TRIBES IN IRAQ & THEIR REACTIONS

AGAINST

AMERICAN ATTACKS

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CENTRAL ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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I. INTRODUCTION

In Iraqi society, the most powerful unit is the extended family or tribe. Even those Iraqi citizens without a tribal background often turn to the neighborhood sheiks for representation or assistance with the government.(Pike, 2003)

At least three-quarters of Iraqi people are members of the nation's 150 tribes, which originated in the Arabian peninsula and moved north in search of water. (Glain, 2000) These tribes are divided into some 2,000 clans with a wide range of religious and ethnic affiliations. They have trans-border linkages to kinsmen in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, Kuwait and Syria. (Mohan, 2003)

As in all parts of the Middle East, the family in Iraq is the core around which society revolves. Iraqi people are bound more by family ties and a strict code of honor than by ethnic background or religion. (Glain, 2000) While education and industrialization has extended its influence in the cities and towns, among the desert nomads and in rural communities the pattern of life has changed little. The Bedouin, for example, follows the ancient patriarchal system in which the interests of family, clan, and tribe come first. These are their kin, and here lies their security against the harsh life

of the desert. Family is the secure relationship people possess. The young children are taught obedience and respect and are brought up according to tribal traditions. Support in time of need, trouble, or danger comes from the other members of the tribe. (Lovejoy, 1964: 136)

In addition, even the residents of Baghdad have also increasingly begun identifying with their tribal groups, sometimes choosing the places they shop and eat by the owner's tribal affiliation. (Parker, 2003)

Tribal affiliations also play a big role in determining whether an applicant gets a job or parents consent to a marriage. Careers, state commissions, business investments, contracts and jobs come mainly through family members well placed in society or in government. Wealth and possessions are also held by the family group. This encourages marriage among cousins, intensifies the family relations and keep the clan wealth concentrated. (Pfaff, 2003) In addition, tribal affiliation can often identify whether Iraqis are Sunni or Shi'ite Muslims, where they come from and whether their extended family has political connections. (washingtonpost, 2003)

II- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TRIBES IN IRAQ

Iraq's politics have been a struggle for power by religious, tribal and ideological factions throughout the country's history. All of Iraq's rulers, the Ottoman Turks, the British and then a British-backed monarchy, had to win the cooperation of the tribes. (Glain, 200) Throughout the history of the area, tribal leaders have used immense power; federations of tribal sheiks who have the popular support of their families have

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proved to have more local and practical power than urban or government forces. (Refugee Fact Sheet)

King Faisal, the first monarch of modern Iraq, was installed as Iraq's king by Britain in 1921 in reward for his Hashemite family's support against the Turks in the World War I. Faisal had no family ties or historical roots in the country, but British diplomat Gertrude Bell was able to persuade the British that Faisal was the best choice because of his links to the tribal leaders. Nasrawi argues that the tribal chieftains, who are backed by hundreds of thousands of men under arms, were major powers, and no Iraqi government could have functioned without cooperating or controling them. He maintains that when the southern tribes rebelled in 1920, shortly after Iraq was put under British mandate, it took brutal force, bribes and effective diplomacy to put down the five-month rebellion. (Nasrawi, 2003)

On the other hand, the political influence and social power of the tribes in Iraq declined steadily since the Ottoman economic and political reform of the late nineteenth century. Jabar,[1] thus, argues that Ottoman Iraq is known among tribesmen as the "graveyard of the tribes." After the centralization of Ottoman power across the Empire, Arabia became a safe heaven for them. Large tribal confederations began to break up into segments. Tribesmen became landless or sharecropping peasants. A centralised government took over various tribal functions, from the administration of justice to settling land and water disputes, the registration of land, education and law and order. Migration, modern education, the commercialisation of the peasant economy and strong

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[1] Dr. Faleh A. Jabar is an Iraqi sociologist, based in London. He holds a PHd in Political Sociology (Birkbeck College, University of London)

government administration reduced tribal cohesion even further. In the majority of the cases, tribes were reduced to small extended families, village communities, or only surnames. But some managed to keep their own value system, lifestyle and kinship ideology in rural areas and small provincial towns. However, while agrarian reforms destroyed the economic power-base of the tribal landlords, the destruction of the monarchy in 1958 eliminated their political influence. (Jabar, 2003: 171) Tribes grew even weaker when the nomads settled into towns and cities, and as the state took responsibility for schools, roads and power. (Glain, 2000) In addition, Saddam Hussein's policies became very influential in determining the power of the tribes.

III. SADDAM HUSSEIN & TRIBES

A- CHANGES AFTER COMING TO POWER IN 1968

Saddam Hussein is from a small village and society dominated by tribalism and a patriarchal culture. He reflects the tribal characteristics of honor, manliness, and loyalty to family, clan, and tribe. He has used these qualities to win loyalty to himself as the republican sheik, and to rule as the tribal chief, the dispenser of wisdom, justice, wealth, and punishment. (Yaphe, 2003: 8) In addition, Mohsen argues that in order to be Iraq's strong man, Saddam Hussein used the traditional tribal ethos such as strength, aggression, alertness and readiness to confront danger. She gives the speech of Saddam Hussein to the students at a training camp as an example. Saddam Hussein says: "Once when I was very young, around 13 or 14, I could not sleep for three successive summers because of the bullet belts around my body as well as the revolver and rifle I carried in

my hands so that when the call came I would be ready. I want the enemies to lose hope when they catch sight of us." (Mohsen, 1994: 12)

