

POLITICAL  
HANDBOOK  
OF THE  
MIDDLE  
EAST  
2008

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**POLITICAL HANDBOOK  
OF THE MIDDLE EAST  
2008**



# REGIONAL POLITICAL HANDBOOKS OF THE WORLD

Political Handbook of the Middle East 2008

Political Handbook of the Americas 2008

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## **Political Handbook of the Middle East 2008**

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# **POLITICAL HANDBOOK OF THE MIDDLE EAST 2008**



A DIVISION OF CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY INC.  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

CQ Press  
2300 N Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20037

Phone: 202-729-1900; toll-free, 1-866-4CQ-PRESS (1-866-427-7737)

Web: [www.cqpress.com](http://www.cqpress.com)

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Cover design: TGD Communications

Composition: Production staff at Aptara Corp. Inc., New Delhi

Maps by International Mapping Associates.

∞ The paper used in this publication exceeds the requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

12 11 10 09 08 1 2 3 4 5

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Political handbook of the Middle East 2008.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-87289-574-4 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Middle East—Politics and government—21st century—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. International agencies—Middle East—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. CQ Press. II. Title.

JQ1758.A58P65 2008

320.956—dc22

2008016130

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# INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION ABBREVIATIONS

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Memberships in non-UN intergovernmental organizations are listed at the end of each country's section under Intergovernmental Representation. An asterisk in the list below indicates a nonofficial abbreviation. In the country profiles, associate memberships are in italics.

ADB	Asian Development Bank	ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
*AfDB	African Development Bank	EIB	European Investment Bank
*AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development	EU	European Union
AMF	Arab Monetary Fund	Eurocontrol	European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union	GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
AU	African Union	*IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	IDB	Islamic Development Bank
BDEAC	Central African States Development Bank	IEA	International Energy Agency
BIS	Bank for International Settlements	Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
BSEC	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation	IOM	International Organization for Migration
*CAEU	Council of Arab Economic Unity	IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
CCC	Customs Cooperation Council	LAS	League of Arab States (Arab League)
*CEUR	Council of Europe	*NAM	Nonaligned Movement
Comesa	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
*CP	Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific	OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
*CWTH	Commonwealth	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	*OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference

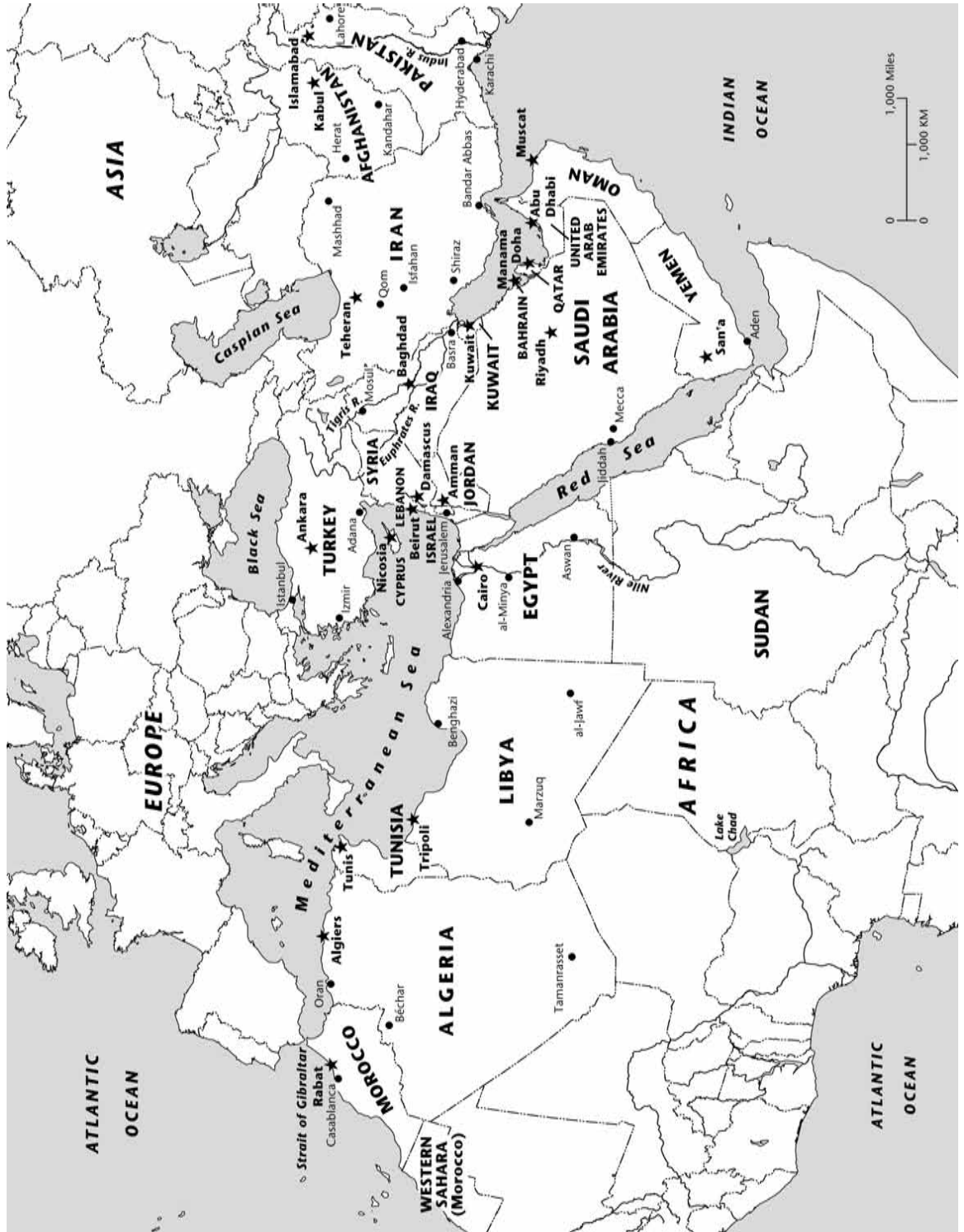
X INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION ABBREVIATIONS

OIF	International Organization of the Francophonie	*PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	WEU	Western European Union
		WTO	World Trade Organization

**PART ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

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The geographical expanse of the Middle East consists mostly of arid countryside, although significant mountain ranges traverse landscapes in nearly all parts of the region. The Sahara, a natural demarcation between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, is the largest desert in the world, while the Empty Quarter (Rub al-Khali) in the Arabian Peninsula reigns as the largest sand expanse.

The stereotypical image of Middle Easterners as Bedouin, or pastoralists, holds true in reality for a dwindling proportion of the population. Many of the region's inhabitants traditionally have been cultivators, fishermen, and traders. In the last century or so, economic development and the growth of industries and services have spurred the rise of new cities, along with a large urban working class and a small but distinct middle class.

The Middle East is a well-recognized region of the world, but defining its limits can be problematic (see the map opposite). Under the most widely accepted definition, the Middle East includes the seventeen Arab countries plus the Palestinian territories and the non-Arab countries of Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Cyprus. Although Turkey, located mostly in Asia, is Muslim and shares a common history with its Middle Eastern neighbors, its aspirations to join the European Union sometimes lead to its being classified as a European country. (The U.S. State Department includes it in its Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.) The island of Cyprus, too, tends to identify itself as European and is a member of the EU, but its position in the eastern Mediterranean, just south of the Asia mainland, renders it a transcontinental nation. Predominantly Muslim Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the eastern side of the region, are also sometimes considered to be (non-Arab) Middle Eastern states because of cultural, historical, and political ties.

The Arab states can be divided into four groups based on their location. The Fertile Crescent—an arc stretching from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf and the site of some of the earliest known centers of civilization—includes Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories. To its south lies the Arabian Peninsula with seven states: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Egypt connects the region's Asian and North African territories; Sudan connects the Arab world with sub-Saharan Africa. To the west lies the Maghreb—consisting of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia—with a Mediterranean coastline that runs to the Atlantic Ocean. Libya is sometimes included among the Maghrebi countries.

Various criteria often serve to extend the boundaries of the Middle East. The Arab League, for example, counts among its members Djibouti, Mauritania, Comoros, and Somalia, although the inhabitants of these countries are neither ethnically Arab nor Arabic speakers. Because of cultural and historical ties, the countries of Central Asia are sometimes included in the region. The *Political Handbook of the Middle East* defines the Middle East as the seventeen Arab countries, Afghanistan, Cyprus, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and Turkey.

The Middle East displays a great diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. The majority of Middle Easterners are ethnically Arab, but Middle Eastern states also contain significant populations of Azeris, Baluch, Amazigh, Kurds, and black Africans, among others. Azeris reside in Nakhchivan, an autonomous republic of Azerbaijan, and although of Persian origin, speak a Persianized Turkic language. Most Baluch, Sunni Muslims who speak Baluchi, live in southwestern Pakistan, but a sizeable number can be found across the border in Iran. Berbers are pre-Islamic inhabitants of North Africa, and many continue to speak Berber languages. The Kurds, a distinct people who speak dialects of the Indo-European Kurdish language, are mostly Sunni Muslims who live in the mountainous area at the intersections of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

Most people in Turkey are ethnically Turkish, but large numbers of Kurds reside in the eastern region of the country; some Greeks live in the west. Israel was founded as a Jewish state, but many of its citizens are Arab. Iran, fundamentally a Persian state, has sizeable minorities of Arabs, Azeris, Baluch, Kurds, and other groups. Arabic is spoken by more Middle Easterners than any other language, while Hebrew is the official language in Israel, Turkish in Turkey, and Persian in Iran.

Great diversity in religion also characterizes the Middle East. Muslims constitute the majority of the population by far. Most Muslims are Sunnis, who adhere to the mainstream, or “orthodox,” branch of Islam. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, to whom God (“Allah” in Arabic) revealed the Koran, the Islamic holy book, the community of Muslims elected his four immediate successors, or caliphs. Later, distant relatives of Muhammad vied for leadership of the Muslim community. Shiites, the largest variant grouping among Muslims, broke away from the larger Sunni community over this dispute, and the Islamic empire was never to unite. In Shiite Islam, a line of hereditary imams (religious leaders)

came to hold great sway and importance, providing leadership for the community. Today, there is no single leader of that community, and the same pertains for Sunni Muslims. Instead, there exist numerous leaders with national or more local followers.

The Shiites further branched into various groups. The largest believe that there were twelve imams and that the twelfth one will again return to lead his people. The great majority of Iranians are Twelver Shiites. Twelvers also form the majority in Iraq and Bahrain and are the largest confessional community in Lebanon. They represent significant minorities in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. More than one-third of Yemen's population is Zaidi Shiite; they believe in only five imams. Scattered throughout the region are small communities of yet another subgroup who believe in seven imams.

Oman is home to Ibadhism, the first offshoot from Sunni Islam, which elects imams from the general population rather than from Muhammad's lineage. Israel, Lebanon, and Syria are home to the Druze, a fiercely independent people who diverged from Islam in their belief in the divinity of several medieval Islamic rulers. The Alawites of Syria follow what is sometimes considered a separate religion derived originally from Shiite Islam. Their prominence far exceeds their numbers by virtue of their holding the top political positions in the country.

The region also contains many Christians and Jews. Most Christians belong to various Eastern rites, with the largest community being the Copts of Egypt. Christians also live in Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories. Lebanon's Maronites are in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, while a number of Middle Eastern Christians have converted to Protestantism in the last century or so. Israel was created as a Jewish state, with its Jewish citizens immigrating in large numbers from elsewhere in the Middle East, as well as from Europe and North America. Small Jewish communities remain in Egypt, Iran, Yemen, and the Maghreb.

The seventh-century emergence of Islam in Mecca, in western Saudi Arabia, transformed the Middle East and surrounding regions. In less than two centuries, Muslims had spread Islam to the extent that the Islamic world encompassed not just the Middle East, but much of Central Asia, northern India, the Iberian Peninsula, and present-day France. Islam expanded subsequently into Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Although Arabs were the early leaders of the Islamic community, converts of other ethnicities soon rose to prominence in Islamic lands in politics, the military, religion, literature, and the sciences. The arrival of the Turks in the Middle East in the twelfth century helped shift the balance of power away from the Arabs. The Ottoman Empire, founded by Turks, more or less unified the Middle Eastern core of the Islamic world and extended its boundaries into southeastern Europe.

By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state had become known as the "sick man of Europe," a decaying empire into which the European powers began to make inroads in the Middle East. In Egypt, Britain established a protectorate over the local ruler, who remained ostensibly a vassal of Istanbul, and in North Africa, France absorbed Algeria into metropolitan

France. Istanbul's alliance with Germany during World War I provided France and Britain the opportunity, for which they had been waiting, to establish strongholds in the region. Using Indian troops, Britain invaded Mesopotamia (Iraq) and, after some setbacks, eventually wrested full control from its Ottoman defenders. In the Turkish-held areas of the Levant, Britain and France encouraged the so-called Arab Revolt and then sent an army to capture Jerusalem and Damascus. In addition, they launched a direct assault on Turkey at the battle of Gallipoli, which ended in disaster for the attackers.

By the end of World War I, the tattered Ottoman Empire had surrendered, and Kemal Mustafa, a Turkish army officer, took control of the Turkish heartland of the former empire. In a few short years, he had abolished the office of the caliph—the titular head of Islam and ruler of the empire—created the state of Turkey, and turned it toward secularism and Europe. He became known as Ataturk, "the father of the Turks." The Arab lands fell under the subjugation of Britain and France. Although the two countries had promised the Arabs independence in return for their help in defeating the Ottomans, the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 divided the Arab territories into European zones of influence. At the end of the war, these zones became mandates (protectorates) of the League of Nations under the control of these same European powers.

Britain took responsibility for Iraq (Mesopotamia), Palestine, Transjordan (the territory east of Palestine), and Egypt. France controlled Lebanon and Syria (both new states) and had already established protectorates over Tunisia and most of Morocco. Elsewhere in the region, Persia remained an independent though weak state, and Libya had become an Italian colony before the war. The new country of Saudi Arabia emerged in the Arabian Peninsula, while the small city-states of the Gulf were "protected" by Britain; Oman remained nominally independent, though under British influence. North Yemen proclaimed its independence, but South Yemen became a British-protected area surrounding the colony of Aden.

As had happened in much of sub-Saharan Africa, new states arose in the Middle East as if from thin air, or more precisely, from lines drawn by colonial powers on maps. Lebanon represented a new creation, with boundaries drawn to ensure that the state contained a roughly equal number of Christians and Muslims. Syria similarly was cobbled together from various Ottoman districts. France, a republic, established republican forms of government in Lebanon and Syria. The British Balfour Declaration of 1917 paved the way in Palestine for Jewish immigration, setting the scene for decades of Arab-Jewish confrontation.

Britain, a monarchy, established monarchies in its mandates. In Egypt, a royal line already existed, but Britain created two new states—Iraq and Jordan—with thrones for Hashemite kings. The Hashemi family traces its descent from the Prophet Muhammad, and its members served for centuries as the governors of Mecca. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Hashemi family created an independent kingdom in al-Hijaz (the Hejaz), the western part of the Arabian Peninsula that includes Mecca and Islam's second holiest city,

al-Madinah (Medina). The kingdom was short-lived, however, because the Al Saud family from central Arabia conquered the Hejaz, incorporating it into what was to become the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. To compensate the allied Hashemi family, Britain placed a Hashemite on the throne of Iraq, a unification of the formerly Ottoman regions of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. At the same time, the Europeans carved Transjordan out of the area east of the Jordan River to provide a throne for the other Hashemite king.

Although the imperial powers granted formal independence to their mandates in the 1920s and 1930s, they retained effective control over these states until well after World War II (apart from Italy, which lost Libya to British control during the war). Instability and conflict accompanied true independence. The founding of Israel in 1948 resulted in a prolonged war between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbors that settled little but the survival of Israel and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Of the two Palestinian areas not absorbed by Israel, the West Bank was incorporated into Transjordan (which changed its name to Jordan) and the Gaza Strip along the Mediterranean fell under Egyptian administration.

A second Arab-Israeli war (the Suez War) took place in October and November 1956, when Israel, in collusion with Britain and France, invaded Egypt but was forced to withdraw under pressure from the United States. In June 1967, cross-border tensions escalated into a third war in which Israel overwhelmed its Arab opponents, capturing the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and Gaza and the Sinai from Egypt. Six years later, in October 1973, the frontline Arab states of Syria and Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur (which was during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan) to regain territories lost in 1967. The attackers enjoyed initial success, but the war ended in a stalemate. Ultimately, however, the war would lead to the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations that culminated in the 1979 Camp David peace treaty between the two countries, permitting the return of Israeli-occupied territory to Egypt and the removal of Egypt from the ranks of the Arab “confrontation” states.

The most recent Arab-Israeli war occurred in 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon in an attempt to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was based there and from whose territory the PLO launched attacks against Israel. Israeli forces eventually reached Beirut, forced the exile of the PLO leadership and evacuation of large numbers of fighters, and then withdrew to southern Lebanon, which they would occupy until 2000. During the course of the Israeli invasion, Syria—which had troops deployed in Lebanon ostensibly to help quell the civil war raging there—avoided engagement with the advancing Israelis, with whom its forces could not compete and win, and Jordan abstained from involvement. Arab-Israeli hostilities recorded another chapter in the summer of 2006 when Israeli forces fought to a standoff with the Lebanese militant group *Hezbollah*.

## Ideologies and Aspirations

The search for workable ideologies of political organization and socioeconomic development dominated the twentieth-century Middle East. Most of the ideologies embraced and then discarded were of European origin and leaned steadily toward the left. Their failure would leave political Islam seemingly in ascendance at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

### *Secular Ideologies*

Long before the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab nation had searched for an appropriate path for gaining independence and advancing their political and economic development. For a century, the favored paths consisted of secular ideologies. Not surprisingly, the first to appear, in the late nineteenth century, was that of nationalism. In the minds of Arab intellectuals and the educated, the Arab Revolt of World War I represented a step toward creating independence, and for the first time in history, a specifically Arab state. Thus, the imposition of mandates came as a severe blow. Nevertheless, Arab elites continued to stress nationalism as a way of gaining independence for individual entities. With formal (or *de jure*) independence, these elites turned their attention to the European principles of liberalism, constitutionalism, and parliamentary democracy. The Egyptian Wafd, founded in 1919, became one of the first parties in this vein to organize. Its name means “the delegation” in Arabic; its founders had sought unsuccessfully to plead their case before the conference drafting the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I. The liberal nationalists were, however, discredited, first by their willingness to cooperate with the mandate powers, then by the unbridgeable gap between new government structures and indigenous institutions, and finally by corruption and support only by elites.

The nationalists found their appeal superseded by other ideologies after World War II and the debacle of the Arab defeat in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948–1950. In the postwar Middle East, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser rose to typify the new breed of pan-Arab nationalist. Nasser seized power in 1952 in the name of the Free Officers, young fellow military officers disgusted by their government’s corruption and unresponsiveness. This bloodless coup established a trend throughout much of the Arab world that would define the 1950s and 1960s. Nasserism was not a coherent, articulated ideology, but it embraced the themes of pan-Arab nationalism, anti-imperialism, state socialism, and the redress of social inequalities. The principles of the Baath Arab Socialist Party, founded in the 1940s, were similar to Nasserism in their emphasis on pan-Arab nationalism, state socialism, and the need for revolutionary action to reform Arab politics. Although Baathism arose as an intellectual movement, implementation of the ideology came about when military officers who seized power through coups and countercoups adopted it in Iraq and Syria. The battleground was thus set for an “Arab cold war” between the traditional monarchies and revolutionary, or progressive, regimes.



Revolutionary forces followed the Egyptian Free Officers' example in deposing the monarchies in Iraq in 1958, in Yemen in 1962, and in Libya in 1969. Some monarchies and more traditional republics proved more resilient than expected. Saudi Arabia and the smaller states of the Gulf persevered because their political systems were extensions of traditional tribal and social institutions. The kings of Jordan and Morocco maintained their positions in part because of their religious appeal as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as through their astute leadership. The shah of Iran based his right to rule on a falsely claimed descent from 2,500 years of Persian kingship, but he buttressed his position by encouraging modernists and repressing dissent.

Israel, by virtue of its history, was unique in the region, although its founders based their ideology on the familiar notions of nationalism and socialism. Zionism had emerged in nineteenth-century Europe as a form of Jewish nationalism, based on the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine to serve as a Jewish homeland. The push for statehood intensified before, during, and after World War II because of Nazi policies and atrocities against the Jews.

Disillusionment with pan-Arab socialism set in as Nasser held tight to power in Egypt, and military rulers in Syria and Iraq degraded Baathism by using it to serve their own political interests. Some intellectuals continued to espouse leftist ideologies, particularly proponents of the Arab Nationalists' Movement and Marxism. Putting these ideologies into practice, however, proved impossible almost everywhere—the exception being in impoverished South Yemen—because of their limited appeal to only a few activists and intellectuals. Even in South Yemen, the quasi-Marxist experiment proved ill-suited to a largely rural, tribal society.

Arabs came increasingly to see the progression of secular ideologies as a series of wrong paths because of their inability to confront Israel militarily, measurably improve living standards, create better and more efficient government, unify the Arab nation, and engage the active support of the masses. Thus, the march of revolution in the region, which seemed inevitable in the 1950s and 1960s, slowed and stalled as revolutionary regimes became more authoritarian and elitist. Meanwhile, traditional regimes continued to survive and prosper, aided in some states by oil revenues. Quite naturally, these governments resisted political change, although their citizenry increasingly sought it.

### *Islamist Ideologies*

State corruption and disillusionment with secular ideologies led to renewed interest in political Islam in the Middle East. Islamic reformers began to emerge in the late nineteenth century just as currents of nationalist and liberal thought began to circulate in the Middle East. Whereas the earliest of these reformers, typified by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, espoused pan-Islamism and the combining of Islamic values with European science, later reformers held different ideas.

One branch, the “reformers,” saw the decline of Islam as being due to the rigidity of political thought and sought to reform Islam with new institutions and skills to meet the demands of modern life. Another branch, the “rejectionists,” argued that European thinking and technology had subjugated the Islamic world because Muslims had lost the qualities that had made the Islamic world great in previous times. According to them, the proper strategy called for rejecting Western influences and returning completely to “pure” Islam. The rejectionist path attracted little support in the first half of the twentieth century. The more moderate reformist path became lost amid the attractions of secular ideologies, and the state attacked groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Despite the proliferation of secular regimes, Islam was never completely divorced from government and politics in the Middle East. Constitutions (apart from those of Israel and Lebanon) proclaimed the state to be Islamic, and states retained sharia (Islamic law) in the areas of personal and family law. Many Muslims remained pious, and their cultural identity continued to be clearly informed by Islam. Over time, a dichotomy developed, with secular states governing Islamic societies, an occurrence somewhat paralleled in Israel in relations between Labor Party–led governments and ultra-religious Jews.

The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, is one of the earliest and longest surviving Islamist groups. It advocates a return to the tenets of Islam (as it interprets them) to address the political, economic, and social issues of the modern age. The Brotherhood spread first among the lower classes and gradually assumed a more political role. Banned by the Egyptian government in 1948, the organization retaliated by assassinating Prime Minister Mahmud Nuqrashi later in the same year. It refused to recognize Nasser's revolutionary government and was severely repressed after attempts on his life. Although forced underground, the Brotherhood still managed to establish branches in other countries. Some of its followers found jobs in Saudi Arabia, where they influenced a new generation of Wahhabis.

Wahhabism, the predominant form of Islam in Saudi Arabia, is based on the teachings of eighteenth-century religious reformer Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab. He denounced the corruption of Islam and, like other reformers, called for a return to “pure” Islam. The Wahhabis do not constitute a separate Islamic sect but practice a very conservative form of Sunni Islam. They go further than other Sunnis in banning music, the mixing of the sexes in public, and the veneration of shrines and graves. Wahhabis also created a type of religious police to enforce conformity to Islamic requirements in public and to ensure that the population adheres to the tenet of prayers five times a day. The founding of the modern state of Saudi Arabia, with its oil-driven prosperity, development, and educational system, softened the edges of Wahhabi practices, but the influx of Muslim Brothers and other conservatives aided in the growth of an archconservative backlash. These radicalized Wahhabis burst onto the scene with a takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca in 1979.

Islamists of varying kinds began to grow in numbers in other parts of the Middle East. In the 1960s and 1970s, Westerners popularly referred to this phenomenon as “Islamic fundamentalism,” based on the Christian experience of fundamentalism, though it had different connotations. The term “Islamist” is more appropriate in defining this “fundamentalism” among Muslims and its adherents. In general, it refers to those people who, in turning away from the perceived “looseness” and indirection of modern society, become more religious. These Islamists want society and the state to adopt stricter Islamic practices, such as reinstating the sharia as the basis of all law, banning alcohol and pork, and enforcing modesty and conformity in dress for men and women. On another level, however, Islamists are compelled to move beyond the peaceful advocacy of stricter measures and into violent opposition to governments and secularist society. These radical Islamists, or Islamist extremists, made their presence felt first in the 1950s and 1960s in Iraq, a heavily secularized state. In the 1970s in Egypt, they drew adherents away from the Muslim Brotherhood into more reactionary groups, such as al-Jihad, which assassinated President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 and attacked foreign tourists. The largely Shiite radical Islamists in Iraq also influenced counterparts in Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, spent fifteen years in Iraq in the Shiite holy city of Najaf.

The Iranian Revolution undoubtedly catalyzed the reemergence of Islamist thought and the radical Islamist presence in today’s Middle East. In one sweep, the movement deposed an authoritarian monarch (the shah), reversed the process of secularization, trumpeted justice for the working classes, and enforced the observance of a conservative view of Islam. It also initially espoused the spread of “Islamic revolution” to the rest of the region. Most important, the Iranian Revolution put conservative religious leaders, or mullahs, in charge of government as well as social conventions. In part, this new, elevated role for mullahs resulted from the emergence of Ayatollah Khomeini, a highly respected Islamic scholar, as the symbol of and most prominent figure of the revolution. It also represented a reestablishment of the clerical oversight of politics that had been a unique feature of the Twelver Shiite Islam prevalent in Iran.

In the region in general, as authoritarian and corrupt governments refused to or were unable to improve standards of living for the masses, Islamist movements grew in popularity, especially because they provided social services and financial assistance denied by government. Although the Iranian Revolution reverberated into the early 1980s, its lasting influence would largely be inspirational, rather than guiding, as traditional Arab-Persian and Sunni-Shiite antipathies came to the fore. The revolution encouraged the creation and growth of other Islamist movements throughout the Middle East and the Islamic world beyond. Some of the movements’ adherents saw themselves as a “loyal opposition” to existing regimes, while others chose to work underground against governments they regarded as corrupt and illegitimate.

In Algeria, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) gained in popularity, and during elections held in 1992, many in Algeria and

abroad feared that if the FIS won, it would change the constitution and eliminate the electoral process. The government, panicked after the FIS won large majorities in the preliminary round of voting, cancelled final elections. The government’s action led to a long, brutal civil war between the FIS and more extremist groups on one side and the government and its supporters on the other. In Lebanon, the plight of the long-downtrodden Shiites led to the formation first of the group al-Amal to protect their political interests during the civil war that erupted in 1975–1976 and then to the founding of *Hezbollah*, created and supported with Iranian backing with the purpose of carrying out a militant defense of the communities’ interests against opposing Lebanese forces and Israeli troops occupying southern Lebanon. The failure of the PLO (founded in 1964 to oppose Israeli control of Palestine) to achieve an independent Palestinian state led to the founding and growth of *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad, Islamist organizations committed to providing services to impoverished and neglected Palestinian communities and to more forcefully challenging Israeli occupation. With the outbreak in 2000 of the al-Aqsa intifada, the second popular uprising against Israeli occupation, *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad became more widely known in the West for dispatching suicide bombers to carry out attacks against Israeli military targets and civilians.

### *Authoritarianism and Democratization*

Political deficiencies throughout the Middle East provided the fertile ground for Islamists to nurture opposition to the status quo that earlier leftist secular ideologies had planted. Nearly half a century after the emergence of the Arab cold war, the Arab world remains divided between progressive republics and traditional monarchies. Although the phenomenon of army-led “revolving door” coups in countries such as Syria and Iraq has ceased, the civilian leaders of such republics continue to rely on authoritarian methods and showcase elections to maintain power. Several states are on the verge of becoming “hereditary republics,” whereby leaders pass on their positions to their sons. This happened in Syria in 2000, when Bashar al-Assad succeeded his late father, Hafiz al-Assad, as president. Husni Mubarak in Egypt, Muammar al-Qadhafi in Libya, and Ali Abdallah Salih in Yemen have all been grooming their sons for succession, as did Saddam Hussein in Iraq before the 2003 invasion and war overthrew his government.

In some ways, the balance in the struggle for supremacy has shifted from the republics to the monarchies. The last demise of a monarchy occurred in Libya in 1969. Undoubtedly the longevity of the monarchies in the Gulf has been aided by oil revenues used to create the most comprehensive systems of economic infrastructure and social welfare in the region. Like the republics, monarchical governments maintain tight control over their populations and either prohibit or limit political participation. The durability of monarchies has been aided as well by the emergence of new “reformist” leaders, among them Mohamed VI in Morocco, Abdallah II in Jordan, and Abdallah in Saudi Arabia.

The three non-Arab states differ politically from the Arab states as well as from each other. Israel is by far the most democratic state in the region, with free elections to the *Knesset* (parliament) and for prime minister. Lively debate takes place among political parties espousing a wide range of ideologies, as reflected in the country's eclectic free press. At the same time, however, deep divisions exist between Israel's Jewish majority and its Arab citizens, who perceive themselves relegated to second-class status. Social and economic distinctions also are evident between Jews of European origin, who have dominated Israeli politics since the country's founding, and other Jews, primarily from the Middle East, who remain poorer. The right-wing Likud Party won the 1977 elections for the first time because of the defection from the left-wing Labor Party by Sephardic Jews (of African and Asian origin) after years of being ignored.

The most fundamental and festering political problem facing Israel, however, is its relations with the Palestinians. Israel occupies or controls the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, but it does not exercise sovereignty over the Palestinians, who remain in a decades-long limbo, impoverished, restricted in their relations with other Arabs, and increasingly banned from available jobs in Israel. A deepening cycle of violence appears to be the primary consequence of fundamental disagreement over the fine points of a peace plan: Israeli domination begets Palestinian resistance—such as attacks on Israeli settlers and soldiers in the occupied territories as well as targets in Israel—which begets overwhelming Israeli retaliation against the Palestinians.

Turkey has been a functioning democracy in theory since its founding nearly a century ago. Its democratic principles, however, have been tested on several occasions by the usurpation of authority by the military claiming to act as guardians of the state. The great majority of Turkey's people are Muslim, while the state has been avowedly secularist, largely opposed to a role for Islamists, and committed to seeking entry into the European Union. Its relations with its large Kurdish population in the east have been problematic and violent, and the post-2003 situation in Iraq—with the consolidation of a nearly independent and possibly expansionist Kurdish state in the north—has not helped the situation. Meanwhile in Iran, the state has held free elections for the *Majlis* (parliament) and for the presidency, although the mullahs have created a great deal of controversy and protest in denying some candidates access to the ballot.

All the predominantly Muslim countries of the Middle East have experienced a sustained debate in one form or another over the compatibility of democracy and Islam. At the two extremes of the debate are the modernists, who argue that the Islamic world must adapt to today's world and accept democratic principles as a fundamental human right, and the Islamists, who contend that there is no need for democracy in the Islamic world because Islam provides all the necessary answers, so a true Islamic state would govern according to divine, and therefore just, principles.

The Middle East is one of the last parts of the world where democracy has not flourished. An avowed goal of the U.S.

government has been the encouragement of democratization, but there has been little progress. Critics charge the George W. Bush administration with using the concept as a cover for pursuing ideological interests, such as the invasion of Iraq, or with hypocrisy in maintaining close relations with decidedly non-democratic regimes. Egypt, a close ally of the United States, has repeatedly cracked down on opposition parties, and Washington has not seriously questioned the lack of human rights there. Saudi Arabia has made only limited progress in the liberalization of its tightly controlled political system. Even Jordan tinkered with its November 2007 parliamentary elections, placing obstacles in the way of Islamist parties and allegedly interfering with the polling to assure the victory of pro-government candidates.

## Violence and Terrorism

The roots of terrorism in the Middle East stem generally from the region's political instability, dissatisfaction with the domination of politics and economics by small elites, and perceptions of Western domination and interference. Much of the Middle East experienced European colonization, and many of its people believe that the West continues to exercise a kind of neocolonialism through political and military support of friendly regimes. Many people in the region regard Western culture as immoral and its intrusion as corrupting. Some view this cultural invasion as part of a broader strategy to increase Western control over the Middle East. In the minds of many Arabs and other Muslims, Israel is a Western creation with the aim of weakening the Arabs and the Islamic world.

Political violence has been an unfortunate feature of the region throughout the modern era. Revolutions in various states in the 1950s and 1960s often resulted in the widespread killing of enemies, and radical elements have often employed assassination to achieve their goals. Such is not, however, only an Islamic phenomenon. Jewish terror groups operated in Palestine before Israeli independence in 1948, and Christian groups engaged in terrorist activities during the Lebanese civil war of the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, certain states have used assassination and terrorist activities against neighboring states and to maintain or enhance control internally.

Terrorism has for several reasons been on the rise in the Middle East in recent decades. Palestinian groups have carried out violent actions with the aim of regaining control of Palestine almost since Israel became independent. Such activity came to international attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s with operations by Palestinian secular fringe groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Black September. The PFLP hijacked a number of civilian airliners bound to or from Israeli airports. Its hijacking of four airliners to remote airstrips in the Jordanian desert sparked a civil war between King Hussein's government and Palestinian forces in his country whose presence threatened to become a "state within a state," challenging the king's legitimacy. Events reached a head in September 1970, when the Jordanian military crushed

the Palestinian forces, leading to their relocation to Lebanon. These hostilities, which became known as Black September, provided the inspiration for the shadowy Black September organization that gained notoriety in 1972 for taking Israeli athletes hostage during the Munich Olympics, resulting in the death of the hostages, some of the kidnapers, and a German policeman.

The United States has accused several Middle Eastern countries of “state-sponsored terrorism,” a concern that has recently grown with efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In January 1986, the United States banned trade with Libya and froze Libyan government assets after Palestinian gunmen with ties to the Libyan government attacked Israeli El Al ticket counters at the Rome and Vienna airports. A few months later, in April, the United States carried out an air strike against Libya after determining that it had been involved in the bombing of a Berlin nightclub. In 1988, a Pan Am flight exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, and in 1989 a French airplane blew up over Niger. In both of these cases, Western governments identified Libyan intelligence officials as having been involved. Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi’s refusal to extradite the officials resulted in the adoption of economic sanctions by the UN Security Council. The deteriorating economic situation in Libya eventually forced the government to hand over the suspects in 1999 and compensate the victims’ families. The United Nations lifted sanctions, and Libya normalized relations with most countries, with the exception of the United States (though in recent years contact and cooperation have increased) [see later in chapter and chronology on Libya].

The U.S. government has also been concerned about Iranian support for terrorist activities. Some government factions in postrevolutionary Iran had sought to export the revolution to neighboring countries and against perceived enemies. Arab and Western support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, from 1980 to 1988, only heightened Iranian animosity. Bahrain accused Iran of supplying and assisting a number of Shiite dissidents arrested and charged in 1981 with plotting a coup. Iran was also suspected of aiding local Shiite activists who bombed several embassies in Kuwait in 1983.

Iranian-Saudi relations, troubled since the revolution, worsened during the Iran-Iraq War. In 1986 Iranian pilgrims making the hajj, the annual pilgrimage of Muslims from around the world to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, attempted to smuggle in explosives. The following year, 400 people died in a clash between Iranian demonstrators and Saudi police during the pilgrimage. In 1989 Saudi Arabia executed sixteen Shiite Kuwaitis convicted of detonating bombs in Mecca, allegedly with Iranian assistance. In 1996 a truck bomb exploded at the U.S. military barracks in al-Khobar, killing several dozen personnel. The United States accused Iran of working through Saudi *Hezbollah*—allegedly an offshoot of the Lebanese *Hezbollah*—to carry out the attack, but the connection was never proven, and suspicions later included al-Qaida.

The United States points to Tehran’s support for *Hezbollah* in Lebanon as evidence of Iranian involvement in terrorism. An offshoot of al-Amal, the principal Lebanese Shiite party,

*Hezbollah* gained attention in the 1980s when it took part in the kidnapping of Westerners. The group later took the lead in resisting the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and is widely credited with making the cost of the occupation too high for Israel to sustain. It further bolstered its reputation by providing much-needed social services in Lebanese Shiite communities and later joined the Lebanese government. The United States placed *Hezbollah* on its list of terrorist organizations, but other Western countries did not follow its lead.

*Hezbollah* re-entered international consciousness when it directly confronted Israel in the summer of 2006. Despite Israel’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, *Hezbollah* had continued to skirmish with Israeli troops and to launch rocket attacks against Israel. In July 2006, a *Hezbollah* incursion into Israeli territory resulted in the deaths of eight Israelis and the capture of two Israeli soldiers. Israel responded with air strikes and artillery fire against Lebanese targets as far north as Beirut’s airport. This in turn provoked more *Hezbollah* rocket attacks on Israeli cities. Israeli troops entered southern Lebanon, and after Israeli forces bombed the town of Qana and killed a number of civilians, the small war expanded despite international calls for a cease-fire. A truce on August 14 finally ended the fighting without material advantage to either side. In the end, *Hezbollah* claimed that it had fared better than Arab forces in any of the Arab-Israeli wars, and it gained considerable admiration throughout the Arab world.

Western classification of terrorism and terrorist groups in the region has become a contentious issue. The Arab world has rejected the U.S. designation of *Hezbollah* as a terrorist group, regarding it instead as a legitimate resistance group against Israeli occupation. Islamist Palestinian organizations, particularly *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad, gained in prominence while resisting the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem during the second intifada. As with *Hezbollah*, their appeal in part derived from their provision of social services, in addition to opposition to corruption within the Palestinian Authority. Their popularity also rested, however, on their frequent attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers and use of suicide bombers against civilian targets in Israel. The United States and Israel condemned *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad as terrorist organizations, while much of the Arab world viewed their actions as legitimate forms of resistance. Their success inspired non-Islamist Palestinian groups—such as the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, a breakaway faction of *Fatah*, the largest and dominant group within the PLO—to adopt similar tactics. It did not take long for *Hamas*, growing in appeal, to clash with *Fatah* and to best the latter both in parliamentary elections and on the ground.

In recent years, terrorism in the Middle East has been carried out largely by Islamist extremists. The most well known of these have belonged to or been associated with al-Qaida, headed by Osama bin Laden, one of many sons of a successful Saudi contractor of Yemeni origin. Bin Laden counted himself among the thousands of “Afghan Arabs,” Muslims who traveled to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation from 1979 to 1989. Many of these fighters returned to their homelands

radicalized by the experience and their conversion to an extremist worldview of an Islamic world under attack by non-believers. Upon his return to Saudi Arabia, bin Laden began organizing and gathering followers to fight back.

Bin Laden and Abd al-Aziz Azzam, a Palestinian religious theorist, had agreed that the organization they had established in Afghanistan should continue. This they developed into al-Qaida (meaning in Arabic “base,” or “foundation”), whose goals would include creating a corps of Islamist volunteers to fight non-Muslims wherever they threatened Islamic lands and to overthrow Muslim-led governments perceived as corrupt and anti-Islamic. After Azzam’s assassination in 1989, bin Laden became the unquestioned leader of al-Qaida, with prominent roles played by two Egyptians: blind cleric Omar Abdel Rahman (whose followers assassinated President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 and attacked the World Trade Center in New York in 1993) and Ayman al-Zawahiri (who facilitated the Egyptian al-Jihad’s merger into al-Qaida).

As bin Laden’s ideology grew more radical and he began recruiting followers, he relocated in 1991 to Sudan, then dominated by an Islamist movement. After international pressure forced the Sudanese to expel him, he found refuge in Afghanistan, where the extremist Taliban regime had taken power. The Taliban (meaning “the students”), educated at radical Islamic religious schools in nearby Pakistan, had seized power in Afghanistan with the goal of restoring their version of the pure Islamic state, free from outside influences. After taking up residence in Afghanistan, bin Laden established camps there to train al-Qaida members in terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

In 1998 bin Laden and Zawahiri issued a fatwa (a religious declaration) declaring that because the United States had waged war on God and his messenger, Muhammad—by propping up corrupt regimes, supporting Israeli occupation of Muslim lands and holy sites, and carrying out attacks and imposing sanctions on Iraq—Muslims were duty bound to carry out attacks on Americans everywhere. The first strike against a U.S. target was the 1993 underground bombing of the World Trade Center in New York that killed six people. In 1998 al-Qaida carried out bombings against the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing several hundred people, mostly Africans. The organization was also implicated in the killing of U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia and Somalia. In 2000 the group attacked an American warship, the USS *Cole*, in the harbor of Aden, Yemen, killing 17 sailors.

The most brazen al-Qaida operation thus far was the carefully planned attack launched on September 11, 2001. Preliminary steps began a year and a half before the event, when some of the participants enrolled in flight schools in the United States. Of the 19 hijackers involved, 15 were from Saudi Arabia, possibly in a deliberate attempt to damage U.S.-Saudi relations. Early on the morning of September 11, four separate groups of hijackers boarded airplanes in Boston, Newark, and Washington, and after seizing control of the planes, flew two of them into the World Trade Center towers in New York and crashed one into the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed in the Pennsylvania countryside after passengers chal-

lenged the hijackers. The death toll from the multiple attacks was 3,126.

When the Taliban ignored a U.S. demand to shut down al-Qaida’s camps and hand over bin Laden, the United States launched a ground invasion of Afghanistan, capturing the country’s main cities and driving the Taliban from power. Taliban leader Mullah Omar and al-Qaida’s leaders escaped and remained free as of the end of 2007. Believed to be hiding in the mountainous border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, bin Laden and Zawahiri periodically issue videos and audio recordings threatening their enemies and exhorting their sympathizers to carry on the fight. Meanwhile, the United States helped establish a new government in Afghanistan, with Hamid Karzai as president. A subsequent election in 2004 confirmed him in office.

Following the attacks on September 11, President George W. Bush declared that the United States would pursue a “global war on terror.” His administration extended economic and other assistance to countries with radical Islamist insurgencies and those cooperating in the fight against terrorism. Bush and members of his administration cited the war on terror in part to justify invading Iraq in 2003. Links between Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi regime and Islamist terrorists were never established, but attacks against U.S. military targets, Iraqi civilians, and foreigners escalated in Iraq in the chaotic security situation after the fall of Hussein’s government. Although Iraqi insurgents carried out many attacks, all those involving suicide bombers were the product of Islamist extremists. The supposed leader of the Islamists, Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, declared his allegiance to bin Laden and claimed to lead the semi-independent organization al-Qaida in Iraq. Zarqawi’s death in an American attack in June 2006 did not put an end to the organization, although operations slowed noticeably in the subsequent months and were overshadowed by increased sectarian fighting.

The controversial treatment of prisoners taken during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and as part of the overall war on terror fueled suspicions about perceived U.S. anti-Muslim attitudes. Although the status of the Guantanamo prisoners raised questions from the start, it gained added attention in the aftermath of the revelation in April 2004 that American soldiers had abused prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. Numerous non-Afghans were captured on suspicion of membership in or at least connections with al-Qaida during the Afghan war. President Bush declared some 700 of these captives “enemy combatants,” denying them prisoner-of-war status and transporting them to the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba or holding them at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and on Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean. They were interrogated in secret, without access to attorneys, and confronted with the possibility of trial in special military tribunals. The United States “rendered,” or transferred secretly, some of them to allied countries for further interrogation. By 2007 none had been convicted of any offense, and a few had been released to their home countries, including Britain, France, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. It also came to light that some of the severe techniques used for interrogation in Iraq had earlier been practiced

on prisoners in Guantanamo and in Afghanistan. Most of the prisoners in the Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca prisons in Iraq were suspected of criminal activity, not terrorism.

Attacks similar to those of al-Qaida have also been carried out elsewhere. Saudi Arabia has faced a sustained campaign of assassinations and bombings since 2003. In Europe, bombs on four Madrid commuter trains exploded on March 11, 2004, and killed 191 people. The United Kingdom has been particularly affected. On July 7, 2005, simultaneous bombs were set off on three Underground trains and a bus, killing some 40 people and injuring hundreds. A plot to blow up aircraft flying from London across the Atlantic was foiled in August 2006, and in June 2007 several cars laden with bombs were discovered on London streets before they exploded, but one of the culprits subsequently drove a car into the terminal at Glasgow Airport and detonated it.

The leaders of al-Qaida remained at large through the end of 2007. Far from being moribund, the parent organization had established or strengthened ties with similarly inclined groups in Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Europe. While the terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom were carried out by homegrown terrorists, evidence began to emerge of ties to al-Qaida itself.

The diversion of American attention to Iraq was given as one reason why al-Qaida persisted, but unsettled political conditions in Afghanistan and Pakistan were also a major contribution. Despite being one of Washington's vital partners in the "war on terror" (and having received about \$5 billion in U.S. military assistance since 2002), Pakistan continues to pose problems for the United States. It is generally believed that Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have found refuge in the Waziristan region of Pakistan's North West Province, in an area beyond the government's control. In addition, there are persistent suspicions that Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) continues to maintain close ties with the Taliban, an organization that it supported openly in earlier years. While the Pakistani army has mounted raids in Waziristan aimed at al-Qaida and Taliban hideouts, it has also sought to negotiate truces with the region's tribal leaders. Moreover, the volatile political atmosphere in Pakistan does not inspire confidence in the country's stability and commitment to fighting terrorism. Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination in Rawalpindi by unknown forces on December 27, 2007, added to the negative atmosphere. Parliamentary elections were postponed until February 18, 2008, when Musharraf's party was decisively defeated.

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan remain acrimonious. Afghan President Hamid Karzai alleges that Pakistan is harboring Taliban leaders and supporting their cause, an assertion flatly denied by President Musharraf. Six years after the toppling of the Taliban and the introduction of an elected government and considerable personal freedom, Afghanistan continues to suffer from recurrent violence and a painfully slow rebuilding process. Despite the presence of a 41,000-troop International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) led by the United States and NATO allies, as well as the provision of \$21 billion in U.S. aid to the Karzai government, the Taliban have regrouped.

They have carried out frequent attacks against ISAF forces and the Afghan government, adopting many of the tactics (such as suicide bombings) pioneered by extremists in Iraq. The Kabul government is able to control only some parts of the country, often only in agreement with powerful autonomous governors. Afghanistan has become the world's leading producer of opium, which has become a major source of Taliban funding, as well as a profitable source of income for many other Afghans and government officials.

## The Iraq War, Antecedents, and Aftermath

Political turmoil and international crises have troubled Iraq for most of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Created as a British mandate after World War I, the country chafed under British control until the 1958 revolution toppled the monarchy and introduced a long period of military leadership. Civilian leaders eventually made their way to the top but retained their predecessors' Baathist ideology, using it to consolidate authoritarian control over the country. In 1979 Saddam Hussein rose to the presidency of Iraq, which he ruled with an iron fist and with the help of his two sons, Udai and Qusai, as well as close relatives from his hometown of Tikrit.

Iraq had long clashed with Iran, its neighbor to the east, over issues including issues of ethnic division between Arabs (Iraq) versus Persians (Iran), Iraq's progressive political system versus Iran's monarchical system, and competing border claims, most prominently featured in the struggle for control of the vital Shatt al-Arab waterway. When revolutionary Iran threatened to interfere in Iraqi politics, Hussein perceived an opportunity to take the upper hand and ordered an invasion of Iran's Khuzestan province in 1980. After initial military successes, the Iraqi military became bogged down, and Iran eventually fought its way into Iraqi territory. The war teetered in an increasingly bloody stalemate until the countries negotiated an end to the fighting in 1988.

Despite having veered close to catastrophe, Hussein proclaimed victory in the war and set about rebuilding his military machine. Far from cowed, but financially sapped by eight years of war, Hussein set his sights on what appeared to be an easier opponent: Kuwait. Relations with Kuwait, to the south, had long been troubled. Baghdad had opposed Kuwaiti independence in 1961 because it claimed that Kuwait was properly an Iraqi province. In addition, Kuwait had demanded the repayment of massive loans extended to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Hussein also accused Kuwait of stealing oil that belonged to Iraq from fields along their common border. In August 1990, Hussein ordered the invasion of his small, oil-rich, and financially well-off neighbor. It took only a few short days to overrun the country. Iraq declared Kuwait a province, and the Kuwaiti ruling family fled to Saudi Arabia. Fearing that Iraq would invade the kingdom next, Saudi Arabia called for international assistance to defend itself and its smaller neighbors. The United States and dozens of other countries responded,

deploying a massive coalition force along Saudi Arabia's borders with Kuwait and Iraq.

In January 1991, the coalition launched Operation Desert Storm with a 38-day aerial bombardment of the Iraqi capital and other military targets. Ground forces then surged across the frontiers: one prong, composed of U.S. and Arab coalition forces, entered and liberated Kuwait, while the other prong, spearheaded by American, British, and French troops, drove deep into Iraq. It took only 100 hours to crush the Iraqi armed forces, reputed to be the fourth largest in the world, and allow the coalition to declare a cease-fire.

Despite the collapse of the Iraqi military and his country's humiliation, a defiant Hussein remained at the helm and savagely crushed rebellions among the Shiites of southern Iraq and the Kurds in the north. As a consequence, the coalition members created and patrolled "no-fly" zones for the Iraqi air force over northern and southern Iraq. The United Nations imposed international sanctions that lasted for twelve years. It also authorized the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) to search for and destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. Iraq cooperated only minimally for the first two years of the inspection regime. In 1993 President Bill Clinton ordered a missile strike on intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for an alleged Iraqi plot to assassinate former president George H. W. Bush. Soon after, Iraq promised more cooperation but, in fact, remained recalcitrant.

In 1996 the United Nations instituted an oil-for-food program, under which Iraq would be allowed to sell some of its oil and use the proceeds for humanitarian aid. Iraq, however, abused the program through surreptitious purchases of armaments and luxury items for the ruling elite. In 1998 frustration with Iraq's failure to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors provoked the United States and Britain to launch large-scale air and missile attacks on Iraqi military targets. Despite the attack, Iraq continued to defy cooperation with UN inspectors, and debate over the value of continuing the sanctions grew.

Although various quarters began to advocate regime change in Iraq after 1998, they mustered little support for launching a war to depose Hussein and his lieutenants. The new administration of George W. Bush, however, included advocates of aggressive action who successfully pushed for overthrowing Hussein in the wake of the September 11 attacks. The administration apparently made secret preparations to invade Iraq as the U.S. military was uprooting the Taliban in Afghanistan. By early 2003, administration officials were stridently portraying Iraq as a danger to its neighbors and the world because it possessed weapons of mass destruction and supported terrorism.

The United States—despite its failure to gain a UN resolution authorizing military action—led an attack on Iraq in March 2003, supported by Britain and a number of smaller countries. Unlike the 1991 war, the Iraq War was carried out by simultaneous air strikes and ground attacks. Coalition troops massed in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and quickly moved across the border, racing through the desert west of Iraq's major cities, confronting little opposition. Within a month, coalition forces had secured

all of Iraq's major population centers and had turned their attention to finding Hussein and his supporters. Uday and Qusai Hussein were killed in July 2003, and U.S. forces captured their father that December.

Despite an overwhelming military victory, the Bush administration failed to achieve its goals in Iraq over the next several years. No weapons of mass destruction were found, and accusations of the deposed regime's ties to al-Qaida and terrorism remained unproven. While Iraqis and outsiders alike applauded the end of the Hussein era, the declared American goal of bringing democracy to Iraq became mired in an escalating resistance (termed an "insurgency" by the United States) and infighting, as well as in actual fighting between Iraqi sectarian groups.

The "insurgents" appeared to include members of the old regime whose opposition was stoked in part by the U.S. disbandment of the Iraqi armed forces and "de-Baathification" process, Sunni Arabs who had prospered under the old regime and feared growing Shiite strength, growing numbers of Islamist extremists, and criminal elements. Although some of these extremists were Iraqi, most were foreign Muslims who had infiltrated Iraq across the Saudi and Syrian borders, to volunteer readily as suicide bombers. Zaqawi rose to prominence in leading the extremists responsible for many of the suicide missions. As U.S. military targets hardened, attacks increasingly focused on Iraqi civilians, particularly those who had or intended to join the Iraqi police and army. By the end of 2007, nearly 4,000 American servicemen and women had died in Iraq, and an untold number of Iraqi civilians had been killed. In a December 2005 speech, Bush estimated the Iraqi death count at 30,000 but gave no specifics; other estimates cited more than 100,000 deaths. A public health study released in mid-2006 put the number of deaths in the region at 600,000.

Progress in rebuilding Iraq remained frustratingly slow. The United States initially created an Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) to bridge the gap between the occupation and the establishment of a new sovereign state. A few weeks after Jay Garner, ORHA's head, had begun work, the United States replaced him with L. Paul Bremer III as President Bush's special envoy and head of the new Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The U.S. Department of Defense oversaw both ORHA and the CPA. In July 2003, the CPA established the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) as an advisory body—with members drawn from the Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni Arab communities—but factionalism soon hampered the IGC, and it attracted criticism for the prominent role that Iraqi exiles played in its operations.

In the meantime, several Shiite militias began to exercise power in key cities while opposing each other. The United States provoked armed opposition when it attempted to arrest Shiite firebrand Muqtada al-Sadr and had to launch an all-out assault on the city of Fallujah to dislodge insurgents there. The situation deteriorated further with a wave of kidnappings and killings of foreigners and bombings of Shiite mosques and centers. U.S. credibility suffered when photographs surfaced of the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison. Sabotage repeatedly disrupted oil pipelines,

American military patrols suffered attacks with IEDs (improvised explosive devices), and problems persisted in sustaining simple infrastructural requirements, such as electricity.

In the midst of the turmoil, the United States sought to create the foundations of a new government in Iraq. The CPA and the IGC drafted a Transition Administrative Law in 2003 and 2004 as an interim constitution, and the CPA handed sovereignty to an interim government in June 2004. These steps prepared the way for elections in January 2005 of the National Assembly, which then appointed a speaker, president, and prime minister (after months of factional wrangling). The assembly completed its principal task—the drafting of a new constitution—just before an August referendum on it. Although approval of the constitution received a solid majority, it failed in two Sunni Arab provinces and barely passed in a third, thus narrowly avoiding a Sunni Arab veto. This paved the way for the election in December 2005 of a permanent assembly. Initial reports indicated a high voter turnout, including among Sunni Arabs who had largely boycotted the earlier elections, and pointed to, as expected, an overwhelming victory by Shiite Islamists.

In April 2006, Nuri al-Maliki, a Shiite and leader of al-Dawah Party, was appointed prime minister, but the government he presided over was unable to stop the violence or even to provide many essential services. Many of the Sunni Arab members of parliament boycotted their duties, while some of the most important ministries were clearly dominated by Shiite factions and militias. The police in much of the country were perceived as Shiite controlled. Shiite death squads, especially the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr, were said to be operating on a large scale and conducting revenge attacks on Sunnis. The destruction in February 2006 of the important Shiite al-Askariyah shrine in al-Samarra, presumably by Sunni Arab militants, provoked Shiite riots throughout the country. The mosque was bombed again in June 2007, prompting Muqtada al-Sadr to remove his cabinet ministers from their duties.

As attacks on both sides mounted, the country seemed to be sliding into civil war. In November 2006, Shiite militias were believed responsible for the abduction of 150 people from the Ministry of Higher Education. Ten days later, Sunni Arab militants were thought to be behind multiple car bombings in Baghdad's Sadr City, which killed more than 200 people. The trial of Saddam Hussein in 2006 was seen by some as a Shiite act of revenge, particularly when a video became public of his Shiite guards chanting as he was hanged on December 30, 2006. The situation was complicated further by infighting between Shiite groups—particularly between Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq—and their leaders increasingly lost control over some of their forces.

The Bush administration faced mounting criticism at home over the conduct of the war; the good showing of the rival Democratic Party in the 2006 congressional elections was attributed in part to popular sentiment against the war in Iraq. As a consequence, President Bush insisted on implementing a “surge” of 28,500 additional U.S. troops in Iraq that he claimed would break the back of the insurgency and thus facilitate an

earlier withdrawal of U.S. troops. By the end of 2007, the numbers of sectarian and anti-American attacks seemed to have declined but had not by any means ceased. One welcome development in Washington's view was the appearance of a Sunni front opposed to Islamist extremists, which was willing to work with the Americans. In contrast to the rest of Iraq, the Kurdish region remained quiet, although struggle for the control of Kirkuk—contested by Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen—had not abated, and Kurdish activists continued to take action against Turkey.

Still, there was no end in sight to either Iraq's troubles or the American military presence there. The Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan, independent panel formed to study the war, concluded in December 2006 that the situation in Iraq was “grave and deteriorating” and that there was a risk of a “slide toward catastrophe.” It called for U.S. forces to shift from combat to shoring up Iraqi military forces and for the United States to step up diplomatic efforts to end the war, including discussions with Iran and Syria. While the administration welcomed the group's recommendation of a temporary “surge” of U.S. troops, it rejected the suggestion of a timed withdrawal. A report released by a commission of retired military experts in September 2007 concluded that Iraqi security forces were in no condition to defend the country but suggested that they could be made viable within a year.

The American presence in Iraq was also complicated by a number of cases of corruption and waste of U.S. sums earmarked for Iraq, a situation that seemed to be facilitated by the American government's awarding massive single-source contracts to firms such as Halliburton and Dyncorp. In September 2007, armed employees of Blackwater, a private company contracted to provide security for the U.S. State Department in Iraq, opened fire on Iraqi civilians on a Baghdad street, killing 17 people. The incident was widely believed to be unprovoked and aroused anger among Iraqis and consternation in the United States. As the year ended, Congress was resisting the administration's request for \$196 billion in emergency funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and had approved only \$70 billion. A study by the Congressional Budget Office calculated that Congress had approved more than \$410 billion for Iraq alone since the 2003 invasion. Independent observers estimated that the total cost of the Iraq War, including both direct and indirect costs, could reach \$2 trillion.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

Since the start of the Cold War and Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons, the international community has shared a concern over the proliferation of such weapons. Therefore, many states joined in adopting a set of treaties, laws, and agreements that created a nuclear non-proliferation regime to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by militant groups as well as by states. Concern has also risen over the acquisition and use of chemical and biological weapons, which along with nuclear arms are commonly called weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Israel remains the only nuclear power in the



Middle East, although it has never admitted to possessing nuclear weapons and has not conducted a nuclear explosion. Israel steadfastly refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and its nuclear capability is often cited as a rationale for other countries in the region to acquire a similar capacity.

Countries on the fringes of the region have taken the most significant steps toward acquisition of nuclear capabilities. Longstanding enmity between Pakistan and India—punctuated by the three wars the two countries fought in 1947–1948, 1965, and 1971, as well as their ongoing dispute over Kashmir—drove both countries to establish nuclear research programs. In May 1998, India, under the BJP, a Hindu right-wing party, exploded a series of nuclear devices in the northwestern Rajasthan desert. Two weeks later, Pakistan responded with five nuclear explosions. International economic sanctions and condemnation from the United States followed among the immediate consequences.

Many Pakistanis and Muslims elsewhere in the region enthusiastically hailed the “Islamic bomb.” It is doubtful, however, that any Middle Eastern government seriously expects that Pakistan would use its nuclear capability in their defense any more than Pakistan would be willing to use such weapons on their behalf. Some commentators noted the close security relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and opined that Saudi Arabia may have reached a secret deal or deals for a Pakistani nuclear umbrella, or that Pakistan would assist Saudi Arabia in developing its own nuclear weapons. Thus far, no evidence exists to corroborate any such scenarios. Iran’s reaction was tempered by the possibility of receiving Pakistani assistance for its own nuclear program and fear that Pakistan’s nuclear capability might be a potential threat.

The international community also feared that Pakistan might be sharing knowledge and materials with other countries. In 2004 Abdul Qadeer Khan, the nuclear scientist who had headed Pakistan’s program, admitted to secretly having sold technology and equipment to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. Western powers had long suspected Libyan efforts to achieve WMD capabilities and first focused on Tripoli’s alleged use of chemical weapons during fighting with Chad in the 1980s and the building of several weapons plants in the 1990s. At the same time, Western powers accused Libyan leader Qadhafi of attempting to buy nuclear weapons from a number of countries. The Soviets built a small research reactor in Libya in 1981, but it was generally acknowledged that Libya’s nuclear capabilities remained minimal. After years of negotiation with the United Kingdom and the United States, Libya announced in 2003 that it would abandon all its unconventional weapons programs. As a result, the remaining sanctions on aircraft and aircraft parts, air transportation, and access to Libyan assets in the United States (although not sanctions on the transfer of weapons) were lifted against it. Relations with the United States and the West improved markedly. Libya subsequently joined the Chemical Weapons Convention and signed the NPT.

The international community harbored more serious concerns about Iraq and its efforts to develop and improve its WMD capabilities. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq attacked the

Kurdish village of Halabja in northeastern Iraq with chemical weapons following its capture by Iranian troops. As many as 5,000 people may have died in the attack. It was also alleged that Iraq had employed chemical warfare against Iranian military positions during the same war. The world had long suspected that Iraq possessed biological agents as well, though it had never used any. Iraq finally admitted in 1995 that it had made anthrax, botulism, and other germ warfare agents. Baghdad had been working covertly to build a nuclear bomb before the 1991 war through its nuclear research and development program. Although a signatory to the NPT and accepting inspections of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iraq managed to conceal its weapons program.

The countries contributing military resources to Operation Desert Storm to end Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait in 1990 and 1991 expressed considerable concern that Iraq might use WMD against coalition troops or place chemical or biological warheads on Scud missiles capable of hitting Israel and Saudi Arabia. Fortunately, such events never unfolded. Forcing Iraq to renounce and relinquish its WMD was, however, a principal rationale behind the international sanctions imposed on it after the 1991 war. Part of UNSCOM’s mission involved not only identifying and destroying Iraq’s WMD and ballistic missiles, but also implementing a comprehensive monitoring system to prevent the development of programs in the future.

Iraq resisted cooperation with UNSCOM as much as possible until 1993, when coalition forces and the United States conducted air strikes against Baghdad targets. As a result, Iraq agreed to abide by the UN resolution requiring it to provide details of its WMD assets, and UNSCOM resumed its work. In the course of its inspections, UNSCOM discovered evidence of a multibillion-dollar effort to build nuclear weapons and stocks of chemical and biological agents. Eventually, in 1994, UNSCOM reported the destruction of all of Iraq’s known banned weapons, but it could not account for other WMD elements that Iraq was known to have at one time possessed. Still, Iraq continued to resist inspections, leading to the extension of sanctions. This tense situation persisted until 1998, when Iraq expelled UNSCOM’s inspectors and the United States and Britain, frustrated by Iraq’s prevarications, carried out a bombing campaign dubbed Operation Desert Fox, the first major action against Iraq since the 1991 war. The United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) was created the following year to replace UNSCOM, but it too faced Iraqi intransigence.

The administration of George W. Bush came into office with a declared goal of regime change in Iraq, and following the 2001 attack by al-Qaida, began to make preparations for an invasion of the country. As reasons for attacking Iraq, the United States advanced claims that Iraq still possessed WMD, was threatening to use them, and might hand them over to terrorists. Iraq denied that it still possessed any WMD, but UNMOVIC remained unconvinced. During and after the war launched in March 2003, U.S. forces searched extensively but unsuccessfully for WMD in Iraq. The multinational Iraq Survey

Group subsequently took charge of the hunt, and in 2004 issued its final report, which indicated that Iraq no longer possessed WMD.

Iran had begun a nuclear research and power generation program before the 1979 revolution that included construction, with German assistance, of a nuclear power plant at Bushehr on the Gulf. The revolutionary government subsequently abandoned the plant, and later efforts to revive German interest failed. Russia, however, accepted an offer to work on completing the plant. Although Iran had signed the NPT and allowed inspections of its nuclear program, suspicions remained that its civilian nuclear program served as a cover for developing a nuclear weapons capability.

Such suspicions about Iran had grown by late 2002, when the international community discovered that two facilities under construction at Natanz and Arak could be used for producing weapons-grade plutonium, unlike the reactor at Bushehr. A few months later, a statement by President Mohammad Khatami that Iran would produce its own uranium for the reactor and reprocess it—instead of buying it from Russia and returning it to Russia after its use—gave pause to many. The United States contended that such a plan would only make sense if it involved a weapons program.

During 2003, Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the IAEA, conducted an investigation and met with Iranian officials. He noted in a November 2003 report that Iran had admitted to carrying out a uranium centrifuge enrichment program for 18 years and had failed numerous times to meet its obligations to the IAEA. Six months later, the agency's board condemned Iran's failure to cooperate and urged it to ratify additional IAEA protocols.

The United States has taken a hard-line view of Iran's activities and has sought action by the UN Security Council. In an attempt to bridge the gap, Britain, France, and Germany began negotiations with Iran through a European Union-sponsored effort and reached an agreement in November 2004 for Iran to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities. Russia subsequently assured the United States that it would supply the fuel for the Bushehr reactor and take back the spent fuel. After the June 2005 election of hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Iran's president, however, the situation deteriorated. Ahmadinejad soon announced that Iran would resume its uranium conversion, which it did in early 2006. Subsequent negotiations led by EU representative Javier Solana, and backed by the United States and Russia, have remained inconclusive.

The United States government continues to view Iran as a serious threat, partly because of its support for *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, *Hamas* in Gaza, and Iraqi Shiite groups, but also because of its nuclear intentions. The Bush administration's "National Security Strategy," released on March 16, 2006, asserted that the United States "may face no greater challenge from a single country than Iran." The United States subsequently tightened economic sanctions, expanded its naval presence in the Gulf, declared that Iran's Revolutionary Guard was a terrorist organization, and expressed support for "regime change" in Iran. While President Bush declined to affirm that he was

planning any military action against the Islamic republic, such action was never completely ruled out.

However, parts of a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released on December 3, 2007, seemed to undercut the administration's contentions about Iran's nuclear plans. The NIE concluded that Iran had stopped work on nuclear weaponry in 2003, although it continued to pursue a uranium enrichment program and might resume development efforts in the future. The administration argued that its efforts to contain Iran through economic sanctions and pressure on the UN Security Council and on European allies had contributed to Tehran's change of policy and that pressure on Tehran should continue.

## Middle Eastern Oil

The Middle East controls by far the world's greatest concentration of oil. In 2004 countries in the region produced more than one-third of the world's total supply. Approximately 30 percent comes from the Persian Gulf alone. The United States is the world's biggest consumer, demanding about a quarter of the world's oil while producing only 7 to 8 percent of it. This level of consumption requires that the United States import the majority of the petroleum it uses, making it highly dependent on foreign supplies, especially from the Middle East.

The great oil fields of the Middle East were developed in the first half of the twentieth century by Western companies. The region provided the wealth, scope, and experience that spurred the emergence of the so-called Seven Sisters, the seven giant oil companies that once dominated the industry. By 1950 three of these companies—Exxon, BP (British Petroleum), and Shell—accounted for 70 percent of total world production. The Seven Sisters coordinated international oil prices by posting arbitrary selling prices, forcing recalcitrant producing countries into line by shifting production elsewhere, and, most important, implementing an extraordinary degree of vertical integration unlike most other industries. This vertical integration meant, in general, that the same company carried out exploration, production, transport, refining, distribution, and retailing of oil that it owned.

The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later Anglo-Iranian and now BP) held the first of the "classical" concessions and recorded the region's first oil discovery and exploitation in Iran in 1908. Finds and production ensued in Iraq a few years later and then in Bahrain in the 1930s. Although oil had been discovered in Saudi Arabia before World War I, production did not begin until after the conflict. Subsequent strikes occurred in the 1950s and 1960s in Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Libya, Oman, and Qatar. In addition, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen became minor producers.

The Seven Sisters' domination of international oil and ownership of the major concessions enabled them to control production as well as prices. The countries in which the concessions were held initially received a flat-rate royalty on the oil produced in lieu of ownership and taxes. As inflation set in, the producing countries demanded and negotiated better terms.

Their strength increased with the appearance of the “independents,” smaller, generally American, companies that offered better terms on new concessions, especially for offshore fields. The competition resulted first in higher royalties, then the imposition of income tax on the companies, and eventually profit-sharing. Most producing countries became extremely dependent on oil revenues, and the reduction of the posted price in the 1950s cut their total income by as much as 40 percent. The need for greater control to ensure stable oil prices for budgetary and development policy spurred a handful of producing countries to form the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960.

OPEC and other producing countries had acquired a substantial amount of clout by the late 1960s because of increasing global demand and declining U.S. production capacity. As a consequence, the Arab oil boycott of the United States and several other countries in response to the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war enabled OPEC to seize control of pricing. Within a few short months in 1973 and 1974, the price of oil shot up from \$3 a barrel to more than \$11. The abrupt, nearly four-fold, increase sparked a wave of shortages and the most severe worldwide recession since the 1930s. The income of oil-producing countries jumped by 400 percent. Lacking the absorptive capacity to use all of their current income for development, the phenomenon of “petrodollars” appeared, whereby oil producers used surplus funds to invest massively in Western companies and government bonds.

Oil prices remained relatively static in the years following, until the early stages of the revolution in Iran (1978–1979), which reduced production there. Inflationary pressure in the producing countries and increasing demand in the consuming nations also combined to push up prices. The upward spiral took another sharp rise in the early years of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), peaking at \$41 in 1981.

The restructuring of the international oil industry, brought about by a wave of nationalizations of oil companies in producing countries in the 1970s, also contributed to the oil-price revolution. Changes in pricing made this development possible and were prompted or spurred by a belief in the producing countries’ inherent right to ownership of their own natural resources. Beginning in the early 1970s, producing countries won agreements for participation in the concessions, that is, partial ownership. By the end of the decade, nearly all the major concessions had been nationalized: national oil companies were created to handle exploration, production, and export, while the Seven Sisters and the independents entered into agreements to buy the crude oil at preferential rates according to long-term contracts. Not surprisingly, national ownership of resources gave the OPEC states greater control over pricing, particularly as global demand rose and matched or outstripped supplies.

The price rises of the late 1970s and early 1980s were not, however, sustainable. They seemed to reflect concern about the uncertain political situation in the Middle East rather than stemming from a real imbalance of supply and demand. Prices began to drop precipitously. Most oil producers began working flat out to maintain the maximum volume of exports simply to

offset the fall in income from lower prices per barrel, thus exacerbating the downward pressure on prices. OPEC members widely flouted the cartel’s efforts to set production quotas. By 1985 OPEC production had dropped by half, and a year later prices fell to nearly \$10. Although prices subsequently recovered somewhat, the impact on producing countries’ economies proved to be enormous. For example, Saudi Arabia—after years of having more income than it could absorb domestically—embarked on nearly two decades of persistent budget deficits; per capita income fell to one-quarter of its peak.

The situation came full circle in the early 2000s as prices again skyrocketed, resulting in part from political concerns about developments in the Gulf, in particular the war in Iraq and persistent questions about Iran’s foreign policy and alleged development of a nuclear capability. Other factors played significant roles as well, among them heavy speculation in oil futures in 2003 and early 2004 and legal actions taken in Russia against the owner of one of the country’s largest oil companies. Strikes and other supply disruptions in Iraq, Nigeria, the United States, and Venezuela further contributed to spot shortages. The maintenance of high price levels owed much to demand pressures in the United States (particularly concerning gasoline because of tight refinery capacity) and growing demand in Brazil, China, India, and elsewhere. In autumn 2005, the international market posted price (West Texas Intermediate) temporarily climbed above \$70 for the first time.

The following two years saw prices rise just as dramatically and exhibit an extreme volatility driven by speculation in oil futures, limited refining capacity in Western states, increased demand in China and India, the lack of much international spare crude oil production capacity, and a series of political tensions (notably between the United States and Iran and among several OPEC producers). OPEC found itself caught in the middle. Rising oil prices meant more income from producers but threatened to slow world economic growth. OPEC’s goal was the establishment of “stable” prices that were high enough to protect its members from another collapse, as in the mid-1980s, but not so high as to make alternative fuels economically attractive.

Oil prices jumped again and again during the first half of 2006 until they reached a record \$78.40 a barrel on July 14. The next few months saw a decline to \$60 as inventories rose in the United States, and OPEC decided to cut back production in October for the first time in two years. A lack of discipline in OPEC ranks meant that the production cuts were only half of what had been agreed, and the marker price of crude fell to \$50 in January 2007, the lowest price in nearly two years. But it was not to last. Driven by renewed speculation on oil futures, continuing tension between the United States and Iran, and tight inventories in the West, prices steadily drove upward throughout 2007. In early November, a new record was set at \$98 a barrel. As the year ended, the record of pricing volatility made predictions for 2008 impossible.

Many observers believed that a world of high oil prices would persist for years. By 2004 global spare capacity had become almost nonexistent. OPEC found itself producing at full

capacity for the first time in a decade, and “NOPEC” (non-OPEC) producers, such as Mexico, Norway, Russia, and the United Kingdom, were also either at capacity or faced diminishing production levels. Some observers even postulated that growth in demand would be accompanied by the depletion of major fields, creating a nightmarish scenario just a decade or two down the line.

The existing giant oilfields are increasingly mature, and few new fields of comparable size have been found in decades. In the 1990s, much attention focused on the promise of Caspian Sea petroleum in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, with potential reserves equal to those of the United States or the North Sea. However, it took a considerable amount of time to develop the long and politically insecure pipelines to the Black Sea, and maritime boundary disputes continue to plague the region. Even if the reserves prove to be as large as expected, they will constitute only about 2 percent of the world’s total. Saudi reserves alone, at 25 percent of the total, dwarf this amount.

It is widely believed that global oil production will soon peak; some oil geologists claim that point has been reached already. Additions to reserves tend to be from smaller, more expensive fields that produce less desirable oil. Furthermore, considerable debate continues over whether the reserves booked in Saudi Arabia and other countries with giant oilfields will ever be realized. Some observers even contend that aggressive drilling has damaged the Saudi fields (with similar results elsewhere) and that, instead of being able to expand their capacity as planned, production will decline in the future as the mature fields fade.

Natural gas, long seen as a cleaner and cheaper energy alternative to crude oil, faces similar problems. Demand has increased markedly as the industrialized world relies more and more on natural gas for electricity generation. Domestic U.S. gas production remains virtually unchanged, although demand continues to grow, thus raising requirements for the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Much of this necessarily will come from the Middle East, which holds some 35 to 40 percent of the world’s total reserves. Algeria, Egypt, and Oman are significant producers, while Iran and Yemen seek to join the market. Qatar alone holds 15 percent or more of the world’s total reserves, and the tiny state’s huge and extremely expensive LNG investments are now beginning to come to fruition.

## Subregional Issues

A number of key developments in the Middle East are subregional in scope, involving only a few actors but demanding outside interest or involvement.

### *Israel and Palestine*

Relations between Israel and the Arab world are among the most complex and intractable political problems in the Middle East and perhaps the world. Britain assumed responsibility for

Palestine under a League of Nations mandate after World War I, and the area witnessed a steady stream of immigration by Jews over the subsequent decades, in part due to agreement between Britain and Zionist leaders. After World War II, UN efforts failed to secure a partition plan for separate Arab and Jewish states, and upon British withdrawal in 1948, Zionists declared the state of Israel. Two years of war ensued between the new Jewish state and its Arab neighbors. When the fighting stopped, Israel had acquired one-third more territory than the partition plan had envisioned, the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem were incorporated into Jordan, and the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration.

The second Arab-Israeli war, the Suez War, took place in 1956, when Israel invaded the Sinai according to a plan devised with Britain and France to take control of the Suez Canal and occupy the peninsula. Israel, under pressure from the United States, soon withdrew from the territory it had captured. As a result of the June 1967 war, however, Israel recaptured the Sinai, along with the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. The Palestinian territories and the Golan have since been under Israeli control. In 1973 Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel to recover Arab territory, but the war essentially ended in a stalemate.

Divisions within Israeli society and disillusionment with the Labor Party establishment helped propel the Likud Party to power in elections held in 1977. Likud’s victory marked a watershed in Israeli politics because it bestowed on Likud the mantle of a respectable, mainstream party for the first time. Its leader, Menachem Begin, who had been a leader of an extremist Jewish organization prior to Israeli independence, became prime minister. Israel has been governed by the right wing more often than not since that time and generally has pursued a hard-line policy toward the Palestinians.

This policy was apparent in 1982, when Israeli forces invaded Lebanon in an attempt to crush the PLO. During the invasion, Israeli forces stood by as their right-wing Christian Lebanese allies massacred Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut. The PLO leadership left Beirut for Tunis, and scores of its fighters dispersed. Although the Israelis soon withdrew from most of Lebanon, they continued to occupy territory along the southern border of the country until 2000, when Prime Minister Ehud Barak acted on a campaign promise to withdraw.

A partial breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli conflict occurred in 1977, when President Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt made an unprecedented visit to Israel. Eighteen months later, in 1979, U.S. President Jimmy Carter brokered talks between Sadat and Begin at Camp David, Maryland, that produced a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Egypt’s acceptance of a separate peace shattered the united Arab front against Israel and brought upon it the condemnation of most Arab states. All but two Arab governments severed diplomatic relations with Egypt, and the Arab League transferred its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis. Of great importance, with Egypt sidelined, the Arabs no longer had any hope of challenging Israel militarily. This weakness revealed itself early on during the 1982 Israeli

invasion of Lebanon when Syria redeployed its troops in the country to avoid engaging the Israelis and the Jordanians sat out the war.

Few significant advances were made toward a resolution of the conflict in the following years. In some ways, the situation worsened. Many Egyptians became disillusioned with Sadat's policies well before Islamists assassinated him in 1981. Likud won elections held in 1981 despite Israel's deteriorating economic situation, but it failed to secure a clear majority and only managed to form a right-wing coalition. Later, although Likud obtained the largest number of votes of any party in the 1984 and 1988 elections, it was forced to form a coalition with Labor after both elections. At the same time, the Palestinians continued to chafe at the Israeli occupation and domination. By 1987 simmering unrest coalesced into the intifada, a coordinated uprising against the occupation. The Israeli government responded with brute force and other hard-line measures to Palestinians throwing stones at soldiers, and relations between the two peoples became even worse.

Only after the success of the 1991 war to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait did the next breakthrough become possible. Having disposed of the Iraqi threat to Middle Eastern stability, the United States turned its attention to defusing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With Soviet co-sponsorship—and having used economic leverage to compel Israeli attendance—the United States convened an Arab-Israeli conference in Madrid in October 1991. Although the talks produced little of substantive agreement, they were significant in marking the first time that all the parties officially met, including Israeli and Palestinian representatives. In part, the stalemate helped ensure Labor's victory in the 1991 election.

The most significant breakthrough arrived in 1993, when Israel and the PLO reached an accord through secret negotiations held in Oslo. By the terms of the Oslo accords, the PLO agreed to recognize Israel's right to exist and to renounce violence, while Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In addition, a plan was negotiated for eventual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza in favor of Palestinian self-rule. According to this timetable, negotiations were to begin in 1995 on a final solution to the conflict and an agreement was to take effect in 1999. In a further positive development, the Israeli-PLO accord paved the way for Israel and Jordan to enter into peace talks and sign a treaty in 1994.

Imprecisions in the terms of the Oslo accords prevented its implementation, so additional agreements became necessary before the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to assume control over some areas of the occupied territories. Yasir Arafat and other Palestinian leaders returned to their homeland for the first time in a quarter-century, and the terms of Israel's withdrawal were made clearer.

Almost typically, the hope that these developments raised soon began to fade. Many people on both sides rejected the agreement. In 1995 a Jewish extremist assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, the Labor prime minister of Israel whose government had negotiated and signed the Oslo agreement. His successor,

hard-line Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, rejected the accords and any compromise with the Palestinians. On the Palestinian side, the Islamist organization *Hamas* emerged to oppose compromise over the Palestinians' right to all of Palestine. Bitterness developed toward returning PLO members who were regarded as corrupt and out of touch with the local communities, having spent the intervening years in relative comfort abroad before assuming new positions of leadership in the Palestinian territories. In 1998 U.S. President Bill Clinton managed to convince the two parties to accept the Wye River Memorandum, which called for Israeli withdrawals under the Oslo agreements to be carried out and for the Palestinian National Council to remove words regarding the liberation of all of Palestine from its charter.

The following years saw yet another return to stalemate as the two sides continued to bicker. After the election of Ehud Barak as Israel's prime minister in 1999, the two sides sat down and reached an agreement at Sharm al-Shaikh to implement their earlier accords. Even this agreement faltered, however. Of significance, 1999 marked the end of the period originally established for a final settlement to take effect. President Clinton persuaded Barak and Arafat to meet at Camp David in July 2000 in a last-ditch effort to achieve a solution. Barak presented what he contended was Israel's final and most generous offer. Israel would withdraw from most of the West Bank and swap land in the Negev Desert for the occupied lands it would retain. It would also cede part of East Jerusalem, and Palestinian refugees would be allowed to enter the West Bank and Gaza.

Despite pressure from Clinton, Arafat refused to accept the Israeli terms. His stance seemed to be based partly on an unwillingness to proceed without the explicit approval of the Palestinian establishment and on the grounds that the Israeli offer was not as generous as promoted: Israel would absorb too much of the West Bank; Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza would remain in place and, in the West Bank, would cut the territory into three noncontiguous areas; and the Palestinians would not have control of their borders or airspace. Furthermore, the Palestinians felt that they could not accept less than full control over East Jerusalem and that the Palestinian right of return would not be recognized even symbolically. The Palestinians were unable or unwilling to make a counteroffer. Barak and Clinton left for home, angry and blaming Arafat for the meeting's failure.

Barak's inability to return with a final settlement damaged his chances for reelection. His rival, former defense minister Ariel Sharon, flexed his muscles in late September 2000 by leading a party of Likud legislators on a high-profile visit to East Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif complex, the third holiest site in Islam and the Temple Mount to the Jews. Confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli security forces erupted almost immediately. Unlike the first intifada, the second uprising soon grew increasingly violent and was more harshly repressed. Meanwhile, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators continued to hammer out their remaining differences, and the two sides came tantalizingly close to agreement in subsequent meetings, most notably at the Egyptian resort of Taba in January 2001. Many

observers believed that, given more time, a settlement might have been reached. Barak, however, lost the elections held in February 2001 to Likud's Sharon, a hard-liner.

With the opportunity missed, the two sides were barely on speaking terms. Radical Palestinian groups—namely, *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad—began to challenge the authority of *Fatah*, the dominant group within the PLO. In addition to attacking Israeli military targets and settlers, these two groups began to carry out suicide missions against civilian targets in Israel. The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a breakaway faction of *Fatah*, adopted the strategy as well. Sharon responded harshly, launching a major military incursion of the West Bank, largely closing Israel to Palestinian workers, establishing checkpoints throughout the West Bank to impede Palestinian movement, and permitting the creation of more settlements. He also confined Arafat to his West Bank headquarters in Ramallah and ordered assassinations—euphemistically called “targeted killings”—of suspected *al-Aqsa* Martyr's Brigade, *Hamas*, and Islamic Jihad leaders.

After the attacks carried out by al-Qaida on September 11, 2001, prompted the Bush administration to declare a “global war on terror,” Sharon lost little time in convincing Bush that Israel's conflict with the Palestinians was one aspect of that campaign. The Bush administration, following Sharon's urgings, refused all contact with Arafat. As prospects for a settlement retreated farther into the distance, Palestinian attacks on Israelis became more frequent and the Israeli response more brutal. Standards of living and nutrition in the Palestinian territories plummeted, and Sharon constantly accused Arafat of refusing to crack down on militant groups.

Israel eventually began to construct a wall primarily on and around the West Bank with the stated purpose of preventing Palestinian entry into Israel, but also resulting in the incorporation of West Bank lands into Israel. In populated areas, the fence consisted of a concrete barrier. The Palestinians protested the building of the fence on Palestinian land, rather than along the Green Line marking the border of Israel, and its deep detours into the West Bank to include Palestinian lands and Israeli settlements on the “Israeli side.” The issues surrounding the barrier illustrate concretely the deepening divisions between the two societies—growing Israeli fear of and anger toward Palestinians in general and Palestinian anger at Israel's continued and heavy-handed occupation of their territory.

Isolated, Arafat bowed to U.S. and Israeli pressure in 2003 and appointed a prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, and committed himself to reining in the militant groups. The violence abated somewhat after several cease-fires, but the calm did not last. Arafat's death in November 2004 and the succession of Abbas as PA president brought some improvement in official Israeli-PA relations, but serious discussions remained in abeyance. Sharon's decision to withdraw unilaterally from Gaza in 2005 appeared to be based more on the desire to cut Israeli losses, improve its security, and focus on control of the West Bank than on any attempt to advance the peace process. In late 2005, however, Sharon abandoned the Likud Party to form the Kadima Party, to which he not only took many of his

former Likud allies, but also enlisted former Labor head Shimon Peres. Kadima seemed to be positioning itself as a centrist party and was thus better situated for working toward peace than was Likud. Netanyahu replaced Sharon as Likud Party leader.

