



Historical Analysis of the Iraqi Shiites' Status from the Era of Imam Ali (AS) until the fall of Saddam

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Abstract:

Iraqi Shiites make up near 60 percent of the population live in the southern half of the country. However, they have been rarely in the circles of power throughout history and often under colonial domination of minorities that reached its peak during the rule of the Ba'ath Party. Thus, the Shiites were considered as an opposition through the history of Iraq, particularly after the World War I and the entry of Britain, although the intensity of the struggle varied according to different conditions. As noted, the Shiites who were in a weak position throughout the Iraq's history were able to gain significant influence on the structure of the Iraqi government and build a Shiite government due to changes in their country after 2003. The Shiites pursue their goals as Islamist parties and groups, and although they differ in many details of their goals, they are united in their general identity, Islam, and establishment of a Muslim community, and seek, in the light of religious doctrines, giving meaning to future policies of their country. This research aims to investigate the Iraqi Shiites' historical status from the era of Imam Ali (AS) until the fall of Saddam.

Keywords: Shiite, Iraq, Imam Ali (AS), Saddam, British, Ottoman

Introduction

Iraq is an Arab and Muslim country in the West Middle East. It consists of three ethnic groups of Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds, where the combination of Shia and Sunni sects has given a complexity to its socio-political

structure. Shiites form about 60 percent of Iraq's population who are residing in the southern part of the country. In the northern half of the country, the Sunnis and Kurds are settled. The sacred places and holy shrines of six Imams as well as the Najaf Seminary,

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which is one of the two important Shiite Seminaries in the world, have granted a special situation to this country.

Indeed, many of the Iraqi people, especially villagers, attended to Islam by the victory of Muslims in the seventh century. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, a minority of the Muslim community rejected the legitimacy of the Umayyad rulers and knew Imam Ali (AS) and his children as the rightful successors. The group was called "Shiite". The new Muslims in Iraq also favored Shia because the Islamic Nation was not managed appropriately. Kufa in southern and Madain in central Iraq were the first base of Shia. (Joyce Ann, 1995: 22-23)

With all that said, even though the majority of Iraq's population was composed of Shia, they have been rarely in the circle of power in the history of this country and they were often isolated and marginalized. Shiites were often ruled by the minority and under colonial domination and kept away from the main centers of decision making, particularly since the rule of the Ba'ath Party. Iraqi Sunnis were dominant on political structure of the country from long in the past and have always enjoyed a position of superiority for a variety of reasons, including the support of the Ottoman Empire, their cohesion with a population of Sunni Arabs in the Middle East, as well as their most prominent role in the history of Iraq. Specifically, this dominance continued since the formation of Independent National Government in 1932 to the formation of the Iraqi Transitional (Governing) Council in 2003. With all the above comments, the Shiites have been always considered as an opposition group for the governments throughout the history of Iraq, and in particular since the First World War with the arrival

of British colonialism, although the intensity of their struggle differs according to different conditions.

The concept of Shia

The word Shia's rooted from Moshayea, which it means to obey and follow. If the word Shia's used solely without any adverb, it is referred to the people who love Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and believe in their Imamate. (Mozaffar, 2005: 5)

Ibn Khaldun in the introduction of "al-Ebr" (p. 138) writes: "Shia literally means companions and followers. In the words of jurists and theologians - including descendants and predecessors, this word refers to the followers of Ali (AS) and his sons." Dedicating this title to the lovers of Ahl al-Bayt is as long as the dawn of Islam. (Mozaffar, 2005: 34)

Literally, Shia also means the claim to follow. As we say "Shia al-Rajol", it means that the person has a claim to being Shia. However, the sect of Shia is also called "Tashayo". (Dehkhoda, 2006: Shi'a)

In Arabic, the word Shia is also being used for party. Hence, the Shiite of Ali is against the Shiite of Moavia. (Welhousen, 2007;139)

Shiite does not believe the caliphate of God for any who except Ali and his children. That is why the governments of that time did not provide the slightest opportunity to promote and release it and provided a stifling environment for them as much as they could. With the rise of Shi'ism and its strengthening, they feared that their organization become shaky. (Mozaffar, 2005: 48)

Shiite's religious and political principles are based on the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is important because it

proves that: Shia's the natural born of Islam and its beliefs are rooted in the Quran and Hadith texts. Secondly, it shows that the emergence of this religion, at least in terms of the ideology of prophecy era, returns to the historical events after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Shiites know Imamate and Velayat as the continuation of prophecy, believe that Imamate, like prophecy is out of human determination, and should be made by divine revelation through the Prophet Muhammad. Accordingly, infallibility is also one of the essential features of Imamate.

Shia's History from Imam Ali's Caliphate

16-year period that began with the Uthman's caliphate and ended with the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS) shows a significant difference from the previous caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar in the expansion of Shia. This course is in many ways a turning point in the evolution of Shia. Firstly, there was an atmosphere during this period in which Shiite tendencies are clearer, more pronounced and popular. Secondly, events took place that gave active and sometimes violent aspect to the Shiite movement which was passive before. At the end, the circumstances occurred that include some political, geographical and economic aspect of Shiite thinking for the first time. (Jafari, 1981; 18)

After the murder of Uthman, Imam Ali (AS) came to caliphate and the Shiite rule lasted nearly 6 years from 35 to 41 BC. In this period, the Shiite boomed and could freely promote its principles after 25 years. Imam Ali (AS) in his first sermon after the allegiance, invited people to the school of Ahle al-Bayt and the Shiites also invited people to Jihad in companion with Imam Ali (AS). In this era, the Shiites were successively fighting the corrupt of internal agents and it can

be seen during the peak of the Shiite Jihad. (Hosseinian, 2004: 35)

