

THE TWO JULY 1968 COUPS IN IRAQ: THE BA^CTH IS RETURNING TO POWER

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In Iraq on 8 February 1963 the Socialist Party of Arab Resurrection (the Ba^cth Party)¹ carried out an armed coup. It overthrew the regime of ^cAbdalkarīm Qāsim and came to power. Its short reign turned out as an unsuccessful experiment and ended on 18 November of the same year in a countercoup staged by the army. A difficult period followed in which the Ba^cth leadership worked to overthrow the existing military regime and restore its former position. The *Ba^cthists* returned to power by accomplishing two coups, one on 17 July and the other on 30 July 1968. In both instances, they prevailed by stratagem rather than through force.² In the first they deposed the president by allying themselves with his closest aides. In the second they got rid of their inconvenient temporary allies. The two distinct groups which in an odd alliance finally carried out the first coup were the *Ba^cth Party* and a small group of dissatisfied supporters of the regime whose leaders were ^cAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd. The two men who held the fate of the regime in their hands belonged to a group of younger moderate Arab nationalist officers within the army.³

Key words: Situation in Iraq after the June War; dissatisfaction on the political scene; plans for overthrowing the regime; the coup of 17 July; power struggle after the coup; the coup of 30 July; the Ba^cth in power again.

Despite urgent appeals of the security apparatus to the government that the regime should take a clear stance to the activities of the *Ba^cthists* and impose hard fines on the regime subverters, the government did not take this direction.

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¹ Commonly referred to as the Arab Ba^cth Socialist Party.

² BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba^cthists and Free Officers*, p. 1073.

³ GOMBÁR, E., PECHA, L. *Dějiny Iráku* [History of Iraq], p. 484.

One security report in 1967 points to the fact that Prime Minister °Abdarrahmān al-Bazzāz closed the investigation and released the detained members of the Ba^cth Regional Command. Several of those were jailed back in January 1966. That testifies to the fact that the government's attitude towards the opposition was not dictatorial, but marked by effort to cooperate. Shiblī al-Aysamī regarded these measures as evidence of the regime's weakness and its leading members had no desire to bear responsibility for taking hard measures. It is possible that there was also a concern of a potential fall of the regime and return of the Ba^cth to power. The idea of collaboration in creating the *Progressive National Front* or participation in a coalition government already met with a negative attitude of some party organisations. Its members were not eager to collaborate or enter into a partnership which would strengthen the coalition government, but on the contrary, they were interested in overthrowing the regime and taking over the whole power in the state. In spite of such attitudes, the party leadership was able to put through a line of "friendly face" towards the regime to prevent persecutions of its members by the security apparatus of the regime. The leadership wanted to convince the ruling elite that it must not be afraid of the dishonest intentions of the party, especially when some security reports warned against the *Ba^cthists* who were spreading rumours that they were not able to take over the power and at the same time were accusing the Communists and the *nāṣirites* that they were planning it.⁴

The *Ba^cth Party* worked in deep secrecy as it realised that any anti-regime activity would mean hard retaliation. The events after 18 November 1963 caused a split in the Iraqi party organisation. The next stroke on the regime came on 4 September 1964 with the arrest of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. Negatively felt in the Iraqi regional party organisation were the purges in the Syrian regional organisation in February 1966. The *Ba^cthists* were claiming that after the escape of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn from prison on 23 July 1966 they felt that his presence in the party had given them more strength and ability to confront the dissension resulting from the February events in Syria as well as in rebuilding the Party in Iraq and expanding its base.⁵

Several political forces in Iraq were dissatisfied with the regime's policy as they felt that °Abdarrahmān °Arif was a weak leader who had allowed things to drift. The groups with pro-western orientation tried to improve relations with the United States, the conservative circles were dissatisfied with the socialist

⁴ Al-°AYSAMĪ, Shiblī. *Tārīkh Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-°arabī al-ishtirākī* [History of the Arab Ba^cth Socialist Party], Vol. 3; *Al-marḥala aṣ-ṣa^cba, 1958 – 1968* [The Difficult Phase, 1958 – 1968], p. 291–292.

⁵ Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. *Al-quṭr al-°irāqī* [The Arab Ba^cth Socialist Party. Iraqi Region]. *At-taqrīr al-markazī li-l-mu'tamar al-quṭrī at-tāsīf* [Central Report of the 9th Regional Congress]. June 1982. Baghdad, 1983, pp. 28–29.

trend, others promoted more decisive steps in amending the economic and social ills of Iraq. The unfulfilled promises to establish a democratic and human political system angered many Iraqis. The situation in the country became particularly volatile after ʿAbdassalām ʿĀrif’s death in April 1966. On this occasion, the Ba^cth leadership seems to have judged, probably rightly, “that the time was not ripe and that it would be unwise to risk rocking the boat at this crucial juncture in Arab affairs”.⁶ In May 1967, for example, Nājī Ṭālib’s resignation produced a crisis that was only resolved by President ʿAbdarraḥmān ʿĀrif taking over the premiership himself. However, after the June 1967 War the president, not able to solve the heavy problems, stepped down from the premiership and appointed instead another high-ranking officer, Ṭāhir Yaḥyā. His firm grip on the levers of political power seemed to preclude future participation in government by a number of political contenders.⁷

Towards the end of 1967 in an atmosphere of rising discontent, different groups tried to gain a more favourable position on the political scene. On the left were two Communist movements and on the right, were a variety of groups, including the moderate nationalists. In the anti-regime camp, there was a grouping of military politicians, all determined to introduce changes. The government relied on a variety of factions in the officer corps. In the spring of 1968 ʿAbdarraḥmān ʿĀrif himself approached a number of Ba^cthists and nationalists in order to sound their opinions, and if possible to associate them more closely with the government.⁸ As the discussions soon broke down, the mentioned group submitted a note to the president calling for the formation of a government of national unity.⁹ However, this initiative also came to nothing.