The next two years brought complications on both sides. To limit Israeli and Israeli settler contacts with the Palestinians, Ariel Sharon ordered Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza in the summer of 2005 and started construction of a security barrier between the West Bank and territory controlled by Israel. However, Sharon was incapacitated by a massive stroke on January 4, 2006; although he survived, he has remained comatose. His deputy prime minister and former mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, took over as head of the Kadima Party and as prime minister. Olmert's position was troubled by a series of developments, including right-wing opposition to the Gaza disengagement, the rise of militantly anti-Israeli *Hamas*, and the inconclusive war with Lebanon's *Hezbollah* in July and August 2006.

A few weeks after Sharon's stroke, *Hamas* unexpectedly won a majority in the Palestinian legislative elections. The party refused American and European demands to recognize Israel and accept previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. As a result, direct aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) was halted, and Israel refused to turn over approximately \$50 million in tax and customs receipts it had collected for the PA. Thus the PA's revenues dropped to one-third of the previous level, and the situation was compounded by the refusal of many banks to do business with it because of U.S. anti-terrorism laws. The West Bank and Gaza slid deeper into poverty, and the PA government was unable to pay salaries to its employees. A national unity government was formed in February 2007 between *Hamas* and *Fatah* as a result of Saudi mediation. Ismail Haniyeh of *Hamas* remained prime minister, but he agreed to work with President Mahmoud Abbas.

The two parties remained at odds, however, and the situation grew more acute in June 2007 when *Hamas* activists attacked *Fatah* loyalists in Gaza and seized complete control. As a consequence, any pretense of a unified Palestinian front regarding Israel disappeared, and Israel reiterated its adamant refusal to deal with *Hamas*, particularly because *Hamas* continued to hold two Israeli soldiers kidnapped near Gaza in June 2006.

External peacemaking efforts in recent years have focused at times on the so-called road map released in 2003 by the “Quartet”—the European Union, Russia, the United Nations, and the United States. The plan envisaged an immediate cease-fire, a freeze on Israeli settlements, and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state. In the next several years, however, little progress was made in accomplishing even the goals considered most immediate at the time it was made public.

During most of the presidency of George W. Bush, the attention of the United States had focused on Afghanistan and Iraq and only minimally on Israeli-Palestinian matters. However, this changed somewhat in 2007 when Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice undertook a series of meetings with Olmert and Abbas in an attempt to revive the “road map” process. When Abbas dissolved the Palestinian unity government after *Hamas*’ actions in Gaza, Bush and Olmert became more active in holding talks with the PA. In November the United States hosted a major conference in Annapolis, Maryland, that included various Arab envoys (Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister and a Syrian deputy prime minister among them), the permanent members of the UN Security Council, representatives of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and delegates from other industrialized and Islamic countries, in addition to negotiators from Israel and Palestine. The conference ended with a surprising declaration that Olmert and Abbas would launch bilateral negotiations—the first in seven years—aimed at concluding, before the end of 2008, a peace treaty that would produce a two-state solution. Many observers, however, expressed doubt that the agreement would lead to substantive results.

### *Syria and Lebanon*

Syria experienced a procession of military coups following its independence after World War II. In 1963 another military-backed coup occurred in the name of the pan-Arab socialist Baath Party, and Syria has since remained a one-party state under Baathist leadership. In 1970 an army officer named Hafiz al-Assad emerged as the country’s ruler, a position he would hold until his death in 2000. Over the years, Assad consolidated authoritarian control over the state through reliance on relatives and fellow Alawites. He brooked no dissent, as graphically illustrated in his massacre of dissident Muslim Brotherhood members in the northern city of Hama in 1982.

In foreign affairs, Syria’s confrontation with Israel led it to align with the Soviet Union in pursuit of financial assistance and military equipment. Defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war meant the loss of the Golan Heights to Israel. Syria’s insistence on the return of all this territory has been a consistent element over the years in serious negotiations between the two countries. The outbreak of civil war in neighboring Lebanon in 1976 raised Syrian concerns that the strife might make it vulnerable to attack by Israel through Lebanon’s “soft underbelly.” Thus Assad felt compelled to intervene in it.

Lebanon is an artificial state, created as a French mandate with boundaries purposefully drawn to include roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims. With independence, Lebanese politics emerged organized along confessional lines. The president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament a Shiite. Each community came to be represented by one or more political parties, usually headed by strongmen, considered during the civil strife to be “warlords,” who collectively comprised the political elite. The presence of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees further complicated the situation, as did the use of southern Lebanon by Palestinian fighters as a platform for attacks on Israel.

A precarious balance between the religions held for decades, despite the higher birth rate among Muslims, which made them the unacknowledged majority of the population. In 1976 the equilibrium collapsed, and civil war ensued. Christian leaders wanted the Palestinians reined in, while Muslim leaders called on the state to identify more closely with the Palestinian cause. Skirmishes erupted between the Maronite Phalange Party and Palestinian guerrillas in 1975, and fighting escalated the following year between Christian and Muslim factions. An abortive coup by Muslim military officers in early 1976 led to Syria deploying troops to protect the government. A few months later, the Arab League created the Arab Deterrent Force—in reality Syrian troops—to police a cease-fire.

The election of the right-wing Menachem Begin as prime minister of Israel in 1977 led to increased Israeli support for the right-wing Lebanese Maronites, who were fighting anti-Israeli Lebanese factions, and Israeli incursions into southern Lebanon to take on the PLO. This spurred greater conflict among the Lebanese factions; eventually each community boasted at least one private army. The country divided into Christian and Muslim enclaves, and prominent leaders from both sides were assassinated. In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon in an attempt to stop attacks along its northern border and defeat the PLO. Its forces also swept into Beirut in part to lend assistance to their Christian allies, with whom Israel entered into a stillborn treaty of sorts.

The civil war ground on through the 1980s. International peacekeeping efforts in 1982 and “national reconciliation” talks in 1983 failed to produce anything of lasting value. Israel retaliated for attacks against its forces in southern Lebanon with the seizure of men from Shiite villages in the south. This accelerated the fragmentation of Shiite groups and rallied resistance to its occupation. As a result of the war, al-Amal emerged to protect the interests of the Shiites, who sat by and large at the bottom of the Lebanese socioeconomic ladder. Militants within the party later broke away to form *Hezbollah* to carry out attacks on Israeli forces and their allies in southern Lebanon. Iran became a prominent supporter of *Hezbollah*.

A meeting of leading Lebanese politicians held at al-Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1989 finally produced a compromise plan for peace. Although implementation would prove tortuous, the war in effect had ended by early 1991. In 1992, following the first parliamentary elections in 21 years, Rafiq Hariri, a prominent businessman who had made a fortune in Saudi Arabia, was appointed prime minister, formed a largely technocratic government, and began the process of reconstructing the country. The price for peace seemed to be the continued presence of Syrian troops in the country and Syria’s domination of Lebanese politics.

Syria’s policies during this period resulted in its increasing isolation. It had supported non-Arab Iran during the Iran-Iraq War because of the bitter rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad. Syria’s enmity toward Iraq also prompted it to participate in the coalition that drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. Border and water issues poisoned relations with Turkey to the north, and Jordan had been uneasy about Syrian intentions since

1970, when it threatened to intervene on the side of the Palestinians during the civil war. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant the loss of its major backer, and Syrian intransigence on Arab-Israeli matters alienated Washington.

President Assad's control over Syria seemed to weaken somewhat in the 1990s. No longer in good health, he faced challenges from his brother and other formerly close associates. His death in 2000 marked the end of a remarkable 30 years in power. He had groomed his eldest son, Basil, to succeed him, but after Basil was killed in a car accident, he called his second son, Bashar, home from London. Many observers doubted Bashar's ability to maintain a firm grip on the country, assuming that the older generation of his father's associates would dominate him or the Alawite stranglehold on power would be broken. During his first few years in office, Bashar proved himself capable, if not always adept, at sustaining many of the domestic and foreign policies of his father while posing as a reformist.

A turning point in the Syrian-Lebanese relationship arrived in February 2005 with the assassination of Rafiq Hariri in Beirut. Hariri had months earlier resigned as prime minister to protest Syrian interference in forcing the Lebanese parliament to accept an extra-constitutional extension of the term of the pro-Syrian president. Not surprisingly, many immediately suspected the hand of Damascus in Hariri's assassination. An outpouring of grief erupted over the genuinely respected Hariri, and mass demonstrations were organized against Syria's continued presence in Lebanon. Relations with the United States, already tense, got worse, with Washington accusing Syria of supporting terrorism through its patronage of *Hezbollah*. After the Iraq War started, the United States also accused Syria of providing refuge for officials of the former Iraqi Baathist regime and not doing enough to prevent Islamist extremists from crossing its borders into Iraq. Even worse for Syria, France and other countries joined the United States in condemning its presumed role in the assassination and its presence in Lebanon. Damascus finally bowed to international pressure and withdrew its troops from Lebanon in April 2005. A United Nations inquiry into the assassination threatened to implicate top Syrian officials.

More violence was to follow in Lebanon. A car bomb killed Lebanese journalist and parliament member Gibran Tuani on December 12, 2005. His death came in the midst of the killings of a number of other Lebanese who opposed the Syrian presence. The deteriorating situation provoked fears that Lebanon might slide again into civil war, and a "national dialogue" of most major groups was convened in mid-2006 to sort out divisive issues, but it did not get far. The inability to pick a successor to President Emile Lahoud, whose term ended in November 2007, provoked a constitutional crisis. An agreement, after much infighting, to make the army chief of staff president was forestalled and possibly prevented by the assassination of a senior general in December, allegedly by Syria or pro-Syrian Lebanese.

The situation was further roiled in September 2007 when Israel carried out an aerial attack on a Syrian installation. While

both Israel and Syria said little about the strike or the target, the site appeared to have been the early stages of a nuclear reactor being constructed with North Korean help. While Syria has the internationally recognized right to build a peaceful nuclear installation, the attack was interpreted as an Israeli signal that even the potential for a nuclear weapons program would be opposed and perhaps also as a warning to Iran about its nuclear ambitions.

### *Egypt and North Africa*

Egypt has long been considered the most important Arab state in terms of history, politics, demography, and culture. The selection of Cairo for the headquarters of the League of Arab States at its founding in 1945 symbolizes Egypt's centrality in the Arab world. In the 1950s, the activist anti-imperialist stance of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser cemented the country's leadership of the Arab world, and Egypt's military strength made it the linchpin of the Arab confrontation states vis-à-vis Israel. Nasser's death in 1970 threatened to reduce Egypt's prominence on the Arab and world stages, but his successor, Anwar al-Sadat, gained credibility in the West for making the historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977 that led to a separate peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Sadat also improved his standing in the West when he parted company with the Soviet Union in exchange for closer relations with the United States—amid much dissension in Egypt—and introduced more liberal economic policies. Since 1979 U.S. aid to Egypt has averaged \$2 billion a year, an arrangement reached as a result of the Camp David settlement with Israel.

Vice President Husni Mubarak assumed the presidency following Sadat's assassination by Islamist extremists in 1981. Mubarak was viewed initially as a weak interim choice, but he gradually strengthened his hold within the government by suppressing dissent. He enhanced his regional standing by tolerating a "cold peace" with Israel and improving relations with other Arab countries. In addition, he bolstered his international posture by strengthening ties to the United States. Egypt also mediated between the Israelis and the Palestinians and contributed substantially to the 1991 coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait.

Nevertheless, Egypt's normally close relations with the United States have been strained at times. On the one hand, Egypt has coordinated closely with the United States on regional security matters and defense cooperation. In part because of its problems with Islamist extremism, Egypt has supported the U.S. campaign against terrorism to the point of reportedly accepting prisoners rendered by the United States for harsh interrogation. On the other hand, Egypt refused to participate in the 2003 Iraq War, and, along with other Arab countries, has steered clear of involvement in postwar Iraqi reconstruction.

U.S. disappointment with Egypt also extends to the arena of human rights. Abuses by police are routine. Although the government has cracked down on Islamists, including executing some 60 alleged extremists since 1992, the state has done little



to protect the large Coptic Christian minority. The government has made several high-profile arrests of human rights activists and politicians. It only reluctantly reacts to outside pressures for greater democracy. Antigovernment demonstrations took place in early 2005, sparked in part by similar demonstrations in Lebanon after the assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri in Beirut. The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood gained the most seats of any group outside the ruling party in relatively free parliamentary elections held in November 2005, but the government subsequently prevented Islamist parties from contesting elections. It is widely believed that Mubarak has not appointed a vice president because he is preparing his son Gamal to succeed him, much as Hafiz al-Assad groomed his son to take the reins in Syria after his passing.

Egypt, although geographically part of Africa, lies at the center of the Middle East and Arab worlds. The North African countries bordering Egypt along the Mediterranean to the west are also Muslim, Arab, and members of the Arab League. Although they participate in Middle Eastern politics and affairs, they exhibit a distinct regional and African identity.

For the most part, recent political developments in North Africa have concerned the issues of democratization or liberalization and the influence of Islamists. Properly speaking, North Africa consists of the Maghreb—that is, the countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia—plus Libya. The Maghrebi states share a common experience of French colonization or mandates and the French language, which is still widely spoken throughout the area. Libya, a colony of Italy before World War I, fell under British protection until independence in 1951. Sudan was under British authority until it gained independence in 1956; the country suffered for decades from a protracted civil war between the Arab Muslim government in Khartoum and a largely Christian black population in the south. Although the majority of the Maghrebi population is ethnically Arab, sizeable minorities of Amazigh, the original pre-Islamic inhabitants, reside in the region, particularly in the mountains of Algeria and Morocco.

Algeria is the most populous of the North African states and faces the most severe internal problems. The National Liberation Front (FLN) led the independence struggle against the French from 1954 to 1962 and has controlled the government since. By the 1990s, its development strategy of using oil and gas revenues to build a heavy industrial base clearly had failed to achieve its objectives, and a rapidly exploding population lowered standards of living and left increasing numbers of young people jobless—an experience shared by Morocco and Tunisia and many other countries in the Middle East.

As a consequence, Islamists began to attract support throughout the region in the 1980s and 1990s by offering social services to the needy, attacking corruption, and calling for social and economic justice. In Tunisia, the Islamic Tendency Movement, later al-Nahda, steadily intensified its criticism of the authoritarian government of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali and suffered increasing persecution for it.

Algeria's experience proved to be far more deadly. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won an overwhelming major-

ity of the votes in the preliminary round of 1992 legislative elections—which were open to non-FLN parties for the first time—and threatened to repeat its success in the final round. The FIS, which had said that it would not maintain a “Western-style” democracy if it were to gain power, appeared to be on the verge of gaining the two-thirds of the parliamentary seats necessary to change the constitution. Panicked, the government cancelled the final round of elections. It then arrested FIS leaders, including moderates, which in turn sparked antigovernment demonstrations.

The government's decision to declare the FIS illegal and to intensify its campaign against Islamists provoked attacks on the military and police. The situation soon deteriorated into civil war. Extremist organizations, such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and an offshoot named the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), committed atrocities against government personnel and civilians. Counterattacks, launched by nebulous progovernment groups widely believed to be composed of security forces, often amounted to massacres of suspected Islamists and their supporters. The number of violent incidents declined sharply after the late 1990s, but by then the fighting had resulted in some 150,000 deaths. By 2005 the GIA appeared to be defunct, while the weakened GSPC announced its allegiance to al-Qaida.

The Maghreb faced increased activity by Islamist extremists after the attacks of September 11, 2001, on the United States. A bombing of a synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba in 2002 killed more than 20 people. Although the unknown Islamic Army for the Liberation of Holy Places claimed responsibility, some observers suggested that al-Qaida had at least inspired the operation, if not carried it out. The Western press has reported that as many as several thousand Algerians have trained in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan. Algerian members of the network have been arrested in London and in Canada.

Moroccans have exhibited the most extremist activity in the region. Suicide bombers with connections to al-Qaida attacked Western and Jewish targets in Casablanca in 2003, killing 45 people, most of them Moroccans. Members of the same organization were blamed by the Spanish government for the 2004 train bombing in Madrid that killed some 200 commuters. In addition, U.S. and German courts have convicted Europeans of Moroccan descent with intent to participate in the September 11 attacks, and a Dutch Moroccan murdered a Dutch filmmaker for making comments perceived as anti-Islamic in 2004.

Algeria has suffered from a revival of terrorist attacks as well. Two bombs exploded in the capital, Algiers, one in the prime minister's office, in April 2007, killing several dozen people. Another bomb in July killed 10 soldiers in a military encampment. Then, in September, a bomb outside Algiers killed 28 coast guard officers, although the main target, President Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, was unharmed. After the third attack, responsibility for all of them was claimed by al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, an outgrowth of earlier Islamist extremist groups that fought government forces in the 1990s.

All the North African regimes continue to demonstrate less-than-democratic tendencies. Although Algeria's FLN has loosened its hold on power and even fragmented in recent years, and multiparty elections have been institutionalized, the government continues to dominate politics and thwart true democratic processes. The leadership of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia has failed to fulfill its early promise of liberalization. Libya remains politically mercurial with Qadhafi firmly in de facto, if not de jure, charge. Somewhat surprisingly, since King Mohamed VI ascended the throne in 1999, Morocco has opened up the most. The kingdom currently enjoys free multiparty elections and an improving human rights environment.

The millions of North Africans resident in Europe have raised concerns in governments there about increased involvement in extremist activities. French courts convicted a number of Algerians of placing bombs on railroad tracks. In France, attention turned to the poverty of North Africans and their exclusion from French society in November 2005 after rioting erupted following the accidental electrocution of two young Frenchmen of North African descent, who were being chased by police. More riots took place in Parisian suburbs and in Toulouse in November 2007 after two teenagers on a motorbike died in a collision with a police vehicle. The causes of these outbursts, however, seemingly owed more to unemployment and discrimination than to political-religious fanaticism.

The Darfur crisis is another African-Arab issue of great concern. The Darfur region of western Sudan has been wracked by violence since 2003 when rebels from the black African farming communities challenged discrimination by the Darfur regional government. In response, *janjaweed*, militia groups drawn from the Arab nomadic population, began attacking civilians with the support of the Sudanese government. (It should be noted that intermarriage has blurred ethnic distinctions between the two communities). Over the next few years, the atrocities spread, with fatalities as high as 300,000 and more than two and a half million people displaced, many to neighboring Chad. International pressure on Sudan to put a stop to the violence has had a limited effect, and Sudan's government has consistently denied that its troops have played any part in the conflict.

## *The Gulf*

The Gulf—alternatively called the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Gulf—remains an area of particular interest to outsiders for at least two major reasons: (1) it contains nearly one-third of the world's oil reserves, and (2) a succession of wars has threatened to disrupt oil supplies and harm the moderate monarchies that are friendly to the West. Contrary to widespread perceptions, the most serious threats to Gulf security flow only from its two northern littoral states, Iraq and Iran. The remaining Gulf states pose no threat to others.

Any potential menace to international order and neighboring states posed by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq appears to

have ended when the U.S.-led invasion overthrew the Baathist regime, and the occupation authorities disbanded the Iraqi military. The regime apparently had no weapons of mass destruction. For the most part, the initial impact of Iraq's problems—dealing with an insurgency organized by supporters of the former regime, restoring oil production and exports, rehabilitating the economy and infrastructure, and installing democratic institutions—seemed to be confined within its borders and of primary concern to the new Iraqi regime and its protecting power, the United States.

In time, however, two spillover factors became increasing problematic: the growing Islamist extremist element of the insurgency and the increasing strength and militancy of Iraq's Shiites. Most of the Islamists in Iraq and many of the suicide bombers that plague the country, killing mostly Iraqis, are infiltrators from outside Iraq (though some Iraqis seem to be involved). The majority of these extremists are Arab, many of them Saudis. They crossed into Iraq through Syria and to a lesser extent directly from Saudi Arabia.

The situation resembles the phenomenon of the so-called Afghan Arabs, those Islamists who fought in Afghanistan and returned home radicalized. The continuing strength and even growth in the numbers of zealots attracted to Iraq portends a threat not only to Iraq, but also to the home countries of these men. Just as wartime experience in Afghanistan, and later training in al-Qaida facilities, produced an earlier generation of extremists, the experience of Iraq threatens to unleash a new generation across borders. Ironically, there have been reports of Islamists trained in Iraq carrying out similar attacks in Afghanistan.

The Iraqi Shiites, long discriminated against even though they formed the majority of Iraq's population, proved to be well organized after the war. With a number of capable militias and political factions, there was some speculation that the Iraqi example could inspire similar activism among Shiite minorities in other Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia, which is home to five million Shiites in the Eastern Province, and Bahrain, which has an already restive Shiite majority. Muqtada al-Sadr, a young firebrand with a large following among Iraq's urban Shiite poor and a formidable militia, provides a particularly unsettling example of what the Gulf's other rulers might face.

In some ways, post-2003 Iraq raised fears similar to those prompted by the success of the 1979 revolution in largely Shiite Iran. Although Iran's revolutionary regime presented itself as the defender of Shiites throughout the Islamic world (and apparently assisted Shiite dissidents in planning a 1981 coup attempt in Bahrain), it posed an even broader threat to neighboring states. The leaders and supporters of the revolution hoped that it would be seen as a model for all Muslims to follow in overthrowing corrupt regimes.

Tehran's aggressive position rattled the Arab Gulf states. Iraq responded by invading Iran in the belief that such an attack might cause Iran to collapse. Saddam Hussein badly miscalculated and nearly lost the eight-year war. The Gulf monarchies viewed Iraq as the lesser of two evils and provided Iraq massive

loans in its war effort to blunt the perceived Iranian threat to all of them. Iran responded by attacking non-belligerent shipping in the Gulf and threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz, as well as by infiltrating Saudi air space with a lone aircraft in 1984, attacking a Saudi offshore oil rig in 1987, and holding demonstrations during the 1987 hajj that turned violent. Kuwait was forced to ask the United States to escort and flag its oil tankers in 1987.

Postwar tensions eased somewhat as a result of the 1991 war against Iraq (notwithstanding the surprise in Tehran when Iraq had much of its air force and civilian aircraft flown to Iran for safekeeping). Cross-Gulf relations gradually improved throughout the 1990s, assisted by the more accommodating attitudes of Presidents Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005). The unexpected election of ultra-conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president in 2005, however, threatened to derail normalized ties, and Ahmadinejad further injured Iran's international standing in December when he publicly expressed his hostility toward Israel and questioned the Holocaust.

Iran's revolutionary regime reversed the shah's policy of friendship with Israel and actively supported the Palestinians (particularly *Hamas*) and Lebanon's *Hezbollah* Shiite militia fighting the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Some U.S.-Iranian cooperation over Iraq and Afghanistan was overshadowed by Iranian backing for U.S. foes and hostile groups. This support fomented U.S. antipathy toward Iran and prompted the classification of the Islamic republic as a supporter of terrorism. In addition to the still-palpable ill will over the holding of U.S. diplomats as hostages in 1980, U.S. allegations that Iran secretly attempted to acquire nuclear weapons also roiled U.S.-Iranian relations. Iran denied having any intentions beyond a peaceful civilian use for its nuclear reactors, but even sympathetic observers doubted this assertion. They noted that the country's precarious position between American troops in neighboring Afghanistan to the east and in neighboring Iraq to the west might give Tehran pause about its security.

During 2006 and 2007, the United States contended on a number of occasions that Iran was financing and providing arms to Shiite militias in Iraq that attacked U.S. troops or Iraqis allied to the United States. Several times, U.S. forces displayed captured arms that they claimed had been supplied by the Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guards. The United States also captured two Iranians in Baghdad in December 2006 and another five, whom it accused of being agents of the Quds Force and involved in providing arms to insurgents, in Irbil (Kurdish Iraq) in January 2007. The Iraqi government claimed the Iranians were diplomatic representatives. The first two were subsequently released, but the other five were still in U.S. custody at the end of the year. At the same time, the United States conducted occasional talks with Iran over cooperation on Iraq. Discussions began during the March 2007 regional conference on Iraq; delegates from the two countries met in Baghdad in May and July; and a bilateral working group started meeting in August. Top State Department officials said in December that

Iran seemed to have decided to reduce its assistance to Shiite militias, and they expected bilateral talks to resume in Baghdad shortly.

The U.S. National Intelligence Estimate released in December 2007 concluded that Iran had stopped efforts to devise a nuclear weapon in 2003, but the U.S. government continued to assert that Iran posed a danger to the United States and the Gulf states and that it could restart its nuclear weaponry program at any time.

Meanwhile, the Gulf's southern littoral—comprising the six Arab monarchies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—remained quiet on the domestic front and under U.S. protection from regional threats. The Iran-Iraq War had sparked the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the early objective of which was to coordinate and improve joint security. Little substantive progress was made on this front, in equal part because of the reluctance of the GCC's members to surrender control of their security forces and because even the combined defenses of the six could never be a match for the military machines of their neighbors. Fortunately, the council recorded relatively more success on the economic front, with the institution of a common tariff regime, agreement on the free movement of capital and labor, and movement toward a common currency.

Pressed by Washington's warnings, the GCC states were wary of Iran's nuclear intentions and fluctuated between seeking American protection and keeping channels open with Iran. The GCC's secretary-general at the organization's December 2005 summit declared that the Gulf states were not worried about Iran's nuclearization as long as it was restricted to peaceful uses. The GCC subsequently offered to send delegations to Tehran to discuss the issue, as well as to create a body to provide Iran with the enriched uranium it needed for nuclear plants intended to produce electricity.

For its part, Iran called for the GCC states to join it in a Gulf regional security pact and thus enable them to reduce security ties with Washington. In December 2007, Iranian President Ahmadinejad, following his contentious trip to New York to address the UN General Assembly and meet with American journalists and members of the public, became the first Iranian president to attend a GCC summit. There, he pressed the group to agree to a regional security arrangement and increase economic and trade ties with Iran. His actions may have been prompted in part by Washington's declaration in mid-2007 that it intended to sell some \$20 billion of arms to various GCC states.

From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, the prolonged economic recession brought about by low oil prices preoccupied the GCC states (apart from a brief interlude during the 1990–1991 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and subsequent war). Saudi Arabia, for example, recorded nearly two decades of budget deficits and incurred substantial international and domestic debts. The sharp rise in oil prices beginning in 2003 reversed the situation and subsequently fattened the oil-producing states' bank accounts. Old projects were dusted off, and the search

ended for subsidies that could be cut without causing a political uproar. For Qatar and the UAE, higher oil prices represented nothing but a bonus. For Bahrain, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, the bonanza could not have come at a better time because their rapidly expanding populations had swelled the ranks of unemployed youth, as desirable government jobs dried up.

By the mid-1990s, the monarchies faced a growing crisis of succession, as the incumbent generation of rulers grew old and infirm. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd suffered a stroke in 1995 and subsequently grew increasingly incapable of ruling the kingdom. The heir apparent, Prince Abdallah, took over day-to-day duties but remained constrained in introducing significant new policies until he finally succeeded in 2005 following Fahd's death.

Zayid Al Nuhayyan, the UAE's venerable president since 1971 and ruler of Abu Dhabi since 1966, passed away in 2004. After the loss of the only president the country had ever known, succession passed quickly, but rather uncertainly, to Zayid's eldest son, Khalifah. Meanwhile, as the health of Kuwait's amir, Jabir al-Ahmad, and heir apparent, Saad al-Abdallah, deteriorated, the country seemed to enter a state of sclerosis. The older generation of the al-Sabah ruling family continued to thin, but it seemed as though little attention had been paid to who among the younger generation should rise to the top. When Jabir died in December 2006, Saad's attempt to succeed was rejected because of questions about his mental competence. Sabah al-Ahmad, half-brother of the deceased Amir Jabir, was chosen instead. His decision to appoint another brother, Nawwaf, as heir apparent reinforced the failure to turn to a younger generation.

Bahrain and Qatar solved their succession problems in different ways. Qatari leader Hamad Al Thani deposed his father in 1995, when the latter went abroad, and immediately instituted a plethora of changes to open the country economically and politically. Qatar overcame a history of sometimes-strained relations with the United States to host major U.S. military bases despite the irritant of the al-Jazeera satellite television network on its soil. Bahraini leader Hamad Al Khalifah succeeded on the death of his father in 1999 and quickly set about defusing a five-year dissident movement sustained mainly by the country's Shiites.

Oman's Sultan Qabus Al ibn Sa'id Al Sa'id straddles the Gulf rulers' generation gap. Born in 1940, he was younger than the Saudi and Kuwaiti rulers but significantly older than the two Hamads. By 2007 he had ruled Oman for 37 years and had no heir.

Democratization has made only slow and limited progress in the Gulf states. Surprisingly, Iran is undoubtedly the most democratic of all the littoral countries, having relatively free elections with universal suffrage for president and parliament. Constraints exist, however, in that the Council of Guardians, composed of religious notables, must approve all presidential candidates. Iraq's experiment with democracy, guided by the United States, took its first faltering steps in 2004 and 2005 but faced trouble because of divisions between and among Shiites, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds.

Significant liberalization has occurred since most Gulf states received full independence in 1971. Kuwait's elected National Assembly has been in operation since 1962, albeit with a few suspensions. Bahrain's parliament, dismantled in 1973 after two fractious years, returned in 2002, though with only half its members elected. The main opposition groups that had boycotted the 2002 elections gained seats in the 2007 elections. Oman's consultative council expanded to full elections in 2003 and held new elections in 2007. Qatar held its first municipal elections in 1997 and continued to promise an oft-postponed and partially elected parliament. Saudi Arabia permitted partial elections to municipal councils in 2005 amid indications that the experiment might be extended to the Consultative Council in the near future. The UAE was the last of the Gulf states to permit elections, and UAE President Khalifah Al Nuhayyan announced in August 2006 that half the members of the country's advisory council would be chosen by electoral colleges in each of the seven member states, with the remainder picked by the seven rulers. One woman won a seat in the December 2006 elections, and eight other women were appointed to the council.

The GCC states currently face the specter of Islamist extremism. Saudi Arabia in particular has been targeted by a group known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Attacks began in 2002 and escalated during the next two years. A cell from the group stormed three residential complexes in Riyadh in May 2003, killing 34 people. An attack on a second residential compound in Riyadh in November 2003 killed about 18, and a suicide attack on the general security headquarters in Riyadh killed 10 people in April 2004. Extremists also launched major attacks in Yanbu on the Red Sea, in al-Khobar on the Gulf coast in May 2004, and against the U.S. consulate in Jiddah on the Red Sea in December 2004.

Although aggressive counteraction by Saudi security forces thinned the ranks of extremists through captures and killings and severely limited the ability of those remaining to launch additional large-scale attacks, the movement was not entirely defeated. Over the next few years, the government regularly announced the arrest of extremist cells in various parts of the country, including a large group in December 2007 that was said to be planning attacks to coincide with the hajj, the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca. An attack on the Buqayq (variant Abqaiq) oil facility in the Eastern Province in February 2006 succeeded in penetrating the outer perimeter fence but failed to get anywhere near the inner workings of the world's largest oil-processing plant. Many of Saudi Arabia's most wanted appeared to have made their way to Iraq. Elsewhere in the Gulf, a suicide bomber in Qatar killed one expatriate in March 2005, and a limited number of attacks on civilian targets and U.S. military vehicles were recorded in Kuwait after September 11.

Although the governments and ruling families of the GCC states have maintained and even intensified good relations with the United States to ensure their security and survival, popular perceptions of the United States in these countries have grown increasingly negative. They have been inflamed by a

perceived U.S. bias in favor of Israel and against the Palestinians, U.S. policies vis-à-vis Iraq (ranging from enforcement of sanctions for 12 years, which harmed the Iraqi people, to invading an Arab country), and revelations of American abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

Yemen, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is not a Gulf state and is not a member of the GCC, though it wants to be. The problem for Yemen is that it mostly represents all that the GCC does not. A desperately poor country with a large and expanding population, Yemen's meager oil resources will likely play out in the short to medium term. The country has always suffered from weak government control of the hinterland, as well as deep divisions between the formerly independent southern and northern halves caused by the 1994 civil war.

Yemen has endured homegrown Islamist extremists and al-Qaida offshoots. A rash of kidnappings of foreigners in the 1990s turned into something far more deadly in 2001, when al-Qaida members attacked the USS *Cole* anchored in the southern Yemeni port of Aden. Like the GCC states, Yemen has sought to portray itself as a partner of the United States in the war on terror and has received U.S. assistance for improving internal security.

President Ali Abdallah Salih has ruled Yemen for 27 years—much like his counterparts in other Arab republics—by restricting true political power to a small circle of supporters while maintaining the appearance of elections for president and the independence of parliament. The president is thought likely to adopt the strategy of the “hereditary republics” in having his son succeed him.

### *Turkey, the European Union, and the Middle East*

Modern Turkey rose from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire, which expired almost mercifully as a result of World War I after centuries of decline. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, maneuvered his fellow countrymen into embracing a secularist Turkey, which looked to Europe for inspiration in political structure and socioeconomic development, bypassing traditional ties to the Middle East and the Islamic world. Atatürk also established a tradition of civilian government that several times was honored in the breach by the assumption of power by the military in the name of preserving the democratic process.

Turkey has long considered itself European and aspires to membership in the European Union (EU). In furtherance of its application, Turkey points to its Western-style democracy, its long and full membership in NATO, and the hundreds of thousands of Turks living in Western European countries, particularly in Germany. The EU formally recognized its candidacy for membership in 1999 but placed it in a class separate from other candidates because it had not met substantive requirements for membership. Among the outstanding issues were questions concerning the existence of stable institutions

guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law, the functioning of a market economy ready to face increased competition, and adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.

Although Turkey has implemented many of the reforms necessary to fulfill the economic requirements for membership, serious doubts remain about the extent of its political reforms. These include the independence of the judiciary, the use of torture, and the extent of freedom of expression and assembly. In particular, the EU has demanded abolition of the death penalty and limitations on the role of the military in politics. Discriminatory treatment of the Kurdish minority poses another stumbling block. Unease in Europe also exists about the possibility of dramatically increased Turkish emigration and Ankara's continuing support of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in defiance of Cyprus's admission to the EU.

In seeking to undertake some of the measures that the EU has demanded, Turkey restricted the death penalty to crimes against the state—though this did not completely satisfy EU expectations—and revised the penal code to bring it in line with European codes. The EU has, however, accused Ankara of backsliding on other reforms. It agreed to resume negotiations on entry in 2004 but imposed as conditions the understanding that talks did not guarantee eventual membership and that they could be suspended if the government failed to carry out reforms. Turkey's accession is viewed negatively by many Europeans for fear that an Islamic member in the EU might lead to greater problems with Islamist extremism.

Turkey's bid for EU membership has been compromised by two other factors as well. The first is the emergence of an Islamist party as the leading political force in Turkey. The success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in gaining a majority in Parliament and appointing Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as prime minister alarmed many inside and outside the country since it seemed that Turkey might be turning away from its secular, Kemalist principles. The sweeping AKP victory in the July 2007 parliamentary elections bolstered the party's dominance and led it to propose AKP member Abdullah Gül as president. Gül was elected after considerable debate, which was symbolized by his wife's wearing the Islamic headscarf, banned in public institutions. The impact of these developments on EU membership is mixed: public opinion in Turkey has weakened on the EU, although Gül, as foreign minister, was in charge of Turkey's membership bid and, as president, repeated his support for it in his first speech.

At the same time, Turkey's relations with the United States have been bumpy. Ankara permits the United States to use its military facilities to resupply forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; participates in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the Balkans; and enjoys good relations with Israel. But it did not allow the United States to use Turkish territory during the attack on Saddam Hussein in 2003. Washington, meanwhile, has been critical of electoral politics in Turkey and the rise of the AKP. Another point of contention has been Turkey's efforts to eradicate the Kurdistan

Workers' Party (PKK), a radical Kurdish organization that has carried out attacks in Turkey, including the May 2007 bombing of an Ankara shopping center. Turkey bombed PKK targets in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq in December 2007 and followed up with an incursion by ground troops. While the United States had long opposed such action, fearing possible destabilization of the pro-American Kurdish region of Iraq, it apparently acquiesced in the strikes in order not to harm relations with an important NATO ally.

## Conclusion

By the end of 2007, the outlook for the Middle East was at once pessimistic and optimistic. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continued unabated, but the level of violence lessened, and the resumption of bilateral negotiations was a promising development. Despite a continuation of all manner of attacks

in Iraq and the desperate situation of many Iraqis, the Bush administration insisted that matters were improving and pointed to a decrease in attacks during the troop "surge" as an encouraging sign. There was, however, still no prospect for withdrawal of American troops from the country, despite growing domestic opposition to the war in the United States. Outside Iraq, terrorism by Islamist extremists in the region seemed to diminish, but political reform still lagged. Beyond the headlines, the peoples of the Middle East continued to hope for peace and for improvements in their standards of living and governance. However, they remained divided in profound ways along religious and ideological fault lines.

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**PART TWO**

**GOVERNMENTS**

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# AFGHANISTAN

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

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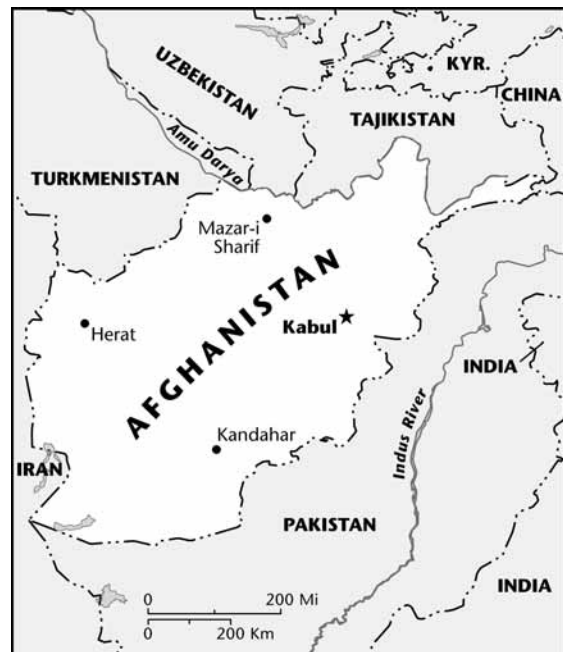
### The Country

Strategically located between the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan is a land marked by physical and social diversity. Physically, the landlocked country ranges from the high mountains of the Hindu Kush in the northeast to low-lying deserts along the western border. Pushtuns (alternatively Pashtuns or Pathans) constitute the largest of the population groups, followed by Tajiks, who speak Dari (an Afghan variant of Persian); others include Uzbeks, Hazaras, Baluchis, and Turkomans. The Kuchi peoples, primarily Pushtuns and Baluchis who maintain a centuries-old nomadic lifestyle, reportedly number 1.3–1.5 million. Tribal distinctions (except among the Tajiks) may cut across ethnic cleavages, while religion is a major unifying factor: 90 percent of the people profess Islam (80 percent Sunni and the remainder Shiite [mostly from the Hazara population]). Prior to the Taliban takeover in 1996, women constituted a growing percentage of the paid work force in urban areas, particularly in health services and education, although female participation in government was minuscule. In the countryside the role of women has for a long time been heavily circumscribed by traditional Islamic fundamentalist strictures, which the Taliban movement also imposed on the urban population. The interim administration of December 2001, transitional government of June 2002, and permanent government of December 2004 all included women, while a significant number of seats were reserved for women in the new National Assembly inaugurated in late 2005. However, Amnesty International concluded in early 2006 that the status of women had not improved nearly as much

as had been anticipated following the fall of the Taliban, with rape, abduction, and forced marriage still commonplace, particularly beyond Kabul.

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita GNP of less than \$200 a year in 2004. Nearly 80 percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture (largely at a subsistence level). The country's extensive mineral deposits are largely unexploited except for natural gas. Industry is virtually nonexistent.

For many years the Soviet Union was Afghanistan's leading trade partner, while development aid from the West and from such international agencies as the Asian Development Bank was suspended as



a result of the Soviet military intervention in late 1979. Thereafter, more than 20 years of civil war and subsequent turmoil left an estimated 2 million dead and much of the country in ruins. The Taliban government, which spent most of its energy following its partial takeover in 1996 in an attempt to secure complete control of the country, was described as having “no apparent economic program.” One major source of income is opium; as much as 90 percent of the world’s heroin reportedly originates in Afghanistan. (In 2007 it was reported that 2006 had seen record opium production, up 25 percent from 2005. About 12 percent of the population reportedly was engaged in opium activities, valued at about \$3 billion annually.)

The rate of childhood death (mostly from preventable diseases) is among the highest in the world, and the illiteracy rate is estimated at 80 percent. Nearly all girls and two-thirds of boys reportedly did not attend school under the Taliban regime, the former in large part because of Taliban policy against education for women. (It was reported in 2007 that some 5 million children were now enrolled, compared to only 900,000 under the Taliban.) Life expectancy is only 45 years, an estimated 50 percent of the population lives in poverty, and 75 percent of the population lacks access to safe water. Economic development is hampered by the fact that much of the nation’s wealth is concentrated in the hands of powerful warlords backed by private militias.

Western nations were eager in 1997 and early 1998 to see a resolution to the Afghan conflict so that progress could be made in laying oil and gas pipelines across the country from the huge and largely unexploited fields in Central Asia. However, alternate plans were subsequently adopted to run the pipelines through other countries as fighting continued in Afghanistan. Renewed Western interest in cross-Afghanistan pipelines returned following the overthrow of the Taliban in late 2001 and the subsequent installation of a transitional government of national unity. However, the most immediate concerns of the new administration were to start rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure, facilitate the return of millions of refugees from neighboring

countries, and remove land mines (observers described Afghanistan as the most heavily mined country in the world).

The United States, which led the military campaign that deposed the Taliban, was accused in some circles of losing its focus on Afghanistan in 2002–2003 as attention shifted to events involving Iraq. However, in 2004 the United States allocated \$1.8 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan and also increased the number of U.S. troops dedicated to fighting Taliban and al-Qaida remnants in Afghanistan. Overall, Western donors pledged \$8.2 billion in new aid at a conference in April 2004 that also endorsed the Karzai administration’s economic plans. However, private foreign investors remained leery of ongoing security problems and perceived deep-seated corruption at all levels of authority. In general, the transitional government received praise for its “crisis management” during 2002–2004. Following its installation in late 2004, the new permanent administration pledged to pursue long-term stability and economic expansion through the promotion of free-market activity.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in early 2006 estimated economic growth at 8 percent in the 2004–2005 fiscal year and nearly 14 percent in 2005–2006. However, journalists described the country as having “no viable economy” and noted that the government continued to rely on foreign aid for nearly all of its budget and foreign troops for its security. All observers agreed that opium production was on the rise after a failed eradication program in 2005.

A survey in 2006 indicated that oil and gas reserves might be significantly larger than anticipated, while deposits of coal, copper, iron ore, and marble also awaited exploitation. Meanwhile, some 60 countries in 2006 pledged an additional \$10.5 billion in aid for reconstruction over the next five years under an “Afghanistan Compact,” which also called for additional reforms by the government. The IMF also approved a three-year lending program valued at \$1.2 billion. However, corruption, the deteriorating security situation, and poor governmental administration continued to hamper distribution of aid resources into 2007.

**Political Status:** Republic established following military coup that overthrew traditional monarchy in July 1973; constitution of 1977 abolished following coup of April 27, 1978; successor regime established following coup of December 27, 1979, but effectively overthrown on April 16, 1992; successor regime effectively overthrown by the Taliban in late September 1996 but claimed to remain legitimate government; interim administration installed in December 2001 following overthrow of the Taliban; transitional government installed in June 2002; new constitution providing for multiparty democracy approved by a *Loya Jirga* (Grand National Council) on January 4, 2004; permanent government of the newly renamed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan established by inauguration of the president on December 7, 2004, and the cabinet on December 23.

**Area:** 249,999 sq. mi. (647,497 sq. km.).

**Population:** 13,051,358 (1979C), excluding an estimated 2.5 million nomads; 24,532,000 (2006E, including nomads). Nomads and refugees in western Pakistan and northern Iraq at one time totaled more than 5 million, many of whom have recently returned to Afghanistan.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** KABUL (3,082,000), Kandahar (341,000), Herat (268,000), Mazar-i-Sharif (197,000).

**Official Languages:** Pushtu, Dari (Persian); in addition, the 2004 constitution authorized six minority languages (Baluchi, Nuristani, Pamiri,

Pashai, Turkmen, and Uzbek) to serve as official third languages in the areas where the majority speaks them.

**Monetary Unit:** Afghani (market rate November 2, 2007: 49.80 afghanis = \$1US). The afghani was “essentially worthless” during the Taliban regime (1996–2001). In late 2002 the transitional government introduced a “new afghani” to replace the old afghani at a rate of 1,000 old afghanis = 1 new afghani.

**President:** Hamid KARZAI (nonparty); appointed chair of the new interim administration at the UN-sponsored Bonn Conference on December 5, 2001, and inaugurated on December 22 for a six-month term (for a detailed description of the complicated issue of the leadership of Afghanistan prior to Karzai’s inauguration, see the 2000–2002 *Handbook*); elected president of the new transitional government by an “emergency” *Loya Jirga* on June 13, 2002, and inaugurated on June 19 for a term that was initially scheduled not to exceed two years; elected by popular vote on October 9, 2004, and sworn in for a five-year term on December 7.

**Vice Presidents:** Ahmad Zia MASOUD (First Vice President) and Mohammad Karim KHALILI (Second Vice President); elected on October 9, 2004, and inaugurated on December 7 for a term concurrent with that of the president. (For a detailed description of the prior vice-presidential situation, see the 2000–2002 *Handbook*.)

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

The history of Afghanistan reflects the interplay of a number of political forces, the most important of which traditionally were the monarchy, the army, religious and tribal leaders, and foreign powers. The existence of the country as a political entity is normally dated from 1747, when the Persians were overthrown and Ahmad Shah DURANI established the foundations of an Afghan Empire. His successors, however, proved relatively ineffective in the face of dynastic and tribal conflicts coupled, in the

19th century, with increasingly frequent incursions by the Russians and British. The latter wielded decisive influence during the reign of ABDUR RAHMAN Khan and in 1898 imposed acceptance of the Durand line, which established the country’s southern and eastern borders but which, by ignoring the geographic distribution of the Pushtun tribes, also laid the foundation for subsequent conflict over establishment of a Pushtunistan state. Emir AMANULLAH succeeded in forcing the British to relinquish control over Afghan foreign affairs in 1919 and attempted to implement such reforms as modern education, women’s rights, and increased

taxation before being forced to abdicate under pressure from traditional leaders.

The outbreak of World War II severely damaged the economy: markets were lost and access to imports and credit was cut off. Subsequently, dissent among intellectuals and failure to resolve the Pushtunistan issue led to a crisis of leadership. Prince Sardar Mohammad DAOUD, designated prime minister in 1953, succeeded in obtaining economic aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union, while modernization of the army helped to alleviate the threat posed by tribes hostile to the government. Politically, however, Daoud was quite autocratic, ignoring the legislature, jailing his critics, and suppressing opposition publications. His dismissal in 1963 was followed by a series of moves toward a more modern political system, including the promulgation of a new constitution in 1964 and the holding of a parliamentary election in 1965. Nevertheless, problems were subsequently encountered, including recurrent famine; a worsening financial situation; increased restiveness on the part of the small, educated middle class; and a sense of impatience with civilian rule. The distress led in 1973 to a military coup, the overthrow of the monarch (Mohammad ZAHIR SHAH), and the return of Daoud as president of a newly proclaimed republic.

On April 27, 1978, in the wake of unrest stemming from the assassination of a prominent opposition leader in Kabul, the Daoud regime was overthrown in a left-wing coup led by the deputy air force commander, Col. Abdul KHADIR. On April 30 a newly constituted Revolutionary Council designated Nur Mohammad TARAKI, secretary general of the formerly outlawed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), as its president and announced the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, with Taraki as prime minister. On March 27, 1979, Taraki yielded the office of prime minister to party hard-liner Hafizullah AMIN while remaining titular head of state by virtue of his presidency of the Revolutionary Council.

It was officially announced on September 16, 1979, that the PDPA Central Committee had unan-

imously elected Amin as its secretary general, and shortly thereafter the Revolutionary Council designated him to succeed Taraki as president. While Kabul radio reported on October 9 that Taraki had died after "a severe and prolonged illness," foreign observers generally assumed that the former president had succumbed on September 17 to wounds received three days earlier during an armed confrontation at the presidential palace. Subsequent reports suggested that a Soviet-backed effort by Taraki to remove the widely disliked Amin as part of a conciliatory policy toward rebel Muslim tribesmen had, in effect, backfired. Such suspicions intensified when the Soviet Union, from December 25 to 26, airlifted some 4,000–5,000 troops to Kabul, which resulted in Amin's death and replacement on December 27 by his longtime PDPA rival, Babrak KARMAL, theretofore living under Soviet protection in Czechoslovakia. Karmal proved scarcely more acceptable to the rebels than Amin, however, his regime being supported primarily by the continued presence of Soviet military personnel (estimated to number more than 110,000 by mid-1982). During the ensuing three years, the level of Soviet military involvement increased because of continued resistance throughout the country by *mujaheddin* ("holy warrior") guerrillas, operating largely from rural bases and supplied from Pakistan, where more than 3 million Afghans had sought refuge. However, in 1985 a semblance of constitutional government was restored. A partially elected *Loya Jirga* was convened on April 23, the first such assemblage in eight years. It promptly endorsed the Soviet presence, while elections for local village councils were held from August through October, despite disruptions attributable to *mujaheddin* activity. Based in Peshawar, Pakistan, the seven leading *mujaheddin* groups formed an Islamic Alliance of Afghan Holy Warriors (*Ittehad-i-Islami Afghan Mujaheddin*) in May 1985 to coordinate resistance to the Moscow-backed regime in Kabul.

On May 4, 1986, after a visit to the Soviet Union for what were described as medical reasons, Karmal stepped down as PDPA secretary general in favor of the former head of the state intelligence

service, Mohammad NAJIBULLAH (Najib). On November 20 Karmal asked to be relieved of his remaining government and party posts, being succeeded as head of the Revolutionary Council by Haji Mohammad CHAMKANI, who was, however, designated only on an acting basis.

In December 1986 the PDPA Central Committee endorsed Najibullah's plan for "national reconciliation," calling for a cease-fire, political liberalization, and the formation of a coalition government. Although the seven-party *mujaheddin* alliance refused to negotiate and intense fighting continued, the government promoted its democratization campaign in 1987 by legalizing additional political parties, drafting a new constitution providing for an elected national legislature, and conducting local elections. However, in practical terms there was little challenge to Najibullah's consolidation of power: the Revolutionary Council on September 30, 1987, unanimously elected him as its president, and on November 30 the *Loya Jirga*, having approved the new constitution, named him as the first president of the republic ("Democratic" having been deleted from the country's name).

On April 14, 1988, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, and the United States concluded a series of agreements providing for a Soviet troop withdrawal within one year. Elections to the new National Assembly (*Meli Shura*) were held the same month, although the government was unable to convince the *mujaheddin* to participate. On May 26 the Revolutionary Council dissolved itself in deference to the assembly, and, in a further effort by the government to reduce the appearance of PDPA dominance, Dr. Mohammad Hasan SHARQ, who was not a PDPA member, was appointed chair of the Council of Ministers to replace Soltan Ali KESHTMAND.

The Soviet troop withdrawal was completed on February 15, 1989, precipitating significant political moves by both the government and *mujaheddin*. Najibullah quickly dropped all non-PDPA members from the Council of Ministers; concurrently, a state of emergency was declared and a new 20-member Supreme Council for the Defense of the Homeland was created to serve, under Najibullah's

leadership, as the "supreme military and political organ" for the duration of the emergency. On February 21 Keshtmand effectively resumed the duties of prime minister through his appointment as chair of the Council of Ministers' Executive Committee.

For their part, the *mujaheddin* vowed to continue their resistance until an Islamic administration had been installed in Kabul. On February 24, 1989, the rebels proclaimed a "free Muslim state" under an Afghan Interim Government (AIG) headed by Imam Sibghatullah MOJADEDI as president and Abdul Rasul SAYAF as prime minister. However, the widespread belief that the rebels would quickly vanquish the Najibullah regime proved incorrect, despite two reported coup plots in December and a nearly successful uprising led (in apparent collusion with rebel fundamentalist Gulbuddin HEKMATYAR) by the hard-line defense minister, Lt. Gen. Shahnawaz TANAI, in March 1990.

On May 7, 1990, President Najibullah named Fazil Haq KHALIQYAR, a former minister-advisor in the Executive Council, to succeed Keshtmand as prime minister. Half of the members of the cabinet subsequently named by Khaliqyar were described as politically "neutral." From May 28 to 29 the *Loya Jirga* convened in Kabul to reiterate its commitment to private sector development and to ratify a number of reform-oriented constitutional amendments.

On May 27, 1991, Najibullah announced that his government was prepared to observe a cease-fire with the *mujaheddin* to permit implementation of a peace plan advanced by UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar that would entail an end to external involvement in Afghan affairs and nationwide balloting to choose a new government. However, the AIG leadership initially rejected the offer. Two months later, at the conclusion of talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, the AIG reversed itself, stating that it "had recognized positive points" in the UN proposal. Consequently, on September 1 the United States and the Soviet Union declared that they were halting arms supplies to the combatants. Trilateral discussions among U.S., USSR, and *mujaheddin* representatives were subsequently held on

transfer of power to an interim regime that would oversee elections within two years. The fundamentalists, however, continued to call for Najibullah's immediate removal and the scheduling of an earlier poll.

On March 19, 1992, *mujaheddin* hard-liners rejected an offer by Najibullah to yield effective authority to an interim administration, reiterating their demand that he resign. By early April, on the other hand, a pronounced shift in the balance of power had emerged in the strategic northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, where local militias were forming alliances with moderate *mujaheddin* units. The realignment cut across both government and insurgent groupings, inaugurating a new cleavage between southern Pushtun fundamentalists led by Hekmatyar and non-Pushtun northerners under the command of Ahmed Shah MASOUD.

On April 16, 1992, Najibullah submitted his resignation and sought refuge in the Kabul UN office after four of his top generals had deserted to Masoud. Within a week, the eastern city of Jalalabad became the last provincial capital to fall to joint *mujaheddin*, militia, and former government forces (including the supporters of both Hekmatyar and Masoud), who thereupon initiated a successful assault on Kabul. On April 24 the leaders of six rebel groups met in Peshawar, Pakistan, to announce the formation of a 51-member Islamic *Jihad* Council (IJC), headed by Imam Mojadedi, to assume power in the capital. After two months the IJC was to be replaced by an interim administration under Burhanuddin RABBANI, with Hekmatyar as prime minister and Masoud as defense minister. However, Hekmatyar refused to participate, proceeding instead to launch an attack on his erstwhile allies. In three days of heavy fighting, Hekmatyar's troops were unable to defeat the Masoud coalition, and on April 28 Mojadedi arrived to proclaim the formation of an Islamic republic. Meanwhile, Hekmatyar's forces continued to ring Kabul's southern and eastern outskirts, threatening to launch another offensive if Masoud did not break with the non-*mujaheddin* northerners (particularly with Gen. Abdul Rashid DOSTAM, an Uzbek, who had served under the former Communist regime).

Subsequently, on May 25, Masoud and Hekmatyar agreed to halt hostilities and hold elections in six months. Even while they were talking, however, clashes were reported between units loyal to Hekmatyar and Dostam. In early June, fighting also broke out between Iranian-backed Hazara Shiites and Saudi Arabian-backed Sunni units loyal to Masoud. Reportedly the Shiites had demanded a minimum of eight ministerial posts in the Mojadedi government.

Although initially indicating that he wished to continue as acting president beyond his two-month mandate, Mojadedi stepped down on June 28, 1992, in favor of Rabbani. Concurrently, Hekmatyar agreed to the appointment of his deputy, Ustad FARID, as prime minister of an interim cabinet. Formally invested on July 6, Farid was forced from office a month later, after heavy fighting had erupted in Kabul between pro- and anti-Rabbani groups, including a massive artillery bombardment by Hekmatyar's forces that caused more than 1,800 deaths.

On October 31, 1992, a Leadership Council, self-appointed five months earlier and chaired by Rabbani, extended the interim president's mandate beyond its four-month limit, permitting Rabbani to convene a Council of Resolution and Settlement in late December that elected him to a two-year term as head of state. Thereafter, Kabul was the scene of renewed fighting, culminating in a peace accord concluded by Rabbani and Hekmatyar in Islamabad, Pakistan, on March 7, 1993. The pact was endorsed by all but one of the major *mujaheddin* leaders. On March 8 Hekmatyar accepted appointment as prime minister, although differences immediately arose over the assignment of portfolios. On May 24, after further fighting in Kabul, a new cease-fire was announced, under which Masoud agreed to resign as defense minister and turn the ministry over to a tripartite commission. The principal obstacle having been overcome, a coalition cabinet was reportedly sworn in at an undisclosed location on June 17. However, the new administration was never effectively implemented in view of continued conflict between forces loyal to Rabbani and Hekmatyar, with General Dostam switching

sides to join forces with Hekmatyar in fighting in Kabul and elsewhere in early 1994.

In late June 1994 Rabbani's troops succeeded in sweeping most Hekmatyar and Dostam units from the capital, and in mid-July the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) reported that all parties had agreed to a peace process. Concurrently, however, there were reports that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was supplying large quantities of arms and ammunition to Hekmatyar, who commenced a systematic bombardment of Kabul after the Supreme Court had extended Rabbani's presidential mandate for an additional six months without granting a similar extension of Hekmatyar's prime ministerial mandate.

On August 28, 1994, Maulawi Mohammad Nabi MOHAMMAD of the moderate Islamic Revolutionary Movement was named chair of a *Loya Jirga* convening commission in preparation for national elections. On November 6 Rabbani and his supporters accepted a modified version of a UN peace plan that called for a commission on which the principal *mujaheddin* units would have equal representation, with Rabbani subsequently announcing his willingness to step down as soon as "reliable mechanisms for a transfer of power" were in place.

Meanwhile the balance of power within Afghanistan was disrupted by an incursion of several thousand young *Taliban* (Islamic students) supported by Pakistan's fundamentalist *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* (Assembly of Islamic Clergy) and led by Maulana Fazlur RAHMAN. In November 1994 Taliban forces captured the city of Kandahar and initiated an anti-drug crusade throughout the opium-growing province of Helmand. The success of the new group appeared to reflect a major shift by Pakistan's ISI away from Hekmatyar and gave rise to speculation that the new element in Afghanistan's domestic turmoil might force a truce between Hekmatyar and Rabbani.

After winning control of a third of the country's provinces, the seemingly undefeatable Taliban by late February 1995 had driven Hekmatyar from his base in Charosyab, ten miles south of Kabul, and proceeded to advance on the capital. However, on March 11 the student militia suffered its first

major defeat at the hands of Rabbani and Masoud and was subsequently forced to yield Charosyab to government forces. Routed in the east, the Taliban launched an offensive against the western city of Herat. That initiative also failed when Masoud dispatched a number of fighter-bombers and some 2,000 troops to aid in the city's defense. Further Taliban defeats followed, while the anti-Rabbani *mujaheddin* front collapsed with Hekmatyar's withdrawal to the eastern city of Jalalabad and Dostam's unwillingness to commit his forces to battle.

On June 9, 1995, a truce was declared between government and Taliban forces. However, the latter mounted a major offensive in September that yielded the capture of Herat. On November 7 President Rabbani offered to resign if the Taliban agreed to a cease-fire and "foreign interference" (presumably by Pakistan in support of the Taliban) were to end. Thereafter, fighting intensified in the vicinity of Kabul, followed by peace talks in which the government succeeded in reaching an accommodation with Hekmatyar (although not with his erstwhile *mujaheddin* allies) providing for joint military action against the Taliban and for governmental power-sharing. Under a peace accord signed on May 24, 1996, the supporters of Rabbani and Hekmatyar undertook to cooperate on the organization of new elections and to establish "genuine Islamic government," with Rabbani continuing as president and Hekmatyar being restored to the premiership. In accordance with the agreement, Hekmatyar was formally reappointed prime minister on June 26. Among the first actions of the restored prime minister were the closure of cinemas and the banning of music on radio and television on Sundays, on the grounds that such activities were contrary to Islamic precepts. However, underscoring the potential for a new round of conflict, Hekmatyar's former anti-Rabbani *mujaheddin* allies suspended Hekmatyar from membership of the coordination council established by the four main fundamentalist movements in 1994 under the leadership of former interim president Sibghatullah Mojadedi (leader of the National Liberation Front).

More ominously for the new government, the predominantly Sunni Taliban guerrillas, still



strongly backed by Pakistan, continued to make military advances in July and August 1996, and by early September they controlled 18 of the country's 30 provinces. The eastern city of Jalalabad, the country's second largest, was captured on September 11, whereupon Taliban forces pursued retreating government troops to Kabul and mounted a new onslaught on the capital. After some heavy fighting on the eastern side of the city, resistance crumbled and the government fled. By September 25 Taliban units were in complete control of Kabul, where on September 27 a six-member Provisional Council was installed under the leadership of Mullah Mohammad RABBANI (not related to the ousted president). Meanwhile, Mullah Mohammad OMAR (the spiritual leader of the Taliban) assumed the status of *de facto* head of state. Among the first acts of the new rulers was to seize ex-President Najibullah from the UN compound in which he had lived since April 1992 and to execute him in summary fashion, together with his brother Shahpur AHMADZAY (who had served as his security chief) and two aides. Mullah Rabbani justified the executions on the grounds that the former president had been "against Islam, a criminal, and a Communist."

After a period of disorganization, the ousted government of Burhanuddin Rabbani relocated to northern Afghanistan, where a military alliance of the regrouped government troops under Masoud's command, the forces loyal to General Dostam, and Hazara fighters served to block the Taliban offensive. The military situation remained effectively stalemated until May 1997, when General Abdul Malik PAHLAWAN, who had apparently ousted General Dostam as leader of the National Front forces, invited the Taliban troops into the alliance's stronghold in Mazar-i-Sharif. However, just as the Taliban takeover of the entire country seemed imminent, General Pahlawan's forces suddenly turned on the Taliban, killing, according to subsequent reports, some 2,000–3,000 Taliban fighters. Anti-Taliban groups, including, significantly, Hekmatyar's Islamic Party, subsequently coalesced as the United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UNIFSA) and retained effective con-

trol of the north for the rest of the year. Collaterally, General Dostam, who had fled the country in June after Gen. Pahlawan's "coup," returned to Afghanistan in late October to wrest control of the Uzbek forces from Pahlawan, who apparently fled to Turkmenistan. Meanwhile, Mullah Omar was named emir of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that was proclaimed by the Taliban on October 26, 1997.

In early 1998 the Taliban and UNIFSA appeared willing to consider a negotiated settlement, agreeing in principle to establish a joint council of religious scholars to assist in the process. However, the Taliban olive branch did not extend to the Hazara Shiite community in central Afghanistan, where the regime was enforcing an economic blockade that was said to be threatening famine. Consequently, despite UN, U.S., and OIC mediation efforts, the peace talks quickly broke down, and heavy fighting was renewed. The Taliban launched what its supporters hoped would be a final offensive to secure total control of the country in mid-July, and Mazar-i-Sharif fell out of UNIFSA hands in mid-August. However, as Taliban forces approached the northern borders, neighboring countries sent troops to defend their own territory from possible fundamentalist incursions and also provided assistance to the beleaguered UNIFSA fighters. In addition, Iran, angered over the killing of eight of its diplomats during the recent fighting and concerned over the threat to the Afghan Shiite community, amassed some 250,000 soldiers along its border with Afghanistan, raising fears of a full-blown regional war. Further complicating matters, on August 20 U.S. cruise missiles struck camps in Afghanistan believed to be part of the alleged terrorist network run by Osama BIN LADEN. (The attack was ordered as retaliation for the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania earlier in the month, in which Washington suspected bin Laden's followers to have been involved.) Bin Laden's presence in Afghanistan subsequently proved to be a barrier to Taliban attempts to gain additional international recognition. However, after the government rejected Western calls for bin Laden's extradition, an Afghan court in November ruled

that the United States had not produced evidence of his complicity in the embassy bombings and permitted him to remain in the country as long as he or his followers did not use it as a base for terrorist activity.

In July 1999 U.S. President Bill Clinton imposed economic sanctions on Afghanistan as the result of the Taliban's unwillingness to turn over bin Laden. Four months later, at Washington's urging, the UN Security Council directed UN members to freeze overseas assets of the Taliban government and to halt all flights to Afghanistan to pressure Kabul regarding bin Laden as well as to protest the perceived mistreatment of women and other human rights abuses and ongoing opium production. (One correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* described the Taliban as having achieved the "rare feat of provoking the hostility of all five permanent members of the Security Council." China, for example, reportedly expressed concern about Taliban influence on Islamic unrest within Chinese borders, while Russia went so far as to threaten to bomb Afghanistan if Kabul provided support to Chechen rebels or Islamist insurgents in neighboring Central Asian countries.) For their part, Taliban leaders appeared to remain preoccupied with attempting to secure control of the approximately 10 percent of the country in the northeast still in the hands of opposition forces. Major Taliban offenses were launched in the summers of 1999 and 2000, each being repulsed (after heavy fighting and large-scale civilian dislocation) by fighters, now referenced as the Northern Alliance, led by Ahmed Shah Masoud. Consequently, in September 2000 discussion was reported on yet another peace plan, under which Masoud would have been given special administrative powers in an autonomous northeastern region.

Negotiations between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban continued for the rest of 2000; however, they ultimately failed, and sporadic heavy fighting ensued in the first part of 2001. Meanwhile, the UN rejected a suggestion from the Taliban that bin Laden be tried in an Islamic country by Islamic religious leaders. Further complicating matters for the Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, by then rou-

tinely referred to as chair of the Taliban's "council of ministers," died on April 15 of natural causes. Although he had been the architect of many of the harsh strictures imposed on the population by the Taliban, Rabbani had been viewed by the international community as more approachable than most of the other Taliban leaders. He was also generally well respected within Afghanistan for the prominent role he had played while a member of the Islamic Party in the *mujaheddin* war against the Soviets. Most of Rabbani's duties were assumed by the vice chair of the ministerial council, Mohammed Hassan AKHUND, but no formal appointment to the chair was announced.

The Taliban launched a major attack against the Northern Alliance in June 2001 and once again appeared dedicated to the pursuit of a final, complete military victory. However, such hopes were irrevocably compromised by the terrorist attacks on September 11 in the United States, which the Bush administration quickly determined to be the work of bin Laden's al-Qaida. Washington immediately demanded that bin Laden be turned over for prosecution or else military action would be initiated to remove him by force from Afghanistan. Intense debate was reported within the Taliban leadership on the issue, and efforts were made to forge a compromise under which, for example, bin Laden might be tried in a third country. However, President George W. Bush declared the U.S. terms to be "nonnegotiable," and Mullah Omar finally decided that the Taliban would take a stand in defense of its "guest." Consequently, after having secured broad "coalition" support for the action, the United States, declaring it was acting in self-defense, launched "Operation Enduring Freedom" on October 7 against al-Qaida and Taliban targets. By that time, it was clear that the assault was intended not only to destroy al-Qaida but also to produce a new regime in Afghanistan, Washington having concluded that al-Qaida and the Taliban were now "one and the same."

Heavy bombing by U.S. aircraft and cruise missiles quickly shattered the minimal infrastructure available to the Taliban military, while Omar's call on October 10 to the rest of the Muslim world for

assistance in countering the U.S. “invasion” elicited little response. The attention of the military campaign shifted later in the month to bombing al-Qaida and Taliban troops in the north to support a ground assault by the Northern Alliance. After a disorganized start, the anti-Taliban forces, substantially rearmed and resupplied by the United States and its allies, assumed an offensive posture at the end of October and drove toward the capital with few setbacks, as many warlords previously aligned with the Taliban defected to the Northern Alliance. The first big prize, Mazar-i-Sharif, fell on November 9, and Kabul was surrounded by November 11. The swiftness of the Taliban collapse apparently surprised coalition military planners, and confusion reigned over how control of the capital would be achieved, U.S. policy-makers being aware of the complicated political overtones involved in the establishment of a new Afghan government. Despite apparent U.S. wishes to the contrary, the Northern Alliance moved into Kabul November 12–13, and the administration of Burhanuddin Rabbani announced it was reassuming authority, at least over the territory now controlled by the Northern Alliance.

Formal definition of the status of the Rabbani administration and governmental responsibility throughout the country overall remained ill-defined following the fall of Kabul, pending the results of a UN-sponsored conference that convened in Bonn, Germany, on November 27, 2001, to negotiate a power-sharing post-Taliban government that would bridge the nation’s myriad cleavages. In addition to UNIFSA/Northern Alliance officials, attendees at the conference included representatives from the so-called Rome Group (supporters of Afghanistan’s former king, Mohammad Zahir Shah), the Peshawar Group (Afghan exiles who had been living in Pakistan), and a delegation of pro-Iranian refugees and exiles who had been centered in Cyprus. No Taliban officials were invited to participate.

Initial negotiations at the Bonn Conference proved difficult regarding the issues of proposed international peacekeepers for Afghanistan (opposed by the Northern Alliance) and the selection of the

head of the planned interim government. A collapse of the talks appeared possible over the latter when it became apparent that the choice would not be Rabbani or the 84-year-old ex-king. However, the conference on December 3, 2001, agreed upon Hamid KARZAI, an obscure former deputy minister with U.S. backing. Karzai was formally appointed on December 5 as chair of an interim administration that would eventually include a 29-member cabinet that had been carefully crafted to include as broad an ethnic base as possible. The Bonn Declaration that concluded the conference on December 5 authorized the interim government for only six months, by which time an emergency *Loya Jirga* was to have established a new transitional government to prepare for free elections of a permanent government. The conference participants also agreed that a UN peacekeeping force would be stationed in Kabul, although details on its mandate and size were left for further negotiation.

Meanwhile, as plans for the installation of the interim administration proceeded, the military campaign against the remaining Taliban and al-Qaida forces continued unabated. After a sustained U.S. bombing campaign, the Taliban surrendered its last remaining stronghold in Kandahar to the UNIFSA/Northern Alliance on December 7, 2001, although Mullah Omar and a number of Taliban ministers escaped capture, perhaps as part of controversial secret negotiations. The air assault subsequently focused on the cave complexes in Tora Bora southwest of Jalalabad, where it was estimated that as many as 1,700 al-Qaida and Taliban fighters may have died before the complex was overrun. However, bin Laden escaped and fled, apparently, to the remote tribal areas across the border in Pakistan.

Karzai and his interim cabinet were inaugurated on December 22, 2001, in a ceremony in Kabul that featured a role for Rabbani as “outgoing president.” Notable attendees included General Dostam, who had earlier threatened to boycott the proceedings because he did not believe the Uzbek community was sufficiently represented in the government. On December 26 Dostam accepted a post as vice chair

of the interim administration and deputy defense minister.

On January 10, 2002, final agreement was reached on the deployment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), directed by the UN to assist in providing security in Kabul and surrounding areas but not to become involved outside that region. In May, the mandate of the ISAF (comprising some 4,500 troops from 19 countries at that point) was extended for another six months, some Western leaders reportedly pressing for its eventual extension to other areas of the country. Meanwhile, U.S. ground forces (upwards of 7,000 strong) remained in Afghanistan to conduct mopping-up activities against remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaida. No timetable was set for withdrawal of the American troops.

Former King Zahir Shah, who had returned to Afghanistan in April, was given the honor of opening the emergency *Loya Jirga* in Kabul on June 12, 2002. On June 13 Karzai received about 80 percent of the votes against two minor candidates in the balloting for the president of the new transitional government, all potential major opponents (including Zahir Shah) having removed themselves from contention. On its final day (June 19) the council also endorsed, by a show of hands, the partial cabinet announced by Karzai. However, the council adjourned without having made a decision on the makeup of a proposed transitional legislature. The transitional government was authorized to hold power for up to two years, with a constitutional *Loya Jirga* to be convened in approximately 18 months to adopt a new constitution that would provide the framework for new elections by June 2004.

In April 2003 President Karzai appointed a 33-member constitutional commission that drafted new basic law in November calling for a multi-party system headed by a president with broad powers and a mostly elected bicameral legislature. A *Loya Jirga* approved the constitution, with modifications, on January 4, 2004 (see Constitution and government, below, for details). Although both presidential and legislative elections were initially scheduled for June 2004, they were postponed due to difficulties in completing voter registration and

other electoral arrangements. Presidential balloting was finally held on October 9, with Karzai winning in the first round of balloting with 55.4 percent of the vote. Authority was formally transferred from the transitional administration upon Karzai's inauguration on December 7; Karzai appointed a new "reconstruction" cabinet on December 23. Balloting for the new National Assembly was held in the last quarter of 2005 (see Legislature, below), and most proposed members of a new cabinet were installed on May 2, 2006. However, five positions remained unfilled until August 7 due to objections within the *Wolesi Jirga* (dominated by conservatives) to the initial appointees. Friction between the legislative and executive branches intensified in May 2007 when the *Wolesi Jirga* attempted to impeach two of Karzai's ministers in the wake of the forced repatriation to Afghanistan of Afghan refugees in Iran. The Supreme Court subsequently ruled that the impeachments were invalid.

### *Constitution and Government*

Following their takeover of power in Kabul in September 1996, the Taliban quickly installed a six-member Provisional Council in Kabul that subsequently grew in stages into a full-fledged Council of Ministers. However, government decision-making authority appeared to remain in the hands of a small Taliban consultative council in Kandahar, the headquarters of the movement's spiritual leader (and emir of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan proclaimed in October 1997), Mullah Mohammad Omar, who served, among other things, as de facto head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces.

The constitution approved in January 2004 provided for a Western-style democracy with a strong central government headed by a popularly elected president (limited to two five-year terms) and a National Assembly (see Legislature, below, for details). The *Loya Jirga* (comprising the current members of the assembly and the chairs of the proposed elected provincial and district councils) was institutionalized as the "highest manifestation of the people of Afghanistan" and given full

responsibility to amend the constitution, prosecute the president if necessary, and “make decisions relating to independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and other supreme interests of the country.” The new basic law enshrined Islam as the state religion but guaranteed freedom for other religions to be practiced. Equal rights were guaranteed for men and women, as were freedom of expression and of association (see Political Parties and Groups, below, for details). Provision was made for an independent human rights commission and an independent judiciary headed by a Supreme Court comprising presidential appointees subject to confirmation by the lower house of the assembly.

The new constitution authorized the establishment of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan pending what were expected to be simultaneous presidential and legislative elections. However, in view of the subsequent delay in holding assembly balloting, the transitional state was declared to have concluded with the inauguration in December 2004 of President Karzai to head the administration of the newly renamed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The process of “institution-creating” culminated in the election of provincial councils and the lower house of the new National Assembly on September 18, 2005 (see Legislature, below, for details).

### *Foreign Relations*

Afghan foreign policy historically reflected neutrality and nonalignment, but by the mid-1970s Soviet economic and military aid had become paramount. After the April 1978 coup, the Taraki government, while formally committed to a posture of “positive nonalignment,” solidified relations with what was increasingly identified as “our great northern neighbor.” Following what was, for all practical purposes, Soviet occupation of the country in late 1979, the Karmal regime asserted that Soviet troops had been “invited” because of the “present aggressive actions of the enemies of Afghanistan” (apparently an allusion to the United States, China, Pakistan, and Iran, among others)—

a statement that proved singularly unconvincing to most of the international community. The UN General Assembly called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Soviet forces, and many other international bodies supported the UN position. Most nations refused to recognize the Kabul regime; exceptions included India, which participated in a joint Indo-Afghan communiqué in early 1985 expressing concern about “the militarization of Pakistan.”

In early 1986, following the accession to power of economy-conscious Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union indicated a willingness to consider a timetable for withdrawal of Soviet troops, conditioned on withdrawal of international support for the *mujaheddin*. The signature of an Afghan-Pakistani agreement (guaranteed by the Soviet Union and the United States) called for mutual noninterference and nonintervention. Accompanying accords provided for the voluntary return of refugees and took note of a time frame established by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union for a “phased withdrawal of foreign troops” over a nine-month period commencing May 15. However, the agreements did not provide for a cease-fire, with both the United States and Pakistan reserving the right to provide additional military supplies to the Afghan guerrillas if Moscow continued to provide arms to Kabul.

In late 1990 the United States and the Soviet Union agreed on a policy of “negative symmetry,” whereby both would cease supplying aid to their respective Afghan allies in expectation that the aid suspension would necessitate a cease-fire between the government and the rebels. Upon implementation of the mutual suspension in September 1991, even fundamentalist rebel leaders reportedly declared that they welcomed “the end of [foreign] interference.” However, by early 1995 it was apparent that involvement by external powers had by no means ceased, although it was being conducted far less visibly than during the Najibullah era. Former students from Islamic seminaries in Pakistan launched the Taliban movement, with one observer initially characterizing the seminarians as “cannon fodder” in a Pakistani effort to reopen vital

highway shipping routes to Tajikistan and beyond. Countering Pakistan's support of the Taliban was Indian aid to Rabbani and Masoud, particularly the provision of military aircraft that were crucial to the defense of Herat. For his part, General Dostam, the northern Uzbek warlord, had long been backed by Russia and Uzbekistan.

Washington initially exhibited a somewhat surprisingly warm stance toward the Taliban takeover in late 1996, reportedly out of the hope that it offered Afghanistan a chance for "stability" after 17 years of civil war. However, the U.S. posture cooled significantly during 1997 because of the Taliban human rights record and harsh religious strictures, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright strongly criticizing the Taliban policies toward women. Meanwhile, Russia and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, issued a stern warning to the Taliban in early 1997 not to attempt to spread militant fundamentalist influence beyond the Afghan borders. Collaterally, Iran displayed its support for the Shiite population in the Hazara region, which was aligned with the anti-Taliban forces.

During a regional tour in March 2006, U.S. President Bush consulted with President Karzai and President Musharraf of Pakistan on the delicate issue of the perceived use of Pakistani border areas by remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban. Karzai later in the year claimed that Pakistan was not doing enough to curb the insurgents, who had made significant advances in southern Afghanistan.

### *Current Issues*

Most of Afghanistan appeared in late 2001 to celebrate the collapse of the Taliban government, which had imposed a "joyless existence" on the population and fostered extreme international isolation. The festive mood was tempered, however, by the knowledge that many of the important components of the new interim government had been part of the disastrous *mujaheddin* regime in the first half of the 1990s that had created the opportunity for the Taliban to flourish in the first place. In

addition, much of the country outside the capital remained under the control of warlords with very little inclination to acquiesce to a strong centralized government. The daunting task of maintaining stability under severe ongoing ethnic, regional, and religious strains fell to Hamid Karzai, whose emergence as the choice to head the interim administration had surprised most observers. Described as a "moderate" Muslim, Karzai had served as a deputy foreign minister in an early Burhanuddin Rabbani cabinet. Western capitals widely praised the performance of Karzai and his interim administration in the first half of 2002 and were considered influential in assuring that he faced little serious challenge in the balloting for president of the two-year transitional government at the *Loya Jirga* in June.

Western grants helped Afghanistan pay off its arrears to several international organizations in early 2003, but some officials reportedly worried in private that global attention had shifted away from Afghanistan and toward Iraq. In May U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared that only "pockets of resistance" remained within Afghanistan and that reconstruction was the transitional administration's appropriate priority. However, a resurgence in the second half of the year of Taliban guerrilla attacks on U.S. and government forces killed hundreds. President Karzai also had to contend with outbreaks of fighting between various warlord militias, many of whom were resisting the new UN/Afghani demobilization and disarmament campaign. When Karzai dropped Vice President Mohammad Qasim FAHIM (a northern commander) as a running mate for the 2004 presidential campaign, many of the northern tribal leaders threw their support to Mohammad Yunus QANUNI, who finished second in the balloting with 16.3 percent of the vote. As a result, the election revealed a continued north/south divide that still threatened national unity. On a more positive note, however, Taliban threats to disrupt the balloting proved mostly empty, and international observers accepted the results as accurately reflecting the popular will, despite a number of electoral irregularities.

At his inauguration in December 2004, President Karzai pledged to combat the “mortal threat” of drug production and trafficking, to fight systemic poverty, and to promote “governmental accountability.” Toward those ends, his new cabinet appeared to rely more heavily on “technocrats” than his previous administration, although critics noted that most “power portfolios” remained in the hands of Pushtuns.

The frequency of rebel attacks remained relatively low for a number of months after the 2004 presidential poll, but the Taliban-led insurgency re-intensified in the spring of 2005. In an apparently related vein, a special *Loya Jirga* endorsed Karzai’s plan for a continued “strategic partnership” with the United States and NATO, although it was unclear if the final arrangements would include permanent U.S. military bases in Afghanistan.

The elections for the lower house of the National Assembly (*Wolesi Jirga*) and provincial councils in September 2005 received widespread international attention as a pivotal moment in the nation’s democratization efforts. Balloting was conducted peacefully (a relief to those worried about potential disruption on the part of the Taliban), and observers described the poll as generally free and fair, despite a degree of alleged fraud. The successful candidates to the *Wolesi Jirga* represented a broad spectrum of the population, from *mujaheddin* (including deeply conservative tribal leaders) to communists to reformists to former members of the Taliban. Analysts found it difficult to predict the future nature of the lower house, suggesting the body was evenly split between members likely to support (for now, at least) the Karzai administration and those likely to consider themselves as part of the opposition camp. Significantly, the *Wolesi Jirga* adopted an independent stance in April 2006 when, under the leadership of Qanuni (narrowly elected speaker the previous December), it announced it would vote separately on each of Karzai’s proposed cabinet appointments. (Five were subsequently rejected.)

Despite these apparent beginnings of genuine political give-and-take, it was widely believed that the new legislature and the government would be

hard-pressed to deal effectively with the myriad problems facing the nation. Among other things, as part of the “Afghanistan Compact” negotiated recently with international donors, the administration had agreed to improve human rights, combat corruption, eliminate illegal militias, counter the booming trade in narcotics, and “restore a functioning economy.” Pledges were also made to triple the size of the Afghan army (from 24,000 in 2006 to 70,000 in 2009) and to establish a judiciary appointed on merit rather than tribal or religious status. (Western capitals hoped that the new members of the Supreme Court appointed by Karzai in April would undercut the power of the Islamic hard-liners in that body.) The social fabric was also threatened by other events in early 2006 including widespread protest demonstrations in May prompted by the controversial publication in Denmark of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad, an outbreak of fighting between Sunnis and Shiites in Herat, and the controversial arrest of a man for converting from Islam to Christianity.

Further complicating matters was the unabated guerrilla campaign on the part of the Taliban, particularly in the south. (More than 1,600 people, including 60 Americans, died from “conflict-related violence” in 2005.) NATO (which has commanded ISAF since August 2003) in early 2006 announced plans to increase the force from 8,500 to 16,000. Many of the new troops were to be deployed in the “volatile” south, a departure from ISAF’s previous primary role as a peacekeeping and security mission around Kabul and in “stable” northern regions. The U.S.-led Combined Forces Command Afghanistan formally transferred control of six southern provinces to NATO/ISAF at the end of July, and in October NATO assumed responsibility for security throughout the country. By that time ISAF forces had grown to 31,000, including many U.S. soldiers previously under direct U.S. command. However, the United States retained control over some 8,000 of its troops for counter-terrorism activities and for training Afghani soldiers and police.

In one of the bloodiest periods since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Taliban guerrillas regained

control of a number of southern villages in the second half of 2006, and the number of suicide attacks escalated throughout the country. Some observers suggested that the Taliban movement was conducting an at least partially successful battle for the “hearts and minds” of southerners, who had reportedly been angered by the loss of civilian lives during NATO and U.S. military operations. Complicating matters for NATO was disagreement over the degree of effort to be allocated toward the anti-insurgency campaign versus reconstruction, much of the population having reportedly grown pessimistic as a result of the lack of progress in the latter.

In view of the deteriorating security, economic, and political conditions, President Karzai in June 2007 urged the Taliban and other rebel fighters to negotiate an end to the violence. However, guerrilla attacks continued unabated, with armor-piercing explosives and improvised explosive devices inflicting increasingly greater damage on Afghan, NATO and U.S. forces. U.S. leaders also claimed that Iranian weapons had found their way into the hands of Afghan insurgents.

## Political Parties and Groups

Resistance to the Taliban was coordinated at first by the Supreme Defense Council formed in October 1996 by the Islamic Afghan Society, the National Front, and the Islamic Unity Party. The umbrella organization’s name was changed to the United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UNIFSA) in mid-1997 to reflect the addition of new members (including the National Islamic Front) as well as expansion of the alliance’s mandate to cover political as well as military initiatives. UNIFSA, with heavy U.S. military and financial support, spearheaded the overthrow of the Taliban in late 2001.

The new constitution approved in January 2004 provided for freedom of association, with political parties authorized if they had no military or paramilitary structures and their platforms were not “contrary to the principles of Islam.” Parties based on ethnicity, language, religious sects, or re-

gions were also prohibited. Many small parties applied for legal status in 2004 and 2005, contributing to highly fluid and often confusing conditions in the run-up to the legislative balloting of September 2005. Some 80 parties are currently registered. However, party influence remains minimal, particularly in the *Wolesi Jirga*, where all candidates in the 2005 elections had technically run as independents.

**National Understanding Front**—NUF (*Jabha-i-Tafahon-i-Milli*). Launched in early 2005 by some 11 political parties, the NUF was described by one reporter as the “first attempt to forge a serious opposition” to the Karzai administration. NUF Chair Mohammad Yunos Qanuni had finished second in the 2004 presidential poll after leaving his post as planning minister in the Karzai cabinet (see Current issues, above, for additional information).

