal of Peace Research*, 41 (May 2004), 357–69; James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, 97 (February 2003), 75–90; Yuri Zhukov, "Roads and the Diffusion of Insurgent Violence: The Logistics of Conflict in Russia's North Caucasus," *Political Geography*, 31 (March 2012), 144–56.
20. See Sebastian Schutte, "Geography, Outcome and Casualties: A Unified Model of Insurgency," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59 (September 2015), 1101–28. Also see Sebastian Schutte, "Geographic Determinants of Indiscriminate Violence in Civil Wars," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 34 (July 2017), 380–405.
21. See Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For a review of the literature on challenges associated with policing peripheral areas, see Clionadh Raleigh and Havard Hegre, "Population Size, Concentration, and Civil War: A Geographically Disaggregated Analysis," *Political Geography*, 28 (May 2009), 224–38.
22. Herbst, 2004.
23. See Zhukov, 2012, on the logistics of how military operations can be sustained, expanded, or relocated to various geographical areas matter from the perspective of insurgents.
24. Lee.
25. *Ibid.*
26. James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

27. *Ibid.*, 15.
28. Jeremy Wallace, *Cities and Stability: Urbanization, Redistribution and Regime Survival in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.
29. *Ibid.*, 21.
30. See Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011); Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Blaydes.
31. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-848, 1990.
32. In January of 1991, Hussein and Iraqi officials met to prepare for the commencement of U.S. military strikes; there was no discussion about the possibility of popular protest, however. See CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-D-000-818, January 1991, for more details.
33. Sandra Mackey, *The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 286–87.
34. Rohde, 63.
35. Chamchamal sits on the main road between Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk while Raniya is located at the intersection of both a north-south and east-west artery.
36. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-000-947, March 1991.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. CRRC Doc. No. SH-GMID-D-000-621, March 1991.
40. CRRC Doc. No. SH-RPGD-D-000-581, March-April 1991.
41. CRRC Doc. No. SH-GMID-D-000-621, March 1991.
42. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-891, 1991.
43. Amatzia Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968–2003. Ba’thi Iraq from Secularism to Faith* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 231.
44. Haddad, 88, goes as far as to argue that the Iraqi state provided “cradle to grave services” in the period before 1990.
45. See Joy Gordon, *Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) and Alissa Walter, “Petitioning Saddam: Voices from the Iraqi Archives,” *Truth, Silence, and Violence in Emerging States: Histories of the Unspoken*, Editor, Aidan Russell (London: Routledge, 2018). Also see CRRC Doc. No. SH-BATH-D-000-492 for more details. According to Walter, petitions provided an important way for ordinary Iraqis to access government aid, including as related to the distribution of rations.
46. Haddad, 88.
47. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-461, December 21, 1991.
48. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-465, August 17, 1992.
49. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-478, c. 1994.
50. CRRC Doc. No. SH-BATH-D-000-492.
51. *Ibid.* On the other hand, the report’s authors believed that the blockade had increased a sense of Iraqi national sentiment.
52. *Ibid.*
53. The study also referenced a 1994 Iraqi Ministry of Health report that found medical problems that had been virtually eliminated before the sanctions had reemerged, including night blindness, thyroid gland inflammation, cholera, rabies, polio, and viral kidney inflammation.
54. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-739, April 1991.
55. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-242, c. 1991.
56. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-832.
57. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-739, April 1991.
58. *Ibid.*
59. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-461, December 21, 1991.
60. *Ibid.*
61. CRRC Doc. No. SH-RVCC-D-000-610, February 1992.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Blaydes.
64. Haddad, 107.
65. Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

66. See Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Aaron Faust, *The Ba'athification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), and Helfont.

67. See Baram, 1997 and Keiko Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets and the National Assembly," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Press, 2003), 136.

68. Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 238.

69. Baram, 1997, 1.

70. Haddad, 96.

71. Martin Walker, "Buying the Tribes from Saddam," *United Press International* (April 3, 2003).

72. Blaydes.

73. Faust, 141–42.

74. Haddad, 96.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Baram, 1997, 19.

77. Charrad, 61.

78. Baram, 1997, 12–13.

79. Baram, 1997, 13; Faleh Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2003), 96; Haddad, 99.

80. Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 265.

81. Baram, 1997, 6.

82. Adeer Dawisha, "'Identity' and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq," *Middle East Journal*, 53 (Autumn 1999), 565.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Jesmeen Khan, "The Iraqi Tribal Structure Background and Influence on Counter-Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 1 (2007), 3–11.

85. Baram, 1997.

86. Haddad, 98.

87. Dawisha, 2009, 239.

88. While the internal documents provide insights into the political landscape around the incorporation of tribes during the early 1990s, it is difficult to measure the extent of regime reliance on tribal actors even within the rich data provided by the archival collections. In an ideal setting, one would have data on tribal incorporation from the 1980s as a baseline for comparison. There is no obvious metric for measuring the influence of the regime's tribal engagement for the period before 1991, however.

89. CRRC Doc. No. SH-RVCC-D-000-610, February 1992.

90. *Ibid.*

91. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-269, February 1992.

92. CRRC Doc. No. SH-IDGS-D-000-370, 1991–92.

93. *Ibid.*

94. Faust, 143.

95. *Ibid.*

96. BRCC Doc. No. 008-4-6-114 to 118, May-July 1995.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*

101. BRCC Doc. No. 027-5-1-493-228 to 230, October 7, 2001.

102. BRCC Doc. No. 027-5-1-493-440, October 1, 2001. This type of evaluation resembles strategies for evaluating religious leaders during the 1990s.

103. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-001-090, July 6, 1992.

104. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-000-327, 1994–95.

105. *Ibid.*

106. CRRC Doc. No. SH-GMID-D-000-622, March-December 1995.

107. *Ibid.*

108. Baram, 2014, 240.

109. CRRC Doc. No. SH-IDGS-D-000-370, 1991–92.

110. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-000-327, 1994–95.

111. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-000-327, 1994–95.
112. BRCC Doc. No. 005-1-2-401, May 7, 1995.
113. Davis, 239.
114. CRRC Doc. No. SH-IDGS-D-000-370, 1991–92.
115. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-001-269, February 1992.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-V-001-250, 1993.
120. Baram, 1997, 7.
121. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-562, c. 1990s.
122. Ibid.
123. CRRC Doc. No. SH-SHTP-A-000-625, 1993.
124. CRRC Doc. No. SH-MISC-D-000-327, 1994–95.
125. These district-level figures are generated based on the political orientation of thousands of individual high school students.
126. Hussein was long concerned with the possibility of a pro-Syrian Ba’th splinter party.
127. The 2014 fall of Mosul to ISIS speaks to the vulnerability of the city to external actors, including those emanating from Syria.
128. The data used in this analysis are from BRCC Boxfile No. 01-3721-0003.
129. Sassoon, 8.
130. Najaf and Karbala are both pilgrimage destinations and locations of major Shi’i shrines.
131. Baram, 2014, 231.
132. Kevin Koehler, Dorothy Ohl, and Holger Albrecht, “From Disaffection to Desertion: How Networks Facilitate Military Insubordination in Civil Conflict,” *Comparative Politics*, 48 (July 2016), 439–57.
133. Mai Hassan, “The Strategic Shuffle: Ethnic Geography, the Internal Security Apparatus, and Elections in Kenya,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 61 (April 2017), 382–95.
134. See Blaydes, for more on rumors as a reflection of societal concerns in Ba’thist Iraq.
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136. BRCC Doc. No. 133-5-7-0135, February 24, 2000.
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