Imam Ali (AS) had followers in Iraq before reaching the caliphate and before selecting Kufa the capital city. After the incident of Jamal in Iraq, it was regarded as the strongest cause for the publication and dissemination of loyalty and love of Imams in Iraq, and especially in Kufa as the capital of the caliphate. Thus, Mu'awiya and his agents, who were from Al Marwan, attempted to eradicate Shiite from Iraq and Kufa, because Kufa was a land where the seed of Shia was planted and developing. (Mozaffar, 2005: 141)

After the peace of Imam Hassan (AS) in 41 A.H until the uprising of Imam Hussein (AS) at the beginning of the year 61 BC, the period of Shiite tribulation begins. This period is the most suffering period of Shi'ism, because the propaganda system shook the nascent tree of Shia. Shiite leaders were martyred brutally and Shiite leaders were isolated.

The movement of Imam Hussein (AS) was the firmest and most robust resort of Shia in Iraq and Kufa. Although Kufa got Imam Hussein (AS) to be killed, it came to the aid of Imams after his martyrdom and killed the killers of Imam Hussein (AS). The martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) is an emotional and intellectual focus that affected the attitude of the Shiite toward the world. Throughout the centuries after this event, the Shiite group rituals on this occasion are held in three main holy cities of Najaf, Karbala and Kadhimiya. The effectiveness of these collective rituals practices is to the extent that helped the consciousness of those Shiites who are not purely religious.

The era of Imam Sajjad (AS), Imam Baqir (AS) and Imam Sadiq (AS), around 67 to 136 A.H, include the utmost authority and dictatorship until the collapse of the Umayyad and

finally the consolidation period of the Abbasid dynasty. The Shiite leaders in this period mainly attempted to train human resources, deepen the Shiite teachings, recognize the Holy Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt school in front of the ruling juridical schools and promote Shi'ism while maintaining Taqiya. (Hosseini, 2004: 54)

Nevertheless, since 136 B.C, a new repression against Shiites began and continued until 193 AD coincided with the death of Harun al-Rashid. By the caliphate of Mammon and imposition of covenant guardianship on Imam Reza (AS), Shiites found a relative freedom and started to promote Shi'ism apparently. During this period, Imam Reza (AS) tried to clarify the boundaries of the Alawite Shia and Abbasid Shia. Because the Abbasids, like Umayyad, had introduced themselves as the descendants of the Prophet. At the time of Imam Javad (AS), Shia had become a powerful party, particularly in Baghdad.

The Imamate of Imam Hadi (AS) and Imam Hassan Askari (AS) were the power of Shia and fear of Caliphate. The Abbasid caliphs in this era greatly feared Shiites' power and started rigidity upon them. Mutawakkil made this rigidity to the extent that everyone who believed in the guardianship of Ali (AS) and his family was killed. However, Shiites' power had reached to the point where the actions of caliphs not only weakened their forces, but also inflame their anger. After the martyrdom of Imam Hassan Asgari (AS), the Minor Occultation (260-329 BC) began. In this era, Shiites were linked to their Imam through four special deputies of Imam Zaman (AS) called Osman ibn Saeed, Saeed bin Osman, Hussein bin Rouh, and Ali bin Muhammad Samari.

The Domination of the UK and Shia Scholars

The First World War found profound changes in Iraq. As soon as the war began, Britain invaded Iraq from the Persian Gulf, and the Shia scholars declared Jihad in response. Even the scholars like Seyed Mohsen Hakim, who later became a prominent Shiite authority in Iraq, went to the front. Another important point was that the declaration of Jihad got thousands of Arab tribesmen to join Turkish forces for repelling the aggression. Despite the common defense efforts, Britain was able to occupy Baghdad at last. Thus, in 1916, Iraq was separated from the Ottoman Empire and became under the tutelage of England. However, English troops faced the opposition of Iraqi Shiites. Najaf uprising was the first confrontation between the Iraqi people and the English forces that was planned by the scholars of "Islamic movement". The uprising began in March 1918/6 Jumada al-Sani 1336 AH and finally ended with the arrest of revolutionaries after a 46-day siege of Najaf by the British forces. (Alhasani, 1999:184-183)

Generally, the presence of English troops in Iraq their long conflict with the Muslim people of this country led to the establishment of fighting groups and parties that the main ones are:

- Najaf Confidential Party that was formed in the 1918 and got supporters in Baghdad, Karbala, Hillah, etc.;
- Najaf Scientific Community established in 1918;
- Islamic Homeland Community that was formed in 1918 in Karbala;
- Islamic Community that was formed in 1918 in Kadhimiya;

- Defense of Independence Community that was formed in Baghdad in 1919. (Fazlipour, 2003)

Thawra al-Eshreen (Iraqi Revolt against the British)