The leaders of the NUF announced that their first goal was to achieve parliamentary power in the National Assembly balloting scheduled for September 2005. They accused the Karzai administration of having failed to combat corruption in government, indicated opposition to the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, and called for the adoption of a proportional voting system in the assembly. However, some observers described the Front as comprising “incongruous factions” that might lack sustained cohesion.

It was estimated the candidates aligned with the NUF gained 60–80 seats in the balloting for the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005, thereby securing the Front’s position as the main opposition to the Karzai administration. Qanuni was subsequently elected as speaker of the *Wolesi Jirga*, after which he announced his resignation as chair of the NUF.

*Leaders:* Ahmad Shah AHMADZAY, Mohammad MOHAQEQ, Najia ZHARA, Mohammad Ali JAWID, Mustapha KAZEMI.

**New Afghanistan Party** (*Hizb-i-Afghanistan-i-Nawin*). Formed by Mohammad Yunos Qanuni in advance of his 2004 presidential campaign, this party was among the core



components at the formation of the NUF. Qanuni, an ethnic Tajik, was considered the most formidable political rival to President Karzai.

*Leader:* Mohammad Yunos QANUNI (Speaker of the House of the People and 2004 presidential candidate).

**Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Wahdat-i-Islami Mar-dom-i-Afghanistan*). A primarily Shiite offshoot of the Islamic Unity Party, this party is led by Mohammad Mohaqeq, a former member of the Karzai administration who left the government in 2004 in a dispute of unclear origin with Karzai. Mohaqeq, an ethnic Hazara, finished third (as an independent) in the 2004 presidential election with 11.7 percent of the vote. He was elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005.

*Leader:* Mohammad MOHAQEQ.

**National Islamic Empowerment Party** (*Hizb-i Iqtedar-i-Milli-Islami*). The formation of this party was reported in early 2006 under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Ahmadzay, a deputy chair of the NUF previously referenced as leader of the Islamic Power Party. Ahmadzay, a religious conservative, ran as an independent in the 2004 presidential election on a platform of opposition to the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

*Leaders:* Ahmad Shah AHMADZAY, Mustapha KAZEMI.

Other components of the NUF reportedly included the **Afghanistan Ethnic Unity Party** (*Hizb-i-Wahdat-i-Aqwam-i-Afghanistan*), led by Nasrullah BARAKZAI; the **Afghanistan National Independence Party** (*Hizb-i-Istiqlal-i-Milli Afghanistan*), led by Taj Mohammad WARDAK; the **Afghanistan Islamic Peace and Brotherhood Party** (*Hizb-i-Sulh wa Ukhwat-i-Islami Afghanistan*), led by Qadir Imami GHORI; a faction of the **Islamic Movement Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Harakat-i-Islami-i-Afghanistan*), led by Mohammad Ali JAWID; a faction of the **Islamic Revolutionary**

**Movement Party** (*Hizb-i-Harakat-i-Inqilahi-Islami*), led by Ahmad NABI; the **National Islamic Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Milli-Islami-i-Afghanistan*), led by Ustad Mohammad AKBARI and Rohullah LOUDIN; and the **New Islamic Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Islami-i-Afghanistan Jawan*), led by journalist Sayed Jawad HUSSEINI.

**Islamic Afghan Society** (*Jamaat-i-Islami Afghanistan*). The Afghan Society draws most of its support from Tajiks in the northern part of the country. It was long the most effective rebel force in the Panjsher Valley and engaged in heavy combat with Soviet forces in 1985, including sporadic invasions of Soviet Tajikistan.

Internal disagreement over relations with the Islamic Party threatened to splinter *Jamaat* in 1990, when military commander Ahmed Shah Masoud temporarily parted company with political leader Burhanuddin Rabbani in rejecting an appeal to aid the Islamic Party's offensive against Kabul. In October, Masoud, long a leading military figure, gained additional prominence when he chaired a *shura* (assembly) of Afghan military chiefs.

Forces loyal to Rabbani fled from the Taliban offensive against Kabul in September 1996, subsequently coalescing under Masoud's command in the north, where, in conjunction with other anti-Taliban militias, they fought the Taliban to a stalemate. Masoud's forces, estimated to number 12,000–15,000, survived into the fall of 2001, having weathered heavy Taliban offensives during the summers of the past three years.

Masoud was killed in an attack by suicide bombers disguised as journalists on September 10, 2001. The assassination was widely attributed to al-Qaida as a prelude to the terrorist attacks in the United States the following day. Mohammad Qasim FAHIM, who became one of the top leaders in the subsequent expulsion of the Taliban, succeeded Masoud as military commander of the Northern Alliance.

Rabbani, whose government had maintained the recognition of many countries throughout the Taliban regime, returned to Kabul in mid-November

2001 to resume the exercise of presidential authority. He reportedly hoped that the subsequent Bonn Conference would appoint him as president of the proposed new interim administration, and he only reluctantly accepted the appointment of Hamid Karzai after holding up the conference for several days in apparent protest to being sidelined. Any remaining short-term political aspirations on Rabbani's part were also put on hold at the *Loya Jirga* in July 2002, where Rabbani endorsed Karzai's election as president of the new transitional government. Fahim, however, was named vice president and minister of defense, establishing himself as one of the administration's dominant figures. Rabbani supported Karzai in the 2004 presidential election even though Fahim was dropped from the Karzai ticket. Rabbani was elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005 and briefly campaigned for the speaker of that body before deferring to Yunos Qanuni.

In the spring of 2007 Rabbani spearheaded the formation of a new group—the **United National Front** (UNF), which brought together *mujaheddin*, former communists, members of the royal family, and other diverse elements in pursuit of national unity, reconstruction, and establishment of a federal system under which governors and provincial councils would be directly elected and the national government would operate on a parliamentary rather than a presidential system. Members of the UNF reportedly included *Wolesi Jirga* Speaker Mohammad Yunos Qanuni, First Vice President of the Republic Ahmad Zia Masoud, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam (leader of the National Front [below] and a top military adviser to President Karzai), Mustapha Kazemi (a leader of the National Islamic Empowerment Party), representatives of the National Congress Party of Afghanistan, Mustapha ZAHIR (grandson of the former king), several cabinet members, and a number of legislators. The new grouping immediately was perceived as the dominant political force in the *Wolesi Jirga*. It strongly supported the proposed national amnesty bill, not surprisingly considering the number of warlords and others with major roles in past conflicts involved in its formation. Saying that military defeat of the Taliban was impossible, Rab-

bani invited the Taliban and other antigovernment forces to lay down their arms and join the UNF in pursuit of national unity.

*Leaders:* Burhanuddin RABBANI (Former President of the Islamic State), Abdul Hafez MANSUR, Munawar HASAN (Secretary General).

**National Front** (*Jumbish-i-Milli*). The *Jumbish-i-Milli* is an Uzbek grouping formed by Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam, who had been a military commander under Najibullah before aligning himself with Ahmed Masoud in 1992. In early 1994 Dostam broke with Masoud to join forces with Hekmatyar's *Hizb-i-Islami* and Mazari's *Hizb-i-Wahdat* in an anti-Rabbani alliance. He did not, however, support his new colleagues in the decisive encounters of March 1995, thereby contributing to their defeat. Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 1996, General Dostam initially played an important role in the anti-Taliban alliance (see Political background, above). However, it was reported that he and his remaining forces had retreated to Uzbekistan following the Taliban offensive of the second half of 1998, and his influence had declined significantly by mid-2000.

Dostam returned to Afghanistan in March 2001 and rejoined the Northern Alliance. The general subsequently remained closely aligned with Rabbani during the overthrow of the Taliban and strongly objected to the selection at the Bonn Conference of Hamid Karzai over Rabbani as president of the new interim government in December. Initially, it appeared that Dostam's disgruntlement would prove a threat to stability, but he accepted positions as vice chair of the interim administration and deputy minister of defense in late December, thereby calming the situation. General Dostam, burdened with a reputation for military ruthlessness and political shiftiness, was not included in the July 2002 cabinet.

Running as an independent, Dostam finished fourth in the 2004 presidential poll with 10 percent of the vote. In April 2005 he became the chief of staff of the high command of the armed forces

in Karzai's administration. However, in early 2007 he joined the UNF (above), which called for a reduction in presidential authority.

*Leaders:* Gen. Abdul Rashid DOSTAM, Azizullah KARQAR, Sayyed NUROLLAH, Faysollah ZAKI, Abdul Majid ROZI.

**Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Wahdat-i-Islami Afghanistan*). The *Hizb-i-Wahdat* was launched in mid-1987 by the following Iran-based groups: the Afghan Nasr Organization (*Sazmane Nasr*); the Da'wa Party of Islamic Unity of Afghanistan (*Da'wa-i-Ittehad-i-Islami Afghanistan*); the Guardians of the Islamic Jihad of Afghanistan (*Pasadaran-i-Jihadi-Afghanistan*); the Islamic Force of Afghanistan (*Nehzat-i-Afghanistan*); the Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (*Harakat-i-Islami Afghanistan*), led by Ayatollah Aseh MOHSENI; the Islamic Struggle for Afghanistan (*Narave Islami Afghanistan*), led by Zaidi MOHAZZIZI; the Party of God (*Hezbollah*), led by Qari AHMAD; and the United Islamic Front of Afghanistan (*Jabhe Muttahid-i-Afghanistan*). Also known as the "Tehran Eight," the group claimed at its inception to represent an estimated two million Shiite Afghan refugees in Iran. During 1992 and early 1993 it joined with Hekmatyar's *Hizb-i-Islami* in a number of clashes with Rabbani's *Jamaat-i-Islami* and the Saudi-backed *Ittehad-i-Islami*. Its principal leader, Abdul Ali MAZARI, was killed on March 13, 1995, reportedly in a helicopter crash south of Kabul after having been captured by the Taliban student militia.

*Hizb-i-Wahdat* was an important component of UNIFSA in that it represented the Hazara Shiite community in central Afghanistan. As of early 1998 the Hazaras were reportedly exercising autonomous government control in the Hazarajat region while contributing substantially to the anti-Taliban military alliance in the north. However, Taliban forces pushed *Hizb-i-Wahdat* out of most of the populated areas in the region (including the important city of Bamiyan) in September 1998. In consonance with the ouster of the Taliban by the UNIFSA/Northern Alliance in late 2001, *Hizb-i-Wahdat* regained control of much of central

Afghanistan, and party leader Karim Khalili was named as a vice president in the transitional government installed in June 2002. He was elected as second vice president of the republic in 2004.

*Leaders:* Karim KHALILI (Second Vice President of the Republic), Ayatollah FAZL.

**National Islamic Front** (*Mahaz-i-Milli-i-Islami*). The most left leaning of the moderate groups, the National Islamic Front had refused to join the Supreme Council in 1981 because not all of the participants had agreed to the election of people's representatives to a provisional government. In November 1990 party leader Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani endorsed a reported U.S.-USSR peace plan that would have left Najibullah in power after the two countries withdrew their support for the combatants. Thereafter, at a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, Gailani allegedly turned down an offer by Najibullah to assume control of the government, suggesting instead the return of Mohammad Zahir Shah, the former monarch.

Gailani, the spiritual leader of the Sufi Muslims, served in the Rabbani cabinet from 1992 to 1996, he and his supporters relocating to Cyprus following the Taliban takeover. They subsequently served as the core component of the so-called "Cyprus Group" at the Bonn Conference in late 2001, where the Front continued to display a proroyalist orientation. Gailani was elected chair of a prominent faction in the House of Elders in 2007.

*Leader:* Pir Sayed Ahmad GAILANI.

**Islamic Party** (*Hizb-i-Islami*). Drawing most of its support from Pushtuns in the southeastern part of the country, the Islamic Party was one of the largest and most radical of the *mujaheddin* groups and often engaged in internecine clashes with former allies including, most notably, the *Jamaat-i-Islami*. Its principal leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, was known to have ties to both Iran and Libya in the 1970s and early 1980s, although they subsequently were believed to have weakened.

Hekmatyar was named prime minister following the all-party accord of March 1993 but was at that stage deeply opposed to the Rabbani presidency; Hekmatyar's appointment lapsed in

mid-1994. Thereafter, his supporters maintained a partial siege of Kabul until forced to withdraw after a decisive defeat in March 1995. This experience eventually impelled Hekmatyar to break ranks with other *mujaheddin* leaders by reaching his own accommodation with the government in May 1996, enabling him to resume the premiership from June until the overthrow of the government in September. Hekmatyar's decision to align his forces with those of Ahmed Masoud and General Dostam was considered an important factor in their subsequent ability to stall the Taliban offensive in the north in 1997. However, Hekmatyar and the Islamic Party were described in 1998 as only nominally associated with UNIFSA and apparently not playing a major role in the remaining military opposition to the Taliban. Interviewed in Iran in mid-2000, Hekmatyar called on the Taliban to establish a provisional government including opposition representatives pending national elections, describing the civil war as benefiting only "foreign forces."

In the fall of 2001 Hekmatyar adopted a strongly anti-Northern Alliance stance and urged support for the Taliban against what he called a U.S. "invasion." Hekmatyar returned to Afghanistan in early 2002 but remained noticeably outside the negotiations toward a government of national unity. Considered a threat to the stability of the interim administration, Hekmatyar was reportedly the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt in May on the part of the United States through the use of an unmanned "drone" bomber. Hekmatyar subsequently reportedly fled to Iran, but he was eventually expelled from that country. Having returned to Afghanistan, he was labeled a terrorist because of attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces. In early 2005 it appeared that some Islamic Party adherents had begun peace negotiations with the Karzai administration, although Hekmatyar (who rejected an apparent amnesty offer) and others remained committed to *jihad* (holy war) until U.S. forces were removed from Afghanistan and an "Islamic System" was installed.

Party members opposed to Hekmatyar's hard line participated (reportedly with some success) in the 2005 legislative balloting. Meanwhile, an arrest

warrant reportedly remained in effect for Hekmatyar, and his supporters, now considered aligned with the Taliban (and possibly al-Qaida) and reportedly sometimes operating out of Pakistan, participated in attacks on government and NATO forces in the north in 2006–2007.

*Leaders:* Gulbuddin HEKMATYAR (Former Prime Minister), Mohammad Yunos KHALES.

**Islamic Unity** (*Ittihad-i-Islami*). Ultra-orthodox Sunni Muslims backed by Saudi Arabia formed the Ittihad-i-Islami. Like the other fundamentalist formations, it long opposed Westernizing influences in pursuing what it viewed largely as an Islamic holy war against Soviet-backed forces. One of its leaders, Abdul Rasul Sayaf, headed the Islamic Alliance of Afghan Holy Warriors at its inception in 1985.

The party endorsed President Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign. Subsequently, Sayaf, described as an "archconservative," was elected to the House of the People in 2005 and was only narrowly defeated for the speaker's position. (Reports have differed on Sayaf's recent formal party affiliation.)

*Leader:* Abdul Rasul SAYAF (Former Prime Minister of Government-in-Exile).

**National Liberation Front** (*Jabh-i-Nijat-i-Milli*). The National Liberation Front was formed to support Afghan self-determination and the establishment of a freely elected government. Its leader, Sibghatullah Mojadedi, was chair of the moderate opposition bloc in the late 1980s. Subsequently, Mojadedi served as interim president from April to June 1992, before becoming a prominent opponent of the succeeding Rabbani government. Immediately following the Taliban takeover of Kabul in September 1996, it was reported that Mojadedi had announced his support for the new government. However, he was subsequently described as having moved to Egypt, from where he was "abstaining" from the conflict between the Taliban and its opponents. Mojadedi supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign and was later named chair of the fledgling national reconciliation commission. He was also elected as speaker

of the House of Elders (*Meshrano Jirga*) in late 2005.

*Leaders:* Imam Sibghatullah MOJADEDI (Former President of Government-in-Exile, Former Interim President of the Islamic State, and Speaker of the *Meshrano Jirga*), Dr. Hashimatullah MOJADEDI.

**Homeland Party** (*Hizb-i-Watan*). Previously known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which dominated national political affairs during the late 1970s and most of the 1980s (see Political background, above), the Homeland Party adopted its new name at its second congress in June 1990. Although not formally dissolved following the fall of the pro-Soviet regime, the group's subsequent activity was limited to occasional contact at meetings of international communist organizations. It was reported in 2003 that the interim government had refused a request from the Homeland Party for legal status, and party adherents subsequently appeared to have launched several new groupings. Former PDPA members reportedly participated in the formation of the UNF (above) in 2007.

**National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan** (*Nahzat-i Hambastagi-i Milli Afghanistan*). This party is led by Ishaq Gailani, who was a candidate for president in 2004 prior to withdrawing in support of Hamid Karzai.

*Leader:* Ishaq GAILANI.

**Afghan Nation** (*Afghan Mellat*). Established during the reign of King Zahir Shah in support of Pushtun nationalism, this grouping (also referenced as the Social Democratic Party of Afghanistan) reportedly factionalized in the early 2000s. One faction, which supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign, is led by Anwar al-Haq Ahadi, who was named minister of finance in the December 2004 cabinet.

*Leader:* Anwar al-Haq AHADI (President).

**National Congress Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i Kongra-i Milli-i Afghanistan*). This party was launched in April 2004 in support of the presidential candidacy of moderate Abdul Latif Pedram,

who finished fifth in the October poll with 1.37 percent of the vote. Pedram, a former journalist and professor, proposed the establishment of a federal system in Afghanistan.

*Leaders:* Abdul Latif PEDRAM, Nasir OJABER.

**National Movement of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i Nahzat-i Milli-i Afghanistan*). Primarily supported by Tajiks, *Nahzat* was launched by Ahmad Wali Masoud following the death of his brother, Ahmed Shah Masoud, the legendary *mujaheddin* military leader. The party factionalized in 2004 when *Nahzat* member Yunos Qanuni ran against Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign, while another Masoud brother, Ahmad Zia Masoud, was one of Karzai's vice presidential running mates.

*Leaders:* Ahmad Wali MASOUD (Party Leader), Ahmad Zia MASOUD (Vice President of the Republic).

Other recently launched parties include the **Afghanistan Independence Party** (*Hizb-i Istiqlal-i Afghanistan*), led by Ghulam Faruq NEJRABI, who won 0.3 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll on a platform that rejected all "direct or indirect influence" on the part of "foreigners," including aid organizations; the **Democracy and Progress Movement of Afghanistan** (*Nahzat-i-Faragir-i Democracy wa Taraqi-i-Afghanistan*), led by Mohammad BUZGAR; the **Freedom Party** (*Hizb-i Azadi*), led by Gen. Abdul MALEK, a former leader of the National Front; the **Islamic Justice Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i Adalat-i Islami-i Afghanistan*), which, under the leadership of Mohammad Kabir MARZBAN, also supported President Karzai in the 2004 campaign; the **National Freedom Seekers Party** (*Hizb-i Azadi Khwahan-i Maihan*), led by Abdul Hadi DABIR, an independent presidential candidate in 2004; the **National Movement for Peace** (*Jumbish-i Milli-i Solk*), led by Shahnawaz TANAY, a former defense minister in the Communist regime; the **National Party** (*Hizb-i Milli*), led by Abdul Rashid ARYAN, a former member of the PDPA and member of the cabinet during Communist rule; the **National**

**Unity Movement** (*Tabrik-i-Wahdat-i Milli*), led by Mahmud GHAZI and Hodayun Shah ASEFI; the **People's Islamic Movement of Afghanistan** (*Harakat-i Islami-i Mardon-i Afghanistan*), led by Hosayn ANWARI, the minister of agriculture in the transitional government; the **Republican Party** (*Hizb-i Jamhuri Khwahan*), led by Sebghatullah SANJAR, who supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential election; and the **Youth Solidarity Party of Afghanistan** (*Hizb-i-Hambastagi-i Milli-i Jawanan-i Afghanistan*), which, under the leadership of Mohammed Jamil KARZAI, supported President Karzai in the 2004 election.

### *Movement Formerly in Power*

**Taliban.** Translated as “seekers” or “students,” the Persian *taliban* was applied to a group of Islamic fundamentalist theology students from Pakistan who swept through southern Afghanistan during late 1994 in a campaign pledged to rid the country of its contending warlords and introduce “genuine” Islamic rule.

In a statement issued in connection with U.S. congressional hearings on Afghanistan in June 1996, the Taliban movement listed its basic demands as including the resignation of President Rabbani, the demilitarization of Kabul, the formation of a national security force, and the convening of an elected assembly of the Afghan people charged with forming “a national Islamic government.” The group’s seizure of power in Kabul three months later gave it the opportunity to implement this program. Previous assessment of the Taliban as espousing a less ferocious brand of fundamentalism than the ousted regime was speedily revised in light of its imposition of strict Islamic law (*sharia*) and summary execution of opponents.

The Taliban militia launched several offensives in late 1996 and 1997 designed to win complete control of the country but was unable to defeat opposition forces in the north or maintain command of the Hazara region west of Kabul. In part, resistance to the Taliban was based on ethnicity or religion: in the north the opposition militias comprised Uzbeks and Tajiks who had long been wary of dom-

ination by Pushtuns (the core Taliban ethnic group), while the Hazara-Taliban split pitted Shiite versus Sunni Muslims. Despite heavy international criticism, the Taliban leaders in 1997 exhibited little moderation in their harsh interpretation of *sharia*, described as “medieval” by some observers, particularly regarding strictures on women. Meanwhile, the Taliban’s 38-year-old spiritual guide, Mullah Mohammad Omar, was described as a reclusive leader who rarely left Kandahar (where the movement was launched) and who, following Taliban interpretation of religious law, never permitted himself to be photographed. A small consultative council located in Kandahar reportedly advised Omar.

Although the Taliban nearly succeeded in the first half of 2001 in efforts to push opposition forces completely out of Afghanistan, the regime’s fortunes reversed dramatically as the result of the terrorist attacks in the United States in September. Washington quickly blamed the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden (see below) for the hijackings and demanded that the Taliban turn their “guest” over for prosecution or face U.S. military intervention. Although some Taliban leaders reportedly argued that the United States demand should be met, Omar and other hard-liners refused and thereby sealed the movement’s fate. Following the Taliban’s final military defeat at the hands of the Northern Alliance in late December, Omar and a number of Taliban ministers were reported to have fled to Pakistan.

Although many observers predicted the total collapse of the Taliban in the wake of its fall from power, the movement subsequently regrouped and launched a series of deadly guerrilla attacks against U.S. troops and the new Afghan army. Mullah Omar, believed at that point to be operating as the head of a ten-man Taliban leadership council, called for a *jihad* against all foreign forces and vowed to “punish” Afghans who supported the Karzai administration. The Taliban failed in its announced plan to disrupt the October 2004 presidential election, but it intensified its attacks in mid-2005, apparently in an effort to complicate the upcoming legislative balloting. Although

some former Taliban leaders by that time reportedly had entered into negotiations with the government toward a possible peace settlement, Mullah Omar maintained his hard line, rejecting an apparent amnesty offer from administration representatives. Some reports attributed the 2005 attacks to a “Neo-Taliban,” while it was also clear that several Taliban splinter groups were operating, raising questions about the cohesiveness and precise leadership of the movement. Meanwhile, the United States, convinced of Mullah Omar’s ties to al-Qaida, continued to offer a \$10 million reward for his capture.

Several former Taliban commanders were reportedly elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in September 2005, while a number of other former members of the movement had reportedly been released from custody in return for their commitment to “peace.” Nevertheless, attacks attributed to the Taliban grew in number in late 2005 and early 2006, most of them emulating the roadside bombings and suicide attacks so prevalent recently in Iraq. By that time the Taliban was described as having significant ties to drug smuggling and was characterized as still representing a significant “menace” in parts of southern Afghanistan.

The Taliban insurgency, fueled by the use of sophisticated new weaponry, escalated steadily for the remainder of 2006 and the first half of 2007, resulting in the takeover (sometimes temporary) by the Taliban of a number of villages and other rural areas in the south. Afghan, NATO, and U.S. officials alleged that the Taliban were operating with impunity out of remote border areas in Pakistan. Western analysts estimated the Taliban strength in 2006 at 6,000 fighters (up from 2,000 only a year earlier), while the Taliban claimed it controlled 12,000 fighters. In early 2007 Omar said he had not seen bin Laden since 2001 and indicated the Taliban had no direct alliance with al-Qaida, other than the shared goal of the expulsion of foreign forces from Afghanistan. The Taliban leader again refused an invitation to peace talks with the Karzai administration.

*Leaders:* Mullah Mohammad OMAR (Spiritual Leader and Former Emir of the self-proclaimed Is-

lamic Emirate of Afghanistan), Laftullah HAKIMI (self-proclaimed spokesman for the “Neo-Taliban”), Qari Mohammad Yousuf AHMADI, Muhammad HANIF, Mansur DADOLLAH (military commander), Jalaluddin HAQQANI (military commander).

### *Terrorist Group*

**Al-Qaida** (The Base). Al-Qaida is the network established in the 1990s by Osama bin Laden in pursuit of his goal of getting U.S. forces out of Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden, a member of one of the wealthiest Saudi families, had participated personally and financially in the *mujaheddin* (“holy warrior”) guerrilla campaign against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Having returned to his native land following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden subsequently focused his fundamentalist fervor on the buildup of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia in connection with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces and the subsequent Desert Storm counterattack. Bin Laden reportedly urged the Saudi royal family to reject the U.S. forces, and he adopted an antimonarchical stance when his recommendations were rebuffed. In 1991 bin Laden moved his operations to Sudan, his attacks on the Saudi government becoming more scathing after he was stripped of his citizenship in 1995 for “irresponsible behavior,” a reference to his having made large sums of money available to militant Islamic causes in a number of countries.

Under heavy pressure from the United States, the Sudanese government expelled bin Laden in 1996, and he established a base in Afghanistan, where he reportedly helped to finance the Taliban takeover. Bin Laden also declared war on the “occupying American enemy” in Saudi Arabia, which he blamed for the perceived repression and corruption on the part of the Saudi government.

In February 1998 al-Qaida joined with several other regional militant organizations to form an International Islamic Front, which urged Arabs to kill “Americans and their allies” until U.S. “hegemony” in the Gulf was dismantled. U.S. officials subsequently accused bin Laden’s “terrorist network” of

masterminding the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, and American cruise missiles attacked suspected bin Laden camps in Afghanistan two weeks later. Several alleged supporters of bin Laden were arrested in the United States on conspiracy and terrorism charges later in the year, while bin Laden was indicted in absentia. An Afghan court ruled in November that Washington had failed to present credible evidence of bin Laden's guilt; he was therefore permitted to remain in Afghanistan, although the government officially cautioned him against using his base there to coordinate terrorist activity in other countries.

In March 2000 Jordan announced the arrest of some 28 alleged bin Laden followers on charges of conspiring to conduct a terrorist campaign in the kingdom. Arrests were subsequently also made in the United Kingdom and Germany to combat what officials described as an international crackdown on groups affiliated with the bin Laden network. Four of his alleged associates were charged in connection with the 1998 embassy bombings (they were subsequently sentenced to life in prison), and al-Qaida was also considered a prime suspect in the bombing of the USS *Cole* in Yemen in October 2000 (see article on Yemen for details).

Immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, Washington described bin Laden as the mastermind of the conspiracy that had left nearly 3,000 Americans dead. The U.S. government unsuccessfully pressed the Taliban government to turn bin Laden and his associates over for prosecution before launching Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and its "War on Terrorism" throughout the world. A reward of \$25 million was offered for bin Laden, U.S. President Bush declaring the al-Qaida leader would be brought to justice "dead or alive."

Al-Qaida forces fought alongside the Taliban army against the Northern Alliance advances from October to December 2001, most analysts concluding that al-Qaida had become the main financial backer of the Taliban and its strongest military component. Mohammed ATEF, an al-Qaida military commander, was killed in a November 14 U.S. air strike, and many al-Qaida fighters died during

heavy bombing of their cave complex in Tora Bora in the second half of December. Most analysts subsequently concluded that bin Laden had escaped to the "anarchic tribal areas" of western Pakistan along with a number of other al-Qaida leaders, one of whom—Abu ZUBAYDAH—was captured in Pakistan in March 2002 and turned over to the United States. Even though al-Qaida had obviously suffered major losses at the hands of U.S. forces, the international community remained extremely wary of the group's ongoing potential to conduct new terrorist activity. Underscoring the breadth of al-Qaida's appeal to a certain segment of the Muslim population, it was reported that the al-Qaida prisoners being held by the United States at the Guantánamo Bay naval base had come from more than 40 countries.

In early 2003 a purported audio tape from bin Laden called upon all Muslims to fight against any U.S.-led action against Iraq, although the tape also described Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his administration as "apostates." In March U.S. officials announced that more than half of al-Qaida's "senior operatives" had been killed or captured, including Khalid Shaikh MOHAMMAD (considered one of the masterminds of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States), who was arrested in Pakistan. (In March 2007 Mohammad confessed to his role in the U.S. attacks and some 30 other terrorist operations around the world, although skeptics wondered if the confession had been unduly affected by his treatment in U.S. custody.) U.S. forces continued their assault on al-Qaida along the border with Pakistan in mid-2003, Pakistan having also sent soldiers to its side of the border to apply similar pressure. In response, in September Ayman al-Zawahiri (reportedly bin Laden's top lieutenant—see Holy War under Illegal Groups in the article on Egypt for additional information) urged Pakistanis to overthrow President Pervez Musharraf. Two assassination attempts against Musharraf were reported late in the year.

In April 2004 another bin Laden tape suggested that al-Qaida would no longer support terrorist attacks in Europe if European governments agreed to remove their military forces from



## Cabinet

As of June 1, 2007

President	Hamid Karzai (Pushtun)
First Vice President	Ahmad Zia Masoud (Tajik)
Second Vice President	Mohammad Karim Khalili (Hazara)
Senior Minister	Hedayat Amin Arsala

### *Ministers*

Agriculture	Obaidullah Ramin
Border and Tribal Affairs	Abdul Karim Barahowie
Communications	Amirzai Sangin
Commerce	Mohammed Amin Farhang
Counter-Narcotics	Habibullah Qaderi
Culture and Youth Affairs	Abdul Karim Khorram
Defense	Gen. Abdurrahim Wardak
Economy	Mohammed Jalil Shams
Education	Mohammad Hanif Atmar
Finance	Anwar al-Haq Ahadi
Foreign Affairs	Rangin Dadfar Spanta
Haj and Islamic Affairs	Nehmatullah Shahrani
Higher Education	Azam Dadfar
Interior	Zarar Ahmed Moqbel
Justice	Mohammad Sarwar Danish
Martyrs, Disabled, Social Affairs, and Labor	Noor Mohammed Qarqeen
Mining	Ibrahim Adel
Public Health	Dr. Mohammad Amin Fatemie
Public Welfare	Sohrab Ali Saffary
Refugee Affairs	Mohammad Akbar
Rural Development	Ehsan Zia
Transportation and Aviation	Nehmatullah Ehsan Jawid
Urban Development	Yousef Pashtun
Water and Energy	Mohammad Ismail Khan
Women's Affairs	Hosna Bano Ghazanfar [f]

### *Ministers of State*

Parliamentary Affairs	Faruq Wardag
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[f] = female

Iraq and Afghanistan. (Many observers had suggested a possible link between al-Qaida and the train bombing in Madrid, Spain, the previous month.) The European leaders immediately rejected the “offer,” although political events in

Spain were dramatically affected by the train attacks.

In June 2004, in response to the killing of a kidnapped American, Saudi Arabian security forces killed several leaders of a group calling itself

“Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula,” including Abdelaziz Issa Abdul-Mohson al-MUQRIN. At the same time, followers of Abu Musab al-ZARQAWI, a Jordanian militant heading a group called Tawhid, were reportedly conducting many of the insurgent attacks against U.S. and Iraqi targets in Iraq. Consequently, questions were raised concerning the extent to which bin Laden exercised control over al-Qaida adherents in particular and militant Islamists in general. However, in October al-Zarqawi declared his allegiance to bin Laden, who subsequently endorsed al-Zarqawi as the al-Qaida leader in Iraq. (See article on Iraq for further information on the campaign conducted in Iraq under al-Zarqawi’s purported leadership.)

Bombings in Egypt and London in July 2005 were considered by some observers to have links to al-Qaida. Subsequently, al-Zarqawi claimed direct responsibility for a series of bombings in Jordan in November as part of an apparent campaign to broaden his campaign beyond Iraq. (Some reports referred to al-Zarqawi’s group as “al-Qaida in Mesopotamia.”) However, a degree of friction was reported between al-Zarqawi and al-Zawahiri over al-Zarqawi’s apparent endorsement of attacks on Shiites in Iraq and the beheading of hostages. For most of 2005, al-Zawahiri served as the primary al-Qaida spokesperson outside of Iraq, conducting what was described as a “political” campaign to gain greater support throughout the Muslim world. Among other things, al-Zawahiri was the target of a U.S. missile attack on a Pakistani village in January 2006. Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities insisted that Abu Hamza RABIA, described as “number three” in the al-Qaida hierarchy, had been killed in December by Pakistani security forces.

An audio tape released in December 2005 represented the first apparent public message from bin Laden in a year. The tape reportedly offered a vague truce to the United States if all U.S. troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan and Iraq. Washington immediately dismissed the proposal, announcing it would never “negotiate” with al-Qaida. The United States continued to proclaim that al-Qaida was in complete disarray, despite bin Laden’s pledge that

additional major attacks were being planned. Most analysts concluded that bin Laden and al-Zawahiri remained “deeply hidden” in the Pakistani border area as of the spring of 2006. However, al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. air strike in June.

Bin Laden subsequently accused the United States of “waging war against Islam,” and al-Zawahiri in mid-2006 urged Afghans to “rise up” against the “infidel invaders,” i.e., U.S. and NATO forces. It was widely accepted that al-Qaida subsequently continued to operate out of the “lawless tribal areas” of Pakistan. However, al-Qaida also intensified its efforts to serve as an umbrella organization for Islamic militants in other countries in the Middle East, East Africa, North Africa, and other regions. Among other things, a “merger” was announced in September between al-Qaida and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria (see *Illegal Groups* in article on Algeria for details). Al-Qaida later was believed to be seeking affiliation with “franchises” in Kashmir, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, and Syria, among others countries. Some analysts suggested that al-Qaida was moving away from emphasis on direct action of its own toward pursuing broad ideological influence on small local movements, supported by increasingly effective use of media technology and the Internet. However, in early 2007 UK terrorism experts warned that al-Qaida was still capable of “devastating attacks” and that its networks remained “incredibly resilient.” Al-Zawahiri pledged that anti-U.S. attacks would increase unless U.S. forces ceased military action in Muslim countries. He also criticized the leaders of Egypt and Hamas (the leading government party in the Palestinian-controlled territories) for “collaborating” with the United States and Israel.

*Leaders:* Osama BIN LADEN, Ayman al-ZAWAHIRI.

## Legislature

Following the overthrow of the Taliban in late 2001, an “emergency” *Loya Jirga* (Grand National Council) was held June 12–19, 2002, as authorized by the Bonn Conference of November–December

2001, to establish a transitional government. The *Loya Jirga* comprised more than 1,500 delegates, about two-thirds of whom were indirectly elected to represent various civic, business, academic, and religious organizations. The remaining delegates were selected by a special commission (appointed as part of the Bonn agreement) to represent minority groups and women.

A new *Loya Jirga* convened in December 2003 to consider a new proposed constitution drafted by a constitutional commission appointed by President Karzai in April. The *Loya Jirga* comprised 500 delegates—450 elected by representatives of the previous *Loya Jirga* and 50 appointed by the president. As approved on January 4, 2004, the new constitution provided for a bicameral **National Assembly** (*Shoray-i-Milli*).

**House of Elders** (*Meshrano Jirga*). The upper house comprises 102 members: 34 indirectly elected for three-year terms by provincial councils; 34 appointed by the president for five-year terms; and (eventually) 34 indirectly elected by district councils for four-year terms. The first elections to the 34 provincial councils were held on September 18, 2005, and those councils subsequently each elected one permanent member of the *Meshrano Jirga* from among its ranks. In addition, the provincial councils each elected a temporary delegate to the *Meshrano Jirga* to serve on an interim basis in the place of the members slated to be elected by district councils. (Due to difficulties in establishing final boundaries for the proposed districts, balloting for the district councils was postponed.) The upper house convened for the first time on December 19, following the announcement of President Karzai's appointments. (Among other things, the president is required to ensure that there are at least 17 women in the *Meshrano Jirga*, as well as 2 Kuchi representatives and 2 representatives of the disabled population.)

*Speaker:* Iman Sibghatullah MOJADEDI.

**House of the People** (*Wolesi Jirga*). The lower house of the assembly comprises 249 members who are directly elected for a five-year term in single-

round balloting. Each of the country's 34 provinces has 2 or more *Wolesi Jirga* representatives, based on population. Voters cast a single vote for one candidate in their province. Seats for the most part are allocated to the top vote getters in each province until that province's seats are filled. However, the constitution requires that at least 68 members of the lower house be women; therefore, some women are named to seats despite having lower vote totals than candidates who would have otherwise qualified. In addition, 10 seats are reserved for Kuchi nomads, which can also alter the regular distribution of seats. The first election was held on September 18, 2005. Candidates (approximately 2,775) ran as independents, although a number of them appeared easily identifiable as members of various political parties. The lower house convened for the first time on December 19.

*Speaker:* Mohammad Yunus QANUNI.

## Communications

Reporters Without Borders described the development of a degree of press freedom in 2007 as one of the "few achievements" of the Afghan government since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. However, the journalism watchdog described the situation in Afghanistan as "fragile," in view of the deteriorating security situation and pressure from conservative elements inside and outside the government.

### *Press*

Widespread civil war and other fighting in the 1980s and 1990s adversely affected the publication of many newspapers, some of which resumed publication following the overthrow of the Taliban government. Newspapers published in Kabul that have been cited in recent reports include *Anis* (Friendship), a long-standing government-funded daily published in Dari; the *Kabul Times*, another state-owned daily (in English); *Erada*, an independent daily; *Arman-i Milli*, a daily; *Hewad* (Homeland); *Estah*, a state-owned daily; *Cheragh*, an independent daily; *Payam-i-Mujahid* (Holy Warrior's

Message), an independent weekly; *Kilit* (Key, 13,000); *Rah-i Nejat*, independent; *Afghanistan*, daily; *Milli Jarida*, independent; and the *Kabul Weekly*, which reportedly ceased publication in late 2006 due to insufficient advertising.

### *News Agencies*

The official domestic facility is the Bakhtar News Agency. There are some five private news agencies.

### *Broadcasting*

Following the Taliban takeover, Radio Afghanistan was redesignated the *Voice of Sharia*, and Kabul TV was shut down. Television service was resumed on a limited basis in the capital in 2001. State-run Radio/Television Afghanistan resumed broadcasting following the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Several private stations have also been launched (including *Aina* and *Tolo*), as have a number of private radio stations. (A poll conducted by the *Financial Times* in 2004 found

that some 60 percent of the Afghan population used radio as the primary source of news. There are approximately 50 privately owned radio stations.) In May 2005 the Karzai administration, facing criticism for using the national radio and television stations for public relations purposes, announced plans to privatize the stations. Meanwhile, it was reported that the Taliban had resumed sporadic broadcasts of *Voice of Sharia* from an undisclosed location. As of 2005, there were 10 Internet users and 2.8 personal computers per 1,000 inhabitants.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Said Tayeb JAWAD

**U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan:** William B. WOOD

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Zahir TANIN

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** ADB, ECO, IDB, Interpol, IOM, NAM, OIC, WCO

# ALGERIA

## DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

*al-Jumhuriyah al-Jazairiyah*  
*al-Dimuqratiyah al-Shabiyah*

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**Note:** According to preliminary results from the May 17, 2007, elections to the National People's Assembly, the governing coalition of the National Liberation Front (FLN), National Democratic Rally (RND), and the Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) easily retained a strong legislative majority with 249 seats (FLN, 136; RND, 61; MSP, 52). Opposition parties were led by the Workers' Party (26 seats), the Rally for Culture and Democracy (19), and the Algerian National Front (15). (The outlawed Islamic Salvation Front and several small legal parties had called for a boycott of the balloting, and turnout of only 35.5 percent was reported.) Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem and his cabinet announced their pro forma resignation on June 1, but President Bouteflika reappointed Belkhadem and most of the incumbent ministers on June 4.

### The Country

Located midway along the North African littoral and extending southward into the heart of the Sahara, Algeria is a Muslim country of Arab-Berber population, Islamic and French cultural traditions, and an economy in which the traditional importance of agriculture has been replaced by reliance on hydrocarbons, with petroleum and natural gas now accounting for more than 95 percent of exchange earnings. Women constitute only a small fraction of the paid labor force, concentrated in the service sector (particularly health care). The future role of women in government (and society as a whole) was one of the key issues separating the nation's Islamic fundamentalist movement from the dominant secularists in the 1990s.

For nearly two decades following independence Algeria was perceived by many as a model for Third World liberation movements: the socialist government attended to social welfare needs, while the economy grew rapidly as oil prices rose in the 1970s. Subsequently, declining oil revenues and poor economic management led to major setbacks.

Once nearly self-sufficient in food, the country became highly dependent on foreign imports. Other problems included 25 percent unemployment, high population growth (more than one-half of the



**Political Status:** Independent republic since July 3, 1962; one-party rule established by military coup July 5, 1965, and confirmed by constitution adopted November 19, 1976; multiparty system adopted through constitutional revision approved by national referendum on February 23, 1989; state of emergency declared for 12 months on February 9, 1992, by military-backed High Council of State and extended indefinitely on February 9, 1993; three-year transitional period declared by High Security Council effective January 31, 1994, as previously endorsed by National Dialog Conference; constitutional amendments approved by national referendum on November 28, 1996, in advance of return to elected civilian government via multiparty local and national legislative elections in 1997.

**Area:** 919,590 sq. mi. (2,381,741 sq. km.).

**Population:** 29,100,867 (1998C); 32,510,000 (2006E), excluding nonresident nationals (estimated at upwards of 1 million in 1980).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** EL DJAZAIR (Algiers, 1,532,000), Wahran (Oran, 724,000), Qacentina (Constantine, 475,000). In May 1981 the government ordered the “Arabizing” of certain place names that did not conform to “Algerian translations.”

**Official Language:** Arabic (French and Berber are also widely spoken. However, in December 1996

the National Transitional Council adopted legislation banning the use of French in the public sector as of July 5, 1998, with the exception that universities were given until July 5, 2000, to switch to the use of Arabic only. In the wake of unrest in Berber areas, the government announced in October 2001 that the Berber language—Tamazight—would be elevated to a “national” language.)

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (official rate November 2, 2007: 66.40 dinars = \$1US).

**President:** Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA (National Liberation Front—FLN); declared winner of controversial election of April 15, 1999, and sworn in for a five-year term on April 27 to succeed Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Liamine ZEROUAL (nonparty), who in September 1998 had announced his intention to resign prior to the scheduled completion of his term in November 2000; reelected (due to internal FLN disputes, as the candidate of the National Democratic Rally and the Movement for a Peaceful Society) on April 8, 2004, and sworn in for a second five-year term on April 19.

**Prime Minister:** (*See headnote.*) Abdelaziz BELKHADEM (National Liberation Front); appointed by the president on May 24, 2006, to succeed Ahmed OUYAHIA (National Democratic Rally), who had been dismissed the same day; formed new government on May 25, 2006.

population is under 20 years old), an external debt estimated at more than \$26 billion, a severe shortage of adequate housing, a widespread perception of corruption among government officials, and a spreading black market.

In the mid-1980s the government began to impose budget austerity while attempting to reduce state control of large industries and agricultural collectives, boost nonhydrocarbon production, and cultivate a free-market orientation. The pace of economic reform accelerated following an outbreak of domestic unrest in late 1988, which also precipitated the launching of what was initially considered one of the continent’s “boldest democratic experiments.” Although political liberalization was

seriously compromised during the 1990s by confrontation with the fundamentalists, the government persevered with its new economic policies, thereby gaining partial rescheduling of the external debt and additional credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Meanwhile, as mandated by the IMF, privatization accelerated, the collateral loss of some 400,000 jobs in the public sector contributing to growing popular discontent with fiscal policy. Burgeoning terrorist activity in the second half of the 1990s impaired foreign investment in a number of sectors, but it did not affect activity in the oil and gas fields in the southern desert, where oil reserves were estimated at about 16 billion barrels. Foreign investors were

described in 2000 as exhibiting renewed interest in response to the new government's free-market orientation and efforts to negotiate a settlement with antigovernment militants.

GDP growth of more than 5 percent was reported for 2004 and 2005, supported primarily by high oil and gas prices. Although growth slowed to 3 percent in 2006, a significant budget surplus continued to permit large-scale spending increases designed to create jobs (official unemployment remained at more than 17 percent, with some observers suggesting the actual level could be twice that figure) and improve the housing and transportation sectors. Efforts were also launched to attract additional foreign investment to the non-hydrocarbon sector, although the IMF cautioned that substantial reform and modernization were still required in the banking system. International financial institutions also urged the government to accelerate its privatization program, described as having stalled recently in the wake of the budget surpluses and a lingering fondness among the population (as well as a number of government leaders) for public benefits associated with the socialist past. Meanwhile, Algeria signed an association agreement with the European Union in September 2005 and subsequently intensified its efforts to gain membership in the World Trade Organization.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Conquered by France in the 1830s and formally annexed by that country in 1842, Algeria achieved independence as the result of a nationalist guerrilla struggle that broke out in 1954 and yielded eventual French withdrawal on July 3, 1962. The eight-year war of liberation, led by the indigenous National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale*—FLN), caused the death of some 250,000 Algerians, the wounding of 500,000, and the uprooting of nearly 2 million others, as well as the emigration of some 1 million French settlers. The new Algerian regime was handicapped by deep divisions within the victorious FLN, par-

ticularly between commanders of the revolutionary army and a predominantly civilian political leadership headed by Ahmed BEN BELLA, who formed Algeria's first regular government and was elected to a five-year presidential term in September 1963. Despite his national popularity, Ben Bella exhibited an extravagant and flamboyant style that antagonized the army leadership, and he was deposed in June 1965 by a military coup under Col. Houari BOUMEDIENNE, who assumed power as president of the National Council of the Algerian Revolution.

During 1976 the Algerian people participated in three major referenda. The first, on June 27, yielded overwhelming approval of a National Charter that committed the nation to the building of a socialist society, designated Islam as the state religion, defined basic rights of citizenship, singled out the FLN as the "leading force in society," and stipulated that party and government cadres could not engage in "lucrative activities" other than those afforded by their primary employment. The second referendum, on November 17, approved a new constitution that, while recognizing the National Charter as "the fundamental source of the nation's policies and of its laws," assigned sweeping powers to the presidency. The third referendum, on December 10, reconfirmed Colonel Boumedienne as the nation's president by an official majority of 99.38 percent. Two months later, in the first legislative election since 1964, a unicameral National People's Assembly was established on the basis of a candidate list presented by the FLN.

President Boumedienne died on December 27, 1978, and he was immediately succeeded by assembly president Rabah BITAT, who was legally ineligible to serve as chief executive for more than a 45-day period. Following a national election on February 7, 1979, Bitat yielded the office to Col. Chadli BENDJEDID, who had emerged in January as the FLN presidential designee during an unprecedented six-day meeting of a sharply divided party congress.

At a June 1980 FLN congress, President Bendjedid was given authority to select members of the

party's Political Bureau, and on July 15 he revived the military General Staff, which had been suppressed by his predecessor after a 1967 coup attempt by Col. Tahir ZBIRI. As a further indication that he had consolidated his control of state and party, Bendjedid on October 30 pardoned the exiled Zbiri and freed former president Ben Bella from house detention. (The latter had been released from 14 years' imprisonment in July 1979.)

Bendjedid was unopposed in his reelection bid of January 12, 1984, and on January 22 he appointed Abdelhamid BRAHIMI to succeed Col. Mohamed Ben Ahmed ABDELGHANI as prime minister. Thereafter, the regime was buffeted by deteriorating economic conditions, growing militancy among Islamic fundamentalists and students, and tension within the government, the FLN, and the army over proposed economic and political liberalization. The political infighting limited the effectiveness of reform efforts, critics charging that many of those entrenched in positions of power were reluctant to surrender economic and social privileges.

The pent-up discontent erupted into rioting in Algiers in early October 1988 and quickly spread to other cities, shattering Algeria's reputation as an "oasis of stability" in an otherwise turbulent region. Upwards of 500 persons died when the armed forces opened fire on demonstrators in the capital, while more than 3,000 were arrested. President Bendjedid thereupon adopted a conciliatory attitude, converting what could have been a challenge to his authority into a mandate for sweeping economic and political change. In a referendum on November 3, voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment reducing the FLN's political dominance by assigning greater responsibility to the prime minister and making him accountable to the assembly. Two days later, Bendjedid appointed Kasdi MERBAH, described as a "determined" proponent of economic liberalization, as the new ministerial leader, and on November 9 Merbah announced a new cabinet from which a majority of the previous incumbents were excluded. Collaterally, the president instituted leadership changes in the military and the FLN, the latter

agreeing late in the month to open future legislative elections to non-FLN candidates. On December 22 Bendjedid was reelected to a third five-year term, securing a reported 81 percent endorsement as the sole presidential candidate.

The FLN's status was eroded further by additional constitutional changes in February 1989 that provided, among other things, for multiparty activity (see Constitution and government, below). Seven months later, arguing that economic reforms were not being implemented quickly enough, Bendjedid named Mouloud HAMROUCHE, a longtime political ally, to succeed Merbah as prime minister.

A multiparty format was introduced for the first time in elections for municipal and provincial councils on June 12, 1990. Contrary to expectations, the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*—FIS), the country's leading Islamic fundamentalist organization, obtained 53 percent of the popular vote and a majority of the 15,000 seats being contested. Responding to demands from the FIS and other opposition parties, President Bendjedid announced in April 1991 that two-stage national legislative elections, originally scheduled for 1992, would be advanced to June 27 and July 18. However, the FIS called a general strike on May 25 to demand additional electoral law changes, the immediate application of sharia (Islamic religious law), the resignation of Bendjedid, and scheduling of new presidential elections. Clashes in the capital between fundamentalists and police intensified in early June, leaving at least seven dead, and on June 5 Bendjedid declared a state of emergency, ordered the army to restore order, and postponed the legislative poll. He also called upon the foreign minister, Sid Ahmed GHOZALI, to form a new government.

On June 18, 1991, Ghazali, described as a "technocrat" committed to economic and political reform, announced his cabinet (the first since independence not to be dominated by FLN leaders) and pledged "free and clean" parliamentary elections by the end of the year. The schism between the government and the fundamentalists remained unbridged, however, and top FIS leaders and hundreds



of their followers were arrested when new violence broke out in Algiers in early July.

Following a period of relative calm, the state of emergency was lifted on September 29, 1991, and two-round elections to a 430-seat assembly were scheduled for December 26, 1991, and January 16, 1992. Again testifying to the remarkable surge in fundamentalist influence, FIS candidates won 188 seats outright in the first round (compared to 25 for the Berber-based Socialist Forces Front [*Front des Forces Socialistes*—FFS] and only 15 for the FLN). With the FIS poised to achieve a substantial majority (possibly even the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional revision), Bendjedid initiated talks with the fundamentalists regarding a power-sharing arrangement.

On January 11, 1992, Bendjedid, apparently under pressure from military leaders upset with his accommodation of the FIS, submitted his resignation. The High Security Council (*Haute Conseil de Sécurité*—HCS), composed of Ghazali and other top officials, including three senior military leaders, announced that it had assumed control to preserve public order and protect national security. (According to the constitution, the assembly president was mandated to assume interim presidential duties, but the assembly had been dissolved by a secret presidential decree on January 4. Although the president of the Constitutional Council was next in the line of temporary succession, the council deferred to the HCS upon Bendjedid's resignation, reportedly ruling that "prevailing conditions" were not covered by the basic law.)

On January 12, 1992, the HCS canceled the second stage of the legislative election and nullified the results of the first. Two days later it announced that it had appointed a five-man High Council of State (*Haute Conseil d'État*—HCE) to serve as an interim collegial presidency. Mohamed BOUDIAF, vice president of the country's wartime provisional government, was invited to return from 28 years of exile in Morocco to assume the chair of the new body.

Following its "soft-gloved coup" in early 1992, the military launched what was described as an "all-

out war" against the fundamentalist movement, arresting numerous FIS leaders (including moderates who had been counseling against violent confrontation) in addition to some 500 other FIS members. Bloody demonstrations throughout Algeria erupted shortly thereafter, and on February 9 the HCE declared a new 12-month state of emergency. With most constitutional rights effectively suspended by the declaration, the government intensified its anti-FIS campaign, while militant fundamentalists initiated guerrilla activity against police and security forces. The unrest continued following Ghazali's reappointment on February 23, even relatively moderate fundamentalists being driven underground by a March decision of the Algerian courts, acting on an HCE petition, to ban the FIS as a legal party. Meanwhile, the nonfundamentalist population appeared to accept the military intervention with relief, since it feared political, legal, and social constraints should the FIS come to power.

HCE Chair Boudiaf was assassinated on June 29, 1992, while addressing a rally in the eastern city of Annaba. Official investigators subsequently concluded there was a broad conspiracy behind the attack without being able to identify those involved. Suspects ranged from militant fundamentalists to members of the "power elite" who may have felt threatened by Boudiaf's anticorruption efforts. (Only one person was arrested in connection with the incident—a member of the presidential guard who was convicted in June 1995 following a trial that shed little light on his motives or possible coconspirators.) On July 2 the HCS named Ali KAFI, the secretary general of the National Organization of Holy Warriors (a group of veterans from the war of independence) as Boudiaf's successor. Prime Minister Ghazali, blaming corrupt government officials and radical fundamentalists equally for the country's disorder, resigned on July 8. He was replaced on the same day by Belaid ABDESSELAM, longtime industry and energy minister under former president Boumedienne.

On February 9, 1993, the HCE extended the state of emergency indefinitely, declaring that steps toward restoration of an elected civilian government

would be taken only after successful completion of the “antiterrorist” crackdown. Four months later it presented a blueprint for constitutional change, promising a democratic Muslim state and a free-market economy. In keeping with the new economic thrust, Prime Minister Abdesselam, viewed as strongly oriented towards state control of heavy industry, was replaced on August 21 by Redha MALEK, an advocate of privatization and other forms of liberalization geared to winning debt rescheduling from international creditors.

In October 1993 the HCE appointed an eight-member Committee for National Dialog to negotiate an agreement among the legal political parties, labor organizations, and trade and professional groups on the nation’s political future. However, talks were constrained by a mounting conviction among party leaders that full-scale civil war loomed unless the FIS was brought into the negotiations, a step the regime refused to accept. Consequently, the National Dialog Conference held in Algiers in January 1994 was boycotted by nearly all the political parties, and its influence was extremely limited. The conference had been expected to name a president to succeed the HCE but failed to do so, reportedly because the military would not grant sufficient authority to a civilian leader. Therefore, on January 27 the HCS announced the appointment of Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Liamine ZEROUAL as president, his inauguration four days later coinciding with the dissolution of the HCE. Zeroual, who retained his former position as defense minister, was authorized to govern (in conjunction with the HCS) for a three-year transitional period, initial reports indicating he would seek a settlement with the FIS.

With debt rescheduling negotiations at a critical juncture, President Zeroual reappointed Prime Minister Malek on January 31, 1994, despite Malek’s hard line regarding the FIS. Malek resigned on April 11, following the announcement of preliminary agreement with the IMF; he was replaced by Mokdad SIFI, who had held a number of ministerial posts recently. On April 15 Sifi announced the formation of a new government, described as largely comprising “technocrats” who

would concentrate on economic recovery while leaving political and security issues to the president and the HCS. One month later the military-dominated regime set up an appointive National Transitional Council to act in a quasi-legislative capacity prior to elections tentatively scheduled for 1997. However, most of the leading parties boycotted the body, severely undercutting its claim to legitimacy.

A number of groups (including, most significantly, the FIS, FLN, and FFS) drafted a proposed national reconciliation pact in Rome in late 1994 and early 1995. The plan called for a cessation of antigovernment violence, the release of fundamentalist detainees, recognition of the FIS, and the convening of a national conference to establish a transitional government pending new national elections. Despite strong international endorsement of the proposal, the government quickly rejected it on the ground that no “credible” truce could be achieved. Further illustrating the sway held by the military’s hard-liners, security forces subsequently launched a massive campaign against the Armed Islamic Group (*Groupe Islamique Armé*—GIA) and other militant factions that had claimed responsibility for a series of bombings and assassinations. At the same time, the Zeroual administration reportedly continued negotiations with the FIS in the hope that the Front’s supporters could be reintegrated into normal political processes. However, the talks collapsed in mid-1995, and the regime subsequently began to implement its own schedule for a gradual return to civilian government.

The first stage of the transition was a presidential election conducted on November 16, 1995, in which Zeroual, running as an independent but with the support of the military, was elected to a five-year term with 61 percent of the vote. His closest competitor, Sheikh Mahfoud NAHNAH of the moderate fundamentalist *Hamas* Party, secured 25 percent of the vote, followed by Saïd SAADI of the Berber Rally for Culture and Democracy (*Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*—RCD), with 9 percent, and Nouredine BOUKROUH of the Algerian Renewal Party (*Parti pour le Renouveau de l’Algérie*—PRA), with 4 percent. President

Zeroual's resounding first-round victory was initially seen as easing the "sense of crisis" somewhat, much of the electorate having apparently endorsed his continued hard line toward the militants. Zeroual, whose platform contained strong anticorruption language, was also reportedly perceived as a buffer, to a certain extent, against complete domination of political affairs by military leaders.

As anticipated, Prime Minister Sifi submitted his resignation following the successful completion of the election, and on December 31, 1995, President Zeroual appointed Ahmed OUYAHIA, former director of the president's office, to succeed Sifi. The government that was announced on January 5, 1996, included several members from *Hamas* and the PRA, seemingly as a "reward" for their participation in the presidential poll, which had been boycotted by several major legal parties (including the FLN and the FFS) in protest over the lack of an agreement with the FIS.

In mid-1996 President Zeroual proposed a number of constitutional amendments granting sweeping new powers to the president and banning political parties based on religion (see Constitution and government, below). Some 38 parties and organizations endorsed the proposals, although the absence of several major legal groupings (including the FFS and RCD) and, of course, the FIS (which would have been precluded from any eventual legalization under the revisions) undercut the impact of the accord. The government subsequently reported that 85 percent of those voting in a national referendum on November 28 had supported the changes in the basic law. However, opposition leaders and some international observers questioned those results and described the government's claim of an 80 percent vote turnout as vastly inflated.

A new wave of antiregime attacks broke out shortly after the constitutional referendum of November 1996 and reached an unprecedented scale in July–August, despite (or perhaps because of) recent national legislative balloting and other progress toward full return to elected civilian government. Nevertheless, the administration pro-

ceeded with its timetable in 1997. New assembly elections were held on June 5, the balloting being dominated by the recently established progovernment National Democratic Rally (*Rassemblement National et Démocratique*—RND), with 156 seats, followed by the Movement for a Peaceful Society (*Mouvement pour une Société Paisible*—MSP, as *Hamas* had been renamed) with 69 seats, and the FLN with 62. After several weeks of reportedly intense negotiations, the MSP and the FLN agreed to join a new RND-led coalition government, which was announced on June 25 under the continued direction of Prime Minister Ouyahia. The RND also secured most of the seats in municipal elections conducted on October 23, although some were allocated to other parties after a judicial review of allegations of widespread fraud made by a number of groups, including the MSP and the FLN. The political transition was completed on December 25, 1997, with indirect elections to the Council of the Nation (the new upper house in the legislature), the RND winning 80 of the 96 contested seats. By that time, however, despite the progress on the institutional front, the wave of domestic violence had reached an unprecedented level.

As of early 1998 the government reported that about 26,000 people had died during the six-year insurgency, although other observers estimated the figure to be as high as 80,000. A special UN commission that visited Algeria at midyear placed the blame for the violence squarely on "Islamic terrorists" and argued that the Zeroual regime deserved international and domestic support. However, human rights organizations strongly criticized the UN report for inadequately addressing the harsh retaliatory measures on the part of government security forces. In that context, it appeared that differences of opinion had emerged within the military and political elite over how to proceed vis-à-vis the fundamentalists. Hard-liners subsequently appeared to continue to dominate that debate, possibly contributing to the surprise announcement in September by Zeroual (seen as having come to favor a dialogue with moderate Islamist leaders) that he would leave office prior to the completion of his term.

The April 15, 1999, presidential election proved to be highly controversial, as six of the seven candidates quit the race shortly before the balloting out of conviction that the poll had been rigged in favor of the military's preferred candidate, Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, who had served as foreign minister in the 1960s and 1970s but had been on the political sidelines for 20 years. Despite the opposition's demand for a postponement, the election proceeded as scheduled, Bouteflika being credited with 74 percent of the vote.

Following surprisingly long negotiations, President Bouteflika named Ahmed BENBITOUR, a former foreign minister who was described as a "close friend" of the president's, as prime minister on December 23, 1999. On the following day, Benbitour formed a new government that included seven parties, all of whom remained in the cabinet named by Ali BENFLIS after he replaced Benbitour in late August 2000. However, the RCD left the coalition in May 2001 as the result of severe unrest within the Berber community (see Current issues, below).

The FLN dominated the May 30, 2002, legislative balloting, securing 199 seats, while the RND declined to 47. Prime Minister Benflis was reappointed on June 1, and on June 17 he formed a new government comprising FLN, RND, and MSP ministers.

Further successes by the FLN in the October 2002 assembly elections appeared to kindle presidential aspirations in Benflis, who was dismissed by President Bouteflika on May 5, 2003; Ahmed Ouyahia returned to the prime ministerial post he had held from 1995 to 1998. In September 2003 Bouteflika also dismissed several pro-Benflis cabinet ministers, exacerbating tensions that subsequently split the FLN into two camps (see FLN, below, for details). The FLN dispute resulted in confusing circumstances under which Bouteflika was reelected (with 85 percent of the vote) on April 8, 2004, as the candidate of the RND and MSP, while Benflis secured only 6.4 percent of the vote as the nominal FLN candidate.

The president dismissed Prime Minister Ouyahia on May 24, 2006, and replaced him with

Abdelaziz BELKHADEM, the secretary general of the FLN. The cabinet appointed by Belkhadem the next day was largely unchanged.

### *Constitution and Government*

The 1976 constitution established a single-party state with the FLN as its "vanguard force." Executive powers were concentrated in the president, who was designated president of the High Security Council and of the Supreme Court, as well as commander in chief of the armed forces. He was empowered to appoint one or more vice presidents and, under a 1979 constitutional amendment that reduced his term of office from six to five years, was obligated to name a prime minister. He also named an 11-member High Islamic Council selected from among the country's "religious personalities." The 1976 document also stipulated that members of the National People's Assembly would be nominated by the FLN and established a judicial system headed by a Supreme Court, to which all lower magistrates were answerable.

In late 1983, as part of a decentralization move, the number of administrative departments (*wilayaat*) was increased from 31 to 48, each continuing to be subdivided into districts (*dairaai*) and communes. At both the *wilaya* and communal (town) levels there were provisions for popular assemblies, with an appointed governor (*wali*) assigned to each *wilaya*. The various administrative units were linked vertically to the minister of the interior, with party organization paralleling the administrative hierarchy.

On January 16, 1986, a referendum approved a new National Charter that, while maintaining allegiance to socialism and Islam, accorded President Bendjedid greater leeway in his approach to social and economic problems, particularly in regard to partial privatization of the "inefficient" public sector. Additional constitutional changes were approved by referendum on November 3, 1988. The revisions upgraded the prime minister's position, declaring him to be the "head of government" and making him directly responsible to the assembly. In effect, the change transferred some of the power

previously exercised by the FLN to the assembly, particularly in light of a decision later in the month to permit non-FLN candidates in future elections. The role of the FLN was further attenuated by reference to the president as the “embodiment of the unity of the nation” rather than “of the unity of the party and the state.”

Another national referendum on February 23, 1989, provided for even more drastic reform. It eliminated all mention of socialism, guaranteed the fundamental rights “of man and of the citizen” as opposed to the rights of “the people,” excised reference to the military’s political role, and imposed stricter separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. In addition, the FLN lost its “vanguard” status with the authorization of additional “associations of a political nature.” Continuing the transfer to a multiparty system, the assembly on July 2 established criteria for legal party status (see Political Parties and Groups, below), and on July 19 it adopted a new electoral law governing political campaigns. The new code established multimember districts for local and national elections, with any party receiving more than 50 percent of the votes to be awarded all the seats in each. However, reacting to complaints from newly formed opposition parties, the government in March 1990 approved a system of proportional representation for the June municipal elections. After intense debate, the electoral law was further changed in 1991 to provide for two-round balloting in single-member districts in future assembly elections.

In announcing a one-year state of emergency in February 1992, the newly formed High Council of State suspended a number of key constitutional provisions, and over the next ten months it ordered the dissolution of nearly 800 municipal assemblies controlled by the FIS since the 1990 elections. In furtherance of its antifundamentalist campaign, the High Council of State in October also created three secret courts in which persons over 16 years of age charged with “subversion” or “terrorism” could be sentenced without the right of appeal. The state of emergency was extended indefinitely in February 1993, a transitional government being named

a year later for a three-year period leading to proposed multiparty elections and a return to civilian leadership.

The electoral code was amended in 1995 to provide for multicandidate presidential elections, in two rounds if no candidate received a majority in the first round. Potential candidates were required to obtain the signatures of 75,000 voters to be placed on the ballot, and anyone married to a foreigner was precluded from running.

In connection with the planned transition to civilian government, the Zeroual administration in the spring of 1996 proposed a number of constitutional amendments, which were approved by national referendum on November 28. Among other things, the amendments banned political parties from referencing religious or ethnic “identities,” while codifying Islam as the state religion and Arabic as the official national language. The president was given authority to govern by decree in certain circumstances and to appoint one-third of the members of a new upper house in the Parliament—the Council of Nations. That second provision was viewed as one of the most significant aspects of the new charter because it gave the president effective blocking power on legislation. (New laws require the approval of three-quarters of the Council of Nations.) A Constitutional Council was established in April 1998, while a juridical State Council was installed two months later.

### *Foreign Relations*

Algerian foreign relations have gone through a series of changes that date back to the preindependence period, formal contacts with many countries having been initiated by the provisional government created in September 1958. Foreign policy in the immediate postindependence period was dominated by President Ben Bella’s anti-imperialist ideology. The period immediately following the 1965 coup was essentially an interregnum, with President Boumedienne concentrating his efforts on internal affairs. Following the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, Boumedienne became much more active in foreign policy, with a shift in

interest from Africa and the Third World to a more concentrated focus on Arab affairs. After the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict, the theme of "Third World liberation" reemerged, reflecting a conviction that Algeria should be in the forefront of the Non-aligned Movement. Subsequently, Algeria joined with Libya, Syria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization to form the so-called "Steadfastness Front" in opposition to Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement. However, in conjunction with a softening Arab posture toward Egypt, Algiers resumed full diplomatic relations with Cairo in November 1988.

A major controversy erupted following division of the former Spanish Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania in early 1976. In February the Algerian-supported Polisario Front (see under Morocco: Disputed Territory) announced the formation of a Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in the Western Sahara that was formally recognized by Algeria on March 6; subsequently, a majority of other nonaligned states accorded the SADR similar recognition. However, the issue split the Organization of African Unity (OAU), with Morocco withdrawing from the grouping in 1984 in protest over the seating of an SADR delegation. Concurrently, relations between Algeria and Morocco deteriorated further, with President Bendjedid pledging full support for Mauritania's "territorial integrity" and Morocco referring to the Polisarios as "Algerian mercenaries." Relations improved significantly in late 1987, however, and in May 1988 Rabat and Algiers announced the restoration of formal ties, jointly expressing support for settlement of the Western Saharan problem through a self-determination referendum. Subsequent progress in Morocco-Polisario negotiations permitted Algiers to concentrate on a long-standing foreign policy goal: the promotion of economic, social, and political unity among Maghrebian states. (See separate section on Arab Maghreb Union).

Relations with Libya worsened as a result of Libya's expulsion of Tunisian workers in the summer of 1985. Algiers felt obliged, however, to defend the Qadhafi regime in the events leading up to

the U.S. attacks on Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986. Although Algeria resisted federation with its eastern neighbor (preferring to concentrate on more inclusive Maghrebian unity), agreement was reached in July 1988 for the free movement of people between the two countries and the launching of bilateral economic projects.

Ties with France, Algeria's leading trade partner, were temporarily strained by legislation in July 1986 making visas mandatory for all North Africans seeking entry into the former metropole; however, swift action by French authorities against Algerian opposition activists later in the year led to an improvement in relations. Earlier, in April 1985, President Bendjedid became the first Algerian head of state since independence to visit Washington, utilizing the occasion to secure Algeria's removal from a list of countries prohibited from purchasing U.S. weapons.

The victories of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Algeria's 1990 and 1991 elections were characterized as generating "shock waves throughout northern Africa." The governments of Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia (all struggling to contain fundamentalist influence) were reported to be greatly relieved by the military takeover in January 1992 and supportive of Algiers' anti-FIS campaign. The government/fundamentalist schism also led in March 1993 to the severing of ties with Iran, which the administration accused of supporting local terrorist activity. France, concerned over the possible influx of refugees should a fundamentalist government be established in Algiers, also supported the military regime.

President Bouteflika met with U.S. President George W. Bush in Washington in June 2001, their talks centering on "energy issues" rather than, as some reformists had hoped, democratization or good governance. Bouteflika returned to the United States late in the year to pledge Algeria's support for Washington's recently launched war on terrorism. Among other things, the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States appeared to shine a more positive light, in the minds of many international observers, on the hard line adopted by the Algerian regime toward militant

fundamentalism since 1992. In consonance with its renewed U.S. ties, the Algerian government refused in 2003 to permit domestic protests against U.S. actions in Iraq.

In March 2003 French President Jacques Chirac made the first formal state visit by a French leader to Algeria since the war of independence. The Algerian population warmly greeted Chirac, who pledged further “reconciliation” initiatives. (Relations with France deteriorated in early 2005 when the French parliament endorsed a bill that recognized the “positive role” that colonization had played in Algeria. President Bouteflika subsequently demanded that France formally apologize for its actions in Algeria, and a proposed French/Algerian “friendship treaty” remained unsigned as of 2007.) Morocco also subsequently was reported to be seeking improved ties with Algeria, but the Algerian government remained committed to a self-determination referendum in the Western Sahara. Consequently, the border between Algeria and Morocco remained closed as of 2007, although interest in negotiations on the issue appeared to have intensified.

In March 2006 Russia agreed to write off Algeria’s debt in return for Algeria’s commitment to buy Russian military equipment in the future. The two countries also subsequently reached a natural gas agreement, one journalist suggesting that Algeria was gaining “confidence” in “diversifying its commercial interests” away from France. Possibly in a similar vein, Algeria in 2007 was reportedly seeking admission to the anglophone Commonwealth.

### *Current Issues*

Facing an extremely difficult task in convincing the Algerian populace and the international community of the legitimacy of the April 1999 presidential poll, President Bouteflika moved quickly to establish his leadership credentials by, among other things, announcing plans for a “civil concord,” which proposed amnesty for most fundamentalist militants in return for their permanent renunciation of violence and surrender of arms.

The pact easily secured legislative approval in the summer and was endorsed by 98 percent of those voting in a national referendum on September 16. By the end of the cut-off date for the amnesty in mid-January 2000, upwards of 6,000 guerrillas had reportedly accepted the government’s offer. However, most of them came from the FIS-affiliated Islamic Salvation Army, which had already been honoring a cease-fire since 1997. Significantly, the GIA rejected the peace plan, and deadly attacks and counterattacks continued on a nearly daily basis throughout the summer of 2000.

Despite the partial success of the civil concord, some 2,700 deaths were reported in 2000 from the ongoing conflict, and an upsurge of antigovernment violence was reported in December. In early 2001 President Bouteflika promised an “iron fist” in dealing with the remaining militants. However, the government faced a new crisis in April when riots broke out within the Berber population in the Kabylie region after a young man died under inadequately explained circumstances while in police custody. Government forces responded with a harsh crackdown, and some 1 million demonstrators reportedly participated in the antiregime protests that ensued in the Kabylie region and other areas, including Algiers. More than 60 people were killed and 2,000 injured in the clashes, which, fueled by economic malaise and long-standing concern over the authoritarian rule of what one journalist described as the “overwhelming power of an opaque military leadership,” continued into 2002, prompting the leading Berber parties (the FFS and the RCD) to boycott the national legislative poll on May 30.

Deadly bomb attacks continued in 2003, mostly the work of the GIA offshoot called the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*—GSPC). However, the level of violence was greatly reduced from its height earlier in the decade (as one reporter put it, dozens killed per month rather than dozens per day). Most observers credited President Bouteflika’s resounding reelection in April 2004 to popular appreciation of the improved security situation, along with recent economic advances and Algeria’s

renewed international status in connection with the U.S.-led war on terrorism.

A January 2005 accord between the government and Berber representatives called for enhanced economic support for Berber areas and appeared to reduce unrest within the Berber community. Even more significant was a national referendum on September 29 that overwhelmingly endorsed the government's proposed national charter for peace and reconciliation. The charter called for amnesty for most of the Islamic militants involved in the civil war that had started in 1991, although leaders of the "insurrection" were barred from future political activity. Collaterally, the charter praised the role of the army in the conflict, effectively eliminating any possibility that excesses on the part of the security forces would be investigated. (It was estimated that 6,000–20,000 Algerians had "disappeared" as the result of the army's anti-insurgency measures.) Most major political parties supported the charter, and President Bouteflika staked his political future on its passage. The government reported a 97 percent yes vote and an 80 percent turnout, although the latter figure was broadly discounted by opponents of the initiative as well as some independent analysts. (It was noted that turnout in Berber regions appeared to be less than 20 percent.) Despite protests over the perceived heavy-handedness of the government in stifling effective opposition to the charter, the consensus appeared to be that the vote was a clear indication that the majority of Algerians were prepared to put the matter behind them. (It was estimated that the conflict had cost more than \$30 billion and left 150,000–200,000 people dead.) However, the state of emergency remained in effect "until terrorism is completely defeated."

After several months of debate, the legislature approved the details of the peace and reconciliation charter in February 2006, and in March several thousand "Islamist" prisoners were released. A \$400-million fund was established to provide compensation to the civil war's victims, although they were precluded from filing other legal claims against the government. Critics of the plan denounced it for "sheltering" the military and security

forces and demanded a more intensive, "South African-style" truth and reconciliation approach under which the facts of individual cases would be revealed prior to the issuance of pardons.

The government offered remaining militants six months to accept the amnesty offer, but the GSPC, now formally aligned with al-Qaida (see Political Parties and Groups, below), stepped up its attacks in late 2006–early 2007, targeting Western business interests as well as Algerian police. It was unclear how the uptick in violence would affect the May 2007 legislative balloting, although it was widely acknowledged that President Bouteflika remained popular in the nonmilitant sectors of society. (*See headnote.*) In fact, constitutional amendments increasing presidential authority were expected to be presented for a national referendum later in the year, possibly after the October local elections. One anticipated proposed change would permit Bouteflika to run for a third term in 2009. (That issue had apparently been a factor in Bouteflika's decision to install his close associate Abdelaziz Belkhadem as prime minister in May 2006, outgoing prime minister Ouyahia being seen as an opponent of plans to eliminate the two-term presidential limit.)

## Political Parties and Groups

From independence until 1989 the National Liberation Front was the only authorized political grouping, Algeria having been formally designated as a one-party state. Under constitutional changes approved in 1989, however, Algerians were permitted to form "associations of a political nature" as long as they did not "threaten the basic interests of the state" and were not "created exclusively on the basis of religion, language, region, sex, race, or profession." To operate legally, parties were also required to obtain government permits. Subsequently, constitutional amendment of November 1996 and electoral law revision of February 1997 further restricted parties from referencing religion, ethnicity, or race. A number of existing groups were deregistered for failure to adapt to the changes by the deadline of April 1997. In addition, a number



of other parties were told to disband in May 1998, either for failing to have the minimum of 2,500 members or for violating other new regulations. Twenty-three parties participated in the 2002 legislative balloting.

### *Government Parties (as of May 1, 2007)*

**National Liberation Front** (*Front de Libération Nationale*—FLN). Founded in November 1954 and dedicated to socialism, nonalignment, and pan-Arabism, the FLN led the eight-year war of independence against France. Although weakened by factionalism and disagreement over the role of the army in politics, the Front subsequently assumed complete control of Algerian political and governmental affairs.

By the late 1980s a cleavage was apparent within the FLN between an “old guard,” dedicated to the maintenance of strict socialist policies, and a group, led by President Bendjedid, favoring political and economic liberalization. The reformers having manifestly gained the ascendancy, Mohamed Cherif MESSAADIA, the Front’s leading socialist ideologue, was dismissed from the ruling Politburo in early November 1988. Subsequently, during the party congress in Algiers November 27–28, the Politburo itself was abolished, and the office of secretary general was dissociated from that of state president. (Bendjedid, however, was named to the newly created post of FLN president.) The delegates also voted to democratize the filling of FLN organs, approved the chief executive’s proposals for economic reform, and nominated Bendjedid as sole candidate for a third presidential term. Although not specifically empowered by the congress to do so, the Central Committee in June 1989 endorsed the creation of a multiparty system, some continued opposition to Bendjedid’s political and economic reforms notwithstanding.

Following the FLN’s poor showing (about 34 percent of the popular vote) in the June 1990 municipal elections, a number of government officials were dismissed from the Politburo amid intense debate over how to check the rapid erosion of the Front’s influence. In late June 1991 Bend-

jedid resigned as FLN president, and several other members of his administration relinquished their party posts as part of the government’s effort to distance itself from FLN control. However, Abdelhamid MEHRI, Bendjedid’s brother-in-law and close associate, was subsequently reelected FLN secretary-general.

Further illustrating the rapid decline in its electoral potency, the FLN won only 15 seats on the basis of a 24 percent vote share in the December 1991 first-round legislative poll. The party was subsequently reported to be divided over Bendjedid’s resignation as president of the republic and the assumption of power by the High Security Council. Subsequently, however, the FLN Central Committee announced it would support the High Council of State, assuming adherence to that council’s pledge to return the nation to a democratic process.

By late 1994 the FLN was firmly in the opposition camp, its leaders joining with those of the FIS, FFS, and other parties in negotiating a proposed plan for a return to civilian government. At the urging of Secretary General Mehri, the FLN formally endorsed a boycott of the 1995 presidential election, although it appeared that many party members voted anyway, a large percentage of their support reportedly going to President Zeroual. Mehri was subsequently dismissed as secretary general in January 1996 by the FLN Central Committee, and his successor, Boualem BENHAMOUDA, quickly distanced the FLN from the FIS and other antiregime groupings.

The 1995 electoral boycott having been widely acknowledged as a mistake, the FLN participated full force in the three 1997 elections and accepted junior partner status in the RND-led coalition government formed in June. However, despite the solidly proadministration stance of the FLN leaders, it was reported that a “reformist” faction, led by former prime minister Mouloud Hamrouche, continued to promote, among other things, a negotiated settlement with the FIS.

The 1998 FLN congress reelected Secretary General Benhamouda, thereby underlining the party’s return to a “conservative tendency.” The FLN nominated military-backed Abdelaziz Boute-

flika as its official candidate for the April 1999 presidential election, although a segment of the party supported Hamrouche, who ran as an independent and subsequently indicated his intention to form a new party. Benhamouda, viewed as a longstanding “rival” to Bouteflika, resigned as secretary general in September 2001; the post was later filled by Prime Minister Ali Benflis.

Following the resurgence of the FLN in the May 2002 assembly balloting (199 seats [to lead all parties] on a 35 percent vote share) and the October 2002 municipal elections, Benflis was reelected as FLN secretary general at a July 2003 congress, which also installed a pro-Benflis Central Committee. By that time it was clear that Benflis (who had been dismissed as prime minister in April 2003) planned to run for president in 2004, thereby causing a rupture in the FLN between his supporters and those of President Bouteflika. The FLN convention in December 2003 selected Benflis as the party’s standard-bearer, but an Algerian court (apparently under pressure from the Bouteflika administration) “annulled” that nomination and ordered FLN funds frozen. After Benflis secured only 8 percent of the vote in the April 2004 balloting, he resigned as FLN secretary general. At a party congress in February 2005, Bouteflika was named “honorary president” of the party, his supporters having clearly regained party control.

In addition, Abdelaziz Belkhadem, described as close to Bouteflika and a potential link to the moderate Islamic movement, was reelected as secretary general. Belkhadem was named prime minister in May 2006.

*Leaders:* Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA (President of the Republic), Abdelaziz BELKHADEM (Prime Minister and Secretary General).

**National Democratic Rally** (*Rassemblement National et Démocratique*—RND). Launched in February 1997 in support of the policies of President Zeroual, the RND dominated the subsequent assembly, municipal, and Council of the Nation balloting, in part due to substantial financing and other assistance from sitting government officials, many of whom ran for office under the RND

banner. Formally committed to pluralism, a “modern” economy (including emphasis on privatization), and “social justice,” the RND was widely viewed primarily as a vehicle for entrenched authority to participate in an expanding democratic process without facing a genuine threat to its hold on power.

A serious split subsequently developed in the party over whom to support in the April 1999 presidential balloting. Consequently, Tahar BENBAIBECHE, who had complained that military leaders had been inappropriately pressuring the RND to back Abdelaziz Bouteflika, was dismissed as secretary general in January 1999 and replaced by Ahmed Ouyahia, who had recently resigned as prime minister. Ouyahia quickly announced that Bouteflika, the official candidate of the FLN, enjoyed the support of most of the RND.

By early 2002 the RND was described as having failed to attract as much popular support as originally expected, apparently because of the party’s ongoing ties to the military. The RND’s representation in the National People’s Assembly fell from 156 to 47 in the 2002 balloting. Ouyahia returned to the prime ministership in April 2003, and the RND supported Bouteflika in the 2004 presidential poll. However, Ouyahia was dismissed as prime minister in May 2006, apparently because he was considered a potential rival to Bouteflika (see Current issues, above).

*Leaders:* Ahmed OUYAHIA (Former Prime Minister and Secretary General), Abdelkader BENSALAH (Speaker of the Council of the Nation).

**Movement for a Peaceful Society** (*Mouvement pour une Société Paisible/Harakat Mujtamas al-Silm*—MSP/Hamas). Formerly known as the Movement for an Islamic Society (*Mouvement pour une Société Islamique*—MSI) or Hamas (an acronym from that grouping’s name in Arabic), the MSP adopted its current rubric in 1997 in light of new national restrictions on party references to religion. The MSP is a moderate Islamic fundamentalist organization distinct from the more

militant Palestinian formation also known as *Hamas*. It advocates “coexistence” with groups of opposing views in a democratic political structure and the introduction “by stages” of an Islamic state that would maintain “respect for individual liberties.” Although it was reported in early 1992 that some *Hamas* members had been arrested in the sweeping antifundamentalist campaign, the government subsequently returned to its position that the grouping represented an acceptable moderate alternative to the FIS. Subsequently, Sheikh Mohamed BOUSLIMANI, a founder of *Hamas*, was killed in late 1993, while another leader, Aly AYEB, was assassinated in September 1994, the attacks being attributed to radicals opposed to *Hamas*’s ongoing dialogue with the government.

*Hamas* leader Sheikh Mahfoud NAHNAH, who had announced his support for the regime’s “antiterrorist” campaign but had described the nation as stuck “in a political dead end” in view of the “lack of trust between people and authority,” received 25 percent of the vote in the 1995 presidential election.

After finishing second in the June 1997 legislative balloting, the MSP joined the subsequent RND-led coalition government, a decision that was described as putting the party’s “credibility on the line” vis-à-vis the more hard-line grouping, the MR (or *Nahda*, see below), which was competing for Islamic support.

Nahnah attempted to run in the April 1999 presidential balloting, but his candidacy was disallowed, ostensibly on the ground that he had not provided proof he had participated in the country’s “war of independence” as required of all presidential contenders under the 1996 constitutional revision. Nahnah died in July 2003 after a long illness.

The MSP, which had seen its assembly representation fall from 69 to 38 in the 2002 balloting, supported President Bouteflika in the 2004 presidential campaign. Not surprisingly, MSP leader Abou Djerra Soltani also strongly endorsed the 2005 national charter on peace and reconciliation.

*Leader:* Abou Djerra SOLTANI (President).

### *Other Legislative Parties (Prior to the May 2007 Legislative Balloting)*

**Movement for National Reform** (*Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale*—MRN). The MRN, also known as *Islah* (Arabic for “reform”), was launched in early 1999 to promote the presidential campaign of Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah, who had recently split from *Nahda*. The MRN, supportive of eventual establishment of an “Islamic State,” won 43 seats in the 2002 assembly balloting, thereby becoming the largest opposition grouping. Djaballah won 4.9 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Abdallah DJABALLAH (Party Leader and 2004 presidential candidate), Lakhdar Ben KHALIF.

**Workers’ Party** (*Parti des Travailleurs*—PT). The Trotskyist PT was one of the groups that signed the proposed national reconciliation pact in early 1995. It secured four seats in the June 1997 assembly balloting and subsequently continued to urge the government to negotiate with the FIS. The PT improved dramatically to 21 seats in the 2002 assembly balloting on a vote share of 4.8 percent. PT leader and women’s rights activist Louisa Hannoun, described as the first woman to run for president in the Arab world, won 1.2 percent in the vote in the 2004 poll.

*Leader:* Louisa HANNOUN.