In the atmosphere of growing dissatisfaction that was created at the end of 1967, several groups sought to penetrate the political scene. On the one hand, there were two Communist movements, one of which represented the Central Committee of the CPI, the other was a group that split from the party in September 1967 under the leadership of ʿAzīz al-Ḥājj. This group fought the

⁶ SLUGLETT, M. F., SLUGLETT, P. *Iraq since 1958. From Revolution to Dictatorship*, p. 111.

⁷ MARR, Ph. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 204.

⁸ SLUGLETT, M. F., SLUGLETT, P. *Iraq since 1958. From Revolution to Dictatorship*, p. 111. (The men, all former officers, included three ex-prime ministers: Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Nājī Ṭālib and ʿĀrif ʿAbdarrazzāq, and five other ex-ministers: Ḥardān at-Tikrītī, ʿAbdassattār ʿAbdallaṭīf, Rashīd Musliḥ, ʿAbdalḡhanī ar-Rāwī and ʿAbdalʿazīz al-ʿUqaylī.)

⁹ *Middle East Record*, No. 4/1968, pp. 514–515.

regime in the South of Iraq in a guerrilla way.¹⁰ The *Patriotic Democratic Party* (al-Ḥizb al-waṭanī ad-dīmuqrātī) was active as well. On the right, there were various groups, including moderate nationalists previously grouped around ʿAbdarrahmān al-Bazzāz, but were now fractured. Against the president also gathered politicians of military background, determined to return to political life. To them belonged Staff Major General ʿAbdalʿazīz al-ʿUqaylī, an Arab *sunnī* from Moṣul, and Nājī Ṭālib, a *shīʿī* from an-Nāṣiriya, who could count on the support of the *shīʿī* community. Several pan-Arab officers, including Rajab ʿAbdalmaǧīd, resented their exclusion from power and planned a return. Finally, the high-ranking *baʿthist* officers such as Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Ḥardān ʿAbdalghaffār at-Tikrītī, Ṣāliḥ Maḥdī ʿAmmāsh and others had both political and personal reasons for desiring the fall of the regime. As for the *shīʿī* and the Kurds, they could also be expected to support the fall of a government headed by the *sunnī* Arabs.¹¹

The resolution adopted on 7 October 1968 at the seventh Congress of the Iraqi Baʿth Regional Command stated: “The regime of ʿAbdarrahmān ʿĀrif turned to a military rule of personal power which though declaring itself as progressive, revolutionary and socialist was reactionary and based on tribal bonds. The party therefore continued its battle to reveal the true face of this regime before toppling it. Helpful in this process was the weakness of the regime, its decline and spread of corruption.¹² Thanks to numerous campaigns the party succeeded in revealing the ugly face of the regime and compromised it on both, regional (waṭanī) and national (qawmī) levels. During the previous period the party was able to re-establish its credibility with the workers and farmers. The party played an active and influential role in all trade unions and professional associations and it tried to push the Progressive National Front project with the aim to improve relations among them and neutralise political and military interests.”

The mentioned resolution was a report fulfilling the tasks related to activities of the *Progressive National Front* (al-Jabha al-qawmīya at-taqaddumīya) which were given to the Regional Command on the ninth National Congress of the party (18 – 25 January 1968). The party tried to win over the partnership with Communists, but they declined the proposal for several reasons. The main reason was that after the split in the *Communist Party of Iraq* (CPI) in

¹⁰ ʿABDALKARĪM, S. *Aḍwāʿ al-ā al-ḥaraka ash-shuyūʿīya fī al-ʿIrāq* [The Lights on the Communist Movement in Iraq], Vol 4, p. 253; KELIDAR, A. (ed.). *The Integration of Modern Iraq*, p. 183–192.

¹¹ *Middle East Record*, No. 4/1968, pp. 515–520.

¹² *Naṣṣ al-bayān aṣ-ṣādir ʿan al-muʿtamar al-quṭrī as-sābiʿ li-l-Ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿarabī al-ishṭirākī* [Text of Declaration passed by 7th Regional Congress of the Arab Baʿth Socialist Party], p. 6.

September 1967, the question of the regime's overthrow was no longer among its priorities. Management and organisational structures weakened, and the traditionally negative attitudes of the CPI toward the Ba^ṯh Party had to be kept in mind.¹³

The leading representatives of the Ba^ṯh Party felt that if they wanted to build a solid place on the Iraqi political scene, they must become the driving force of the movement to remove the regime of ʿAbdarrahmān ʿĀrif. They therefore began to call for joint action to build a common front with progressive and nationalist forces. When they did not meet with a satisfactory response, they went on to establish contacts with suitable personalities of the regime. The reason for this change was the recognition that an armed revolt against the regime and its removal was not technically possible without the participation of the Republican Guard units deployed around the presidential palace. Therefore, it was necessary to reach an agreement with Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd, the commander of the Guard, despite the fact that the party – after detailed examination of his personal qualities – did not regard him highly.¹⁴