After Najaf uprising, the Shiite activities led the Iraqi public positions toward armed revolution against British colonialists (Alhasani, 1999: 241), because Muslims' obedience of non-Muslim government was in conflict with Islamic ideology of the Muslims in Iraq. Hence, many nationalist groups were formed such as the Shiite-Sunni group called "Haras Al-Istiqlal" led by Seyyed Mohammad Hassan Sadr and with the support of prominent Shia scholars. One of the main goals of this group was bringing a son of Sharif Hussein (of the Hashemite family and the Sunni Muslims) to the kingdom of Iraq (Joyce, 1995: 32-33). Revolution 1920, also known as "Thawra al-Eshreen" (Iraqi revolt against the British), was led by scholars such as Mohammad Saeed al-Haboubi, Kashef al-Gheta, Seyed Mohsen Hakim, Seyed Abu al-Hasan Isfahani and Seyed Mohammad al-Shabibi. (www. Mehrnews.ir) Indeed, it was not only a Shiite revolution but also a revolution of the Iraqi people led by a Shia authority. Shiites at the time had no claim for Shiite religion, but they put forward two demands: the first one was political demand, i.e. an independent Iraqi state should be formed and the occupiers must not be dominant. The second demand was the issue of all Iraqi tribes, both Shiite and Sunni, who were suppressed by the British. (Interview with Mousavi, 22/12/2006) Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Shirazi, Iranian and Persian-speaking clergy, who was the most important Shia cleric in Iraq at that time, issued a fatwa that: "No one but Muslims has the right to rule over Muslims". He also wrote a letter to Sharif Hussein

about the establishment of an Arab kingdom in Iraq. Many scholars and important people in Karbala, Najaf and Kadhimiya and other cities, supported these measures, but many of them were arrested and the British deported some. In the spring of 1920, Iraq was declared officially under British mandate and the Iraqis found that they will not gain independence without war. Shiite clergymen including the leaders of Haras Al-Istiqlal with the cooperation of some Sunni scholars called the tribes to revolt. Most Sunni tribes did not participate in the uprising because of the British financial assistances. Thus, the Iraqi revolution 1920 lasted for three months by the participation of about one-third of the Iraqi people, and finally failed by the intervention of the British Air Force and massacre of more than nine thousand people. (Joyce, 1995: 31-35)

The Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq (1932-1958)

After the suppression of the revolt, the British chose Faisal, son of Sherif Hussein, as the king of the new Iraqi government to prevent another possible uprising. The majority of cabinet members were the former Ottoman officers. They were Sunni, like Faisal and mostly came from Baghdad and moderate families. (Shirzad, 3/4/2004) After determining the cabinet ministers, an English consultant was appointed for each minister, so that the Minister must do nothing without coordination with his adviser. The dependence of the new government made the Shia scholars lose their passion to form the new one, especially because there was no Shiite person among officials and governors. Thus, from 1921 when the British took the Faisal's family to power in Iraq and dominated the monarchy system in the country, the Shiites were marginalized once again. (www. mehr-

news. ir/fa/newsprint. aspx? News ID=111181)

Britain's decision to hand over the government and positions to the Sunnis and the marginalization of the Shiites might have several reasons: during the war between the Ottomans and English invaders, the Shiites were chiefly against Great Britain and fought along with the Turks because of religious considerations. In contrast, a small number of Sunni leaders supported the British. Another reason for the British's tendency to Sunnis was political activity of the Shiite top clergymen - who often were of Iranian origin - and could harm British interests in Iraq and in Iran. Cancellation of Tobacco Concession, supporting the constitutional movement in Iran in 1909, Ayatollah Shirazi's fatwa prohibiting the domination of non-Muslims on the Muslimsetc. Are the examples of Shiite clerics' resistance against British colonialism? Such movements could reflect Shiites as an undesirable partner and thus led Britain to support the Sunni community that was less stressful. Based on this fact, the efforts of Shiites as the majority population of Iraq for their rights were not satisfactory. During the 35-year rule of the Hashemite family, Shiites had a marginal role in Iraq's politics. However, King Faisal, particularly at the end of his life, adopted compromising policy with Shiites, because he knew the political system in which Arab minority Sunni rule out the Arab majority Shiite and the Kurd massive minority as an unstable system. Therefore, he tried to assign limited role to the Shiites in his Cabinet. (Dekmejian, 1993:192) Thus, from 1947 onwards, 4 of the 23 prime ministers were Shiite. In addition, several members of the Cabinet, as well as a large number of MPs were Shia, although these few people

were not employed in critical sector such as the economy and defense. (Fouler, 2006:3-4) The low participation of Shiites in the Hashemite government is not comparable with that of the Ottoman Empire. While no Shiites were in the Ottoman parliament, in the Hashemite Parliament in 1928, 26 out of 88 members were Shia. (Joyce, 1995: 42)

Although the revolt in 1920 failed, but led to the relatively important gains. The most important result of the Iraqi revolt against the British was the failure of British project Wilson's on the refusal to recognize an Iraqi government. The project had made the following suggestions before the revolt:

1. Making Iraq as an Indian country through the displacement of thousands of Indians and making the destiny and fate of Iraq dependent to the government of India.
2. Settlement of the Jewish immigrants in Iraq under the aegis of the United Kingdom and also the domination over Palestine and transforming it into a Jewish living state.
3. Division of Iraq by separating Basra and its accession to India so that the Gulf becomes an English-Indian sea. British occupiers forced a number of their pro dignitaries in the city to set a Protocol in this field.
4. Assigning Mosul to France and the French use of minority to achieve this goal.

Generally, Wilson, vice regent of Britain in Iraq, believed that there is no relationship between Iraq and other Arab countries. His ambition was to form a government in Iraq, which is one of the colonies of the British monarchy within the framework of "Dominion". However, an Iraqi revolt against the

British made fundamental changes in the political perspectives of England toward Iraq. As a result, a serious attitude about the formation of a local government as a self-reliant political unit began. (Javadi, 2005)

Clergymen and scholars, as leaders of the Shiite community, despite the failure of the uprising in 1920 and the events that have passed, continued to fight for the country's independence from the domination of non-Muslims. They prohibit Shiites from serving the government that was illegitimate. In 1920, they opposed to attendance of Shiite students in newly founded government schools, because they believed that these schools provide secular education and take children out of the supervision of clergymen. With the formation of the Iraqi army in 1921, scholars opposed with the presence of Shiite young. It is also noteworthy that, at that time some of the Shiites had differences on some political issues. For instance, "Vatani Party" believed in the collaboration with Sunnis to break free from the grip of Britain, while the "Movement Party" supported putting pressure on the Sunni government in order to obtain job for the Shiites.

