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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

CIA NESA

IA 2003-20035.GH

The Iraqi Senior Officer Corps: Shaped by Pride, Prejudice, Patrimony, and Fear

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18 March 2003

The Iraqi Senior Officer Corps:

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This assessment was prepared by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information available as of February 2003 was used in this report. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the

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**The Iraqi Senior Officer Corps:
Shaped by Pride, Prejudice, Patrimony, and Fear**

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Summary [redacted]

Sunni Arab dominance of the Iraqi officer corps, particularly by Saddam's Tikriti clansmen, and an extensive security oversight system that traditionally emphasizes loyalty over competence limit military effectiveness and pose challenges for rebuilding the military after Saddam.

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- Officers are mostly drawn from loyal Sunni tribes from the central and northern provinces; Kurdish and Shia selection to and advancement within the officer corps is restricted.
- Saddam's son Qusay controls the security and intelligence apparatus in Iraq and directly supervises elite paramilitary and military forces. Tikritis control two-thirds of key military and security organizations and at least one-sixth of corps and division command billets in the regular ground forces.
- Officers are subjected to intense political and security scrutiny in a system where survival depends on deft manipulation of patrimonial networks. Saddam rewards loyalty with privileged treatment and brutally eradicates any perceived disloyalty. [redacted]

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Draconian control methods degrade professionalism and combat effectiveness, and have prevented the armed forces from contributing to national cohesion among Iraq's Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds. Baghdad's pervasive and stifling security system limits leaders' ability to react, improvise, and initiate. Oppressive controls also exacerbate officer resentment and low morale, which may diminish their will to fight for the regime. [redacted]

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Saddam's controls have deprived the Iraqi officer corps of its once powerful political role. When the Iraqi dictator's hold on power starts to loosen, a complex mix of personal and institutional interests will shape officers' responses to US-led combat operations and a post-Saddam government.

- Reforming the officer corps and restructuring the armed forces into a force for national cohesion will be key to the stability of a post-Saddam Iraq. [redacted]

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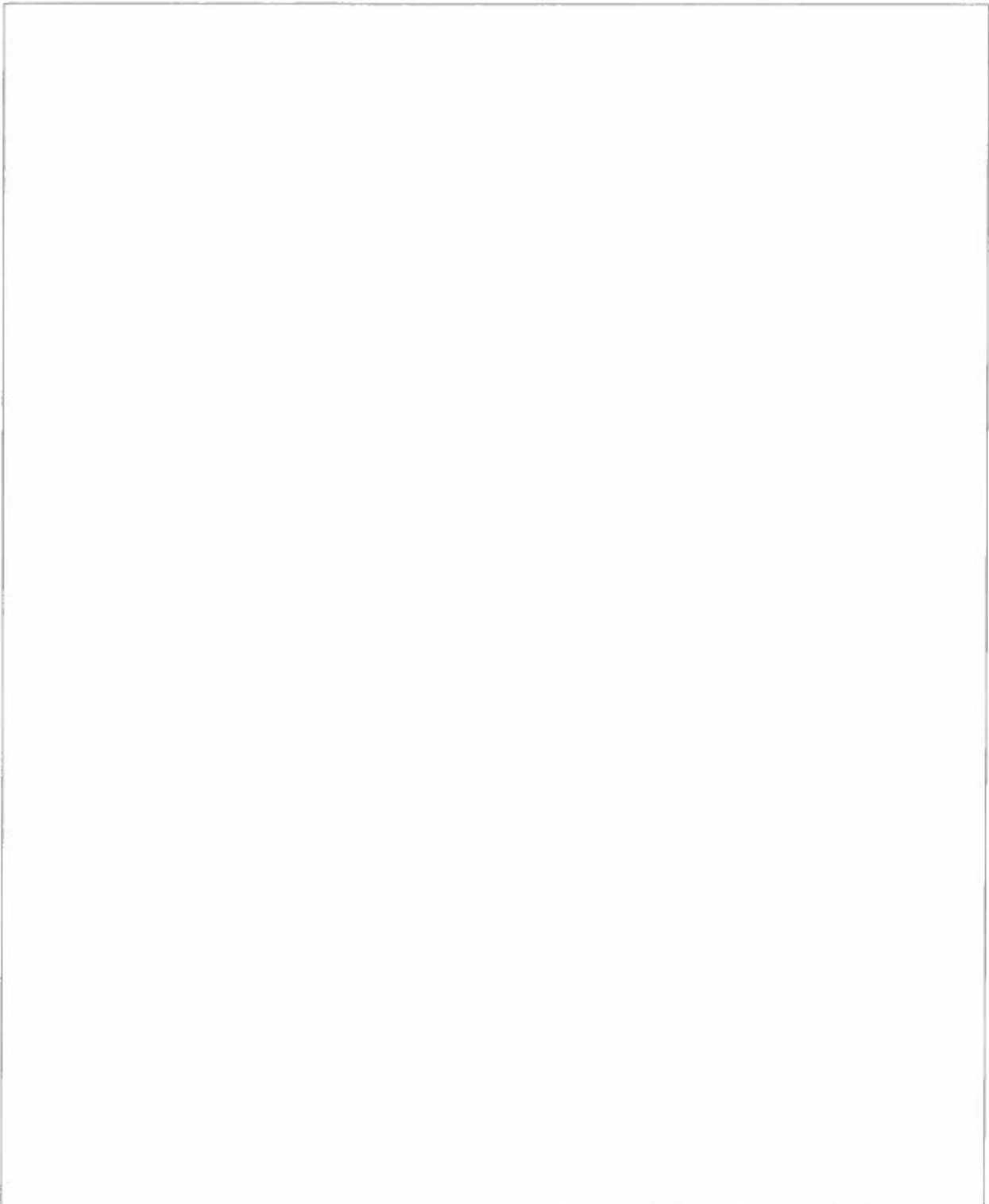
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