From the point of view of the belonging of the individual actors of the first coup, it can be said that there was action from the inside of the regime because the key roles in the first coup were not played by the Ba^ṯhists, but the “clique of palace officers” or the “Arab revolutionaries”. The core of this coterie consisted of ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif, Ibrāhīm ʿAbdarrahmān ad-Dāʿūd and Saʿdūn Ghaydān. All three were Colonels and favourites of Brigadier Saʿīd Ṣulaybī, president's strong man within the army. All of them held important positions: ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was a director of Military Intelligence; Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd commanded the Republican Guard, the real shield of the regime; Saʿdūn Ghaydān commanded the armoured brigade incorporated into the Republican Guard. All of them belonged to the middle class and came from the al-Anbār province, from where also came the president and Saʿīd Ṣulaybī. ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif came from Fallūja from a landowner family, Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd came from the town of Hīt from a clergyman's family and Saʿdūn Ghaydān came from Baghdad from a family of a police officer. ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was the cousin of Saʿīd Ṣulaybī, and belonged to the same tribe al-Jumayla.¹⁵

¹³ ʿABDALKARĪM, S. *Aḍwāʿ alā al-ḥaraka ash-shuyūʿiyya fī al-ʿIrāq* [The Lights on the Communist movement in Iraq], p. 14.

¹⁴ Ḥizb al-Ba^ṯh al-ʿarabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādir ʿan al-muʿtamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 20–21.

¹⁵ TRIPP, Ch. *A History of Iraq*, p. 193.

In 1968, Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif began to be dissatisfied with the regime managed by Ṭāhīr Yaḥyā and his two leftist associates Khayraddīn Ḥasīb and Adīb al-Jādir, who tried to weaken the dangerous dependence of the country on Western oil companies.¹⁶ They were also affected by the reports of the premier's corruption and repeatedly demanded his dismissal, but to no effect. Some days before the planned coup the two officers became convinced that the premier was planning to move against them, and therefore had a strong reason to take the first step.¹⁷ Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif had very close relations with the president, and often assured him of their loyalty, so he would never expect their betrayal. What could prompt them to turn against their patron? Hanna Batatu, interviewed in February 1970 in Istanbul the exiled president. °Abdarrahmān °Ārif commented that °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was "in this thing, but a tool whetted with money".¹⁸ After the Iraqi government in 1967 granted an important oil contract to ERAP,¹⁹ and begun to cooperate with the USSR in this field, the principal oil companies in the country and the powers that stood behind them begun seeking agents to work for the removing of the government and found in °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif the man they needed: "they bought him through Saudi Arabia and by the intermediary of Bashīr Ṭālib, the military attaché in Beirut and the ex-commander of the Republican Guard, and of Nāṣir al-Hānī, Iraq's ambassador to Lebanon".²⁰

Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd was of a different nature than °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif, who persuaded him to join the planned coup. He was not corrupted, but under the influence of some clergymen he hated all that was related to socialism. But the main cause of his abandonment of the president was the fear of the *nāṣirites* because he played a decisive role in their attempt to overthrow the regime in 1966. Despite his reservations, the president, after the June war, released them and appointed many to previous or similar functions. The campaign against the *Ba'athists* also lessened as the president may have thought the *Ba'ath* spent force.²¹ Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd had warned the president that the enemies would take advantage of his generosity and, when they penetrated deeper into the

¹⁶ PENROSE, E., PENROSE, E. F. *Iraq: International Relations and National Development*, p. 396.

¹⁷ MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 205.

¹⁸ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1074.

¹⁹ ERAP (Enterprise de Recherches et d'Activités Pétrolières) a group of companies owned by the French State.

²⁰ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1074.

²¹ TRIPP, Ch. *A History of Iraq*, p. 190.

commanding structures of the army, they could take power and send their opponents to the gallows.

By the end of 1967, high-ranking *Ba^cthī* officers had begun to probe the mood of dissatisfied officers in the army, willing to participate in a coup. As ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was in the key military position, it was not surprising, that activities of that kind could not escape him. One such meeting, where ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Rajab ʿAbdalmajīd took part, was to take place in early February 1968. Rajab ʿAbdalmajīd was a *nāṣirite* officer, coming from the city ar-Ramādī as well as ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd. A link between these two and the *Ba^cth Party* was Sa^cdūn Ghaydān, commander of the armoured brigade in the Republican Guard. For a long time, Sa^cdūn Ghaydān had maintained a relationship with the party whose sympathiser he was, a fact that ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif in February did not know.²² As far as ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was concerned, he sought to get closer to the *Ba^cth Party*. Before well-known *ba^cthī* officers he did not hide his thoughts and suggested that he would like to take part in bringing about change. The Party leadership that saw him as unreliable, even suspicious, had been categorically rejecting any cooperation with him.²³ As to Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd, in talks with leading *Ba^cthists* he hinted that a co-operation with ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif would be needed to ensure the success of the action.²⁴

But these officers who held important functions in the regime were not immune to external influences. They had often been approached by various oppositional figures, each of whom tried to convince them to support more important things than protecting the rotten regime of President ʿAbdarraḥmān ʿĀrif. They argued that if the regime they were protecting would be overthrown by revolting army units stationed outside the capital, they would not only lose their functions and be relieved without honours but they could stand trial for supporting a regime that was considered inefficient and corrupt. Similar convincing arguments had been presented to them by several regime opponents to induce them to win them over. Although their cooperation was crucial to the coup's success, neither of them was particularly committed to the *ba^cthists* cause, and their support was determined more by opportunism than ideology.²⁵ Especially ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd, had already become

²² MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 208.

²³ Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-ʿarabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādir ʿan al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 22–23.

²⁴ AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Chalīl, ḤUMAJDĪ, Jaʿfar ʿAbbās. *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāṣir* [Contemporary History of Iraq], p. 241.