In April 1922, two hundred of important Shiite figures in Karbala held a conference that it is most important provisions were as follows: full political independence and the end of the British mandate, immediate formation of the National Assembly and half of the cabinet ministers and government officials should be Shiite. In June 1923, Shiite clerics issued a fatwa and banned the participation of people in the constitutional parliamentary election to pass the mandate relationship between Iraq and Britain. Against this move, the British exiled those clerics issued such fatwas, including Sheikh Mehdi Khalesi and his son. This English measure led to the migration of a number of prominent scholars

and clerics from Iraq to Iran. In addition, some exiled leaders also signed a bond to step down from politics and could return to Iraq. So many affairs such as endowments and the religious court that were previously in the hand of scholars became in the area of administration. (Joyce en, previous: 37-41)

In March 1930, the UK chose one of the puppets called "Nuri al-Said" as Prime Minister. He also oversaw the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Interior, thus he was able to suppress any opposition. However, after the growing public discontent, he was forced to leave all positions in 1932. The new Prime Minister during two years signed a 25-year agreement with Great Britain that its provisions were applicable since the adoption of Iraq in the UN. Under the agreement, Iraq has become an independent state since then. The agreement also allowed Britain to keep two important military bases called Habbaniyah and Shu'aibain in addition to the protection of all political-economic concessions in Iraq.

In 1932, Iraq won its independence from Great Britain and was accepted as an independent state in the UN, but British influence was continued through the cabinet ministers and advisors, as well as continued control of Iraq's oil. (Fathi, 2004) In 1933, King Faisal died. Ghazi I was the only son of Faisal I, who came to power in 1933 and took the reign for about 5 years and half. However, he was actually deprived of political power and finally died in 3rd April 1939. (United Press International, 2004)

In the first year of the reign of King Ghazi, military service became compulsory and military personnel rose twice before. During the years 1935 and 1936, few protests took place by the tribes against the feudal and the compulsory military service law. However, the scholars took no part in this uprising and

refused the opposition against the government. A prominent scholar like Ayatollah Abul Hasan Isfahani did not interfere in the political affairs. After him, the supreme Shiite Clergy Ayatollah Boroujerdi also adopted the same way. Ayatollah Boroujerdi in a conference in 1950 ensured that scholars would refrain from interfering in politics as before.

The successor of the reign of Ghazi was his only son, Faisal II (1935-1958AD). But, when his father died, his uncles the regent took the government of Iraq from April 1939 to May 1953 because Faisal II, was too young to rule (4 years old). During these years, Iraq had undergone various events, including Zionists' immigration to Palestine, which led to the establishment of Israel. In support of the Palestinian Grand Mufti who had taken refuge in Baghdad, the Regent was forced by the public opinion to appoint "Rashid Ali Gilani" who was pro-German as the Prime Minister.

Soon Baghdad was besieged with the intervention of English and Jordanian troops and in October 1941, Nuri al-Said reappointed as the Prime Minister. King Faisal II in 1953 took the reign while the situation in Iraq was troubled. At the beginning of 1954 when Nuri al-Said became Prime Minister for the twelfth time, (Bigdeli, previous: 32-35) the political parties were banned, but political opposition and public protests still continued in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities by 1958. Especially with the participation of the British in attacking Egypt (sudden attack of English, French and Israeli fighters to the Suez Canal in 1956), people protested in the streets of Najaf and other cities every day. Even some moderate clergymen were unable to do anything in spite of the government's request to calm the people. (Joyce, 1995, 42-48)

Abdul-Karim Qasim's Reign (1958-1963)

Since early 1958, the Iraqi people wanted to impose the rules of democracy in political and economic life of the country and lack of cooperation with the western colonial governments. The coup in 1952 by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt has an important effect on the minds of the Arabs, particularly the Iraqi people, and made Abdul Nasser very popular among the people to the extent that his nationalist and reformist ideas not only crept among people but also among young military officers. 200 of them founded a group called "Free Officers" and Major General Abdul Karim Qasem was appointed as the Supreme Committee Commander of this group. One of the main objectives of this committee was to overthrow the monarchy.

In the fourteenth July 1958, the nineteenth brigade led by General Abdul Karim Qasem and the twentieth brigade led by Abdul Salam Arif surrounded Baghdad and executed Faisal II and his Vice-Regent after breaking into the Riyadh Palace. The public welcomed this coup, or "revolution", which is the peak of the protest process against Great Britain and its affiliated system. (Seifzadeh, 2000)

By the formation of the Revolutionary Command Council, Abdul Karim Qasim, who was a leftist, was elected as President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense as Minister and Abdul Salam Arif as the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq. During the five-year rule, Qasim gave the seats of power to his friends and loyalists and imposed a military dictatorship. Since early 1960, the differences between Qasim and Arif emerged for a variety of reasons, including the cooperation of Qasim with the Communists. At this time, Arif had communications with Qasim's opponents, including

Nasserism, Baathists and generally the nationalist camp. Hence, he was dismissed from all his positions and later on he was arrested and sentenced to death for suspicion of involvement with the Baathists in a conspiracy against the government. Perhaps, one of the greatest weaknesses of Qasim during his reign was that he could not adopt a balancing policy between communism and nationalism, or between the alliance with Syria and the Soviet Union.