With the emphasis on the tribal characteristics, Saddam began a series of reinventions intended to keep him in power, after seizing the control of Iraq by 1968 military coup. In his first attempt, Saddam created a new Ba'ath Party purged of its intellectuals, leftists, and military heroes. Unlike the original urban-based members who had joined the Ba'ath Party in the 1950s and 1960s, Saddam and the new Ba'athist elite came almost entirely from small towns and villages where tribal and family loyalties are still strongest. (Yaphe, 2003: 9)

Furthermore, the people who wanted to join the Ba'ath Party had to fill in a form which included questions in regard to his tribal origins: "affiliation to a tribe; and if married, is the wife an Iraqi and to which tribe does she belong." Baram argues that this practice was introduced for the party-security reasons. The tribal origin of a new candidate could provide clues as to his potential loyalty. (Baram, 1997: 6)

In January 1979, Saddam and the Ba'ath Party declared that equality of the political parties in Iraq was out of question, meaning that any other ideology, opinion or practices are impermissible.(Simons, 1996: 285) At the same time, Saddam began mobilizing clan and family networks into the military and security services. Members of Saddam's tribe (the Abu Nasir) and clan (the Bayjat) were given priority in joining the sensitive security units as bodyguards to the inner circle of the regime and to Saddam and his family, and as protectors of special sites and programs. Tribes closely related to

Saddam's clan- the Dulaym, Dur, Jabbur, and Ubayd- were recruited for the Republican Guards, the Special Rebuplican Guards, the bodyguard units, intelligence and security units in the military and the party, the Baghdad garrison, and the Ministry of Defense. (Yaphe, 2003: 9) All these are the units where loyalty to the president was of particular importance, because they were assigned the duty of protecting Saddam Hussein from the army. In these and other units, officers from tribal backgrounds were promoted more rapidly than others. The president also rewarded their villages by providing roads, electricity, and water systems. (Baram, 1997: 5)

By the mid-to late 1980s, thus, members of Saddam's family and tribe dominated all areas critical to Saddam's power. Jabar calls this process "the construction of etatist or political tribalism."(Jabar, 2003: 172) Half-brother Barzan was intelligence minister and security chief for several years after the revolution, a position later held by his other half-brothers, Sibawi and Watban. Cousins Adnan Khayrallah Talfah and Ali Hasan al-Majid (known as Chemical Ali for his use of chemical weapons in the Kurdish repression of 1988) each served as the Minister of Defense. Cousins Hussein and Saddam Kamil and Ali Hasan al-Majid run the first circle of protection around Saddam, including intelligence, security, and the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization (MIMI). Until his defection in 1995, Saddam's cousin and son-in-law Hussein Kamil headed MIMI, which was responsible for developing programs for weapons of mass destruction. And by the early 1990s, Saddam's family policy had brought in his sons Qusay and Uday. Qusay controled the intelligence and security forces, including the Special Republican Guards. (Yaphe, 2003: 9)

Dodge argues that basing the heart of the regime on close family members makes it very difficult for those at the top of the state to plot against Saddam Hussein. He maintains that it is much more difficult for an individual member of his family to develop a power base independent of the president and so pose a threat to his rule. Therefore, underlying appointments of close family members is the assumption that if Saddam Hussein is removed, they will also fall from power. Even close family members have been regularly reassigned to different jobs in the higher echelons of the government to remind them that they owe their position solely to Saddam Hussein and not to any personal skills they possess. (Dodge, 2003: 65)

In addition, while the important units such as the intelligence organizations are not closed to men from non-privileged regions or families who have proved their loyalty to the party, such posts are concentrated in the hands of men from particular families and regions. Eleven of the nineteen officers and eighteen of the forty-nine lower-ranked men employed by *al-Amn* (Iraq intelligence organization) in Erbil came from the "Sunni Arab triangle- the region extending from Baghdad north to Musul and west to the Syrian border.[2] But people from this region generally come from the lower classes. Those from towns, tribes or families that are better off, or have access to higher education, tend to avoid such employment. Al-Khafaji argues that the success of the protection and intelligence apparatus is thanks to the fact that it does not rely on the ideological indoctrination. Rather, it follows the path taken by Saddam Hussein and most other influencial personalities in the regime since they emerged from their impowerished home towns looking for someone to give them a job in Baghdad. (Al- Khafaji, 1994: 24)

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[2] Please, see the map.

For example, the Himaya, presidential guard, is based on young Tikritis mainly from his own tribe. Brought in at age 15 or 16 they were trained in the presidential compound in Baghdad for about three years. These young men owed Saddam everything- their position, their possessions, their arranged marriages, and their social status. In exchange, they offered total loyalty and submitted to strict discipline. They feared and admired Saddam, whom they called "Ammna al-Chebir"- "Our Great Uncle." (Baram, 2003: 95-96)

Furthermore, Saddam Hussein ensured the loyalty even of people whose family members he had had executed or assassinated, by promoting them or retaining them in important positions where they cannot reach him personally. He also surrounded them with the informers who report any suspicious actions. In this way, tribe members whom he no longer trusts can still be of value to him. (Baram, 2003: 97)