²⁵ COUGHLIN, C. *Saddam. The Secret Life*, p. 55.

conscious of their power. They had their own ambitions and plans for the future. They seemingly concluded that if the president had been overthrown, the responsibility for the regime's failure would fall on them. Sensing that they needed cover that enveloped their own ambitions, they agreed to cooperate with the *Ba'ath Party* in the belief that it would give them legitimacy for their rule. Given the poor role played by the Ba'ath during 'Abdassalām 'Ārif's regime, they felt the party would be the ideal tool in their hands.²⁶

At the time of these contacts, the *Ba'ath Party* developed an initiative in other areas and contributed to the creation of air to facilitate the overthrow of the regime. The student strike in January 1968 was largely a part of it, even though the Communists also took part in it. In March 1968 Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and the *Ba'ath Party* organised a demonstration to support the change of government, and the party also made secret preparations. These activities peaked in April 1968, when thirteen retired officers and former prime ministers submitted a memorandum to the president calling for the dismissal of Prime Minister Ṭāhir Yaḥyā and demanding the formation of a coalition government of revolutionary personalities and the establishment of a legislative assembly. Of the aforementioned thirteen officers were five members of the Ba'ath Party, and the whole group was put together by Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr. The president strictly rejected their demands, however, on 10 May he announced an amendment to the interim constitution in that he extended the transitional period for another two years, making it clear that everything would remain the same as before. In spite of the constant pressure of 'Abdarrazzāq an-Nājif, Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and other younger officers, 'Abdarrahmān 'Ārif in a short time declared that Ṭāhir Yaḥyā would on 17 July 1968 form a new government.²⁷ The president's statement had apparently confirmed and accelerated the opposition's decision to overthrow the regime.

The regional leadership of the *Ba'ath Party* developed a plan of action to take control of the units of the Republican Guard, and then, under the threat of an armed attack on the presidential palace, force 'Abdarrahmān 'Ārif to surrender. The strategic reserve was made up of the 10th armoured brigade deployed in al-Warār Camp, which had to advance towards Bagdad in support of the action. In order to neutralise the pro-regime forces, special armed groups made up of civilian party members had to play an important role. According to the party leadership nearly all its members had to be involved in the rebellion. In addition, former officers, and soldiers as well as other civilians had also to be involved in the action too. This decision resulted from the assessment that it is a

²⁶ KHADDURI, M. *Socialist Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968*, p. 23.

²⁷ SLUGLETT, M. F., SLUGLETT, P. *Iraq since 1958*, p. 112; *Middle East Record*, No. 4/1968, pp. 516–517.

matter of extraordinary importance to the party and its future, which demands that the leadership should be at the forefront of the assault and bear all the risks and issue orders with full knowledge of the current situation.²⁸

The question whether ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dāʿūd were expecting any support from abroad had not been satisfactorily answered so far. Removed members of the regime were convinced that the game was played in pro-Western, especially pro-American interests. The Western sympathisers among Iraqis seeing their position radically weakened and having little hope of reversing their fortunes under Ṭāhir Yaḥyā and the Arab socialists, may have played upon the discontent of the officers and finally weaned ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and his cohorts away from the support of the president and over to their point of view.²⁹ Luṭfī al-ʿUbaydī and Nāṣir al-Hānī, the Iraqi Ambassador to Lebanon, played a key role in these events. Another source states that ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was won over by Saudi Arabian middlemen and by the Iraqi military attaché in Beirut, Bashīr at-Ṭālib, as well as Nāṣir al-Hānī.³⁰ It may be significant, in this respect, that Nāṣir al-Hānī became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first cabinet formed after the coup. The fact is that the young officers were not known in public, nor did they have the stature or organisation to maintain a government. Therefore, a political party with enough support and public credibility, like the *Ba^cth Party*, was needed.

The most important troops on which the regime's fate depended were the Republican Guard, the Baghdad garrison, and the military intelligence. The commander of the first was Colonel Ibrāhīm ʿAbdarrahmān ad-Dāʿūd a favourite of President ʿAbdarrahmān ʿĀrif. With him cooperated Colonel Saʿdūn Ghaydān, commander of the Republican Guard's armoured brigade. The main task of these two officers was the defence of the Presidential Palace (the Palace of the Republic) against unexpected attack and protection of the president's life. The Baghdad garrison, commanded by Colonel Ḥammād Shihāb, a seemingly neutral officer, was deployed on the outskirts of Baghdad to protect the capital from a possible insurrection of military units from the countryside. The third force commanded by Colonel ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif, also with close ties to the president, was the Military Intelligence. It was supposed to follow the activities of the activities in the army and report it to the president. This officer was in a position where he could not escape either the

²⁸ Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-ʿarabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr ʿan al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 24–25.

²⁹ MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 206.

³⁰ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1074.

direct organisation of revolts or rumours of suspicious activities in the army units throughout the country. The influence of these three officers who had direct access to the president increased significantly because the fate of the regime depended on them. The president who had appointed them, of course, had no doubts about the loyalty of his *Praetorian Guard*.³¹

On the eve of the planned uprising, °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd visited the president with the request to withdraw Ṭāhir Yaḥyā from his position and at the same time show him devotion. Whether it was the last attempt to change his mind (as °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif later asserted), or just a cover for disguising the upcoming coup, is hard to say, but the president's refusal clearly predetermined the events: both officers came to the conclusion that the time had come to act.³² Contacts with Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and his chosen colleagues resumed. Shortly before the planned date of the action (to be held on 14 July with a view to meeting the objectives of the coup and the revolution of 1958), Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif began to hesitate and informed Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr that they changed their minds about the feasibility of the military coup. This caused the assumption that both officers either decided to take action themselves, without co-operating with the *Ba'ath Party*, or merely pretended to be better off for them while preserving the regime's loyalty. They may have suspected some party leaders that they wanted to use them and therefore tried to make it clear that no action could be taken without their support. Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr reportedly replied that his adherents do not intend to cancel the action, and they are determined to make the plan even without their help. However, the date of the uprising had to be moved from 14 to 17 July for organisational reasons.