Abdul Salam Arif's Coup

In early 1963, Qasim got involved in the overt and covert conflicts with all political groups, like the Baathist Party, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and even the Communist Party, and this led him to lose a lot of supporters among the masses. These conflicts along with other internal and external problems such as a dispute with the British Petroleum Company caused many problems for Qasim. In the eighth February 1963, Abdul Salam Arif's plan to coup was carried out with the help of the Baath Party and bombing the head quarter of Qasim. The day after the coup, Qasim surrendered to the coup and was executed. (Jamili, 1992: 98-107) The Revolutionary Command Council, composed of prominent members of the Baath Party and some non-Baathist members, appointed Abdul Salam Arif (the Sunni nationalist and pro-Nasserist officer) as interim President and Hassan al-Bakr as the Prime Minister. Shortly after coming to power of the Baath in Iraq, the party was divided into two branches, and the disputes between them increased. Under such circumstances, Arif declared the formation of a new government by the presidency of an old officer called Tahir Yahiya and then banned all the parties and finally established a military dictatorship.

With the arrival of Abdu Salam, the government officials wanted the Shiite authority to endorse the government with a telegraph, but Ayatollah Seyed Mohsen Hakim, who was familiar with the Baath Party, refused. In order to protest and assert themselves against the Baathists and spirits up people, they travelled along with a number of dignitaries and believers of Najaf for a month and visited Karbala, Kadhimiyan, Samarra and Baghdad. This journey that was welcomed by the people everywhere, in fact, was considered to be a warning for coup leaders. Following the great popular maneuver, the coup leaders realized the power and authority of the Muslims and undertook efforts to communicate with Hakim. But he never allowed them to visit and enjoy his name.

One of Arif's measures to undermine the role and authority of Shiite clergymen was raising the flag of ethnicity. He considered the Sunnis as Arabs with original race and the Shiites as non-Arab and Persian people and bounded himself to save the honor of the Arabs. Shiite clerics stand against this behavior and put a meeting with the coup leaders subject to taking back the positions against Shiites. These disputes led Arif to greater violence and a lot of followers and representatives of the Shiite clerics were exiled or imprisoned. However, the link between Shia clerics and people as well as Sunni scholars was to the extent that Arif soon saw himself against people and even Sunni clerics. So he turned to be soft and tried to release the Islamic groups. ([http://www. Hawzah. Net/per/h/hg/hg58. Htm](http://www.Hawzah.Net/per/h/hg/hg58.Htm))

Arif in April 1966 was killed in the fall of his helicopter and the National Defense Council elected his brother Abdul Rahman Arif to the presidency. Among his measures are ceasefire with the Kurds and recognizing their rights within the law, missioning a rep-

representative to resolve disputes with some neighboring countries, close cooperation with nationalists and Nasserists and also opposition to imperialism. In the days of her reign, the country was led to the political open space. The Communist and the Baath Party, which were driven out by Abdul Salam from the political arena, began their overt activity again. Abdul Rahman tried to sweep the officers during his presidency and thus prompted them to himself. The secret organization of Free Young Officers were raised among the dissidents and sought to overthrow the government. In the spring of 1968, they surrounded the presidential palace led by Hassan al-Bakr. Abdul Rahman Arif surrendered and was exiled to London in its bid and after that, Hassan al-Bakr personally formed his cabinet. At this time, Saddam Hussein Takriti was appointed as the secretary of the Revolutionary Council and Vice President.

Shiite authority was not passive during the presidency of Abdul Rahman Arif. Ayatollah Seyyed Mohsen Hakim in the first step sent a message for the popularity of the new regime as follows: "The military officers should be abandoned and the three-member leadership council must take the country's control. We are ready to agree you're one of those three".

Although the prime minister did not accept the suggestion of Najaf Clergy, the political opening, Arab-Israeli war - which led to the defeat of the Arabs - and the measures of Shiite authority granted popularity and power to the cleric. Some measures of Ayatollah Hakim as the great Shiites authority at that time included replying to the telegraph of Abdul Rahman Arif and emphasizing the need for unity to confront Zionism, holding funerals for the martyrs fighting in Karbala, Basra, Najaf, and Baghdad, sending commit-

tees consisting of Shia and Sunni scholars to various countries for addressing the issue of Palestine and the situation of Muslims. ([Http://www.hawzah.net/per/h/hg/hg58.htm](http://www.hawzah.net/per/h/hg/hg58.htm))

The Reign of the Baath Party

At the first meeting of the Ba'ath Party's regional commander council, a number of important issues in domestic politics were prioritized: the weakening of religious practice of the people and the promotion of disbelief and atheism in various ways, including fighting against religious authorities and clergy, which gradually increased the pressure of government over scholars and Shiites. After consolidating its power, the party began intense and systematic attacks on the Shiites, especially the scholars and authorities. In June 1969, a number of Shi'a scholars, including Seyyed Mahdi Hakim, wrote a letter in five articles and sent to the government requesting the abolition of censorship and ending the crackdown and violence. But the government did not just make any positive moves but also tried to capture the appropriative property and prohibited religious ceremonies in Najaf. Islamic schools were closed and Islamic education was removed from the public school curriculum. In addition, a number of relatives and associates of Ayatollah Hakim were arrested. In contrast to these behaviors of the Ba'ath regime, the Shia community held anti-government demonstrations in various Shi'ite cities. Ayatollah Hakim also banned the membership of the Ba'ath Party and sent Seyyed Mahdi Hakim (the son of Ayatollah Hakim, who was previously sentenced by the ruling regime to the death) to various cities in the country to inform the Shiites in this regard. In late 1969, government forces attacked the homes of non-

governmental members of Islamic groups, and not 1995 previous: 71-73) The Iraqi government also used the dispute with Iran over its frontiers and expelled Iraqi Persians from Iraq. The expulsion of Shiites to Iran continued until 1975, and more than 100,000 Iraqi Shiites migrated to Iran between 1969 and 1975.