**Algerian National Front** (*Front National Algérien*—FNA/*Jabhah al-Wataniyah al-Jazairiyah*). Organized in June 1999 in support of the “downtrodden,” the FNA received official recognition the following November. It won eight seats in the 2002 legislative poll on a 3.2 percent vote share. However, the proposed presidential bid in 2004 of the FNA leader, Moussa Touati, was rejected by the Constitutional Council.

*Leader:* Moussa TOUATI.

**Renaissance Movement** (*Mouvement de la Renaissance/Harakat al-Nahda*—MR/*Nahda*). Previously called the Islamic Renaissance Movement (*Mouvement de la Renaissance Islamique/*

*Harakat al-Nahda al-Islamiyya—MRI/Nahda*), the party dropped the “Islamic” portion of its rubric in early 1997 to conform to new national regulations. Initially a small, moderate fundamentalist grouping, *Nahda* was promoted in the mid-1990s by the government as a legal alternative to the banned FIS. The grouping performed “surprisingly well” in the June 1997 legislative balloting, finishing fourth with 34 seats. By that time *Nahda* had adopted a tougher stance than the other main legal Islamic party (the MSP), and its leaders ultimately declined to participate in the new RND-led coalition government.

A *Nahda* congress in early 1998 reportedly directed that some authority previously exercised by long-standing leader Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah be turned over to Secretary General Lahbib Adami. The apparent rivalry between the two came to a head late in the year when Adami announced that the party had agreed to support Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the military-backed FLN candidate, in the upcoming presidential balloting. Djaballah consequently left *Nahda* in January 1999 and formed the MRN (above), taking nearly half of the 34 *Nahda* assembly representatives with him. *Nahda* fell to only one seat in the 2002 assembly poll.

*Leader:* Lahbib ADAMI (Secretary General).

**Algerian Renewal Party** (*Parti pour le Renouveau de l'Algérie—PRA*). A moderate Islamic group that first surfaced during the October 1988 demonstrations, the PRA announced in 1989 that it would concentrate on economic issues, particularly a fight to end “state capitalism and interventionism.” PRA leader Nouredine Boukrouh, described as a “liberal businessman,” won 4 percent of the votes in the 1995 presidential election. The government disallowed Boukrouh’s candidacy for the 1999 presidential election, citing insufficient signatures of support. However, Boukrouh joined the coalition government announced in December 1999. The PRA secured 2.2 percent of the vote in the 2002 assembly balloting.

*Leaders:* Nouredine BOUKROUH, Yacine TORKMANE.

**Movement of National Harmony** (*Mouvement de l'Entente Nationale—MEN*). The MEN secured 1.9 percent of the vote in the 2002 assembly balloting.

*Leaders:* Ali BOUKHAZNA, Amar LAS-SOUED.

**Socialist Forces Front** (*Front des Forces Socialistes—FFS*). Long a clandestine group, the predominantly Berber FFS was legalized in November 1989. Having earned the enmity of the government in 1985 when he briefly formed a “united front” with Ben Bella’s MDS (below) to oppose the FLN, the FFS leader, revolutionary hero Hocine Aït-Ahmed, remained in Swiss exile until December 1989. The FFS boycotted the 1990 municipal elections but, after failing to create a multiparty coalition to “block” the FIS, presented over 300 candidates in the December 1991 legislative balloting on a platform that endorsed a “mixed economy,” greater regional autonomy, and official recognition of the Berber language. The FFS won 25 seats (second to the FIS) on a 15 percent vote share in the first election round, Aït-Ahmed strongly criticizing cancellation of the second prior to returning to self-imposed exile in Switzerland. The FFS subsequently joined the FIS and the FLN as the leading proponents of the unsuccessful January 1995 peace plan and boycotted the 1995 presidential balloting. However, Aït-Ahmed then called for “conciliation” talks with the government in apparent recognition of the Zeroual regime’s strengthened position following the election.

Aït-Ahmed, hitherto FFS general secretary, was elected to the newly created post of party president at the March 1996 FFS congress in Algiers. Dueling with the RCD for support within the Berber community, the FFS secured 20 seats in the June 1997 assembly balloting but was not invited to participate in the new RND-led government because of the Front’s insistence that negotiations should proceed with the goal of incorporating the FIS into the legal political process. A special congress in February 1999 nominated Aït-Ahmed as the FFS candidate for the upcoming presidential balloting, despite the reported poor health of the

aging leader, who had recently returned from his self-imposed exile. A May 2000 congress reelected Aït-Ahmed as FFS president amid reports of deepening divisions within the party. In the wake of severe unrest in Berber areas, the FFS boycotted the 2002 assembly balloting. The FFS also called for a boycott of the 2005 referendum on the national charter for peace and reconciliation, arguing that the charter would “consecrate impunity” for perpetrators of violent crimes on both sides of the recent conflict.

*Leaders:* Hocine AÏT-AHMED (President of the Party and 1999 presidential candidate), Samir BOUAKOUIR, Ahmed DJEDDAI (Secretary General).

### *Other Parties Competing in the 2002 Legislative Balloting*

**Ahd 54.** A small, nationalist party, *Ahd 54* (*Ahd* is Arabic for “oath,” reportedly a reference to principles espoused at the beginning of the war of independence) secured 0.9 percent of the vote in the 2002 assembly balloting. Its leader, human rights activist Ali Fawzi Rebaïne, won 0.7 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll.

*Leaders:* Ali Fawzi REBAÏNE, Toufik CHELLAL.

**Patriotic Republican Rally** (*Rassemblement Patriotique Républicain—RPR*). The RPR is a successor to the Algerian Movement for Justice and Development (*Mouvement Algérien pour la Justice et le Développement—MAJD*), a reformist group launched in November 1990 by former prime minister Kasdi Merbah, who had resigned in October from the FLN Central Committee. Merbah, a staunch antifundamentalist, was assassinated in August 1993, the government accusing Islamic militants of the act. However, no group claimed responsibility for the killing, and observers pointed out that Merbah had a broad spectrum of enemies. In 1999 the government listed the RPR as the successor to the MAJD.

*Leader:* Abd al-Kader MERBAH (President).

**National Party for Solidarity and Development** (*Parti National pour la Solidarité et le Développement—PNSD*). The center-right PNSD won a reported 1.6 percent of the popular vote in the June 1990 municipal elections. It secured 1.8 percent of the vote in the 2002 assembly poll.

*Leader:* Mohamed Cherif TALEB (President).

Other parties that competed unsuccessfully in the 2002 assembly balloting included the **Front of Algerian Democrats** (*Front des Algériens Démocrates—FAD*), led by Tayeb KABRI; the **National Constitutional Rally** (*Rassemblement National Constitutionnel—RNC*), which in 2004 announced it had changed its name to the **Democratic National Front** (still under the leadership of Sassi MABROUK); the **National Movement of Algerian Youth** (*Mouvement National pour la Jeunesse Algérienne—MNJA*), led by Omar BOUACHA; the **National Movement of Hope** (*Mouvement National l’Espérance—MNE*), led by Mohamed HADEF; the **National Movement for Nature and Development** (*Mouvement National pour la Nature et le Développement—MNND*), led by Abderrahman AKIF; the **Progressive Republican Party** (*Parti Républicain et Progressiste—PRP*), which had won three seats in the 1997 assembly balloting under the leadership of Idriss KHADIR; the **Rally for Algeria** (*Rassemblement pour l’Algérie—RPA*), led by Mohamed HAMMOUMA; the **Rally for National Unity** (*Rassemblement pour l’Unité Nationale—RUN*), led by Yacine LEKHAL; and the **Union for Democracy and Liberties** (*Union pour la Démocratie et les Libertés—UDL*), which had won one seat in the 1997 assembly election.

### *Other Parties*

**Republican National Alliance** (*Alliance Nationale Républicaine—ANR*). The ANR was formed in early 1995 by several former government officials, including Redha Malek, prime minister in 1993–1994, and Ali Haroun, a member of the 1992–1994 collective presidency. Formally opposed to any compromise with the Islamic fundamentalist movement, the ANR was considered a

vehicle for a presidential bid by Malek. However, Malek was prevented from contesting the 1995 election because he failed to obtain the required 75,000 signatures of support. Malek was reelected chair of the party by the June 1996 ANR congress in Algiers, which also elected a new 145-member National Council.

Despite retaining a seat in the cabinet, the ANR in early 2002 was described as “steering clear” of the upcoming legislative poll.

*Leaders:* Redha MALEK (Chair), Ali HAROUN.

**Rally for Culture and Democracy** (*Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*—RCD). Formed in February 1989 to represent Berber interests, the RCD proclaimed its commitment to “economic centralism,” linguistic pluralism, and separation of the state and Islamic religion. It won 2 percent of the votes in the June 1990 municipal balloting.

In early 1994 Mohamed Ouramadane TIGZIRI, the RCD’s national secretary, was assassinated, apparently as part of the militant fundamentalist campaign against groups such as the RCD that advocated a secular, Western-style political system. The RCD’s strongly antifundamentalist leader, Saïd Saadi, was also subsequently prominent in the Berber Cultural Movement, described by the *New York Times* as having evolved into an influential political group in its campaign to have the Berber language sanctioned for use in schools and other public forums. Saadi captured 9 percent of the votes in the 1995 presidential poll, having been assured of the lion’s share of Berber votes because of the boycott by the FFS, the RCD’s primary competitor for support within that ethnic group. The RCD secured 19 seats in the June 1997 assembly elections but boycotted the December balloting for the new Council of the Nation. The RCD also announced in early 1999 that it was boycotting the upcoming presidential election. However, surprising many observers, the RCD subsequently joined the government coalition of December 1999, the party reportedly having become “increasingly closer” to President Bouteflika. The RCD left the coalition in

May 2001 in the wake of severe government/Berber friction, and it boycotted the 2002 national and local elections. Saadi won 1.9 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll.

The RCD strongly condemned the national charter for peace and reconciliation that was approved in 2005. The party also charged the government with fraud in regard to the official vote turnout for the related referendum. Meanwhile, another Berber grouping (the **Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie**, led by singer Ferhat MLENNI) also rejected the charter as an exercise in “self-amnesty” by the Algerian authorities.

*Leader:* Saïd SAADI (President).

**Democratic and Social Movement** (*Mouvement Démocratique et Social*—MDS). The MDS rubric reportedly was recently adopted by the grouping formerly known as Challenge (*Ettahaddi*). Dedicated to “the revolutionary transition of Algeria to modernity and progress,” *Ettahaddi* had been launched in January 1993 as successor to the Socialist Vanguard Party (*Parti de l’Avant-Garde Socialiste*—PAGS). The PAGS had emerged in 1966 as an illegal, but generally tolerated, heir to the Algerian Communist Party (*Parti Communiste Algérien*—PCA), which had been proscribed shortly after independence. Supportive of the Boumedienne government but less so of the Bendjedid administration, the PAGS reportedly applauded the 1988 unrest as helpful in its effort to “reestablish itself,” particularly among labor unionists. It offered a limited number of candidates in the 1990 municipal elections, without success, and boycotted the 1991, 1997, and 2002 legislative elections as well as the 1999 presidential poll.

*Leader:* Hachemi CHERIF (Secretary General).

**Fidelity** (*Wafa*). Organized by former foreign affairs minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi following his 1999 presidential campaign in the hope of coordinating nationalist and Islamist opposition groups, *Wafa* was subsequently denied recognition by the government on the grounds that it was essentially an FIS “clone.” Ibrahimi was rejected by the Constitutional Council as a presidential candidate in

2004 and subsequently threw his support behind Ali Benflis.

*Leaders:* Ahmed Taleb IBRAHIMI, Mohammed SAID, Rashid LERARRI.

**Democratic Front** (*Front Démocratique—FD*). An anti-Bouteflika grouping, the FD elected former prime minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali as its chair during the May 2000 inaugural congress. Ghazali was not permitted by the Constitutional Council to run in the 2004 presidential election, and he subsequently announced he was supporting Ali Benflis in that campaign.

*Leader:* Sid Ahmed GHOZALI (Chair).

**Socialist Workers Party** (*Parti Socialist des Travailleurs—PST*). Legalized in early 1990, the Trotskyite PST supports “radical socialism,” non-payment of Algeria’s external debt, and secular government. The PST boycotted the 2002 assembly balloting.

*Leader:* Chawki SALHI.

### *Illegal Groups*

**Islamic Salvation Front** (*Front Islamique du Salut—FIS*). The FIS was organized in early 1989 to represent the surging Islamic fundamentalist movement. Capitalizing upon strong antigovernment sentiment, it won control of a majority of town and departmental councils in the June 1990 municipal elections. Apparently to permit the broadest possible support for its effort to win national legislative control, the FIS leadership was subsequently reluctant to define its goals in specific terms. However, a significant proportion of the Front’s supporters appeared committed to the adoption and enforcement of sharia throughout Algeria’s theretofore relatively secular society and the imposition of measures such as the segregation of the sexes in schools and the workplace, a ban on alcohol consumption, and obligatory veils for women. FIS leaders also made it clear that a national fundamentalist government, even one that came to power through a multiparty election, would not feel bound to maintain a “Western-style” democracy.

In June 1991 FIS leader Dr. Abassi Madani, Ali Belhadj (his deputy), other members of the party’s Constitutional Council, and hundreds of FIS followers were arrested on charges of fomenting an “armed conspiracy against the security of the state” in connection with violent demonstrations in Algiers and other cities. Although hard-line FIS factions reportedly called for continued protest and an election boycott unless the detainees were released, the FIS ultimately participated in the December 26 legislative balloting under the leadership of the moderate Abdelkader HACHANI.

After winning 188 seats in the first round of the 1991 assembly poll, the FIS prepared to assume national political leadership, Hachani attempting to reassure the nonfundamentalist population that the FIS would “persuade, not oblige people into doing what we say.” However, the party’s plan to mount the world’s first Islamic state via the ballot box was thwarted by the military takeover of the Algerian government in early January 1992. Nearly all of the remaining FIS national leaders, including Hachani, were subsequently arrested, as were hundreds of its local and provincial officials, with upwards of 30,000 FIS followers reportedly being placed in desert detention camps. In addition, Algerian courts in March formally banned the FIS as a political party upon petition of the High Council of State, which also ordered the dissolution of many municipal councils under FIS control and their replacement by appointed bodies. The Front was subsequently reported to be sharply divided between members remaining faithful to the group’s official commitment to nonviolence and more radical adherents prepared to “move from words to rifles.” It was generally believed that the latter were responsible for a number of attacks on Algerian security personnel during the rest of the year and for the subsequent emergence of armed groups such as the AIS and the GIA (below).

In July 1992 Madani and Belhadj were sentenced to 12 years in prison for conspiring against the authority of the state, five other leaders receiving shorter terms. In the wake of Liamine Zerroual’s appointment as president in early 1994, sporadic negotiations were reported between the

government and the FIS, many reports suggesting that a breakthrough was imminent in mid-1995. However, the government finally declared the talks deadlocked, allegedly over the failure of the FIS leaders to renounce antiregime violence unequivocally. Consequently, no FIS participation was permitted in the 1995 presidential balloting, the Front calling upon supporters to boycott the election as a way of embarrassing the government. That strategy backfired, however, as heavy voter turnout and Zeroual's strong showing served to undercut the Front's insistence that it still held majority popular support.

The government released Madani on July 15, 1997, one week after Hachani had been freed when a court found him guilty of "inciting rebellion" in 1992 but sentenced him to time served. However, the nature of subsequent FIS/government talks was unclear, and Madani was placed under house arrest in September after he had called for UN mediation of the Algerian political impasse. Not surprisingly, the FIS urged its supporters to boycott the October local elections.

FIS leaders expressed the hope that President Bouteflika's civil concord of the second half of 1999 would lead to legalization of the party (perhaps under a different name). Meanwhile, the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Hachani in Algiers in November 1999 were unclear, although the government attributed the murder to the GIA.

FIS leaders Madani and Belhadj were released from house arrest and prison, respectively, in July 2003, the former subsequently settling in Qatar. Both men were barred from political activity, although in 2005 Madani was reported to have contacted President Bouteflika regarding Madani's possible participation in discussion about the proposed general amnesty.

Rabeh Kebir, a longstanding FIS leader, returned to Algeria in September 2006 after 14 years in exile in Germany. He announced his support for the nation's current reconciliation program and indicated a desire to become involved in legal political affairs, thereby divorcing himself from other "historic" FIS figures such as Madani and

Belhadj. Haddam in early 2007 expressed similar sentiments, although he remained in the United States. Meanwhile, Belhadj described the national reconciliation program as a "trick" that was designed primarily to protect the military from further investigation regarding its activities in the antifundamentalist campaign.

*Leaders:* Dr. Abassi MADANI (in Qatar), Ali BELHADJ, Abdelkader BOUKHAMKHAM, Sheikh Abdelkader OMAR, Abdelkrim Ould ADDA (Foreign Spokesperson), Rabeh KEBIR, Anwar HADDAM (in the United States).

**Islamic Salvation Army** (*Armée Islamique du Salut—AIS*). The AIS, also previously referenced as the Armed Islamic Movement (*Mouvement Islamique Armée—MIA*), was an underground fundamentalist organization formed in response to the banning of the FIS in 1992. It was often described as the "military wing" of the FIS, although there were occasional reports of policy differences between the leaders of the two groups.

Initially, the AIS was formally committed to antiregime military activity, although, unlike the GIA (below), it attacked only "official" military and police targets. (Shortly after the formation of the AIS, its fighters, estimated at about 10,000 strong, were reported to be operating under a unified command with GIA guerrillas, but extensive fighting, apparently emanating from disputes over tactics, broke out between the two groups in early 1994.) In early 1995 AIS leaders called for dialogue with the government, indicating that they would accept any "peace settlement" negotiated by the FIS. The AIS declared a "cease-fire" in antigovernment attacks as of October 1, 1997, apparently to disassociate itself from the shocking (even by recent Algerian standards) wave of violence gripping the country.

In June 1999 the AIS agreed to a permanent cease-fire in connection with President Bouteflika's plans for a civil concord that included an amnesty for most AIS members and the restoration of their civil and political rights. In January 2000 AIS leader Madani MEZRAG signed documents formalizing the elements of the concord and announced the "dissolution" of the AIS, some 1,500



AIS members having reportedly been declared eligible for amnesty. Mezrag supported President Bouteflika's reelection bid in 2004 and endorsed the 2005 national charter for peace and reconciliation, indicating his desire to help form a new legal party among former FIS/AIS supporters.

**Armed Islamic Group** (*Groupe Islamique Armé*—GIA). The GIA was an outgrowth of antigovernment violence that first broke out in the mid-1980s around the city of Blida. In the 1990s the Group emerged as the most militant of the underground fundamentalist organizations, its targets including police, government officials, journalists, feminists, and foreigners. Vehemently anti-Western, the Group reportedly supported establishment of an Iranian-style “theocracy” in Algeria and firmly rejected dialogue with the military-backed Zeroual regime.

The GIA guerrilla force was once estimated at 2,500–10,000 fighters, some known as “Afghanis” in reference to their having fought with the *mujaheddin* in Afghanistan. In early 1994 the Group was reportedly in control of many rural areas and several urban districts. However, the government subsequently claimed that its intensive “antiterrorist” campaign had significantly weakened the GIA. Moreover, many GIA leaders were killed by security forces or rival Islamists. In addition, one leader, Sheikh Abdelhaq Layada, was arrested in Morocco in 1993 and extradited to Algeria, where he was sentenced to death following his conviction on terrorism charges (see below for information on his subsequent release).

In mid-1995 the GIA was placed on the U.S. State Department's list of “terrorist” organizations. Although deemed by mid-1996 to be stronger militarily than the AIS, the GIA was believed to have lost much of whatever popular support it might once have commanded as the result of its assassination campaign and sometimes indiscriminate bomb attacks.

The GIA was broadly accused of the bulk of the terrorist incidents of 1997–2000, most of which occurred in central Algeria, where the Group's influence was considered the strongest. As the at-

tacks grew more random and increasingly targeted civilians, some observers suggested that discipline had broken down within the GIA, a correspondent for the *New York Times* describing the Group as a “loose organization of roving bandits, including outlaws with little or no ideological commitment to Islam.”

GIA leader Antar ZOUABI strongly rejected the government's amnesty offer included in President Bouteflika's civil concord of the second half of 1999, and most GIA fighters reportedly followed his lead. Zouabi was reportedly killed by security forces in February 2002; Rachid Abou Tourab was subsequently reported to have been selected as the new GIA leader. Meanwhile, like the GSPC (below), the GIA was included on the list of “terrorist” organizations subject to asset seizure by the United States as part of the war on terrorism announced after the September 11, 2001, attack.

Noureddine Boudiafi reportedly assumed leadership of the GIA in 2004; however, he was subsequently arrested, and the GIA mantle reportedly fell to Younes CHAABANE, who was killed during a security sweep in early 2005. By that time, the government was describing the GIA as “nearly extinct.”

Layada was released from prison in early 2006, apparently as part of the national peace and reconciliation process. However, some GIA fighters reportedly remained active at that point, having been blamed by the government for at least one attack in mid-2005.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Abdelhaq LAYADA, Noureddine BOUDIAFI, Mohammed SAID, Ahmed ZAOUI (in exile), Abdelmadjid DICHOU, Rachid Abou TOURAB, Ahmed BAICHE.

**Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat** (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*—GSPC). Also referenced as Appeal and Struggle, the GSPC was established in 1999 by members of the GIA who were opposed to the parent group's targeting of civilians but remained committed to attacks on military sites and personnel. The GSPC was included on the list of proscribed organizations published by the United

States following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

By 2003 the GSPC was one of the few Islamist groups “still fighting,” hard-liner Nabil SAHRAOUI having supplanted GSPC founder Hassan HATTAB as leader of the group. In October 2003 Sahraoui said that the GSPC supported Osama bin Laden’s *jihad* against “the American heretics,” and the GSPC was held responsible for several attacks on Algerian forces in 2003–2004. However, Sahraoui was killed by the Algerian army in June 2004, analysts suggesting that GSPC forces had dwindled to 400–450 guerrillas by that time. Another GSPC leader, Amari SAIFI, was taken into custody in late 2004 and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment.

In late 2005 Hassan Hattab, one of the founders of the GSPC, said he believed most GSPC supporters were now willing to consider an amnesty agreement. However, he later withdrew his support for the nation’s new reconciliation charter. In September 2006 Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden’s deputy, announced a “blessed union” between al-Qaida and the GSPC, indicating that French and U.S. supporters of the Algerian regime would be targeted. Although the government announced that several hundred GSPC fighters had been killed recently, the GSPC claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in late 2006–early 2007. Prompting even greater concern among Western leaders over the possible expansion of GSPC activity to Europe, the GSPC announced in early 2007 that it was changing its name to “al-Qaida in the Maghreb” in support of an eventual Islamic state across North Africa.

*Leaders:* Nabil SAHRAOUI, Abdelmalek DROUKEL (Abu Musab ABDULWAHOOD), Hassan HATTAB, Moktar bin MOKTAR.

**Defenders of the Salafi Call** (*Dhanat Houmet Daawa Salafia*). One of the few Islamist militant groups active in Algeria as of 2005, this “Taliban-trained” grouping, another offshoot of the GIA, was reported to comprise about 150–250 fighters in western Algeria. Like the GSPC, it has been declared a terrorist organization by the United States.

*Leader:* Mohammed BENSLIM.

## Legislature

The 1996 constitution provided for a bicameral **Parliament** (*Barlaman*), consisting of a restructured National People’s Assembly and a new upper house, the Council of the Nation. The first round of multiparty balloting for a new 430-member assembly was held December 26, 1991, with the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) winning 188 seats, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) 25, the FLN 15, and independents 3. A runoff round involving the top two vote-getters in the remaining districts was scheduled for January 16, 1992. However, the second poll was canceled on January 12 by the High Security Council, which also declared the results of the first round invalid. Subsequently, it was revealed that the former assembly had been dissolved by a secret presidential decree on January 4.

In April 1992 the High Council of State announced the appointment of a 60-member National Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shoura al-Watani*) to serve in an advisory capacity to the government pending new assembly elections. The National Dialog Conference of early 1994, in turn, authorized the appointment of a three-year National Transitional Council (*Conseil National de Transition—CNT*), which at its initial sitting in May encompassed 63 seats filled by parties, 85 by professional associations and trade unions, and 30 by government nominees, with 22 reserved for nonparticipating secular parties. The CNT was dissolved on May 18, 1997, in preparation for the elections to the bodies authorized by the new constitution.

**Council of the Nation** (*Majlis al-Umma/Conseil de la Nation*). The upper house has 144 members, 96 (2 from each *wilaya*) elected in secret ballot by an electoral college of the members of local councils and communal and *wilayaat* assemblies and 48 appointed by the president. The term of office is six years, although one-half of the initial members (elected on December 25, 1997) served only three years to permit 50 percent replenishment of the council every three years from that point. Following the balloting of December 30, 2003, the distribution of the elected

## Cabinet

As of May 1, 2007 (*see headnote*)

Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem (FLN)

### *Ministers of State*

Foreign Affairs Mohamed Bedjaoui  
Interior and Local Authorities Nouredine Yazid Zerhouni (FLN)  
Without Portfolio Bouguerra Soltani

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Rural Development	Said Barkat
Commerce	El Hachemi Djaaboub (MSP)
Communication	Hachemi Djiar
Culture	Khalida Toumi [f]
Employment and National Solidarity	Djamal Ould-Abbes
Energy and Mining	Chakib Khelil
Finance	Mourad Medelci
Fishing and Marine Resources	Smail Mimoune
Health, Population, and Hospital Reform	Amar Tou (FLN)
Higher Education and Scientific Research	Rachid Harraoubia (FLN)
Housing and Urban Affairs	Mohamed Nadir Hamimid
Industry	Mahmoud Khedri
Justice, Keeper of the Seals	Tayeb Belaiz
Labor and Social Security	Tayeb Louh (FLN)
National Education	Boubakeur Benbouzid (RND)
Posts and Information Technology	Boudjemaa Haichour (FLN)
Promotion of Investments	Abdelhamid Temmar
Public Works	Amar Ghoul (MSP)
Relations with Parliament	Abdelaziz Ziari (FLN)
Religious Affairs and Endowments	Bouabdallah Ghlamallah (RND)
Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises and Crafts	Mustapha Benbada
Territorial Management and Environment	Cherif Rahmani
Tourism	Nouredine Moussa
Training and Professional Education	El Hadi Khaldi
Transportation	Mohamed Maghlaoui (RND)
War Veterans	Mohamed Cherif Abbas (RND)
Water Resources	Abdelmalek Sellal
Youth and Sports	Yahia Guiddoum

### *Ministers Delegate*

Agriculture and Rural Development	Rachid Benaissa
Family and Women's Affairs	Nouara Saâdia Djaffar (RND) [f]
Financial Reform	Karim Djoudi
Higher Education and Scientific Research	Souad Bendjaballah [f]
Interior and Local Communities	Daho Ould Kablia
Maghreb and African Affairs	Abdelkader Messahel
National Defense	Abdelmalek Guenaizia
Territorial Management and Environment	Abderrachid Boukerzaza
Secretary General of the Government	Ahmed Noui

[f] = female

seats was as follows: National Democratic Rally, 52; National Liberation Front, 31; Movement for a Peaceful Society, 10; Movement for National Reform, 2; Socialist Forces Front, 1. The most recent balloting for indirectly elected seats was held December 28, 2006.

*Speaker:* Abdelkader BENSALAH.

**National People's Assembly** (*Majlis Ech Chaabi al-Watani, Assemblée Populaire Nationale*). The lower house has 389 members, 381 representing the 48 *wilayaats* (each of which has at least 4 representatives) according to population, and 8 (4 in Europe and 4 in other Arab nations) elected by Algerians living abroad. Members are elected for a five-year term on a proportional basis from lists presented by parties or independents. Following the election of May 30, 2002, the distribution of seats was as follows: National Liberation Front, 199; National Democratic Rally, 47; Movement for National Reform, 43; Movement for a Peaceful Society, 38; Workers' Party, 21; Algerian National Front, 8; Movement of National Harmony, 1; Renaissance Movement (*Nahda*), 1; Algerian Renewal Party; and independents, 30. The next election was scheduled for May 2007. (*See headnote.*)

*Speaker:* Amar SAADANI.

## Communications

### *Press*

After a long period of strict control of national and foreign press activities, the government introduced a new Information Code in mid-1989 that formally ended the state media monopoly and accorded journalists greater freedom of expression. It was succeeded in March 1990 by a more stringent code that mandated imprisonment for journalists who "offended" Islam or any other religion; the new regulations also stipulated that all new periodicals be printed in Arabic. However, those strictures were not rigorously implemented, and an information "explosion" subsequently took place in the increasingly independent press. By mid-1991 there were reportedly more than

110 daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals, many of them fostered by a government program under which journalists in state-owned enterprises were offered a sum equal to two years' salary to help establish private publications. However, most of the new papers continued to be printed on government presses, which enabled the administration to suspend their issuance during the early phase of the 1991 state of emergency. Significant restrictions, largely directed at the Islamic fundamentalist press, were imposed following the declaration of a state of emergency in early 1992. In addition, journalists were permitted to report on "security matters" only with government authorization and only using information released by the state, stories on antigovernment activity consequently becoming quite limited. In part because they were often perceived as "apologists" for the government, journalists were subsequently targeted by fundamentalist radicals.

New restrictions, including harsh penalties in a revised penal code, have been imposed on the press in recent years, prompting protests from both domestic and international journalism organizations. Among other things, opposition candidates complained in 2002 about the high level of control exercised by the administration of President Bouteflika over all aspects of the media. Journalists have subsequently been jailed regularly for what the government calls "libel" or "defamation" but what free press advocates describe as legitimate criticism of officials. On the other hand, a reporter for *Middle East International* in 2005 opined that a degree of "genuine political debate" was apparent among some Algerian newspapers.

The following are dailies published in Algiers unless otherwise noted: *el-Moudjahid* (The Fighter, 440,000), former FLN organ in French; *Algérie Actualité* (255,000), government weekly in French; *Horizons* (200,000), in French; *al-Chaab* (The People, 150,000), former FLN information journal in Arabic; *al-Massa* (100,000), in Arabic. Other independent dailies include: *Le Soir de l'Algérie* (150,000), in French; *Al Khabar* (The News, 120,000), in Arabic; *El Watan* (The Nation, 80,000), in French; *Le Jeune Indépendant* (60,000),

in French; *Al Djazair al-Joum* (54,000), in Arabic; *Le Matin*, in French; *La Tribune*, in French; *al-Jumhuriyah* (The Republic, Wahran, 20,000), former FLN organ in Arabic; *Liberté* (20,000), in French; *Le Monde Aujourd'hui*, in French; *Le Quotidien d'Oran* (Wahran), in French.

### *News Agencies*

The domestic agency is the Algerian Press Service (*Wikalat al-Anba al-Jazairiyah/Algérie Presse Service*—APS). A number of foreign agencies maintain offices in Algiers.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The government decreased its control over broadcasting services in 2000, although it retained

a supervisory role. The former state-controlled *Télévision Algérienne* continues to service about a dozen stations. There were 11 personal computers and 58 Internet users per 1,000 people in 2005. There were 415 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Amine KHERBI

**U.S. Ambassador to Algeria:** Robert S. FORD

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Youcef YOUSFI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AMU, AU, BADEA, BIS, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, WCO

# BAHRAIN

## KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

*al-Mamlakah al-Bahrayn*

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### The Country

An archipelago of some 33 largely desert islands situated between the Qatar peninsula and Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain consists primarily of the main island of Bahrain plus the smaller islands of Muharraq, Sitra, and Umm-Nassan. Summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees (F), and annual rainfall averages only about four inches; however, natural springs provide sufficient water. The predominantly Arab population is about two-thirds indigenous Bahraini, with small groups of Saudi Arabians, Omanis, Iranians, Asians, and Europeans. An estimated 65 percent consists of Shiite Muslims, while 30 percent, including the royal family, adheres to the Sunni sect.

Oil, produced commercially since 1936, and natural gas account for some 65 percent of the government's income, although recoverable petroleum reserves may be exhausted in 15 to 20 years. (As of 2005 Bahrain was producing 40,000 barrels per day, while its total reserves were estimated at about 125 million barrels.) Additional revenue is derived from operation of the Aluminum Bahrain smelter, one of the largest nonextractive enterprises in the Gulf area, and from one of the Middle East's largest oil refineries, devoted largely to processing crude (about 150,000 barrels per day) from Saudi Arabia. Bahrain also has been a prominent financial center for many years; its more than 50 offshore banks handle much of the region's oil-related wealth.

Aided by financial support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, the government upon independence began to establish an extensive network of social services, including free

education and medical care, and in 1982 mounted an ambitious program for infrastructure development and improvements in agriculture and education. An economic downturn in the mid-1980s, caused by declining foreign aid, appeared to have been reversed by the end of the decade; however, the Gulf crisis precipitated by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait generated additional economic problems for the emirate as aid from Gulf neighbors was severely constrained and offshore banking activity fell sharply. In response, the government intensified its campaign to promote



development of new small- and medium-scale industries, in large part by loosening restrictions on private foreign investment. The economy rebounded in the mid-1990s under the influence of steady oil revenue. Subsequently, falling oil prices in 1998 led to a 3 percent decline in GDP for the year and intensified concern over the government's budget deficit, and observers suggested that a growing segment of the population (particularly those under 27 years of age, who make up 70 percent of the total) was at risk of becoming economically disenfranchised. However, the economy rebounded strongly in 1999 as the result of the sharp turnaround in oil prices and the subsequent positive response from foreign investors. GDP growth subsequently remained strong, averaging more than 5 percent annually in 2000–2004. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) described the economy as “one of the most advanced in the region,” although unemployment remained a significant concern, and a number of observers warned that entrenched poverty (primarily within the Shiite population) still presented a threat to political and social stability. High oil prices were the primary factor in GDP growth averaging 5.8 percent annually in 2005–2006, with increased non-oil revenue and continued low inflation of 1 percent. Unemployment reportedly dropped from 15 percent to 9 percent in recent years due largely to the country's National Employment Program. Also, a construction boom in 2006 saw progress in the development of a major financial center and a causeway linking Bahrain and Qatar.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Long ruled as a traditional monarchy, Bahrain became a British protectorate in 1861 when Britain concluded a treaty of friendship with the emir as part of a larger effort to secure communication lines with its Asian colonies. The treaty was modified in 1892, but little evolution in domestic politics occurred prior to the interwar period. In 1926 Sir Charles BELGRAVE was appointed adviser to the

emir, providing guidance in reform of the administrative system—an especially important step in light of accelerated social change following the discovery of oil in 1932. Belgrave continued to have a direct and personal effect on Bahraini policy until his departure in 1957, the result of Arab nationalist agitation that began in 1954 and reached a peak during the 1956 Anglo-French action in Egypt. Incipient nationalists also provoked disturbances in 1965 and in 1967, following the second Arab-Israeli conflict.

In 1968 Britain announced that it would withdraw most of its forces east of Suez by 1971, and steps were taken to prepare for the independence of all of the British-protected emirates on the Persian Gulf. Initially, a federation composed of Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven components of the present United Arab Emirates was envisaged. Bahrain, however, failed to secure what it considered an appropriate allocation of seats in the proposed federation's ruling body and declared separate independence on August 15, 1971.

Despite nominal efforts at modernization, such as the creation of an Administrative Council following the 1956 disturbances and a quasi-ministerial Council of State as its successor in 1970, virtually absolute power remained in the hands of the emir until the adoption in 1973 of the country's first constitution, which provided for a partially elected National Assembly. However, total control quickly returned to the royal family when the emir, describing the new legislative body as “obstructionist,” ordered its dissolution in August 1975.

Although initially less intense than in other regional countries, rebellious sentiments among some of the majority Shiites, resentful of Sunni rule, precipitated conflict following the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the accompanying spread of Islamic fundamentalism. In December 1981 the government declared that it had thwarted a conspiracy involving the Iranian-backed Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB). That plot and the discovery in February 1984 of a rebel arms cache resulted in numerous arrests, the banning of a Shiite religious organization (the Islamic Enlightenment

**Political Status:** Independent emirate proclaimed August 15, 1971; constitution adopted December 6, 1973; constitutional monarchy established on February 14, 2002, under constitutional amendment decreed by the emir in purported accordance with National Action Charter endorsed by national referendum on February 14–15, 2001.

**Area:** 258 sq. mi. (668 sq. km.).

**Population:** 650,604 (2001C); 729,000 (2006E). Both figures include non-nationals (approximately 264,000 in 1999).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** MANAMA (152,000); Muharraq (119,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (official rate November 2, 2007: 1 dinar = \$2.65US).

**Sovereign:** King Sheikh Hamad ibn Isa Al KHALIFA, descendant of a ruling dynasty that dates from 1782; succeeded to the throne as emir on March 6, 1999, upon the death of his father, Sheikh Isa ibn Salman Al KHALIFA; proclaimed himself king under constitutional amendment adopted on February 14, 2002.

**Heir to the Throne:** Crown Prince Sheikh Salman ibn Hamad Al KHALIFA.

**Prime Minister:** Sheikh Khalifa ibn Salman Al KHALIFA, uncle of the emir; appointed January 19, 1970, by his brother, then-emir Sheikh Isa ibn Salman Al KHALIFA; continued in office upon independence.

Society), and the issuance of compulsory identity cards to nationals and resident aliens. The government subsequently maintained a tight rein on the activity of fundamentalists, a number of whom were arrested in 1992 for belonging to illegal organizations. In January 1993, apparently in response to Western calls for political liberalization, the emir established a Consultative Council of 30 “elite and loyal men,” including some former National Assembly members.

A wave of clashes with security forces erupted during the summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Manama in December 1994, follow-

ing the arrest of Sheikh Ali SALMAN, a religious leader who had demanded more jobs for Shiites. In January 1995 Salman and two followers were deported to Dubai and thereafter granted temporary asylum in Britain. However, after the emir, in an implicit reference to Iran, complained of “meddling by foreign countries in our internal affairs,” further disturbances occurred in March in which a police officer was killed. In April two people were killed and dozens injured during a raid on the home of another opposition cleric, Sheikh Abd al-Amir al-JAMRI, and on May 2 ten Shiites, including Jamri, were given jail terms for property damage resulting from the December and January outbreaks.

Sheikh Jamri was released on September 25, 1995, following the initiation of reconciliation talks between the government and the Shiite opposition. However, a new outbreak of violence in early 1996 prompted the rearrest of Jamri and seven followers. Additional arrests were made in February after a series of bombings in the capital.

Following further bombings in March, April, and May 1996, the government announced on June 3 that it had foiled an allegedly Iranian-backed plot to seize power and that more than 80 of those involved had been arrested. Recalling its ambassador from Teheran, Bahrain claimed that the Iranian authorities had hatched the plot with a Bahraini branch of the Lebanon-based *Hezbollah* (Party of God), whose members had been trained in Iran and had been the principal instigators of the recent unrest among Bahraini Shiites. Denying the Bahraini charges, Iran responded by withdrawing its ambassador from Manama while offering to mediate between the government and the Shiite opposition. Meanwhile, apparently responding to international pressure for political liberalization throughout the Gulf, the emir in September appointed an expanded 40-member Consultative Council.

Sheikh Isa ibn Salman Al KHALIFA, the emir of Bahrain since 1961, died of a heart attack on March 6, 1999. He was immediately succeeded by his son and longtime heir apparent, Sheikh Hamad ibn Isa Al KHALIFA, who was reportedly more reform-minded than his father. A new cabinet was appointed on May 31, although it comprised most



members of the previous government, including his uncle, Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa ibn Salman Al KHALIFA. In November 2000 the emir appointed a 46-member Supreme National Committee to draft a National Action Charter that would serve as a blueprint for political development and democratization. Although some members reportedly resigned over alleged “interference” by the emir, the draft charter was endorsed by a reported 98.4 percent in a national referendum on February 14–15, 2001. A year later the emir decreed constitutional amendments that incorporated the charter’s provisions, including the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in which authority was to be shared by a bicameral National Assembly and the former emir (now to bear the title “king”). As the first step in the progressive (by regional standards) democratization process, local elections were held in May 2002, with a number of opposition political “associations” or “societies” participating. However, several such groups boycotted the October balloting for the Chamber of Deputies to protest the king’s decision that the assembly’s upper house, the Consultative Council, would continue to be appointed rather than elected.

Several political associations participated in two rounds of municipal elections and balloting for the Chamber of Deputies on November 25 and December 2, 2006. In the Chamber of Deputies, opposition Shiites increased their representation, securing 17 seats (compared to 7 in 2002), while Sunnis, many supportive of the government, retained control by winning 22 seats (see Current issues, below). One woman, who ran uncontested, was among those elected to the lower house. The king appointed new members to the Consultative Council on December 5, and his cabinet reshuffle of December 11 included for the first time a former member of the Islamic National Accord Society (INAS). The prime minister retained his post.

### *Constitution and Government*

In December 1972 the emir convened a Constituent Council to consider a draft constitution that provided for a National Assembly composed of a

cabinet (which had replaced the Council of State in 1971) and 30 members elected by popular vote. The constitution was approved in June 1973 and became effective December 6, 1973, and an election was held the following day. However, the assembly was dissolved in August 1975, with the emir suspending the constitutional provision for an elected legislative body. The Consultative Council named in January 1993 was established by the emir’s decree, observers predicting it would operate on a “trial basis” before provision for it or some other such body was incorporated into the constitution. At the time of the appointment of the council in September 2000, the government announced plans to conduct elections in 2004 for the next council. Meanwhile, the emir in April had decreed the establishment of a new Supreme Council for Economic Development to oversee the privatization of some state-owned industries.

The constitutional amendments of February 2002 proclaimed the country a “constitutional monarchy” based on separation of powers, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and freedom of association. In addition, the changes in the basic law provided for formation of a bicameral legislature; women were empowered not only to vote, but also to run for office. However, critics accused King Hamad of reserving too much authority for himself. (The king was designated head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces and was given uncontested power to appoint cabinet ministers, judges, and members of the upper house in the new National Assembly.)

The legal system is based on *sharia* (canonical Muslim law); the judiciary includes separate courts for members of the Sunni and Shiite sects. A constitutional court was established in July 2002.

The six main towns serve as bases of administrative divisions that are governed by municipal councils.

### *Foreign Relations*

Since independence, Bahrain has closely followed Saudi Arabia’s lead in foreign policy. However, it has been more moderate than most other

Arab states in its support of the Palestine Liberation Organization and in condemning the Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty of 1979.

Generally regarded as the most vulnerable of the Gulf sheikhdoms, Bahrain was a target of Iranian agitation and territorial claims following the overthrow of the shah. Although Manama adopted a posture of noncommitment at the outbreak in 1980 of the Iran–Iraq war, it subsequently joined the other five members of the GCC in voicing support for Iraq. A security treaty with Saudi Arabia was concluded in December 1981, and in February 1982 the foreign ministers of the GCC states announced that they would actively oppose “Iranian sabotage acts aimed at wrecking the stability of the Gulf region.” To this end, Bahrain joined with the other GCC states in annual joint military maneuvers. The spirit of cooperation was jolted in April 1986, however, by Bahrain’s conflict with Qatar over a small uninhabited island, Fasht al-Dibal, that had been reclaimed from an underlying coral reef for use as a Bahraini coast guard station. Following a brief takeover by Qatari armed forces, an agreement was reached to return the site to its original condition. In January 1989 the two countries agreed to mediation by Saudi Arabia to resolve other territorial problems, including Bahrain’s claim to Zubara, the ancestral home of the Al Khalifa family on the Qatari mainland. Nonetheless, in mid-1991 Qatar instituted a suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), claiming sovereignty not only over Fasht al-Dibal, but another reef, Qitat Jaradah, and the larger Hawar Island. Following the ICJ’s March 2001 ruling on the dispute (wherein Zubara was awarded to Qatar and Fasht al-Dibal, Qitat Jaradah, and Hawar Island to Bahrain), relations between the two countries improved significantly.

Relations with Washington have long been cordial, and in October 1991, following the UN action against Iraq, Bahrain and the United States signed a defense cooperation agreement, similar to one concluded between the United States and Kuwait, that provided for joint military exercises and authorized the storage of equipment and the use of port facilities by U.S. forces. The Gulf crisis was seen

as having provided the government with a powerful means of surmounting Sunni Arab fears that an ongoing U.S. presence would promote unrest among the country’s numerically predominant Shiite population, and in October 1995 Manama announced it had granted the United States permission to base 30 military aircraft in Bahrain. Meanwhile, the emirate and its GCC associates continued to seek regional security arrangements that would dilute domestic political pressure on individual members regarding military ties with the West. However, upon ascending to power in March 1999, Sheikh Hamad quickly pledged to maintain the close ties that his father had established with the Western powers. Subsequently, Bahrain signed a free trade agreement with the United States, whose naval base in Bahrain remained an important component of U.S. military force in the Gulf. Anti-American sentiment has remained relatively low in Bahrain, although protests broke out in May 2004 against attacks by U.S. forces on Shiite “holy cities” in Iraq. In late 2005 Bahrain was reported to have lifted its ban on imports of Israeli products as a result of pressure from the United States under terms of the free trade agreement. However, conflicting reports emerged over the status of Bahrain’s Israeli Boycott Office, with U.S. officials contending it had been closed in advance of implementation of the free trade agreement in 2006, while other reports stated that Bahrain’s boycott was still in effect, in compliance with Arab League dictates.

### *Current Issues*

Critics of Sheikh Isa’s domestic policies (particularly the repression of dissent emanating from the Shiite population and secular liberals since the 1996 disturbances) expressed the hope in 1999 that the new emir, Sheikh Hamad, would prove more open to dialogue and compromise. Among other things, Shiite leaders called for the release of Sheikh Jamri, the popular cleric who had finally gone on trial in February 1999 after having been detained for three years in connection with the events of early 1996. Opposition groups also continued to lobby for restoration of an elected legislature,

release of all political prisoners (arrests had continued throughout 1998), and the return of exiled dissidents—demands that attracted significant international support.

In July 1999 Sheikh Jamri was sentenced to ten years in jail on charges of inciting unrest and operating illegally on behalf of a foreign power. However, the emir pardoned the sheikh almost immediately, albeit not before coercing a “humiliating confession” from Jamri. (Sheikh Jamri died of a heart attack in December 2006.) Opposition groups welcomed the emir’s decision in November to release a number of detainees, but they claimed that numerous other political prisoners remained in jail. They also were only cautiously supportive of the government’s decision to include women for the first time in the new Consultative Council appointed in September 2000 and its announcement that membership of the next council would be determined through the ballot box. However, some of those concerns were alleviated by the referendum on the National Action Charter in February 2001. The emir also reduced tensions between his administration and its opponents by visiting Shiite-dominated areas, issuing a general amnesty for political detainees, permitting the return of prominent dissidents from exile, and repealing a number of hard-line security measures.

Although Sheikh Hamad promoted his constitutional amendments of February 2002 as moving Bahrain toward the status of a “modern democracy,” complaints quickly arose within the opposition camp. Most importantly, opponents decried Hamad’s decree that only the lower house of the National Assembly would be elected, with the upper house appointed by the king having an effective veto over legislation. (Critics called that decision a violation of the intent of the 2001 National Action Charter.) King Hamad also was strongly attacked for a 2002 decree granting immunity to any security personnel or government officials accused of torture or other human rights violations prior to 2001. A number of public protests subsequently broke out, many of them among Shiites who continued to feel repressed by the royal family and Sunnis in general. In the wake of a boycott by sev-

eral prominent political “societies” (see Political Groups, below), the turnout for the October 2002 balloting for the Chamber of Deputies was only 53 percent (down from more than 80 percent for the May municipal elections). International observers also began to question the government’s enthusiasm for reform, particularly when Abd al-Hadi al-KHAWAJA (the executive director of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights [BCHR]) was arrested in late 2004 for criticizing Prime Minister Salman. (Khawaja was pardoned by the king following his conviction, but the BCHR remained closed.) Concerns also were raised about the new antiterrorism law proposed by the government in 2005, opponents describing the language in the bill as being so broad as to permit the detention of any government critic. A decision by the government in early 2006 to help former political exiles on humanitarian grounds was “cautiously welcomed” by social activists.

While political societies continued to increase in number, in mid-2005 the king ratified a law placing more restrictions on the societies, specifically barring them from receiving funding from foreign sources and raising the minimum age for membership from 18 to 21. Also prohibited were political associations based on “class or profession, sectarian or geographical” groupings, drawing immediate criticism from the societies and prompting large public protests that carried over into early 2006. Nevertheless, most of the political societies, including several that boycotted the 2002 elections, agreed to register in accordance with the new law while continuing to promote full-fledged party empowerment and preparing to participate in the elections. In August 2006 the government announced tiered financial support for political groups, depending on size of membership, number of representatives in the legislature, and number of women representatives.

Tensions escalated between Shiites and Sunnis in advance of the 2006 parliamentary elections, with reports of confrontations between Shiite villagers and government security forces early in the year. Additionally, observers reported that Sunnis were becoming increasingly alarmed over Iranian

influence that they believed could lead to a “Shiite crescent” in the region. Further, a pre-election “political firestorm” was ignited by a former government official’s report alleging a secret plan to promote sectarian discrimination against Shiites and to rig the elections. Following balloting for the Chamber of Deputies (see Legislature, below) and the gains made by the main Shiite opposition group, the INAS, the government was encouraged that tensions might ease. Observers noted, however, that about three-quarters of the successful candidates, including both Sunnis and Shiites, were described as Islamists, underscoring the electoral failure of liberal tendencies. INAS members briefly boycotted the opening session of the National Assembly on December 15, but joined the swearing-in ceremonies on December 18. INAS leaders said the boycott was prompted by the reappointment of government officials whose names allegedly were linked to the scandal.

## Political Groups

Political parties are proscribed in Bahrain. At the first National Assembly election in 1973, however, voters elected ten candidates of a loosely organized Popular Bloc of the Left, while such small clandestine groups as a Bahraini branch of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), apparently consisting mainly of leftist students, subsequently continued to engage in limited activity. During the 1994 disturbances, a Shiite opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB), insisted that security forces were arresting its followers “at random” and condemned deportations of regime opponents.

Reports in the first half of the 1990s concerning activity on behalf of Shiites focused on *Hezbollah*, based in Lebanon and believed to be financed by Iran. The government charged that a *Hezbollah*-Bahrain was formed in Iran in 1993 and contributed to anti-regime activity, including the alleged coup attempt of 1996. Meanwhile, the Bahrain Freedom Movement, based in London under the leadership of Mansur al-JAMRI (the son of popular Shiite leader Sheikh Abd al-Amir al-Jamri [see Politi-

cal background and Current issues, above]), called for “passive resistance” on the part of the Bahraini populace to pressure the government into adopting “democratic reforms.”

Although the constitutional amendment of February 2002 did not lift the ban on political parties, several “groups” and “societies” were subsequently legalized in line with the democratic reforms. Staffed largely by formerly exiled opposition figures who had returned to Bahrain following the amnesty issued by the king in February 2002, those groups and associations “unofficially” endorsed candidates in local elections in May. In 2005 some groups registered under the new political associations law (see Political background, above) and entered candidates in the 2006 parliamentary elections. The political associations appeared to be functioning as de facto political parties, although parties remain formally banned.

**Islamic National Accord Society** (INAS). Referenced as “*al-Wifaq*” (“accord”), this Shiite grouping is led by cleric Sheikh Ali Salman, a former prominent member of the Bahrain Freedom Movement. *Al-Wifaq*, reported to be the country’s largest opposition group, was credited with winning upward of 70 percent of the seats in the municipal elections of May 2002. However, the INAS boycotted the October 2002 national balloting to protest some of the king’s constitutional amendments that *al-Wifaq* leaders considered inimical to genuine power-sharing (see Current issues, above). In 2004 it was reported that a number of INAS members split off to form a new **Justice and Development Society**, which INAS loyalists said would divide and weaken the Shiites. (While the Justice and Development Society pledged to participate in the 2006 national poll, the group apparently was dissolved sometime before the election.) In 2005 INAS decided to register as called for under the new political associations law, despite objecting to provisions of the law. A number of members resigned in protest over the registration, and subsequently, Sheikh Ali Salman was appointed the group’s first secretary general, underscoring his increasing status in the society. The group won

18 seats in two rounds of balloting in the 2006 Chamber of Deputies elections, greatly increasing Shiite representation in the lower house to 42.5 percent. Although Salman had indicated great interest in the post of speaker of the chamber, the incumbent was reelected.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Ali SALMAN (Secretary General), Husayn al-DAIHI (Deputy Secretary General), Husayn MUSHAYMA.

**Progressive Democratic Forum** (PDF) This group was launched by former members of the Marxist **National Liberation Front of Bahrain** (NLFB)—active mainly in exile since the 1950s—upon their return to Bahrain in 2002 following reforms by King Hamad. The PDF subsequently registered as an official group. In 2005 the group was one of nine that urged the king to suspend the new political associations law and to institute more democratic reforms. The PDF unofficially supported candidates in the 2002 and 2006 balloting for the Chamber of Deputies.

*Leaders:* Ahmad al-THAWADI, Hassan MADAN.

**National Islamic Society** (*Al Menbar*). This Sunni group, reported to be part of the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, won seven seats in the 2006 parliamentary election.

*Leaders:* Salah ALI (President), Abdullahtif al-SHAIKH, and Ali AHMAD.

**Al-Asala** A progovernment Sunni Salafi society of some 240 members, *al-Asala* was the first political society to register under the new political associations law. It secured five seats in the 2006 parliamentary elections and reportedly formed an alliance with the National Islamic Society to offset gains by Shiite groups in the Chamber of Deputies.

*Leader:* Ghanion al-BUANEEN.

**Al-Mithaq** Established in 2005, *al-Mithaq* (“covenant”) backed the National Action Charter and the government’s decision to offer financial support to political groups since the new political associations law banned them from receiving money from foreign sources. Other societies criticized *al-Mithaq*’s position, saying its support for

the government hindered other groups’ attempts to expand democracy. *Al-Mithaq*’s only candidate for the 2006 parliamentary election withdrew before the poll.

*Leaders:* Ahmad JUMA (President), Muhammad JANAHI (Secretary General).

**National Democratic Action Society** (*Waad*). This leftist, nationalist group boycotted the October 2002 balloting for the Chamber of Deputies. However, in 2005 its members voted in favor of registering under the new political associations law despite having vowed months earlier to challenge some aspects of the law. The group failed to win seats in the 2006 parliamentary election.

*Leaders:* Ibrahim SHARIF (President), Ibrahim Kamal al-DEEN (Vice President), Abdul Rahman al-NUAIMI.

**Islamic Arab Democratic Society** (*Wasat*.) A Pan-Arab opposition group, *Wasat* (“center”) fielded candidates in the 2002 parliamentary election. In 2005 the group participated in protests aimed at the political associations law and continued to press for amendments to the law through the legislature.

*Leader:* Jassem al-MEHZEA.

**National Justice Movement** This opposition group announced its formation in March 2006 to offset the influence of the INAS and to give more weight to secular groups. The group, whose focus was naturalization and constitutional issues, was highly critical of government actions against Islamists alleged to be *jihadists*. The group supported candidates who ran as independents in the 2006 parliamentary election.

*Leader:* Abdullah HASHIM.

**Islamic Action Society** This grouping was formed by followers of Shiite religious scholar Muhammad Mahdi al-SHIRAZI. It was led by Sheikh Muhammad Ali Mahfuz, a former leader of the IFLB. The Islamic Action Society, which supported political reforms and was seen as furthering the aims of the IFLB, boycotted the 2002 elections but supported candidates who ran as independents in the 2006 parliamentary election.

*Leader:* Sheikh Muhammad Ali MAHFUZ.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM).** Some members of the London-based BFM returned to Bahrain in 2002, including former BFM leader Majid al-AWALI, who was named to the new cabinet in November. However, other BFM members remained in exile in London, criticizing King Hamad for orchestrating a “constitutional putsch.” The group continued to be active in its criticism of the government in early 2006, with one senior member calling for a boycott of the next elections.

**Movement of Liberties and Democracy—Bahrain (Haq).** This mostly Shiite separatist group, which was formed in 2005 after its members broke away from the INAS, does not recognize the country’s constitution. In 2006 the group participated in several protest rallies and boycotted the Chamber of Deputies elections.

*Leaders:* Husayn MUSHAYMA (Secretary General), Abduljalil ALSINGACE.

Other political societies active in 2006 included the Baathist **Democratic National Rally**, the leftist **Progressive Democratic Society, Constitutional Rally**, and **National Free Thought**.

## Legislature

The first election to fill 30 non-nominated seats in the **National Assembly** was held December 7, 1973. In addition to the elected members, who were to serve four-year terms, the assembly contained 14 cabinet members (including 2 ministers of state). The assembly was dissolved on August 26, 1975, on the grounds that it had indulged in debates “dominated by ideas alien to the society and values of Bahrain.”

In January 1993 the emir appointed a 30-member Consultative Council to contribute “advice and opinion” on legislation proposed by the cabinet and, in certain cases, suggest new laws on its own. In accordance with reforms announced in April 1996, the emir appointed new 40-member councils on September 28, 1996, and September 27, 2000. (The council appointed in 2000 included women for the first time.)

The king dissolved the Consultative Council on February 14, 2002, in anticipation of the establishment of the new bicameral National Assembly (*Majlis al-Watani*) provided for in the constitutional revision of the same day.

**Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura).** The upper house comprises 40 members appointed by the king for a four-year term. The first appointments, including six women as well as representatives of the Christian and Jewish communities, were made by King Hamad on November 16, 2002. The king appointed 40 new members on December 5, 2006.

*Speaker:* Ali Saleh Abdullah al-SALEH.

**Chamber of Deputies (Majlis al-Nuwwab).** The lower house comprises 40 members directly elected on a majoritarian basis for a four-year term. In the most recent elections on November 25, 2006, with runoff balloting on December 2, the seat distribution was as follows: Islamic National Accord Society (INAS), 17 seats; the National Islamic Society, 7; the *Al-Asala*, 5; and independents, 11 (one of the independents was described as firmly aligned with INAS).

*Speaker:* Khalifa al-DHAHRANI.

## Communications

### Press

Until recently, the ruling family strongly censored all media; the Bahraini press was described by a correspondent for the *Financial Times* as “fawning.” Some progress toward media freedom has been noted since early 2001 in line with recent democratic reforms, although “draconian” regulations remained formally in place, including Internet censorship. The following newspapers are published in Manama unless otherwise noted: *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Gulf News, 30,000), first Arabic daily, founded 1976; *al-Ayam* (The Days, 21,400), daily in Arabic; *al-Adhwaa* (Lights, 16,000), Arab weekly; *Bahrain Tribune* (12,500), sister paper to *al-Ayam* in English; *Gulf Daily News* (11,000), daily in English; *Al Watan* (The Nation, started

## Cabinet

As of January 1, 2007

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister

Sheikh Khalifa ibn Salman Al Khalifa  
Sheikh Ali ibn Khalifa Al Khalifa  
Sheikh Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifa  
Jawad Salim al-Urayid

### *Ministers*

Cabinet Affairs	Sheikh Ahmad ibn Atayatallah Al Khalifa
Chamber of Deputies and Consultative Council Affairs	Brig. Gen. Abdulaziz al-Fadhil
Commerce and Industry	Hassan ibn Abdullah Fakhro
Defense	Gen. Sheikh Khalifa ibn Ahmad Al Khalifa
Education	Majid ibn Ali al-Nuaimi
Electricity and Water	Sheikh Abdullah ibn Salman Al Khalifa
Finance	Sheikh Ahmed ibn Muhammad Al Khalifa
Foreign Affairs	Sheikh Khalid ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al Khalifa
Health	Dr. Nada Haffadh [f]
Housing and Public Works	Fahmi ibn Ali al-Jawder
Information	Muhammad ibn Abdulghaffar Abdullah
Interior	Sheikh Rashid ibn Abdullah ibn Ahmad Al Khalifa
Justice and Islamic Affairs	Sheikh Khalid ibn Ali Al Khalifa
Labor	Majid ibn Mushin al-Alawi
Municipalities and Agricultural Affairs	Mansur ibn Hassan ibn Rajab
Oil and Gas	Abdullahussain ibn Ali Mirza
Prime Minister's Court Minister	Sheikh Khalid ibn Abdullah Al Khalifa
Social Affairs	Fatima al-Balushi [f]

### *Ministers of State*

Defense  
Foreign Affairs

Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al Khalifa  
Nizar Al Baharna

[f] = female

in 2005), daily in Arabic; *Sada al-Ushb* (Weekly Echo, 5,000), Arabic weekly; *al-Bahrain al-Yawm* (Bahrain Today, 5,000), Arabic weekly, published by the Ministry of Information; and *al-Wasat* (described as the “first truly independent” paper in Bahrain).

### *News Agencies*

The official national facility is the Bahrain News Agency; *Agence France-Presse*, the Associated

Press, the GulfNews Agency, and Reuters maintain offices in Manama.

### *Broadcasting and computing*

The Bahrain Broadcasting Service (Idhaat al-Bahrayn), a government facility that transmits in Arabic and English, and Radio Bahrain (Radiyu al-Bahrayn), an English-language commercial station, are the principal sources of radio programs

and were received by approximately 355,000 sets in 1999. Bahrain's first private radio station began broadcasting in 2005 as The Voice of Tomorrow (Sawt Al Ghad), focusing on sports and entertainment. The government-operated Bahrain Television (Tilifiziyun al-Bahrayn), which has provided commercial programming in Arabic since 1973, added an English-language channel in 1981. As of 2005, there were approximately 213 Internet users and 169 personal computers per 1,000 people. As of that same year there were about 1,030 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Naser Mohamed AL-BALOOSHI

**U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain:** Joseph Adam ERELI

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Tawfiq Ahmad ALMANSUR

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, GCC, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, WCO, WTO



# CYPRUS

## REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

*Kypriaki Dimokratia (Greek)*

*Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti (Turkish)*

### The Country

Settled by Greeks in antiquity, conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1571, placed under British administration in 1878, and annexed by Britain in 1914, Cyprus has been independent since 1960 (although effectively partitioned since 1974). The largest island in the eastern Mediterranean, it supports diverse and often antagonistic ethnic groups and traditions. More than 75 percent of the population speaks Greek and belongs to the Orthodox Church, while more than 20 percent is Turkish-speaking Muslim; adherents of other religions account for less than 2 percent.

Although Cyprus was historically an agricultural country, the Greek Cypriot rural sector presently employs only about 13 percent of the total labor force and contributes less than 6 percent of GDP (the corresponding Turkish Cypriot figures being 25 and 12 percent, respectively). Nonetheless, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and wine rank with clothing and footwear as leading exports. Following the de facto partition of the island into Greek and Turkish sectors in 1974, rebuilding in the south emphasized manufacturing of nondurable consumer goods, while the more severely damaged north has relied on its citrus groves, mines, and tourist facilities as well as on direct budgetary assistance from Turkey (estimated at around 20 percent of budgeted expenditure in recent years). Whereas 70 percent of predivision productive resources had been located in the north (including 80 percent of the island's citrus groves and 60 percent of tourist

installations), the postdivision southern economy rapidly outdistanced that of the north, achieving consistently high annual growth rates and virtually full employment. In addition to developing tourism and agriculture, Greek Cyprus diversified into financial, shipping, and other services, becoming a major offshore banking center and suffering only a temporary downturn as a result of the 1990–1991 Gulf crisis.

The economy performed well in the first half of the 1990s, growth averaging more than 4 percent annually and unemployment remaining negligible. However, disturbances along the dividing line between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot



territories in 1996 led to a decline in tourism, the collateral slowdown in economic growth being exacerbated by the effect of drought in 1996–1997 on agricultural production. Subsequently, the economic focus was on efforts to harmonize policies in areas such as taxation, customs, and government spending with those of the European Union (EU), with which Cyprus began conducting formal accession negotiations in 1998. With one of the strongest economies among the EU candidate states, Cyprus completed 24 of 29 chapters in the EU accession process by late 2001. However, some economic slowdown was noted, mainly due to the global recession and declining tourism.

GDP grew by 4.1 percent in 2001, 2.1 percent in 2002, and 1.9 percent in 2003. In order to join the EU, the government initiated broad reforms in the banking sector and agreed to raise taxes on its offshore financial companies. Accession to the EU on May 1, 2004, was seen as providing substantial opportunities for economic growth, although the unresolved political division of the island continued to be a significant complication. In 2004 GDP grew by 3.5 percent, with inflation (2.5 percent) and unemployment (3.4 percent) remaining well below European averages. In addition, by that time per capita annual income had reportedly reached about 80 percent of EU norms. Government priorities included deficit reduction (in part through pension reform and wage constraint for public sector workers) and overall labor market reform.

In 2007 the International Monetary Fund reported that Cyprus's economy continued to recover from its "weak performance" of four years ago, citing low inflation (2.5 percent), a significant deficit reduction, and a higher standard of living. New construction in vacation homes and increased tourism revenues helped boost annual GDP growth to 3.8 percent.

The northern economy (on which reliable figures are scarce) appears to have made only limited progress since 1974, being hard hit by the collapse in 1990 of the Polly Peck International fruit-packaging and tourism conglomerate (which had accounted for a third of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus's [TRNC] GDP and 60 percent of its exports) and by external rulings ban-

ning imports from the TRNC as an unrecognized entity. The TRNC announced a five-year plan for economic development in 1997, although progress appeared to continue to depend on a resolution of the political statement on the island. Meanwhile, aid from Turkey remained the major support for the TRNC, which, by using the Turkish lira as its unit of currency, has been forced to deal with rapid inflation, unlike the Greek Cypriot sector.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

The conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriot aspirations shaped the political evolution of Cyprus both before and after the achievement of formal independence on August 16, 1960. Many Greek Cypriots had long agitated for *enosis*, or the union of Cyprus with Greece; most Turkish Cypriots, backed by the Turkish government, consistently rejected such demands, opposed the termination of British rule in 1960, and advocated division of the island into Greek- and Turkish-speaking sectors. Increased communal and anti-British violence after 1955 culminated in the Zürich and London compromise agreements of 1959, which provided for an independent Cyprus guaranteed by Greece, Turkey, and Britain and instituted stringent constitutional safeguards for the protection of the Turkish minority. These agreements expressly prohibited either union with Greece or partition of the island between Greece and Turkey.

The government of Archbishop MAKARIOS proposed numerous constitutional changes in November 1963, including revision of articles considered inviolable by the Turkish Cypriots. The proposals led to a renewal of communal conflict, the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from the government, and, in 1964, the establishment of the UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), whose mandate was thereafter regularly extended for six-month periods by the Security Council. Further conflict broke out in 1967, nearly precipitating war between Greece and Turkey.

Following the 1967 violence, Turkish Cypriots moved to implement an administration for their

**Political Status:** Independent republic established August 16, 1960; member of the Commonwealth since March 13, 1961; under ethnic Greek majority regime until coup led by Greek army officers and subsequent Turkish intervention on July 20, 1974; Turkish Federated State proclaimed February 13, 1975, in Turkish-controlled (northern) sector; permanent constitutional status under negotiation (currently suspended) despite proclamation of independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on November 15, 1983.

**Area:** 3,572 sq. mi. (9,251 sq. km.), embracing approximately 2,172 sq. mi. (5,625 sq. km.) in Greek-controlled (southern) sector and 1,400 sq. mi. (3,626 sq. km.) in Turkish-controlled (northern) sector.

**Population:** 913,000 (2001E, including Greek sector census figure of 703,529 and an estimate of 209,000 for the Turkish sector); a comparable overall estimate for 2006 would be 992,000, assuming accuracy of the 2001 TRNC figure, which includes settlers from Turkey (approximately 55 percent).

**Major Urban Centers (Urban Areas, 2005E):** NICOSIA/LEFKOSÍA (224,000, excluding

Turkish sector), Limassol/Lemesós (175,000), Larnaca/Lárnax (77,000), Paphos/Néa Páfos (54,000). In 1995, city names were changed by the government as part of a campaign to standardize them in accordance with their Greek pronunciation; however, both names are accorded official status.

**Official Languages:** Greek, Turkish.

**Monetary Unit:** Cyprus Pound (market rate November 2, 2007: 1 pound = \$2.50US). (In the wake of its accession to the European Union in May 2004, Cyprus indicated in 2007 it would like to adopt the euro as its official currency on January 1, 2008.)

**President:** Tassos PAPAĐOPOULOS (Democratic Party); elected in first-round popular balloting on February 16, 2003, and inaugurated for a five-year term on March 1, succeeding Glafcos CLERIDES (Democratic Rally).

**Vice President:** Vacant. Rauf R. DENKTAŞ, then president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector), was elected vice president by vote of the Turkish Community in February 1973, but there has been no subsequent vice-presidential balloting.

segment of the island. This organization, known as the Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration, constituted a de facto government in the Turkish communities. The Turkish Cypriot withdrawal also meant that from 1967 until the Turkish military intervention in July 1974 the prime conflicts were between the Makarios regime and radicals in the Greek community (led, until his death in January 1974, by Gen. George GRIVAS).

On July 15, 1974, the Greek Cypriot National Guard, commanded by Greek army officers, launched a coup against the Makarios government and installed a Greek Cypriot newspaper publisher and former terrorist, Nikos Giorgiades SAMPSON, as president following the archbishop's flight from the island. Five days later, Turkish troops were dispatched to northern Cyprus, bringing some 1,400 square miles (39 percent of the total area) under their control before agreeing to a cease-fire. On July 23 the Sampson government resigned and

the more moderate presiding officer of the Cypriot House of Representatives, Glafcos CLERIDES, was sworn in as acting president. On the same day, the military government of Greece fell, and on July 25 representatives of Britain, Greece, and Turkey met in Geneva in an effort to resolve the Cyprus conflict. An agreement consolidating the cease-fire was concluded on July 30, but the broader issues were unresolved when the talks collapsed on August 14. Upon his return to Cyprus and resumption of the presidency on December 7, Makarios rejected Turkish demands for geographical partition of the island, although he had earlier indicated a willingness to give the Turks increased administrative responsibilities in their own communities.

On February 13, 1975, Turkish leaders in the occupied northern sector proclaimed a Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (see map) with Rauf DENKTAŞ, the nominal vice president of the republic, as president. Although the action was

immediately denounced by both President Makarios and Greek Prime Minister Caramanlis, the formation of a Turkish Cypriot Legislative Assembly was announced on February 24.

Extensive negotiations between Greek and Turkish representatives were held in Vienna in April 1977, following a meeting between Makarios and Denktas in February. Although it was revealed that the more recent Greek proposals embraced the establishment of a bicomunal federal state, the Makarios government insisted that only 20 percent of the island's area be reserved for Turkish administration, while the Turks countered with demands that would entail judicial parity and a presidency to rotate between Greek and Turkish chief executives.

Archbishop Makarios died on August 3, 1977, and was succeeded, as acting president, by Spyros KYPRIANOU, who was elected on August 31 to fill the remaining six months of the Makarios term. Following the kidnapping of Kyprianou's son on December 14 by right-wing extremists, Clerides withdrew as a contender for the presidency, and Kyprianou became the only candidate at the close of nominations on January 26, 1978. As a result, the election scheduled for February 5 was canceled, Kyprianou being installed for a five-year term on March 1. In April 1982 the two government parties, the Democratic Party (*Demokratiko Komma—Deko*) and the (Communist) Progressive Party of the Working People (*Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou—AKEL*), agreed to support Kyprianou for reelection in February 1983.

In a three-way race that involved Clerides and Vassos LYSSARIDES, the leader of the United Democratic Union of Cyprus–Socialist Party (*Ethniki Demokratiki Enosi Kyprou–Sosialistiko Komma—EDEK-SK*), who technically withdrew on January 4, Kyprianou won reelection on February 13, 1983, securing 57 percent of the vote. On November 15, the Turkish Cypriot Legislative Assembly unanimously approved the declaration of an independent TRNC.

President Kyprianou and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas met at UN headquarters January 17–20, 1985, for their first direct negotiations in five years. Prior to the meeting, the two had endorsed

a draft proposal to establish a federal republic that entailed substantial territorial concessions by the Turkish Cypriots and the removal of foreign troops from the island. Although UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar declared that the gap had “never been so narrow” between the two sides, the talks collapsed after Kyprianou reportedly characterized the plan as no more than an “agenda.” Subsequently, the government's coalition partner, AKEL, joined with the opposition Democratic Rally (*Demokratikos Synagermos—Desy*) in blaming Kyprianou for the breakdown in the talks and calling for his resignation as president.

At the conclusion of a bitter debate on the president's negotiating posture, the House of Representatives voted unanimously on November 1, 1985, to dissolve itself, paving the way for an early legislative election. In the balloting on December 8, Kyprianou's Deko gained marginally (though remaining a minority grouping), while the opposition failed to secure the two-thirds majority necessary to enact a constitutional revision that would require the chief executive to conform to the wishes of the House.

Deprived of the backing of AKEL, Kyprianou placed third in first-round presidential balloting on February 14, 1988. In a runoff election one week later, George VASSILIOU, a millionaire businessman running with AKEL endorsement, defeated Clerides by securing a 51.5 percent majority.

On August 24, 1988, Presidents Vassiliou and Denktas met in Geneva for the first summit talks between the two communities in over three years, with formal negotiations being resumed in September. By June 1989 deadlock had again been reached, an acceptance in principle by both sides of the UN-proposed concept of a bicomunal, bizonal federation under one sovereignty being negated by fundamental differences on implementation. More positively, in May 1989 both sides began the withdrawal of forces from 24 military posts along the central Nicosia/Lefkosia sector dividing the island.

A new round of UN-sponsored talks in February 1990 ended prematurely the following month when a demand by Denktas for a “right of self-determination” was construed by Vassiliou as a

demand for separate sovereignty. Relations were further exacerbated by the Greek Cypriot government's application in July for entry into the European Community (EC, subsequently the EU). Benefiting from association with Vassiliou's high negotiating profile, AKEL registered the biggest advance in legislative balloting on May 19, 1991, but Desy retained a narrow plurality as Deko representation plummeted.

In 1992 the UN suggested a demarcation of Greek and Turkish sectors under a federal structure that would entail the transfer of about 25 percent of TRNC territory to Greek Cypriot administration. The plan was described as "totally unacceptable" by Denktaş, who warded off growing criticism from TRNC hard-liners by reiterating his self-determination/sovereignty demand for Turkish Cypriots. Also divided were the Greek Cypriots, with AKEL and Desy broadly supporting Vassiliou's acceptance of the UN plan, whereas Deko and the EDEK-SK complained that the president was accepting effective partition. Because of the continuing deadlock, the UN Security Council in November proposed so-called confidence-building measures as the basis for an overall settlement, including troop reductions, small transfers of TRNC territory to UN administration, and the reopening of Nicosia international airport (closed since 1974). However, differences on these proposals proved to be as intractable as those on the fundamental issues.

Veteran Desy leader Clerides emerged as the surprise victor in Greek Cypriot presidential balloting on February 7 and 14, 1993, when Vassiliou (again backed by AKEL) was narrowly defeated in the runoff contest (50.3 to 49.7 percent). During the campaign the Desy leader's previous support for the Vassiliou line had mutated into forceful criticism, thus enabling Deko and the EDEK-SK (whose joint candidate was eliminated in the first round) to swing behind Clerides in the second round. A new government appointed by Clerides on February 25 contained six Desy and five Deko ministers.

Hopes that Clerides would break the deadlock in the Cyprus negotiations were quickly disappointed. On the other hand, because of continuing economic

progress in Greek Cyprus, the administration went into legislative balloting on May 26, 1996, in a buoyant mood. Desy retained its narrow plurality of 20 seats, Deko lost 1 of its 11, and AKEL managed only a 1-seat advance, to 19; the remaining seats went to the EDEK-SK, 5; and the new Free Democrats Movement (*Kinima ton Eleftheron Demokraton*—KED), 2.

The Desy-Deko coalition collapsed when the Deko central committee decided to break from the government on November 4, 1997, after Clerides revealed his intention to seek reelection in the February 1998 elections. The five Deko cabinet members who consequently resigned were replaced by nonparty ministers. There were seven candidates in the February 1998 presidential balloting: President Clerides; George IACOVOU, an independent backed by AKEL and Deko; George Vassiliou, former president and the leader of the KED; Nikos ROLANDIS, leader of the Liberal Party (KP); Vassos LYSSARIDES, president of EDEK-SK; Nicholas KOUTSOU of New Horizons (NO); and independent candidate Alexis GALANOS, who had broken from Deko over its endorsement of Iacovou.

Iacovou led Clerides by a very slight margin in the first-round balloting (40.61 to 40.06 percent) on February 8, with Lyssarides finishing third with 10.59 percent. The EDEK-SK took no position regarding the runoff, but the other first-round contenders endorsed Clerides, who secured a 50.8 to 49.2 percent victory in the second round on February 15 at which a 94 percent turnout was reported. On February 28 Clerides announced a new "national unity" government comprising, in addition to Desy, the KP, EDEK-SK, United Democrats, and several Deko "rebels." Among other things, the multiparty cabinet was reportedly designed to present a unified stance regarding EU membership and proposed reunification talks. However, the EDEK-SK resigned from the government in late 1998 as the result of a dispute regarding the proposed deployment of Russian missiles on the island (see Current issues, below).

In legislative balloting on May 27, 2001, AKEL secured a plurality of 20 seats, followed by Desy with 19. In presidential elections on February 16,

2003, Tassos PAPADOPOULOS of Deko, campaigning against the proposed UN reunification plan, won a first-round election with 51.5 percent of the vote. His new coalition cabinet was sworn in on March 1, 2003.

On July 14, 2003, after the breakdown of negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots over reunification, the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives unanimously approved EU entry. Greek Cypriots rejected the UN-brokered peace plan in a referendum on April 24, 2004, thereby ensuring that only the Greek areas of Cyprus joined the EU on May 1, 2004 (see Current issues, below).

In the parliamentary elections of May 21, 2006, Deko received 17.9 percent of the vote, up from 14.8 percent in 2001, while support for both AKEL and Desy declined somewhat. The president reshuffled the cabinet on June 8, with members of Deko, AKEL, and the Social Democrats' Movement (*Kinima Sosial-dimokraton*—Kisos, as the EDEK-SK had been renamed) predominating.

### *Constitution and Government*

The constitution of 1960, based on the Zürich and London agreements, provided for a carefully balanced system designed to protect both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot interests. A Greek president and a Turkish vice president, both elected for five-year terms, were to name a cabinet composed of representatives of both groups in specified proportions. Legislative authority was entrusted to a unicameral House of Representatives, with 35 Greek and 15 Turkish members to be elected by their respective communities. In addition, Greek and Turkish Communal Chambers were established to deal with internal community affairs. Collateral arrangements were made for judicial institutions, the army, and the police. Following the original outbreak of hostilities in 1963 and the consequent withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriots from the government, there were a number of changes, including merger of the police and gendarmerie, establishment of a National Guard, abolition of the Greek Communal Chamber, amendment of

the electoral law, and modification of the judicial structure.

Subsequent to withdrawal, the Turkish community practiced a form of self-government under the Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration, an extraconstitutional entity not recognized by the government. It formed a Turkish Cypriot Provisional Assembly composed of the 15 Turkish members of the national legislature and the 15 representatives to the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber. In early 1975 the Provisional Administration was reorganized as a Turkish Federated State in the northern sector of the island, followed by a unilateral declaration of independence in November 1983 (see article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector). From the December 1985 election the national membership of the House of Representatives was increased to 80 seats, although only the 56 Greek Cypriot seats were filled in that and subsequent contests.

Prior to the intervention by mainland Turkish forces, the island was divided into six administrative districts, each headed by an official appointed by the central government. Municipalities were governed by elected mayors.

### *Foreign Relations*

Following independence in 1960, Cyprus became a member of the UN and a number of other intergovernmental organizations. On several occasions Archbishop Makarios made diplomatic overtures toward Third World countries, although even prior to the 1974 conflict, internal problems made it difficult for him to follow up on such initiatives. As a result of the events of 1974, the domestic situation became in large measure a function of relations with Greece and Turkey, two uneasy NATO partners whose range of disagreement has by no means been confined to Cyprus. Britain, because of its treaty responsibilities in the area, has long played a major role in attempting to mediate the Cyprus dispute, while the United States, prior to the George H. W. Bush presidency, played a less active role. The intercommunal talks, held intermittently since 1975, were initiated at the request of the UN Security Council, which has assumed

the principal responsibility for truce supervision through the UNFICYP.

In October 1987 the government concluded an agreement with the EC to establish a full customs union over a 15-year period commencing January 1, 1988; in July 1990 it submitted a formal application for full membership. In October 1993 the Council of Ministers of the EU called on the Brussels Commission to begin “substantive discussions” with Cyprus to prepare for accession negotiations. The result was agreement by the EU’s Corfu summit in June 1994 that Cyprus would be included in the next round of enlargement negotiations due to begin in 1996 or 1997. Uncertainties remained, however, as to linkage between EU accession and resolution of the basic Cyprus question, especially in light of vehement opposition by both the TRNC and Turkey to the Greek Cypriots’ unilateral pursuit of membership. (Formal negotiations regarding the accession of Cyprus to the EU were launched in March 1998, and Cyprus joined in 2004.)

Turkish Cypriot hostility to Greek Cypriot EU aspirations was compounded when the European Court of Justice ruled on July 5, 1994, that all EU imports from Cyprus would require authorization from the Greek Cypriot government, thus in effect banning direct trade between the EU and the Turkish sector. President Denktas informed the UN Security Council on July 26 that resumption of the peace talks was contingent on cancellation of the court’s ruling, while TRNC Assembly resolutions of late August called for defense and foreign policy coordination with Turkey and rejected a federal Cyprus solution as required by the UN, urging instead “political equality and sovereignty” for the Turkish sector.

Pursuant to an agreement of November 16, 1993, placing Cyprus within “the Greek defense area,” joint Greek–Greek Cypriot military exercises were held for the first time in October 1994. Seven months later, President Clerides headed a visit to Athens by the Greek Cypriot National Council (consisting of the main party leaders) for a “unity” meeting with Greek government ministers. Concurrently, closer relations were established between the Greek Cypriot government and Russia,

which in March 1995 informed Turkey of its firm commitment to a federal solution to the Cyprus problem in accordance with UN resolutions.

In 2007 Cyprus and Turkey were engaged in a dispute over oil and gas exploration rights in the Mediterranean granted to Egypt and Lebanon. Turkey had warned the latter countries that any agreements with Greek Cyprus also required discussion with the Turkish north. Egypt subsequently halted its agreement with Cyprus; Lebanon did not succumb to pressure from Turkey.

### *Current Issues*

Amid persistent deadlock in intercommunal negotiations, the Greek Cypriot side took some comfort from the specific condemnations of Turkish Cypriot intractability that issued regularly from the UN secretary general and Security Council beginning in 1992. President Clerides subsequently adopted a tougher stance by categorically ruling out any formal talks on a “confederation” and insisting that further discussions be based on the UN-endorsed concept of a bicomunal federation preserving a single sovereignty.

While continuing to attach importance to American and British mediation, the Greek Cypriot government gave increasing priority to the “EU route” to a settlement, believing that its application for full EU membership could yield a breakthrough in the deadlock. Under this scenario, the Turkish Cypriot side would perceive the potential benefits of EU membership to the beleaguered northern economy and would accordingly be brought to accept a federal “one sovereignty” settlement as the Greek Cypriot application progressed. However, such hopes were dashed in August 1996 when Greek Cypriot antipartition demonstrators clashed with Turkish soldiers and civilians after penetrating the UN buffer zone. An international mediation effort to ease the tension between the two communities was subsequently launched by France, Germany, and the UK.

In response to a UN draft agreement for the establishment of a federal Cyprus in 1997, President Denktas restated his demand that Cyprus suspend

its application for EU membership before talks proceeded. The prospects for future rapprochement remained slim, as Denktaş met with the Turkish foreign affairs minister, İsmail Cem, and announced that a joint committee would be formed to implement “partial integration” between the TRNC and Turkey. In December the EU summit in Luxembourg included Cyprus among the six countries for whom formal membership negotiations would begin in the spring of 1998 (Turkey being pointedly excluded from the list), and the TRNC subsequently suspended all bicomunal activities. The Greek Cypriot government invited the TRNC to appoint representatives to the Cypriot team being established to negotiate with the EU; however, the Denktaş administration rejected the overture, reportedly out of concern (in part, at least) that it would be in a “subservient” position under such arrangements.

Tension between the Greek Cypriot government and the TRNC escalated sharply in late December 1998 when Clerides announced the impending deployment of Russian missiles on Greek Cypriot soil. Turkey quickly threatened possible military intervention, and the EU said it would suspend accession talks with Cyprus if the plan was pursued. Consequently, Clerides agreed to have the missiles deployed instead on the Greek island of Crete, with Greece maintaining “operational control” of the weapons. Subsequently, the administration called upon the international community to bring greater pressure on Ankara and the TRNC to return to the bargaining table. Although both Washington and the UN pledged to intensify their mediation efforts, little hope for compromise appeared following nationalists’ significant gains in April 1999 balloting in Turkey and no sentiment for a “unitary state” having surfaced in the TRNC.

Apparently in consonance with Greek-Turkish rapprochement (see articles on Turkey and Greece), the tension between Greek and Turkish Cypriots eased considerably after a major earthquake hit western Turkey in mid-August 1999, the Cypriot government sending monetary and humanitarian aid to Turkey. However, the improved relations failed to produce any breakthrough in a series of

UN proximity talks conducted through 2000. In what some saw as a compromise step, Denktaş in 2001 backed away from his insistence of Cypriot recognition of the TRNC as a precondition to resuming talks and proposed a “partnership republic” instead of confederation.