Almost exactly ten years after the monarchy was overthrown, on 17 July 1968 the Iraqī regime was overthrown by the army, indicating that the revolutionary process had not yet reached its peak. The coup that closed the period of bourgeoisie-democratic revolution, established the power of petty-bourgeois democratic political forces, which opened Iraq's way to national and democratic revolution.³³ The reasons cited by the insurgents – the corruption of Prime Minister Ṭāhir Yaḥyā, Kurdish dissatisfaction and protests, subjugation of foreign coercion – were only incidental circumstances and pretexts that triggered the process of violent change, but the main reason was the fact that the regime was neither sufficiently consolidated nor gained legitimacy from the will of the people. Both in the army and outside official circles there were groups

³¹ KHADDURI, M. *Socialist Iraq*, p. 22.

³² *Middle East Record*, No. 4/1968, p. 516–517.

³³ GOMBÁR, E. *Revolučně demokratické strany na Blízkém východě* [The Revolutionary-Democratic Parties in the Near East], p. 53.

that had been determined to achieve change by force if their demands for participation in the political process were not met. Since the regime was not willing to tolerate the opposition, its term was dependent on the loyalty of the army. In any case, the army became an arbiter between the group in power and opposition. If the army – more precisely its commanding officers – changed attitude, the fate of the regime would be sealed.

The coup d'état: On the morning of 16 July the Ba^ṯh Regional Command was gathered in the house of its secretary Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, to make the final adjustments to the plan and the division of tasks among the members. In preparing the coup, the leadership decided to entrust an armed group of civilian party members shortly before the commencement of the action to encircle ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif in his house and, if he resisted, should be liquidated.³⁴ Thus, disagreements between the Ba^ṯh Party and its allies manifested itself before the deposition of ^ṯAbdarraḥmān ^ṯĀrif, as the party leadership until now did not know that ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif would be involved in the coup. The party leadership assumed that the powers of the prime minister and the president would merge in the person of Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr. Unexpectedly a courier appeared with a message from Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd, that he and ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif are ready to cooperate with the condition that the latter would be named prime minister of the new regime. He himself was satisfied with the function of defence minister. Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd, who seems to have been in the trust of Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, persuaded ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif to change his mind and promised to secure the prime minister chair if he cooperates with the Ba^ṯh Party. Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and the present party leaders, without checking opinions of other members (some of whom were against ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif, but did not object to Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd), accepted the suggestion, fearing that refusal could move ^ṯAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif, the director of military intelligence, to reveal the conspiracy, which would mean their arresting. They were forced to accept the offer as an appropriate means to get to power, but they decided to get rid of both as soon as their position was consolidated.³⁵ The leadership had to cope promptly with the new situation, and given that the fate of the whole action rested with the Republican Guard and its commander Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd, it had hesitantly to agree, for it had no other choice.

³⁴ Ḥizb al-Ba^ṯh al-^ṯarabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr ^ṯan al-mu'tamar al-quṯrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 21–21.

³⁵ Ḥizb al-Ba^ṯh al-^ṯarabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr ^ṯan al-mu'tamar al-quṯrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], p. 34.

Agreeing with the participation of the new man in the coup had caused great changes in the situation and in calculations and exposed the leadership to great risk – the risk of challenging the set goals and deflecting the coup from the revolutionary, national, socialist and democratic path that the party had set. On the other hand, the refusal to cooperate, when °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif already knew the details of the plan and was a supporter of the regime, meant to expose the party to huge danger and dissipation of hope for success. After evaluating both alternatives, the leadership decided to agree to the participation of °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif in the coup as well as in the division of functions as agreed with Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd.³⁶ In the new situation, the party only came to the Office of the president. To balance, it wanted to secure the ministry of defence, that was army decision-making, but Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd had reserved this position. Finally, the party had to be content with the functions of the chief of staff and commander of the air force reserved for Ḥardān °Abdalghaffār at-Tikrītī. It also took over the police and internal security that was the function of the minister of the interior for Šālih Maḥdī °Ammāsh.³⁷ On the other hand Sa°dūn Ghaydān was entrusted with the command of the Republican Guard. And while the *Ba°thists* were to control the security forces and the police, the officers believed that the real power would remain in the hands of the prime minister and the army. The party leaders who did not know the truth of Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif agreed only to a tactical alliance in order to attain power. When they came to power, they quietly agreed to get rid of the two officers at the earliest appropriate opportunity, and charged with this task a number of reliable members of the leadership.³⁸

In the early morning of 17 July, the action began. Acting separately, the palace clique and the Ba°th could well have missed their aims; united they achieved easy triumph. One circumstance facilitated their work: the regime's military strongman Brigadier Sa°d Šulajbī was out of country,³⁹ he was undergoing medical tests in London. °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and his troops seized the Ministry of Defence, while Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd with a number of tanks and a battalion of the Republican Guard occupied Broadcasting House. A critical situation occurred at the Republican Palace. Here Sa°dūn Ghaydān

³⁶ AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl, ḤUMAJDĪ, Ja°far °Abbās. *Tārīkh al-°Irāq al-mu°āšir* [Contemporary History of Iraq], p. 242.

³⁷ ISKANDAR, Amīr. *Šaddām Ḥusayn, munāḍilan wa mufakkiran wa insānan* [Šaddām Ḥusayn: the Fighter, the Thinker, and the Man], p. 109.