On May 2, 1970, Ayatollah Seyyed Mohsen Hakim died and Ayatollah Khomeini became the authority of the Shiites. The authority of Ayatollah Khomeini was closer to traditional and jurisprudential authority than to political and social leadership. After the death of Ayatollah Hakim, a more active context was created for Ba'athist sectarian acts. Because if the authority of Ayatollah Hakim was accompanied by certain political acts and protests against the government, then the next authority would be less involved in political affairs. Ayatollah Khomeini was acting with reservation at that time and refrained from expressing his political desires and desires. In July 1974, the Ba'athist regime stepped up a significant movement, which was the arrest of Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Baqer Sadr and a group of Al-Dawa's intellectual and political leaders. After a while, Ayatollah Sadr was released, but it was a turning point in Iraq's historical events, since it began the direct confrontation between the Islamists and the government. In December 1974, a group of Mujahedeen and ideologists from the Dawa Party, such as Sheikh Aref al-Basiri, were executed, which led to the closure of the seminary by Sadr and Khomeini. (Amiri, 1998:63) Following this incident, Ayatollah Sadr issued a fatwa and banned the membership of the Dawa Party to preserve the lives of his students. (Joyce, 1995: 71-73)

One of the milestones in the political history of the Shiites in Iraq was the events of the 4th to the 7th February, 1977, which was

known as the "Safar Intifada" due to the regime's obstruction of religious ceremonies by the Shiites of Iraq. Following the announcement by the government, about thirty thousand people opposed it and fought against government officials and confronted them with cold weapons and also seized some of the police stations. This movement provoked a severe reaction of the Ba'ath party and thus military helicopters attacked people from above, which killed and wounded thousands of people. Ayatollah Sadr supported this move and announced his support. Imam Khomeini also confirmed it. The Ba'athist regime in Iraq called this movement a merciless and barbaric plot, and executed its leaders after the trial.

In June 1979, Hasan al-Bakr stayed at home and was ousted under the pretext of illness and Saddam Hussein formally took the power. This is a milestone in the history of Iraq, especially in the Shiite, because the Baath Party led by Saddam Hussein has played an important role in anti-Shia and ethnicity. ([Http: //www. hawzah.net/per/magazine/zm](http://www.hawzah.net/per/magazine/zm))

The Reign of Saddam Hussein

Saddam Hussein intended to involve Shiites in the Iraqi government before they formally take the power, so he chose several practical measures. One of the most important measures was the industrialization of the southern Shiite regions and the acceleration of changes within the villages. While Saddam Hussein heavily monitored the Shiite circles, he tried to portray himself as a friend of Shia by transforming the concept of Shiism and, in particular, by doing respectable moves toward religious scholars. But with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein took a different approach because he saw the success of the Shiite regime in Iran as a great threat to himself. (Toal, 2000: 92-93)

The victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 created a new wave of Shiite unrest in Iraq. The Rajab Uprising (13th Rajab of 1399 AH) was the first popular Shiite uprising in Iraq after the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which continued until the start of the Iraqi imposed war against Iran (1980). This movement was, indeed, the immediate and direct reflection of the Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people on the Shiites of Iraq. The magnitude and extent of oppression in this uprising was such that it caused a split in the council of the leadership of the Iraqi revolution and the execution of 22 high-ranking Ba'athist leaders. (Institute of Abrar Moaser of Tehran, 2004) The demonstrators also called for social reform and the establishment of an Islamic state during Muharram of the same year. Subsequently, the Ba'ath Party convened with the participation of leaders and the presence of Saddam. The result of this meeting was the arrest of Ayatollah Sadr on June 12, 1979, that was in fear of an aware leader. Following the arrest of Ayatollah Sadr, a large number of protests took place by the Iraqi Shiite people in the cities of al-Thawra, al-Kadhimiya, al-Khalis, and al-Sahwa. Authorities and scholars from different countries, including Iran, such as Ayatollah Maraashi and Golpayegani, called for the release of Ayatollah Sadr. These reflections and reactions led the Ba'ath party to release him. After the incident, Ayatollah Sadr issued a fatwa warranting an armed struggle against the Ba'athist regime as obligatory and, in this way, the national and armed struggle of the Shi'ites of Iraq began against the government. (Eskandarian, 2005:78)

At this time, violent acts became widespread in relation to the Shia political move-

ment. In December and November 1979, four hundred people were arrested and 15 of those affiliated with the Dawa Party were executed. On March 17, 1980, 96 executives of the Dawa party were executed on a day. The Ba'ath Party tightened the ring of political siege against the Iraqi Shiite movement. As he stated on March 31, 1980 that the investigations revealed that the Dawa Party was a foreigner and traitor to Iraqi nation that was fighting and rebelling against the principles of the regime by various means. Thus, the Supreme Council of the Revolution stipulated that the members of this party are sentenced to death, according to Article 156 of the Penal Code. As a result, mass arrests began among members and supporters of the Dawa Party, which resulted in the highest rates of executions. Meanwhile, Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr, who had the characteristics of a charismatic and influential leader with both scientific and religious aspects as well as influential political and social activities, provided a political movement. (Collective authors, 2001: 275)

In addition to cultural, political and promotional activities, he also took some military actions, including advising some of the Shiite-minded young people to enter the Iraqi Army system and gain enough expertise in military affairs. On the other hand, he established and assisted the scarifying groups and also made contacts with some of Saddam's rivals who competed for power, such as Adnan Hussein, who was planning a coup against Saddam. It was arranged to support the new system after the coup, while Adnan Hussein was committed to put Sadr in his proper position in the new government. With all of these programs, the coup d'etat of Adnan Hussein was failed.