For most of 2002 periodic negotiations between the Greek and Turkish sides failed to produce tangible results. However, a report published in October by the European Commission announced that Cyprus, among others, had fulfilled the political criteria for admission to the EU and was expected to sign an accession treaty in the spring of 2003 in anticipation of membership in 2004. Consequently, international pressure intensified for resolution of the Turkish/Cypriot dispute. (Although the EU made it clear that Cyprus’s accession was not contingent on a political settlement and that the EU was prepared, if necessary, to admit only the “Greek” part of Cyprus, it was clear that the preference was strong for the island’s entry as a “unified entity.”) In an effort to solve the deadlock, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan launched a comprehensive plan in early November, proposing a reunification plan in which the two component states would have equal status and substantial autonomy.

Central to Annan’s plan was the return of property from the Turkish Cypriots to the Greek Cypriots and compensation for property losses in both communities. Annan’s proposal envisioned a reduction of the TRNC from 36 percent of the island to 28.5 percent. The plan would displace 42,000 Turkish Cypriots and allow 85,000 Greek Cypriots to return to their former homes.

Tensions between the two communities increased with the February 2003 presidential election of Tassos Papadopoulos, who demanded that all Greek refugees have their property restored as part of any reunification. Despite apparent concessions from Denktaş regarding partial reopening of the border and some proposed land return, little progress was achieved in subsequent talks as Papadopoulos retained his hard-line stance.

In early 2004 Papadopoulos agreed to present the revised UN reunification plan to a national



referendum, although he campaigned against the plan, demanding more concessions from the TRNC, particularly in regard to property reparations. Consequently, the plan was defeated by Greek Cypriots by a three-to-one margin on April 24, and, as a result, only the Greek Cypriot sector joined the EU on May 1. (Sixty-five percent of voters in the TRNC had supported the plan forwarded by UN Secretary General Annan.)

The UN-controlled border between the TRNC and the south opened to some trade and travel in 2004, although the TRNC government charged that the Greek Cypriot government was limiting trade from the north by its administrative requirements. Although bitterness continued on both sides, new reunification talks were launched in mid-2005, Papadopoulos arguing that the island was “too small” to remain divided. (See article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector for additional information on the reunification issue.)

In the May 2006 parliamentary elections, the mood of the voters reflected their rejection of the UN reunification plan as presented in 2004. Papadopoulos’s Deko gained a small increase in vote share compared to 2001 results, while parties, most notably Desy, that had backed the UN plan for reunification did not fare well. The elections included one Turkish Cypriot candidate, and for the first time since 1963, Turkish Cypriots living in the Greek-controlled part of the island were allowed to vote.

Meanwhile, Turkey’s consideration for admission into the EU continued to influence politics and government activity in both Cyprus and the TRNC (see article on Turkey for details on its negotiations with the EU). In July 2006, under a “set of principles” mediated by the UN, Greek Cypriot and TRNC officials traded lists of bicomunal issues for discussion, the new effort coming on the heels of a meeting between presidents Papadopoulos and Talat in Nicosia several days earlier. In the TRNC, friction within the ruling coalition over reunification led to the collapse of the government in September and the establishment of a new coalition government (see article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector for details).

Bilateral north/south talks continued in 2007, consideration of the UN reunification plan having stalled. Goodwill gestures were advanced, including a meeting in Cyprus between the religious leaders of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities to try to promote reconciliation, the removal by Turkish Cypriots of a controversial footbridge erected in 2005, and the destruction of a wall dividing Nicosia/Lefkosía by the Greek Cypriot government.

## Political Parties

Throughout the 14 years preceding the Turkish intervention, the Cypriot party system was divided along communal lines. As a result of population transfers, the Greek parties now function exclusively in the south, while the Turkish parties function in the north. All are headquartered within the divided city of Nicosia. The Greek parties are listed below (see article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector for Turkish parties).

### *Government Parties*

**Democratic Party** (*Demokratiko Komma*—Deko). The Democratic Party is a center-right grouping organized in 1976 as the Democratic Front to support President Makarios’s policy of “long-term struggle” against the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus. The leading component of the government alliance in the House of Representatives after the 1976 election, at which it won 21 seats, its representation fell to 8 seats in 1981. In December 1985 it obtained 16 seats (28 percent) in an enlarged House of 56 members, after its former coalition partner, AKEL, had supported a censure motion against (then) President Kyprianou. Deko absorbed the Center Union (*Enosi Kentrou*—EK), a minor formation led by former chief intercommunal negotiator Tassos Papadopoulos, in February 1989. It won 11 legislative seats in 1991 and endorsed Clerides for the presidency in 1993, then slipped to 10 seats (on a 16.5 percent vote share) in May 1996.

The run-up to the February 1998 presidential election produced a serious split in Deko, whose leadership formally endorsed (along with AKEL) the candidacy of independent George Iacovou. Many Deko members reportedly objected to that endorsement, and Deko Vice President Alexis GALANOS presented himself as a candidate, securing 4 percent of the vote in the first round of balloting. Galanos (and, apparently, many of his backers) supported Clerides in the second round, and several Deko “rebels” were appointed as independents to the new coalition government, with Galanos being named a presidential advisor. Galanos, a former president of the House of Representatives, was subsequently identified as the leader of a new **Eurodemocratic Renewal Party**.

Deko’s vote share fell to 14.8 percent in the May 2001 balloting and the party’s legislative representation slipped to nine seats.

Kyprianou, former president of the republic and a founder of Deko, stepped down as president of the party in 2000 due to ill health; he died in March 2002. Kyprianou was replaced by Tassos Papadopoulos, who adroitly gained the support of AKEL and the Social Democrats’ Movement (Kisos) in the February 2003 presidential election with a campaign that emphasized the need for more concessions from the TRNC in negotiations for a permanent peace plan. He won the election with 51.5 percent of the vote.

Deko urged a “no” vote in the 2004 referendum on the proposed UN reunification plan. It garnered a vote share of 17.9 percent in the May 2006 parliamentary balloting.

*Leaders:* Tassos PAPAPOULOS (President of the Republic and Party President), Nicos CLEANTHOUSE (Deputy President), Vassilis PALMAS (Secretary General).

**Progressive Party of the Working People** (*Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou*—AKEL). Organized in 1941 as the Communist Party of Cyprus, AKEL dominates the Greek Cypriot labor movement and claims a membership of about 15,000. Its support of President Kyprianou, withdrawn for a period in 1980 because of the latter’s

handling of “the national issue,” was renewed in September when the government agreed to a renewal of intercommunal talks; it was again withdrawn as a result of the breakdown in talks at UN headquarters in January 1985. The party won 12 legislative seats in 1981 and 15 in 1985; it endorsed the candidacy of George Vassiliou in 1988.

In January 1990 a number of dissidents, including 4 of the Politburo’s 15 members, were dismissed or resigned in a controversy over democratic reforms that led to the creation of Adesok (see below, under the EDE) by 5 of the party’s (then) 15 parliamentarians. None was reelected in May 1991 balloting, in which AKEL representation increased to 18 seats. A further advance, to 19 seats (and 33 percent of the vote), was registered in May 1996. AKEL supported independent George Iacovou in the February 1998 presidential poll. The party got a surprising victory in the May 2001 balloting with 34.7 percent of the vote and became the largest party in the legislature with 20 seats. AKEL, having supported Deko candidate Papadopoulos in the 2003 presidential elections, received four posts in the new Council of Ministers.

In general, the party has supported a federal solution to the divided island, backing an independent, demilitarized Cyprus and rapprochement with Turkish Cypriots. However, it urged a “no” vote in the 2004 referendum on the proposed UN plan for reunification. AKEL’s share of the vote dropped to 31.1 percent in the May 2006 parliamentary elections, resulting in a loss of two seats.

*Leaders:* Dimitris CHRISTOFIAS (Secretary General and President of the House of Representatives).

**Social Democrats’ Movement** (*Kinima Sosial-dimokraton*—Kisos). This grouping was formerly known as the Unified Democratic Union of Cyprus—Socialist Party (*Ethniki Demokratiki Enosi Kyprou*—*Socialistiko Komma*—EDEK-SK), a moderately left-of-center grouping that supported a unified and independent Cyprus. The EDEK-SK had concluded an electoral alliance with the Democratic Front and AKEL in 1976 but campaigned separately in 1981, its three

representatives refusing to support the government after the new House convened. Its chair (and founder of the EDEK-SK), Vassos Lyssarides, campaigned for the presidency in 1983 as leader of a National Salvation Front; although announcing his withdrawal prior to the actual balloting as a means of reducing “polarization” within the Greek Cypriot community, he was nonetheless credited with obtaining a third-place 9.5 percent vote share. The party obtained six legislative seats in 1985. Lyssarides ran fourth in the first round of the 1988 presidential poll, after which EDEK-SK threw its support to George Vassiliou. The party improved to seven seats in the 1991 House election but fell back to five in May 1996 (on a 10 percent vote share). Lyssarides secured 10.6 percent of the votes in the first round of the February 1998 presidential balloting. Although the EDEK-SK did not endorse President Clerides in the second round (encouraging members to vote for the candidate of their choice), the party was given the defense and education portfolios in the subsequent coalition government. However, the EDEK-SK withdrew from the government following Clerides’s decision to cancel the proposed deployment of Russian missiles on the island in December.

The party adopted its current name in 1999. In the 2001 legislative balloting, the party’s vote share fell to 6.5 percent. Kisos supported Deko candidate Tassos Papadopoulos in the 2003 presidential elections and received two posts in the new coalition government. The party, while backing a federal solution to reunification, urged a “no” vote in the 2004 referendum on the proposed UN reunification plan.

In the May 2006 parliamentary elections, Kisos’s vote share was 8.9 percent, and it increased its number of seats to five.

*Leaders:* Yiannakis OMIROU (President), Kriakos MAVRONICOLAS (Deputy President), Vassos LYSSARIDES, Antonis KOUTALIANOS (General Secretary).

### *Opposition Parties*

**Democratic Rally** (*Demokratikos Synagermos*—Desy). The Democratic Rally was organized

in May 1976 by Glafcos Clerides following his resignation as negotiator for the Greek Cypriots in the intercommunal talks in Vienna. The Rally has long favored a strongly pro-Western orientation as a means of maintaining sufficient pressure on the Turks to resolve the communal dispute. It secured 24.1 percent of the vote in 1976 but won no legislative seats. Its fortunes were dramatically reversed in the 1981 balloting, at which it obtained 12 seats, with 7 more being added in 1985. The party absorbed the small New Democratic Alignment (*Nea Demokratiki Parataxi*—Nedipa), led by Alekos MIHAILIDES, prior to the 1988 presidential balloting, at which Clerides was defeated in the second round. The party won a plurality of 19 seats at the legislative election of May 1991, with an additional seat going to its coalition partner, the Liberal Party (*Komma Phileleftheron*—KP).

Glafcos Clerides withdrew from the party presidency upon being elected president of the republic in February 1993, following which he appointed a government of Desy and the Democratic Party. A Desy-Liberal alliance won 20 seats in the May 1996 election, with a vote share of 34 percent, all seats going to Desy candidates. In February 1998 the KP officially merged with Desy. The KP had been organized in 1986 by Nikos ROLANDIS (formerly a close associate of President Kyprianou), who supported George Vassiliou in 1988. It secured one legislative seat as an electoral partner of Desy in 1991 but failed to retain it in 1996. Rolandis won less than 1 percent of the vote in the first round of the 1998 presidential balloting and, after throwing his support behind Clerides in the second round, was subsequently named to the February 1998 cabinet. In the first round of the February 2003 presidential elections, Clerides received 38.8 percent of the vote. The party supported the UN reunification proposal in advance of the 2004 referendum, in which Cypriot voters overwhelmingly rejected the UN plan. In 2005 dissidents opposed to the party’s support of the UN reunification plan left to form a new party, EVROKO (see below), with disaffected members of other groups.

In the May 2006 parliamentary election, Desy secured 30.34 percent of the vote and lost 1 of its 19 seats.

*Leaders:* Nicos ANASTASIADES (President), Averof NEOPHYTOU (Deputy President), Eleni VRAHIMI (Secretary General).

**European Party** (*Evropaiko Komma*—EVROKO). The European Party was founded in July 2005 by dissidents from Desy who had opposed Desy's stance on the 2004 referendum, in partnership with the New Horizons party. In advance of the 2006 parliamentary elections, EVROKO also formed an alliance with the Fighting Democratic Movement. EVROKO garnered 5.75 percent of the vote and three seats, all credited to EVROKO.

Despite the opposition of its founding members to the UN plan of 2004, EVROKO favors a reunification plan based on the resolution of EU issues with Turkey.

*Leader:* Dhimitrios SILLOURIS.

**New Horizons** (*Neoi Orizontes*—NO). NO was launched in early 1996 backed by the Church and advocating that Cyprus should be a unitary rather than a federal state. It failed to win representation in the May 1996 election. Party leader Nicos Koutsou won less than 1 percent of the vote in the first round of the 1998 presidential balloting. The NO received 3 percent of the vote in the May 2001 balloting, winning a single seat. In the 2003 presidential election Koutsou received 2.1 percent of the vote.

*Leaders:* Nicos KOUTSOU (Chair and 1998 and 2003 presidential candidate), Stelios AMERIKANOS (Secretary General).

**Fighting Democratic Movement** (*Agonistiko Dimokratiko Kinima*—ADIK). ADIK is a break-away formation from Deko that was launched in 1999. It won a single seat, held by ADIK president Dinos Michailades, with 2.16 percent of the vote in the May 2001 balloting. ADIK formed an electoral alliance with EVROKO prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections. However, Michailades, running on the EVROKO ticket, failed to win reelection.

There were reports that ADIK was committed to retaining a separate identity despite its agreement with EVROKO. Election results show ADIK receiving 0.23 percent of the vote, raising questions about the official relationship between EVROKO and ADIK.

*Leaders:* Dinos MICHAILADES (President), Yiannis PAPADOPOULIS (Secretary General).

**Ecological Environmental Movement—Cyprus Green Party** (*Kinima Oikologoi Perivallontistoi*). The Cyprus Green Party was established as a political party in February 1996 but failed to make much impact in the May 1996 election, winning only 1 percent of the vote. The party managed to gain legislative representation for the first time in the May 2001 balloting. It received 1.98 percent of the vote and won a single seat. The party retained its seat with 1.95 percent of the vote in the May 2006 elections. In 2007 the Green Party made a joint announcement with the Turkish Cypriot **New Cyprus Party**, calling for military withdrawal from Nicosia as a first step toward demilitarization of the entire island. The party opposed any division of the island based on geography, ethnicity, or religion.

*Leaders:* George PERDIKIS (General Secretary), Savvas PHILIPPOU (Deputy General Secretary).

### *Other Parties That Contested the 2006 Legislative Elections*

**United Democrats** (*Enomeni Demokrates*—EDE). The leftist EDE was formed in 1996 by members of the Free Democrats Movement (*Kinima ton Eleftheron Demokraton*—KED) and the Democratic Socialist Reform Movement (*Ananeotiko Demokratiko Sosialistiko Kinema*—Adesok). The center-left KED had been launched in April 1993 by former president George Vassiliou following his unexpected failure to win a second term in February. He pledged that the new group would “promote the admission of Cyprus into Europe.” The party won two seats on a 3.6 percent vote share in the May 1996 election.

## Cabinet

As of May 1, 2007

President  
Deputy Minister to the President and  
Government Spokesperson

Tassos Papadopoulos (Deko)  
Khristodhoulos Pasiardhis (ind.)

### *Ministers*

Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environment  
Commerce, Industry, and Tourism  
Communications and Works  
Defense  
Education and Culture  
Finance  
Foreign Affairs  
Health  
Interior  
Justice and Public Order  
Labor and Social Insurance

Fotis Fotiou (Deko)  
Antonis Michaelides (Deko)  
Haris Thrasou (AKEL)  
(Vacant)  
Akis Cleanthous (Deko)  
Michalis Sarris (ind.)  
Giorgos Lillikas (AKEL)  
Haris Haralambous (AKEL)  
Neoklis Sylikiotis (AKEL)  
Sophoclis Sophocleous (Kisos)  
Antonis Vassiliou (Kisos)

The Adesok had been launched in early 1990 by a number of AKEL dissidents favoring settlement of the Cyprus issue on the basis of UN resolutions. It failed to retain legislative representation in the 1991 and 1996 elections.

Vassiliou, who won just 3 percent of the vote in the first round of the February 1998 presidential balloting, supported President Clerides in the second round. Vassiliou was subsequently named as the government's chief EU negotiator, while the EDE was also given a ministry in Clerides's new coalition government. The EDE won a single legislative seat in 2001.

The EDE, which supported the UN reunification proposal put forth in the 2004 referendum, subsequently lost its legislative seat in the May 2006 elections, securing only 1.6 percent of the vote. Party president Mikhalis PAPAPETROU subsequently resigned.

In 2007 former cabinet minister Costas Themistocleous announced his bid for the presidency in 2008, saying he favored changes to the UN plan for reunification that would impose a deadline on negotiations. If further talks failed, Themistocleous

said, he would call for a new referendum on the issue.

*Leaders:* Costas THEMISTOCLEOUS (2008 presidential candidate), Praxoula Antoniadou KYRIAKOU (First Vice President), Nicolas SHIANIS (Secretary General).

**European Democracy** The European Democracy party was founded by Desy dissident Prodromos Prodromou after the 2004 referendum on the UN plan for reunification of Cyprus, which Prodromou had opposed. European Democracy had been considering participating in the formation of EVROKO, but it ultimately ran on its own in the 2006 parliamentary elections, receiving less than 1 percent of the vote.

*Leader:* Prodromos PRODROMOU (President).

Other minor parties that contested the 2006 parliamentary elections were the **Free Citizens' Movement**, led by Timis EYTHIMIOU, and the **Hunters' Political Movement**, led by Michalis PAFITANIS.

## Legislature

The Cypriot **House of Representatives** (*Vouli Antiprosópon/Temsilciler Meclisi*) is a unicameral body formerly encompassing 35 Greek and 15 Turkish members, although Turkish participation ceased in December 1963. By contrast, the balloting of December 8, 1985, was for an enlarged House of 56 Greek members. At the most recent election of May 21, 2006, the seat distribution was as follows: the Progressive Party of the Working People, 18; the Democratic Rally, 18; the Democratic Party, 11; the Social Democrats' Movement, 5; the European Party, 3; and the Ecological Environmental Movement—Cyprus Green Party, 1. There are also 24 seats nominally reserved for Turkish Cypriots.

*President:* Dimitris CHRISTOFIAS.

## Communications

The material that follows encompasses Greek-sector media only; for Turkish media, see article on Cyprus: Turkish Sector.

Freedom of the press is protected under the constitution of Cyprus, and the media in the republic are independent. One significant issue, according to Reporters Without Borders, was the hinderance of the free flow of information between northern and southern sectors of the island. The example cited was the refusal of the Greek Cypriot government in 2006 to allow journalists from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to report on a sports event in the south.

### *Press*

The following newspapers are published daily in Nicosia in Greek, unless otherwise noted (circulation figures are daily averages for 2002): *Phileleftheros* (Liberal, 26,000), independent; *Simerini* (Today, 9,000), right-wing; *Apogevmatini* (Afternoon, 8,000), independent; *Haravghi* (Dawn, 9,000), AKEL organ; *Alithia* (Truth, 11,000), right-wing;

*Agon* (Struggle, 5,000), right-wing; *Cyprus Mail* (4,000), independent, in English; *Machi* (Battle, 3,000), right-wing.

### *News Agencies*

A Greek-sector Cyprus News Agency (*Kypriakon Praktoreion Eidiseon*—KPE) was established in 1976; numerous foreign bureaus maintain offices in Nicosia.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Prior to the 1974 conflict, broadcasting was controlled by the semigovernmental Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (*Radiofonikon Idryma Kyprou*—RIK) and the government-owned *Radyo Bayrak* (RB) and *Radyo Bayrak Televizyon* (RBT). At present, radio service in the Greek sector is provided by the RIK, in addition to 3 private island-wide and 24 local stations. The RIK maintains television service from its station on Mount Olympus, while the RB and the RBT stations broadcast from the Turkish sector. The Greek channel ET-1 is rebroadcast on Cyprus, while radio service is also provided by the BBC East Mediterranean Relay and by the British Forces Broadcasting Service, Cyprus. As of 2005 there were approximately 390 Internet users and 309 personal computers per 1,000 people. As of that same year there were about 861 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Andreas S. KAKOURIS

**U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus:** Ronald L. SCHLICHER

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Andreas D. MAVROYIANNIS

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** CEUR, CWTH, EIB, EU, Eurocontrol, Interpol, IOM, NAM, OSCE, PCA, WCO, WTO

# CYPRUS: TURKISH SECTOR

## TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

*Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti*

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### Government and Politics

#### *Political Background*

The Turkish Cypriots withdrew from participation in the government of the Republic of Cyprus in January 1964 in the wake of communal violence precipitated by Archbishop MAKARIOS's announcement of proposed constitutional changes in November 1963. In 1967 a Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration was established to provide governmental services in the Turkish areas, its representatives subsequently engaging in sporadic constitutional discussions with members of the Greek Cypriot administration. Meanwhile, an uneasy peace between the two communities was maintained by a UN peacekeeping force that had been dispatched in 1964. The constitutional talks, which ran until 1974, failed to bridge the gulf between Greek insistence on a unitary form of government and Turkish demands for a bicomunal federation.

A Turkish Federated State of Cyprus was established on February 13, 1975, following the Greek army coup of July 15, 1974, and the subsequent Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus. Rauf DENKTAŞ, nominal vice president of the Republic of Cyprus and leader of the National Unity Party (*Ulusal Birlik Partisi*—UBP), was designated president of the Federated State, retaining the office as the result of a presidential election on June 20, 1976, in which he defeated the Republican Turkish Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi*—CTP) nominee, Ahmet Mithat BERBEROĞLU, by a majority of nearly four to one. He was reelected for a five-

year term in June 1981, remaining in office upon proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in November 1983.

Intercommunal discussions prior to the death of Archbishop Makarios on August 3, 1977, yielded apparent Greek abandonment of its long insistence on unitary government but left the two sides far apart on other issues, including Greek efforts to secure a reduction of approximately 50 percent in the size of the Turkish sector and Turkish demands for virtual parity in such federal institutions as the presidency (to be effected on the basis of communal rotation) and the higher judiciary.

Prior to the breakdown in discussions between Denktaş and Greek Cypriot leader Spyros KYPRIANOOU at UN headquarters in January 1985, the Turks had made substantial concessions, particularly in regard to power sharing and territorial demarcation of the projected federal units. Specifically, they had abandoned their earlier demand (revived in 1991) for presidential rotation and had agreed on a reduction of the area to be placed under Turkish local administration to approximately 29 percent of the island total. However, the two sides were unable to agree on a specific timetable for Turkish troop withdrawal, the identification of Turkish-held areas to be returned to Greek control, or a mechanism for external guarantees that the pact would be observed. In announcing on January 25 that presidential and legislative elections would be held in June, President Denktaş insisted that neither the balloting nor the adoption of the TRNC constitution should be construed as efforts to “close the door to a federal solution.”

**Political Status:** Autonomous federal state proclaimed February 13, 1975; independent republic (thus far recognized only by Turkey) declared November 15, 1983; TRNC constitution approved by referendum of May 6, 1985.

**Area:** Approximately 1,400 sq. mi. (3,626 sq. km.).

**Population:** 200,587 (1996C); 224,000 (2006E), on the basis of Turkish Cypriot claims, which include nonindigenous settlers (more than half of the total). The latter figure has not been adjusted to accord with a March 2006 census report of 264,172. The 2006 result has been challenged by Greek Cypriots, who base their estimates on the known Turkish population in 1974, increased by subsequent rates of increase in the south plus an adjustment for emigration.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** LEFKOŞA (Turkish-occupied portion of Nicosia, 42,200), Gazi Mağusa (Famagusta, 37,100).

**Principal Language:** Turkish.

**Monetary Unit:** Turkish New Lira (market rate November 2, 2007: 1.18 liras = \$1US). Use of the Cyprus pound as an alternative unit of exchange was terminated on May 16, 1983.

**President:** Mehmet Ali TALAT (Republican Turkish Party); elected in first round of popular balloting on April 17, 2005, and inaugurated April 24 for a five-year term in succession to Rauf R. DENKTAŞ (nonparty).

**Prime Minister:** Ferdi Sabit SOYER (Republican Turkish Party); asked on April 25, 2005, to form a government by Mehmet Ali Talat, who had resigned as prime minister on April 20 following his election as president; formed new coalition government on April 28, 2005, following the approval of President Talat and the Assembly of the Republic; formed new coalition government on October 5, 2006, following the collapse of the previous coalition on September 11.

The constitution was approved by 70 percent of those participating in a referendum on May 5, 1985, with the leftist CTP actively campaigning for a “no” vote. At the presidential poll on June

9, Denktaş was accorded a like margin, while the UBP fell two seats short of a majority at the legislative balloting of June 23. On July 30 a coalition government involving the UBP and the Communal Liberation Party (*Toplumcu Kurtuluş Partisi*—TKP), with Derviş EROĞLU as prime minister, was confirmed by the assembly.

The Eroğlu government fell on August 11, 1986, after the TKP had refused to endorse a proposal to expand the scope of trade and investment in the sector. However, the prime minister was able to form a new administration on September 2 that included the center-right New Dawn Party (*Yeni Doğuş Partisi*—YDP) as the UBP’s coalition partner.

President Denktaş drew 67.5 percent of the vote in securing reelection to his fourth five-year term on April 22, 1990. Subsequently, a rift developed between Denktaş and Eroğlu over the conduct of negotiations with the south, the prime minister advocating a harder line on concessions to the Greek Cypriots than did the president. As a result, a group of dissidents withdrew from the UBP in July 1992 to form the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP), to which Denktaş transferred his allegiance in late October, thereby provoking a power struggle with UBP leader Eroğlu, who became highly critical of the president’s “unacceptable concessions” in negotiations with the Greek Cypriots.

Denktaş eventually gained the upper hand by calling an early assembly election on December 12, 1993, in which the UBP, although retaining a narrow plurality, lost ground, while the DP and the CTP both registered gains. The outcome was the formation on January 1, 1994, of a center-left DP-CTP coalition headed by DP leader Hakki ATUN, which supported the Denktaş line in the intercommunal talks.

In the run-up to the 1995 presidential balloting, Atun resigned as prime minister on February 24 after the CTP had opposed President Denktaş’s reelection offer to distribute to TRNC citizens the title deeds of Greek Cypriot property in the north. In the presidential contest on April 15 and 22, Denktaş for the first time failed to win an outright majority in the first round (taking only 40.4 percent of the vote),



although he scored a comfortable 62.5 to 37.5 percent victory over Eroğlu in the second. Protracted interparty negotiations were needed to produce, on June 3, a new DP-CTP administration headed by Atun. The coalition again collapsed in November, following the resignation of the CTP deputy premier, Ösker ÖZGÜR, but it was reestablished the following month with Mehmet Ali TALAT of the CTP as Atun's deputy. The DP-CTP coalition government resigned on July 4, 1996, and the UBP's Eroğlu was again given, on August 1, 1996, the job of forming a new government. A UBP-DP coalition cabinet headed by Eroğlu was approved by the president on August 16, 1996.

In the legislative balloting of December 6, 1998, the UBP improved from 17 to 24 seats. On December 30 President Denktaş approved Eroğlu to head a new UBP-TKP coalition government, the DP having fallen into dispute with the UBP over economic policies and cabinet representation. The legislature approved the new cabinet on January 12, 1999, by a strict party-line vote of 31–18. Denktaş won 43.6 percent of the vote in the first round of presidential balloting on April 15, 2000, while UBP candidate Eroğlu received 30.1 percent; the TKP's Mustafa AKINCI, 11.7 percent; the CTP's Mehmet Ali Talat, 10 percent; and Arif Hasan TAHSİN of the Patriotic Unity Movement (*Yurtsever Birlik Hareketi*—YBH), 2.6 percent. Three other minor candidates each received less than 1 percent of the vote. The second round of balloting, scheduled for April 22, was canceled when Eroğlu withdrew on April 19 after the TKP decided to back neither of the candidates for the second round. Denktaş was sworn in on April 24.

After a series of disagreements between the coalition partners (mainly regarding the direction to be taken in foreign relations), the UBP-TKP government resigned on May 25, 2001. President Denktaş asked Eroğlu to form a new government, and a UBP-DP coalition was appointed on June 7.

The CTP returned to a plurality (19 seats) in the December 14, 2003, assembly balloting, and Talat formed a CTP-DP coalition government on January 13, 2004. However, only two days after the TRNC population had endorsed a UN plan for reunifica-

tion (see Current issues, below), the coalition became a minority government when two DP legislators quit the party to protest the administration's pro-unification stance. After numerous attempts by Talat and the UBP's Eroğlu to form coalition governments failed, new assembly elections were held on February 20, 2005. The CTP increased its seat total to 24, and Talat was able to form a more secure CTP-DP coalition cabinet on March 16.

Talat secured 55.6 percent of the vote in the first round of presidential balloting on April 17, 2005, with Eroğlu finishing second with 22.7 percent. Talat resigned as prime minister on April 20 and was inaugurated as president on April 24. The following day, Ferdi Sabit SOYER, a close ally of Talat and CTP stalwart, formed another CTP-DP coalition government. The government collapsed in September 2006 over differences between the coalition partners. A new coalition government, again headed by Soyer, was established in October between the CTP and the newly formed Freedom and Reform Party (*Özgürlük ve Reform Partisi*—ÖRP), headed by former UBP leader Turgay AVCI.

### *Constitution and Government*

The constitution of the TRNC provides for a presidential-parliamentary system headed by a popularly elected chief executive, who cannot lead a party or be subject to its decisions. The president appoints a prime minister, who (unlike other ministers) must be a member of the legislature and whose government is subject to legislative recall. Like the president, the 50-member Assembly of the Republic is elected for a five-year term (subject to dissolution) and its presiding officer, who is chosen at the beginning of the first and fourth year of each term, becomes acting head of state in the event of presidential death, incapacity, or resignation. The members of the Supreme Court, composed of a president and seven additional judges, also form a Constitutional Court (five members) and a Court of Appeal and High Administrative Court (three members each). Lesser courts and local administrative units are established by legislative action.

### *Current Issues*

The European Council meeting held in late 1997 decided that Cyprus would be included in the first group of applicants to join the expanded European Union (EU), while determining that “political and economic conditions” required for the membership of Turkey were not satisfied. The EU also expressed a desire to see action taken on the Cyprus government’s wish to include the Turkish Cypriots in the negotiating delegation. However, President Denktaş of the TRNC indicated his unwillingness to proceed with negotiations unless further international recognition of the TRNC was forthcoming, and new discussions were not launched as expected. In August, Denktaş attempted to counter the UN push for reunification by formally proposing a confederation of “equal states,” with the UN continuing to patrol the border. That proposal was quickly rejected by most of the international community, despite Denktaş’s assessment that “Turks and Greece on Cyprus are like oil and water. They can no longer be mixed.”

Tension between the TRNC government and opposition parties and groups became more severe with Denktaş’s decision to withdraw from the talks with the Greek Cypriot side in late 2000. However, observers noted some easing after Denktaş decided to resume dialogue in 2002 after the EU indicated that Cyprus had fulfilled the necessary criteria to begin accession negotiations in 2003 with the goal of membership in 2004, with or without resolution of the dispute with the TRNC. Denktaş reportedly made several unilateral offers regarding land return and the reopening of the border, but talks were described as deadlocked by March 2003. Attention subsequently focused almost exclusively on the plan forwarded by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan under which the island would be reunified in a loose confederation with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sectors retaining broad autonomy in most domestic areas. (For complete details on the Annan plan, see Current issues in article on Cyprus.)

With the encouragement of new Prime Minister Talat of the CTP (which had led all parties in the

December 2003 assembly balloting), the voters in the TRNC endorsed the UN reunification plan by a 65 percent “yes” vote in a national referendum on April 24, 2004, despite Denktaş’s opposition. Unfortunately for the TRNC, however, the plan was rejected by a three-to-one margin by the Greek Cypriot community. Consequently, the TRNC was “left out in the cold” when Cyprus acceded to the EU with nine other new members on May 1. The EU immediately pledged substantial economic assistance to the TRNC as a reward for the “yes” vote regarding reunification. However, in October Cyprus vetoed an EU plan to establish trade relations with the TRNC. The government of Cyprus indicated that too much assistance to the TRNC might embolden Turkish Cypriots still hoping for additional recognition for the TRNC.

The early legislative elections of February 2005 in the TRNC were widely viewed as a strong endorsement of reunification, the Turkish Cypriots clearly having suffered political and economic isolation since Cyprus’s accession to the EU. Following Talat’s election in April to succeed President Denktaş (who, at age 81, had decided to retire), those favoring unification again saw reason for hope. Negotiations, again centered on the Annan plan, subsequently resumed in an atmosphere that led one observer to conclude that nearly “everyone seems to want reunification.” Included on that list were Russia (which had been unconvinced in early 2004), the United States (which sent economic development missions to the TRNC), Greece, and Turkey (for whom the stakes were arguably higher than for the others.) Turkey, hoping to begin its own EU accession process, keenly desired an end to the island’s split in view of the fact that either Greece or Cyprus could block its entry. In July, Turkey signed a protocol that would (upon approval by the Turkish legislature) extend its long-term customs union with the EU to the ten new EU members, including Cyprus. However, Turkey insisted its decision did not constitute recognition of the Greek Cypriot government. (Turkey was the only country to recognize the TRNC government and the only European country yet to recognize the Greek Cypriot government.)

Despite continued heavy international pressure, no substantive negotiations toward reunification were conducted throughout the remainder of 2005. Further exacerbating the situation, Cyprus forced the EU to withhold \$140 million in aid earmarked for the TRNC. On a more positive note, the TRNC assembly in December ratified legislation permitting Greek Cypriots to seek the return of property seized in the north following the 1974 partitioning of the island. (The commission established to adjudicate the property returns [or reparations] was described as fully operational as of May 2006.)

UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw met with TRNC President Talat in the TRNC in January 2006, prompting strong criticism from Greek Cypriot leaders who accused some EU members of attempting to “legitimize” the northern government. In return, Straw described the current Greek Cypriot stance as “not conducive” to reunification. The complex EU issues subsequently continued to dominate TRNC affairs. Just a day after formally authorizing the start of EU accession talks with Turkey, the EU in February announced it would release \$165 million to the TRNC for infrastructure development. Although Cyprus accepted that decision, it continued to block the proposed easing of EU trade sanctions against the TRNC. For its part, Turkey pressed for a comprehensive settlement of the island’s status rather than a “piecemeal” approach. As a result, even discussions on minor “technical” issues such as immigration and environmental protection were stalled as of May.

The legislative elections in the south in May 2006 (see article on Cyprus for details) indicated growing popular support for President Papadopoulos’s negative stance toward the UN reunification plan. Collaterally, TRNC President Talat acknowledged that Turkish Cypriots had become “greatly disheartened and pessimistic” over the lack of progress in talks with the Greek Cypriots and the ongoing economic “isolation” of the north. Nevertheless, Talat said his government had not yet reached the point of pursuing additional international recognition of the TRNC as an independent entity, preferring instead to retain its support for the UN plan. On July 8, presidents Talat and

Papadopoulos agreed to a “set of principles” mediated by the UN that recommitted both sides to discussions on the UN plan by, among other things, establishing the “right atmosphere” for such talks. By the end of the month both sides had submitted issues for discussion, but the effort was short-lived. A subsequent plan by Finland to host an emergency summit in November was canceled, the reason reported as “no progress would be forthcoming.” Meanwhile, the EU, citing Turkey’s lack of progress toward normalizing relations with Cyprus, halted accession talks with Turkey until the latter agreed to open its ports and airports for use by Cyprus. Reunification was at the core of the dispute between the CTP and the DP that resulted in the collapse of the government in September and the establishment of a new coalition that received official approval in October. The CTP allied itself with the new ÖRP, which had been formed by dissident deputies from the DP and the UBP.

Progress on reunification had stalled in early 2007, although the leading Muslim cleric from the TRNC for the first time crossed the demarcation line into Cyprus to meet with the head of the Greek Orthodox Church in an effort to promote the resumption of talks.

## Political Parties

Most of the Turkish Cypriot parties share a common outlook regarding the present division of the island. Differences have surfaced, however, as to the degree of firmness to be displayed in negotiations with the Greek community.

### *Government Parties*

**Republican Turkish Party** (*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi*—CTP). A Marxist formation at the time, the CTP campaigned against the 1985 constitution because of its alleged repressive and militaristic content. For the 1990 election (at which it lost 5 of 12 seats won in 1985) the CTP joined with the TKP and YDP (see DP, below) in a coalition styled the Democratic Struggle Party (*Demokratik Mücadele Partisi*—DMP). It made a comeback to

13 seats in the 1993 balloting, entering a coalition with the DP that effectively collapsed in February 1995 on the issue of Greek Cypriot property rights but was reconstituted in May. Two further coalition collapses and reconstitutions in 1995 led to the ouster of Ösker ÖZGÜR as CTP leader in January 1996. A DP-CTP coalition government under the leadership of Hakki ATUN resigned on July 4, 1996, and the CTP became the main opposition party. However, it was supplanted in that regard by the DP following the 1998 legislative balloting, at which CTP representation fell from 13 to 6 seats on a vote share of 13.4 percent. In part, the electoral decline was attributed to the CTP's stance that negotiations should be resumed with Greek Cypriot officials regarding a settlement of the political stalemate on the island. Chair Mehmet Ali Talat ran as the party's presidential candidate on April 15, 2000, and received 10 percent of the vote.

The CTP competed in the 2003 assembly elections under the rubric of the CTP–United Forces (*CTP–Birleşik Güçler*—CTP-BG) to reflect its attempt to broaden its base through extended cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and independent voters on an anti-Denktaş, pro-EU platform. The CTP-BG secured a plurality of 19 seats in the 2003 balloting on a vote share of 35 percent.

Talat subsequently formed a coalition government with the DP, which continued in office following the February 2005 assembly balloting in which the CTP-BG's vote share grew to 44 percent (good for 24 seats). The coalition collapsed in September 2006 following a dispute with the DP over the CTP's demand for a reallocation of ministries based on the additional two seats the CTP gained in assembly by-elections in June, and, more significantly, over reunification. Prime Minister Soyer criticized the DP for its refusal to make concessions to the Greek Cypriot government, despite pressure from the EU, and for its increasing nationalism. The CTP subsequently formed a coalition with the newly formed ÖRP, the alliance being granted official approval by the president and, in October, by the assembly.

*Leaders:* Mehmet Ali TALAT (President of the TRNC), Ferdi Sabit SOYER (Prime Minister of the

TRNC and Chair of the Party), Omer KALYONCU (Secretary General).

**Freedom and Reform Party** (*Özgürlük ve Reform Partisi*—ÖRP). The ÖRP was formed in September 2006 by Turgay Avci, former secretary general of the UBP. He was joined by two other UBP deputies and one from the DP to promote a “reformist, democratic, and transparent” government. The four defectors blamed their parties for not working in harmony with Turkey. Observers said the ÖRP would help move the TRNC government toward averting “a major crisis” in Turkey's bid for EU membership (see article on Cyprus for details). The new party became a junior partner in coalition with the CTP in October, the alliance vowing to pursue political equality for the TRNC and a bizonal solution to reunification. Avci said he left the UBP because he wanted a party that would promote policies similar to those of Turkey. The party was given four cabinet ministries after the new coalition government was established.

*Leaders:* Turgay AVCI (Chair and Deputy Prime Minister), Erdoğan SANLIDAĞ, Mustafa GOKMEN.

### *Opposition Parties*

**Democratic Party** (*Demokrat Parti*—DP). The DP was formed in 1992 by a group of pro-Denktaş UBP dissidents who advocated a more conciliatory posture in the intercommunal talks than did the party mainstream. The DP was runner-up in the 1993 legislative balloting, thereupon entering into a majority coalition with the CTP (see above). In 1993 the party accepted the **New Dawn Party** (*Yeni Doğuş Partisi*—YDP), led by Ali Özkan ALTINIŞIK, into its ranks. The DP-CTP coalition government ended on July 4, 1996, and the UBP's Derviş Eroğlu formed a new coalition government with the DP as a partner on August 16, 1996. However, the DP moved into opposition status following the December 1998 legislative poll, at which it secured 22.6 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, in September 1998 the DP had reportedly accepted the Free Democratic Party (*Hür Demokrat Parti*—HDP) into its ranks. The

HDP, led by İsmet KOTAK and Özel TAHSİN, was one of several parties launched following the 1990 election. Prior to the 1993 election the HDP had joined with two smaller groups, the Homeland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*—AP) and the Nationalist Justice Party (*Milliyetçi Adalet Partisi*—MAP), led by Zorlu TÖRE, in a coalition styled the National Struggle Party (*Milli Mücadele Partisi*—MMP). The DP extended support to Rauf Denktaş in the 2000 presidential election. The DP became the junior partner in the new coalition government announced with the UBP in June 2001. Following the December 2003 balloting, the DP joined an unsteady CTP-led coalition. Two of the seven DP legislators resigned from the party in April 2004 to protest the government's prounification stance, forcing early elections in February 2005, at which the DP gained six seats on a 13.5 percent vote share. Mustafa Arabacıoğlu won 13.2 percent of the vote in the first round of the April 2005 presidential poll.

The rift between the DP and the CTP increased, primarily over reunification of the island, resulting in the resignation from the party of another DP deputy in 2006. DP leader Denktaş maintained that the reunification issue could not be resolved until the TRNC is recognized. He also blamed Turkey for allegedly influencing the DP and UBP deputies' decision to resign, a move he said was designed ultimately to further Turkey's bid to join the EU. Following the collapse of its coalition government with the CTP and the party's subsequent move into opposition status, the DP called for early elections, boycotted the initial meeting of the assembly under the new government, and held demonstrations outside.

*Leaders:* Serdar DENKTAŞ (Chair and Former Deputy Prime Minister), Mustafa ARABACIOĞLU (2005 presidential candidate), Ertuğrul HASIPOĞLU (Secretary General).

**National Unity Party** (*Ulusal Birlik Partisi*—UBP). The right-wing UBP was established in 1975 as an outgrowth of the former National Solidarity (*Ulusal Dayanışma*) movement. Originally committed to the establishment of a bicomunal federal state, it captured three-quarters of the seats in

the Turkish Cypriot Legislative Assembly at the 1976 election but was reduced to a plurality of 18 seats in 1981 and survived a confidence vote in the assembly on September 11 only because the motion failed to obtain an absolute majority. The UBP's former leader, Rauf Denktaş, was precluded by the constitution from serving as president of the party or from submitting to party discipline while president of the republic; nevertheless, he was instrumental in launching the breakaway DP in 1992 after clashing with party leader Derviş Eroğlu, who moved to an increasingly propartition stance. The UBP retained its plurality in the 1993 balloting but remained in opposition. Eroğlu took Denktaş to the second round in the 1995 presidential election, winning 37.5 percent of the vote. Staying in the opposition until a DP-CTP coalition government came to an end on July 4, 1996, the UBP rose to power as a member of a coalition government with the DP on August 16, 1996. The UBP increased its vote share to over 40 percent in the 1998 legislative balloting, Eroğlu subsequently forming a coalition with the TKP. Eroğlu ran as presidential candidate for the UBP on April 15, 2000, and won 30.1 percent of the vote at the first round. He withdrew from the race on April 19 prior to the scheduled second round between himself and Denktaş. The UBP-TKP coalition broke down in May 2001, and Eroğlu formed a new government with the DP in June. However, he was obliged to resign the prime ministership following the December 2003 legislative balloting, in which the UBP was outpolled by the CTP 35 percent to 33 percent. The UBP secured 19 seats on a vote share of 31.7 percent in the February 2005 assembly balloting, while Eroğlu finished second in the first round of presidential balloting in April with 22.7 percent of the vote. Citing the need for "fresh blood" in the party's leadership, Eroğlu resigned as UBP chair in late 2005. He was succeeded in February 2006 by Hüseyin Ozgurgun.

Three UBP deputies resigned in September 2006 to establish, with a former DP deputy, the ÖRP, which became the junior partner in a new coalition government with the CTP.

*Leaders:* Hüseyin OZGURGUN (Chair), Dr. Derviş EROĞLU (Former Prime Minister,

Former Chair of the Party, and 2005 presidential candidate).

**Peace and Democracy Movement** (*Bariş ve Demokrasi Hareketi*—BDH). The BDH is a coalition of leftist parties that joined together to improve their electoral opportunities prior to the 2003 legislative elections. The grouping was formed under the leadership of Mustafa Akıncı, formerly the party leader of TKP, which provided the core of the BDH. Other constitutive parties of the BDH included the **Socialist Party of Cypress** (*Kıbrıs Sosyalist Partisi*—KSP) and the **United Cyprus Party** (*Birleşik Kıbrıs Partisi*—BKP). The BDH won six seats in the 2003 assembly balloting but only one in the 2005 poll (on a 5.8 percent vote share).

Following the poor electoral showing in 2005, some core components reportedly left the BDH, although the BDH continued its institutional existence under the leadership of Akıncı. The BDH, along with one independent deputy, cast the only two votes against the new CTP-ÖRP coalition in the October 5 assembly session.

*Leaders:* Mustafa AKINCI (Chair), İzzet İZCAN, Mehmet ÇAKICI (Secretary General).

**Communal Liberation Party** (*Toplumcu Kurtuluş Partisi*—TKP). Also known as the Socialist Salvation Party, the TKP is a left-of-center grouping organized in 1976. The six assembly seats won by the party in 1976 were doubled in 1981, two of which (for an enlarged chamber) were lost in 1985. The TKP joined the Eroğlu government in July 1985 but withdrew in August 1986.

In 1989 the TKP absorbed the Progressive People's Party (*Atılımcı Halk Partisi*—AHP), which itself had resulted from the merger in early 1986 of the Democratic People's Party (*Demokratik Halk Partisi*—DHP) and the Communal Endeavor Party (*Toplumsal Atılım Partisi*—TAP). The DHP, which advocated the establishment of an independent, nonaligned, and biregional Cypriot state, was organized in 1979 by former prime ministers Nejat KONUK and Osman ÖREK, both of whom had left the UBP because of dissension within the party. The TAP was a centrist party formed in 1984.

The TKP's legislative representation fell from ten seats to seven in 1990 and to five in 1993.

It rebounded to seven seats (on a vote share of 15.4 percent) in December 1998 and became the junior partner in the subsequent coalition government with the UBP. Chair Mustafa Akıncı ran as the TKP's presidential candidate on April 15, 2000, and received 11.7 percent of the vote. The TKP subsequently decided to encourage its voters to vote for their candidate of choice for the second round, a move that caused the UBP's Eroğlu to withdraw from the race. Following the breakdown of the coalition government with the UBP in May 2001, the TKP joined the opposition. Chair Akıncı subsequently stepped down as the party leader, and the post was assumed by the former secretary general, Hüseyin Angolemlı.

*Leaders:* Hüseyin ANGOLEMLİ (Chair and 2005 presidential candidate), Güngör GÜNKAN.

#### *Other Parties That Competed in the 2005 Legislative Elections*

**New Party** (*Yeni Parti*—YP). The YP was founded in 2004 by Nuri Çevikel, a former member of parliament who had resigned from the CTB-BG. Çevikel was a settler from Turkey, and the party reportedly was established to focus on the issues of other settlers. Çevikel was also reportedly known for his views opposing Denktaş and the UBP.

*Leader:* Nuri ÇEVİKEL.

**Nationalist Justice Party** (*Milliyetçi Adalet Partisi*—MAP). The far-right-wing MAP supports unification with Turkey and extension of Turkish citizenship to northern Cypriots. In 1993 the party joined with the HDP and AP to form MMP. The MAP backed President Denktaş in the 2000 presidential election.

The party gained one seat in the assembly after a former DP parliamentarian, Kenan AKIN, defected to the MAP in December 2000. The MAP, which had opposed the UN reunification proposal in the 2004 referendum, ultimately ran on its own in the 2005 parliamentary elections.

*Leader:* Zorlu TÖRE (Chair).

#### *Other Parties*

**Nationalist Peace Party** (*Milliyetçi Bariş Partisi*—MBP). The MBP was formed as the result

of a merger between the MAP and the center-right **Renewal Progress Party** (*Yenilikçi Atılım Partisi*—YAP). In the 2003 legislative elections, the MBP received 3.23 percent of the vote. Its cochairs are Ali Rıza GÖRGÜN and former UBP member and former president of the legislature, Ertuğrul HASİPOĞLU.

**Solution and EU Party** (*Cözüm ye AB Partisi*—ÇABP). Established as a prounification grouping in 2003, the ÇABP secured 2 percent of the vote in the December 2003 legislative poll.

*Leader:* Ali EREL.

**Patriotic Unity Movement** (*Yurtsever Birlik Hareketi*—YBH). The left-wing YBH was formed as a result of a merger of the **New Cyprus Party** (*Yeni Kıbrıs Partisi*—YKP) and some former members of the CTP (see above) in 1998. The YKP had been founded in 1989 by Alpay Durduran, the TKP/AHP 1985 presidential candidate. In 1998 Durduran urged Turkish Cypriot leaders to return to the bargaining table with their Greek Cypriot counterparts.

The YBH favors the unification of the island and equal treatment for all Cypriots, including Greek Cypriots. In 2003 the YBH filed suit with the European Court of Human Rights to challenge the electoral process of the TRNC. The party presented Arif Hasan TAHSİN as its candidate in the first round of presidential balloting in 1999.

In 2006 it was reported that the YKP had reemerged as a separate party with Rasih KESKİNER as secretary general.

*Leader:* Alpay DURDURAN (Chair).

**National Revival Party** (*Ulusal Diriliş Partisi*—UDP). The UDP was founded on November 18, 1997, under the leadership of Enver Emin. A precursor of the UDP had been founded in 1994 as the National Birth Party (*Ulusal Doğuş Partisi*). As of November 1995, it had one seat in the assembly. The National Birth Party then merged with the DP and ceased its legal existence. The UDP secured 4.6 percent of the vote and no seats in the December 1998 legislative balloting. The UDP backed President Denktaş in the presidential election on April 15, 2000.

*Leaders:* Enver EMİN (Chair), Mustafa ERBİLEN (Secretary General).

Reports on the 1998 legislative balloting indicated that a **National Resistance Party** (*Ulusal Direnis Partisi*—UDİP) had received 4.5 percent of the vote, and the recently formed **Our Party** (*Bizim Parti*—BP), led by Okyay SADIKOĞLU, had received 1.2 percent. The BP, described in 1998 as the first Islamist grouping to participate in a TRNC election, supported President Denktaş in his reelection bid.

On August 25, 2000, Arif Salih KIRDAĞ formed the **Freedom and Justice Party** (*Özgürlük ve Adaleť Partisi*—ÖAP) to “safeguard bank victims’ rights.” In December a new centrist formation, the **New Democracy Party** (*Yeni Demokrasi Partisi*), was founded by Eşref DÜSENKALKAR. In January 2001 the **Liberal Party** (*Liberal Parti*—LP) was launched by Kemal BOLAYIR and Ünal Aki AKİF. In 2004 the **Free Thought Party** was reportedly launched under the leadership of Salih COSAR; the party’s initial membership reportedly included two defecting DP legislators, although one subsequently returned to the DP fold.

## Legislature

A Turkish Cypriot Legislative Assembly, formerly the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Turkish Cypriot Administration, was organized in February 1975. Styled the **Assembly of the Republic** (*Cumhuriyet Meclisi*) under the 1985 constitution, it currently contains 50 members, who are elected for five-year terms on a proportional basis in which parties must surpass a 5 percent threshold to gain representation. Following the election of December 14, 2003, the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) held 19 seats; the National Unity Party (UBP), 18; the Democratic Party (DP), 7; and the Peace and Democracy Movement (BDH), 6.

Defections from the DP in late April 2004 cost the CTP-DP coalition government its legislative majority. Consequently, early elections were held on February 20, 2005, with the CTP winning 24 seats; the UBP, 19, the DP, 6; and the BDH, 1.

## Cabinet

As of March 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Ferdi Sabit Soyer (CTP)
Deputy Prime Minister	Turgay Avcı (ÖRP)

### Ministers

Agriculture	Önder Sennaroglu (CTP)
Economy and Tourism	Enver Öztürk (ÖRP)
Environment and Natural Resources	Asim Vehbi (ÖRP)
Education and Culture	Canan Öztoprak (CTP)
Finance	Ahmet Uzun (CTP)
Foreign Affairs	Turgay Avcı (ÖRP)
Health and Social Assistance	Esref Vaiz (CTP)
Interior	Özkan Murat (CTP)
Labor and Social Security	Sonay Adem (CTP)
Public Works and Transportation	Salih Usar (CTP)

Following another defection from the DP and three from the UBP in September 2006, and the formation of a new CTP-ÖRP coalition, the distribution of seats was as follows: the CTP, 25; the UBP, 13; the DP, 6; the Freedom and Reform Party, 3; independents, 2; and the BDH, 1.

*President:* Fatma EKENOĞLU.

## Communications

The constitution of the TRNC guarantees freedom of the press, save for legislative restrictions intended to safeguard public order, national security, public morals, or the proper functioning of the judiciary. According to the International Press Institute (IPI), however, in 2006 “freedom of the press and the right to free expression continue to be violated.” Numerous cases have been brought against the editor of the newspaper *Afrika*, cases that would result in more than 2,000 years of imprisonment if the government were successful in all of its prosecutions, according to the IPI. Reports of journalists being harassed, threatened, and arrested reportedly prompted Greek Cypriot journalists to boycott all events in the north for a two-week period in August.

## Press

The following are published in Nicosia in Turkish: privately owned *Kıbrıs* (Cyprus), “populist” monthly; *Birlik* (Unity), center-right daily (affiliated with the UBP); *Halkın Sesi* (Voice of the People), daily; *Avrupa* (Europe), independent leftist; *Yeni Düzen* (New Order), CTP organ; *Ortam* (Situation), TKP organ; *Yeni Demokrat* (New Democrat), DP organ; *Vatan* (Homeland), and “anti-establishment” *Afrika*. In addition, a number of mainland Turkish papers circulate, of which the leaders are *Sabah* (Morning), *Milliyet* (Nationality), and *Hürriyet* (Liberty).

## News Agency

The Turkish-sector facilities are Turkish Agency Cyprus (*Türk Ajansı Kıbrıs*—TAK) and the Northern Cyprus News Agency (*Kuzey Kıbrıs Haber Ajansı*).

## Broadcasting

Broadcasting in the Turkish sector had been controlled by *Radyo Bayrak* and *Bayrak Radyo Televizyon* (BRT). Currently there are several privately owned stations, including GENC-TV, Kanal T, and



Kıbrıs. In addition, there is the island-wide public Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation. There were approximately 306,000 radio and 77,400 television receivers in the sector in 1999. In addition to *Radio Bayrak* and the BRT, there are two private radio stations, *First FM* and *Kıbrıs FM*.

### Intergovernmental Representation

The Turkish Federated State did not seek general international recognition and maintained no

missions abroad, except for a representative in New York who was recognized by the UN as official spokesperson for the Turkish Cypriot community; it did, however, participate in an Islamic Conference meeting on economic cooperation in Ankara, Turkey, held November 4–6, 1980. The present Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has proclaimed itself independent but has been recognized as such only by Turkey, with whom it exchanged ambassadors on April 17, 1985.

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** ECO, OIC

# EGYPT

## ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

*Jumhuriyat Misr al-Arabiyyah*

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**Note:** Thousands of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, under an Israeli blockade since the Hamas takeover of June 2007, crossed into Egypt to stock up on supplies after a border wall was breached on January 23, 2008. After initial leniency, Egyptian officials sealed the border and moved to prevent Palestinians from staying in Egypt.

### The Country

Situated in the northeast corner of Africa at its juncture with Asia, Egypt occupies a quadrangle of desert made habitable only by the waters of the Nile, which bisects the country from south to north. Although the greater part of the national territory has traditionally been regarded as wasteland, Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world: 90 percent of the people are concentrated in 4 percent of the land area, with population densities in parts of the Nile Valley reaching 6,000 per square mile. (Ambitious projects inaugurated in the late 1990s created massive irrigation canals from Lake Nasser [formed by the Aswan High Dam] in the south and from four new lakes in the northwest [formed after flooding], permitting industrial and agricultural development in the desert. Another major irrigation canal was built eastward from the Nile along the northern coast into the Sinai Peninsula.) Arabic is universally spoken, and more than 80 percent of the ethnically homogeneous people adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam, much of the remainder being Coptic Christian. Women were listed as 29 percent of the paid labor force in 1996, with the majority of rural women engaged in unpaid agricultural labor; urban employed women tend to be concentrated in lower levels of health care and education.

Completion of the Aswan High Dam in 1971 permitted the expansion of tillable acreage and of

multiple cropping, while the use of fertilizers and mechanization also increased production of such crops as cotton, wheat, rice, sugarcane, and corn, although Egypt still imports more than 50 percent of its food. Much of the population continues to live near the subsistence level, high rural-to-urban migration having increased the number of urban unemployed. A growing industrial sector, which



employs 30 percent of the labor force, has been centered on textiles and agriprocessing, although the return by Israel of Sinai oil fields in 1975 permitted Egypt to become a net exporter of petroleum. Other natural resources include gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, zinc, gypsum, and talc.

The reopening of the Suez Canal (closed from the 1967 war until 1975) helped stimulate the gross domestic product, which displayed average annual real growth of 9 percent from mid-1979 to mid-1983. By 1985 economic conditions had sharply deteriorated as the decline in world oil prices not only depressed export income but severely curtailed remittances from Egyptians employed in other oil-producing states; in addition, tourism, another important source of revenue, declined because of regional terrorism and domestic insecurity. Compounding the difficulties were rapid population growth (an increase of approximately one million every nine months), an illiteracy rate estimated at nearly 50 percent, a high external debt, and an inefficient, bloated, and often corrupt bureaucracy of some six million civil servants.

In the early 1990s the government pledged to privatize state-run enterprises, reduce tariffs and price subsidies, devalue the Egyptian pound, and pursue further economic liberalization. Progress has been slow, despite the appointment of Prime Minister Ahmed NAZIF, a younger and more technologically savvy presence in the government. While the International Monetary Fund in 2005 and 2006 noted Egypt's progress in structural reforms, it cited the need for privatization and debt reduction. Meanwhile, the populace has repeatedly demonstrated its frustration over the slow pace of significant change. Increasing poverty remained a concern, particularly in urban areas. On a more positive note, real GDP growth of 4.9 percent was reported in 2005 and increased to nearly 7 percent in 2006, due largely to a significant increase in shipping traffic on the Suez Canal, as well as growth in tourism and gas production. The IMF also noted the "impressive decline" in inflation, from 11.4 percent in 2004 to an annual average rate of 4.8 percent in 2005–2006.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

The modern phase of Egypt's long history began in 1882 with the occupation of what was then an Ottoman province by a British military force, only token authority being retained by the local ruler (*khedive*). After establishing a protectorate in 1914, the United Kingdom granted formal independence to the government of King FUAD in 1922 but continued to exercise gradually dwindling control, which ended with its evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone in 1956. The rule of Fuad's successor, King FAROUK (FARUK), was abruptly terminated as the result of a military coup on July 23, 1952. A group of young officers (the "Free Officers"), nominally headed by Maj. Gen. Muhammad NAGIB, secured Farouk's abdication on June 18, 1953, and went on to establish a republic under Nagib's presidency. Col. Gamal Abdel NASSER (Jamal Abd al-NASIR), who had largely guided these events, replaced Nagib as prime minister and head of state in 1954, becoming president on June 23, 1956.

The institution of military rule signaled the commencement of an internal social and economic revolution, growing pressure for the termination of British and other external influences, and a drive toward greater Arab unity against Israel under Egyptian leadership. Failing to secure Western arms on satisfactory terms, Egypt accepted Soviet military assistance in 1955. In July 1956, following the withdrawal of a Western offer to help finance the High Dam at Aswan, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company and took possession of its properties. Foreign retaliation resulted in the "Suez War" of October–November 1956, in which Israeli, British, and French forces invaded Egyptian territory but subsequently withdrew under pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations.

On February 1, 1958, Egypt joined with Syria to form the United Arab Republic under Nasser's presidency. Although Syria reasserted its independence in September 1961, Egypt retained the UAR designation until 1971, when it adopted the name

**Political Status:** Nominally independent in 1922; republic established in 1953; joined with Syria as the United Arab Republic in 1958 and retained the name after Syria withdrew in 1961; present name adopted September 2, 1971; under limited multiparty system formally adopted by constitutional amendment approved in referendum of May 22, 1980.

**Area:** 386,659 sq. mi. (1,001,449 sq. km.).

**Population:** 61,452,382 (1996C); 73,612,000 (2006E), including Egyptian nationals living abroad.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** AL-QAHIRA (Cairo, 8,090,000), al-Giza (5,957,000), al-Iskandariyah (Alexandria, 3,990,000), Es-Suweis (Suez, 688,000), Bur Said (Port Said, 562,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Egyptian Pound (market rate November 2, 2007: 5.48 pounds = \$1US).

**President:** Muhammad Husni MUBARAK (National Democratic Party); appointed vice president on April 15, 1975; succeeded to the presidency upon the assassination of Muhammad Ahmad Anwar al-SADAT on October 6, 1981; confirmed by national referendum of October 13 and sworn in for a six-year term on October 14; served additionally as prime minister from October 14, 1981, to January 2, 1982; sworn in for a second presidential term on October 13, 1987, for a third term on October 13, 1993, and for a fourth term on October 5, 1999, following unanimous nomination by the People's Assembly on June 2 and confirmation in national referendum of September 26; elected to a fifth six-year term in limited multicandidate balloting on September 7, 2005, and inaugurated on September 27.

**Prime Minister:** Ahmed NAZIF; asked by the president on December 27, 2005, to form a new government, which was installed on December 31.

Egypt incurred heavy losses in the six-day Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, which resulted in the closing of the Suez Canal, the occupation by Israel of the Sinai Peninsula, and an increase in Egypt's military and economic dependence on the USSR. Popular discontent resulting from the defeat was instrumental in bringing about a subsequent overhaul of the state machinery and a far-reaching reconstruction of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), then the nation's only authorized political party.

A major turning point in Egypt's modern history occurred with the death of President Nasser on September 28, 1970, power subsequently being transferred to Vice President Anwar al-SADAT. The new president weathered a government crisis in 1971 that included the dismissal of Vice President Ali SABRI and other political figures accused of plotting his overthrow. A thorough shake-up of the party and government followed, with Sadat's control being affirmed at a July ASU congress and, two months later, by voter approval of a new national constitution as well as a constitution for a projected Federation of Arab Republics involving Egypt, Libya, and Syria. At the same time, the pro-Soviet leanings of some of those involved in the Sabri plot, combined with Moscow's increasing reluctance to comply with Egyptian demands for armaments, generated increasing tension in Soviet-Egyptian relations. These factors, coupled with Sadat's desire to acquire U.S. support in effecting a return of Israeli-held territory, culminated in the expulsion of some 17,000 Soviet personnel in mid-1972.

The apparent unwillingness of U.S. President Nixon in 1972 to engage in diplomatic initiatives during an election year forced Sadat to return to the Soviet fold to prepare for another war with Israel, which broke out in October 1973. After 18 days of fighting, a cease-fire was concluded under UN auspices, with U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger ultimately arranging for peace talks that resulted in the disengagement of Egyptian and Israeli forces east of the Suez Canal. Under an agreement signed on September 4, 1975, Israel withdrew to the Gidi and Mitla passes in the western Sinai and returned the Ras Sudar oil field to Egypt after securing

Arab Republic of Egypt. (A less formal linkage with North Yemen, the United Arab States, was also established in 1958 but dissolved in 1961.)

political commitments from Egypt and a pledge of major economic and military support from the United States.

Although he had intimated earlier that he might step down from the presidency in 1976, Sadat accepted designation to a second six-year term on September 16. On October 26, in the first relatively free balloting since the early 1950s, the nation elected a new People's Assembly from candidates presented by three groups within the ASU. Two weeks later, the president declared that the new groups could be termed political parties but indicated that they would remain under the overall supervision of the ASU. The role of the ASU was further reduced in June 1977 by promulgation of a law that permitted the formation of additional parties under carefully circumscribed circumstances, while its vestigial status as an "umbrella" organization was terminated a year later.

On October 2, 1978, Sadat named Mustafa KHALIL to head a new "peace" cabinet that on March 15, 1979, unanimously approved a draft peace treaty with Israel. The People's Assembly ratified the document on April 10 by a 328–15 vote, while in a referendum held nine days later a reported 99.95 percent of those casting ballots voiced approval. At the same time, a series of political and constitutional reforms received overwhelming support from voters. As a result, President Sadat dissolved the assembly two years ahead of schedule and called for a two-stage legislative election on June 7 and 14. Sadat's National Democratic Party (NDP) easily won the multiparty contest—the first such election since the overthrow of the monarchy in 1953—and on June 21 Prime Minister Khalil and a substantially unchanged cabinet were sworn in. On May 12, 1980, however, Khalil resigned, with President Sadat assuming the prime ministership two days later.

By 1981 Egypt was increasingly dependent on the United States for military and foreign policy support, while growing domestic unrest threatened the fragile political liberalization initiated in 1980. In an unprecedented move in early September, the government imprisoned more than a thousand op-

position leaders, ranging from Islamic fundamentalists to journalists and Nasserites.

On October 6, 1981, while attending a military review in Cairo, President Sadat was assassinated by a group of Muslim militants affiliated with *al-Jihad* ("Holy War"). The assembly's nomination of Vice President Muhammad Husni MUBARAK as his successor was confirmed by a national referendum on October 13, the new president naming a cabinet headed by himself as prime minister two days later. On January 2, 1982, Mubarak yielded the latter office to First Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Fuad MUHI al-DIN.

The NDP retained overwhelming control of the assembly at the March 1984 election, the right-wing New Wafd Party being the only other group to surpass the 8 percent vote share needed to gain direct representation. However, popular discontent erupted later in the year over measures to combat economic deterioration, and numerous opposition leaders, accused of "fomenting unrest," were arrested. Meanwhile, Islamic fundamentalists continued a campaign for the institution of full *sharia* law that provoked a new wave of arrests in mid-1985.

At his death in June 1984 Muhi al-Din was succeeded as prime minister by Gen. Kamal Hasan ALI. Ali was replaced in September 1985 by Dr. Ali Mahmud LUTFI, who, in turn, yielded office on November 12, 1986, to Dr. Atif Muhammad SIDQI, a lawyer and economist whose appointment appeared to signal a willingness to institute drastic reform measures sought by the IMF and World Bank. Anticipating a resurgence of opposition and facing court challenges to the legality of an assembly that excluded independent members, the president confounded his critics by mounting a referendum in February 1987 on the question of legislative dissolution. The subsequent election of April 6 reconfirmed the NDP's control, and on October 5 Mubarak received public endorsement for a second term.

President Mubarak's swift response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 received widespread domestic support, and, at balloting on

November 29 to replenish the assembly (whose 1987 election had been declared illegal in May 1990), the ruling NDP won an increased majority. The landslide victory was tarnished, however, by low voter turnout and an election boycott by three leading opposition parties and the proscribed, but prominent, Muslim Brotherhood. On December 13 Dr. Ahmad Fathi SURUR was elected assembly president, assuming the responsibilities left vacant by the assassination of the previous speaker, Dr. Rifaat al-MAHGOUB, on October 12.

Following a May 1991 cabinet reshuffle, Mubarak indicated that measures would be considered to reduce the NDP stranglehold on government activity. However, the state of emergency in effect since 1981 was extended for three more years, Mubarak citing ongoing “subversion” by fundamentalist militants as justification. Subsequently, international human rights organizations charged that the administration was continuing to torture and otherwise abuse its opponents, particularly the fundamentalists, with whom a state of “all-out war” was said to exist by 1992. For their part, the militants, vowing to topple the “corrupt” Mubarak government and establish an Islamic state, intensified their guerrilla campaign against police, soldiers, government officials, and tourists.

On July 21, 1993, the assembly nominated Mubarak for a third term by a vote of 439–7, and the president received a reported 95 percent “yes” vote in the national referendum of October 4, opposition leaders strongly questioning the accuracy of the tally. Although President Mubarak had promised an infusion of “new blood” into his administration, many of the previous cabinet members were reappointed in the reshuffle announced on October 14 by Prime Minister Sidqi.

On June 26, 1995, Mubarak narrowly escaped assassination when a group of alleged fundamentalists opened fire on his motorcade after his arrival in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for a summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It was the third attempt on his life in 22 months. In September 1996, three defendants were sentenced to death by an Ethiopian court for their role in the 1995 attack,

which President Mubarak blamed on the militant Islamic Group (see *Illegal Groups under Political Parties*, below).

Despite the regime’s rhetorical commitment to broadening the governmental role of lesser parties, the NDP again completely dominated the legislative elections of late 1995, opposition leaders claiming they had been hamstrung by new press restrictions and the ongoing ban (under the long-standing state of emergency) on political demonstrations. On the other hand, the appointment of Kamal Ahmed al-GANZOURI as prime minister on January 3, 1996, launched what was widely perceived as significant economic liberalization.

The level of violence between the government and fundamentalist militants peaked in 1995 when more than 400 were killed from a combination of terrorist attacks and government reprisals against militant strongholds. International human rights organizations criticized the mass detention of political prisoners and “grossly unfair” trials leading, in many cases, to executions.

Sporadic incidents occurred throughout 1996 and into early 1997. In view of continued conflict with fundamentalist militants, the state of emergency was extended in 1997 (and again in 2006), permitting the government to continue to detain “terrorists” without formal charges for lengthy periods and to try defendants in special courts. Meanwhile, local elections in April again failed to reveal any hint of a political challenge to NDP control, nearly half of the ruling party’s candidates running unopposed.

In mid-1997 imprisoned fundamentalist leaders reportedly called for a “cease-fire,” and Egypt’s vital tourist industry continued to revive. However, the government, apparently unconvinced that a truce had been achieved, proceeded with several mass trials and imposed harsh sentences on a number of defendants. Subsequently, militants massacred some 70 tourists at an ancient temple at Luxor in November, again bringing the conflict to the forefront of world attention. By that time, most observers agreed that a split had developed

in the militant camp and that the faction committed to violence comprised possibly only several hundred guerrillas. It was also widely believed that there was little popular support for the militants, and only a few serious incidents were reported in 1998. By early 1999 the government had released an estimated 5,000 of the 20,000 people detained since the crackdown had begun, and in March the Islamic Group renounced violent methods.

All political parties having been distinctly “marginalized,” President Mubarak faced no challenge to his nomination in June 1999 by the People’s Assembly for a fourth term, duly confirmed by an official “yes” vote of 94 percent in a national referendum on September 26. Upon his inauguration, Mubarak announced the appointment of Atef Muhammad OBEID as the new prime minister. Subsequently, the NDP ultimately again won unchallenged control of the assembly in 2002. Some 70 percent of the NDP candidates also ran unopposed in the April 2002 municipal elections.

In June 2004, for the first time in Egypt’s history, a member of the opposition leftist National Progressive Unionist Party—NPUP (*al-Hizb al-Watani*) won a seat in the Shura Council, and in October 2004, a third political party was allowed to form (see Constitution and government, below). Prime Minister Obeid resigned in 2004 and was succeeded by Ahmed Nazif, former minister of communications and information technology, who at age 52 was considerably younger than other government leaders.

President Mubarak was elected in controversial multicandidate balloting in September 2005 with 88 percent of the vote, most notably defeating Ayman NUR, formerly jailed leader of the leftist Tomorrow Party (*al-Ghad*), and then-leader of the New Wafd Party—NWP Hizb (*al-Wafd al-Gadid*), Numan GOMAA (see Political Parties and Groups, below). Seven other candidates each received less than 1 percent of the vote. Mubarak asked Prime Minister Nazif to form a new cabinet, which was sworn in at year’s end.

Legislative elections in November and December 2005 resulted in the NDP retaining an over-

whelming majority, but significant inroads were made by independents affiliated with the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, whose representation increased more than five-fold to 88 seats. Runoffs for 12 undecided seats were postponed because of violence in several districts. (As of early 2007, runoff elections had not been held.) The cabinet was reshuffled on August 28, 2006, after the minister of justice resigned.

### *Constitution and Government*

Under the 1971 constitution, executive power is vested in the president, who is nominated by the People’s Assembly and elected for a six-year term by popular referendum. The president may appoint vice presidents in addition to government ministers and may rule by decree when granted emergency powers by the 454-member assembly, which functions primarily as a policy-approving rather than a policy-initiating body. (Since assuming the presidency in 1981, Mubarak has chosen to rule without a vice president.) In May 1990 the Supreme Constitutional Court invalidated the 1987 assembly elections, claiming the electoral system discriminated against opposition and independent contenders. Consequently, the government abolished electoral laws limiting the number of independent candidates, rejected the “party list” balloting system, and enlarged the number of constituencies.

For only the third time since forming in 1977, Egypt’s Political Parties Committee allowed the creation of a new political party, Tomorrow (*al-Ghad*), in February 2004. On June 9, 2005, the assembly approved a draft law to elect the president by direct, secret balloting, replacing the referendum system. This followed adoption of a constitutional amendment in May 2005 to allow Egypt’s first multicandidate presidential election. The amendment was approved in a public referendum, albeit marked by huge public demonstrations over what is still perceived as too much government control over potential candidates.

A Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*), formerly the Central Committee of the ASU, is

composed of 176 elected and 88 appointed members who serve 6-year terms. It serves in an advisory capacity as an “upper house” of the assembly. In addition to the Supreme Constitutional Court, the judicial system includes the Court of Cassation, geographically organized Courts of Appeal, Tribunals of First Instance, and District Tribunals. A Supreme Judicial Council is designed to guarantee the independence of the judiciary. Emergency laws, in effect since 1981, provide the government with broad arrest and detention powers. In addition, special military courts were established in late 1992 for the prosecution of those charged with “terrorist acts” in connection with the conflict between the government and militant Islamic fundamentalists.

For administrative purposes Egypt is divided into 26 governorates, each with a governor appointed by the president, while most functions are shared with regional, town, and village officials. In April 1994 the People’s Assembly approved legislation whereby previously elected village mayors would thenceforth be appointed by the Interior Ministry.

Constitutional amendments passed by the assembly on April 30, 1980, and approved by referendum on May 22 included the following: designation of the country as “socialist democratic,” rather than “democratic socialist,” and designation of the Islamic legal code (*sharia*) as “the” rather than “a” principal source of law. In 2006 President Mubarak proposed 19 constitutional amendments that parliament considered in March 2007 (see Current issues, below).

### *Foreign Relations*

As the most populous and most highly industrialized of the Arab states, Egypt has consistently aspired to a leading role in Arab, Islamic, Middle Eastern, African, and world affairs and has been an active participant in the UN, the Arab League, and the Organization of African Unity. For a number of years, its claim to a position of primacy in the Arab world made for somewhat unstable relations with other Arab governments, particularly

the conservative regimes of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, although relations with those governments improved as a result of the 1967 and 1973 wars with Israel. Relations with the more radical regimes of Libya and Syria subsequently became strained, largely because of their displeasure with the terms of the U.S.-brokered disengagement. Thus a January 1972 agreement by the three states to establish a loose Federation of Arab Republics was never implemented.

Formally nonaligned, Egypt has gone through a number of distinct phases, including the Western orientation of the colonial period and the monarchy, the anti-Western and increasingly pro-Soviet period initiated in 1955, a period of flexibility dating from the expulsion of Soviet personnel in 1972, and a renewed reliance on the West—particularly the United States—following widespread condemnation of Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement by most Communist and Arab governments.

On November 19, 1977, President Sadat began a precedent-shattering three-day trip to Jerusalem, the highlight of which was an address to the Israeli *Knesset*. While he offered no significant concessions in regard to the occupied territories, was unequivocal in his support of a Palestinian state, and declared that he did not intend to conclude a separate peace with Israel, the trip was hailed as a “historic breakthrough” in Arab-Israeli relations and was followed by an invitation to the principals in the Middle Eastern dispute and their great-power patrons to a December meeting in Egypt to prepare for a resumption of the Geneva peace conference. Israeli Prime Minister Begin responded affirmatively, but all of the Arab invitees declined. Consequently, on December 5 Egypt broke relations with five of its more radical neighbors (Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and South Yemen).

A dramatic ten-day “summit” convened by U.S. President Carter at Camp David, Maryland, in September 1978 yielded two documents—a “Framework for Peace in the Middle East” and a “Framework for a Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt”—that were signed by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin at the White House on September 17. By mid-November details of a peace



treaty and three annexes had been agreed upon by Egyptian and Israeli representatives. Signing, however, was deferred beyond the target date of December 17 primarily because of Egyptian insistence on a specific timetable for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, in addition to last-minute reservations regarding Article 6, which gave the document precedence over treaty commitments to other states. Thus, on March 8, President Carter flew to the Middle East for talks with leaders of both countries, and within six days compromise proposals had been accepted. The completed treaty was signed by Begin and Sadat in Washington on March 26, and on April 25 the 31-year state of war between Egypt and Israel officially came to an end. On May 25 the first Israeli troops withdrew from the Sinai under the terms of the treaty and negotiations on autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza opened in Beersheba, Israel.

The Arab League responded to the Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement by calling for the diplomatic and economic isolation of Egypt. By midyear all league members but Oman, Somalia, and Sudan had severed relations with the Sadat regime, and Cairo's membership had been suspended from a number of Arab groupings, including the league, the Arab Monetary Fund, and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. Egypt succeeded in weathering the hard-line Arab reaction largely because of increased economic aid from Western countries, including France, West Germany, Japan, and the United States, which alone committed itself to more aid on a real per capita basis than had been extended to Europe under the post-World War II Marshall Plan.

Although Egypt and Israel formally exchanged ambassadors on February 26, 1980, a month after opening their border at El Arish in the Sinai to land traffic, negotiations on the question of Palestinian autonomy were subsequently impeded by continued Jewish settlement on the West Bank, the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem in July 1980, and the invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. Following the massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatila in September 1982, Cairo recalled its ambassador from Tel Aviv. (Relations at

the ambassadorial level were ultimately reestablished in September 1986, despite tension over Israel's bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis in October 1985.)

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 generated concern in Egypt, with the government ordering Moscow in February 1980 to reduce its diplomatic staff in Cairo to seven, while offering military assistance to the Afghan rebels. In 1981, accusing the remaining Soviet embassy staff of aiding Islamic fundamentalist unrest, Cairo broke diplomatic relations and expelled the Soviet ambassador. Relations were resumed in September 1984, as the Mubarak government departed from the aggressively pro-U.S. policy of the later Sadat years, while a three-year trade accord was signed by the two governments in late 1987.

Relations with most of the Arab world also changed during President Mubarak's first term, Egypt's stature among moderate neighbors being enhanced by a virtual freeze in dealings with Israel after the 1982 Lebanon invasion. Although relations with radical Arab states, particularly Libya, remained strained, Egypt's reemergence from the status of Arab pariah allowed it to act as a "silent partner" in negotiations between Jordan and the PLO that generated a 1985 peace plan (see entries on Jordan and the Palestinian Authority). However, the subsequent collapse of the plan left the Mubarak administration in an uncomfortable middle position between its "good friend" King Hussein and the PLO, whose Cairo offices were closed in May 1987 after the passage of an "anti-Egyptian" resolution by the Palestine National Council.

During an Arab League summit in Amman, Jordan, in November 1987, the prohibition against diplomatic ties with Egypt was officially lifted, although the suspension of league membership remained in effect. It was widely believed that the threat of Iranian hegemony in the Gulf was the principal factor in Cairo's rehabilitation. Egypt, which had severed relations with Iran in May 1987 upon discovery of a fundamentalist Muslim network allegedly financed by Tehran, possessed the largest

and best-equipped armed force in the region. Following the Amman summit, Egypt authorized reopening of the PLO facility, instituted joint military maneuvers with Jordan, increased the number of military advisers sent to Iraq, and arranged for military cooperation with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

By January 1989 only three Arab League countries—Libya, Lebanon, and Syria—had not renewed diplomatic relations with Cairo, and Egypt returned to full participation in the organization during its Casablanca, Morocco, summit in May. Meanwhile, a dispute that had marred relations with Israel since the latter's 1982 withdrawal from the bulk of the Sinai was resolved on February 26, when the two countries agreed to reaffirm Egyptian sovereignty over Taba, a beach resort on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (see Israel map, p. 201).

Lebanon and Syria restored diplomatic relations with Cairo in 1989, and relations with Libya also improved as President Mubarak journeyed to Libya in October to meet with Col. Muammar al-Qadhafi, the first such visit by an Egyptian president since 1972. Meanwhile, Cairo increased pressure on Jerusalem to begin negotiations with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, forwarding a ten-point plan to speed the onset of elections and lobbying the United States to exercise its diplomatic influence over Israel.

Egyptian-Iraqi relations were rocked in June 1989 by Baghdad's imposition of remittance restrictions on foreign workers, leading to the repatriation of 1 million Egyptians, many of whom complained about Iraqi mistreatment. In what was clearly his boldest foreign relations move, President Mubarak spearheaded the Arab response to Iraq's incursion into Kuwait in August 1990. At an Arab League summit in Cairo on August 10 the Egyptian leader successfully argued for a declaration condemning the invasion and approving Saudi Arabia's request for non-Arab troops to help it defend its borders. Subsequent Egyptian efforts to facilitate an Iraqi withdrawal were rebuffed by Baghdad. Overall, more than 45,000 Egyptian troops were deployed to Saudi Arabia, elements of

which played a conspicuous role in the liberation of Kuwait.

In the wake of Iraq's defeat in 1991, policy differences arose between Egypt and its allies. Cairo had long urged that postwar regional security be entrusted to an all-Arab force. By contrast, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members indicated that they looked with favor on a continued U.S. presence in the area. Particularly irksome was a Saudi statement that the monarchy did not welcome the permanent stationing of Egyptian forces on its soil, Cairo subsequently withdrawing all its troops by the end of August. A corollary to the dispute over military policy was increased uncertainty as to the level of economic aid that Egypt could expect from its oil-rich neighbors. For their part, Western creditors quickly rewarded Cairo for its support during the Desert Shield and Desert Storm campaigns. Shortly after the defeat of Iraqi forces, the United States and Gulf Arab states forgave about \$14 billion of Egypt's \$50 billion external debt, and Paris Club members subsequently agreed to gradually write off another \$11 billion. Globally, its prestige was enhanced by the selection of its leading diplomat, former deputy prime minister Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI, as the secretary general of the United Nations effective January 1, 1992.

Egyptian officials reportedly played an important advisory role in the secret talks that led up to the accord between Israel and the PLO in September 1993. In addition, Egypt won the backing of other North African governments for its hard-line antifundamentalist posture. Cairo's relations with Amman improved after a three-year rift caused by Jordan's pro-Iraqi stand during the Gulf crisis. In February 1995 President Mubarak hosted Jordan's King Hussein, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and PLO Chair Yasir Arafat in a summit designed to revitalize prospects for implementation of the Israel/PLO peace accord. The summit also reportedly addressed growing tension between Egypt and Israel regarding nuclear weapons.

By mid-1995 tension with Egypt's southern neighbor, Sudan, had intensified because of an intimation by Mubarak that Sudanese officials had

played a role in the June 26 assassination attempt in Ethiopia. In June Sudan accused Egypt of provoking a clash in the disputed border region of Halaib, with Mubarak declaring his support for exiled opponents of the fundamentalist Khartoum regime. In 2004, Egypt reluctantly agreed to send military officers as observers to Sudan, but stopped short of getting involved in attempting to resolve the Sudanese civil war.

On March 13, 1996, Egypt hosted the so-called "terrorism summit" of some 27 heads of state and government in the wake of suicide bomb attacks in Israel earlier in the month that appeared to threaten the Middle East peace process. Following the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's new prime minister in May, President Mubarak became more critical of him over the next six months in the face of what he described as Netanyahu's "lack of action" in implementing the Israeli/PLO peace accord. The Egyptian president intensified his attacks on Netanyahu's policies in 1997, particularly in regard to the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. In early 1998 Mubarak strongly objected to U.S. plans to take military action against Iraq after Baghdad blocked the activities of UN weapons inspectors. Meanwhile, by that time significant improvement had been registered in relations between Egypt and Sudan, the two countries having apparently agreed to address each other's "security" concerns, i.e., Sudanese support for fundamentalist militants in Egypt and Egyptian support for antiregime activity in Sudan, particularly on the part of southern rebels. Full diplomatic relations were restored between Sudan and Egypt in December 1999, following a visit by Sudan's President Bashir to Cairo. Relations with Iran were also reported to have improved later in 1998, but in 2005 they were again strained after a security court convicted an Egyptian of plotting to assassinate the president and of spying for Iran.

President Mubarak welcomed the election of Ehud Barak as prime minister of Israel in May 1999 as a "hopeful sign" regarding a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, and Egypt was a prominent mediator in negotiations through mid-2000. However, Egypt recalled its ambassador to

Israel in November 2000 in response to the Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip. Egyptian/Israeli relations cooled even further following the election of hard-liner Ariel Sharon as prime minister of Israel in February 2001. By 2004, however, after Sharon had unveiled his unilateral disengagement plan for the Gaza Strip, in consultation with Egypt and the United States, relations between Egypt and Israel began to thaw. Egypt's role in security arrangements in Gaza were vital to the process and widely seen as enhancing Egypt's role as a power broker in the region. In December 2004, Egypt and Israel conducted their first prisoner exchange, marking a shift in relations and paving the way for a December 12 pact between the two countries on exports. In February 2005, Mubarak again helped mediate between Israel and the Palestinians, adopting a high-profile diplomatic role. Mubarak's diplomatic efforts in the latter part of 2006 focused on negotiations toward a Palestinian unity government to include Hamas and Fatah, subsequently straining Egypt's relations with Israel, which refused to accept Hamas as a legitimate partner in any Palestinian government. In September, Egypt resumed diplomatic ties with Costa Rica and El Salvador after both decided to move their embassies back to Tel Aviv from Jerusalem.