³⁸ Ḥizb al-Ba°th al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aš-šādīr °an al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 24–25.

³⁹ TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 191.

played the decisive role: at the appointed time two o'clock in the morning, he brought in his own car some high Ba^cthī officers into the armoured battalion headquarter which he commanded.⁴⁰ With the help of the Ba^cthī officers (Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Ḥardān °Abdalḡaffār at-Tikrītī, Šālīḡ Maḥdī °Ammāsh and Anwar °Abdalqādir al-Ḥadīthī), secured complete control of the armoured brigade and they completely surrounded the presidential palace.⁴¹

When the president woke up about half past three in the morning, Prime Minister Tāhir Yaḡyā and other regime figures were already detained, and in fact the power passed to the rebels. After a brief hesitation and a few warning shots from the tanks surrounding the presidential palace, the president decided that the resistance was senseless and made ready to surrender. He was escorted to the airport and placed on an airplane to London to join his ailing wife.⁴² From London then he flew into exile, which he spent in Istanbul and later in Cairo, almost exactly ten years after the fall of monarchy, the fourth major change had been effected in Iraq.

The Ba^cth Party threw into action its militia as well as the tenth armoured brigade which was at the time of the coup approaching Baghdad. After the resignation of the president, °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif immediately sent an officer to the brigade commander with the order to stop and return to the camp – on the pretext that the uprising had successfully ended – but to no avail. The Ba^cthists in the brigade, however, consistently followed the instructions of the party: the commander refused the order, continued the march on Baghdad and took position in the Abū Ghurayb area. The party leadership expected that °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif would try to stop the brigade's advance to Baghdad as he and his companions wanted to have larger army units at their disposal.⁴³ The Ba^cth Party therefore decided to use the tenth armoured brigade and other groups to strengthen its own position. The air force also participated, making some propaganda overflights.

On 17 July morning, proclamation No. 1 was put out. It gave the purposes of the leaders of the coup saying that a new era is approaching that would provide prospects for democratic life and equal opportunities for citizens. The solution of the Kurdish problem was also put within the priorities. There were three

⁴⁰ SLUGLETT, M. F., SLUGLETT, P. *Iraq since 1958*, p. 113.

⁴¹ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1074.

⁴² BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1075.

⁴³ Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aš-šādīr °an al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 24–25.

decisions in the proclamation: 1. Relieving ʿAbdarrahmān ʿĀrif of his position as president; 2. Dismissal of the government of Ṭāhir Yaḥyā; and 3. The establishment of a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) which would assume supreme authority. As the new president Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, who was the only candidate acceptable to all because of his seniority, prestige, and congenial character, was installed.⁴⁴ The new president instantly invited ʿAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif to form the new cabinet.

The new leadership in the first proclamation also presented the main features of political, economic, social, and cultural direction as well as Arab and foreign policy. In home politics, it had undertaken to reconsider the laws, regulations and instructions that had been issued under extraordinary conditions, contrary to the wishes of the people, to eradicate corruption, to punish bribers, to strengthen the security of their homeland and nation and to create a chamber of deputies (al-majlis al-waṭanī). In the field of economy, the RCC had committed itself to taking care of the interests of the people, based on the belief that the revolution is the path of the masses toward social and political liberation and a way of eliminating the backwardness. Therefore, it will promote the development of industrial production by supporting and developing the public (socialist) sector enterprises for the benefit of the domestic economy, paying special attention to the private sector, activating it and increasing domestic production, as well as wider application of the agrarian reform law.⁴⁵ The leadership expressed the decision to implement an oil policy independent of international cartels, to eliminate the exploitation of monopolies, to reduce Iraq's dependence on oil income, to support the domestic oil company (Sharikat an-naḥī al-waṭanīja) and to enable it to build an independent oil sector.⁴⁶

In the area of Arab policy, the Revolution has espoused the Charter of the League of Arab States and expressed its determination to work tirelessly on the political, economic and military unity of the Arab homeland. The Revolution clearly expressed unwavering support for the right of the Palestinians to their stolen land and other occupied territories, a firm commitment to work to strengthen the united Arab struggle against imperialism and Zionism and the absolute and positive support of guerrilla activity in the occupied territories. Foreign policy – according to the Revolution – was based on resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement and on Arab national interests. It also underlined efforts to achieve international cooperation, based on the equality of states, to eliminate the spectre of war and aggression, and to establish a lasting and just

⁴⁴ KHADDURI, M. *Socialist Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl, ḤUMAJDĪ, Jaʿfar ʿAbbās. *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāšir* [Contemporary History of Iraq], pp. 243–244.

⁴⁶ SULAYMĀN, Ḥikmat Sāmī. *Naḥī al-ʿIrāq. Dirāsa iqtisādīya siyāsīya* [The Iraqi Oil. Economic-Political Study], p. 210.

peace. The statement highlighted the condemnation of racial discrimination and the creation of closest Arab and Islamic relations. The Revolution in the First Proclamation called upon all the progressive patriotic and national forces that believed in the aims of the Arab nation and the message of the Revolution to be full of optimism, to forget the quarrels and put forward positive and creative work in order to unite all the people to create a genuine unity of the homeland and to strengthen the pillars of the revolutionary government.⁴⁷ However, the people accepted the change of regime without interest, because they were already tired of the officers' power games, their official statements. "The dramatic events that took place were so distant from them, and from the difficulties of their everyday life and the general conditions of the nation. They were simply unable to see the point of it all."⁴⁸