Finally, Saddam decided to shake the base of the Shiite-political movement in Iraq. But before that, he sent an officer to the house of Ayatollah Sadr and gave ultimatum to him and asked him to fulfill three conditions:

- 1) Cancelling the fatwa of banning membership in the Ba'ath Party;
- 2) Quit from the Dawa Party and order it to be sanctioned;
- 3) Ending the cooperation and support for the Iranian revolution.

Ayatollah Sadr refused all the above conditions. Eventually, he was arrested on April 6, 1980, and was martyred together with his sister Bennett Alhadion April 8 by the Ba'ath Party. Their bodies were transferred to Najaf and buried overnight and secretly.

After the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the movement of the Shi'ites of Iraq took a militant strategy and engaged in guerrilla actions against some of the main government goals. In August 1979, Saddam Hussein and in April 1980 Tariq Aziz, deputy prime minister had unsuccessful assassination. The government responded to this movement with more repression and began to expel a large number of Shiites - more than 52,000 people between 1980 and 1982 - to Iran. The members of the Dawa Party were prosecuted and some voluntarily left Iraq. (Bruno, 2004) Altogether, in the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Shi'ites were fired from their country on false pretexts such as non-Iraqi citizenship, Iranian origins, and lack of loyalty to the Ba'ath revolution, and etc. The Ba'athist practices to expel Shiites were very cruel, including the brutal invasion at midnight, the confiscation of their property, and the transfer of them to the borders of Iran and forcing them to go to Iran by force of arms and passing through the very bad weather conditions and landmines. (Asadi, 2004:87)

In 1980, the Iraq war began with Iran, which continued until 1988. In the early years of the imposed war, the Shiites who had been fired into Iran provided their own paramilitary force under the name of Badr's 9th Corps, whose militants were actively presence in Iran's missions against the Ba'ath regime, including Karbala 2 and 5, Mersad and Qods. (Institute of cultural studies and international research of Abrar Moaser Tehran, 2004)

With the escalation of the suppression of the Ba'ath regime, a number of prominent opposition groups and figures embarked on a policy of "continuing the conflict outside Iraqi borders." These groups and individuals included the Dawa Party, the Islamic Action Organization, Jama'a Al-ulama and Jondalamam, and several other smaller groups. With the emigration of Seyyed Mohammad Baqer Hakim, Seyyed Hossein Sadr and some of the clerics to Iran, and inspired by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Jama'a Al-ulama group was once again activated. (Abrar Moaser Tehran, 2004) Regarding this, the Islamic Revolutionary Supreme Council of the Islamic Republic of Iraq was founded on November 26, 1982, with 16 members from various Iraqi groups and parties, with the cooperation and coordination of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in an attempt to establish an inclusive movement to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The Dawa Party was also a component of the Supreme Council, and Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Bagher Hakim presided over it in 1984. (Exclusive interview with Ayatollah hakim, 2002) In addition to Iran, individuals such as, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini Shirazi, Seyyed Mohammad Taghi Modarresi and Seyyed Hadi Modarresi also elected Kuwait as a safe haven for their activities, with the intensification of the suppression wave.

The position of Shiites in Iraq before Occupation

Despite the fact that during the history of its independence, Iraq has had the majority of the Shiite population, but due to its geopolitical and geostrategic importance, Iraq has been subdued by transnational powers and despite its high economic capacities has inevitably experienced various types of poverty and insecurity.

Perhaps one of the main causes of instability in Iraq is its majority Shiites population that has never been able to cope with the rule of sovereignty, due to its Sunni status.

Therefore, the 90 years history of Iraq's independence has been an expression of oppression and pressure on Shiites. Shiite's Imams have been under the pressure from the beginning of Islam, but they have never been destroyed and their beliefs have not been blemished.

Thus, the Shiites of Iraq, despite being the majority, have never found the opportunity to rule and have always been at the forefront of the struggle against the domination (Gholami Qomi, 2007, p.33). The movement of Imam Hossein (PBUH) played a significant role in the gradual expression of the Shi'a, as the tendency toward Shi'a religion continued until the end of the Umayyad rule (Joyce, 1994, 27). Shiite movements continued to the time of Abbasian and Moguls over Iraq. From 41 to 132 Hijri, Iraq was under the control of the Umayyad regime. In the tenth of Muharram, year of 61 Hijri, the incident of Ashura and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH) were carried out by Yazid Ibn-Moaviyeh, the second caliphate, in Karbala. In the 132 lunar year, the Abbasian took the place of Bani Omayyad.

Abu al-Abbas was the first Abbasian caliphate in Kufa. Since 914, when the Ottomans dominated Baghdad, the Shiites had been under the oppression and tyranny of ottomans until 1917, that Iraq occupied Britain. Although the occupation of Iraq led to the Shiite emancipation of the Ottoman oppression in 1918, Shiites under the leadership of the time scholars, including Mohammad Taqi Shirazi and Ayatollah Abolhassan Esfahani, launched a struggle against the British, and eventually, the Britain recognized the independence of Iraq, inevitably.