In addition, the measures to ensure the control of the political system were accompanied by the Saddam's pictures on postage stamps, on school notebooks, on wrist watches, on T-shirts, in schools, in offices, and throughout the government buildings. (Simons, 1996: 287) At the entrance to the town of Najaf, for example, his picture showed him as a humble visitor holding the rails of the shrine. At the entrance to the offices of "peasant unions", he was shown in peasant costumes holding a spade. At the entrance to the universities, he was wearing academic robes. In addition, his picture, three columns wide and ten inches long, would appear in the middle of the front page of every daily paper, even when no news about him was reported. In an issue of *al-Thawra* (1 August 1984), Saddam's name and his titles are repeated 147 times on the paper's eight pages. His photograph appears 27 times. The daily paper *Iraq* published on 18

November 1984 carried a story highlighting the positive effects that this repetition has had on the subconscious of a girl named Ghadah Jalal al-Din al- Rumi. She was hit by a car when crossing the road, and while receiving treatment under anaesthetic she repeated in her delerium the phrase "Saddam...Father Saddam." (Al-Jaza'iri, 1994: 45) In addition to the pictures, a third of the period of television transmission would also be devoted to covering the activities of the leader and his speeches, repeated in full during the three news bulletins. No official could appear before a camera without a picture of the president in the background. Furthermore, whenever he left the presidential palace, sirens would go off and soldiers would line the route. (Al-Khalil, 1989: 110-111) The airport in Baghdad also became the Saddam International Airport, and Saddam's birthday became a National Day. (Simons, 1996: 287)

On the other hand, Mohsen (1994: 12) argues that the establishment of his personality cult, and the subjugation of Iraqi cultural life to it were not achieved easily or quickly. She maintains that during the first two years of Ba'athist rule (1968-1970), Saddam Hussein had to hire Lebanese journalists to depict him as the strong man of Iraq because he could not find a single Iraqi to do this.

Moreover, as a part of the personality cult, insulting Saddam Hussein also became an offence in Iraq. For example, when Saddam visited a school and asked a six year old boy, "Do you know who I am?", the boy replied, "Yes, you are the man who makes my father spit on the television every time you appear", then the boy's entire family disappeared and their house was razed. (Simons, 1996: 287) Chalabi argues that Saddam Hussein made the penalties for political activity so severe that not only the individual and his immediate family were at risk but also their extended family could be

punished. (Chalabi, 1994: 226) Therefore, any people- male, female or even children- who oppose the regime were subjected to the brutal treatment: murder, execution, thallium poisoning, detention and torture. (Cobbett, 1989: 128)

In an interview by Marie Valla from Newsweek with Saman Abdul Majid, who had translated Saddam Hussein's ideas to the West in both French and English for the last 15 years of his reign, when he was asked why despite his repressive policies toward the Kurds and the Shi'ites, Saddam Hussein had members of both these groups working closely with him, he answered:

> He thought highly of what it meant to be Iraqi. He had a very strong sense of nationality. And that's one thing that people don't understand about President Saddam Hussein. He is a man who made no discrimination whatsoever on the basis of religious or ethnic identities. He did not persecute the Kurds as Kurds or the Shi'ites as Shi'ites or the Sunni as Sunni. To him, they all were good Iraqis as long as they behaved well, were not against him and would not participate in any political movements of opposition or tried to topple the regime. As long as you were a good citizen by his criteria, you were welcome. (Valla, 2003)

B- TRIBAL POLICIES

In the 1970s, Saddam rejected all tribal things because he regarded them as reactionary and irrelevant to a modern Westward-looking Iraq. (Yaphe, 2003: 9) Sheiks who represented a threat to him were killed or jailed. Tens of thousands of people from tribal areas were forced to migrate to cities. (washingtonpost, 2003) In 1976, he banned the use of tribal names such as al-Tikriti, al-Dulaymi, and al-Duri. Every one was issued

with a new ID card, and all new birth certificates carried only the child's first name and that of the father.[3] (Simons, 1996: 287)

In addition, the continued existence of tribalism was blamed on the slow development of the relations of production in the Arab world. The Bath regime equated tribalism with feudalism. In addition, Amatzia argues that tribalism was perceived as late as 1982 as opposed to Pan-Arabism and Iraqi patriotism. In that regard, the party magazine reported that tribal chiefs were creating disturbances and tribal fights to undermine the party rule, and argued that the peasants' associations were to serve as substitutes for the tribe, and peasants should be persuaded to live in a "peasant family" under the party's leadership. However, tribalism was considered so powerful that the party organ stressed that anti-tribal policy had to be flexible. (Amatzia, 1997: 2)

Furthermore, throughout the Ba'ath rule, the heads of the regime kept in touch with those tribal chiefs who were ready to cooperate. This was done through the low-profile personal visits, and modest presents such as special hand guns or a Barnau rifle for the chief and some money. The cooperating sheiks could also rely on the government to provide jobs at the center for their supporters. But there were also punishments for the uncooperative chiefs ranged from death to denial of funds and jobs, and giving jobs in the center and in the Peasant Associations to their rivals. In the Kurdish north, this policy was the key to all the government's interaction with the rural Kurds. Tribal

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3 While Joglekar (2003) argues that the Iraqi government followed this policy to conceal the number of the clan and family members in government, Pike (2003) argues that it was followed in order not to identify the area or tribe a person comes from for the security reasons. Pike maintains that this practice is partly a protection for the individual. If somebody is e.g. called a Tikriti, it is easy to know that they are part of the ruling family which may expose them to particular security risks.

chiefs, many of whom were actually appointed by the regime served as mukhtars to mediate between the government and their communities.(Amatzia,1997: 6-7)

Jabar (2003: 172) argues that the Ba'ath Party revived the military tribalism among the Kurds. He maintains that the tribal chiefs of the Sorchy, Mezouri, Doski, Herki and Zibari tribes were recruited as mercenaries to fight against the nationalist Kurdish movement as early as 1974, and the tribal chiefs favoured by the state got richer and more powerful.