In the next statement, issued on the same day, the decision to establish the Revolutionary Command Council (Majlis qiyādat ath-thawra) was announced. It consisted of the President, the Prime Minister, the Defence and Interior Ministers, the Army Chief of General Staff, commander of the Baghdad garrison and commander of the Republican Guard. The RCC held the supreme power, including the legislative power and the powers of the President and the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, as stated in the Provisional Constitution and other laws, as well as the election of the President and the formation of the government. The RCC sent several army officers into retirement and proudly declared that during the coup "no drop of blood was spilled".⁴⁹

From the first hours of the coup, the power struggle between the *Ba^cth Party* and the group of "palace officers" was evident. The officers in their political statements preferred the pragmatic economic program, oil policy tilting more towards the West, and a moderate attitude towards the Kurds. On the other hand, the *Ba^cthists* made it clear that they would strengthen Arabism and socialism, would take a somewhat tougher line with the Kurds and make changes in the previous oil policy. In the government, eight of twenty-six seats

⁴⁷ Text of the Statement. In Al-Jumhūrīya al-^ciraqīya, Wizārat at-takhtīt [The Republic of Iraq. Ministry of Planning]. *Al-qarārāt al-^camma li-Majlis qiyādat ath-thawra 1968 – 1977* [General Decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council], Vol. 1, without date, pp. 11–14.

⁴⁸ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers*, p. 1075.

⁴⁹ Al-Jumhūrīya al-^ciraqīya, Wizārat at-takhtīt [The Republic of Iraq. Ministry of Planning]. *Al-qarārāt al-^camma li-Majlis qiyādat ath-thawra 1968 – 1977* [General Decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council], Vol. 1, pp. 15–19.

were occupied by members or supporters of the *Ba'ath Party*.⁵⁰ Another eight were nominees of the “clique of palace officers”, including the diplomat Nāṣir al-Hānī, at foreign affairs.⁵¹ The government also comprised of several other specialists,⁵² and four Kurds.⁵³ The first decisions of the RCC and the announcement of a new government, in which °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif took the post of chairman, created a critical situation because many important members of the party did not know the developments and context of the last hours before the coup and were not aware of the considerations why was the leadership obliged to agree to his participation in the coup, nor were they aware of its further decision that it would try to get rid of him as soon as possible. This all could not yet be explained to the party members and the leadership faced this painful situation,⁵⁴ without revealing the plan.

The first days after the coup indicated that the government was unable to move forward. “Its two basic component forces had little in common and were pulling it in opposite directions. This did not escape the public in Baghdad, for the daily of the “palace clique” *at-Thawra*, the organ was saying one thing and the *Ba'athist* daily *al-Jumhūrīya*, another.”⁵⁵ But soon it turned out that prime minister and minister of defence were gaining the upper hand. During less than two weeks after the successful coup of 17 July, the *ba'athist* revolutionary

⁵⁰ They were: Ṣāliḥ Maḥdī °Ammāsh (interior), Dr. Aḥmad °Abdassattār al-Jawārī (education), Anwar °Abdalqādir al-Ḥadīthī (labor and social affairs), Dr. °Izzat Muṣṭafā (health), Khālīd Makkī al-Hāshimī (industry), Ḍiyāb al-°Alqāwī (youth), Dr. Ghā'ib Mawlūd Mukhlis (municipal and rural affairs), Rashīd ar-Rifā'ī (presidential affairs). In BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers*, p. 1076.

⁵¹ The other seven were: °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif (prime minister), Ibrāhīm °Abdarrahmān ad-Dā'ūd (defence), Dr. Ṭāhā al-Ḥājj Ilyās (culture and information), Muḥsin al-Qazwīnī (agriculture), °Abdalmajīd al-Jumaylī (agrarian reform), Nājī al-Khalaf and Kāzīm al-Mu°alla (both without portfolio).

⁵² They were: Jāsim al-°Azzāwī (unity affairs) and Muḥsin Shīt Khaṭṭāb (communications), Ṣāliḥ Kubba (finance), Dr. Muḥammad Ja°qūb as-Sa°īdī (planning) and Dr. Maḥdī Ḥantūsh (oil).

⁵³ They were: Musliḥ an-Naqshabandī (justice), Iḥsān Shīrẓād (works and housing), °Abdallāh an-Naqshabandī (economy) and Muḥsin Dīza'ī as a personal representative of mullā Muṣṭafā al-Bārẓānī (reconstruction of the North).

⁵⁴ *Al-Jumhūrīya al-°iraqīya*, *Wizārat at-takḥṭīṭ* [The Republic of Iraq. Ministry of Planning]. *Al-qarārāt al-°amma li-Majlis qiyādat ath-thawra 1968 – 1977* [General Decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council], Vol. 1, pp. 25–26.

⁵⁵ BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers*, p. 1076.

leadership was dealing with everyday agenda filled with possibilities of explosion on each side. Its work was based on high discipline among the party members, and their confidence in the leadership and correctness of its decisions and actions. They considered it necessary to decide this situation in its favour, in line with the decision to get rid of ^cAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd. It was not an easy matter at all, because both had offices and a number of bodyguards in the presidential palace, where was the secretary of party's Regional Command Office too. Any suspicious act could instigate immediate reaction and from revolution a counter-revolution.⁵⁶

The relations between nationally-oriented officers and their colleagues, members of the *Ba^cth Party*, were tense because neither group wanted to divide power. While a theatre was performed in the front political stage, in the background the *Ba^cthists*, by their skilful political manipulation of circumstances, were changing the military balance to their advantage. As the *Ba^cthist* officers formed a considerable minority in the armed forces, it was clear to the party leadership that if it would not determine the struggle for power immediately, it would be defeated again. Both sides struggled to dominate government appointments and media, but it soon turned out that the "palace officers" and their civilian supporters were not a serious opponent for the *Ba^cth Party*. Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and his colleagues made a series of shrewd moves. The *Ba^cthist* took advantage of the self-confidence of Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd, who took over the ministry of defence not sooner than after three days after the coup. Then they arranged for him an inspection visit of Iraqi troops on the Jordanian front. Thus, Ḥardān ^cAbdalghaffār at-Tikrītī, Chief of Staff, became temporarily Commander of the army, while he was also commander of the air force. Through him the *Ba^cthists* managed to make enough transfers and appointments in the army – to call into service 117 *Ba^cthist* officers, whom the previous regime sent into retirement,⁵⁷ to transfer to Baghdad the tenth armoured brigade commanded by Ḥammād Shihāb – and to take additional measures to protect them against unforeseen events.