In the revolution known as Thorah al-Ashrin, the uprising of the authorities against Britain in 1920, the British and Sunni militants launched massive killing of Shiites. In 1935, a vast uprising took place against the rulers of the state. At the same time, Shiites made new demands in their protests. These demands were:

1. Membership in the parliament relative to the Shi'a population
2. Free election
3. Press freedom
4. Tax cuts

In this year, the vast Shiite uprising, especially in Forat al-Awosat, reached its peak and continued until 1936. With the advent of nationalist Arab rulers in Iraq, the activities of Shiite leaders became more intense. Those who viewed communism and nationalism as opposed to Islam, created the Dawa Party in July 1958, to confront these two trends. At the same time, Sunni Muslim parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Tahrir Party began their activities in Iraq.

Al-Dawa Party started its joint activities with the Muslim Brotherhood, to establish an Islamic State in Iraq. In 1968, when the Ba'ath party took power, we witnessed the

peak of Ba'athists violence against the Shiites of Iraq. The system of domination during various periods of the Iraq movement has had a great deal of influence on Iraqi Shiites, the most important of which are:

1. Manage of poverty in Iraq, especially in Shiite societies, to prevent their outburst and independence;
2. Development and deepening of differences among Shiites and even Shia's elders to prevent their unity;
3. Instability in alliances and joint decisions in Shiite societies;
4. Not having a strategy for the Islamic State in the future by Iraqi Shiite leaders;
5. Persuading Shiite communities to secure their minimum demands (Gholami Qomi, 2007, 41-48).

Iraqi's Shiites have historically marginalized, although they account for about 60% of the country's population. The harassment and persecution of Shiite during the Ba'athists regime, especially under the supervision of the scholars, have caused feelings of restriction and oppression among them. It is therefore natural to welcome any kind of division of power and share it.

On the other hand, the Shiites have a sort of internal organization that results from their attention to the scholars. Sometimes this organization is based on the great scholars or their homesteads (such as Sadr and Jeysh al-Mahdi groups); but in addition, Shiite parties and groups that fought with Saddam, such as the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah Da'awa al-Islam, also have influence and credibility. Therefore, organizing and mastering the rich underground and agricultural resources (according to Shiites residential area, which are often the southern and central parts of Iraq),

and the considerable population are considered the advantages of the Shiites (Ghasemi, 2010: 41)

Discussion and Conclusion

Shiites are those who consider the caliphate solely for Amir al-Mu'minin and his children (AS). Thus, the rulers of the time, in fear of ruining the state and their power, always kept the Shiites far from power and sovereignty and created a shocking atmosphere for them. Shiites in Iraq were not exceptions. They were always isolated during the history of their country, and after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and British mandate, they were also under the rule of the Sunni families because it was the British demand. During the rule of the Hashemite dynasty and its subsequent reigns until the Ba'athist rule, the Iraqi Shiites were dominated and deprived of their rights. But during this time, Shi'ite scholars and the people did not give up seeking for their rights, and established parties and groups to protect the religion of Islam and to fulfill their legitimate demands along with the anti-colonial and anti-revolutionary moves that they undertook. Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Bagher Sadr was one of the most important and most prominent scholars of Shi'a in the struggle against colonialism who took an important step in this direction with the establishment of the Al-Dawa Party. Since then, other Shiite groups have been established inside and outside Iraq's land, including the Islamic Action Organization and the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution.

Gradually, with the rise of the Ba'ath regime's pressure on the militants and the martyrdom of some Shi'ite scholars and militants, including Ayatollah Sadr, many Shiite militants emigrated outside Iraq, including Iran, Syria and some Western countries, and con-

tinued their struggles outside their country. These efforts and struggles couldn't advance the overthrow of the Ba'ath Party until the Saddam's regime was collapsed with the intervention of the United States and its allies. Thus, the Iraqi opposition groups who were outside Iraq, including Shiites, returned to their country to share in its new sovereignty.

It should be noted that after the collapse of Saddam's regime, the new revolutionary demands of the Shiite community of Iraq took a new shape and wave of political mobilizations have emerged that has surprised American policymakers and even Sunnis. In fact, the Shiites have found that at present, the American occupiers are the only factor that has prevented the Shiites from reaching political power. This is the main factor in the crisis of the relationship between the Shiite community of Iraq and the issue of the presence of Americans in this country. Although we see the emergence of various Shiite groups in the form of political parties, but these groups differ in the ways to advance the goals of the future of Iraq: as the disagreement between the al- Iraqiyeh and other Shiite alliances.

This issue has put the future of the Iraq's changes into ambiguity. Shiite groups, having a superior position in the new Iraq, are seeking to gain a greater share of political power based on their high proportion of their population and due to creating security and stability in this country as the dominant group in the sovereignty. Sunni groups seek to revise the constitution and revitalize the role of preventing Shiite domination, and obstructing the institutionalization of their power in the new Iraqi political structure by various means, and opposing actions such as removing Baathism and federalism, especially in

the south and north of the country, are looking for reviewing the constitutional law and renewal of their traditional role in Iraq.

Therefore, the conflicts and differences in the goals and interests of the domestic groups, the lack of compromise and convergence between the Sunni and Shiite groups, the lack of a civilian tradition of democracy, and the lack of national ownership of the power of governance, the political process and security conditions have faced Iraq with difficulties. Iraq is the second largest Shiite country in the world after Iran. It can play a significant role in the future of the relations between the two countries; as we have seen in the history of the relations between the two countries, there has been many relations in various political, social, cultural, and economic fields.

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