### *Current Issues*

Under increasing pressure from prodemocracy activists, as well as from the United States, President Mubarak in February 2005 called for a constitutional amendment to allow multicandidate elections. Unprecedented public demonstrations and calls for Mubarak to step down preceded his historic announcement. The amendment was approved in a referendum in May 2005, but the government still faced vehement criticism for the restrictive conditions it placed on potential candidates; for example, leaders of the recognized parties could run, but independent candidates must get the backing of 250 members of the assembly and local councils. Four opposition parties immediately announced a boycott of the presidential elections scheduled for September 2005.

Egyptian authorities had attempted to ban referendum-day protests, but large demonstrations took place nonetheless. The government also arrested members of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood. The ongoing crackdown against Islamists and other opposition groups sparked bold, massive protests, leading to further arrests. The leftist Tomorrow, the one new party granted a permit, saw its leader Ayman NUR jailed for six weeks on charges of forging signatures on his political party application. His June 2005 trial was postponed until after presidential elections, in which he ran a distant second to Mubarak. Subsequently, Nur was sentenced on December 24 to five years in prison. The European Union joined Washington in condemning Nur's conviction, which led to postponement of talks on a free trade agreement with the United States in 2006.

While the presidential election in 2005 was trumpeted as a move toward democratization, most observers considered the election to be a very limited step toward reform. Some 19 candidates were disqualified, the government refused to allow international monitors, turnout was extremely low, and laws severely restricting political activity remained in place. Assembly elections a few months later were marked by violence, with at least nine people allegedly killed by government security forces who reportedly blocked some polling stations in opposition strongholds. Hundreds of supporters of Muslim Brotherhood-backed candidates were arrested during the three-stage elections. While the NDP again dominated in the results, candidates allied with the Muslim Brotherhood significantly increased their representation, strengthening the group's position as the major opposition force. In what was regarded as a move to preserve the NDP's power, the government postponed local elections (scheduled for April 2006) for two years, saying the delay was necessary to give the assembly more time to adopt laws that would increase the role of local governments.

Terrorist attacks plagued Egyptian tourist areas in 2005 and 2006. After three bomb explosions in the southern Sinai resort of Dahab on April 24, 2006, killed at least 24 people, Israel closed

its border with Egypt for security reasons. Within days, Egyptian authorities arrested 10 people, linking some of them to previous attacks, and in May security forces killed the leader of an obscure group alleged to be behind the Dahab bombing.

Tensions increased in 2006 following parliament's approval in May of a two-year extension to the 1981 emergency law. In a subsequent blow to political reform, the high court dismissed an appeal by Ayman Nur, and, on the same day, another court took disciplinary action against one of two judges (the second was exonerated) who lost their judicial immunity after publicly charging electoral fraud in the 2005 parliamentary elections. Thousands of riot police attempted to disperse massive demonstrations in Cairo following the court ruling, and hundreds were arrested. The protests were backed by the country's 7,000 judges, who demanded they be granted independent oversight of all aspects of elections, as provided for in constitutional amendments of 2000. The judges contended that they were restricted to monitoring polling places, not vote counting. Observers saw the judges' demands as a challenge to the NDP's ability to retain control and, ultimately, to handpick Mubarak's successor. The latter was a topic of considerable speculation, particularly after Mubarak's son, Gamal MUBARAK, gained a more prominent leadership role in the NDP and made a public address in September citing the need for Egypt to develop nuclear power, which the government quickly announced was among its top priorities.

The court cases against the judges, along with the imprisonment of two prominent political opponents (Nur and Talaat SADAT, who was sentenced to a year in prison for accusing the military of involvement in the death of his uncle, the former president), and the arrest and detainment of hundreds of protesters appeared to observers to have weakened the president's popularity, despite the country's substantial economic progress. Meanwhile, the government's increasing repression of the opposition appeared to have strengthened the Muslim Brotherhood, observers said, even as hundreds of the group's members were arrested throughout 2006 and early 2007.

Attention in 2007 turned to controversial constitutional amendments, which were approved by 75.9 percent in a referendum on March 26, 10 days ahead of the scheduled date and only 7 days after parliament approved the president's proposed changes. Official reports recorded voter turnout of 21.7 percent, which observers attributed to a boycott by the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition groups. Human rights organizations claimed turnout was as low as 5 percent and that the vote was rigged. Among the most significant constitutional changes, which went into effect immediately, were provisions granting the government the authority to ban political parties based on religion (which observers said was aimed at the Muslim Brotherhood), entrenching most of the restrictions in effect under the emergency law (including a broadening of police authority to circumvent legal processes to combat terrorism), giving the president the authority to dissolve parliament, and reducing judicial oversight of balloting. Egypt's judges rejected the results and vowed not to supervise future balloting. Opposition and human rights groups were vociferous in their criticism, saying the changes were a major setback to Egyptians' basic freedoms and were designed to consolidate the ruling party's control. Amnesty International called the amendments "the greatest erosion of human rights in 26 years." The United States, which had toned down its criticism prior to the referendum, was accused by human rights groups of easing its pro-democracy stance in the region.

## Political Parties and Groups

Egypt's old political parties were swept away with the destruction of the monarchy in 1953. Efforts by the Nasser regime centered on the creation of a single mass organization to support the government and its policies. Following unsuccessful experiments with two such organizations, the National Liberation Rally and the National Union, the Arab Socialist Union—ASU (*al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki al-Arabi*) was established as the country's sole political party in December 1962.

Prior to the legislative election of October 1976 President Sadat authorized the establishment of three "groups" within the ASU—the leftist National Progressive Unionist Assembly (NPUA), the centrist Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization (EASO), and the rightist Free Socialist Organization (FSO)—which presented separate lists of assembly candidates. Following the election, Sadat indicated that it would be appropriate to refer to the groups as distinct parties, though the ASU would "stand above" the new organizations. A law adopted on June 27, 1977, authorized the establishment of additional parties under three conditions: (1) that they be sanctioned by the ASU; (2) that, except for those established in 1976, they include at least 20 members of the People's Assembly; and (3) that they not have been in existence prior to 1953.

On February 4, 1978, the ASU Central Committee modified the impact of the 1977 legislation by permitting the *Wafd*, the majority party under the monarchy, to reenter politics as the New Wafd Party (NWP). Less than four months later, however, representatives of the NWP voted unanimously to disband the party to protest the passage of a sweeping internal security law on June 1. Subsequently, President Sadat announced the formal abolition of the ASU, the conversion of its Central Committee into a Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) to meet annually on the anniversary of the 1952 revolution, and the establishment of a new centrist group that, on August 15, was named the National Democratic Party (NDP). In an April 1979 political referendum, the voters overwhelmingly approved removal of the first two conditions of the 1977 law, thus clearing the way for the formation of additional parties. In May 1980 a constitutional amendment, also approved by referendum, removed reference to the defunct ASU as the sole source of political activity, thus formally legitimizing the limited multiparty system. In July 1983 the assembly approved a requirement that parties obtain 8 percent of the vote to gain parliamentary representation. One month later, the NWP announced that it was "resuming public activity," a government attempt to force the group to reregister as a new party

being overturned by the State Administrative Court the following October.

At the 1984 election only the NDP and the NWP won elective seats, the former outdistancing the latter by a near 6–1 margin. In 1987 the NDP obtained a slightly reduced majority of 77.2 percent, the remaining seats being captured by the NWP and a coalition composed of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), the Liberal Socialist Party (LSP), and “Islamists” representing the Muslim Brotherhood (see below). Following a Supreme Court decision in May 1990 that overturned the results of the 1987 balloting, the government enacted a number of electoral changes, including reversal of the 8 percent requirement.

In 2002 the administration introduced controversial new regulations that precluded political activity on the part of any group receiving money from overseas that had not been approved by and channeled through the government. Opponents of the regime decried the measure as an attempt to throttle parties that might be funded by foreign prodemocracy organizations. In 2005, ten parties formed an alliance to promote reforms (see Other Legislative Parties, below). Still other parties are summarily banned.

### *Government Party*

**National Democratic Party**—NDP (*al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati*). The NDP was organized by President Sadat in July 1978 as the principal government party, its name being derived from that of the historic National Party formed at the turn of the century by Mustapha Kamel. In August it was reported that 275 deputies in the People’s Assembly had joined the new group, all but 11 having been members of the Egyptian Arab Socialist Party—EASP (*Hizb Misr al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki*), which, as an outgrowth of the EASO, had inherited many of the political functions earlier performed by the ASU. The EASP formally merged with the NDP in October 1978. President Mubarak, who had served as deputy chair under President Sadat, was named NDP chair at a party congress on January 26, 1982.

Two months after his pro forma reelection in October 1993, President Mubarak announced the composition of the new NDP political bureau, most leadership posts being retained by incumbents despite the president’s campaign pledge to revitalize both the NDP and the national administration. In November 1998 the NDP nominated Mubarak as its candidate for the 1999 presidential election. Official NDP candidates reportedly won only 27 percent of the seats in the 2000 assembly balloting, although many successful independent candidates joined (or rejoined) the party to give it 388 out of 442 elected seats. Analysts attributed the poor performance of the official NDP candidates to public perception that the party lacked an ideological foundation and existed only to rubber-stamp the administration’s agenda.

President Mubarak was reelected as chair of the NDP at the September 2002 congress, while his son, Gamal Mubarak, who has been mentioned as a possible successor to his father, was elevated to a new post as head of the NDP’s policy board.

In 2005, the NDP won the two-thirds majority (ultimately reported as 320 seats) needed to amend the constitution, which will determine how Mubarak’s successor will be chosen. In 2006 Gamal Mubarak was elevated to the post of assistant secretary general of the party, observers suggesting that he was being “groomed” to succeed his father, despite the elder Mubarak’s comments in November indicating his interest in remaining president for as long as he lives.

*Leaders:* Muhammad Husni MUBARAK (President of the Republic and Chair of the Party), Gamal MUBARAK (Assistant Secretary General), Majid SHARBINI, Muhammad Safwat al-SHARIF (Secretary General).

### *Other Legislative Parties*

Prior to the assembly elections of 2005, opposition leaders announced on October 8 they had formed a coalition of ten parties and movements seeking greater representation in the legislative body. Independent candidates allied themselves with movements or groups not officially

recognized by the government. The **National Front for Political and Constitutional Change**, led by former prime minister Sidqi, was an apparent partial successor to the **Consensus of National Forces for Reform** (*Tawafuq al-Qiwa al-Wataniyah lil-Islah*), a group of eight opposition parties formed in 2004. Notably excluded from the 2005 coalition was the Tomorrow Party (*al-Ghad*), reportedly because of dissension within that party. Among those included were **Arab Dignity** (*Karama al-Arabyia*), established by disenchanting Nasserists and led by Hamdin SABAHI; **Enough** (*Kifaya*), also referenced as the **Egyptian Movement for Change**, which includes leftists, liberals and Islamists, co-founded in 2004 by George ISHAQ and Amin ESKANDAR; the **Labor Party**; the **Center** (*Hizb al-Wasat*), an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Abdul-Ela MADI; and three parties already represented in the assembly.

**New Wafd Party**—NWP (*Hizb al-Wafd al-Gadid*). Formed in February 1978 as a revival of the most powerful party in Egypt prior to 1952, the NWP formally disbanded the following June but reformed in August. In 1980 a “new generation of *Wafd* activists” instigated demonstrations in several cities, prompting the detention of its leader, Fuad SERAGEDDIN, until November 1981. In alliance with a number of Islamic groups, most importantly the proscribed Muslim Brotherhood (below), the NWP won 15 percent of the vote in May 1984, thus becoming the only opposition party with parliamentary representation. In 1987 the NWP won 35 seats (23 less than in 1984), the Brotherhood having entered into a *de facto* coalition with the SLP and the LSP (below). The NWP boycotted the *Shura* poll in 1989, complaining that electoral procedures remained exclusionary; it also boycotted the 1990 assembly elections, although party members running as independents retained at least 14 seats.

Following the 1995 national balloting, NWP leaders charged that electoral fraud had been the “worst in history.” The NWP also boycotted the April 1997 local elections. However, although the NWP had urged a boycott of the 1993 presidential poll, it urged a “yes” vote for President Mubarak in

1999. Serageddin died in August 2000 and was succeeded as party leader by Numan Gomaa, who was a distant third in 2005 presidential balloting. The party won six seats in the 2005 assembly elections.

Following internal strife in early 2006, resulting in the naming of Mahmud ABAZAH as chair, Gomaa refused to give up control, and in April he was arrested after a highly publicized incident at party headquarters between rival factions that resulted in the death of one member. The assembly’s Political Parties Committee subsequently ruled that Mustapha al TAWIL was the legitimate leader of the party, but in May a court determined that Tawil’s appointment was illegal. The leadership rift appeared to have been settled in February 2007 after a court overturned the party’s ouster of Gomaa as chair.

*Leaders:* Numan GOMAA, Muhammad SARHAN, Munir Fakhri Abd al-NUR (Secretary General).

**Liberal Socialist Party**—LSP (*Hizb al-Ahrar al-Ishtiraki*). The Liberal Socialist Party, which was formed in 1976 from the right wing of the ASU, focuses on securing a greater role for private enterprise within the Egyptian economy while protecting the rights of workers and farmers. The party’s assembly representation fell from 12 to 3 seats in June 1979 and was eliminated entirely at the 1984 balloting, on the basis of a vote share of less than 1 percent. It obtained three elective seats in 1987 as a member of a Socialist Labor Party–led coalition. It subsequently discontinued its alliance with the SLP and Muslim Brotherhood. It boycotted the November 1990 poll, although one of its members reportedly won a seat as an independent. The party won one seat in the 2000 and 2005 assembly elections and supported Mubarak in the 2005 presidential election.

*Leader:* Hilmi SALIM.

**National Progressive Unionist Party**—NPUP (*Hizb al-Tajammu al-Watani al-Taqaddumi al-Wahdawi*). Although it received formal endorsement as the party of the left in 1976, the NPUP temporarily ceased activity in 1978 following the enactment of restrictive internal security

legislation. It contested the June 1979 assembly election on a platform that, alone among those of the four sanctioned parties, opposed the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and it failed to retain its two parliamentary seats. In both 1979 and 1984 the party leadership charged the government with fraud and harassment, although on the latter occasion, President Mubarak included a NPUP member among his assembly nominees. In November 1990 the NPUP resisted opposition appeals for an electoral boycott and captured six assembly seats; meanwhile, the party led opposition criticism against U.S. military involvement in the Gulf. The NPUP urged a no vote against Mubarak in the 1993 presidential referendum and called for a boycott of the 1999 poll. The party won one seat in the 2005 assembly elections.

*Leaders:* Rifaat al-SAID (Chair), Abu al-Izz al-HARIRI (Deputy Chair), Muhammad Abd al-Aziz SHABAN.

**Tomorrow Party** (*al-Ghad*). Officially recognized by the government in October 2004, this leftist party became only the third new party allowed since 1977. Tomorrow seeks constitutional reform to reduce the power of the presidency and an end to the country's emergency law. Espousing a commitment to social justice, the party is made up largely of dissidents from the NWP. Former leader Ayman Nur, jailed for six weeks in 2005 (see Current issues, above), came in a distant second to Mubarak in the September 2005 presidential election. A rift over leadership occurred after the election between Nur's supporters and those led by Musa Mustafa Musa. His splinter group elected him the new party leader on October 1, 2005, though Nur insisted he was still party president. Nur was sentenced to five years in prison in December 2005 following his conviction on charges that he forged documents used to register his party. On December 30, however, the party's general assembly elected Naji al-Ghatrifi to be its new leader, named Nur its honorary leader, and sacked four dissident members. The party won one seat in the 2005 assembly elections. Nur remained in prison in 2006 after his appeal was rejected.

*Leader:* Naji al-GHATRIFI (Chair).

### *Other Parties That Participated in Recent Elections*

**Nasserist Arab Democratic Party**—NADP. Also referenced simply as the Nasserist Party, the NADP, formed in 1992, won one seat in the 1995 assembly balloting, three in the 2000 poll, and none in the 2005 elections. Its platform called for the government to retain a dominant role in directing the economy and to increase the provision of social services. In 2007 rifts widened in the party among the "old guard" who backed the 80-year-old Daoud's leadership, supporters of the party's secretary general, Ahmed Hassan (blamed by many for the party's downfall), and a reformist wing headed by Sameh ASHOUR, who had left the party in 2002.

*Leaders:* Diaeddin DAOUD (Chair), Ahmed HASSAN (Secretary General).

**National Party** (*Hizb al-Umma*). A small Muslim organization, the National Party has ties to the supporters of Dr. Sadiq al-MAHDI, former prime minister of Sudan. It participated unsuccessfully in the 2000 assembly balloting on a platform that called for the strengthening of the "democratic process."

*Leader:* Ahmad al-SABAHI Awadallah (Chair and 2005 presidential candidate).

**Green Party** (*Hizb al-Khudr*). The Green Party, recognized by the Political Parties Tribunal in April 1990, was reported to have emerged in response to a 1986 newspaper column by (then) Vice President Abdel Salam DAOUD that criticized his country's lack of interest in environmental issues. The formation claimed 3,000 members and, while professing no interest in gaining political power, participated unsuccessfully in the 1990 legislative campaign. The party supported President Mubarak in the 2005 presidential campaign.

*Leader:* Abdul Moneim al-AASAR (Chair).

Other parties that participated in the 2005 elections were the **Democratic Unionist Party** (*Hizb*



*al-Itahadi Democrati*), formerly led by Ibrahim TURK, who was killed in an automobile accident in 2006; the **Egyptian Arab Socialist Party**, led by Wahid al-UQSURI; the **Generation Party** (*al-Gayl*), led by Naji al-SHAHABI; the **National Accord Party**, led by Al-Sayyid Rifaat al-AGRU-DI; **Solidarity** (*al-Takaful*), a socialist grouping led by Usama Mohammad SHALTOUT; the **Egypt 2000 Party** (*Misr*), led by Fawsi Khalil Mohammad GHAZAL; the **Social Constitutional Party**, led by Mamduh Mohammad QINAWI; and the **National Rally for Democratic Change**, whose leader, former Prime Minister Sidqi, was coordinator of the ten-party National Front coalition.

### *Other Parties and Groups*

**Muslim Brotherhood** (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*). Established in 1928 to promote creation of a pan-Arab Islamic state, the Brotherhood was declared an illegal organization in 1954 when the government accused its leaders, many of whom were executed or imprisoned, of plotting a coup attempt. However, for many years the Mubarak government tolerated some activity on the part of the Brotherhood since it claimed to eschew violence, as a means of undercutting the militant fundamentalist movement. With much of its support coming from the northern middle class, the Brotherhood retains the largest following and greatest financial resources among Egypt's Islamic organizations despite the emergence of more radical groups. It dominates many Egyptian professional associations, collaterally providing a wide range of charitable services in sharp contrast to inefficient government programs.

The Brotherhood secured indirect assembly representation in 1984 and 1987. Although the Brotherhood boycotted the 1990 assembly balloting, joint SLP/Brotherhood candidates contested a number of seats in November 1992 municipal elections. Many Brotherhood adherents were removed from local and national appointive positions in 1992–1993 as a side effect of the government's antifundamentalist campaign. Friction with the government intensified further in early 1995 when a

group of Brotherhood members were charged with having links to the militant Islamic Group (below). The government arrested more than 50 members of the group in July on charges of belonging to an illegal organization. Sentences of up to five years in prison were handed down against most of the defendants in early November, essentially precluding effective Brotherhood participation in the legislative balloting later that month. (It was subsequently reported that only one successful assembly candidate could be identified as a Brotherhood adherent.) The Brotherhood urged a boycott of the April 1997 local elections, claiming that many of its supporters and preferred candidates had been subjected to government "intimidation."

In January 1996 a number of former Brotherhood members reportedly launched a **Center Party** (*Hizb al-Wasat*) along with representatives of the Coptic community in an avowed effort to "heal the breaches" within the Egyptian populace. However, the government denied the party's request for recognition and arrested some 13 of its founders with purported Brotherhood ties. In August seven of the defendants were convicted of antigovernment activity by a military court and sentenced to three years in prison. *Al-Wasat* was again denied legal status in May 1998, the government describing it as insufficiently different from other parties to warrant recognition. (See Other Legislative Parties, above.)

A number of the officially independent candidates in the 2000 assembly balloting were clearly identifiable as belonging to the Brotherhood, and 17 of them were elected, permitting the return of the Brotherhood to the assembly after a ten-year absence. Though Brotherhood leaders subsequently again denied any connection to militant groups, a number of Brotherhood members were arrested in the government crackdown on Islamists in late 2001 and early 2002.

The death of 83-year-old leader Mamoun al-HODAIBI on January 9, 2004, was seen as an opportunity to attract the younger generation, but on January 14 the party selected an "old guard" successor: Muhammad Mahdi Akef, 74. He maintained that the Brotherhood would not change its

approach. Akef had been convicted in 1954 of the attempted assassination of President Nasser and served 20 years in prison.

While Akef called for dialogue with the government, in May 2004 security forces arrested 54 members of the Brotherhood and for the first time targeted the organization's funding sources, closing various businesses and the group's website. In March 2005, some 84 members were arrested in police raids in the midst of massive demonstrations, said to be the largest in Cairo's history. The Brotherhood ran 120 candidates as independents in the November–December 2005 assembly elections, securing 88 seats in balloting marked by violence, including the death of one Brotherhood supporter. It was widely reported that government security forces blocked some polls and detained scores of group members. Brotherhood leaders said they would use the gains made in representation to push for the abolition of laws that restrict political activity. Arrests of Brotherhood members continued throughout 2006, and the government banned the group's leaders from traveling outside the country and its members from seeking office in trade union and student elections. About 140 student members, as well as some Brotherhood leaders, were arrested in December after a campus protest. Most of those arrested in 2005 reportedly remained in jail.

*Leaders:* Muhammad Mahdi AKEF, Mohamed HABIB (Deputy Chair), Mohamed HILAL, Essam el-ERIAN, Mohamed MORSI, Mohamed Khair al-SHATIR, Mahmoud EZZAT (Secretary General).

Another group, referenced as the **Social Justice Party**, was formed in 1993 and led by Mohammad Abdul AALA. It was suspended in 2003. One new party, referenced as the **Conservative Party**, led by Mustafa Abd al-AZIZ, was approved in 2006.

### *Illegal Groups*

**Holy War** (*al-Jihad*). A secret organization of militant Muslims who had reportedly split from the Muslim Brotherhood in the second half of the 1970s because of the latter's objection to the use of

violence, *al-Jihad* was blamed for attacks against Copts in 1979 and the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. In the first half of the 1980s it appeared to be linked to the Islamic Group (below), but the two organizations emerged with more distinct identities during the mid-1980s. Although some observers described *al-Jihad* as continuing to seek recruits, particularly in the military, its influence appeared to have diminished in the late 1980s as the result of government infiltration of its ranks and growing support for the Islamic Group. However, security officials charged that a revival of the group was attempted in the first half of the 1990s in conjunction with the increasingly violent fundamentalist/government conflict. A number of reported *al-Jihad* supporters were imprisoned in mid-1993 on charges of plotting the overthrow of the government, while, according to authorities, about 30 members were arrested in an April 1994 security sweep. Meanwhile, members of an apparent splinter, variously referenced as *New Jihad* or the *Vanguards of Conquest (Talai al-Fath)*, were subsequently given death sentences for complicity in assassination plots against top government officials. Some reports linked that activity to Ayman al-ZAWAHIRI, a former Cairo surgeon who had been imprisoned (and reportedly subjected to extreme torture) for three years following the assassination of President Sadat. Zawahiri was also reportedly linked to the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in 1995.

In 1998, in the wake of the Luxor attack of 1997, Zawahiri and his brother, Mohammad al-ZAWAHIRI, were described as attempting to "reorganize" *al-Jihad* from Afghanistan, where they had reportedly established ties with the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden. (Ayman al-Zawahiri had not been seen in Egypt since 1986.) Among other things, Ayman al-Zawahiri endorsed bin Laden's 1998 call for attacks on "Jews and Crusaders" (the latter a reference to Americans and their allies). At that point it appeared that a portion of *al-Jihad*, having been effectively suppressed in Egypt, had shifted away from a goal of overthrowing the Egyptian government to a global anti-Western campaign in concert with al-Qaida (for information

on al-Qaida, see article on Afghanistan). However, some members of *al-Jihad* reportedly objected to that new focus and split from Ayman al-Zawahiri.

A number of alleged *al-Jihad* adherents received long prison terms in early 1999, while nine were sentenced to death in absentia, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Yasser al-SIRRI, a London-based leader. Al-Zawahiri was also indicted in absentia in 1999 in the United States for his alleged role in the planning of the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Pakistan in 1998. Following the attacks on the United States in September 2001 that were quickly attributed to al-Qaida, al-Zawahiri, noted for his organizational skills, was described as the number two leader, after bin Laden, in that network. Some reports linked al-Zawahiri to the July 2005 bombings in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, that killed at least 64 people, and in 2006 al-Zawahiri claimed that the Islamic Group (below) had joined *al-Jihad*, which he said was linked to al-Qaida. As of mid-2007, he continued to elude U.S. authorities.

**Islamic Group** (*Gamaat i-Islami*). The Islamic Group surfaced in the late 1970s as the student wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, subsequently breaking from that organization and aligning (until the mid-1980s) with *al-Jihad* in seeking overthrow of the government. Having gained adherents among the poor in the Cairo slums and the villages in southern Egypt, it served as a loosely knit, but highly militant, umbrella organization for as many as three dozen smaller organizations. The government accused the group of spearheading attacks on security forces, government officials, and tourists beginning in 1992, and hanged a number of its members who had been convicted of terrorist activity.

Egyptian authorities in the mid-1990s asked the United States to extradite Sheikh Omar ABDEL RAHMAN, the blind theologian who is reputed to be the spiritual leader of the Islamic Group and had been in self-imposed exile in the New York City area since 1990. In April 1994 Sheikh Abdel Rahman was sentenced in absentia by an Egyptian security court to seven years in prison for inciting

his followers to violence in 1989. In addition, 25 codefendants received jail terms of various lengths. In January 1996 Sheikh Abdel Rahman was sentenced to life in prison in the United States following his conviction on charges of conspiring to commit a series of bombings in the New York City area, including as mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Eight codefendants were given prison terms of 25 years to life. Meanwhile, Safwat Abd al-Ghani, viewed as the political leader of the Group, was confined to prison in Egypt on a charge of illegal weapons possession. Ghani and other Islamic Group defendants had initially been charged with murder in the 1990 assassination of Assembly President Rifat al-Mahgoub; however, the charges were dismissed in 1993 following a court ruling that confessions had been extracted from them by torture.

Talaat Yassin HAMMAN, described by Egyptian authorities as the “military commander” of the Islamic Group, was killed by security forces in April 1994. His “intended successor,” Ahmad Hassan Abd al-GALIL, also died in a shoot-out with police the following November. It was subsequently reported that Group military activities were being conducted under the leadership of Mustapha HAMZA and Rifai TAHA, apparently based in Afghanistan.

Two members of the group were executed in February 1995 after being convicted of a bombing in which a German tourist was killed, while two others were executed in late March for the attempted killing of Nobel laureate Naguib MAHFOUZ in October 1994. The Egyptian government also accused the Group (and Hamza in particular) of being behind a June 1995 attempt on the life of President Mubarak in Ethiopia.

In mid-1996 reports surfaced that a faction of the Islamic Group had signaled an interest in negotiations with the government. However, that possibility was apparently rejected by the Mubarak administration. Factionalization within the group was also apparent in 1997, particularly in regard to a “cease-fire” ordered by its imprisoned leaders at midyear. Although the militants responsible for the attack at Luxor in November appeared linked to

the group, long-standing group leaders disavowed responsibility, suggesting they were no longer in control of at least some “rogue” guerrilla cells. Subsequently, spokesmen for the group emphasized that it had reached “political maturity” and had renounced violence in favor of attempting to establish an Islamic state in Egypt through the political process. Sheikh Abdel Rahman appeared to endorse that shift in late 1998 when he called on his followers to pursue “peaceful means,” and the Islamic Group announced in March 1999 that a unilateral cease-fire was in effect. That cease-fire remained in effect through mid-2005. Islamic Group members still committed to violence reportedly subsequently joined the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden. In April 2006, it was reported that Egyptian authorities had released 950 members of the organization, including its founder, Najeh Ibrahim, though officials denied having released that number and said those who were released posed no risk to national security.

*Leaders:* Najeh IBRAHIM, Safwat Abd al-GHANI, Salah HASHEM, Talaat Fuad QASIM (Spokesman in Europe).

**Islamic Liberation Party** (*Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*). This radical political movement wants to create an Islamic society in Egypt and is on the United States’ list of foreign terrorist organizations.

In September 2002 some 51 defendants were given jail sentences in connection with the alleged activity of a clandestine organization known as *al-Waad* (The Pledge). First arrested on charges of belonging to an illegal organization, the defendants were also subsequently accused of planning violent acts in pursuit of the establishment of an Islamic state in Egypt. In early 2005 an Egyptian court upheld a five-year sentence for Mohammed Abdel Fattah, convicted along with 24 others the previous year, but Fattah managed to escape. He and the others were accused of trying to reorganize the party, which has been banned since 1974.

Also subject to government crackdowns have been the Islamic fundamentalist **Survivors from Hell** (*al-Najoun Min al-Nar*), charged in 1988 with

the attempted murder of two anti-Muslim former government ministers, and **Denouncement and Holy Flight** (*Takfir wa al-Hijra*). (Some 245 members of the latter were reportedly arrested in April 1996.) An obscure Islamic group, **Islamic Pride Brigades of the Land of the Nile**, claimed responsibility for a bombing in the heart of Cairo in April 2005. Nasser el-MALLAHI, the leader of an obscure party operating in the Sinai area, **Monotheism and Struggle** (*Tawhid wal-Jihad*), was killed by security forces in 2006 in connection with the bombings at Dahab. The group was reportedly founded by Khaled MOSSAD, who was killed by Egyptian forces in 2005.

Clandestine left-wing formations against which the government has moved energetically in the past included, most prominently, the **Egyptian Communist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Shuyui al-Misri*). Founded in 1921, the party subsequently experienced numerous cleavages that yielded, among others, the **Egyptian Communist Labor Party** and the Maoist **Revolutionary Current**. In 1990 another splinter, the **People’s Socialist Party**, was launched under the leadership of veteran Communist Michel KAMEL, who later died in exile in France.

Two Islamist groupings—the **Reform** (*Islah*) **Party**, formed in 1997 under the leadership of Gamal SULTAN; and the **Islamic Law** (*Sharia*) **Party**—sought permission to participate in the 2000 assembly elections, but their applications were emphatically rejected by the government.

## Legislature

The **People’s Assembly** (*Majlis al-Shaab*) is a unicameral legislature elected in two-round balloting for a five-year term. As sanctioned by a popular referendum, President Sadat dissolved the existing assembly (which had two years remaining in its term) on April 21, 1979, and announced expansion of the body from 350 to 392 members, in part to accommodate representatives from the Sinai. Prior to the election of May 27, 1984, the assembly was further expanded to 458 members, including 10 appointed by the president.

## Cabinet

As of March 1, 2007

Prime Minister      Ahmed Mahmoud Muhammad Nazif

*Ministers*

Agriculture	Amin Ahmed Muhammad Othman Abaza
Civil Aviation	Lt. Gen. Ahmad Shafiq
Communications and Information Technology	Tariq Muhammad Kamal
Culture	Faruq Abd al-Aziz Husni
Defense and Military Production	Fld. Mar. Muhammad Hussein Tantawi Sulayman
Economic Development	Othman Muhammad Othman
Education	Youssri Saber Husayn al-Gamal
Electricity and Energy	Hassan Ahmed Younes
Finance	Yussef Boutros-Ghali
Foreign Affairs	Ahmed Ali Abu al-Ghayt
Foreign Trade and Industry	Rashid Muhammad Rashid
Health and Population	Hatem Moustafa Moustafa al-Gabaly
Higher Education	Hani Mafouz Helal
Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities	Ahmed al-Maghrabi
Information	Anas Ahmed al-Fiqy
Interior	Gen. Habib al-Adli
International Cooperation	Fayza Abu-al-Naga [f]
Investment	Mahmoud Muhiy al-Din
Irrigation and Water Resources	Mahmoud Abd al-Halim Abu Zayd
Justice	Mamduh Muri
Local Development	Muhammad Abd al-Salam Mahgoub
Manpower and Immigration	Aisha Abdel Hady Abdel Ghany [f]
Petroleum	Amin Sameh Samir Fahmi
Religious Trusts	Mahmoud Hamdi Zakzuk
Social Solidarity	Ali Moselhi
Tourism	Muhammad Zuhayr Muhammad Wahid Garana
Transport	Muhammad Yunis Mansur Lufti Mansur

*Ministers of State*

Administrative Development	Ahmed Mahmoud Darwish
Environmental Affairs	Majid George Ghattas
Legal Affairs and Parliamentary Councils	Mufid Muhammad Mahmud Shihab
Military Production	Sayed Abdou Moustafa Meshal
Scientific Research	Hani Mafouz Helal

[f] = female

On May 19, 1990, the Supreme Constitutional Court voided the results of an assembly poll of April 6, 1987, because of improper restrictions on opposition and independent candidates, and an Oc-

tober 11 referendum approved formal dissolution of the body. A new election, boycotted by most of the leading opposition formations, was held November 29 and December 6, 1990, the assembly

having been reduced to 454 members, including the 10 presidential appointees.

Elections to the current assembly were held in November–December 2005. First-round balloting was conducted for three groups of districts on three days (November 9 and 20 and December 1); second-round balloting was held six days after each first round. The government reported that some 5,000 candidates competed for 444 seats. The results for 12 seats were annulled. The government reported the seat distribution for the remaining 432 seats as follows: the National Democratic Party (NDP), 265; the New Wafd Party (NWP), 6; the National Progressive Unionist Party (NPUP), 1; the Liberal Socialist Party, 1; the Tomorrow Party, 1; independents 157; and vacant, 1. However, it was widely agreed that 88 of the independent candidates were clearly identified as allied with the Muslim Brotherhood, while many of the remaining independents were considered allied with the NDP. (Most news reports credited the NDP with having secured 320 seats.) Ten parties and groups fielded candidates under a coalition referenced as the National Front for Change.

*President:* Dr. Ahmad Fathi SURUR.

## Communications

The Supreme Press Council, established under a constitutional amendment in May 1980, oversees newspaper and magazine activity while government boards also direct the state information service, radio, and television. The government retains 51 percent ownership (exercised through the *Shura*) of many major newspapers and consequently exercises substantial editorial control. Although the development of an active and often highly critical opposition press was permitted in the 1980s, significant censorship has been imposed in recent years in conjunction with the conflict between the government and Islamic fundamentalist militants. A new press law was adopted in May 1995 providing for prison sentences and heavy fines for, among other things, “insulting” public officials or state institutions. However, in June 1996 some of the

harshest elements of the new code were rescinded after the government was strongly criticized by domestic and international journalists for attempting to “muzzle” the press.

In February 2005, the president announced an end to imprisonment for various publication offenses, yet three months later, three journalists from an independent daily were found guilty of libeling the housing minister and sentenced to a year in jail. In July 2005 the government reshuffled the leadership of the press, appointing new heads to all the major government dailies. In 2006 journalists protested a new law, approved by parliament in July, that allowed the jailing of journalists who investigate allegations of corruption or publish articles critical of the government or of foreign heads of state. In July, the editor of an independent weekly was convicted of libel and sentenced to a year in prison. Later in the year, several Internet columnists critical of the government were arrested.

## Press

The following are Cairo dailies published in Arabic, unless otherwise noted: *al-Ahram* (1,000,000 daily, 1,200,000 Friday), semiofficial with *al-Ahram al-Massai* as an evening daily; *al-Akhbar* (800,000), Saturday edition published as *Akhbar al-Yawm* (1,100,000); *al-Jumhuriyah* (650,000), semi-official; *al-Misaa*; *Le Journal d’Egypte* (72,000), in French; *Egyptian Gazette* (36,000), in English; *Le Progrès Egyptien* (22,000), in French; *al-Hayat*. Among other newspapers are *al-Dustour*, independent opposition weekly; *al-Ussbu*, independent “nationalist” weekly; and *al-Masr al-Yawm*. The party organs include the Socialist Labor Party’s bi-weekly *al-Shaab* (50,000), which was closed in April 2005; the Socialist Liberal weekly *al-Ahrrar*; the National Progressive Unionist weekly *al-Ahali*; The New Wafd’s daily *al-Wafd*; the NDP’s weekly *Shabab Beladi*; the Nasserist Arab Democratic Party’s *al-Arabi*; the Tomorrow Party’s *al-Ghad*; the National Party’s weekly *al-Umma*; and the Green Party’s weekly *al-Khudr*.

*News Agencies*

The domestic agency is the Middle East News Agency—MENA (*Wakalat al-Anba al-Sharq al-Awsat*). In addition, numerous foreign bureaus maintain offices in Cairo.

*Broadcasting and Computing*

The Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) operates numerous radio stations broadcasting in Arabic and other languages, and some three dozen television stations transmitting in two programs. Commercial radio service is offered by Middle East Radio (*Idhaat al-Sharq al-Awsat*). As of 2005 there were approximately 68 Internet users and 37 personal computers per 1,000 people. As of that same year there were about 184 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

The first Egyptian communications satellite was launched by the European Space Agency in 1998;

some 80 channels were expected to be broadcast regionally by the satellite, known as “Nilesat,” under the control of the ERTU.

**Intergovernmental Representation**

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Nabil FAHMY

**U.S. Ambassador to Egypt:** Francis Joseph RICCIARDONE Jr.

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Maged Abdelfattah ABDELAZIZ

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AU, BADEA, CAEU, Comesa, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OAPEEC, OIC, OIF, PCA, WCO, WTO

# IRAN

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

*Jomhori-e Islami-e Irân*

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### The Country

A land of elevated plains, mountains, and deserts that is semiarid except for a fertile area on the Caspian coast, Iran is celebrated both for the richness of its cultural heritage and for the oil resources that have made it a center of world attention. Persians make up about one-half of the population, while the principal minority groups are Turks and Kurds, who speak their own languages and dialects. English and French are widely spoken in the cities. More than 90 percent of the people belong to the Shiite sect of Islam, the official religion. Prior to the 1979 Islamic revolution, women constituted approximately 10 percent of the paid labor force, with substantial representation in government and the professions. Since 1979 female participation in most areas of government has been limited, and many working women still serve as unpaid agricultural laborers on family landholdings. On the other hand, the government of President Ali Akbar Hashemi RAFSANJANI was less willing than its predecessor to enforce Islamic social codes, and women successfully ran for parliamentary seats. Educational and professional restrictions on women are less stringent than in a number of nearby Arab states.

Despite a steady increase in petroleum production, both the economy and the society remained basically agricultural until the early 1960s, when a massive development program was launched. During the next decade and a half, the proportion of GDP (exclusive of oil revenue) contributed by agriculture dropped by nearly 30 percent, Iran becoming a net importer of food in the course of a major

population shift to urban areas. Under a 1973–1978 five-year plan, agriculture was slated to expand along with industry and oil and gas production. Severe inflation and a substantial outflow of capital, among other issues, prevented these goals from being realized.

Conditions deteriorated during the 1980–1988 war with Iraq, as heavy infrastructure damage contributed to a sharp reduction in petroleum exports. The government subsequently relaxed the tight economic controls imposed during the war, its new free-market posture emphasizing (at least





rhetorically) the privatization of state-run enterprises, curtailment of agricultural subsidies, and efforts to attract foreign investment. However, although the long-term potential remained strong (Iran's oil reserves were estimated at upward of 100 billion barrels), the economy was stressed through the mid-1990s by high inflation (exacerbated by cuts in state subsidies), rising unemployment, a fast-growing population, widespread corruption, a growing external debt burden, and food and housing shortages that sparked sporadic antigovernment demonstrations.

GDP grew by 4 percent in 1997, but growth slipped to 1 percent in 1998, primarily as the result of a dramatic drop in oil prices. By the end of 1998 annual inflation was estimated at 35 percent. Real GDP growth rose to 3.6 percent in 2000 and 5.7 percent in 2001, mostly as the result of higher oil prices. Despite a downward revision of oil production quotas by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 2002, GDP growth of 4.8 percent was recorded. Also contributing to recent economic advances were increased privatization, tax incentives for corporations, and loosening of trade regulations. A dual exchange rate—one for state imports of many basic goods and another, much higher, for all other transactions—was eliminated with the adoption of a unified exchange rate in 2002.

High oil prices continued to buoy the economy, with annual average GDP growth of 5 percent in 2005–2006. GDP growth for 2007 was projected to be 6 percent. While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2007 noted Iran's robust growth due to soaring oil prices, it urged authorities to use the additional revenue to sustain a high growth rate and create jobs in light of the country's 10 percent unemployment rate and an annual inflation rate of nearly 5 percent. In addition, the IMF urged the phasing out of energy subsidies. In the wake of U.S. sanctions affecting several Iranian banks (see Foreign relations, below), the IMF stated that in regard to at least one of the large banks, it had found no evidence of any transactions with terrorist groups. Nevertheless, the IMF noted Iran's "short-comings" in combating the financing of terrorism

and encouraged authorities to follow through with plans for anti-money laundering legislation. On a more positive note, the IMF commended Iran for accelerating privatization efforts, particularly with its largest banks.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Modern Iranian history began with nationalist uprisings against foreign economic intrusions in the late 19th century. In 1906 a coalition of clergy, merchants, and intellectuals forced the shah to grant a limited constitution. A second revolutionary movement, also directed largely against foreign influence, was initiated in 1921 by REZA Khan, an army officer who, four years after seizing power, ousted the Qajar family and established the Pahlavi dynasty. Although Reza Shah initiated forced modernization of the country with Kemalist Turkey as his model, his flirtation with the Nazis led to the occupation of Iran by Soviet and British forces in 1941 and his subsequent abdication in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza PAHLAVI. The end of World War II witnessed the formation of separatist Azerbaijani and Kurdish regimes under Soviet patronage; however, these crumbled in 1946 because of pressure exerted by the United States and the United Nations. A subsequent upsurge of Iranian nationalism resulted in expropriation of the British-owned oil industry in 1951, during the two-year premiership of Mohammad MOSSADEQ.

In the wake of an abortive coup in August 1953, Mossadeq was arrested by loyalist army forces with assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British intelligence operatives. The period following his downfall was marked by the shah's assumption of a more active role, culminating in systematic efforts at political, economic, and social development that were hailed by the monarchy as a "White Revolution." However, the priorities established by the monarch, which included major outlays for sophisticated military weapon systems and a number of "showcase" projects (such as a subway system for the city

**Political Status:** Former monarchy; Islamic Republic proclaimed April 1–2, 1979, on basis of referendum of March 30–31; present constitution adopted at referendum of December 2–3, 1979.

**Area:** 636,293 sq. mi. (1,648,000 sq. km.).

**Population:** 69,470,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Center (2005E):** TEHRAN (8,600,000).

**Official Language:** Persian (Farsi).

**Monetary Unit:** Rial (official rate November 2, 2007: 9,320 rials = \$1US).

**Supreme Religious Leader:** Ayatollah Seyed Ali KHAMENEI; elected President October 2, 1981, and sworn in October 13, following the assassination of Mohammad Ali RAJAI on August 30; reelected August 16, 1985, and sworn in for a second four-year term on October 10; named Supreme Religious Leader by the Assembly of Experts on June 4, 1989, following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi KHOMEINI on June 3.

**President:** Mahmoud AHMADINEJAD; popularly elected in a runoff on June 24, 2005, confirmed on August 3 by the Supreme Religious Leader, and sworn in before the legislature for a four-year term on August 6, succeeding Mohammad KHATAMI.

**First Vice President:** Parviz DAVODI; appointed by the president on August 14, 2005, succeeding Mohamed Reza AREF.

of Tehran), coupled with a vast influx of foreign workers and evidence of official corruption, led to criticism by traditional religious leaders, university students, labor unions, and elements within the business community.

In March 1975 the shah announced dissolution of the existing two-party system (both government and opposition parties having been controlled by the throne) and decreed the formation of a new National Resurgence Party to serve as the country's sole political group. In the face of mounting unrest and a number of public-services breakdowns in overcrowded Tehran, Emir Abbas HOVEYDA, who had served as prime minister since 1965, was

dismissed in August 1977 and replaced by the National Resurgence secretary general, Jamshid AMOUZEGAR.

By late 1977 both political and religious opposition to the shah had further intensified. On December 11 a Union of National Front Forces was formed under Karim SANJABI, a former Mossadeq minister, to promote a return to the constitution, the nationalization of major industries, and the adoption of policies that would be "neither communist nor capitalist, but strictly nationalist." Conservative Muslim sentiment, on the other hand, centered on the senior mullah, Ayatollah Ruhollah KHOMEINI, who had lived in exile since mounting a series of street demonstrations against the "White Revolution" in 1963, and the more moderate Ayatollah Seyed Kazem SHARI-ATMADARI, based in the religious center of Qom. Both leaders were supported politically by the long-established Liberation Movement of Iran, led by Mehdi BAZARGAN.

By mid-1978 demonstrations against the regime had become increasingly violent, and Prime Minister Amouzegar was replaced on August 27 by the Senate president, Jaafar SHARIF-EMAMI, whose parliamentary background and known regard for the country's religious leadership made him somewhat unique within the monarch's inner circle of advisers. Unable to arrest appeals for the shah's abdication, Sharif-Emami was forced to yield office on November 6 to a military government headed by the chief of staff of the armed forces, Gen. Gholam Reza AZHARI. The level of violence nonetheless continued to mount; numerous Kurds in northwest Iran joined the chorus of opposition, as did the well-financed Tudeh Party, a communist group. The oil fields and major banks were shut down by strikes, bringing the economy to the verge of collapse. Thus, after an effort by Golam-Hossein SADIQI to form a new civilian government had failed, the shah on December 29 named a prominent National Front leader, Shahpur BAKHTIAR, as prime minister designate.

Ten days after Bakhtiar's formal investiture on January 6, 1979, the shah left the country on what was called an extended "vacation." On February

1, amid widespread popular acclaim, Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile, and a week later he announced the formation of a provisional government under a Revolutionary Council, which was subsequently reported to be chaired by Ayatollah Morteza MOTAHARI. On February 11 Prime Minister Bakhtiar resigned, and Bazargan was invested as his successor by the National Consultative Assembly immediately prior to the issuance of requests for dissolution by both the assembly and the senate.

Despite a series of clashes with ethnic minority groups, a referendum on March 30–31, 1979, approved the proclamation of an Islamic Republic by a reported 97 percent majority. A rising tide of political assassinations and other disruptions failed to delay the election on August 3 of a constituent assembly (formally called the Assembly of Experts) delegated to review a draft constitution that had been published in mid-June. The result of the council's work was subsequently approved in a national referendum on December 2–3 (see Constitution and government, below).

The most dramatic event of 1979 was the November 4 occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and the seizure of 66 hostages (13 of whom were released on November 17, while another was freed for health reasons in early July 1980), apparently in an effort to secure the return of the shah for trial; he had been admitted to a New York hospital for medical treatment. The action, undertaken by militant students, was not disavowed by the Revolutionary Council, although the government appeared not to have been consulted. Prime Minister Bazargan felt obliged to tender his resignation the following day, without a successor being named. On December 4 the UN Security Council unanimously condemned the action and called for release of the hostages, while the International Court of Justice (ICJ) handed down a unanimous decision to the same effect on December 15. Both judgments were repudiated by Iranian leaders.

Notwithstanding the death of the shah in Egypt on July 27, 1980, and the outbreak of war with Iraq in late September (see Foreign relations, below), no resolution of the hostage issue occurred in 1980.

American frustration at the lengthy impasse was partially evidenced by an abortive helicopter rescue effort undertaken by the U.S. Air Force on April 24, and it was not until November 2 that Tehran agreed to formal negotiations with Washington, proposing the Algerian government as mediator. The remaining 52 hostages were ultimately freed after 444 days of captivity on January 20, 1981, coincident with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan as U.S. president. In return for their freedom, Washington agreed (1) to abstain from interference in internal Iranian affairs; (2) to freeze the property and assets of the late shah's family pending resolution of lawsuits brought by the Islamic Republic; (3) to "bar and preclude" pending and future suits against Iran as a result of the 1979 revolution or the hostage seizure, with an Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal to be established at The Hague, Netherlands; (4) to end trade sanctions against Tehran; and (5) to unfreeze \$7.97 billion in Iranian assets.

Internal developments in 1980 were highlighted by the election of the relatively moderate Abol Hasan BANI-SADR, a former advisor to Ayatollah Khomeini, as president on January 25 and the convening of a unicameral assembly, the *Majlis-e Shoura-e Islami*, on May 28, following two-stage balloting on March 14 and May 9. On August 9 Bani-Sadr reluctantly agreed to nominate Mohammad Ali RAJAI, an Islamic fundamentalist, as prime minister after three months of negotiations had failed to yield parliamentary support for a more centrist candidate.

Despite the support of secular nationalists, political moderates, much of the armed forces, and many Islamic leftists, Bani-Sadr was increasingly beleaguered by the powerful fundamentalist clergy centered around the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) and its (then) secretary general, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Ayatollah Mohammad Hossein BEHESHTI. The IRP had emerged from the 1980 legislative balloting in firm control of the *Majlis*, enabling the clergy, ultimately with the support of Ayatollah Khomeini, to undermine presidential prerogatives during the first half of 1981. Moreover, on June 1 an arbitration committee, which had been established in the wake of violent clashes on

March 5 between fundamentalists and Bani-Sadr supporters, declared that the president had not only incited unrest but had also violated the constitution by failing to sign into law bills passed by the *Majlis*. Nine days later, Khomeini removed Bani-Sadr as commander in chief, and on June 22, following a two-day impeachment debate in the assembly that culminated in a 177–1 vote declaring him incompetent, the chief executive was dismissed.

On June 28, 1981, a bomb ripped apart IRP headquarters in Tehran, killing Ayatollah Beheshti, 4 government ministers, 6 deputy ministers, 27 *Majlis* deputies, and 34 others. Prosecutor General Ayatollah Abdolkarim Musavi ARDEBILI was immediately appointed chief justice, while on July 24 Prime Minister Rajai, with more than 90 percent of the vote, was elected president. Having been confirmed by Ayatollah Khomeini on August 2, Rajai named Hojatolislam Mohammad Javad BAHONAR (Beheshti's successor as leader of the IRP) as prime minister, the *Majlis* endorsing the appointment three days later. Meanwhile, in late July deposed president Bani-Sadr, accompanied by Massoud RAJAVI of the *Mujaheddin-e Khalq* (see Political Parties and Groups, below), had fled to Paris, where he announced the formation of an exile National Resistance Council.

On August 30, 1981, President Rajai and Prime Minister Bahonar were assassinated by an explosion at the latter's offices, and on September 1 the minister of the interior, Hojatolislam Muhammad Reza MAHDAVI-KANI, was named interim prime minister. On October 2 Hojatolislam Seyed Ali KHAMENEI, Bahonar's replacement as secretary general of the IRP and a close associate of Khomeini, was elected president with 95 percent of the vote. Sworn in on October 13, he accepted the resignation of Mahdavi-Kani on October 15, with Mir Hosein MUSAVI, the foreign minister, being named the Islamic Republic's fifth prime minister on October 31, following confirmation by the *Majlis*. President Khamenei was elected to a second four-year term on August 16, 1985, defeating two IRP challengers. On October 13, following nomination by the president, Musavi was reconfirmed as prime minister.

At *Majlis* elections on April 8 and May 13, 1988, reformists won a clear majority. The elections, which were boycotted by the sole recognized opposition party, the Liberation Movement of Iran, also highlighted the increasing power of *Majlis* speaker Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who on June 2 was named acting commander in chief of the armed forces. On June 6 Rafsanjani was renamed to his parliamentary post, despite the reported efforts of Ayatollah Hussein Ali MON-TAZERI, Khomeini's officially designated successor, to force him to concentrate exclusively on his military responsibilities.

On March 27, 1989, following a meeting of the Presidium of the Assembly of Experts at which the "future leadership of the Islamic Republic" was discussed, Montazeri, declaring his "lack of readiness" for the position, submitted his resignation as deputy religious leader. On June 3 the 89-year-old Khomeini died, the Assembly of Experts designating President Khamenei as his successor the following day. On July 28 Iranians overwhelmingly voted their approval of constitutional changes that abolished the office of prime minister and significantly strengthened the powers of the theretofore largely ceremonial presidency. On August 17 Speaker Rafsanjani, who had been elected to succeed Khamenei as chief executive, was sworn in before the *Majlis*, and two days later he submitted a 22-member cabinet list that secured final approval on August 29.

At nationwide elections on October 8, 1990, to the Assembly of Experts, supporters of President Rafsanjani won a majority of seats, thus dealing a major setback to hard-line leaders. Rafsanjani further depleted the hard-liners' influence by, ironically, making assembly membership contingent on successful completion of an Islamic law examination. Furthermore, at parliamentary balloting in April and May 1992 Rafsanjani supporters captured an unexpectedly large majority of the seats, aided in part by the pro-Rafsanjani Council of Guardians' elimination of a number of hard-line *Majlis* candidates in March.

On June 11, 1993, President Rafsanjani was reelected to a second four-year term. However,

despite lackluster opposition from three challengers selected by the Council of Guardians from a list of 128 presidential candidates, he won only 63.3 percent of the vote, a severe decline from the 94.5 percent registered in 1989. The president's slippage was also evident when the *Majlis*, while approving the remainder of the reshuffled cabinet on August 16, voted against the reappointment of Mohsen NURBAKHSH as minister of economic affairs and finance. Notwithstanding the obvious legislative dissatisfaction with current policies, Rafsanjani subsequently named Nurbakhsh to the newly created post of vice president for economic affairs, which did not require approval by the *Majlis*.

Cuts in state subsidies and consequent price increases triggered a series of riots in several cities in 1994, the assembly authorizing police to "shoot to kill" in any subsequent outbreaks. Thus, an estimated 30 people died when police opened fire during a disturbance near Tehran in April 1995. Nevertheless, President Rafsanjani vowed to persevere with his free-market reform policies, although it was widely conceded that little progress had been achieved in making the economy more efficient or the government bureaucracy less corrupt.

Elections to a new *Majlis* were held on March 8 and April 19, 1996, the balloting failing to produce a clear-cut victor in the battle between conservatives and moderates for political dominance. The results reflected the continued "quiet power struggle" between President Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khamenei, whose supporters had accused the administration of having "wandered" from the path set by the 1979 revolution. With political primacy still apparently hanging in the balance, attention subsequently focused on the presidential election scheduled for May 1997, ruling clerics having emphasized that no constitutional amendments would be considered to permit a third term for Rafsanjani.

In what was considered an extraordinarily high voter turnout of 88 percent, Hojatolislam Seyed Mohammad KHATAMI, a moderate cleric, won the May 23, 1997, presidential poll with 20 million votes (69.5 percent) to 9 million combined votes for the three other candidates, including second-place (25 percent) Ali Akbar NATEQ-NURI, the conser-

vative speaker of the *Majlis*, who was supported by Ayatollah Khamenei and the Society of Combatant Clergy, the majority conservative faction of the *Majlis*. Khatami, backed by various leftist groups as well as the moderate Servants of Construction, reportedly did well among women, students, the urban middle class, and other voters who apparently desired an end to Iran's international isolation, an easing of Islamic "vigilantism," and economic reform. The *Majlis* approved Khatami's cabinet recommendations on August 20; meanwhile, outgoing President Rafsanjani was named as president of the newly expanded Council for the Expediency of State Decrees (see Constitution and government, below), which included former cabinet members rejected by Khatami.

The election of President Khatami in May 1997 precipitated an extended tug-of-war for political and economic control between his reformist camp, which enjoyed widespread popular support, and the conservative clerics, who retained broad institutional power, often in alliance with intelligence services and businessmen. For his part, Khatami steadfastly pursued the "rule of law" and a civil society marked by greater nonclerical participation in governing bodies, expanded freedoms for individuals and the media, and tolerance for divergent religious and political views (including the legalization of parties). He also steadfastly called for warmer ties with the West based on a "dialogue of civilizations" and attempted to convince neighboring states that Iran had no interest in establishing regional dominance. Conservatives tried to block democratization at many levels, including the *Majlis* (which forced the dismissal of several cabinet members) and the judiciary (which banned newspapers and took legal action against a number of reformists). The conservative cause appeared to receive a boost in the October 23, 1998, balloting for the Assembly of Experts, although their success was tainted by a relatively low turnout and the fact that many reform candidates had been barred from running by the conservative Council of Guardians. However, pro-Khatami candidates did very well in the municipal balloting of late February 1999, winning all of the seats on the Tehran Council and

some 70 percent of the seats they contested overall. Significantly, Ayatollah Khamanei, often associated with the conservative cause, did not support hard-liners in their efforts to ban reform candidates in the local elections.

Reformist candidates reportedly won about 70 percent of the seats in *Majlis* elections of February–May 2000, but the new membership’s legislative efforts faced constant resistance from the Council of Guardians and the judiciary. The reformists maintained their electoral momentum in June 2001, when President Khatami was reelected with a reported 78 percent of the vote against nine challengers. The reformists suffered a major defeat in local elections held on February 28, 2003, with conservative candidates winning majorities in most major cities, as former supporters of the reformists chose to stay away from the polls. The conservative Builders of an Islamic Iran Council won 14 of 15 city council seats in Tehran. Turnout in the capital was reported at about 10 percent, with turnout nationwide reported at 39 percent.

In parliamentary elections held on February 20, 2004, conservatives won a sweeping victory after the Council of Guardians disqualified more than a third of the candidates. Some 80 incumbent reformist MPs were among those barred from standing for election. The Builders of an Islamic Iran Council won a majority, securing about 144 of 229 seats. The Interior Ministry reported turnout at 28 percent in Tehran and 50.57 percent nationwide, the lowest since the 1979 revolution. After a second round, held on May 7 to determine remaining seats, the conservatives had secured at least 200 of 290 seats. Within the conservative majority, the Builders of an Islamic Iran Council controlled about 195 of those. Lesser-known reformists without formal ties to established political parties and associations were left with a small bloc of about 40 seats.

In the 2005 presidential elections, conservative candidate Mahmoud AHMADINEJAD, the mayor of Tehran, won a runoff vote against former president Rafsanjani on June 24. Ahmadinejad won 61.64 percent of the vote while Rafsanjani received 35.93 percent, a difference of more than 7 million

votes. Turnout for the runoff was reported at 59.72 percent compared to 62.66 percent in the first round (in which seven candidates competed). Reformist and former *Majlis* speaker Mehdi KARRUBI, who stood as a candidate in the first round on June 17, alleged rampant voter fraud and irregularities in an open letter to the supreme leader.

In the elections for the Assembly of Experts on December 15, 2006, conservatives retained control, the Council of Guardians having disqualified a third of the candidates. Rafsanjani retained his assembly seat, receiving the most votes of any Tehran candidate. In concurrent elections for local councils, moderate conservatives won the majority of seats, followed by reformists.

Following the death in July 2007 of the speaker of the Assembly of Experts, Ali MESHKINI, Rafsanjani was elected on September 4 to fill the post.

In 2007, five ministers resigned from the cabinet. The cabinet was reshuffled on August 12.

### *Constitution and Government*

The constitution of December 1979 established Shiite Islam as the official state religion, placed supreme power in the hands of the Muslim clergy, and named Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as the nation’s religious leader (*velayat-e faqih*) for life. The *velayat-e faqih* is also supreme commander of the armed forces and the Revolutionary Guard, can declare war, and can dismiss the president following a legislative request or a ruling of the Supreme Court. He is formally responsible for the “delineation” of national policies in all areas, although some de facto authority was assumed by other officials following Ayatollah Khomeini’s death in 1989.

An elected 86-member Assembly of Experts appoints the country’s spiritual leader and has broad powers of constitutional interpretation. (Members of the assembly are popularly elected for eight-year terms. Previously, only mullahs were permitted to run; however, revisions approved prior to the 1998 balloting permitted nonclerics to stand for the assembly, although their candidacies were still subject to approval by the Council of Guardians.) The president, the country’s chief executive

officer, is popularly elected for a maximum of two four-year terms. Members of the unicameral *Majlis*, to which legislative authority is assigned, also serve four-year terms. The post of prime minister was eliminated as part of basic law revisions approved by referendum in July 1989, the president being authorized to appoint members of the Council of Ministers, subject to legislative approval. The *Majlis* was also empowered to impeach the president by a one-third vote of its members and to request his dismissal by a two-thirds vote. In the event of a presidential vacancy, an election to refill the office must be held within 50 days. A Council of Guardians, encompassing six clerics specializing in Islamic law appointed by the *velayat-e faqih* and six nonclerical jurists elected by the legislature from nominees selected by the High Council of the Judiciary, is empowered to veto candidates for the presidency, *Majlis*, and Assembly of Experts and to nullify laws considered contrary to the constitution or the Islamic faith. (No constitutional provision having been made for the vetting by the Council of Guardians of candidates in municipal elections, the *Majlis* established a special committee for that purpose prior to the February 1999 local balloting.) In addition, a Council for the Expediency of State Decrees, composed of six clerics and seven senior governmental officials, was created in February 1988 to mediate differences between the *Majlis* and the more conservative Council of Guardians. (The authority and size of the Expediency Council were expanded in March 1997 by Ayatollah Khamenei, transforming the Council from an arbitrating panel to an "august consultative body," comprising a wider range of members, such as technocrats and faction leaders.) There is also a Supreme Council for National Security, established under the 1989 constitutional amendments to replace the National Defense Council. The new council, which coordinates defense and security policies and oversees all intelligence services, comprises the president, who serves as chair, two members appointed by the *faqih*, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the speaker of the *Majlis*, and several military and ministerial representatives. Political parties are technically authorized to the extent that they "do not vio-

late the independence, sovereignty, national unity, and principles of the Islamic Republic."

The civil courts instituted under the monarchy were replaced by Islamic Revolutionary Courts, judges being mandated to reach verdicts on the basis of precedent or Islamic law. The legal code subsequently underwent numerous changes, and on several occasions Ayatollah Khomeini called for the purging of judges who were deemed unsuitable or exceeded their authority. In August 1982 it was announced that all laws passed under the former regime would be annulled if contrary to Islam, while on September 23 homosexuality and consumption of alcohol were added to an extensive list of capital offenses. Although individuals are guaranteed a constitutional right to counsel, summary trials and executions were common following the 1979 revolution, many victims being suspected leftists or guerrillas.

Iran is administratively divided into 30 provinces (*ostans*); in addition, there are about 400 counties (*shahrestan*) and nearly 900 municipalities (*bakhsh*). The first municipal elections ever were conducted in February 1999. Reformers hoped that substantial authority would eventually be shifted from the national government to the local councils.

### *Foreign Relations*

Although a charter member of the United Nations, Iran momentarily curtailed its participation in the world body upon the advent of the Islamic Revolution. It boycotted the 1979 Security Council debate on seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran but joined in UN condemnation of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan late in the year.

An active member of OPEC, Iran was long in the forefront of those urging aggressive pricing policies, as opposed to the more moderate posture of Saudi Arabia and other conservative members. After 1980, however, a combination of the world oil glut and the need to finance its war effort forced Iran to sell petroleum on the spot market at prices well below those set by OPEC; concurrently, it joined Algeria and Libya in urging a "fair share" strategy

aimed at stabilizing prices through drastic production cutbacks.

A major international drama erupted in late 1986 with the revelation that members of the U.S. Reagan administration had participated in a scheme involving the clandestine sale of military equipment to Iran, the proceeds of which were to be used to support anti-Sandinista *contra* forces in Nicaragua. In early 1989 relations with the West, which had recently improved, again plummeted when British authorities refused to enjoin publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, a work considered deeply offensive to Muslims worldwide, with Khomeini issuing a death decree against the author in February.

Iran and its western neighbor, Iraq, have long been at odds over their borders, principally over control of the Shatt al-Arab waterway linking the Persian Gulf to the major oil ports of both countries (see Iraq map, p. 609). Although the dispute was ostensibly resolved by a 1975 accord dividing the waterway along the thalweg (median) line, Iraq abrogated the treaty on September 17, 1980, and invaded Iran's Khuzistan Province on September 22. Despite early reversals, Iran succeeded in retaining control of most of the larger towns, including the besieged oil center of Abadan, and by the end of the year the conflict had resulted in a military stalemate. The war had the immediate effect of accentuating disunity within the Islamic world, the more radical regimes of Libya, Syria, and South Yemen supporting Tehran, and the more conservative governments of Jordan, Egypt, and the Gulf states favoring Baghdad.

Despite mediation efforts by the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Nonaligned Movement, and various individual countries, fighting continued, with Iran advancing into Iraqi territory for the first time in July 1982. Rejecting a cease-fire overture, Tehran demanded \$150 billion in reparations, ouster of the Saddam Hussein government, and Iraqi repatriation of expelled Shiites. By early 1984 Iranian forces had made marginal gains on the southern front, including capture of the bulk of the Majnoon oil fields north of Basra, with what was essen-

tially a stalemate prevailing for the ensuing three years.

A renewal of Iranian military offensives in late 1987 proved futile, as Iraqi troops drove Iranian troops from Basra and half of the Iranian Navy was reported lost during fighting with U.S. battleships protecting oil tankers in the Gulf. In February 1988 the "war of the cities" recommenced, with Iran and Iraq bombarding each other's capitals and other densely populated centers. Thereafter, the combination of Iraq's increasing use of chemical weapons and major military supply shortages led Iran to agree to a cease-fire on July 18. Ensuing peace talks, mediated by the United Nations, were slowed by friction over the return of prisoners, the Iraqi demand for free passage through the Shatt al-Arab waterway, and Iranian insistence that Iraq be condemned for initiating the fighting. However, despite allegations by both sides that the other was rearming, the cease-fire continued into 1990, being succeeded by a peace agreement on what were essentially Iranian terms (i.e., a return to the 1975 accord) in the wake of the crisis generated by Iraq's seizure of Kuwait in August 1990. (Still, in 2007, Iran contended that its "cessation of hostilities" agreement with Iraq has never been replaced by a formal peace accord.)

Iran played a somewhat ambivalent role during the Gulf drama of 1990–1991, declaring its "full agreement" with those condemning the Kuwaiti invasion but opposing the deployment of U.S. troops to the region. In September 1990 it denied that it had secretly agreed to help break the UN embargo by importing some 200,000 barrels a day of Iraqi crude oil. Subsequently, it provided "haven" for upward of 100 Iraqi warplanes upon commencement of Operation Desert Storm in January 1991. Iran retained the planes upon the conclusion of hostilities and a year later confiscated them in what it termed partial satisfaction of reparations stemming from the Iran-Iraq conflict.

As the Gulf crisis subsided, Iran's top two leaders, Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rafsanjani, appeared to have reached an unspoken understanding to cooperate in countering the influence of their more radical colleagues by seeking a reduction in



friction with the United States and other Western powers, as well as with regional Arab governments, including Iraq. In the wake of Saddam Hussein's humiliating military defeat, Tehran voiced sympathy for Iraq's Shiites while insisting that it was providing no military support for the southern rebels. In essence, it attempted to position itself midway between two former antagonists: Iraq, which it wished to see weakened but not destroyed, and the United States, whose power it acknowledged but which it did not welcome as a permanent arbiter of Middle Eastern affairs.

In May 1991 the administration of George H. W. Bush announced that it would not welcome improved relations until Tehran used its influence to secure the release of hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon. The Iranian foreign ministry indicated in return that the hostage issue might soon become a "non-problem," particularly if some \$10 billion of impounded Iranian assets were released by Washington. Shortly thereafter, the United States agreed to resume purchasing Iranian oil with the stipulation that all payments would go into an escrow account established by the ICJ.

For the remainder of 1991 Tehran continued its efforts to emerge from political and economic isolation, hosting an international human rights conference in September and taking an active role in the release of the remaining American and British hostages in Lebanon. However, despite a U.S. agreement in December to compensate Iran \$278 million for undelivered military equipment, further rapprochement was stymied by Tehran's opposition to U.S.-brokered Middle East talks and President Rafsanjani's condemnation of American efforts to persuade China and India to stop transferring nuclear equipment to Iran.

In April 1991 Iran generated concern among its Persian Gulf neighbors by expelling Arab residents from Abu Musa, a small island in the middle of the waterway that, along with two adjacent islands, Large Tunb and Small Tunb, had long been viewed as belonging to the United Arab Emirates but had been jointly administered since Iranian occupation of Abu Musa in 1971. The dispute continued into 1997, Iran having rejected the Arab League's call

for ICJ arbitration. (In 2007 Iran still maintained that it owned the islands. The Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] has backed the Emirates' claims to the islands and "demands" that Iran enter into negotiations and end its "occupation" of Abu Musa.) Also in 1997, Tehran was accused by the government of Bahrain of having supported a coup attempt in that island nation (see article on Bahrain).

Complicating matters were a decision in March 1995 by Conoco Inc. under heavy pressure from Washington, to abandon a proposed \$1 billion contract with Iran for the development of offshore oil and natural gas fields and the subsequent imposition by U.S. President Bill Clinton of a full embargo on U.S. trade and investment with Iran, effective in mid-June. Describing Iran as an "outlaw state" because of its alleged complicity in international terrorism and its pursuit, according to U.S. officials, of nuclear weapons capability, Washington also called upon Moscow and Beijing to forgo their respective plans to sell nuclear reactors to Iran for the production of electricity.

In January 1996 it was revealed that some \$18 million had been approved for the American CIA to support efforts to "change the nature" of the Iranian government. Washington subsequently attempted to intensify pressure on Tehran by authorizing sanctions against foreign companies that invest significantly in Iran's oil and gas industries.

A German court appeared to support American charges that Iran had engaged in "state-sponsored terrorism" when it ruled in April 1997 that senior Iranian officials were involved in the 1992 assassinations of Iranian Kurdish separatists in a German restaurant. Bonn withdrew its ambassador to Tehran following the ruling, with other European Union (EU) members (except Greece) following suit. The EU's action, however, was temporary (the ambassadors returned in November) and did little to dissuade critics of America's unilateral policy of sanctions against Iran. Former U.S. national security advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, for example, said the costly sanctions were not isolating Iran but were instead alienating American allies while driving Tehran and Moscow closer. (Relations were strained, for example,

between France and the United States in September 1997 when a French company [part of a multinational consortium] signed a gas deal with Tehran, despite the U.S. announcement that it would target the American assets of any business, domestic or foreign, which made deals larger than \$40 million with Iran.) Iran had reportedly been receiving Russian help with a ballistic missile program and, according to the *New York Times*, Moscow agreed to withdraw support of the program under American and Israeli pressure in 1997. Meanwhile, in November the United States bought 21 Soviet-era MIG-29s from Moldova to keep them from being sold to Iran.

Washington seemed more receptive to rapprochement with Tehran following the election of moderate President Khatami in May 1997. At the end of July Secretary of State Madeleine Albright confirmed that the United States would not oppose the construction of a transnational Central Asian gas pipeline that would cross northern Iran, the first major economic concession to Iran since the 1979 revolution. Tehran's relations with Iraq, Syria, and the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, also improved following Khatami's victory.

In a televised interview in January 1998 President Khatami proposed cultural exchanges with the United States. He also expressed a willingness to reconsider Iran's severed relationship with the United States and, in reply, the U.S. State Department suggested direct negotiations. However, Iran's powerful conservative spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, subsequently lashed out at the United States, reconfirming deep internal divisions in the Iranian leadership.

The most significant regional tension in 1998 involved neighboring Afghanistan, where Taliban forces launched a midyear campaign to gain control of those parts of the country previously held by opposition forces. Tehran, angered at the unexplained killing of a number of its diplomats in Afghanistan and concerned over the fate of the anti-Taliban Shiite community in the central area of that country, massed more than 200,000 troops along the border in September, and war seemed imminent. Both sides subsequently showed a degree of

restraint; however, moderates in Tehran reportedly expressing the fear that a military adventure would compromise Iran's hope to become the "gateway" for the economic markets opening up in Central Asia. Similar motivation also partially explained Tehran's announcement in September that it had disassociated itself from the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, a decision that prompted the reestablishment of full relations with the United Kingdom. President Khatami's "charm offensive" toward Europe subsequently included a visit to the Vatican in March 1999.

Toward the end of the Clinton administration in 1999–2000, trade restrictions against Iran were reduced, and Secretary of State Albright announced official "regret" over the U.S. role in the 1953 coup and for supporting Iraq in the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq war. However, the new George W. Bush administration adopted a much less conciliatory stance in the first half of 2001, based on what it claimed was Iranian support for militant Palestinian groups, such as Islamic Holy War and *Hamas*, as well as *Hezbollah* guerrillas in Lebanon. (The Iranian government contended that it provides only "moral support" and humanitarian aid for such groups and does not belong on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.) Moderate Iranians had hoped that a new era in relations with Washington would develop following the U.S.-led campaign against al-Qaida and Taliban forces in Afghanistan in late 2001, Iran having reportedly supplied useful intelligence and other assistance to support that effort in light of its different view of Islam than that expressed by al-Qaida and the Taliban. However, expectations of rapprochement with Washington were dashed in January 2002, when President Bush accused Iran of forming, along with Iraq and North Korea, an "axis of evil" threatening global security. That characterization prompted widespread anti-American demonstrations in February, and President Khatami accused Washington of "bullying" many other countries in the world through its "war on terrorism." Nevertheless, the United States continued its pressure, with Bush in August accusing Iran of seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction and demanding that Russia cease

assistance to Iranian nuclear activities. On the other hand, the EU considered Iran's posture in a much less provocative light and launched new talks with Tehran on possible trade liberalization measures.

Iran officially opposed the U.S.-led invasion of neighboring Iraq in 2003 but nevertheless welcomed the ouster of President Saddam Hussein and allowed Iraqi opposition figures to travel freely from Iran to northern Iraq on the eve of the war. While viewing the U.S. military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan (and elsewhere in Central Asia) as a potential threat, the Iranian leadership has moved to assert its influence in a country with a majority Shiite population. The U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan against the Taliban removed another hostile regime on its border. Iran exerts political and economic influence in the Herat region.

Iran has had close ties in Iraq to prominent Shiite political figures, especially those from the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Iran had provided refuge and assistance to SCIRI during the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq war, arming the group's military wing, the Badr Brigade. Iran reportedly has operated an extensive intelligence network in Iraq and has provided support to Shiite mosques and influential religious charities. U.S. officials have accused Iran of “meddling” in Iraq and failing to police its border with Iraq.

Iran's nuclear program became the focus of international scrutiny following revelations—revealed in satellite photographs provided by the exiled *Mujaheddin-e Khalq* in August 2002 (see reference to MKO, under Political Parties, below)—that it had failed to disclose an elaborate underground uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and a heavy-water plant in Arak. Iranian officials obstructed inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and provided contradictory explanations to them when they inquired about the nature of Iran's nuclear program. Facing possible referral to the UN Security Council, Iran negotiated a tentative agreement in October 2003 with Britain, France, and Germany—acting as representatives of the EU—to allow more intrusive inspections and to divulge the full history of its program in return for access to civil-

ian nuclear technology. Iran also volunteered to temporarily suspend uranium enrichment activities while negotiations continued with the Europeans. In the meantime, additional questions were raised about the nature of Iran's nuclear program and the government's intentions when the IAEA found traces of highly enriched uranium. Iran insisted that its activities were solely for the purpose of producing electricity, but the United States accused Tehran of secretly working to build nuclear weapons.

Tensions over the nuclear issue heightened following the election of President Amadinejad in June 2005. Talks between Iran and European governments had made little progress, and Iran, dismissing European proposals as “insulting,” announced that it would end its voluntary suspension of uranium enrichment activities and would refuse further IAEA inspections. The Iranians reopened a uranium conversion plant in Isfahan in August 2005, declaring that it was fully within its rights under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue uranium enrichment and activities associated with it. On February 4, 2006, member states on the IAEA's board of governors voted to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for its failure to dispel concerns over its nuclear program. The Security Council, in a presidential statement, urged Iran on March 29 to suspend uranium enrichment but did not threaten punitive sanctions amid reluctance voiced by Russia and China. Striking a defiant tone, President Ahmadinejad announced on April 11 that Iran had successfully enriched uranium at low levels, saying the country had taken a major step toward mastering nuclear technology. He reiterated the regime's view that Iran regarded uranium enrichment as an inalienable right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the first direct approach by an Iranian leader to a U.S. president since the hostage crisis of 1979, Ahmadinejad sent a letter to President Bush on May 8 criticizing U.S. foreign policy while expressing his country's readiness to defuse disagreement on the nuclear program. The letter was dismissed by the Bush administration as containing no concrete proposals to resolve the nuclear dispute.

The United States reversed its long-standing policy and said on May 31, 2006, that it was ready to hold direct talks with Iran on the nuclear issue and that it would join European governments in negotiations aimed at resolving the crisis. In a fresh diplomatic initiative, the United States, other permanent members of the UN Security Council, and Germany agreed to offer Iran a package of incentives if it suspended uranium enrichment and cooperated with IAEA inspectors. The proposal, which included offers of access to civilian nuclear technology, trade concessions, and some security assurances, was presented to Iran by EU envoy Javier Solana in June. However, Iran insisted it would not respond to the offer until late August, despite Western demands for an answer within weeks. In August, Ahmadinejad said that Iran would not yield to international pressure to dismantle its nuclear program. Thus having failed to meet UN demands that it suspend its nuclear activities, the Security Council unanimously voted on December 23 to impose sanctions on Iran. For its part, Iran condemned the resolution as illegal.

While the United States has said it would continue to seek a diplomatic solution to the nuclear dispute, it has refused to rule out possible military action. Iranian officials have warned that any U.S. or Israeli military action against its nuclear sites would result in retaliation against U.S. and Israeli targets. In March 2007, the UN Security Council unanimously agreed to tighten its sanctions as Iran continued to insist that it was developing its nuclear program solely for peaceful purposes. The UN resolution included a ban on arms sales to Iran and an expanded freeze on its assets. Iran again countered that the sanctions were illegal. Iranian and U.S. officials met in Baghdad in May 2007, in the most high-profile contact between them, but the talks focused on Iraq. Iran continued to maintain that it would not halt its nuclear research program, even as the Bush administration asserted that there would be “serious consequences” if Tehran did not end its enrichment process. In September, the IAEA reported that it had reached agreement with Tehran on a “work plan” to resolve outstanding questions about nuclear activity, but Western diplo-

mat continued to step up pressure on Iran. The EU decided to impose its own sanctions outside of those adopted by the United Nations because some countries wanted to distance themselves from the broader U.S. actions. Subsequently, in October, the Bush administration announced sweeping new sanctions against Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, accusing the guard of proliferating weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorism through the guard’s elite Quds division. The United States also called for other countries to stop doing business with four of Iran’s largest banks. The actions were seen by observers to indicate that Bush intended to gradually escalate financial and political pressure on Iran, rather than enter into a new war in the region. Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator, Ali LARIJANI, resigned in October, reportedly over differences with Ahmadinejad on how to conduct the talks. Larijani had supported continuing talks with the West, whereas Ahmadinejad, now supported in his claim of a peaceful nuclear program by Russian President Vladimir Putin, was said to favor a more hard-line approach. Some analysts said the resignation was a sign of the supreme leader’s support for Ahmadinejad’s tough stance. By early November, the UN had agreed to consider yet another set of sanctions if Iran did not answer key questions by December about its nuclear program, though a month earlier the IAEA had said that it had no evidence Tehran was seeking nuclear arms.

In 2007, Iran and Nicaragua restored diplomatic relations and signed extensive trade agreements. Iran also entered into several economic agreements with Venezuela in 2007.

### *Current Issues*

The success of the “reform tide” in the February 1999 municipal elections triggered a harsh response from the conservative judiciary, which, among other things, suspended the publication of many of the recently established newspapers that had been fueling reformist sentiment. Prodemocracy demonstrations (primarily on the part of students) at midyear were met with violent counter-demonstrations involving what critics described as

“Islamic vigilantes,” some of them organized in the *Ansar-e Hezbollah* militia. President Khatami played a significant role in quelling what was described as the nation’s worst rioting since 1979 by urging his followers to show “restraint.” His admonition reportedly cost him a degree of support within the radical reform wing but nevertheless prevented the “extreme polarization” toward which many analysts feared the country was heading. However, tensions intensified substantially following the overwhelming victory of reformist candidates in the 2000 *Majlis* balloting. The Council of Guardians subsequently decreed that the new legislature was not authorized to overturn antireform legislation hastily approved by the outgoing *Majlis* and also barred the reformists from launching investigations into judicial structures and activities. In addition, a number of aides and associates of President Khatami were subsequently arrested or otherwise harassed, as were a number of prominent legislators. For his part, Khatami initially expressed reluctance in early 2001 to run for another term, saying that prodemocracy activists had paid a “heavy price” and suggesting that expectations for institutional change may have been “too high.” Following his landslide reelection, Khatami focused greater attention on economic rather than political reform, the former appearing much less threatening to the conservative power bases. Nevertheless, the “unrelenting” campaign against reformists continued throughout the remainder of 2001 and into 2002. Despite the deep societal cleavages arising from the domestic political deadlock, the Iranian population seemed relatively united regarding foreign affairs. Reformists and conservative hardliners alike reacted strongly and angrily to President Bush’s inclusion of Iran in the “axis of evil” in early 2002. All segments of Iranian society solidly supported the Palestinian cause.

Khatami appeared poised for a collision with the conservative establishment when he submitted two draft laws to the *Majlis* in September 2002, which were designed to break the conservatives blocking his cabinet and prevent the parliament from implementing their reformist agenda. One bill called for restrictions on the power of the Council of

Guardians to vet electoral candidates and the second provided for increased presidential oversight of the judiciary. Khatami’s advisers said the president would resign or call a national referendum if the Council of Guardians rejected the bills, but when the bills were vetoed (as expected), Khatami chose to remain in office. His refusal to confront the conservatives openly led to divisions within reformist ranks and growing popular disillusionment. The Council of Guardians’ consistent obstruction of parliament and the judiciary’s repression of reformist voices and media succeeded in deflating public expectations, intimidating popular opposition, and sowing discord among reformists. After the regime crushed large street demonstrations that erupted in 1999 following the closure of a reformist newspaper, popular protests steadily dwindled. Student activists leading the demonstrations soon broke ranks with the reformist coalition, sharply criticizing Khatami for his cautious stance.

The reformists had once drawn some authority and leverage from their popular mandate, but public support gradually receded as time passed and concrete change failed to materialize. The reformists suffered their first electoral setback in municipal elections in February 2003 amid low voter turnout. The conservatives, having organized their supporters, won in most major cities, including in Isfahan, Kerman, Mahshad, and Shiraz. In Tehran the newly formed conservative political group Builders of an Islamic Iran Council won 14 of 15 city council seats. The bickering reformist parties failed to agree on a unified candidate list and instead offered voters three rival lists. On May 3, 2003, the new Tehran council selected as mayor Mamoud Ahmadinejad, an obscure conservative, engineer, and former officer in the Revolutionary Guards.

Prior to the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Council of Guardians had undermined the reformists by banning more than 2,300 of the approximately 8,200 aspiring candidates, including some 80 sitting MPs. The reformist MPs held a sit-in in the parliamentary lobby to protest the ban but failed to rally public support. One-third of the MPs offered their resignations. Following vague calls for compromise by the supreme religious leader,

the Council of Guardians reinstated a small number of candidates, although no prominent reformist MPs seeking reelection. The council gave no specific reasons for the disqualifications but accused the blacklisted candidates of failing to uphold and respect the principles of the Islamic Republic and the authority of the supreme leader. Calling the ban a “bloodless coup,” the largest reformist party, the Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF), abstained from participating in the election. The ban meant that reformists had no candidates in more than 70 constituencies. Some reformist candidates allowed to run withdrew in protest. Cabinet ministers hinted that they might refuse to organize the election, but they eventually backed away from their threats.

The elections proceeded as scheduled on February 20, 2004, with the conservative Builders of an Islamic Iran Council winning a large majority, securing some 155 of 229 seats. A second round of voting was held on May 7, 2004, to determine remaining seats (except for certain Tehran constituencies, where voting would be held in conjunction with the 2005 presidential polling). In the second round, the conservatives won a majority, with Builders of an Islamic Iran Council taking an additional 40 seats, bringing their majority in the *Majlis* to at least 195. The overall conservative majority is estimated at 200 to 210 seats. The Interior Ministry reported turnout at 28 percent in Tehran and 50.57 percent nationwide, the lowest since the 1979 revolution. The Council of Guardians disagreed with the ministry, insisting that the turnout was higher. Lesser-known reformists without formal ties to established political parties controlled an insignificant bloc of about 40 seats. The outcome of the dispute over prospective candidates as well as the election results marked a resounding defeat for the reformists. Some voices within the reformists, including leaders of the IIPF, argued that the country’s theocratic system was fundamentally undemocratic and required constitutional amendments to enhance the authority of elected representatives.