The *Ba^cthists* also took advantage of the fact that Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd and ^cAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif "forgot" their colleague Sa^cdūn Ghaydān to win him on their side, and in essence, they partially neutralised the Republican Guard. Within less than two weeks, the correlation of forces in the army changed so much that all the *Ba^cthists* needed was short bold stroke. When Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd travelled on an official visit to Jordan, his absence eased the situation for

⁵⁶ Al Al-Jumhūrīya al-^ciraqīya, Wizārat at-takḥṭīṭ [The Republic of Iraq. Ministry of Planning]. *Al-qarārāt al-^camma li-Majlis qiyādat ath-thawra 1968 – 1977* [General Decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council], Vol. 1, pp. 25–26.

⁵⁷ *Middle East Record*, No. 4/1969, p. 520.

them. On 30 July came the stroke: Tanks of the tenth brigade commanded by Brigadier Ḥammād Shihāb at-Tikrītī entered the capital and occupied all key positions. Prime Minister °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif was invited to lunch with Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr in the presidential palace. At the end of the lunch he was confronted with a group of armed party members, led by Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. The premier was appointed ambassador to Morocco and like the former president, seated in an airliner and sent out of the country. The government was dissolved and the supreme power passed to the *Ba'athists*.⁵⁸

On 30 July 1968, a cleansing operation was carried out of the men who joined the coup subsequently. According to *Ba'athist* sources Ṣaddām Ḥusayn conceived a plan on how to remove the counter-revolutionary elements, decided the time of the operation and distributed the tasks. At 3 p.m. he himself led the group that arrested °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif in the presidential palace. Prior to that commander of the tenth armoured Brigade had been ordered to encircle the presidential palace. Fast and precise measures were also taken to neutralise the units of the Republican Guard and to discourage any possible complication. At the same time, measures were taken to expel °Abdarrazzāq an-Nāyif from the country.⁵⁹ If the 17 July coup had not been followed by the events of 30 July, it would have remained a mere military uprising of a right-wing reformist character rather than a major revolutionary event in which Ṣaddām Ḥusayn for the first time played an important role.⁶⁰

In the evening of 30 July 1968, the Secretary of the *Ba'ath* Regional Command, Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr on behalf of the RCC, addressed the Iraqi people, saying that the Revolution of 17 July was a natural continuation of the Revolution of 14 July 1958 and deepening of its patriotic and national direction. He further spoke about the necessity to open a new page on the building of fraternal relations that would pave the way for the revolutionary patriotic unity and would make possible for Iraq to fulfil its role as vanguard. He said that the

⁵⁸ Ḥizb al-Ba'ath al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr °an al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 19–27.

⁵⁹ Ḥizb al-Ba'ath al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr °an al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 26–27; Ḥizb al-Ba'ath al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. Al-quṭr al-°irāqī [The Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party. Iraqi Region]. *At-taqrīr al-markazī li-l-mu'tamar al-quṭrī at-tāsī°* [Central Report of the 9th Regional Congress], p. 30.

⁶⁰ Ḥizb al-Ba'ath al-°arabī al-ishtirākī. Al-quṭr al-°irāqī [The Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party. Iraqi Region]. *At-taqrīr al-markazī li-l-mu'tamar al-quṭrī at-tāsī°* [Central Report of the 9th Regional Congress], p. 30.

Revolution, when entered this way, it wanted to confirm the deep belief of the *Ba^cth Party* that the forward motion of the revolutionary wheel requires the widest possible participation of the masses. At the end he announced three decisions: 1. Expulsion of ^cAbdarrazzāq an-Nāyif and Ibrāhīm ad-Dā'ūd from the RCC; 2. Removal of the government; and 3. Appointment of Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr as President of the Republic and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

The coup d'état on 30 July brought Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr to power, but the position of the *Ba^cth Party* was still fragile. Party support throughout the country was negligible; according to its own assessment, the party in 1968 had no more than five thousand members.⁶¹ After 30 July the party was obliged to re-launch the revolutionary process and bring a great deal of ideological effort to bring into line the analyses, slogans and programs that were adopted in the period of oppression and between the new situation which – given the objective conditions and concrete reality – required positive theoretical and practical views, in line with the objectives of unity, freedom and socialism.⁶² The party faced two tasks if it was to retain power and avoid a repetition of its fate in 1963. It had to consolidate its hold over the apparatus of state, and avoid serious contradictions in leadership. These tasks were successfully mastered between 1968 and 1973.

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⁶¹ *Economist*, London, 24 – 30 June 1978, p. 78.

⁶² Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-^carabī al-ishtirākī. *Thawrat 17 tammūz at-tajriba wa-l-āfāq* [The Revolution of 17 July, the Experiment and Prospects]. *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādīr ^can al-mu'tamar al-quṭrī ath-thāmin* [Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress], pp. 28–30.

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