The emphasis on tribal identity intensified in the 1990s, as the United States gave the impression of being determined to remove Saddam Hussein from power. (Joglekar, 2003) In addition, with his army facing post-Gulf War uprisings by ethnic Kurds in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south, Hussein decided to revive tribal groups and cooperate with their leaders in order to prevent future rebellions. (washingtonpost, 2003) Furthermore, the regime used armed tribesmen, apart from the army and security units, to control southern cities during the four-day US and British air strikes in December 1998. Indeed, prior to the attack, security arrangements were planned in high-level meetings among army commanders, party leaders and tribal chiefs. (Dawisha, 1999: 564-565) The government encouraged the reconstruction of clans and tribes where they existed. In other areas, the government allowed the manufacture of new tribal groups based on economy. Where the initiative was weak, Baghdad apparently encouraged the prominent citizens to take the initiative or permitted non-leading families to manufacture an entity in order to gain power and wealth. This has created a new symbiosis: the state advances the favored tribes and the favored tribes

protect the state. The state benefits from its absorption of the tribes and the tribes use the state to enrich themselves. (Pike, 2003)

The international embargo put on the country after Iraq had invaded Kuwait aimed at undermining Saddam, however, Joglekar (2003) argues that it paradoxically offered him a golden opportunity to re-establish his control over an increasingly impoverished society. As his support base narrowed, especially among the urban and westernized middle classes, who were severely hit by the economic deprivation resulted from the sanctions, Saddam responded by resorting to tribalism. (Dawisha, 1999: 563) Jabar argues that the food supply increasingly depended on the tribes, and on Saddam's good will. (Joglekar, 2003) Al- Shahristani (1994: 137) argues that despite the United Nations regulations that allow the importation of food and medicine, Saddam Hussein continued to starve the Iraqi people. They had to buy food on the open market at exorbitant prices. A typical family of six with a monthly income of 400 dinars (a civil servant's salary) will pay about 120 dinars for their rations and then must pay 5 dinars for one egg, 25 dinars for a kilogram of rice, 30 dinars for a kilogram of tomatoes, 180 dinars for a kilogram of meat, and 12 dinars for a kilogram of black flour. However, he argues that Ba'athist officials offered white United Nations flour in return for the cooperation with the regime.

Therefore, the anti-tribal phobia of the 1970s disappeared in the 1990s. Saddam told the tribesmen that they represented all of the Iraqi people and all of the nation's principles. He declared that there was little difference between the Iraqi state and its tribes in the way both protecting certain values and traditions and rejecting the others.

He characterized the Ba'ath Party as the tribe encompassing all tribes. He also participated enthusiastically in the tribal celebrations, clapping rhythmically as they danced and sang, sometimes participating in their dances, and pointing his gun at the air in a show of appreciation. In one such gathering, Saddam criticized his audience for not bringing their weapons to the welcoming celebration because according to him, "men must carry their guns on them." Therefore, the tribal tendency towards weaponry provided Iraqi leader with valuable support. (Dawisha, 1999: 563) In addition, Saddam Hussein regularly put on traditional Arab dress and made televised visits to tribal elders.(Glain, 2000) In his speeches to the chiefs and their people, Saddam Hussein also used local tribal expressions to indicate to his listeners that he knew the area and its folklore well and that he, too, had come from a tribal background. (Amatzia, 1997: 11) Joglekar (2003) argues that he bought their allegiance, in fact, by offering food, vital materials, money and in particular, the opportunity for them to exercise new influence. They were given authority over security, police forces, the justice system and tax collection and the scope to operate beyond their traditional areas of control into major cities including Baghdad. Exempted from the military service, the men of the tribes received light arms and means of transportation and communication to allow them to help Saddam Hussein crush any domestic unrest. In order to provide reconciliation and establish himself as chief of the chiefs, Saddam Hussein also invited tribal leaders to his palace in 1992. He apologised for the agrarian reforms of the past 30 years and promised reconciliation. In return, the tribal sheiks took an oath of allegiance to the president. (Jabar, 2003: 172) Therefore, believing that the campaign to promote tribalism was working to its advantage in rural areas, the government extended offers of money and

gifts to tribal elders and members of notable families who lived in cities, hoping to shore up an urban population that was troubled because of the U.N. sanctions. (washingtonpost, 2003)

"The government even came to my family and said they willl give us land, money, weapons and salaries to reorganize our tribe, but our allegiance will be for the government, for the Ba'ath Party and President Saddam Hussein," said Hassan, the sociology professor. (Parker, 2003)

In that regard, the result is that the tribes have become Saddam Hussein's prime source of power outside Baghdad. Favored tribes get better roads and schools, and money in a country weakened by sanctions for the past decade. (Glain, 2000) Jabar (2003:172) argues that the only way to get a job for many Iraqis today is by returning to the tribe. He also maintains that the revival of the tribes as social actors stems from the need to fill the void created by the destruction of civil society institutions, and from the decline of the state itself as the provider of the security and justice. However, he argues that these newly revived tribes have damaged the very fabric of an urbanised and cultured society since they operate in the urban centers, not in the rural areas. Therefore, he asserts that today the tribes in the south of Iraq are not coherent social groups: One section may enthusiastically cooperate with the government while another opposes it, which means that it is not possible to draw up a list of pro-regime or anti-regime tribes.