In the run-up to the 2005 presidential elections, both reformists and conservatives were divided over whom to nominate for office. The Council of Guardians barred hundreds of candidates from run-

ning, including all women candidates and Mostafa Moin, who had served as minister of science in Khatami’s cabinet. Moin’s candidacy, however, was permitted after the supreme leader intervened. In a field of seven candidates, former president Rafsanjani won the most votes in the first round of polling, with 21.01 percent, but failed to secure a majority, forcing an unprecedented runoff. One of the reformist candidates, former *Majlis* speaker Mehdi Karrubi, finished behind Ahmadinejad by a margin of less than 1 percent after leading in earlier tallies. In an open letter to the supreme leader, Karrubi alleged that voting had been rigged and that the son of the supreme leader had been involved in the fraud. Rafsanjani’s aides also alleged widespread irregularities and manipulations carried out by paramilitaries and militia.

In the runoff on June 24, 2005, Ahmadinejad won an overwhelming victory, securing 61.64 percent of the vote, while Rafsanjani received 35.93 percent. Turnout was reported to be 59.6 percent. During the campaign, Ahmadinejad had contrasted his humble background with Rafsanjani’s image as a member of the privileged elite and promised to address growing inequality between the rich and poor. Reformists had set aside their uneasy relations with Rafsanjani and called on their supporters to vote for him to prevent “fascism.”

With Ahmadinejad’s election, the conservatives regained control of all the elected institutions, allowing the supreme leader to consolidate his power. The regime announced various efforts to tighten the enforcement of laws requiring women to follow Islamic dress code, but it has proved unable or unwilling to fully dismantle the limited social freedom developed under Khatami’s tenure. The U.S. military presence in neighboring Iraq and Afghanistan prompted the conservatives to invoke national security concerns, portraying the reformists as traitorous for questioning the premises of the theocracy and reaching out to Western governments. With the reformists in disarray, high oil prices bolstering state revenues, and Shiite allies leading the government in Iraq, the supreme leader and the conservative clerical establishment faced no immediate threat to their hold on power.

Ahmadinejad subsequently provoked international condemnation with his comments on Israel and the Holocaust. Quoting Ayatollah Khomeini, the president said in a speech in October 2005 that Israel should be “wiped off the map.” In December 2005 he said that the West “invented a myth that Jews were massacred” and suggested that Israel be moved to Europe or elsewhere. On the nuclear issue, Ahmadinejad sought to rally public opinion in Iran and throughout the Islamic world with populist rhetoric, accusing the West of pushing a double standard by tolerating Israel and other nuclear powers while singling out Iran for punishment. Nevertheless, the conservative deputies in parliament clashed at times with Ahmadinejad, rejecting a number of cabinet nominees and criticizing his proposed budget. In addition, the supreme leader, in what was interpreted as a rebuke to Ahmadinejad’s handling of international issues, set up an advisory council on foreign relations in 2006 that included the former foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi as its chair. The council was seen by some observers as an attempt to offset the brash approach of Ahmadinejad and pave the way for possible diplomatic solutions. Nevertheless, Iran did not back down from its intentions to proceed with development of its nuclear program (see Foreign relations, above). Others speculated that the supreme leader’s naming of Kharrazi to the council was perhaps an indication of his dissatisfaction with Ahmadinejad.

Amid growing frustration with the president and his policies, students held a major demonstration in December 2006, denouncing Ahmadinejad as a “dictator.” After the more conservative followers of Ahmadinejad did not fare as well as expected in the December 15 elections for the Assembly of Experts, and the concurrent local elections, reformists appeared to be taking a more active role, buoyed by Rafsanjani having received the most votes in Tehran in the assembly elections. Tehran was formerly seen as a stronghold for Ahmadinejad. Rafsanjani further demonstrated his increasing influence by meeting with the British ambassador in Tehran in January 2007 over the nuclear issue, committing Iran to “any verifying measures by the responsible authorities,” according to news reports. While some analysts said he was trying to avoid

a major confrontation with the United States, others thought his actions resulted from the mounting influence of the reformists. In what was described as an unprecedented rebuke, 150 members of the *Majlis* signed a letter in January condemning the president’s economic policies and criticizing his recent trip to Latin America at what was a difficult time for the country.

Tensions with the West flared again in March 2007, when Iran captured 15 British sailors, claiming they had “invaded” Iranian waters. The crew was released two weeks later, following a speech by Ahmadinejad in which he attacked the West and its Middle East policy.

A measure adopted by the *Majlis* to hold concurrent parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007 was rejected by the Guardian Council in April on the grounds that it would shorten the respective terms of office. Meanwhile, with parliamentary elections scheduled for 2008, various reformists groups were reportedly trying to form coalitions in advance of the elections, although divisions were cited among many of the groups. In May, workers protested against high unemployment and low wages, with thousands calling for the labor minister’s resignation. Though Ahmadinejad had promised economic reforms, many factories had closed and government harassment of workers’ advocates had increased. The economic upheaval was further exacerbated by Ahmadinejad’s announcement, only several hours ahead of time, that gas rationing and a fuel-price increase were to be implemented, prompting protests and violent riots. Meanwhile, the parliament rejected an emergency measure that would have postponed the rationing. Fearing that the rioting might spread, the government temporarily shut down the country’s mobile phone network to prevent protesters from easily contacting each other to set up further demonstrations. Despite Iran’s vast supplies of crude oil, it does not have enough refineries to meet domestic demand. It was reported to have imposed rationing in anticipation of possible U.S. sanctions over Iran’s nuclear program, banning companies from selling gas to Iran. Soon after the rationing, Venezuela agreed to sell gas to Iran to limit the latter’s imports from Western countries.

In July 2007, the United States accused the Revolutionary Guard of assisting Iraqi militants in abducting and killing five U.S. soldiers in January. It also continued to insist that militants were using explosive devices from Iran against coalition forces in the U.S.-backed war in Iraq. Ultimately, the United States announced sanctions against the Revolutionary Guard, the first time the United States had taken punitive steps against the armed forces of a sovereign country. News reports quoted Iran's interior minister responding to the sanctions by warning of a "crushing" response to any military attack against Iran.

Throughout 2007, while the nuclear issue continued to heighten tensions on the foreign stage, turmoil persisted internally. Students staged a large demonstration in October, clashing with police during a speech by Ahmadinejad. The government cracked down on the media and other critics and dissenters. In September there was a sharp escalation in cross-border fighting with Kurdish rebels, who claimed to have several thousand members seeking autonomy for Kurds in Iran near Iran's border with Iraq. The main group identified with the attacks was the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (see Political Parties and Groups, below).

## Political Parties and Groups

Although political parties are permitted under the constitution, none was recognized following the formal dissolution of the government-sponsored Islamic Republican Party in June 1987, despite Tehran's announcement in October 1988 that such groupings would thenceforth be welcomed if they "demonstrated commitment to the Islamic system." A number of new political formations were identifiable during the *Majlis* elections of 1996, although it was carefully noted by the government that they were not official parties. Meanwhile, some former parties appeared to remain informally tolerated. Supporters of President Mohammad Khatami were reported in 1998 to have achieved recognition as the first full-fledged political party since the 1979 revolution (see Islamic Iran Solidarity Party, below), and several others also subsequently achieved legal status. However, the main political formations have

continued to be organizations acting in a "pseudo-party" capacity by, among other things, presenting candidate lists for legislative elections without having sought formal party registration. Political parties in Iran tend to operate as small clubs, personal platforms, or loosely defined ideological associations rather than as large organizations with grassroots networks or formal, disciplined structures. Membership in one does not preclude membership in another, and the associations tend to lack detailed policy manifestos. Some appear before an election and quickly fade afterward.

**Builders of an Islamic Iran Council** (*Etelafe Abadgaran-e Iran-e Eslami*). This group, whose name is also translated as Developers of an Islamic Iran Council, first emerged in the local elections of February 2003, presenting largely unknown, younger candidates on the Tehran ballot with strong backing from senior conservatives in the political establishment. The party won control of the Tehran city council, which had been paralyzed by feuds among reformist council members. The council elected Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as mayor, who at one point proposed converting city parks into cemeteries for war dead, a suggestion he later withdrew. The group in some cases operated under alternative names outside of Tehran. Employing vague slogans calling for economic progress and adherence to "Islamic values," the party launched a well-financed campaign for the 2004 parliamentary elections. With more than 2,300 reformist candidates barred from appearing on the ballot, the group secured a large majority of at least 195 seats in the *Majlis*. Divisions and defections have emerged within the party's bloc in parliament, sharply reducing the number of seats held by the party, although not affecting the overall conservative majority. A significant number of the newly elected MPs included former officers in the Revolutionary Guards. The most powerful figure in the party is Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, son-in-law of the supreme leader, who was selected speaker of the *Majlis*. The group originally endorsed Mohammad Baqer QALIBAF, the former chief of police forces, before the first round of the 2005 presidential elections, but later backed Ahmadinejad in



his successful bid. Although encompassing a range of views on economic policy without a clear ideological vision, the group has become the most prominent conservative party, at least in the public arena.

The party has drawn membership from the Society of Islamic Engineers, which has roots in traditional conservative circles and helped publicize the Builders of an Islamic Iran Council. The deputy speaker of the *Majlis*, Reza BAHONAR, comes from the society, as does Ahmadinejad. Following their election, the party's MPs adopted strident, populist language; impeached Khatami's transport minister; urged an uncompromising stance on the nuclear issue; and adopted measures hostile to foreign investment. After successive electoral victories, it may eclipse other older conservative parties, as it has been widely perceived as a vehicle for the supreme leader. Opponents allege that the supreme leader's son, Mojtaba Khamenei, plays an influential role in the party.

In 2007 Haddad-Adel spoke out against the United States on its stance against Iran's nuclear program and urged common resistance to such pressure with North Korea, which had also said it had been developing nuclear capabilities.

*Leaders:* Gholam-Ali HADDAD-ADEL (Speaker of the *Majlis*), Mehdi KOUCHAK-ZADEH (MP), Hossein FADAEI (MP).

**Society of Combatant Clergy** (*Jam'eh Rohaniyat Mobarez*—JRM). This hard-line, conservative group has continued to exert influence within the political establishment, although, like other older conservative groups, it has been overshadowed on the public stage by the Builders of an Islamic Iran Council. Along with the Islamic Coalition Society (see below), the group vehemently opposed the reformist agenda and has remained committed to perpetuating the country's rigid political and cultural restrictions. With strong ties to the clergy, the party sees Iran as representing the interests of the Islamic world.

The JRM was formed in late the 1970s in support of the then-exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. (The JRM has often been referenced, as it was in re-

cent *Handbooks*, as the Association of Combatant Clergy. The JRM abbreviation and translation of "Jame'eh" as "society" has been adopted for this edition of the *Handbook* in order to assist the reader in differentiating between the conservative JRM and its influential moderate offshoot, the Assembly of Combatant Clergy [MRM; see below]. Readers are cautioned to assess news reports carefully, as the two groupings are routinely confused because of the similarity of their names.) The JRM served as the primary vehicle for clerical political representation following the installation of Khomeini as the nation's leader in 1979, with the JRM and Servants of Construction (SC) considered breakaway groups. Although the JRM essentially concurred with the SC in the mid-1990s regarding proposed economic reform, it argued that ultimate political authority should remain with the nation's religious leaders, adopting a conservative stance on such issues as proposed expanded press freedoms and re-institution of a formal party system.

As of late 1995 the society was believed to control about 150 seats in the *Majlis*, giving it significant policy influence under the leadership of Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri. Having apparently done poorly in the first round of voting for the new *Majlis* in March 1996, the JRM adopted a hard-line approach for the second round, denouncing "liberals" as a threat to the ideals of the 1979 revolution. According to a number of observers, that campaign was assisted by *Hezbollah* militants, who, among other things, reportedly disrupted meetings of "un-Islamic" groupings.

It was subsequently estimated that society supporters had secured about 110 seats in the new *Majlis* in 1996. Although this represented the loss of its former "overall majority," the JRM was nevertheless able to secure the reelection of Nateq-Nuri as speaker by a reported vote of 146–105. JRM adherents later served as the core of the new *Hezbollah* faction in the *Majlis*, with Nateq-Nuri unsuccessfully carrying the standard of the conservative clerics in the May 1997 presidential election. He received 7.2 million votes to 20 million for the victorious Mohammad Khatami. However, Nateq-Nuri was reelected as *Majlis* speaker in both 1997

and 1998. The JRM was not widely referenced in regard to the 1999 municipal balloting. Many of its 2000 *Majlis* candidates were presented in conjunction with the Islamic Coalition Society. The JRM did not endorse a candidate in the 2001 presidential balloting, thereby diluting the conservatives' chances of mounting an effective challenge to President Khatami. In the 2005 presidential elections, the group initially backed Ali Larijani, former director of the state television and radio monopoly, prompting criticism from Ahmadinejad's supporters that the group was causing divisions within the conservative camp.

By 2007 rifts reportedly had developed among some progovernment factions, with Nateq-Nuri criticized for not being conservative enough. In March, Nateq-Nuri said that he would not be a candidate in any election.

*Leaders:* Ali Akbar NATEQ-NURI (Former Speaker of the *Majlis*), Muhammad Reza MAHDAVI-KANI (Founder), Assadollah BADAMCHIAN.

**Islamic Coalition Society** (*Jameyat-e Motalefe-ye Eslami*). An umbrella organization of hard-line conservative clerics and merchants with links to the late Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic Coalition Society is influential in the judiciary as well as the quasi-charitable foundations that, having originally been formed to aid war victims and the poor, now control much of the non-oil economic sector. Although consensus within the society opposes political liberalization, there reportedly has been factionalization concerning economic reform, which is endorsed by some of the business community. In the 2005 presidential elections, the party initially backed Ali Larijani, director of the state television and radio monopoly, but later withdrew its support in favor of Ahmadinejad, reportedly on the orders of the office of the supreme leader.

In the 2006 Assembly of Experts elections, the party supported candidates of the Society of Combatant Clergy.

*Leaders:* Habibollah ASGAROWLADI (Former Commerce Minister), Hamid Reza TARAQI,

Assadollah BADAMCHIAN (Deputy Secretary General), Mohammad Nabi HABIBI (Secretary General),

**May 23 Movement.** Prior to the reformist victory in the parliamentary elections of 2000, some 20 parties and organizations (including important student organizations) committed to political reform and broadly supportive of President Khatami formed the May 23 Movement. (The coalition was named in honor of Khatami's election victory, which occurred on May 23, 1997; it is also known as the Second Khordad Movement [or Front], the second day of the month of Khordad in the Iranian calendar corresponding to May 23.) Once in power, serious divisions within the coalition emerged, as reformists argued over how to respond to the successive vetoes of parliamentary bills and measures stifling dissent and press freedom. The coalition failed to agree on a unified candidate list in Tehran for the 2003 local elections. During the disputed 2004 parliamentary elections, members of the coalition were deeply divided over whether to boycott the vote or to participate in hopes of limiting the size of a conservative victory. Although the coalition leaders continued to hold meetings, they could not reach agreement on a single, reformist candidate for the 2005 presidential elections, splitting reformist votes during the first round. There have been no recent references to the activities of this group.

**Islamic Iran Participation Front** (*Jebhe-ye Mosharekat-e Iran-e Eslami*—IIPF). Established in December 1998 by pro-Khatami forces, the IIPF presented candidates in the 1999 municipal elections, some in coalition with the SC. For the 2000 *Majlis* balloting, it served as a core component of the May 23 Movement, subsequently reporting that approximately 80 of its members had been elected. The IIPF is led by Mohammad Reza Khatami, the brother of President Khatami. Several senior members of the party had been involved as student activists in the seizure of the U.S. embassy in 1979 but have since evolved into proponents of liberal democratic change. After the 2000 elections, members of the IIPF were the most outspoken advocates for

sweeping reforms, arguing as cabinet ministers and MPs for greater media freedom, cultural openness, women's rights, environmental safeguards, and engagement with Western governments. Regarding economic policy, some elements of the IIPF and other reformists remain reluctant to embrace market reform measures.

Some prominent members of the party were targeted and harassed by the conservative judiciary, paramilitaries, and parallel security services. Abbas Abdi was sentenced to four years in prison after publishing a poll in October 2002 showing a majority of Iranians supporting dialogue with the United States. Judges closed newspapers sponsored by the party, including *Sobh-e Emrooz*. Its editor, Saeed Hajarian, was a senior adviser to President Khatami when he was shot and nearly killed in an assassination attempt in 2000. Hard-line paramilitaries sometimes broke up IIPF rallies and events. Frustrated with the obstruction of the Council of Guardians and judicial repression, IIPF members lobbied to confront the conservatives, advocating that Khatami resign or hold a referendum, but the president refused. By the end of Khatami's second term, the IIPF had concluded that reform within the parameters of the current system was unattainable and that the constitutional framework had to be amended to deliver genuine parliamentary democracy. During the crisis preceding the 2004 elections, in which most IIPF candidates were banned from appearing on the ballot, IIPF leaders wrote an unprecedented open letter to the supreme leader questioning the legitimacy of his rule and warning of a betrayal of the revolution. Out of power, some members have turned to promoting new civil society groups and civic education efforts. The party has sought to reach out to liberal activists in the banned but tolerated Liberation Movement of Iran led by Ibrahim YAZDI (see below). The party supported Mostafa Moin, former minister of scientific research in Khatami's cabinet, in the first round of the 2005 presidential elections. In the second round, the party endorsed Rafsanjani largely as a vote against the conservative Ahmadinejad.

In 2007 divisions were reported over attempts to form a reformist coalition in advance of the 2008 *Majlis* election.

*Leaders:* Mohammad Reza KHATAMI (Former Deputy Speaker of the *Majlis*), Saeed HAJARIAN, Seyyed Abdolvahed MUSAVI-LARI, Seyyed Safdar HOSEYNI, Mohsen MIRDAMADI (Secretary General).

**Islamic Revolution Mujaheddin Organization (IRMO).** Described by some observers as the "third major grouping" (after the JRM and the SC) during the 1996 *Majlis* campaign, IRMO was supported by a number of leftist organizations and former parties. It was reportedly aligned to a certain degree with the SC in 1996, although its support was considered "feeble" in contrast to *Hezbollah's* efforts on behalf of the SC's main rival, the JRM. IRMO supported Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 presidential election and served as one of the most liberal components of the May 23 Movement in the 2000 *Majlis* balloting. Although it supported Khatami in his reelection effort in 2001, IRMO subsequently distanced itself from the government by insisting upon more active resistance to the anti-reform influence of conservative clerics.

A prominent member of the party, university academic Hashem Aghajari, was convicted of apostasy and sentenced to death in November 2002 for a speech in which he questioned absolute clerical authority and called on Iranians to interpret the Koran for themselves. Following student demonstrations, the supreme leader intervened, ordering the courts to lift the death penalty. Aghajari was later sentenced to a five-year prison term. In the 2005 presidential elections, IRMO supported Mostafa Moin.

*Leaders:* Behzad NABAVI (Former Deputy Speaker of the *Majlis*), Mohsen ARMIN (Spokesperson), Mohammad SACAMATI.

**Islamic Iran Solidarity Party.** Reportedly recognized in 1998 as Iran's first legal post-1987 party, the Islamic Iran Solidarity Party was launched by a group of Khatami government ministers and other officials. Perhaps more than any

other reformist organization, the party has fallen into disarray and possible irrelevance following recent victories by the conservatives in parliament and the presidency.

In 2006 Ebrahim ASGHARZADEH, former secretary general of the party, resigned, saying he would start a new group because the reformists had failed to understand the “real needs of the people.”

*Leaders:* Reza RAHCHAMANI, Reza NORUZ-ZDEH (Secretary General).

**Islamic Labor Party (ILP).** An outgrowth of a workers’ movement launched in the 1980s in opposition to Marxist groups, the ILP reported that 15 of its members had been elected to the *Majlis* in 2000 as part of the May 23 Movement. ILP leader Ali Reza Mahjoub is also head of the House of Workers, the nation’s primary federation of unions. One of the few well-known reformists to return to the *Majlis* in 2005 balloting, Mahjoub managed to win a seat in the new parliament representing a Tehran district (determined in a third round of voting that coincided with the first round of presidential polling on June 17).

In 2007 the party participated in protests demanding job security and rights for workers, including the right to form unions.

*Leaders:* Ali Reza MAHJOUR, Abolqasem SARHADIZADEH, Hosein KAMALI (Secretary General).

**Assembly of Combatant Clergy** (*Majma’ Ruhaniun Mobarez*—MRM). The MRM was launched in 1988 by members of the Society of Combatant Clergy (JRM) who split from the parent group because of their objections over the JRM’s unwillingness to support political liberalization. (The MRM was referenced as the Assembly of Militant Clerics in the 1999 *Handbook*, and its name has been routinely translated in news reports as the Association of Militant Clerics [or Clergy], the League of Militant Clerics, and other variations. See the section on the JRM, above, for an explanation of the naming conventions adopted for this edition of the *Handbook* to assist in identifying the two groups.)

Members of the MRM were prominent in the reformists’ victory in 1988 *Majlis* balloting, although their influence declined following the 1992 balloting. The MRM returned to center stage on the political front with the surprise presidential victory in 1997 by MRM member Mohammad Khatami, who had been eased out of his position as minister of Islamic culture in 1992 after critics accused him of maintaining too liberal a stance regarding Western influences. A member of the May 23 Movement in the 2000 *Majlis* balloting, the MRM currently serves as one of the primary moderate groupings within the reform movement.

Within the May 23 Movement, the MRM favored a more gradualist approach to reform, seeking to work solely within the confines of the theocratic system and avoid antagonizing conservative institutions. The MRM opposed boycotting the 2004 elections and supported a rival presidential candidate in the 2005 presidential elections, backing party leader Mehdi Karrubi instead of the IIPF’s Mostafa Moin. After losing in the first round of the election and alleging fraud, Karrubi resigned as the organization’s secretary general to form his own party (see the National Trust, below). The MRM elected Mohammad Khatami to head its Central Council on August 8, 2005, days after he completed his second and final four-year term as president. Khatami has been associated with the party since the 1980s.

*Leaders:* Gholamreza MESBAHI (Spokesman), Mohammad KHATAMI (Secretary General).

**Servants of Construction** (*Kargozaran-e Sazandegi*—SC). The SC (also sometimes referenced as the Executives of Construction) was launched in January 1996 by 16 top members of the Iranian executive branch, leading to its being informally referenced as the “G-16.” Widely viewed as allied with (then) President Rafsanjani, the SC founders called for continued economic reform and moderate political liberalization.

About 90–100 SC supporters were believed to have been elected to the *Majlis* in 1996, a strong “antiliberal” campaign on behalf of the

JRM/*Hezbollah* having apparently prevented what some observers had expected to be a clear-cut SC victory. The SC supported Interior Minister Abdullah NOURI in his unsuccessful bid to be elected speaker of the new *Majlis*.

The SC supported Mohammad Khatami in the May 1997 presidential election. Although the *Majlis* subsequently approved all of Khatami's cabinet recommendations, some of the harshest debate was over two SC candidates, Nouri and Seyed Ataollah Mohajerani. Early in 1998 the conservative judiciary arrested some Khatami supporters, including the SC's Gholan Hussein Karbaschi, mayor of Tehran, for alleged corruption in an election backlash that was seen by pro-Khatami elements as an escalation of political warfare. The popular mayor, who had been a leading figure in Khatami's surprise presidential victory, was subsequently sentenced to 18 months in prison. By that time, however, the SC had reportedly elected him as its secretary general after the grouping had apparently been officially recognized as a party. After seven months in jail, Karbaschi was pardoned in December 1999 by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The SC was subsequently reported to have been fractionalized on the issue of how close to remain aligned with the Khatami administration, some members criticizing the president for failing to take stronger action to challenge the prosecution of SC members by the conservative judiciary.

The SC presented candidates in the 1999 municipal elections, some in alliance with the IIPF. Nouri was the top vote-getter in the local balloting in Tehran, but later in the year he was sentenced to five years in prison for having questioned the powerful role of the religious hierarchy, his case becoming one of the most prominent of the reformist versus conservative battles.

The "centrist, economics-oriented" SC presented joint candidates with other members of the May 23 Movement for many of the seats in the 2000 *Majlis*, although SC candidates competed on an independent SC list for some seats in Tehran. Included in that group was Rafsanjani, who had stated his goal of returning to the speakership of the *Majlis*. Indicative of the ongoing lack of har-

mony between Rafsanjani and Khatami (as well as their respective supporters), Rafsanjani was also included on the candidate list of the conservative JRM. Although he was elected to the *Majlis*, Rafsanjani ultimately declined his seat in the wake of controversy surrounding electoral decisions in his favor on the part of the Council of Guardians. He, however, remained head of the influential Expediency Council. Meanwhile, the SC claimed representation in the *Majlis* of some 55 members. Following the SC's defeats in the municipal elections of 2003, the parliamentary elections of 2004, and Rafsanjani's crushing loss in the 2005 presidential vote, the group announced plans for a major reorganization and "restructuring" that would result in new leadership. Regardless, it will be difficult to alter the perception of the party as a failed platform for Rafsanjani.

In 2007 the SC joined an unnamed reformist coalition in advance of the 2008 *Majlis* elections.

*Leader:* Gholan Hussein KARBASCHI.

**Liberation Movement of Iran** (*Nehzat-e Azadi-e Irân*). A liberal Islamic grouping established in 1961 by Mehdi Bazargan, the Liberation Movement, also referenced as the Freedom Movement of Iran, supported the opposition religious leaders during the anti-shah demonstrations of 1978. Named prime minister in February 1979, Bazargan resigned in the wake of the U.S. embassy seizure the following November. Subsequently, he remained one of the most outspoken critics tolerated by the government. In a letter authored in November 1982, he accused the regime of responsibility for an "atmosphere of terror, fear, revenge, and national disintegration." *Nehzat-e Azadi*, which was linked to the Paris-based National Resistance Council, boycotted the legislative balloting in 1984 and in 1988 because of government-imposed electoral restrictions. In May 1988 the publication of a second letter from Bazargan to Ayatollah Khomeini highly critical of the government's war efforts and other "erroneous plans" led to the arrest of leading members of his party and the Association for the Defense and Sovereignty of the Iranian Nation, which had

been formed in opposition to continuation of the war with Iraq in March 1986 by Bazargan and others who had participated in the 1979 provisional government. Bazargan charged that the movement was not permitted to participate freely in the 1992 legislative campaign, and supporters were urged to boycott the 1993 presidential balloting.

Bazargan died of heart failure in January 1995, and his longtime assistant, Ibrahim Yazdi, was subsequently named as the movement's new secretary general. Yazdi later called on the government to permit the movement to present candidates in the March 1996 legislative elections. However, the Council of Guardians ruled that movement candidates per se would not be permitted to do so, although four members could run as independents. Those potential candidates subsequently declined to participate in the campaign to protest the council's decision. For his part, Yazdi argued that, while Iranians remained "loyal" to the "ideals" of the revolution, there was growing discontent over the government's "violation" of "rights and liberties." Yazdi was arrested in December 1997 (and later released) after signing a letter with 50 other government critics appealing for protection for Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, a cleric whose home was attacked by demonstrators after he questioned the authority of Ayatollah Khamenei. Montazeri had once been in line to succeed Ayatollah Khomeini (see Political background, above, for details). He has been under house arrest for several years for his remarks, prompting mass protests by his supporters in the city of Isfahan.

The Liberation Movement, a strong supporter of the reform tendency since 1997, was not permitted to present candidates in 2000 *Majlis* balloting, and the crackdown on the party by the conservative judiciary resulted in the arrest of some 60 party members in late 2000 and early 2001 on charges of seeking to overthrow the government in relation to, among other things, recent student unrest. The party was formally outlawed in July 2002. It condemned the Council of Guardians' ban on hundreds of reformist candidates in the 2004 parliamentary elections and speaks out frequently on human rights abuses. The most significant case

has been that of Akbar Ganji, a journalist jailed for reporting on an alleged conspiracy of assassinations orchestrated against dissidents. He has refused to recant and has engaged in hunger strikes. Eight Nobel laureates have written to Iran demanding his release.

*Leader:* Ibrahim YAZDI (Secretary General and Former Prime Minister).

Shortly after the 2005 presidential election, former parliamentary speaker and former leader of the MRM, Mehdi KARRUBI, registered the **National Trust** as a new party. Party founders include Rasoul MONTAJABNIYA, a former prominent member of the Association of Combatant Clergy, and Reza HAJATI, a former student activist.

**Office for Consolidation of Unity** (*Daftar-e Takhim-e Vahdat*). This student organization has served as a platform for outspoken critics of the regime and in 1999 led street demonstrations protesting a crackdown on press freedom. The organization played an important role in the 1979 revolution, supporting the seizure of the U.S. embassy, and many of its leaders participated in the taking of American hostages. The group allied itself with the May 23 Movement (Second of Khordad) but later broke ranks with President Khatami and the reformists, criticizing their refusal to confront the conservatives and arguing that the Islamic Republic is inherently undemocratic. Several leaders have been imprisoned since 1997. Ahmad BATEBI, a student demonstrator with no links to the organization's leadership, was imprisoned in 1999 after his photograph appeared in newspapers and on the cover of *The Economist* holding the bloodied T-shirt of a fellow student. He remains in prison serving a 15-year sentence. In February 2007 Batebi's wife, a dentist, reportedly was "snatched from the street," arrested by men thought to be security and intelligence agents, according to Human Rights Watch.

**Devotees of the Party of God** (*Ansar-e Hezbollah*). This is a hard-line paramilitary organization known for breaking up antiregime street demonstrations and attacking those considered to

be flaunting social restrictions imposed by the authorities. Its roots date back to the 1979 revolution, when gangs of urban poor organized as “*Hezbollah*” to support Ayatollah Khomeini. Most members are veterans of the Iran-Iraq war or former members of the Basij militia, which was formed by the revolutionary leadership. The group has been accused of carrying out political assassinations.

**National Front** (*Jebhe-e Melli*). The National Front was established in December 1977 as an essentially secular antiregime coalition of nationalist factions, including followers of former prime minister Mohammad Mossadeq. One of its founders, Shahpur Bakhtiar, was formally expelled upon designation as prime minister by the shah in late 1978; another founder, Karim SANJABI, resigned as foreign minister of the Islamic Republic in April 1979 to protest a lack of authority accorded to Prime Minister Bazargan. Prominent in the front is the long-standing **Iranian Nation Party** (INP), formed by Dariush FORUHAR, a former minister in the post-revolution Bazargan government. The INP (also sometimes referenced as the Iran People’s Party) was tolerated by the government, despite remaining technically illegal. The party’s newsletter regularly published harsh criticism of the regime, particularly in regard to human rights violations. Foruhar and his wife, Parvaneh ESKANDARI-FORUHAR, were murdered in November 1998, the killings ultimately being attributed to “rogue elements” within government security forces. Several INP members were arrested in July 1999 in connection with recent student unrest. For the 2000 *Majlis* balloting the INP, now led by Bahran NAMAZI, attempted to present joint candidates with the Liberation Movement of Iran and other groups in a Coalition of National Religious Forces in support of the reformist movement.

**Party of the Masses** (*Hezb-e-Tudeh*). Traditionally pro-Soviet, the communist Tudeh was formed in 1941, declared illegal in 1949, and went underground in 1953. A number of its leaders returned from exile in East Germany in early 1979. At a March 1981 Central Committee plenum, the party aligned itself with Ayatollah Khomeini’s

“anti-imperialist and popular line,” while ending its support for separatist movements. Because of Tudeh’s conservatism, a number of more radical communist groups also emerged. Tudeh was formally banned in April 1983 after several party officials confessed to providing the Soviet Union with military and political information. On the other hand, a faction of the militia Fedayeen-e-Khalq joined Tudeh in support of the revolution. Its founder, Iraj ESKENDARI, died in East Germany in April 1985. A dissident faction, calling itself the Iranian People’s Democratic Party, was reportedly formed in Paris in February 1988. In 2007 the party’s website listed addresses in Berlin and London, and the party leader was identified as Ali Khavari.

*Leaders:* Dr. Nureddin KIANOURI (under arrest), Eshan TABARI (under arrest), Ali KHAVARI (Chair, in exile).

Among some of the other parties and groups are the **Islamic Labor Welfare Party**, the **Youth Party**, the **Modernist Muslim Women’s Association**, and the **Association of the Women of the Islamic Revolution**.

The largest guerrilla group—which at one time claimed some 100,000 members but is now considered to have much less support—is the **Mujaheddin-e Khalq** (“People’s Warriors,” also referenced as the *Mujaheddin Khalq* Organization—MKO or MEK), founded in 1965 in opposition to the shah. Leftist but also Islamic, the *Mujaheddin* confined most of their activities after the revolution to urban areas, frequently engaging in street battles with the Revolutionary Guards and the regular army; many of the political assassinations of 1979–1982 were apparently carried out by its members. The political leader of the *Mujaheddin*, Massoud RAJAVI, accompanied former president Bani-Sadr into exile in Paris in July 1981 but subsequently came under pressure from French authorities and left, with 1,000 of his followers, for Iraq in June 1986; within Iran, guerrilla leader Mussa KHIABANI was killed in February 1982, his successor being Ali ZARKESH. In mid-1988 the *Mujaheddin* captured three Iranian

towns before the Iranian army drove them back into Iraq in early August. The 15,000-member guerrilla force reportedly met with stiff resistance from “locals” who considered its attacks on the weakened army treasonous. Subsequently, the *Mujaheddin* claimed that thousands of its adherents had been executed by government forces. In December 1991 many *Mujaheddin* members were arrested during a government crackdown on opposition street protests, while President Rafsanjani ordered air strikes against its bases in Iraq during the run-up to the 1992 balloting.

In late 1993 Tehran strongly criticized Paris’s decision to permit Maryam RAJAVI (wife of Masoud Rajavi and recently elected, according to *Middle East International*, as “president of Iran” by the *Mujaheddin* executive committee) to remain, with 200 supporters, in France. Subsequently, in January 1994, some 17 *Mujaheddin* members were arrested as participants in a bombing in the Iranian capital, with leaders of the group denying complicity and accusing the government of routinely linking them to all such disturbances for political purposes. Later in the year the U.S. State Department accused the *Mujaheddin* of engaging in terrorism, Washington’s animosity apparently stemming in part from *Mujaheddin* links to the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. The group was reportedly used to assist Hussein’s forces in crushing Kurdish and Shiite rebellions. In the summer of 1997, apparently as a gesture of goodwill toward the new moderate Khatami government, Israel ordered an end to *Mujaheddin* broadcasts via an Israeli-owned satellite. The *Mujaheddin*, now operating out of Iraq, claimed responsibility for sporadic attacks in Tehran in 2000 and 2001. Subsequently, the group was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union.

In August 2002, the group’s political wing, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), presented satellite photographs and details of an underground uranium enrichment center in Natanz and a heavy-water nuclear production facility in Arak. The satellite imagery prompted speculation that the group was supplied with intelligence from

the United States or Israel, as it would lack sufficient resources to monitor Iran’s nuclear activities. The revelations, subsequently confirmed by UN inspectors, indicated that Iran had made substantial progress in its nuclear research and renewed suspicions that the regime was pursuing a clandestine weapons project (possibly involving the purchase of materials and know-how from Pakistani scientists). The group lost its primary sponsor after the fall of Saddam Hussein and was briefly bombarded by U.S. forces. The MKO agreed to a cease-fire and was later disarmed and confined to designated camps under U.S. guard. Some 4,000 MKO members have remained under U.S. military supervision or “detention” at Camp Ashraf in Iraq, and, after a lengthy review by the U.S. State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), none has been charged as suspected terrorists. The political wing, the NCRI, continues to enjoy support from a small number of parliamentary representatives in Europe and in the U.S. Congress.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department listed the NCRI as an “alias” for the exiles fighting in Iraq. Rajavi, described as the leader of the NCRI, met on separate occasions with leaders of Belgium and Norway, drawing criticism from Iran after Rajavi was quoted as saying the Iranian mullahs were a threat to the people of Iran and “to all humanity.”

In 2007 as many as 3,800 members were said to be living in Iraq under some degree of supervision by the United States. Though Iraq was trying to evict the group for security reasons, the United States reportedly was reluctant to change course because the *Mujaheddin* were said to be providing important information about Iran’s nuclear program.

Of the separatist groups, the largest is the primarily Sunni Muslim **Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI)**, also referenced as the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK), which was outlawed in August 1979. Campaigning under the slogan “Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for the Kurds,” the KDPI, like the *Mujaheddin*, has been a principal target of government forces; its guerrilla wing is often referred to as the *Pesh Mergas* (as is a similar Kurdish group in Iraq). Its former secretary general, Abdur Rahman QASSEMLOU,



## Cabinet

As of November 1, 2007

President	Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
First Vice President	Parviz Davodi
Vice President, Chief of the Iran Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO)	Gholamreza Aghazadeh
Vice President, Chief of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization	Fatemeh Vaezjavadi [f]
Vice President, Chief of the Physical Training Organization	Mohammad Ali-Abadi
Vice President, Chief of the President's Office	Ali Saidlu

### *Ministers*

Agriculture Jihad	Mohammad Reza Eskandari
Commerce	Masoud Mir Kazemi
Communications and Information Technology	Mohammad Soleimani
Cooperatives	Mohammad Abbasi
Culture and Islamic Guidance	Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi
Defense	Brig.-Gen. Mohammad Mostafa Najjar
Economic Affairs and Finance	Davoud Danesh Jaafari
Education	Mahmoud Farshidi
Energy	Parviz Fattah
Foreign Affairs	Manouchehr Mottaki
Health	Kamran Baqeri Lankarani
Housing and Urban Development	Mohammad Saeedi Kia
Industry and Mines (acting)	Ali Akbar Mehrabian
Intelligence	Gholam Hosein Mohseni
Interior	Mostafa Por Mohamadi
Justice and Government Spokesman	Gholam Hosein Elham
Labor and Social Affairs	Mohammad Jahromi
Petroleum (acting)	Gholam Hosein Nozari
Roads and Transport	Mohammad Rahmati
Scientific Research and Technology	Mohammad Mehdi Zahedi
Welfare	Abdolreza Mesri

[f] = female

was assassinated in Vienna in July 1989, while his successor, Sadeq SHARAFKANDI, and four KDPI colleagues were murdered in Berlin in September 1992. In 1993 German prosecutors charged that the Iranian government had been involved in the latter attack. (Former Iranian prime minister Bani-Sadr testified at a trial in Germany in 1996 that Ayatollah Khamenei had personally signed a death warrant for Sharafkandi.) Late in 1993 it was also reported that KDPI guerrillas had engaged government troops near the Iraqi border.

Another KDPI leader, Ghafur HAMZEKI, was reported to have been assassinated in Baghdad in August 1994, while, in what was described as an effort to "crush" the guerrillas, Iranian bombers and missiles attacked KDPI bases in Iraq the following November. In May 1995 it was reported that Abdallah HASSANZADEH had replaced Mustafa HEJRI as KDPI leader and secretary general. The KDPI claimed that its fighters had been attacked by Iranian troops in late 1996 in the wake of the incursion by the Iraqi military into the Kurdish

“safe haven” in northern Iraq. In April 1997 a German court ruled that unnamed senior Iranian officials were responsible for the 1992 assassinations in Berlin, a finding that strained Iran’s relations with the EU as well as Germany. Perhaps indicating a reduction in tensions between the KDPI and the government, the KDPI was described as openly supporting candidates in Kurdish-populated areas in the 1999 municipal elections. As of 2005 the secretary general of the Iraq-based KDPI was Mustafa HEJRI.

Another separatist group, identified as the **Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan**, also known as Pejak, was operating in 2007 just miles from Iran in the northern region of Iraq. It claimed responsibility for numerous cross-border attacks in Iran, including the killing of 24 Iranian soldiers in 2006 in retaliation for the deaths of 10 Iranian Kurds. The group, which some reports said was an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party in Iraq, claimed to have several thousand members living in its base camp in northern Iraq and identified two of its leaders as Akif ZAGROS and Gulistan DUGAN.

## Legislature

The unicameral **Islamic Consultative Assembly** (*Majlis-e Shoura-e Islami*) has 290 members serving four-year terms. Members are popularly elected in multiple-member constituencies in which each voter votes for as many candidates as there are seats. (Successful candidates must receive a minimum percentage of the total votes. If some seats remain unfilled after the first round of balloting, a runoff round is held.) Political groups are permitted to present candidate lists, many of the leading groups serving in a quasi-party capacity. All candidates must be approved by the Council of Guardians, which regularly rejects many prospects.

The balloting held on February 20, 2004, was marred by a dispute over the disqualification of more than 2,300 candidates by the Council of Guardians. The conservative Builders of an Islamic Iran Council won a majority, securing about 155 seats in the first round of balloting and another 40

seats in the second round on May 7, giving them a majority of at least 195 in the *Majlis*. The overall conservative majority was estimated at 200 to 210, with the remainder held by independent MPs and a bloc of about 40 reformists without party affiliation. The number of seats held by the Builders of an Islamic Iran Council subsequently declined due to internal divisions, although the overall conservative majority in parliament remained intact.

*Speaker:* Gholam-Ali Haddad ADEL.

## Communications

Freedom of the press is provided for in the 1979 constitution, except in regard to violations of public morality and religious belief or impugning the reputation of individuals. Nevertheless, more than 20 newspapers were closed in August 1979, and drastic curbs were imposed on foreign journalists, including a ban on unsupervised interviews with government officials and a requirement that reporters apply for press cards every three months. In August 1980 Ayatollah Khomeini called for increased censorship, and on June 7, 1981, an additional seven publications were banned. Subsequently, on August 25, 1981, the *Majlis* passed a law making it a criminal offense to use “pen and speech” against the government. However, the Rafsanjani government permitted a degree of debate in the press on controversial issues, leading one correspondent to describe the situation as “lively but controlled.” Critics of the regime called for an extension of press freedom, noting that newspapers were routinely shut down by the authorities for publishing “antigovernment” articles. The Khatami administration installed in 1997 issued permits to dozens of new publications, apparently hoping through public debate to strengthen independent institutions. The establishment of a more vibrant press was credited with the success of reformists in the February 1999 municipal elections. However, conservatives opposed to the new policy of openness continued to control the “Press Court,” which ultimately determines the fate of newspapers. Journalism subsequently became one of the main battlefields in the conflict between reformists and

conservatives. New restrictions on the press contributed to large-scale student demonstrations in July 1999.

Shortly after the 2000 legislative elections, the outgoing *Majlis* hurriedly approved a crude press control law, which the conservative Council of Guardians ruled could not be overturned by the new reform-minded *Majlis*. Consequently, some 110 proreform publications were closed over a four-year period, and many journalists were arrested. Journalists and dissident voices sought refuge on the Internet, but the judiciary began cracking down on web-based writers in 2003 and imposing stricter controls on Internet service providers. Nevertheless, some Farsi-language websites based outside the country have managed to circumvent the restrictions. Blogging has also grown rapidly as a form of political and social protest, reducing the regime's ability to control the flow of information.

Numerous journalists and editors have been jailed over the past eight years. The plight of journalist Akbar GANJI has gained international attention. After writing articles linking conservative authorities to the murders of dissidents, authorities imprisoned Ganji in 2001. Unlike most dissidents under detention, Ganji has refused to recant and has engaged in hunger strikes. Eight Nobel laureates wrote to Iran demanding his release. On March 18, 2006, Ganji was freed. As of October 2007, nine journalists remained behind bars. President Ahmadinejad has cracked down "hard" on journalists, according to the watchdog group, Reporters Without Borders, which said in its 2007 report that Iran "continues to be the Middle East's biggest prison for the media." Some reports have said that broadcasters are more restricted than the press.

### *Press*

Iran experienced a rapid increase in the number of daily and weekly newspapers following the election of Khatami to the presidency in 1997, some of them quickly reopening under new names after having been closed by conservative clerics. Newspaper closures and prison sentences since

have had a chilling effect on the press, discouraging journalistic inquiry and limiting the range of debate and comment. The breathing space for reformist publications has steadily been reduced since 1999. Prominent newspapers aligned with the conservatives include *Jomhuri Islami*, hard-line conservative; *Kayhan* (Universe), hard-line conservative; *Resalat* (Message), considered more "pragmatic" *Siasat-e Ruz*, hard-line; and *Ettela'at* and *Hamshari*, owned by the Tehran city council. Newspapers backed by reformists include *Sharq* (East), which enjoys the most influence and reach; *Hambastegi*, *E'temad*, *Aftab-e Yazd*, the economic-focused *Donyaye Eqtesad*, and *Eqhbali*, associated with the IIPF; and *Entekhab* and *Farhang-e Ashti*. English-language dailies include the moderate *Iran News*, *Iran Daily*, and the conservative *Tehran Times*.

### *News Agencies*

In December 1981 the domestic Pars News Agency was renamed the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Following the July 1981 closing of Reuters' Tehran office, Agence France-Presse and Italy's ANSA were the only Western bureaus with operations in Iran. Reuters has subsequently reopened its facility in Tehran, and several other foreign bureaus are now represented, including the BBC and the New China News Agency (*Xinhua*). A small number of foreign journalists are allowed to reside in Iran; they must renew their visas every three months. Permission to travel to certain regions, including predominantly Kurdish areas and towns along the border with Iraq and Afghanistan, must be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and is often denied.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which answers directly to the office of the supreme leader (who appoints the director), operates a comprehensive monopoly on television and radio over two networks and home-service radio broadcasting in a variety of indigenous and foreign languages. IRIB has been frequently criticized by

reformists for ignoring reformist voices or manipulating issues to favor conservative viewpoints. The reformist majority in the previous *Majlis* also alleged that the broadcaster had failed to fully account for its expenditures. From the outset of the U.S.-led war in Iraq in 2003, IRIB broadcast an Arabic-language program beamed into Iraq on terrestrial transmitters and throughout the Arab world by satellite. Iranian law prohibits commercial stations. A ban on the use of satellite television is sporadically enforced but widely flouted. Authorities have also attempted to jam satellite reception with mixed success. There were approximately 10.7 million television receivers and 5 to 7.5 million Internet users as of 2005. Some estimates put the number of Farsi Weblogs as high as 700,000, one of the highest blog sectors in the world. Aware of the popularity of the Internet, state authorities have carried out extensive censorship using filter software that blocks sites related to politics, women's rights, ho-

mosexuality, and pornography. As of 2005 there were about 104 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

The United States severed diplomatic relations with Iran on April 4, 1980. Iranian diplomatic interests in Washington were handled by an interests section at the Algerian embassy until March 1992, when a successor section was established at the Pakistani embassy. The embassy of Switzerland handles U.S. interests in Iran.

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Mohamad KHAZAEI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** ECO, IDB, Interpol, IOM, IOR-ARC, NAM, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO

# IRAQ

## REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

*al-Jumhuriyat al-Iraqiyah*

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### The Country

Historically known as Mesopotamia (“land between the rivers”) from its geographic position centering in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, Iraq is an almost landlocked, partly desert country whose population is overwhelmingly Muslim and largely Arabic-speaking but also includes a Kurdish minority of over 4 million in the northeastern region bordering on Syria, Turkey, and Iran. Most Muslims, by a slim majority, are Shiite, although the regime had long been Sunni-dominated prior to the 2003 U.S./UK-led invasion. Under Saddam Hussein’s government, women comprised about one-fifth of the paid labor force, nearly one-half of the agricultural work force, and one-third of the professionals in education and health care. A moderate interpretation of Islamic law gave women equal rights in divorce, land ownership, and suffrage. Women were given the right to vote and run for office in the interim constitution adopted in 2004, although their ultimate rights regarding civil matters were the focus of intense debate during the 2005 negotiations for a permanent constitution.

Agriculture, which was characterized by highly concentrated land ownership prior to the introduction of land reform legislation in 1958, occupies about two-fifths of the population but produces less than one-tenth of the GNP. The most important crops are dates, barley, wheat, rice, and tobacco. Oil is the leading natural resource and, under normal conditions, accounts for over half of GNP. (Iraq has known reserves of 115 billion barrels of oil, although many fields have yet to be explored, and estimates of total reserves range

up to 350 billion barrels. Iraq’s reserves are believed to be among the two largest in the world [along with Saudi Arabia’s]. The predominantly Kurdish north is rich in oil, as is the mainly Shiite south. However, the central region [where most Sunnis live] has fewer proven reserves, an issue that has contributed significantly, in the opinion of most analysts, to recent difficulties in negotiating final political stability at the national level.) Other important natural resources include phosphates, sulfur, iron, copper, chromite, lead,



limestone, and gypsum. Manufacturing is not highly developed, although petrochemical, steel, aluminum, and phosphate plants were among heavy-industrial construction projects undertaken in the 1970s. During most of the 1980s the country experienced severe economic difficulty as a result of depressed oil prices and the heavy cost (including shortfalls in oil output) attributable to war with Iran. However, economic reforms launched in 1987, coupled with postwar optimism, helped propel GDP growth by 10 percent in 1988, the first positive rate since early in the decade.

Serious difficulties were encountered in 1990 in the form of economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations following Iraq's August 2 seizure of Kuwait. Subsequently, the unremitting air campaign launched by U.S.-led coalition forces in early 1991 was described as causing "near apocalyptic results" that relegated Iraq's infrastructure to a "preindustrial" condition. UN sanctions, most importantly an embargo on the export of Iraqi oil, continued into late 1996 because of what Western leaders considered Baghdad's failure to implement cease-fire resolutions fully. As of that time Iraq's economy and social services network remained in near-total collapse. Limited oil shipments resumed in December 1996 under the UN's "oil-for-food" plan, which helped control malnutrition and permit provisions of basic health services. As of mid-2002 Iraq had earned an estimated \$54 billion under the UN plan, producing nearly 2 million barrels per day, or 4 percent of global production, with the United States one of Iraq's leading customers. Nevertheless, conditions for the general population remained dismal. Child mortality had reportedly doubled since the Gulf war, and an estimated 30 percent of school-age children were no longer enrolled in school in a country that once boasted one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world. Many members of the professional class had "fallen into poverty," and the Iraqi dinar had collapsed into "near worthlessness," which contributed to rampant unemployment. Meanwhile, serious conflict between Iraq and the UN over weapons inspections effectively barred progress toward ending sanctions.

**Political Status:** Independent state since 1932; declared a republic following military coup that overthrew the monarchy in 1958; provisional constitution issued September 22, 1968, and substantially amended thereafter; de facto one-party regime ousted following invasion by U.S./UK-led forces in March 2003; interim constitution (Transitional Administrative Law) adopted by the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council on May 8, 2004, providing for popular election of a Transitional National Assembly; new constitution adopted by referendum on October 15, 2005, providing for popular election of a permanent National Assembly and a mixed presidential/parliamentary system.

**Area:** 167,924 sq. mi. (434,923 sq. km.).

**Population:** 22,017,983 (1997C); 29,628,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** BAGHDAD (5,925,000), Irbil (Arbil, 3,216,000), al-Mawsil (Mosul, 1,325,000), Al Basra (1,250,000).

**Official Languages:** Arabic, Kurdish.

**Monetary Unit:** New dinar (market rate November 2, 2007: 1,231 new dinars = \$1US).

**President of the Presidency Council:** Jalal TALABANI (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan); elected by the Transitional National Assembly on April 5, 2005, and inaugurated on April 7; reelected by the National Assembly on April 22, 2006, and sworn in on May 3 for a four-year term.

**Vice Presidents of the Presidency Council:** Adil Abd al-MAHDI (Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) and Tariq al-HASHIMI (Iraqi Islamic Party); elected by the National Assembly on April 22, 2006, and sworn in on May 3 for a four-year term.

**Prime Minister of the National Government:** Nuri Jawad al-MALIKI (Islamic Call/United Iraqi Alliance); nominated by the president (upon the recommendation of the United Iraqi Alliance) on April 21, 2006, and approved by the National Assembly and sworn in (along with his new national unity government) on May 20 in succession to Ibrahim al-JAAFARI (Islamic Call/United Iraqi Alliance).

The March 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S./UK-led forces further damaged Iraq's infrastructure, although following the ouster of Saddam Hussein, the United States immediately pledged \$20 billion for reconstruction; the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other international organizations promised an additional \$18 billion. Oil production and exports resumed in the second half of 2003 but have yet to reach pre-war levels. Particularly damaging to production have been numerous attacks on Iraq's oil pipelines, installations, and oil security personnel on the part (apparently) of disaffected supporters of the former Hussein regime and other Sunni insurgents as well as militant Islamists from other countries. The ongoing conflict has also compromised rebuilding efforts, which have been described as anemic by international critics of the United States.

In 2003 Iraq's GDP declined by 41.4 percent, but it recovered in 2004 to grow by 46.5 percent before slowing dramatically to 3.7 percent growth in 2005 and 6.2 percent (estimated) in 2006.

In mid-2006 one U.S. report argued that reconstruction efforts in Iraq had been hindered by inadequate procurement policies. In addition, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) decried what it perceived to be an insufficient international response to the plight of Iraqi refugees. (The UNHCR estimated that 1.9 million Iraqis have been displaced internally and 2.0 million externally [primarily to Syria and Jordan].) Meanwhile, health experts estimated that approximately three-quarters of the population lacked clean water or sanitation services.

The IMF extended its assistance to the Iraqi government in March 2007 in view of "some progress" in economic reform, particularly in the financial and banking sectors. However, the Fund called for improvements in the tax system, intensified efforts to fight widespread corruption, passage of a proposed hydrocarbons law that would regulate oil production and distribution of revenue, and, most importantly, negotiation of a political settlement that would curb sectarian violence. Regarding the oil sector, officials of the Kurdish Regional Government in September 2007 signed exploration

contracts with several U.S. and Canadian companies as the national hydrocarbons law remained stalled in the legislature.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Having previously been conquered successively by Arabs, Mongols, and Turks, the region now known as Iraq became a British mandate under the League of Nations following World War I. British influence, exerted through the ruling Hashemite dynasty, persisted even after Iraq gained formal independence in 1932. The country continued to follow a generally pro-British and pro-Western policy until the overthrow of the monarchy in July 1958 by a military coup that cost the lives of King FAISAL II and his leading statesman, Nuri al-SAID. Brig. Gen. Abd al-Karim QASIM, leader of the revolt, ruled as head of a left-wing nationalist regime until he too was killed in a coup on February 8, 1963, that brought to power a new military regime led by Lt. Gen. Abd al-Salam ARIF and, after his accidental death in 1966, by his brother, Gen. Abd al-Rahman ARIF. The Arif regime terminated in a third, bloodless coup on July 17, 1968, which established Maj. Gen. Ahmad Hasan al-BAKR, a former premier and leader of the right wing of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (*Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki*), as president, prime minister, and chair of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which was designated the country's highest authority by the provisional constitution issued on September 22.

Under Bakr a number of alleged plots were used as excuses to move against internal opposition; the most prominent took place in June 1973 when a coup attempt by Col. Nazim KAZZAR, head of national security, led to numerous arrests and executions. Domestic instability was further augmented by struggles within the *Baath* and by relations with the Kurdish minority.

The Kurds, under the leadership of Mullah Mustafa al-BARZANI, resisted most Baghdad governments in the two decades after World War II

and, with Iranian military support, were intermittently in open rebellion from 1961 to 1975. A 1970 settlement with the Kurds ultimately broke down over distribution of petroleum revenues and exclusion of the oil-producing Kirkuk area from the proposed "Kurdistan." In May 1974 Iraq and Iran agreed to a mutual withdrawal of troops along their common frontier, pending a settlement of outstanding issues. However, the Iraqi army subsequently launched a major offensive against the Kurdish rebels, and over 130,000 Kurds fled to Iran to escape the hostilities. Concessions were ultimately made on both sides in an agreement concluded in March 1975 during a meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Algiers; a "reconciliation" treaty was signed in Baghdad the following June. Iraq agreed to abandon a long-standing claim to the Shatt al-Arab waterway at its southern boundary with Iran and accepted a delimitation of the remaining frontier on the basis of agreements concluded prior to the British presence in Iraq. Iran, in return, agreed to cease all aid to the Kurds, whose resistance momentarily subsided. In mid-1976, however, fighting again erupted between Iraqi forces and the Kurdish *Pesh Merga* guerrillas, ostensibly because of the government's new policy of massive deportation of Kurds to southern Iraq and their replacement in the north by Arabs.

On July 16, 1979, President Bakr announced his resignation from both party and government offices. His successor, Saddam HUSSEIN, had widely been considered the strongman of the regime, and his accession to leadership of the *Baath* and the RCC came as no surprise. Earlier in the year, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) had withdrawn from the six-year-old governing National Progressive Front following what Hussein himself had termed a purging of Communists from the government. Reports in late July of a failed "conspiracy" against the new president provided further evidence that he had effectively eliminated opponents from the RCC.

Although former president Bakr was known to be experiencing health problems, his resignation was apparently linked to differences within the

RCC in regard to three policies: (1) containment not only of the Kurds but, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, the increasingly restive Shiite community, led by Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-SADR until his execution in April 1980; (2) an Iraqi-Syrian unification plan (see Foreign relations, below), aspects of which Hussein found objectionable; and (3) suppression of the ICP, including the removal from the cabinet of its two ministers. Although a broad amnesty was proclaimed on August 16, 1979, Kurdish, Shiite, and Communist opposition to the Hussein government persisted and appeared to expand following Baghdad's September 17, 1980, abrogation of the 1975 Algiers agreement and the invasion five days later of Iran's Khuzistan Province, which yielded a debilitating conflict that was to preoccupy the regime for the next eight years (see Foreign relations, below).

Iraq also suffered extensive physical destruction from the Western-led "Operation Desert Storm" in early 1991, which had been precipitated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the previous August. (For a chronology of relevant events, see the 1991 *Handbook*, Appendix A-II.) Upon formal termination of the conflict on March 3, Baghdad faced major rebellions by Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south, both of which were largely contained by early April. Many Shiite refugees fled into southeastern Iran, and the Kurds retreated into the mountainous northern region bordering Iran and Turkey. Late in the month autonomy talks were launched in Baghdad between Kurdish leaders and the Iraqi government. Meanwhile, on March 23 President Hussein announced the formation of a new government, including the appointment of Saadoun HAMMADI to assume the prime ministerial duties theretofore performed by Hussein himself. On May 18 the Kurdish leadership reported that the regime had accepted its demands for a democratic government, separation of the *Baath* from the government, a free press, and elections. Moreover, on July 4 the National Assembly endorsed a bill providing for a limited democracy, wherein political party formations would be legalized but membership in the armed forces and security apparatus would continue to be limited to *Baath* members.



Although Hussein formally approved the National Assembly bill on September 3, 1991, he subsequently retreated from liberalization measures and moved to consolidate power within a cabinet increasingly dominated by family members. On September 13 the president named Muhammad Hamzah al-ZUBAYDI to replace Hammadi as prime minister after Hammadi, whom analysts had described as the only independent in the regime, had called for a more conciliatory posture in negotiations with UN coalition members and the Kurds.

In January 1992, 80 military officers charged with participating in a coup attempt were executed along with 76 antiregime demonstrators. Four months later elections were held in the north to an Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly. However, Baghdad immediately branded the poll as violating a constitutional prohibition of elections by armed groups; the Kurdish leaders defended the action as being in conformity with the 1970 autonomy agreement. On June 4 the new Kurdish Assembly named Fuad MASUM, a member of the political bureau of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), as the first Kurdish prime minister, and a Kurdish cabinet was appointed shortly thereafter. Masum resigned on March 18, 1993, amid reported discontent over fuel and food shortages in the north; he was succeeded on April 11 by Kosrat Abdulla RASUL, a popular veteran guerrilla fighter, who announced a new Kurdish cabinet on April 26. (The Kurdish coalition government collapsed in 1994 as renewed fighting broke out between the PUK and its long-standing rival, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan [DPK]. Kurdish territory was subsequently partitioned informally into PUK and DPK spheres of influence until the DPK invited Iraqi troops into the area to participate in an anti-PUK campaign in August 1996. See DPK under Political Parties and Groups, below, for details.) Meanwhile, President Hussein remained firmly in control of the Iraqi government, although growing popular discontent was reported, particularly in regard to the economic and social effects of UN sanctions in place since the Gulf crisis. A number of civilians and army officers (apparently including former supporters of

the regime) were executed following the discovery of an alleged coup plot in August 1993, which may also have contributed to a surprise cabinet reshuffle on September 5 in which Prime Minister Zubaydi was replaced by Ahmad Hussein KHUDAYYIR, a longtime *Baath* member and close associate of the president who had served as finance minister since 1991.

Citing the damage inflicted on Iraq by the UN sanctions, President Hussein took formal control of the Iraqi administration on May 29, 1994, by assuming the additional post of prime minister in succession to Khudayyir, who retained the finance portfolio. Numerous ministerial changes were reported over the next 15 months as the regime faced continuing economic and political pressures.

In mid-August 1995 two of President Hussein's sons-in-law and their wives fled the country and accepted political asylum in Jordan. The most important of the defectors appeared to be Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamil al-MAJID, who, as head of the Iraqi weapons program, had been one of the most powerful figures in President Hussein's inner circle. Majid, reported to have been locked in an intense power struggle with Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Uday HUSSEIN, immediately called for the overthrow of the Hussein regime in order to have the UN sanctions lifted.

Apparently in part to counter perceptions that the defections represented a serious threat to the government's future, the RCC on September 7 amended the constitution to provide for popular confirmation of its chair as president of the republic. Three days later the National Assembly endorsed the RCC's "nomination" of Saddam Hussein for a seven-year presidential term, and a national referendum on October 13 produced a reported 99.96 percent "yes" vote on the question. Voter turnout was also announced at over 99 percent, a tribute, in the eyes of some observers, to the organizational capabilities of a "revitalized" *Baath*, which also supplied nearly all the candidates for new assembly elections in March 1996. Meanwhile, any genuine concern the regime may have felt as the result of the much-publicized defections of 1995 evaporated in February 1996 when

Lt. Gen. Majid accepted a “forgiveness” offer from President Hussein, only to be killed in a gunfight shortly after his return to Iraq.

Following the recommendation of the RCC, the National Assembly on August 19, 2002, unanimously nominated President Hussein for another seven-year term. The government reported that 100 percent of those voting in a national referendum on October 15 approved the measure.

After declaring the Iraqi regime to be in violation of UN resolutions relating to inspections designed to determine Iraq’s status in regard to weapons of mass destruction, the United States and the United Kingdom launched an invasion in March 2003 that resulted in the ouster of Hussein. (See Current issues, below, for additional information.) On April 21 U.S. Gen. (Ret.) Jay GARNER arrived to head a U.S. Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), which, among other things, was to set up an Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA) as an advisory body to the ORHA. However, the Iraqis slated to participate in the authority (many of whom had just returned from exile) balked at the lack of day-to-day government responsibilities assigned to the proposed IIA. On May 6 U.S. President George W. Bush named L. Paul BREMER, a former U.S. ambassador, head of the civil administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The UN Security Council endorsed the CPA’s legal status as an occupying power in a resolution on May 22 and called upon the CPA (formally launched June 1) to facilitate a quick transition to Iraqi rule.

With membership determined by the CPA, a new Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) was established on July 13, 2003. The 25 members were carefully divided across religions and ethnic lines (13 Shiites, 5 Sunnis, 5 Kurds, 1 Assyrian Christian, and 1 Turkman). A rotating presidency was instituted for the IGC, which on September 1 announced the formation of a 25-member interim cabinet authorized to assist in drafting an interim constitution and preparing for elections for a transitional government. (The Arab League did not recognize the IGC as Iraq’s legitimate government, although OPEC allowed the IGC oil minister to attend OPEC meetings.)

The draft interim constitution was presented on March 1, 2004, and was approved by the United States and the IGC on March 8. On June 28 the IGC was dissolved in favor of the new Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), which accepted the transfer of sovereignty from the CPA (as endorsed by the UN Security Council on June 8). Ayad ALLAWI, a Shiite from the Iraqi National Accord, was named prime minister of the interim administration, and Ghazi Ajil al-YAWAR, a Sunni, was named to the largely ceremonial post of interim president.

Elections to a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA) were held on January 30, 2005, with the main Shiite coalition (the United Iraqi Alliance [UIA]) securing 140 seats, followed by the Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan (DPAK) with 75 and the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Iraqi List (led by Allawi) with 40. (The main Sunni parties called for a boycott.) Concurrent balloting was held for a new Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly, as well as for various regional councils.

After intense and often contentious negotiations, the TNA, on April 5, 2005, elected Jalal TALABANI, a Kurd from the PUK, as president of a new Presidency Council that also included Shiite and Sunni vice presidents. On April 7 the Presidency Council appointed Ibrahim al-JAAFARI, a Shiite from Islamic Call (*al-Dawah*), a party that was part of the winning UIA list, to head a new cabinet, which was inaugurated on May 3. On October 15 a proposed permanent constitution, drafted by a committee appointed by the TNA, was adopted by referendum with a “yes” vote of 79 percent. On December 15 elections for a permanent National Assembly (with 275 seats) were held, the UIA repeating its January victory by winning a plurality of 128 seats. The DPAK finished second with 53 seats, followed by the Iraqi Accord Front (IAF) with 44 and the Iraqi National List (INL, as the Iraqi List had been renamed) with 25. (Iraq’s Sunni community participated more heavily in the December poll than it had in January; many of its votes were directed to the IAF or the Iraqi National Dialogue Front.)

Because the formation of a government depended on a two-thirds majority ratification in the National Assembly, several months passed before a cabinet could be submitted to the body for approval. The major problem involved divisions within the United Iraqi Alliance over its choice for prime minister. Al-Jaafari won an internal poll within the alliance against Adil Abd al-MAHDI in February 2006 by just one vote. However, other groups representing Kurds and Sunnis refused to participate in any national unity government with al-Jaafari as prime minister. Consequently, al-Jaafari was eventually forced to relinquish the premiership to a fellow *al-Dawah* candidate, Nuri Jawad al-MALIKI, who on May 20 formed a cabinet that included representatives from most of the major parties in the assembly. (The ministries of defense, interior, and national security were not filled until June 8.)

Six Shiite ministers representing the supporters of hard-liner Muqtada al-SADR (see Al-Sadr Movement under Political Parties and Groups) resigned from the cabinet on April 16, 2007. Further damaging governmental stability, the minister from the IAF suspended their participation in the cabinet in August, while several INL ministers resigned their posts as directed by former prime minister Allawi.

### *Constitution and Government*

Constitutional processes were largely nonexistent during the two decades after the 1958 coup, despite the issuance of a provisional basic law in 1968 and a 1971 National Action Charter that envisaged the establishment of local governing councils and the reconvening of a legislature. It was not until June and September 1980 that elections were held for a unicameral National Assembly and a Kurdish Legislative Council, respectively. However, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the nation's supreme authority since 1968, was not dissolved, effective power remaining concentrated in its chair, who continued to serve concurrently as president of the republic and commander in chief of the Armed Forces. (Amendments approved by the RCC in September 1995 directed that its chair's

assumption of the presidency would henceforth be subject to the approval of the National Assembly and a national referendum.) RCC decrees had the force of law and were not automatically subject to any legislative or judicial review, although some bills were passed on to the Assembly for approval. The RCC was also solely responsible for electing and dismissing its own members, who had to come from the leadership of the *Baath*. The judicial system was headed by a Court of Cassation and included five courts of appeal, courts of the first instance, religious courts, and revolutionary courts that deal with crimes involving state security.

As a concession to northern minority sentiment, the Kurds in 1970 were granted autonomy as "defined by law," and in 1976 the country's 16 provincial governorates were expanded to 18, 3 of which were designated as Kurdish Autonomous Regions. However, it was not until after the 1991 Gulf war that Baghdad agreed to enter into a dialogue with Kurdish leaders to achieve meaningful implementation of what had been promised more than two decades earlier. After the new talks broke down, Kurdish groups in 1992 established an elected Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly, which in turn selected a prime minister to oversee a Kurdish government broadly responsible for most services in the region until the collapse of Kurdish cooperation in 1994.

In January 1989 it was announced that the Iraqi constitution would be replaced prior to the National Assembly balloting of April 1; however, a draft of the new basic law did not appear until July 30, 1990, after having secured legislative approval 12 days before. The published version of the document provided for direct election of the president for an eight-year renewable term; replacement of the RCC by a 50-member Consultative Council, composed of an equal number of appointed and directly elected members; and the registration of new political parties, with a proviso that only the *Baath* would be permitted to have branches in the army and security forces. In a speech on March 16, 1991, Saddam Hussein declared that the time had come to "begin building the pillars" of the new constitutional "order" despite the many problems

facing the country. On September 3, 1991, Hussein approved a law technically ending 23 years of one-party rule; however, the other changes were never submitted to a referendum.

The interim constitution adopted in March 2004 following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 provided for an appointed Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) to assume sovereignty from the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority for a short time pending the election of transitional government bodies. The 275-member Transitional National Assembly (elected by popular vote on January 20, 2005) was authorized to elect the Presidency Council, dissolve the cabinet, and oversee the drafting of a new permanent constitution. The Presidency Council (elected in April 2005) was empowered to appoint the prime minister, cabinet, and members of the judicial council and to veto legislation passed by the assembly. Day-to-day governmental responsibility was given to the prime minister and the cabinet (installed in May 2005).

The TNA was supposed to produce a draft permanent constitution by August 15, 2005, but deep divisions regarding issues such as the role of Islam, the powers of regions under a federalist system, and the distribution of oil wealth pushed negotiations well past that deadline. Most Sunni representatives boycotted the discussion, in part due to their concern over proposed “regionalization” articles that Sunnis feared might lead to the eventual breakup of the country. However, some Sunni leaders accepted a last-minute agreement regarding future constitutional revision and encouraged Sunnis to participate in the referendum on October 15. The proposed constitution was approved by 79 percent of the voters, receiving overwhelming support in Shiite- and Kurdish-dominated areas. However, the new basic law almost failed as the result of a provision that it could not be passed if two-thirds of the voters in three provinces rejected it. The “no” vote easily exceeded the two-thirds threshold in two Sunni-dominated provinces but reached only about 55 percent in the third questionable province.

The new 2005 permanent constitution codified Iraq as a federal republic with a mixed presidential/

parliamentary system. Although regions (of which Kurdistan was recognized as one) were granted broad autonomy, the “unity of Iraq” was “guaranteed.” A region was defined as comprising one or more provinces, leaving open the possibility of provinces joining together to form more powerful regions. (A Kurdish Regional Government [KRG] was subsequently formed in the provinces of Arbil, Suleimaniah, and Dohuk.) However, many of the provisions in that regard and other controversial areas were considered temporary at best because the constitution authorized the National Assembly to appoint a new panel following the upcoming legislative elections to propose additional changes and refinements to the constitution. Meanwhile, Islam was enshrined as the state religion (and a basic source of legislation), although freedom of religion was guaranteed. The directly elected National Assembly (one seat for every 100,000 inhabitants) was authorized to elect the president by a two-third’s majority for a four-year term. Significant responsibilities (including the role of commander in chief of the armed forces) were reserved for the prime minister, nominated by the president upon the recommendation of the bloc with a majority of seats in the assembly.

In October 2006 the assembly passed legislation permitting provinces throughout the country to form regional administrations similar to the KRG, although resistance reportedly remained strong among Sunnis, who feared that the nine predominantly Shiite provinces in the south might merge into a “super-region.”

### *Foreign Relations*

After adhering to a broadly pro-Western posture that included participation in the Baghdad Pact and its successor, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), Iraq switched abruptly in 1958 to an Arab nationalist line that was subsequently largely maintained. Relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist-bloc countries became increasingly cordial after 1958, whereas diplomatic links with the United States (and temporarily with Britain) were severed in 1967. In

1979, however, Baghdad moved against Iraqi Communists, veering somewhat toward the West, particularly France, for military and development aid. The change in direction was reinforced following a June 7, 1981, Israeli air raid against the Osirak nuclear reactor being built outside Baghdad, France indicating that it would assist in reconstructing the facility.

Relations with Arab states have fluctuated, although Iraq has remained committed to an anti-Israel policy. A leading backer of the "rejection front," it bitterly denounced the 1977 peace initiative of Egyptian President Sadat and the Camp David accords of September 1978, after which, on October 26, Syria and Iraq joined in a "National Charter for Joint Action" against Israel. This marked an abrupt reversal in relations between the two neighbors, long led by competing *Baath* factions. The "National Charter" called for "full military union," and talks directed toward its implementation were conducted in January and June 1979. At the latter session, held in Baghdad, presidents Assad of Syria and Bakr of Iraq declared that their two nations constituted "a unified state with one President, one Government and one Party, the *Baath*." However, the subsequent replacement of Bakr by Saddam Hussein, whom the Syrians had long considered an instigator of subversion in their country, coupled with Hussein's accusations of Syrian involvement in an attempted coup, abruptly terminated the rapprochement.

Relations with Tehran have long been embittered by conflicting interests in the Gulf region, including claims to the Shatt al-Arab and to three islands (Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa) occupied by Iran in 1971, as well as by Iranian support for Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite communities. Following the advent of the Khomeini regime in Iran in 1979, Iraq bombed a number of Kurdish villages inside Iran, and on September 22, 1980, having repudiated a 1975 reconciliation treaty, Iraq invaded its eastern neighbor. Despite overwhelming Iraqi air superiority and early ground successes, the Iranian military, reinforced by a substantially larger population with religious commitment to martyrdom, waged a bitter campaign against the

Western-supplied Iraqi forces, the brief campaign projected by Hussein soon being reduced to a stalemate. In the course of the protracted conflict, numerous Iraqi cease-fire proposals were rebuffed by Tehran, which called for the payment of \$150 billion in reparations and Hussein's ouster. It was not until a failed siege of the Iraqi city of Basra, coupled with an increasingly intense political struggle within Tehran, that Ayatollah Khomeini on July 20, 1988, called for a suspension of hostilities. A cease-fire was subsequently concluded with effect from August 20, although it was not until August 15, 1990, in the midst of the crisis generated by its seizure of Kuwait, that Iraq agreed to a comprehensive settlement based on the 1975 Algiers accord, a rejection of which by Baghdad had precipitated the lengthy conflict. A number of issues, including Iranian demands for reparations, subsequently remained unresolved, however, and a final peace accord was not signed, the status between the two countries being described as "no war, no peace."

The "annexation" of Kuwait in August 1990 was preceded by Saddam Hussein's delivery of a July 17 Revolution Day speech, during which the Iraqi president insisted that Kuwait had not only exceeded OPEC production quotas but had also stolen oil from Iraqi wells by "slant drilling." Other areas of contention were historic uncertainties regarding the precise demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait border, plus the status of certain offshore territories (including Bubiyan Island) that had been operationally "loaned" to Iraq as a gesture of Arab solidarity during the Iran-Iraq war (see article on Kuwait). However, there was little international support for Baghdad's position, and the UN Security Council reacted strongly, demanding an unconditional withdrawal within hours of the Iraqi action on August 2, imposing a trade embargo on August 6, and approving on November 29 the use of any methods needed to force Iraqi compliance as of January 15, 1991. On January 16, following a five-month buildup of U.S. and allied military units, the UN coalition commenced offensive action, which yielded the liberation of Kuwait City on February 26-27 and a suspension of military operations on

February 28, followed by Iraqi acceptance of terms for ending the conflict on March 3.

Although most coalition military units withdrew from the Gulf by mid-1991, the UN economic embargo remained in effect, in part because of U.S. displeasure at Saddam Hussein's continuance in office. Nevertheless, although Washington had long demanded that the Iraqi president step down, the Bush administration did not wish to trigger dismemberment of the country. Thus, it stood aside as Iraqi forces crushed a Shiite insurrection in the south, and U.S. aid to the northern Kurds was confined largely to humanitarian supplies.

Seemingly encouraged by the coalition's unwillingness to intervene on behalf of either the Kurds or Shiites, the Hussein regime subsequently refused to comply with cease-fire provisions requiring its assistance in the location and destruction of Iraq's nonconventional weapons. Nevertheless, by October 1991 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had accumulated enough information to charge that an Iraqi atomic weapon had been within 18 months of completion at the outset of the Gulf war and that enough material had survived allied bombing to allow the completion of other such weapons within five years. Consequently, on October 11 the Security Council approved additional restrictions, branded by Baghdad as "colonial," to prevent Iraq from ever again acquiring the means to build weapons of mass destruction.

During 1992 and early 1993 tension continued unabated between Baghdad and UN authorities. On August 27, 1992, U.S. and British warplanes began patrolling a southern "no fly" zone below the 32nd parallel to protect Shiite Muslims from Iraqi air attacks. In January 1993 Iraq was obliged to remove surface-to-air missiles that had been moved into the zone, and a series of cross-border raids to retrieve abandoned military equipment from Kuwait were countered by retaliatory allied air strikes. Meanwhile, a northern "no fly" zone, similar to the one in the south, remained in effect to protect the Kurds, although Kurdish secession was effectively blocked by opposition from virtually all interested parties save for the Kurds themselves.

U.S. Tomahawk missiles struck the Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad on June 26, 1993; Washington claimed it had "compelling evidence" that Iraq had been involved in a plot to kill former president George H. W. Bush in Kuwait several months earlier. Moreover, Western powers threatened further military action if the Hussein regime continued to resist measures designed to prevent the development of chemical and nuclear weapons and long-range missiles by the Iraqi military.

An estimated 70,000 Iraqi soldiers massed near the Kuwaiti border in early October 1994, prompting the United States to order "overwhelming" air power and send 40,000 of its troops back to the region in fear of a repetition of the 1990 invasion. In addition, the UN Security Council warned Baghdad against any further "provocative" behavior, and other Arab states (including some, such as Jordan, which had been relatively pro-Iraqi in the previous conflict) strongly condemned the Iraqi buildup. Consequently, the Iraqi forces quickly withdrew, and on November 10, in a major policy shift, the RCC issued a decree, signed by President Hussein and approved by the National Assembly, that accepted Kuwait's sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity, based on a recent UN border demarcation.

Despite Iraq's conciliatory measures, the Security Council kept its economic sanctions in place, the United States insisting it would not support their lifting until Baghdad had returned Kuwaiti property seized in 1990–1991, had accounted for numerous missing Kuwaitis (some presumed to still be held in Iraqi prisons), and had established permanent safeguards to protect the rights of the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south. Western powers also insisted on full compliance with the demands of the UN weapons monitors; the West's concern focused on a perceived lack of candor from Baghdad regarding its biological weapons program.

In view of the enormous hardships being endured by the populace as the result of continued UN sanctions, the regime finally agreed in December 1995 to a UN Security Council plan permitting the sale of a limited amount of Iraqi oil to pay for food

and medicine. (Baghdad had previously resisted the proposal, saying it represented a compromise of its sovereignty.) The Security Council gave its final approval to the project in May 1996, but implementation was delayed over U.S. concerns that appropriate monitoring mechanisms had not been established. Washington reluctantly accepted the arrangements for the oil sale in early August, but action was again suspended later that month when Iraqi troops entered Kurdish territory in the north at the invitation of the DPK. (See the DPK under Political Parties and Group for details.)

In early September 1996 the United States launched more than 20 cruise missiles at Iraqi air defense installations in the south as an indirect “punishment” for Iraq’s recent military actions in the north. Tension escalated over the next several weeks as Washington dispatched aircraft carriers and additional troops to the Gulf and President Hussein threatened to fire upon Western planes patrolling the “no-fly” zones. Both sides subsequently retreated from the brink of open warfare, however, as Iraqi forces withdrew from the north and the United States discovered a paucity of support from its former coalition allies for renewed hostilities. Consequently, with Iraq facing a potentially “catastrophic” winter, attention again focused on the “oil-for-food” plan, which was finally implemented in mid-December. The plan authorized Iraq to sell \$2 billion in oil over the next six months. Some of the revenue was earmarked for victims (primarily Kuwaitis) of Iraq’s 1990 aggression; the Kurds were also scheduled to receive assistance. However, the bulk of the new income was slated for distribution (under UN supervision) throughout Iraq, where it was estimated that nearly 5,000 children had been dying each month from malnutrition or normally treatable diseases.

The UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) reported in April 1997 that, although progress was being made in the dismantling of weapons, Iraq was still not cooperating as fully as expected. The issue erupted into a major crisis in October when Baghdad threatened to block all further UN inspections unless the economic sanctions were lifted and U.S. personnel (described as

a threat to Iraqi “national sovereignty”) were removed from the UN teams. At the same time, new UNSCOM head Richard Butler (former Australian ambassador to the UN) reported that “no remotely credible account” had emanated from the Iraqi government regarding its former biological weapons program. In November the RCC ordered the expulsion of all U.S. inspectors, prompting Washington to send additional forces to the region and to solicit support for a possible military response. However, the United States found little enthusiasm for its plan among Arab states, many of whom accused the Clinton administration of applying a double standard by taking such a hard line toward Iraq but failing to pressure Israel to proceed with implementation of the peace accord with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, U.S. planes, ships, and soldiers continued to pour into the region in early 1998 in preparation for an attack, despite opposition from fellow Security Council members China, France, and Russia. With time apparently running out, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan met with Hussein in Baghdad in late February, finally securing the Iraqi president’s signature on a memorandum of understanding permitting the resumption of inspections at all proposed sites, including the “presidential palaces” previously declared off limits. Tensions having been reduced, at least temporarily, regional leaders subsequently launched a quiet campaign to pursue the “reintegration” of Iraq into the international community, while a number of countries, including France and Russia, continued to promote the lifting of the UN sanctions. (Among other things, many countries were eager to join Iraq in oil and natural gas projects as soon as the sanctions were removed.) Meanwhile, the new phase of the “oil-for-food” program permitted \$5.2 billion in oil sales over the next six months.

Encouraged by the apparent moderation in the Iraqi stance on inspections, the United States in the spring of 1998 reduced its forces in the Gulf, and UNSCOM head Butler spoke of a possible breakthrough in negotiations with the Iraqi regime. However, a fresh crisis erupted in August when Baghdad, declaring its disarmament “complete,” demanded a reduction in U.S. representation in

UNSCOM and suspended cooperation with UNSCOM in some areas. The Security Council adopted a hard line toward the demands, and the Iraqi government subsequently announced it was ending all cooperation with UNSCOM until the UN sanctions were lifted and Butler was replaced as chief of the inspectors. A new U.S./UK assault on Iraqi sites appeared imminent in mid-November before Hussein, reportedly under heavy pressure from other Arab leaders, agreed to permit UNSCOM to return to work. Significantly, in addition to ordering a continued buildup of U.S. military capabilities in the region, Clinton and other U.S. officials indicated that U.S. policy now sought a regime change in Iraq, not just "containment." To that end, the U.S. Congress authorized Clinton to allocate \$97 million in military and financial assistance to Iraqi opposition groups.

In early December 1998 UNSCOM's Butler reported that the Iraqi government was not living up to its mid-November pledge of cooperation but was in fact refusing inspectors access to some sites and withholding requested documents. Consequently, on December 16, U.S. and UK forces launched Operation Desert Fox, an intensive bombing and missile campaign on military sites throughout Iraq. U.S. and UK officials said the attacks were designed to degrade the weapons capabilities of the Hussein regime and reduce its collateral threat to nearby countries, although China, France, and Russia (the other permanent members of the Security Council) criticized the action. Extensive damage was inflicted by the campaign (which ended on December 20), but Baghdad remained defiant, declaring a permanent cessation in its interactions with UNSCOM and announcing it would no longer respect the no-fly zones. Subsequently, Iraqi pilots routinely challenged the zones, prompting retaliatory strikes by U.S. forces, now operating under expanded rules of engagement and having been authorized to attack a wider array of targets, such as government buildings and communication facilities. U.S. and UK planes continued to pound Iraqi sites into May, because the Security Council remained divided on how to proceed, support for the military action having been further eroded by revelations that some

UNSCOM inspectors had conducted intelligence-gathering activities for Washington while engaged in their inspection duties. (For subsequent developments in the dispute with the UN and the United States, see Current issues, below.)

As part of Baghdad's efforts to rejoin mainstream Arab activity, a free-trade pact was negotiated with Egypt in January 2001, while economic ties were promoted with Syria, one destination for inexpensive Iraqi oil. In addition, Iraq was formally reintegrated into the Arab League at the March 2002 summit in Beirut, Lebanon, during which Baghdad pledged its support for "Kuwaiti sovereignty." Moreover, President Hussein continued to emphasize his regime's support for the Palestinian cause by, among other things, halting oil exports for one month in the spring of 2002 to protest Israeli actions.

The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003 altered the dynamics of Iraq's role in the region. The fall of Baghdad in just three weeks raised U.S. hopes that a post-Hussein Iraq would serve as an impetus for regional transformation in the Middle East, but the more immediate goal became stability in Iraq. The first step in building a new Iraqi government was the appointment of the Iraqi Governing Council by the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The creation of this body was met with skepticism by Iraq's Arab neighbors but was endorsed by Iran, which was willing to cooperate with the council because it included Iraqi Shiite parties that had been in exile in Iran. Following the dissolution of the CPA in 2004, Iraq's interim government, led by Ayad Allawi, cooperated with U.S.-led forces in an effort to defeat insurgents. Iraq's transitional and permanent governments, led, respectively by Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Nuri al-Maliki, continued Allawi's policy of cooperation with the United States.

In 2006 Prime Minister al-Maliki backed the full withdrawal of foreign troops by 2008. The United States, however, tied its withdrawal to security conditions in Iraq, not to a specific timetable. Meanwhile, tensions continued between Iraq and its neighbors over the flow of foreign insurgents into the country, while Sunni capitals in the



region expressed concern over the implications of a Shiite-dominated government in Iraq.