The government, however, saw the utility of the support of the tribes in 1991 when they assisted him in crushing a rebellion in south of the country, which has a Shi'ite Muslim majority. (Joglekar, 2003) These events persuaded Saddam of the benefit of the tribes and tribal values to his regime. During the Shi'ite revolt, which was perceived by the regime as the most serious challenge to its survival since its assumption of power in 1968, a number of southern Shi'ite tribes which had been receiving benefits from Baghdad either sided with the regime or remained neutral. (Dawisha, 1999: 563) Saddam Hussein responded by labeling the loyal tribes, "the swords of the state", and decreed that all those who were pursued by the law would not be prosecuted. Joglekar argues that undermining the state's judicial authority was a price the Iraqi President obviously was willing to pay at a time of perceived crisis. Moreover, the government started to take conservative measures in accordance with the traditional tendencies of tribesmen. In May 1992, the regime took measures against the night clubs and alcohol consumption. Opening hours were reduced, and the issuance of new licences was stopped. Two years later, in a degree signed by Saddam Hussein, all night clubs and discotheques were closed and the sale and consumption of alcohol was banned in all places except the home and private parties. This public and official declaration of the tribal identity led to the reversal of the 1976 government regulation banning the use of names showing tribal or regional connections. The list of names of those elected to the National Assembly in March 1995, was printed in the newspapers and the radio and television broadcasts also repeatedly stated Who's Who in the contemporary Iraqi tribes. Joglekar argues that this is hardly surprising, since a good 60 percent of those elected were either tribal leaders or their representatives. (Joglekar, 2003)

On the other hand, Saddam Hussein believed that the powerful tribes were a threat to himself. The stronger the tribes become, the more the Iraqi leader has to worry that they will become a weapon for his enemies. One example is Machann Al Jaburi. His father, a sheik, was killed by the members of another tribe, and the son's older relatives were locked in a succession struggle. The youngest member of the sheik's family, Mr. Jaburi, was in a weak position, and Saddam Hussein summoned him to Baghdad. In an interview, Mr. Jaburi says: "He asked me what I needed, and I told him I wanted to be a sheik." The Iraqi leader, thus, gave the young man a watch, $10,000, a car and a villa, and a high-paying job in Baghdad. Payback time came in 1980, when war broke out between Iraq and Iran. "I went to my hometown with 50 buses, and came back with 50,000 men," Mr. Jaburi says. By the time the war ended in 1989, the Al Jaburis were the country's most powerful tribe. Mr. Jaburi's territory was transformed with public-works projects. But Saddam Hussein apparently concluded the tribe had become too powerful. Therefore, he cut off their patronage, disregarded their contribution to the war effort and excluded the tribe from his first postwar government. Forced to choose between the state and his increasingly resentful tribe, Mr. Jaburi chose the tribe. He and his family members wanted to assassinate the Iraqi leader and take over the government. The coup plan was discovered in early January 1990, when Mr. Jaburi was in Paris, and the other plotters were arrested and executed. On the other hand, Rashid Abdula Salem Al Jaburi, an Al Jaburi leader, responsible for about 20,000 people throughout Iraq, chose the regime throughout its confrontation with his tribe. The government recently built a school in Al Jaburi territory just outside Baghdad. Unlike most other schools, this one even has new textbooks. (Glain, 2000)

On the other hand, al Khafaji[4] (2003: 80-81) maintains that tribalism has not proved to be an effective binding mechanism for the various segments of Iraqi society. Firstly, he argues, the fact that the use of tribal title is forbidden to hide the dominance of Saddam Hussein's tribe is the evidence that the ruling regime finds it difficult to convince ordinary people of the merits of the reliance on kinship relations. Secondly, even within the power elite, kinship relations have been used to solidify interest groups and not express the basis of the social relations. The brutal murder of Saddam Hussein's sons-in-law in 1996 and the subsequent assassinations, disappearances and imprisonment of numerous relatives who did not comply with the leader's will shows that kinship is not the basis of those groups. He argues that the third and perhaps most important indicator that tribalism is not effective in forging loyalties in Iraq is the course of the 1991 uprising. He maintains that there is hardly any mention about the role of the entire tribes acting together or about recourse to tribal sentiments in order to mobilise the population for, or against the intifada.

IV- AMERICAN ATTACKS & TRIBES

Both Saddam Hussein and the United States, however, had made intense efforts to win over the tribes during the war. (Mohan, 2003) Therefore, the following question was put forward: "Will the tribal leaders remain loyal to Hussein, who gave them since

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[4] Dr. Isam al Khafaji is an Iraqi writer and scholar. Born in Baghdad in 1950, he lives now in the Netherlands, where he teaches on state and nation formation and consolidation, globalisation and development at the International School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. He is also a consultant with the World Bank, Washington DC.

the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War cash, land and cars, as well as increased authority in rural Iraq? Or will they welcome the Americans and help them fight the Iraqi army?"

Since the United States and its allies launched war against Iraq in March 2003, Saddam's regime praised the resistance of regular army troops. But the regime also depicted other forces in almost mythic terms, mentioning Arab bravery, tribal influence and Islamic faith. Saddam called on strategically important tribal chiefs, who potentially have hundreds of thousands of armed men under their command, to fight invading troops without waiting for further orders. (Special Report, 2003) He also held again regular meetings with the influential tribal leaders, where he gave gifts and received expressions of loyalty. He gave them tens of thousands of light weapons to distribute to their members with the hope they would turn into a guerrilla army. Therefore, several prominent sheiks insisted that their allegiance is firmly with Hussein, whom they see as "their dear leader" and "the great president." If there is a war, they said, they would mobilize hundreds of thousands of fighters, from schoolboys to old men ineligible to join the military, to defend their villages and the roads leading to Baghdad.

"We will fight to the death against any invaders," said Rashash Imarrah, chief of the Imarrah tribe, most of whose members live near the intersection of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southern Iraq. He also added:

> The last time a foreign army sought to capture Baghdad, during World War I, British forces moved up the Tigris from the Persian Gulf to expel the Ottoman Turks who controlled most of present-day Iraq. Expecting the tribes to help fight the Ottomans, or at least remain neutral, the British instead found themselves under attack by several tribes that remained loyal to the Turks. Tens of thousands of British soldiers died, many from disease, before Baghdad finally fell in 1917. The Americans should remember this. (washingtonpost, 2003)

As hereditary leader of one of the Iraq's biggest tribes, Sheik Kadhim is a vital supporter of Saddam's regime. He was captured by the Americans, but he lied to them. "I said we were rebels," the sheik says. "So the US soldiers returned our weapons and told us how to find other anti-government forces in the nearby marshes. I guess they hoped we would regroup and destroy more cities." He and his men drove a mile or so down the road, out of the Americans' sight, then made a U-turn and went home. Today, after the U.S. invasion, the sheik controls 267,000 armed fighters, and his walls are decorated with the photos of him and Saddam Hussein. (Liu, 2003)

Fallujah, about an hour's drive west of Baghdad, is in a farming district that consists of large, extended families. People here are known for their adherence to the tribal codes of hospitality, honor, loyalty and revenge. Ammer Al-Yissawi, a professional scuba diver said "Fallujah people will hide Iraqi fighters. If they do not hide them, people will call them collaborators."(Kaplow)

A tribal leader in Basra also told Newsweek that "Iraqi tribes are in great solidarity with the leadership, we follow the central government. But of course if communications are cut between us and the center, all authority will revert to our sheik." (Liu, 2003)

On the other hand, many analysts and diplomats argued that tribal fighters would not pose a significant threat to the U.S. forces. While government officials expected that tribesmen would obey Hussein's military directives, others argued that the decision would be made by the individual tribal leaders. Because they believed that their real

allegiance is to themselves. Although it is difficult to be certain, many of the people believe that the strong resistance that U.S. and British troops encountered in southern Iraq is the result of loyalty to Ba'ath Party, not of the tribes. The Iraqi vice president, however, argued that tribal militants were destroying enemy tanks along the Euphrates, but such claims cannot be verified. Although they are nationalistic, many tribal leaders are ultimately more concerned with the interests of their tribes, not Saddam's regime. As a result, foreign military analysts argued that the U.S. officials developed a strategy to buy off tribal leaders as they did with some success in Afghanistan.(washingtonpost, 2003)

Mohan (2003) maintains that recognising the importance of the tribal support or at least neutrality, Americans and Britishs have tried to secure the loyalties of Iraqi tribes using the contacts from Iraqi exiles as well as tribal leaders in Iraq's neighbouring states. Burke (2002) also argues that dozens of teams of elite American soldiers and intelligence specialists sent into Iraq with millions of dollars in cash to take key tribal leaders away from Saddam Hussein even before the occupation. The specialist teams in Iraq are thought to be concentrating on the rural areas of central Iraq around Baghdad, where Sunni Muslim tribal leaders are strongest. He maintains that the Shi'ite Muslim tribal leaders in the south are, however, worried by a repeat of 1991 when, after being encouraged to rebel, they were abandoned by Washington. Kurdish tribal leaders in the north have, however, made it clear that they would support an American invasion of Iraq.

On the other hand, some tribal chiefs reject the idea that they could be influenced by money. Hussein's gifts to them over the years, they insisted, were intended to trickle down to ordinary people, not to obtain their favor. They say their loyalties cannot be purchased. (washingtonpost, 2003)

To determine whether the reactions of Iraqi people against the Americans are related to their loyalty to Saddam Hussein or not, Ayub Nuri argues that although they expressed their happiness after the fall of Saddam Hussein, killing of Iraqi civilians by US troops has made them turn against the occupying army. He maintains that more Iraqi civilians have been killed since the war ended than during the war itself. (Nuri, 2003) Gareth Stansfield also argues that Iraqi people want to take revenge on the Americans for killing their relatives. Thus, it has nothing to do with any loyalty to Saddam Hussein. (Kleveman, 2003)

The tribal chief Riyadh al-Asadi said after meeting a U.S. official for talks on the future of Iraq after Saddam Hussein said: "The entire Iraqi people is a time bomb that will blow up in the Americans' face if they do not end their occupation." A former officer Khairi Jassim also said: "The Iraqi people did not fight the Americans during the war, only Saddam's people did. But if the people decide to fight them now, they are in big trouble. All of us will become suicide bombers, I will turn my six daughters into bombs to kill the Americans." (chinadaily, 2003)

In order to understand the reasons behind these reactions, it is necessary to examine the interview with Ubeid, which is a tribe with a population of 1.5 million in

the Kirkuk area. In early September, the coalition arrested Sheikh Hatam, one of the leaders of Ubeid, accusing him of attacking the oil pipeline running near his village. Sheikh Anwar al-Asi, Hatam's brother, said that there was nothing new about their having a tribal leader in jail: Saddam's regime had imprisoned successive leaders for various conflicts of value and disagreements with the regime. But this time, he said, it was intolerable. In the village, people said that even more than their brother's arrest, something else made them so angry that they would hate the Americans forever: the way American soldiers ransacked their homes late at night, conducted body searches of their women, and broke every door, window and piece of equipment in the house in the process. "They don't respect us or our values: a force like that can't expect to stay for long," said Sheikh Anwar. (Nuri, 2003)

In addition, the post-war conditions have led the Iraqi people to react against the Americans. People argue that nearly the whole of Iraq had suffered from the devastation of war in 1991; but when the war stopped Saddam Hussein ordered the reconstruction of roads, electricity, buildings and bridges. The work was done in six months. "In this way," they said, "Saddam showed that he was loyal to his people, however, in 2003 the buildings are still in the same condition as they were two days after the war." (Nuri, 2003)

V- POST-SADDAM IRAQ

Some rural and semi-urban parts of Iraq are now under the control of the tribes. The British have even empowered local tribal leaders to assist in governing the second city of Basra. (Stansfield, 2003: 7)

Mohan (2003) argues that in ensuring the safety and security of Iraq after the removal of Saddam Hussein, the U.S. forces need their support.

 A statement issued by the secretariat of the "alliance of Iraqi tribes" after the meeting of representatives of some 400 tribes from across the country called for a tribal role in ending the lawlessness that Iraq has suffered since US-led coalition forces ousted president Saddam Hussein in April 2003. They claimed that the tribes should have a major role in maintaining order and protecting Iraq's resources from sabotage and looting. However, several tribal chiefs, coming mainly from southern Iraq, challenged the proposal. "They want to create some kind of militia, the solution is not to set up a tribal force, but to form an Iraqi army that commands respect" said Sayyed Ahmad Omran al-Sharifi from the Sada al-Sharifin tribe.(quickstart.clari.net, 2003)

In the postwar period, however, there are some problems facing the U.S. military planners. One of them is the disarming of the over 150 Iraqi tribal groups. Another problem is the prospect that the various tribal groups will form into factional armies and began fighting each other, similar to what occurred between rival groups in postwar Afghanistan. Masapollo argues that such an unstable and fragmented environment will create a particular security concern that the post-conflict Iraq is unsuitable for any

reconstruction and international relief presence as it has in Afghanistan. (Masapollo, 2003)

VI- DEMOCRACY

In rebuilding Iraq as a democracy, there will be revised laws, a constitution, and the advisory committees made up of returned Iraqi exiles, bureaucrats, professionals and local leaders to advise General Tommy Franks during the military occupation. Phaff (2003), however, argues that there is no discussion of the relationship of laws and advisory committees to Iraq's real social structure.

Pike (2003) argues that the tribal society brings along some consequences: individuals are limited by the tribe. This fact is very visible for the women and children. Women belong to the family and do not have much right to choose about their own future. Deciding whether to work or not, choosing a profession, or choosing their spouses is not in their hands. What is decisive is the family's approval.

Omar also argues that dishonouring women was a distinctive feature of the process whereby Saddam Hussein and his family governed Iraq, implementing their own tribal values. Since Saddam Hussein became president in 1979, many orders and decrees have been issued to control women's lives. In April 1981, men married to Iraqi women of Iranian origin were made eligible for government grants if they divorced their wives or if the wievs were deported. The grant for civilians was 2.500 dinars and for soldiers 4.000 dinars, the equivalent of £2000 or three times a teacher's annual salary. In December 1982, it is also decreed that Iraqi women were not allowed to marry non-

Iraqis. An Iraqi woman already married to a non-Iraqi was prohibited from transferring money or property to him, he could not inherit from her and if they divorced he could not have any financial settlement or custody of the children. In February 1990, the tribal practice of killing women for honour crimes was also reinforced and legitimized by the Iraqi regime. If they were found quilty of an honour crime, men who murdered their mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts, brothers' daughters or father's brothers' daughters are exempted from punishment or legal questioning. (Omar, 1994: 63-64)

In addition, Iraq's women suffered human rights abuses under the Ba'ath regime, including rape, torture, imprisonment or even death for opposing the regime. President Bush has repeatedly stated that supporting and promoting respect for women's rights is a U.S. foreign policy imperative. He argues that ensuring women's rights strengthens democracy and civil society, bolsters prosperity, enhances stability and encourages tolerance. The U.S. is committed to helping the Iraqi people transition to a sovereign, representative form of government that respects human rights, rejects terrorism and maintains Iraq's territorial integrity without threatening its neighbors. (The fact sheet, 2003)

Tierney, however, argues that the strong family bonds complicate virtually everything that Americans are trying to do here such as changing women's status and creating a liberal democracy. Robin Fox of Rutgers University, the author of "Kinship and Marriage" also argues:

> Americans do not understand what a different world Iraq is because of these highly unusual cousin marriages. Liberal democracy is based on the Western idea of autonomous individuals committed to a public good, but that is not how members of these tight and bounded kin groups see the world. Their

world is divided into two groups: kin and strangers. For them, it is safer to marry a cousin than a stranger. (Tierney, 2003)

In Iraq, the ideal is for the woman to remain within the clan by marrying the son of her father's brother. Tierney argues that the prevalence of cousin marriage, however, did not get much attention before the war from the Republicans in the United States who expected a quick transition to democracy in Iraq. Steve Sailer, who investigated the practice in Iraq also wrote in the American Conservative magazine in January 2003 that the Americans should stop expecting postwar Iraq to resemble postwar Germany or Japan. Because he argues that the deep social structure of Iraq is the complete opposite of those two nation-states, with their highly patriotic, and cooperative peoples.(Tierney, 2003)

In addition, the tribal laws are creating difficulty for the Americans in establishing democracy in Iraq. For tribesmen, if one defects from the existing social structure, it means that one is immoral. Since immorality would ruin the honour of the family, the respective family member should be punished. In Sulaymaniyah one woman's nose was cut in order to set an example. She was accused of having an immoral relationship which, however, was not proven. After 1990, there were quite a high number of honour crimes in Iraq, which according to Iraqi law were not punishable. (Pike, 2003) With regard to this, Jaasim, who is the sheik in the village of Rashidiya, says:

If one member of my tribe has killed someone from another tribe, the prominent figures of this tribe will visit the other man's tribe. We will have a tribal meeting. We will speak about the incident. And we will give them blood money. Sometimes, such actions keep a murderer out of jail. In other cases, they will receive a much lighter sentence because they settled the matter through the tribal system. (washingtonpost, 2003)

The highest-profile case of tribal justice occurred in 1996, when Hussein's two sons-in-law, Hussein Kamel Hassan Majeed and Saddam Kamel Hassan Majeed, returned to Iraq after defecting to Jordan and disclosing secrets about Iraq's weapons programs. The brothers were killed during a night-long gun battle, not by the police or the military, but by the members of their own tribe seeking to redeem the family's honor. (washingtonpost, 2003)

Moreover, Wamidh Nadmih, a professor of political science at Baghdad University argues that if people have a car accident, they don't sort it out in the courts anymore, even if they live in the city, they sort it out in the tribe." (Parker, 2003)

Apart from the tribal laws, the understanding of nepotism by the Iraqis is also a problem for the Americans in establishing democracy. Because Iraqi people frequently describe nepotism not as a civic problem but as a moral duty. Sheik Yousif Sayel, the patriarch in charge of the clan's farm on the Tigris River south of Baghdad argues: "In this country, whoever is in power will bring his relatives in from the village and give them important positions, that is what Saddam did." (Tierney, 2003)

On the other hand, many specialists argue that democracy has coexisted with the strong kinship systems throughout the history. Dr. Stanley Kurtz, an anthropologist at the Hoover Institution asserts:

> Japan and India have managed to blend traditional social structures with modern democracy, and Iraq could do the same, but it will take time and finesse, along with respect for traditions like women wearing the veil. A key purpose of veiling is to prevent outsiders from competing with a woman's cousins for marriage. Therefore, if you attack veiling, you also attack the core of the Middle Eastern social system. (Tierney, 2003)

VII- CONCLUSION

The Iraqi tribes were highly influential under the monarchy that ruled the country until 1958 but were disregarded by the Ba'ath Party which succeeded it and considered their customs backwards and primitive. But the Gulf War changed everything and increased the importance of the tribes.

We see that during the American occupation, not a strong resistance came from the Iraqi tribes. It is believed that the people who feel attracted to the Ba'ath party and Saddam Hussein fought the Americans. On the other hand, after the Americans ousted Saddam Hussein, this situation changed. Most of the tribes became angry partly because of the Americans' attitudes towards themselves, and partly because of the post-war situation. Many Iraqis look to the United States to repair the war damage and restore order and predictability to their lives. However, the Americans have not revived the local economy, and could not provide the new jobs for the Iraqis. Very few damaged buildings have been rebuilt, and even the town's amusement park, has been turned into a military base for the Italians. "The Americans promised us a lot", says Adds Sheik Abdul Razaq Mohammed Sadr, a leader of one of the tribes in Nasiriyah's outskirts "but they didn't give us anything yet. I believe a month or two will be the end of our patience." (Whitelaw, 2003: 18)

Consequently, the tribes began to show their power against the Americans. In my opinion, especially after these disordered days pass, they will increase their power and try to have a strong say in the post-Saddam Iraq.

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APPENDIX

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iran and Kuwait

Area: total: 437,072 sq km, water: 4,910 sq km, land: 432,162 sq km

Land boundaries: Total: 3,650 km; border countries: Iran 1,458 km, Jordan 181 km, Kuwait 240 km, Saudi Arabia 814 km, Syria 605 km, Turkey 352 km

Capital: Baghdad

Population: 24,683,313 (July 2003 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.78% (2003 est.)

Age structure: 0-14 years: 40.7% (male 5,103,669; female 4,946,443) 15-64 years: 56.3% (male 7,033,268; female 6,855,644) 65 years and over: 3% (male 348,790; female 395,499) (2003 est)

Birth rate: 33.66 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Death rate: 84 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Ethnic groups: Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian or other 5%

Religions: Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%

Languages: Arabic, Kurdish (official in Kurdish regions), Assyrian, Armenian

Its constitution, government type, legal system, executive-legislative-judicial branches, political parties and leaders: in transition following April 2003 defeat of SADDAM Husayn regime by US-led coalition

International organization participation: ABEDA, ACC, AFESD, AL, AMF, CAEU, EAPC, ESCWA, FAO, G-19, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WtoO

Administrative divisions: 18 governorates. Al Anbar, Al Basrah, Al Muthanna, Al Qadisiyah, An Najaf, Arbil, As Sulaymaniyah, At Ta'mim, Babil, Baghdad, Dahuk, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Karbala', Maysan, Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Wasit

For more latest information, see **http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html**