In November 2006 President Talabani met with Iranian President Ahmadinejad in an attempt to solicit Iran's assistance in quelling the sectarian violence that had wracked Iraq since early in the year. Ahmadinejad pledged to assist "brother Iraq" but insisted that stability was dependent on the withdrawal of U.S.-led "occupation forces" from Iraq. Talabani also visited Syria in January 2007, diplomatic relations between Iraq and Syria having been resumed the previous November. Syria's President Assad declared that a "safe and secure Iraq" would be a "benefit" for Syria. Iran and Syria also were among some 16 countries from the region and the West that held a regional security conference in Baghdad in March, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki imploring Iraq's neighbors to discontinue financial and military aid to militant groups in Iraq. Subsequently, some 60 countries meeting in Egypt in May adopted a five-year plan for Iraqi reconstruction and security. Concurrently, several creditor nations announced that they were forgiving additional Iraqi debt.

Tensions with Turkey intensified significantly in October 2007 when Turkish forces began cross-border shelling of suspected bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been conducting a campaign against the government in Ankara since the late 1970s. Turkey subsequently threatened to launch a military mission against the PKK, which prompted a heated response from the Iraqi government as well as messages of concern from Washington.

### *Current Issues*

In December 1999 the UN Security Council authorized the establishment of the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Committee (UNMOVIC) to succeed UNSCOM and offered to suspend the sanctions against Iraq if Baghdad were to cooperate with the new disarmament body and the IAEA for 120 days. Although Iraq quickly rejected the proposal, Hans Blix of Sweden, a former IAEA director, was chosen in January 2000 as

a compromise candidate to head UNMOVIC, and technical appointments to UNMOVIC in March were designed to produce a broad base of inspectors who would be perceived as less subservient to U.S. and UK influence than the UNSCOM inspectors had been. Nevertheless, Iraq displayed no inclination to let the new inspectors into the country, in part, according to some analyses, because international commitment to the sanctions appeared to be waning. President Hussein subsequently launched a "charm offensive" to reestablish regional ties, particularly through trade accommodations. In addition, he was seen as attempting to deflect attention away from the Iraqi disarmament issue by adopting a vocal pro-Palestinian stance.

The tone of the Iraqi/UN impasse changed significantly with the installation of the Bush administration in Washington in early 2001, the new U.S. president announcing he would give heightened attention to enforcement of the no-fly zones and otherwise intensify the pressure on Baghdad. Lending support to the call for renewed vigilance, UNMOVIC in March 2001 indicated that the Iraqi regime probably still retained the ability to deploy biological or chemical weapons.

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, President Bush quickly expanded the global U.S.-led "war on terrorism" to include the Iraqi question, arguing that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction could someday end up in the hands of terrorists. Branding Iraq as a member (along with Iran and North Korea) of an "axis of evil," Bush directed the Central Intelligence Agency to use "all available tools" to overthrow Hussein and in mid-2002 started planning a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq if complete disarmament were not quickly forthcoming. Although Washington initially indicated it believed previous Security Council resolutions were sufficient to support military action against Iraq, the U.S. administration ultimately responded to domestic and international pressure and decided to seek another "last chance" resolution. Iraq having agreed in September to "unconditional" inspections (while continuing to maintain that it possessed no prohibited weapons or weapon delivery systems), the Security

Council on November 8, 2002, adopted Resolution 1441, which threatened Iraq with “serious consequences” if it failed to comply with the new inspection regime. UNMOVIC inspectors arrived in Iraq later in the month.

The growing possibility of the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein presented a paradox for leaders in the Kurdish north, which in recent years had enjoyed *de facto* self-rule, the region being divided into separate areas administered by the PUK and the DPK. For some Kurds, a war to remove Hussein actually appeared to represent a risk of relinquishing some of the authority currently exercised, although most of the Kurdish political organizations remained committed to the establishment of a federal Iraq. In addition, the Kurds were leery of Turkey’s intentions should hostilities erupt. (Turkey, home to some 20 million Kurds, had battled its own Kurdish separatist movement since the early 1980s [see article on Turkey for details] and was naturally perceived as concerned that a breakup of Iraq could lead to renewed demands for creation of an independent Kurdistan.) Further complicating political and military assessment was the presence of major oil fields near the northern city of Kirkuk, controlled by the Hussein regime but claimed by the Kurds.

UN weapons inspectors arrived in Iraq in late November 2002 to resume the search for banned weapons. Meanwhile, Iraq gave the UN a list of its current weapons as well as information on its past weapons programs. However, the 12,000-page report was heavily criticized by the United States as being misleading and incomplete. The UN demanded greater cooperation from Iraq, citing numerous incidents of interference. Consequently, on December 19 the United States declared that Iraq was in breach of UN resolutions.

In January 2003 the inspectors discovered 12 unreported chemical warheads as well as Iraqi missiles that appeared to violate range limitations. However, Iraq subsequently pledged to be more forthcoming and cooperative, and opposition to the U.S. military build-up grew in France, Germany, and a host of other nations. In February

UN inspectors reported that Iraq had agreed to the UN’s use of aerial reconnaissance, and the inspectors asked for more time to complete their mission. However, the United States and the UK presented a draft UN Security Council resolution on February 24 that would have authorized military action against Iraq if the regime did not meet a deadline of March 17. By this point, the Security Council and NATO seemed locked into pro- and anti-invasion blocs. In response, the Bush administration announced that it would develop a “coalition of the willing” to pursue military action. The pro-war camp withdrew its draft UN resolution on March 17 in light of a threatened French veto. Meanwhile, as the United States and the UK deployed more troops to the region and conducted a diplomatic campaign to convince more countries that Iraq was in violation of its UN commitments, Arab leaders tried unsuccessfully to convince Hussein to resign and go into exile.

As the threat of invasion grew, the Iraqi regime undertook a number of steps designed to forestall military engagement. On February 4, Iraqi officials made an offer to renegotiate terms with the UN to address any remaining major concerns of the weapons inspectors. The regime also began destroying its stocks of the prohibited missiles in March. At the same time the country was divided into four military districts, each led by a relative or close ally of Hussein, and Iraq began defensive deployments of troops around Baghdad.

On March 20, 2003, the United States launched a series of missile attacks (the “shock and awe” initiative); American, British, Australian, and Polish troops began a ground offensive shortly thereafter. The coalition forces drove quickly into Iraq and engaged in both conventional and psychological warfare to convince the Iraqi military to surrender. Both efforts were successful, with the rapid advance to Baghdad being eased by the surrender of major Iraqi commands. Meanwhile, some of the most intense fighting of the war took place between coalition forces and Iraqi special militias known as the *Fedayeen* (martyrs) *Saddam*. (Some of the *Fedayeen* were reportedly non-Iraqis recruited on

the eve of the campaign.) The U.S./UK coalition attempted, with limited success, to prompt a Shiite uprising in the South. However, Kurdish forces in the north operated effectively with U.S. special operations forces and airborne troops and were able to capture the key towns of Mosul and Kirkuk. By April 7 U.S. forces were in Baghdad; the last battle of the campaign took place in Hussein's hometown of Tikrit on April 14.

On May 1, 2003, President Bush declared an end to major combat operations, prematurely as it turned out. Subsequently, the U.S.-led coalition undertook efforts to create a stable interim government and restore security and infrastructure. However, the first attempts to develop a broad-based government failed because Iraqis could not agree on specific terms and opposed U.S. plans to keep the proposed IIA as a mainly advisory body. After the ORHA was deemed to have failed (particularly in view of a deteriorating security situation), new chief civilian leader Paul Bremer attempted to "de-Baathify" the government and military by dissolving the security forces, a decision that was later perceived to have had negative consequences.

Security continued to deteriorate as foreign fighters, former regime elements, and Iraqi Sunnis engaged in a bloody insurgency. A truck bomb destroyed the UN compound in Baghdad leading to a UN withdrawal from Iraq, and car bombs and improvised explosives subsequently took a toll on coalition forces and Iraqi leaders. In a major development, Hussein's two sons were killed in a battle in Mosul in late July 2003. Meanwhile, efforts to identify or discover banned weapons produced no results, even after the deployment of the 1,000-member Iraq Survey Group, which was composed of U.S. and international weapons experts. (In January 2005 the Bush administration confirmed that no banned weapons or chemical agents had been found.)

Insurgents also began to kidnap foreign workers and Iraqi government and political figures. Over time, the insurgency appeared to become more organized, and many analysts concluded that one of the ringleaders was Jordanian-born Abu Musab

al-ZARQAWI, who was known to have links to al-Qaida (see section on al-Qaida in article on Afghanistan for additional information).

On December 13, 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured near Tikrit, and by January 2004 the coalition had captured or killed 42 of its 55 "most-wanted" former Iraqi leaders. Meanwhile, security improved in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south; the ongoing insurgency was concentrated in the central region in an area that became known as the Sunni Triangle.

During negotiations on the interim constitution in early 2004, the Shiites on the IGC demanded that the document be based on *sharia* (Islamic law); they also opposed a clause that permitted any three provinces to block a permanent constitution with a two-thirds vote in each of the three provinces. Because there were three Kurdish provinces, that provision gave the Kurds a de facto veto over the future constitution. However, the country's highest Shiite leaders eventually agreed to the "Kurdish veto." In return, a plan to use regional bodies to elect representatives to the Transitional National Assembly was revised in favor of direct elections.

In March 2004 Bremer announced the reconstruction of the Iraqi security forces in response to growing unrest in Fallujah among followers of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-SADR, the son of a popular cleric killed by the Hussein regime. After two sieges in April and May and a second assault, which included members of the new Iraqi security forces, Fallujah was returned to relative calm. Al-Sadr subsequently announced his intention to participate politically and to form a party.

Internal problems continued to plague the IGC and the CPA through 2004. (On May 17, 2004, the chair of the IGC, Izzedin SALIM, was assassinated.) Meanwhile, the credibility of the United States was undermined by revelations of a prisoner abuse scandal at the U.S. military prison at Abu Ghraib in which U.S. troops reportedly mistreated and degraded Iraqi prisoners.

After contentious negotiations within the Sunni community, Muhsin Abd al-HAMID, leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party (the largest mainstream

Sunni party), urged Sunnis to boycott the balloting for the Transitional National Assembly on January 30, 2005. For the first time, women voted in an Iraqi election. The turnout was approximately 60 percent, and international observers described the balloting, dominated by the Shiite United Iraqi Alliance, as generally free and fair.

On May 10, 2005, the TNA appointed a 55-member council to draft a new constitution. A deadline of August 15 was set for completion of the draft, which was scheduled for national referendum October 15 in preparation for new elections at the end of the year. However, the August 15 deadline was subsequently extended amid disagreement over, among other things, the extent of autonomy to be given to the three main regions. Sunnis in particular were concerned about extensive Shiite control of oil-rich areas in the south as well as possible Iranian influence over the southern provinces. Eventually, a draft constitution, which provided for the establishment of regional authorities, was submitted in time for a referendum on October 15 (see Constitution and government, above). The constitution was overwhelmingly adopted by 79 percent of Iraqis, although it was rejected in three provinces. The growing sectarian/ethnic political divide in Iraq was apparent; Sunni-dominated provinces overwhelmingly rejected the constitution, and Shiite- and Kurdish-dominated provinces voted overwhelmingly in favor of it. In order for the constitution to be presented to the Iraqi people on time, a pledge was made to revisit the controversial aspects of the document once a permanent government was formed. The referendum was held on time, and 61 percent of eligible voters turned out. The voting reflected the differing views of Iraq's ethnic and sectarian communities on the nature of what post-Saddam Hussein Iraq should look like. The Kurds wanted confirmation of their regional autonomy, while, like the Kurds, most Shiites favored a federal Iraq. Sunnis, however, feared that extensive regional autonomy would produce a weak, decentralized Iraqi nation-state in which their interests would not be sufficiently protected. Meanwhile, the fact that most of Iraq's oil reserves were in the Shiite-dominated

southern provinces and in the northern Kirkuk area (claimed historically by Iraqi Kurds) exacerbated internal tensions.

With the constitutional referendum completed, Iraq proceeded to elect a permanent National Assembly on December 15, 2005. Iraq's Sunni Arab leaders concluded that their boycott of the January poll had been a mistake, and two Sunni-based political groupings were formed to contest the election—the Iraqi Accord Front (IAF) and the Iraqi National Dialogue Front. The IAF was dominated by the Iraqi Islamic Party, and the Dialogue Front was formed by secular, nationalist Sunnis (some with *Baath* backgrounds), who steadfastly opposed a federal Iraq. The United Iraqi Alliance was in power most of 2005, and although it broadly represented Iraq's Shiites, many Shiites reportedly remained dissatisfied with the lack of progress on security and in delivery of services. The alliance meanwhile brought Muqtada al-Sadr's group into the coalition after it pledged to end violent activities and join the political process. Former interim prime minister Ayad Allawi hoped that his Iraqi National List would attract many disillusioned Iraqis in the December 2005 assembly poll, but the United Iraqi Alliance dominated the elections as it had in January.

Throughout 2005 violence in Iraq developed an increasingly sectarian tone, prompting speculation that Iraq was about to plunge into all-out civil war. Foreign troops and Shiites were targeted by insurgents, especially by followers—Iraqi and non-Iraqi—of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (the Jordanian leader of “al-Qaida in Iraq” [see section on al-Qaida in article on Afghanistan for additional information]). Hopes that Iraq would stabilize in the near-term were dealt a severe blow on February 22, 2006, by the bombing in Samarra of the al-Askariya shrine, a Shiite holy site. The bombing confirmed for some observers that Iraq was in a civil war; indeed, the civilian death toll rose dramatically in February and March 2006. Although Iraq's government called for calm, there seemed to be little respite from sectarian strife.

As violence increased in the early months of 2006, difficult decisions over the formation of the

government continued. Despite the victory of the United Iraqi Alliance, the premiership of Ibrahaim al-Jaafari was unpopular with the DPAK and with Sunnis. Furthermore, al-Jaafari was not universally popular with all the factions within the alliance, and a standoff ensued between his *al-Dawah* group, the supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr, and other parties and independents who wanted to back another candidate. SCIRI proposed that its vice president, Adil Abd al-MAHDI, be nominated for prime minister by the United Iraqi Alliance, but in an internal party ballot in February al-Jaafari defeated al-Mahdi by one vote (64–63). Thus, the UIA was left with a candidate for prime minister whom half the alliance opposed and who was unacceptable to other parties whose support was required to get the two-thirds majority needed to form a government. In April a representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-SISTANI brokered an agreement in which neither al-Jaafari nor Abd al-Mahdi would be the alliance candidate for prime minister, clearing the way for Nuri al-Maliki to serve as a compromise candidate. Al-Maliki was able to gain consensus within the factions of the alliance as well as approval from Sunni and Kurdish groups and Allawi's Iraqi National List.

On June 7, 2006, al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. air strike near Baquba. Observers, including President Bush, cautioned that violence in Iraq would likely continue, despite al-Zarqawi's death.

In the wake of sectarian violence that was claiming an average of 1,500 Iraqis per month, Prime Minister al-Maliki in June 2006 initiated a broad security operation designed, as a first step, to restore control in Baghdad. He also presented a national reconciliation plan directed in large part at Sunni insurgents. However, more than 3,000 Iraqis died in July, primarily at the hands of sectarian death squads. (Sunnis charged that Shiite militias were killing Sunnis under the "cover" of Iraqi security forces.) In September the U.S. defense department reported that the Shiite-Sunni fighting had spread from Baghdad and now represented a major element of the "core conflict" in Iraq. Many analysts questioned the ability of the

al-Maliki administration to resolve the violence, although U.S. President Bush in November once again announced his support for the beleaguered prime minister.

Saddam Hussein was hanged in December 2006 following his conviction of crimes against humanity, including his ordering the execution of Shiites in the village of Dujail following an attempt on his life in 1982. (Hussein also faced numerous charges in other cases, although formal proceedings against him in those matters ceased after his death.) The events surrounding Hussein's execution appeared to further inflame Sunni passions, and sectarian violence continued unabated into 2007. Consequently, President Bush in late January announced that some 30,000 additional troops would be sent to Iraq as part of a military "surge" intended to restore security. At the same time, the United States reportedly began to enlist previously anti-U.S. Sunni tribal leaders in a campaign against al-Qaida forces, Bush once again linking the conflict in Iraq to the global "war on terrorism."

Prime Minister al-Maliki faced a serious political threat in August 2007 when the IAF and the INL suspended participation in his cabinet. As a result, al-Maliki in September reportedly intensified his efforts to placate Sunnis by releasing Sunnis who had been arrested in the recent crackdown and by endorsing proposed legislation that would permit former *Baath* members to return to government service. However, the hydrocarbons law (considered a crucial element in a lasting political settlement) remained unresolved in the assembly, and some political groups (including some Shiite followers of Muqtada al-Sadr and the predominately Sunni supporters of former prime minister Allawi in the INL) called for dissolution of the assembly and new elections. For his part, al-Maliki, buoyed by the apparent reduction of violence in the fall, announced plans to form a new government involving the rump UIA, the DPAK, and, possibly, the IAF. Meanwhile, President Bush also cited what he described as the "success" of the nine-month "surge" and urged continued support for the al-Maliki administration despite its failure to achieve many of

the “benchmarks” established earlier to measure progress.

## Political Parties and Groups

Following the 1968 coup the dominant force within Iraq was the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (*Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki*), which under the National Action Charter of 1973 became the core of the regime-supportive National Progressive Front (NPF), subsequently the National Progressive and Patriotic Front (NPPF). (For details on the *Baath*, which was disbanded by the CPA following the ouster of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and other components of the NPPF, see the 2007 *Handbook*.) In the wake of the onset of the war with Iran in September 1980, various elements announced the formation of antigovernment groupings, all receiving support from abroad. A more inclusive opposition grouping, the 17-member Iraqi National Joint Action Committee (INJAC) was launched in Damascus on December 27, 1990. During an INJAC summit in Damascus in August 1991 the coalition called for efforts to “promote its actions inside Iraq.” However, in December coalition members rejected a plan that called for regional assistance in overthrowing the regime. Coordination of opposition activity passed in June 1992 to the Iraqi National Congress (INC, below).

On September 3, 1991, President Hussein nominally ended 23 years of de facto one-party rule by approving a measure that legalized opposition formations. However, there were no reports of such groups emerging subsequently in areas under government control.

Dissident groups met with top U.S. officials in August 2002 to try to present a coherent, cohesive front in anticipation of possible U.S.-led military action against the regime of Saddam Hussein, but, according to most accounts, the opposition remained fractious. Problems included objections by some groups over perceived INC “domination,” criticism by smaller Shiite organizations over apparent efforts by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI) to speak for

the entire Shiite population, and concerns over the role of former Iraqi military officers, who may have been involved in human rights abuses while serving in Iraq but were now seeking a role in the potential new government.

The collapse of the *Baath* regime following the overthrow of the Hussein regime in 2003 and the banning of the party left a political vacuum in the country, which was filled by many formerly exiled parties, Muqtada al-Sadr’s movement, Kurdish political organizations, and Sunni coalitions. Iraqi politics thereby became, for the most part, defined by ethnicity and sect.

### *Parliamentary Parties and Groups*

**United Iraqi Alliance** (UIA). Formed in December 2004, the UIA was the brainchild of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-SISTANI, the Shiite leader who wanted an umbrella organization for the major Shiite parties. In addition to the parties below, minor parties in the UIA include *Hezbollah*, a “Marsh Arab” Shiite grouping; the **Islamic Action Organization**, formed in the early 1960s and often referred to as the Islamic Task Organization (ITO); and the **Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen**, a grouping of Shiite Turkmen formed in 1991, led by Abbas al-BAYATI. By the time of the January 30, 2005, balloting for the TNA, some 22 parties had reportedly joined the alliance. In the December 2005 assembly elections, the UIA was reported to have won a plurality of 128 seats. The alliance subsequently served as a core component of the national unity government.

**Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council** (SIIC). The SIIC is the new name adopted in May 2007 by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which had also been referenced as the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic revolution in Iraq (SAIRI). SCIRI was formed in 1982 as an umbrella for a number of Shiite groups, including the **Holy Warriors** (*al-Mujaheddin*), which was founded in 1979 in Iran. (The Holy Warriors had claimed responsibility for a variety of attacks on Baghdad, and

in March 1980 the RCC had decreed the death penalty for members of the organization.) Other founding members of SCIRI were Islamic Call (*al-Dawah*, see below); the **Islamic Action Organization**, an *al-Dawah* splinter group formed in 1980 under the leadership of Skeikh Taqi MODARESSI; the **Islamic Movement in Iraq**, led by Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi al-KALISI; and the **Islamic Scholars Organization**, led by Sheikh al-NASERI.

Each of the SCIRI components was awarded representation on the INJAC in 1990. In late December 1991 the INJAC debated and ultimately rejected a plan formulated by SCIRI leader Hojatolislam Said Muhammad Bakr al-HAKIM (a founder of the Holy Warriors), which called for Syrian, Iranian, and Turkish assistance in overthrowing the Hussein regime.

In early 1994 spokesmen for SCIRI called for UN intervention to protect the Shiite population in southern Iraq from a government military offensive. In early 1999 the United States indicated an interest in providing assistance to SCIRI as part of the new U.S. initiative to topple Saddam Hussein. However, SCIRI leaders based in Iran declined the offer because they did not want to collaborate with the INC.

SCIRI declined to attend the INC rejuvenation meetings in 1999. It subsequently claimed responsibility for attacks on Iraqi government targets in May 2000 and June 2001. Although SCIRI participated in the 2002 sessions designed to promote a unified anti-Hussein front in advance of a potential U.S.-led military campaign, it was not operating in tandem with the INC and argued that Iraqis themselves should overthrow the Hussein regime. SCIRI reportedly had up to 12,000 fighters at its command, most in Iran but some already in Iraq. When Saddam Hussein fell, SCIRI leaders began returning to Iraq and pledged cooperation with the U.S.-sponsored political process. SCIRI was one of the early participants in the Iraqi Governing Council established by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Following the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the SCIRI militia (the Badr Brigade) regrouped as a political entity, the **Badr Organization**, which maintained close ties to SCIRI. SCIRI leader al-Hakim was assassinated in August 2003; he was succeeded by his nephew, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim.

Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim met in December 2006 in Washington with U.S. President George W. Bush, whose administration appeared to be emphasizing ties with SCIRI (despite SCIRI's Iranian association) in an attempt to "marginalize" the supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr. The adoption of the SIIC rubric in May 2007 was also seen, in part at least, as another effort to underscore the moderate stance of the group in relation to the Sadrists, with whom the SIIC and the Badr Organization subsequently battled for control of southern Iraq.

SCIRI and the Badr Organization have been part of the United Iraqi Alliance since its inception, with members of the Badr Organization subsequently dominating Iraqi security forces.

*Leaders:* Abd al-Aziz al-HAKIM (Leader), Adil Abd al-MAHDI (Vice President of the Republic), Haithem al-HUSSAINI.

**Islamic Call** (*al-Dawah al-Islamiyah*). *Al-Dawah* was established in the 1950s with the support of Shiite leader Muhammad Bakr al-Sadr, who was executed by the Hussein regime in April 1980. Closely affiliated with the Iranian *Mujaheddin*, the Damascus-based *al-Dawah* claimed responsibility for seven assassination attempts on Hussein and for numerous bombings during the 1980s. Although it was a founding member of the INC, *al-Dawah* subsequently distanced itself from the congress because it was dissatisfied with its representation on the group's executive council. *Al-Dawah* was one of several groups that claimed responsibility for the attempted assassination of Udai Hussein in December 1997. Consequently, the United States refused to aid *al-Dawah's* antiregime activities and questioned its relationship, if any,

to SCIRI and/or the INC. In fact, some reports in April 1999 indicated that a “deep political rivalry” had developed between *al-Dawah* and the SCIRI leadership. By 2002 it was generally accepted that *al-Dawah* had broken away from SCIRI, and *al-Dawah* was not officially represented at the various Iraqi opposition meetings during 2002.

As a party in exile, *al-Dawah* had split into various branches in Tehran, Damascus, and London, but after the fall of Saddam Hussein its prominent leaders returned to Iraq and resumed political activity. Like SCIRI, whose leaders also returned from exile, *al-Dawah* cooperated with the U.S.-led occupation authority and gained representation on the IGC. Following the election in January of the transitional assembly in which the United Iraqi Alliance, which included *al-Dawah*, was victorious, Ibrahim al-Jaafari of *al-Dawah* was appointed prime minister. However, dissatisfaction with al-Jaafari’s performance within the UIA eventually forced him to relinquish the post after elections for the permanent assembly in December 2005. In April 2006 al-Jaafari was replaced as the UIA candidate for prime minister by another *al-Dawah* member, Nuri al-Maliki.

*Leader:* Nuri Jawad al-MALIKI (Prime Minister).

**Al-Sadr Movement.** This group, an amorphous political, social, and military movement, coalesced around the personality of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, the son of Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr and a relative of Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr al-Sadr, two prominent Iraqi Shiite clerics killed by Saddam Hussein’s regime. After being underground since 1999, Muqtada al-Sadr rose to prominence almost immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Al-Sadr did not have the religious credentials of his father, but he was able to claim his family’s legacy. Although the majority of Iraqi Shiites backed the approach of the Shiite establishment toward the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Muqtada al-Sadr galva-

nized a minority of urban Shiite poor from East Baghdad’s “Sadr City” (formerly known as Saddam City). After forming his own militia (the Mahdi Army), he also began to organize social services for Shiite communities.

Al-Sadr spurned the IGC, whose membership consisted of other Shiite parties such as SCIRI and *al-Dawah*. Throughout 2003 his followers opposed the presence of U.S.-led forces in Iraq, and tensions rose between occupying authorities and his movement. In early April 2004 full-blown hostilities erupted between al-Sadr’s militia and U.S. forces in Sadr City, Najaf, and other Shiite population centers. U.S. forces prevailed then and also when another uprising broke out in August, the Mahdi Army suffering heavy losses. Al-Sadr survived the fighting, which enhanced his reputation among Shiites who opposed the continued U.S. presence. His political and military actions also challenged other Shiite groups and the establishment in Najaf. However, al-Sadr was never able to command the allegiance of the majority of Iraq’s Shiites, who still followed Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

The Al-Sadr Movement did not confront coalition forces in Iraq militarily after the August 2004 failed uprising, but al-Sadr refused to participate in the January 2005 elections for the Transitional National Assembly, although the closely allied “National Independent Cadres and Elites” list won three seats. Throughout 2005 al-Sadr sought a political role and was persuaded to join the UIA list before the December 2005 poll.

With the formation of a national unity government in May 2006, al-Sadr’s followers were awarded five ministries (agriculture, education, health, trade, and transportation). However, the Mahdi Army was subsequently implicated in widespread attacks on Sunnis during sectarian violence that dominated the rest of the year. Under reported heavy U.S. pressure, the al-Maliki administration directed security forces to target Madhi Army elements as part of the security operation launched in early 2007, and in April the Sadrist ministers resigned from the cabinet, denouncing Maliki’s support for the U.S. “occupation forces.”



In May al-Sadr called upon his supporters to operate “peacefully” in pursuit of the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and in August he declared a “suspension” of Mahdi Army activities for six months, although some breakaway factions reportedly continued to operate militarily.

In September 2007 the Sadrist bloc announced its formal withdrawal from the UIA’s legislative faction due to what it perceived as the government’s failure to provide adequate services or security. The rupture was partly attributable, in the opinion of many analysts, to the ongoing friction between the Sadrists and the SIIC for influence in southern Iraq.

*Leaders:* Muqtada al-SADR, Sheikh Salah al-UBAYDI, Nassar al-RUBAYI (Parliamentary Leader).

**Islamic Virtue Party** (*Hizb al-Fadilah*). *Al-Fadilah* is led by Muhammad al-Yacoubi, a former student of Muhammad Sadeq al-Sadr. The party is particularly strong in the Basra region of Iraq and advocates the establishment of a regional government in the Shiite south, as well as installation of Islamic religious law throughout Iraq. *Al-Fadilah* was part of the UIA during the January and December 2005 legislative elections and joined the national unity government in 2006. However, *al-Fadilah* withdrew from the UIA and the cabinet in March 2007 in a dispute over cabinet posts.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Muhammad al-YACOUBI, Sheikh Arsad al-NASIRI.

**Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan (DPAK).** The DPAK (or Kurdistan Alliance) was formed by the DPK, PUK, and other smaller groups in December 2004 to contest the January 2005 elections for the transitional assembly. Other minor parties in the DPAK include the **Kurdistan Communist Party** (KCP), formed in 1993 and led by Kamal SHAKIR; the **Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party** (KSDP), led by Muhammad Jahi MAHMUD; the **Kurdistan Toilers’ Party**, formed in 1985 by dissidents from the Kurdistan Socialist Party under the leadership of Qadir AZIZ; the **Chaldean Democratic Union**; the **Iraqi Turk-**

**men Brotherhood Party**; and the **Islamic Group of Kurdistan**.

The DPAK finished second in the January 2005 balloting with 75 seats and just over 25 percent of the vote, partly because of the widespread boycott of the election by Iraq’s Sunni community. The PUK, DPK, and most of the other smaller DPAK parties presented a joint Kurdish National Democratic List for the January 2005 elections for the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly.

PUK secretary general Jalal Talabani became president of Iraq after the January 2005 poll. In the December 2005 election for a permanent assembly, the DPAK again presented a joint ticket dominated by the DPK and PUK. Six other smaller parties joined the list, although the Kurdistan Islamic Union left to campaign on its own. Because more Sunni Arabs participated in the December elections, the DPAK’s seat total fell to 53 on a vote share of 21.7 percent. In addition to being an important component of the national government, the DPAK dominates the Kurdish Regional Government.

#### **Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK).**

The DPK evolved from a KDP offshoot, the Kurdish Democratic Party (Provisional Leadership), which was formed in late 1975 following the Algiers agreement between Iraq and Iran and the collateral termination of aid to the Kurds by Iran and the United States. When Mullah Mustafa al-Barzani withdrew from the Kurdish insurgency (see Political background, above), the KDP splintered, and the Provisional Leadership declared itself the legitimate successor. It refused to cooperate with the National Front and undertook guerrilla activity through the military wing of the old party, the *Pesh Mergas* (“Those Who Face Death”). The Provisional Leadership consistently opposed government efforts to resettle Kurds in southern Iraq and engaged in clashes with its rival, the PUK (see below), and the Iraqi army. The group began to call itself the DPK following the death of Mullah Barzani in March 1979, although differences between so-called “traditionalist” and “intellectual” factions continued.

In mid-July 1979 several hundred party members returned to Iraq from Iran, where they had resided since 1975. In the spring of 1980, however, there were reports that Iraqi Kurds (*Faili*), who had emigrated from Iran in the first half of the century, were being expelled at the rate of 2,000 a day. Collaterally, Massud Barzani, the son of Mullah Barzani and a leader of the DPK Iranian wing, voiced support for the Tehran regime because of collusion between “U.S. imperialism and its [*Baath*] lackeys . . . [in] relentlessly fighting against . . . our Shi’a brethren.” A subsequent party congress in August 1981 concluded with a denunciation of the “fascist regime” in Baghdad and its “imperialist war.”

In 1988 the DPK and the PUK served as the leading components of a new rebel coalition called the Kurdistan Front (KF) that also included the Kurdistan Socialist Party (KSP), the Kurdistan People’s Party (a small Marxist grouping), and the IMIK. The DPK controlled the largest rebel force during the 1991 Kurdish uprising following the Gulf war and was represented at the Baghdad peace talks by Nashirwan Barzani, a nephew of Massud Barzani and grandson of the KDP’s founder. During the second half of 1991, the distance between Massud Barzani, who urged immediate negotiations with the Hussein regime, and the PUK’s Jalal Talabani, who argued for continued military actions prior to talks, widened, thus hampering action by a coalition that had granted veto power to each of its members. (The revived KF by then included the Assyrian Democratic Party [a Kurdish-speaking Assyrian grouping], the Christian Union [another Assyrian formation], and the Kurdish Communist Party [KCP, an offshoot of the ICP, below].)

On May 19, 1992, the KF conducted an inconclusive election for executive leader, neither of the leading contenders (Massud Barzani and Jalal Talabani), with vote shares of 44.6 and 44.3 percent, respectively, being able to secure a majority; concurrently, a 105-seat Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly was selected (see Legislatures, below). The DPK and the PUK

decided to share power equally in the assembly as well as in a Kurdish “national government” located in Arbil. Moreover, immediately prior to an INC meeting in September 1992, the two groups agreed to place their guerrilla units under a single command. However, the accord was never implemented, and the DPK and PUK retained control of western and eastern “enclaves,” respectively. Ongoing tension, fueled by the reported deep animosity between Barzani and Talabani, eventually erupted into open fighting in early 1994, and as many as 2,000 guerrillas were reported killed over the ensuing months. Although an agreement was announced in late November for a cease-fire leading up to new elections in May 1995, PUK forces shortly thereafter seized control of Arbil and expelled DPK representatives from the assembly and cabinet. Yet another cease-fire in the spring of 1995 also proved ineffective, and heavy fighting was reported to have broken out again in July, one correspondent describing the factions as “risking national suicide” at the time when unity was most crucial to Kurdish ambitions. Despite intense U.S. mediation efforts, the DPK/PUK infighting continued throughout the rest of the year and the first half of 1996 as each side retained control of its own territory and no region-wide governance was attempted.

Prompting intense international criticism, the DPK invited the Iraqi military to join it in a “final” offensive against the PUK in late August 1996. (DPK leaders subsequently argued that they had taken that action out of fear that the PUK was planning its own offensive in concert with Iranian forces, which had recently crossed the border to challenge guerrillas from the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran.) Some 30,000 Iraqi soldiers moved into the north and quickly forced the PUK out of its stronghold in Salahuddin and toward the Iranian border.

On September 26, 1996, DPK leader Barzani announced the formation of a new coalition Kurdish government, led by Roz Nuri Shawez of the DPK and including representatives from the IMIK and the KCP. Barzani also declared that

the “temporary” military alliance with Baghdad had ended (Iraqi troops having already been withdrawn in the face of U.S. retaliatory measures in southern Iraq) and reiterated that he was not pursuing a separate political accord with the Iraqi regime. Subsequently, the PUK launched a counter-offensive and recaptured most of the territory it had recently lost. By late October the DPK and PUK were again reported to be discussing a cease-fire and the possible reactivation of regional authority.

The DPK withdrew from negotiations in March 1997, and KF cohesion was further corroded when new hostilities broke out the following month between the PUK and the IMIK. Kurdish affairs were additionally complicated in May when some 10,000 Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq to attack camps of the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK, see article on Turkey). Although Baghdad formally objected to the encroachment on its sovereignty, its protest was apparently not heartfelt enough to stimulate any other action. Despite UN and other international condemnation of its cross-border offensive, Turkey sent even more forces into Iraq in September, claiming, among other things, that it had been invited to do so by the DPK. Subsequently, the PUK launched what it called a “pre-emptive strike” against DPK strongholds in October; however, the cease-fire was subsequently reinstated (reportedly under heavy U.S. pressure), and the uneasy DPK/PUK territorial and military standoff continued into 1998. At that time, it was estimated that there were approximately 10,000 DPK guerrillas loyal to Barzani, described as a publicity-shy “tribal leader” wary of Western influence in the region. Despite having been branded a “traitor” by other opposition groups for his brief collaboration with the Iraqi regime in 1996, Barzani was invited to Washington to meet with Talabani in the fall of 1998, their subsequent peace agreement reflecting U.S. recognition that the former remained a significant influence in the Kurdish region and thereby a necessary component of any effective anti-Hussein opposition. Among other

things, the two Kurdish leaders agreed to share power in the region and to conduct new assembly elections in the second half of 1999. However, although “relative peace” transpired in the Kurdish-controlled regions, continued friction prevented new assembly balloting. Finally, in October 2002, the assembly reconvened amidst a “display of friendship” between Barzani and Talabani, seemingly prompted by the prospect of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the concurrent need for Kurdish unity in discussions regarding a “post-Saddam” Iraq. (It has long been widely accepted that Kurdish sentiment overwhelmingly favors the creation of an independent Kurdish state. However, bowing to opposition to that proposal from regional and Western capitals, the Kurdish groups in Iraq remain formally supportive of a federated Iraq with substantial regional autonomy.) As of late 2002, it was estimated that as many as 25,000 guerrillas were under the command of the DPK, which had governed northwestern Iraq on a de facto basis with an administration based in Arbil. (Most news reports currently reference this group as the Kurdish Democratic Party [KDP] in apparent recognition of its status as the genuine successor to the original KDP.)

*Leaders:* Massud BARZANI, Jawhar Namiq SALIM, Sami ABDURAHMAN, Hashyar ZUBARI.

**Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).** The PUK, which has received support from the Syrian *Baath*, resulted from the 1977 merger of Jalal Talabani’s Kurdish National Union (KNU) with the Socialist Movement of Kurdistan and the Association of Marxist-Leninists of Kurdistan. The KNU had been formed in mid-1975 when Talabani, a left-wing member of the original KDP, refused to accept Mullah Barzani’s claim that the Kurdish rebellion had come to an end. Supported by *Pesh Merga* units, Talabani subsequently attempted to unify guerrilla activity under his leadership, but the PUK suffered significant losses in June 1978 during skirmishes in northern Iraq with the DPK, which Talabani

accused of having links to both the shah of Iran and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

In January 1984 it was reported that an agreement had been concluded between the PUK and government forces that called for a cease-fire, assurances of greater Kurdish autonomy, and the formation of a 40,000-member Kurdish army to counter Iranian incursions into Iraqi Kurdistan. The agreement was never implemented, however, and Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency asserted in November 1986 that the PUK had entered into an alliance with the DPK to pursue a joint struggle against Baghdad.

PUK forces battled with supporters of the IMIK (below) in late 1993, PUK leaders calling the pro-Iranian fundamentalists "dangerous" and uncommitted to basic Kurdish aspirations. Two years later the PUK was locked in open conflict with the DPK, Talabani accusing arch rival Barzani, among other things, of "hoarding" revenue generated by trade across the Turkish border. Like the DPK, the PUK was estimated to control about 15,000–25,000 fighters, leading observers to the conclusion that a military resolution of their dispute seemed unlikely. Meanwhile, Talabani, described, in contrast to Barzani, as a "garrulous jet-setter," was considered to have the stronger support among Western powers. The PUK, in which a core of urban intellectuals and leftists could still be identified, also exhibited policy differences with the DPK. The PUK's antitribal stance, for example, attracted support from peasant farmers embroiled in land disputes with long-standing tribal leaders. Following attacks by DPK/Iraqi forces in August and September 1996, the PUK was reported to have received military support from Iran, facilitating its subsequent counteroffensive. In September 1998 Talabani reconciled with Barzani during a meeting in Washington in the interest of presenting a united front against the Iraqi regime (see DPK, above, for additional information). Subsequently, the PUK exercised de facto authority in the eastern half of northern Iraq, designating the city of Sulaimani as its regional "capital," until the formation of the Kur-

dish Regional Government following the overthrow of the Hussein national government.

*Leaders:* Jalal TALABANI (President of the Republic and Leader of the Party), Barham SALIH, Ahmad BAMARMI.

**Iraqi National List (INL).** Formerly known as the Iraqi List, the INL was formed by Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi in December 2004 in advance of the 2005 legislative balloting. The INL includes members of several parties and groups, including Allawi's INA, as well as some tribal leaders. Although mostly Shiite, the group formally presents itself as secular and nonsectarian. It campaigned on a platform of promoting national unity by bridging ethnic and religious differences, but it polled only 13.8 percent of the vote in the January 2005 poll, winning 40 seats in the 275-seat TNA. The INL was therefore unable to form a government, and Allawi was succeeded as prime minister by Ibrahim al-Jaafari of the United Iraqi Alliance.

In preparation for the December 2005 poll for a permanent National Assembly, the INL expanded to include the Iraqi Communist Party and former president Ghazi al-Yawar's *Iraqiyun* List. Nevertheless, it once again polled poorly; its representation fell to 25 seats with just 8 percent of the vote. The group may have suffered from the formation of Sunni-based lists that were running for the first time. Despite the poor showing, the INL retained representation in the subsequent national unity government.

In August 2007 the INL leaders directed INL ministers to resign from the cabinet to protest the perceived lack of reform efforts on the part of Prime Minister al-Maliki, with Allawi presenting himself as a candidate to return to the premiership. However, not all of the INL cabinet members followed the withdrawal directive.

*Leader:* Ayad ALLAWI (Former Interim Prime Minister).

**Iraqi National Accord (INA).** A predominantly Sunni grouping formed with support from Saudi Arabia following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the INA was the focus of increasing attention in the mid-1990s in light of the disarray

within the INC. The U.S. intelligence community in particular reportedly concluded that the INA represented one of the “most promising” of the Iraqi opposition formations, in part because its members included a number of defectors from the Iraqi military. The INA opened an office in Amman, Jordan, in February 1996 after King Hussein offered to support anti-Saddam Hussein efforts. An INA office also operated in Kurdish-controlled territory in northern Iraq until operations there were quashed by Iraqi troops in August–September 1996.

The INA was also one of the seven organizations deemed eligible by Washington in early 1999 to share in \$97 million of U.S. aid designed to support antiregime activity. Subsequent reports regularly referenced the INA, which claimed clandestine support within the Iraqi military, as a member of the revamped INC. Although continuing to cooperate (from offices in London and Jordan) with the INC in attempting to establish a unified opposition front in 2002, the INA appeared to be making certain that it was identified as a separate grouping. Meanwhile, former INA members under the leadership of Tawfiq al-YASIRI and other former Iraqi military officers formed an Iraqi National Coalition to participate in opposition coordination efforts.

*Leaders:* Dirgham KADHIM, Ayad ALLAWI (Secretary General).

**Iraqiyun List.** Established in December 2004 by Interim President Ghazi Ajil al-Yawar, the *Iraqiyun* List comprised independents and members of small parties from across the political, ethnic, and religious spectrum. It supported a federal system for Iraq.

After the *Iraqiyun* List secured five seats in the TNA in January 2005, al-Yawar was named one of Iraq’s two vice presidents. The *Iraqiyun* List joined the Iraqi National List for the December 2005 election for the permanent National Assembly.

*Leader:* Ghazi Ajil al-YAWAR (Former Vice President of the Republic).

**Iraqi Communist Party—ICP** (*al-Hizb al-Shuyui al-Iraqi*). Founded in 1934, the Communist Party was legalized upon its entrance into the National Front in 1973. However, in May 1978 the government executed 21 communists for engaging in political activities within the armed forces (a right reserved exclusively to *Baath* members), and by March 1979 several hundred ICP members had either fled the country or relocated in Kurdish areas. With the party having withdrawn from the National Front, (then) RCC Vice Chair Saddam Hussein confirmed in April that communists were in fact being purged.

In 1993 an ICP congress rejected a proposal that it transform itself into a more centrist grouping and instead reaffirmed its Marxist identity. The congress also elected Hamid Majid Musa as the new ICP secretary general.

The ICP was not included on the list of opposition groups approved by Washington to receive U.S. assistance in early 1999, and it did not participate in the 2002 meetings led by the INC, SCIRI, and other groups in the hope of creating a unified opposition front. However, Muza was appointed a member of the Governing Council following the fall of Saddam Hussein, and the ICP campaigned for the January 2005 legislative election under a **People’s Union** list that also included non-ICP candidates. In the December 2005 poll, the ICP joined the Iraqi National List.

*Leader:* Hamid Majid MUZA.

**Iraqi Accord Front (IAF).** The IAF is a Sunni coalition that won 44 seats in the December 2005 assembly poll. The biggest party in the IAF is the IIP, but the front also includes the hard-line **General Council for the People of Iraq** led by Adnan al-DULAIMI, and the National Dialogue Council, led by Sheikh Khalaf al-ILYAN. The IAF was the most successful list in the Sunni Arab provinces in the assembly election, winning 44 seats. It helped formulate the early 2006 national reconciliation and joined the subsequent unity government. However, in early August 2007 the IAF announced that its ministers were suspending their cabinet

participation to protest the al-Maliki administration's failure to disband Shiite militias or to release Sunnis who had been "arbitrarily arrested" in the 2006–2007 crackdown on sectarian violence. The IAF also demanded a greater role for Sunnis in security policies overall.

*Leaders:* Muhsin Abd al-HAMID, Tariq al-HASHIMI (Vice President of the Republic).

**Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP).** The IIP, formed in the 1950s, was suppressed during the reign of Saddam Hussein, and members of the party conducted an armed struggle against the regime. The IIP resurfaced after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and the party's secretary general, Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, was given a seat on the IGC. Leaders of the IIP called on followers to boycott the January 2005 legislative elections, but the party participated in the December 2005 poll as the main component of the IAF. (The IIP had caused some controversy among Sunni Arabs because of its support for the new constitution.)

*Leaders:* Tariq al-HASHIMI (Vice President of the Republic), Ammar WAJIH.

**Iraqi National Dialogue Front.** This front, which contested the December 2005 legislative elections, is predominantly a Sunni political grouping, although its candidates have included representatives from other ethnic and sectarian groups. It was formed to protest the IIP's acceptance of the draft constitution, which included provisions for regional authorities. Its founder, Saleh al-Mutlaq, was the primary Sunni Arab negotiator on the constitutional drafting committee. The front secured just over 4 percent of the vote in the December 2005 poll, winning 11 seats.

*Leader:* Saleh al-MUTLAQ.

**Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU).** Led by Salah al-Din Baha al-DIN, the KIU was part of the Kurdish Alliance in the January 2005 elections. The KIU dropped out of the Kurdish Alliance and ran on its own in the December 2005 poll, winning five seats and 1.3 percent of the vote.

**Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF).** A coalition of 26 small Turkmen parties and groups formed in 1995, the ITF advocates greater autonomy for the Turkmen ethnic group and official recognition as a minority. The ITF secured three seats in the January 2005 TNA elections, but its representation dropped to one seat after the December 2005 poll.

*Leader:* Faruk Abdullah Abd al-RAHMAN.

Other parties that secured representation in the National Assembly in the December 2005 poll include the *Mithal al-Alusi List for the Iraqi Nation*; the **Assyrian Democratic Movement** (*al-Rafidain*); the **Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc**; *al-Risaliyun*, described as closely allied with Muqtada al-Sadr; and the **Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress**.

### *Other Parties and Groups*

**Iraqi National Congress (INC).** The INC was launched by a number of largely Kurdish exile groups in Vienna, Austria, in June 1992. More than 70 delegates from 33 opposition groups attended the Congress's first conference within Iraq in the northern city of Shaqlawah in September. During a second such conference in Salahuddin in October, 170 representatives from virtually all the anti-regime formations elected a 3-member presidential council and a 26-member executive council. The participants also committed themselves to the nonviolent overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a federal system that would permit a substantial degree of ethnic autonomy without partition of the country. Delegates to a third conference in 1993 established a constitutional council and approved diplomatic initiatives intended to secure broader international support for their efforts. At that time, many groups (including the DPK, PUK, SCIRI, IMIK, and INA) were presenting themselves as components of the INC. However, infighting subsequently disrupted INC cohesion, and by 1996 the group was described as in complete disarray (see the 2005–2006 *Handbook* for details).

In early 1999 Washington designated the INC as one of the groups eligible to receive U.S. aid in the

effort to topple the Iraqi regime. Consequently, in an apparent effort to regroup, the INC held its first general meeting in nearly three years in London in April 1999. The session appointed an “interim collective leadership” to oversee the revitalization effort, although the seat reserved for the SCIRI was not filled.

The United States briefly halted aid to the INC in early 2002 to protest perceived insufficient accounting of the estimated \$18 million previously allocated to the INC. However, later in the year the INC’s international profile again increased as speculation grew over the role of long-standing Iraqi opposition groups following the potential overthrow of Saddam Hussein. A few observers suggested that INC leader Ahmad Chalabi might serve an important role in a new government. At the same time, however, it appeared that many of the INC’s major founding components no longer considered themselves members of the INC. The SCIRI, for example, clearly was maintaining its distance from the INC, and the PUK, DPK, and INA were also regularly being referenced as operating outside of the INC umbrella.

Chalabi and other INC members entered Iraq during the U.S./UK-led invasion in early 2003. Despite losing the support of the United States for alleged improper financial dealings, Chalabi became deputy prime minister in the Transitional National Government. Chalabi’s INC was briefly part of the United Iraqi Alliance but campaigned in the December 2005 elections on its own. The group failed to win a single assembly seat.

*Leaders:* Ahmad CHALABI (Former Deputy Prime Minister), Gen. Najib al-SALHI.

#### **Movement for Constitutional Monarchy.**

Led by a claimant to the Hashemite throne, which was abolished in 1958, this London-based movement was one of the groups declared eligible for special U.S. aid in early 1999. In 2002 it was described as a component of the INC. In the December 2005 poll the movement ran with Ahmad Chalabi’s INC, but the list failed to win any seats.

*Leaders:* Sharif Ali ibn HUSSEIN, Salah al-SHAYKHLY.

**Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK).** The Sunni Muslim IMIK, also referenced as the Kurdistan Islamic Movement (KIM), long served as the voice of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in northern Iraq. As a member of the Kurdistan Front, the IMIK reportedly won 4 percent of the vote in the May 1992 balloting for the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly; however, it subsequently rejected an offer from the DPK and the PUK to fill five seats in the new legislative body. In December 1993 intense fighting broke out between supporters of the IMIK and the PUK, followed by a reported “peace agreement” brokered by representatives of SCIRI in February 1994. Viewed as having Iranian support, the IMIK was subsequently reported to have agreed to participate in the new Kurdish government envisioned by the November 1994 DPK/PUK accord. However, when that plan collapsed, the movement, by then apparently controlling some territory near the Iranian border in its own right, was described as aligned with the DPK in ongoing confrontation with the PUK.

A serious split within the IMIK led to the creation of the more radical *Ansar al-Islam* (see below). Although the IMIK had originally been on the list of groups eligible for U.S. aid under the Iraq Liberation Act, assistance was reportedly denied following the terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September 2001, apparently out of concern in Washington over funding certain Islamist groupings.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Othman Abd al-AZIZ, Ahmad Kakar MAHMOUD, Sheikh Sadiq Abd al-AZIZ.

**Ansar al-Islam** (Supporters of Islam). A Kurdish extremist grouping launched initially as the *Jund al-Islam* (Army of Islam) by IMIK defectors and other fundamentalist militants in mid-2001, *Ansar al-Islam* was subsequently blamed for a number of violent episodes in northern Iraq. One of the group’s adversaries—the PUK—alleged that *Ansar al-Islam*, which controlled several villages with a guerrilla force estimated at 400–1,000 fighters, was connected with the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden.

*Leaders:* Mullah Najm al-Din FARAJ (a.k.a. Mullah KREKAR), Ahson Ali Abd al-AZIZ, Abdullah al-SHAFII.

**Kurdistan Islamic Group (KIG).** Formed in 2001 by Muhammad Ali Bapir, the KIG, a conservative Sunni grouping, is comprised mainly of former members of the IMIK. The group was reportedly linked to *Ansar al-Islam* (an allegation denied by Bapir), and leaders were arrested by U.S. forces in 2003. In the January 2005 elections, the KIG secured two seats in the TNA.

*Leader:* Muhammad Ali BAPIR.

**Al-Qaeda in Iraq.** This group is an outgrowth of the *Tawhid* insurgent/terrorist organization formed, under the leadership of Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, to combat U.S.-led forces following the overthrow of the Hussein regime in 2003. *Tawhid's* initial relationship to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida was unclear, but in late October 2004 al-Zarqawi pledged his allegiance to bin Laden, who in turn endorsed al-Zarqawi as leader of al-Qaida in Iraq. Al-Zarqawi claimed responsibility for the antigovernment attacks in Jordan in late 2005 in what was perceived as an attempt to expand his group's influence beyond Iraq. Concurrently, references to the group as "al-Qaida in Mesopotamia" increased.

The U.S. government consistently referred to al-Qaida in Iraq as comprising "non-Iraqi terrorists," although most independent analysts concluded that Sunni Iraqi insurgents also participated in the activities of the group, which was reportedly involved in many attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces. In addition, al-Zarqawi's followers targeted Shiite Iraqi civilians perceived to be cooperating with the United States or the Iraqi government, which apparently cost al-Qaida in Iraq much support among those sectors in the population that might otherwise have sympathized with its goals.

Al-Zarqawi was killed during a U.S. airstrike in June 2006, and he was reportedly later succeeded as leader of al-Qaida by Sheikh Abu Hamza al-MUHAJIR, an Egyptian referred to by U.S. officials under a different pseudonym—Abu Ayyub al-Masri. Al-Muhajir subsequently report-

edly claimed the allegiance of 12,000 fighters, although many observers considered that figure to be inflated.

In 2007 the United States reportedly convinced a number of Sunni tribal leaders (who may have previously supported the Sunni insurgency) to join with U.S. and Iraqi forces in a sustained campaign against al-Qaida in Iraq. In the fall, bin Laden reportedly urged al-Qaida supporters in Iraq to avoid fueling sectarian violence, although the extent of his authority in that matter appeared questionable. Meanwhile, al-Qaida in Iraq continued to operate as part of an umbrella organization of Sunni insurgent groups known as the Islamic State of Iraq.

**Anbar Salvation Council.** Also known as "Anbar Awakening," this group was formed in 2006 (apparently with the support of the al-Maliki administration) to represent progovernment Sunnis in Anbar Province. Components of the council in 2007 reportedly cooperated with U.S. and Iraqi forces in the campaign against al-Qaida fighters. One leader of the council, Sheikh Abd al-SATTAR Abu Reesha, was killed by a roadside bomb in September 2007.

## Legislature

The former bicameral parliament ceased to exist with the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958; legislative functions were subsequently assumed by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). On the basis of a bill approved by the RCC in March 1980, a unicameral National Assembly was established to which elections were first held in June, with subsequent balloting in October 1984, April 1989, March 1996, and March 2000.

Elections were also held in the "autonomous" northern region in September 1980, August 1986, and September 1989 to a 50-member Kurdish Legislative Council, which Baghdad continued to recognize despite balloting for a more inclusive Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly in May 1992.

Following the ouster of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the interim constitution adopted in 2004



## Cabinet

As of November 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Nuri al-Maliki (Shiite, UIA)
Deputy Prime Ministers	Barham Salih (Kurd, DPAK) Salam al-Zaubai (Sunni, IAF)

### *Ministers*

Agriculture	Ali al-Bahadili (ind.)
Communications	Mohamed Tawfiz (shiite, INL)
Culture	Assad Kamal al-Hashimi (Kurd, IAF)
Defense	Gen. Abd al-Qader Jassim al-Obeidi (Sunni, ind.)
Education	Khudayer al-Khuzai (Shiite)
Electricity	Karim Waheed (Shiite)
Environment	Narmin Uthman (Kurd, DPAK) [f]
Finance	Bayan Jabr (Shiite, SIIC)
Foreign Affairs	Hushyar Zubari (Kurd, DPAK)
Health	Salih Mahdi al-Hasnawi (ind.)
Higher Education	Abd Diyab al-Ujayli (Sunni, IAF)
Housing	Bayan Daza Ei (Kurd, DPAK)
Human Rights	Wijdan Mikaeil (Christian, INL) [f]
Industry and Minerals	Fawzi al-Hariri (Kurd, DPAK)
Interior	Jawad Kadem al-Bolani (Shiite, UIA)
Justice	Vacant
Labor and Social Affairs	Mahmoud Mohammed Jawad al-Radhi (Shiite)
Migration and Displacement	Abdul-Samad Rahman Sultan (Shiite)
Municipalities and Public Works	Riyad Gharib (Shiite)
National Security	Sherwan al-Waili (Shiite)
Oil	Hussein al-Shahristani (Shiite)
Planning	Ali Baban (Sunni, formerly IAF)
Science and Technology	Raed Fahmi Jahid (Sunni, INL)
Trade	Abed Falah al-Sudani (Shiite)
Transportation	Vacant
Water Resources	Abd al-Latif Rashid (Kurd, DPAK)
Youth and Sport	Jassim Mohammed Jafar (Shiite)

### *Ministers of State*

Civil Society Affairs	Adel al-Assadi (Shiite)
Foreign Affairs	Rafaa al-Esawi (Sunni, IAF)
National Assembly Affairs	Safa al-Safi
National Dialogue	Akram al-Hakim (Shiite)
Provincial Affairs	Khulud Sami Azarah al-Majun [f]
Tourism and Antiquities	Zuhayr Muhammad Tutashurbah
Without Portfolio	Ali Mohammed Ahmed (Kurd) Mohammed Abbas Auraibi (Shiite, INL) Hassan Rhadi Khazim (Shiite)
Women's Affairs	Faten Abd al-Rahman (Sunni, IAF) [f]

[f] = female

**Note:** The Iraqi Accord Front (IAF) announced in early August 2007 that its ministers were suspending their participation in the cabinet. In early November the prime minister's office announced that the IAF ministers would be replaced soon if they did not resume their responsibilities. In addition, the Iraqi National List (INL) in August announced that its ministers would resign from the cabinet, although several INL ministers appeared to disregard directive from party leaders.

provided for a popularly elected 275-member Transitional National Assembly to serve until a permanent constitution was adopted permitting eventual election of a new assembly. The new constitution, approved by national referendum on October 15, 2005, provided for a unicameral **National Assembly** (also referenced as the Council of Representatives [*Majlis al-Nuwwab*]). The assembly comprises 275 members elected by proportional representation within the 18 provinces, whose seat distribution (based on population) ranges from 5 to 59. Twenty-five percent of the seats are reserved for women. The seat distribution following the first election on December 15, 2005, was as follows: the United Iraqi Alliance, 128 seats (the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, 29; supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr, 29; Islamic Call, 26; the Islamic Virtue Party, 16; and independents included on the alliance's list, 28); the Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan, 53; the Iraqi Accord Front, 44; the Iraqi National List, 25; the Iraqi National Dialogue Front, 11; the Kurdistan Islamic Union, 5; the Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc, 3; *al-Risaliyun*, 2; *Mithal al-Alusi* List for the Iraqi Nation, 1; Iraqi Turkmen Front, 1; the Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress, 1; and the Assyrian Democratic Movement, 1.

*Speaker:* Mahmoud al-MASHADANI.

**Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly.** Created after the collapse of a new autonomy agreement with the Iraqi government in late 1991, the unicameral Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly, as then constituted, contained 105 seats, 5 of which were reserved for Christian Assyrians. A minimum vote share of 7 percent was necessary for non-Assyrian representation. Following the balloting of May 19, 1992, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) agreed to fill 50 seats each; 4 were awarded to the Assyrian Democratic Party and 1 to the (Assyrian) Christian Union. However, renewed Kurdish infighting subsequently precluded legislative activity. On October 4, 2002, the assembly reconvened for the first time in eight years as part of a reconciliation initiative launched in anticipation of possible

U.S. military action against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.

Following the ouster of Hussein in 2003, the interim national constitution adopted in 2004 provided for new elections for a 111-member Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly. In balloting on January 30, 2005, the Kurdistan National Democratic List secured 104 seats; the Kurdistan Islamic Group, 6; and the Kurdistan Toilers' Party, 1.

*Speaker:* Adnan MUFTI.

## Communications

### *Press*

Following the overthrow of the Hussein regime in 2003, the CPA and the interim and transitional Iraqi governments promoted the establishment of a free press. Several hundred small, often fleeting, newspapers were subsequently launched, many of them serving as outlets for Iraqi political parties. However, more than 100 journalists have been killed since 2003, and others have been kidnapped, primarily by insurgents, who have particularly targeted local journalists working for foreign news sources. Intensified sectarian conflict in 2006–2007 also contributed to the imposition of press restrictions by the Maliki administration, especially in regard to what the government perceived as “inflammatory” reporting.

### *News Agencies*

The domestic facility is the Iraqi News Agency (*Wikalat al-Anba al-Iraqiyah*); several major foreign bureaus maintain offices in Baghdad.

### *Broadcasting*

The public broadcaster is the Iraqi Media Network, which operates the Radio of the Republic of Iraq and the al-Iraqiyah television station. As of 2005 there were approximately 1.4 Internet users and about 22 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Samir Shakir Mahmood  
SUMAIDAIE

**U.S. Ambassador to Iraq:** Ryan C. CROCKER

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Hamid al-BAYATI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, CAEU, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO

# ISRAEL

## STATE OF ISRAEL

*Medinat Yisrael* (Hebrew)

*Dawlat Israil* (Arabic)

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**Note: Information on Palestinian affairs, formerly included in this article under Occupied and Previously Occupied Territories, is now covered in the new article at the end of the Governments section called the Palestinian Authority/Palestinian Liberation Organization.**

### The Country

The irregularly shaped area constituting the State of Israel is not completely defined by agreed boundaries, its territorial jurisdiction being determined in part by military armistice agreements entered into at the conclusion of Israel's war of independence in 1948–1949. The territory under de facto Israeli control increased substantially as a result of military occupation of Arab territories in the Sinai Peninsula (since returned to Egypt), the Gaza Strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River (including the Old City of Jerusalem), and the Golan Heights following the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. (The Gaza Strip is now under Palestinian control, as are sections of the West Bank.) Those currently holding Israeli citizenship encompass a heterogeneous population that is approximately 80 percent Jewish but includes important Arab Christian, Muslim, and Druze minorities. As of 2007, women constituted 47 percent of the paid workforce, concentrated in agriculture, teaching, administration, and health care.

Following independence, Israel emerged as a technologically progressive, highly literate, and largely urbanized nation in the process of rapid development based on scientific exploitation of its agricultural and industrial potentialities. Agri-

culture has diminished in importance but remains a significant economic sector, its most important products being citrus fruits, field crops, vegetables, and export-oriented nursery items. The industrial sector includes among its major components



high-tech manufactures, cut diamonds, textiles, processed foods, chemicals, and military equipment. U.S. financial assistance, tourism, and direct aid from Jews in the United States and elsewhere are also of major economic importance.

Defense requirements generated a highly adverse balance of trade and a rate of inflation that escalated to more than 400 percent prior to the imposition of austerity measures in mid-1985, which yielded a dramatic reduction in inflation to less than 16 percent in 1988. Israel subsequently experienced one of the highest GDP growth rates in the world in the first half of the 1990s, while unemployment, which had peaked at more than 11 percent in 1992, dropped to 6 percent by the end of 1996. The Netanyahu government (installed in 1996) pursued pro-business policies (most notably extensive privatization of state-run enterprises) and a commitment to budget austerity. Nevertheless, growth slowed significantly in subsequent years, while unemployment rose to 8.6 percent, and the shekel depreciated sharply in 1998, in part due to turmoil in global financial markets. Israel's economic downturn was also attributed, to a certain degree, to a lack of progress in the Middle East peace process.

The economy rebounded dramatically in 2000, with GDP growth of 7.4 percent being achieved and inflation dropping to nearly zero. However, conditions subsequently reversed just as sharply in the wake of renewed government/Palestinian violence, the "burst of the technology bubble," and the collateral decline in the global economy. Deep recession was marked by declining GDP of 0.9 percent in 2001 and 1 percent in 2002. In the face of growing budget deficits, the administration proposed emergency spending cuts in 2002, prompting conflict within the government coalition.

Modest growth (1.3 percent) resumed in 2003, and genuine recovery appeared to be at hand when GDP rose by more than 4 percent in 2004 and 5.2 percent in 2005. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised the Sharon government for reforming the pension system and accelerating privatization, although such measures prompted several large-scale strikes on the part of labor groups.

In addition, unemployment remained unacceptably high, even though it dropped slightly from 10.4 percent in 2004 to 9.1 percent in 2005. In 2006 the IMF noted that recent macroeconomic policies and structural reforms had opened up Israel's economy, increased its competitiveness, and attracted foreign investment. Growth of approximately 5.0 percent was maintained in 2006, with a rate of 4.5 being forecast for 2007. In addition, unemployment declined to 7.5 percent in 2007, while inflation remained below 2.0 percent for the year.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Israel's modern history dates from the end of the 19th century with the rise of the world Zionist movement and establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements in territory that was then part of the Ottoman Empire. In the Balfour Declaration of 1917 the British government expressed support for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, provided that the rights of "existing non-Jewish communities" were not prejudiced. With the abrogation of Turkish rule at the end of World War I, the area was assigned to Great Britain under a League of Nations Mandate that incorporated provisions of the Balfour Declaration. British rule continued until May 1948, despite increasing unrest on the part of local Arabs during the 1920s and 1930s and Jewish elements during and after World War II. In 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for the division of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states and the internationalization of Jerusalem and its environs, but the controversial measure could not be implemented because of Arab opposition. Nonetheless, Israel declared its independence coincident with British withdrawal on May 14, 1948. Although immediately attacked by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, the new state was able to maintain itself in the field, and the armistice agreements concluded under UN auspices in 1949 gave it control over nearly one-third more territory than had been

**Political Status:** Independent republic established May 14, 1948; under multiparty parliamentary regime.

**Land Area:** 8,463 sq. mi. (21,920 sq. km.), including inland water (172 sq. mi., 445 sq. km.).

**Population:** 5,548,523 (1995C); 7,057,000 (2006E). Area and population figures include East Jerusalem (27 sq. mi., 70 sq. km., prior to subsequent unilateral expansion), which Israel occupied in 1967 and formally annexed in 1980 in an action not recognized by the United Nations or the United States (which maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv). Also included is a 444-square-mile (1,150 sq. km.) sector of the Golan Heights to which Israeli forces withdrew under a 1974 disengagement agreement with Syria and which was placed under Israeli law in December 1981. The figures do not include the Gaza Strip (most of which was turned over to Palestinian control in May 1994) and the West Bank (from portions of which Israel began withdrawing in May 1994), which encompassed an area of about 2,320 square miles (6,020 sq. km.) and a combined population of approximately 3,449,000 in 2002.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** JERUSALEM (709,000, including East Jerusalem), Tel Aviv/Jaffa (375,000), Haifa (269,000), Rishon LeZiyyon (220,000), Ashdod (200,000).

**Official Languages:** Hebrew, Arabic. English, which was an official language under the British Mandate from the League of Nations taught in the secondary schools and is widely spoken.

**Monetary Unit:** New Shekel (market rate November 2, 2007: 3.97 shekels = \$1US).

**President:** Shimon PERES (*Kadima*); elected by the *Knesset* in second-round balloting on June 13, 2007, and inaugurated for a seven-year term on July 15, succeeding Moshe KATSAV (*Likud*). (*Knesset* Speaker Dalia ITZIK [*Kadima*] had been serving in an acting presidential capacity since January 25, 2007. See Political background, below, for details.)

**Prime Minister:** Ehud OLMERT (*Kadima*); became acting prime minister, as prescribed by law because of his position as deputy prime minister, on January 4, 2006, when Prime Minister Ariel SHARON (elected as a member of *Likud* but subsequently a founding member of *Kadima*) underwent surgery (from which he has never regained consciousness); designated by the president on April 6, 2006, to form a new government following the legislative elections of March 28; named interim prime minister (effective April 14, 2006) by the cabinet when the cabinet on April 11 declared Sharon permanently incapacitated; sworn in as prime minister on May 4, 2006, to head a new coalition government.

assigned to it under the original UN resolution. A second major military encounter between Israel and Egypt in 1956 resulted in Israeli conquest of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, from which Israel subsequently withdrew under U.S. and UN pressure. In two further Arab-Israeli conflicts, Israel seized territories from Jordan (1967) and from Egypt and Syria (1967 and 1973). Cease-fire disengagements resulted, however, in partial Israeli withdrawal from territory in the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai. Withdrawal from the remaining Sinai territory, except for Taba (see Occupied and Previously Occupied Territories, below), was completed in April 1982 under a peace treaty with Egypt concluded on March 26, 1979. The Israeli sector of the Golan Heights, on the other

hand, was placed under Israeli law on December 14, 1981.

The internal governmental structure of modern Israel emerged from institutions established by the British administration and the Jewish community during the Mandate. For three decades after independence, a series of multiparty coalitions built around the moderate socialist Israel Workers' Party (Mapai)—enlarged in 1968 to become the Israel Labor Party—governed with relatively little change in policy and turnover in personnel. Save for a brief period in 1953–1955, David BEN-GURION was the dominant political figure until his retirement in 1963. He was succeeded by Levi ESHKOL (until his death in 1969), Golda MEIR (until her retirement in 1974), and Yitzhak

RABIN, the first native-born Israeli to become prime minister.

Prime Minister Rabin tendered his resignation in December 1976, following his government's defeat on a parliamentary nonconfidence motion, but he remained in office in a caretaker capacity pending a general election. On April 8, 1977, prior to balloting scheduled for May 17, Rabin was forced to resign his party post in the wake of revelations that he and his wife had violated Israeli law concerning overseas bank deposits. His successor as party leader and acting prime minister, Shimon PERES, proved unable to reverse mounting popular dissatisfaction with a deteriorating economy and evidence of official malfeasance. In a stunning electoral upset, a new reform party, the Democratic Movement for Change, captured a significant proportion of Labor's support, and the opposition *Likud* party, having obtained a sizable legislative plurality, formed the nucleus of a coalition government under Menachem BEGIN on June 19.

As the result of a fiscal dispute that provoked the resignation of its finance minister, the Begin government was deprived of a committed legislative majority on January 11, 1981, and the *Knesset* approved a bill calling for an election on June 30. Despite predictions of an opposition victory, the *Likud* front emerged with a one-seat advantage, and Begin succeeded in forming a new governing coalition on August 4.

Prime Minister Begin's startling announcement on August 28, 1983, of his intention to resign both his governmental and party positions for "personal reasons" (largely the death of his wife) was believed by many observers also to have been influenced by severe Israeli losses from the 1982 war in Lebanon (see Foreign relations, below). The Central Committee of *Likud*'s core party, *Herut*, thereupon elected Yitzhak SHAMIR as its new leader on September 1, and the constituent parties of the ruling coalition agreed to support Shamir, who, after failing in an effort to form a national unity government, was sworn in as prime minister on October 10.

Amid increasing criticism of the Shamir administration, particularly in its handling of eco-

nomics affairs, five *Likud* coalition deputies voted with the opposition on March 22, 1984, in calling for legislative dissolution and the holding of a general election. At the balloting on July 23, Labor marginally outpolled *Likud*, securing 44 seats to *Likud*'s 41. Extensive interparty discussion followed, yielding agreement on August 31 on the formation of a national unity coalition on the basis of a rotating premierships. Thus, Labor's Peres was approved as the new prime minister on September 13 with the understanding that he would exchange positions with Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Shamir midway through a full parliamentary term of four years. On October 20, 1986, Shamir, in turn, became prime minister, with Peres assuming Shamir's former posts.

The election of November 1, 1988, conducted in the midst of a major Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) that had erupted in the occupied territories 11 months earlier, yielded an even closer balance between the leading parties, with *Likud* winning 40 *Knesset* seats and Labor 39. Conceivably, *Likud* could have assembled a working majority in alliance with a number of right-wing religious parties. However, most of the latter refused to participate in an administration that did not commit itself to legislation excluding from provisions of the law of return (hence from automatic citizenship) those converted to Judaism under Reform or Conservative (as opposed to Orthodox) auspices. As a result, Shamir concluded a new agreement with the Labor leadership, whereby he would continue as prime minister, with Peres assuming the finance portfolio in a government installed on December 22.

By early 1990 the coalition was under extreme stress because of divergent views on the terms of peace talks with the Palestinians. The principal differences turned on *Likud*'s insistence that no Arabs from East Jerusalem participate in the talks or in future elections and that Israel should be accorded a right of withdrawal should the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) become even remotely involved. There were also deep fissures within *Likud* itself, caused primarily by a group of hardliners, including Industry and Commerce Minister Ariel SHARON, who were opposed to a Palestinian

franchise. Following an angry exchange with Shamir in the *Knesset* on February 12, Sharon resigned from the cabinet. Ten days later the Labor Party issued an ultimatum to the prime minister to accept its peace formula (which called for at least one delegate each from Palestinian deportees and those maintaining partial residence in East Jerusalem) or face dissolution of the government. On March 12 Shamir dismissed Peres from the cabinet, prompting Labor's other ministers to resign. Three days later, in the wake of a successful non-confidence motion (the first in Israeli parliamentary history), Shamir assumed the leadership of a caretaker administration. A lengthy period of intense negotiation followed, with Shamir on June 11 forming a *Likud*-dominated right-wing government whose two-seat majority turned on the support of dissidents from Labor and *Agudat Yisrael*, a periodic Labor ally. In November 1990 *Agudat Yisrael* formally joined the ruling coalition, increasing the government's *Knesset* majority to six.

In February 1992 former prime minister Rabin gained control of the opposition Labor Party from longtime rival Peres, who had been unable since 1977 to lead Labor to the formation of a government in its own right. Four months later, in what was termed more of a *Likud* debacle than a Labor triumph, Labor won a plurality of 44 *Knesset* seats. It subsequently formed a new administration on July 12 in coalition with the recently organized *Meretz* (itself a coalition of three left-of-center parties) and the ultra-orthodox Sephardi Torah Guardians (*Shas*).

On March 24, 1993, Ezer WEIZMAN, a former fighter pilot and *Likud* hard-liner who had subsequently become a Labor Party leader and an outspoken advocate of peace with the Arabs, was elected by the *Knesset* as Israel's seventh president. The following day former deputy foreign minister Benjamin NETANYAHU, who called for "a much tougher line" in addressing the Palestinian issue, was elected in a party contest to succeed Shamir as *Likud* leader. The Labor/*Likud* split on the Palestinian question came into even sharper focus in September when Rabin signed the historic agreement with the PLO that launched the Palestinian

self-rule process. (See the article on the Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization for details.)

In mid-July 1994 two MPs from *Yiud*, a break-away faction of the ultranationalist *Tzomet*, agreed to enter the Labor government; however, they were prevented from doing so until late December because of a High Court ruling that their action would contravene antidefection legislation. Their support gave the Labor coalition 58 of 120 *Knesset* seats. However, on February 3, 1995, the six *Knesset* representatives of *Shas*, which had withdrawn from the ruling coalition in March 1994, announced that they were formally returning to opposition because of worsening security and the status of Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

Attention subsequently focused on negotiations over the second accord of the Palestinian autonomy process, which was signed on September 28, 1995, and endorsed (in a non-mandatory vote) by the *Knesset* by 61–59 on October 6. However, domestic and regional political affairs were soon thrown into turmoil when Rabin was assassinated on November 4 by a right-wing Israeli opposed to the peace process. (Rabin's assailant, Yigul AMIR, was sentenced to life imprisonment in March 1996.) Foreign Minister Peres assumed the position of acting prime minister upon Rabin's death and was formally nominated by the Labor Party on November 13 to proceed with forming his own cabinet. The leaders of Labor, *Meretz*, and *Yiud* signed another government agreement on November 21, and the new cabinet was approved by the *Knesset* the following day, at which time Peres became prime minister.

Peres announced on February 11, 1996, that elections, then scheduled for November, would be moved up, a new date of May 29 subsequently being established following discussion with *Likud* representatives. Running counter to preelection polls, *Likud*'s Netanyahu defeated Peres by a vote of 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent in the first-ever direct balloting for prime minister. The election turned primarily on security issues, as Netanyahu adopted a hard-line stance toward any further "concessions" to the Palestinians, categorically ruled out the



eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state, and pledged additional support for the Jewish settlers in the West Bank. Although Labor led all parties by winning 34 seats in the *Knesset* elections, Netanyahu was subsequently able to form a coalition government comprising representatives from *Tzomet* and the newly formed *Gesher* (the two parties with whom *Likud* had presented joint *Knesset* candidates), *Shas*, The Third Way (a new centrist grouping), *Yisrael B'Aliya*, and two ultra-orthodox groups (the National Religious Party [NRP] and the United Torah Judaism [UTJ]). Netanyahu formally succeeded Peres as prime minister on June 18 after the *Knesset* approved the new government by a vote of 62–50.

In addition to growing pressure regarding the Palestinian question, Prime Minister Netanyahu also confronted several other significant domestic problems in 1997 and early 1998. Most notable was the controversial demand by the Orthodox Jewish movement that it be formally confirmed as the ultimate authority concerning conversions to Judaism. (The Reform and Conservative movements, strongly represented in the United States, were seeking to have conversions completed under their auspices legally recognized in Israel.) With his coalition government so dependent on backing from orthodox parties, Netanyahu initially announced support for legislation confirming the orthodox monopoly; however, a special committee was subsequently established to attempt to produce a compromise position. The prime minister also faced dissension within *Likud* and growing restiveness over budget austerity, the latter contributing to the decision by *Gesher* to leave the coalition in January 1998. (The government's legislative majority was reduced to a razor-thin 61–59 by *Gesher's* withdrawal.) In addition, the administration was buffeted in early 1998 by changes in the leadership of Mossad (Israel's external security apparatus that had recently bundled an assassination attempt in Jordan) and the somewhat chaotic and incomplete distribution of gas masks during the most recent U.S./Iraqi crisis. Regarding that confrontation, the Israeli government had emphasized that, unlike in 1991, it had been prepared to respond

militarily if fighting had broken out and it had been targeted by Iraqi missiles.

On March 4, 1998, the *Knesset* by a vote of 63–49 reelected President Weizman, who had added a degree of political impact to the previously essentially ceremonial post by criticizing the Netanyahu government's handling of the peace process.

Under heavy international pressure, Prime Minister Netanyahu signed an accord with PLO Chair Yasir Arafat in late October 1998 calling for further Israeli withdrawals from West Bank territory (the so-called Wye agreement). However, implementation of the plan stalled in December as Netanyahu futilely attempted to address the growing popular demand for progress toward a resolution on the Palestinian front while maintaining the allegiance of the religious parties in his coalition, who steadfastly opposed any land-for-peace compromise and, in fact, urged additional construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. The government also exhibited a lack of unity regarding policies to address the deteriorating economic climate. Consequently, in mid-December, Netanyahu, facing the threat of a no-confidence motion in the *Knesset*, agreed to early elections.

On May 17, 1999, Ehud BARAK of the Labor-led One Israel coalition was elected prime minister, defeating Netanyahu by 56–44 percent. (Three other minor candidates had withdrawn shortly before the election.) Barak had staked out a more liberal peace posture than Netanyahu, announcing he would, if elected, revitalize the Wye agreement, initiate final status discussions with the Palestinians, withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon within one year, and relaunch discussions with Syria regarding the Golan Heights. Barak had also stressed his economic platform because domestic problems such as burgeoning unemployment, rising inflation, and declining growth appeared to be playing a greater role in voting considerations that year than in previous elections. In concurrent balloting for the *Knesset*, One Israel secured a plurality of 26 seats, followed by *Likud* (19 seats), *Shas* (17), *Meretz* (10), and 11 parties with 6 or fewer seats. The legislative campaign was noteworthy for a series of "slurs and counter-slurs" that underscored the continued

intensity of the secular/religious schism within the Israeli population. Subsequently, in view of his poor showing (as well as *Likud's* collective electoral decline), Netanyahu resigned as chair of *Likud* and was succeeded by his longtime rival, Ariel Sharon.

After difficult and extended negotiations (during which he ultimately abandoned efforts to form a “national unity” government with *Likud*), Barak on July 6, 1999, received *Knesset* confirmation of a new cabinet, including One Israel (Labor, *Gesher*, and *Meimad*), Shas, *Yisrael B'Aliya*, *Meretz*, the NRP, and the new Center Party. Barak immediately launched into intense diplomatic efforts to resolve the Palestinian conflict. However, his coalition proved fractious in regard to the peace initiatives, and Shas, *Yisrael B'Aliya*, and the NRP left the cabinet on July 9, 2000, to protest potential “concessions” to the Palestinians. *Gesher's* minister also resigned on August 2. Meanwhile, on July 31 the government had suffered another setback when Moshe KATSAV of *Likud* had defeated Shimon Peres for the Israeli presidency by a vote of 63–37 percent. (President Weizman had resigned his post, ostensibly because of poor health, although he had recently been subjected to an investigation concerning gifts he had received as a cabinet member a decade earlier.)

Although he had narrowly survived several non-confidence votes, Prime Minister Barak, faced with an apparent lack of support in the *Knesset* for his peace efforts, announced his resignation on December 9, 2000, and called for a special prime ministerial election as a national referendum of sorts on the matter. (Barak remained in his post in an acting capacity pending the new balloting.) In view of the outbreak of the “second *intifada*,” the Israeli electorate illustrated its rightward shift on February 6, 2001, by electing the “hawkish” Sharon as prime minister by a 62.4–37.6 percent margin over Barak, who quickly resigned as Labor’s leader.

Somewhat surprisingly, Labor agreed to join the national unity government formed by Sharon on March 7, 2001. *Likud's* other coalition partners included Shas, *Yisrael B'Aliya*, the new One Nation, the UTJ (represented at the deputy ministerial level), and the new National Union-*Yisrael Beit-*

*einu* (NU-YB) *Knesset* faction (see National Union under Political Parties, below, for details). On October 15 the NU-YB ministers announced their intention to leave the cabinet, having adopted an even harsher stance toward the Palestinian question than Sharon. However, their resignation was temporarily rescinded following the assassination by Palestinian militants of Tourism Minister Rechavam ZEEVI, leader of the NU-YB, on October 17. After the NU-YB faction finally departed the cabinet on March 15, 2002, Sharon bolstered his government by appointing new ministers from the NRP and *Gesher*. Sharon dismissed the Shas and UTJ ministers on May 20 when they failed to support his austerity budget proposals, although the Shas ministers were reinstated on June 3 after the package passed on a second vote in the *Knesset*. *Gesher* leader David Levy resigned his post as minister without portfolio on July 29.

The Labor ministers resigned from the cabinet on October 30, 2002, because of their opposition to the allocation of funding for Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Faced with the potential collapse of his “national unity” government and the loss of a government majority in the *Knesset*, Prime Minister Sharon called for new *Knesset* elections to be held in early 2003.

On November 19, 2002, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Avraham MITZNA, the mayor of Haifa, was elected as the new Labor leader. He subsequently proposed a markedly “dovish” approach to the Palestinian question, calling for the closure of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, the immediate evacuation of Israeli forces from the region, and the eventual unilateral Israeli withdrawal from portions of the West Bank should a comprehensive peace agreement fail to materialize. Subsequently, Sharon was easily reelected as *Likud* leader over arch-rival Benjamin Netanyahu. Sharon pledged to maintain his hard line regarding negotiations with the Palestinians, announcing that negotiations would not proceed until all violence ceased.

*Likud* scored a major victory in the January 28, 2003, *Knesset* election, securing 38 seats compared to 19 seats for the Labor/*Meimad* coalition. Labor subsequently pulled out of negotiations

regarding a new coalition government, and on February 28 Sharon formed a new cabinet comprising *Likud*, *Shinui*, the NRP, and the NU-YB. In June 2004 Sharon dismissed two NRP ministers who opposed his plan for unilateral Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip (see Current issues, below), placing the government in minority status in the *Knesset*. The coalition finally collapsed on December 1 when the *Knesset* rejected Sharon's proposed 2005 budget. (Sharon dismissed the *Shinui* ministers who voted against the budget.) On January 10, 2005, Sharon secured *Knesset* approval (by a vote of 58–56) for a new cabinet comprising *Likud*, Labor, and the UTJ, with Labor leader Peres being named vice prime minister in the new government. In August 2005 the Sharon government began its unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip, which prompted the resignation of Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opened up deep fissures within *Likud*. Subsequently, in November, the *Knesset* rejected Sharon's appointment of two *Likud* loyalists to his cabinet. Meanwhile, Amir PERETZ defeated Shimon Peres as leader of Labor in an internal party ballot, and Peretz subsequently promised to end the party's participation in Sharon's government. Sharon consequently called an election for early 2006 and then announced his resignation from *Likud* and the formation of a new party, *Kadima*, or "Forward."

In January 2006 Prime Minister Sharon suffered a debilitating stroke. His deputy, former Jerusalem mayor Ehud OLMERT, became acting prime minister (as prescribed by law). Olmert steered *Kadima* to a plurality of 29 seats in the March 28 *Knesset* balloting, while the coalition of Labor and *Meimad* won 19 seats and *Likud* fell to 12 seats. With Labor/*Meimad*, Shas, and the small Pensioners Party, Olmert subsequently formed on May 4 a coalition government that controlled 67 *Knesset* seats. Olmert expanded the coalition with the addition of *Yisrael Beiteinu* (which had separated from the National Union to campaign on its own in the recent legislative poll) to the cabinet in late October.

Former prime minister Shimon Peres (who had helped to launch *Kadima*) was elected president with 86 votes in second-round balloting in the

*Knesset* on June 13, 2007, after his two challengers from the first round dropped out of the race. Peres was inaugurated on July 15 after President Katsav had formally resigned effective July 2 as part of an apparent plea-bargaining arrangement involving charges of sexual harassment. (Katsav, at his own request, had been declared "temporarily incapacitated" by a *Knesset* committee in January in order to combat the charges, his presidential duties having been assumed at that time by *Knesset* Speaker Dalia ITZIK.)

### *Constitution and Government*

In the absence of a written constitution, the structure of Israeli government is defined by fundamental laws that provide for a president with largely ceremonial functions, a prime minister serving as effective chief executive, and a unicameral parliament (*Knesset*) to which the government is responsible and whose powers include the election of the president. Under legislation passed in March 1992, in what some observers construed as a historic change in the country's electoral system, the *Knesset* approved a law providing for the direct election of the prime minister. However, that legislation was reversed in March 2001, and the prime minister is now once again appointed by the president upon the recommendation of the *Knesset*. The prime minister's term of office corresponds to that of the *Knesset*.

The role of Judaism in the state has not been formally defined, but the Law of Return of 1950 established a right of immigration for all Jews (with a few exceptions, such as criminals). The judicial system is headed by a Supreme Court, and there are five district courts in addition to magistrates' and municipal courts. Specialized courts include labor courts and religious courts with separate benches for the Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and several Christian communities, while military courts are important in the occupied areas.

Israel is divided into six administrative districts (*mehozot*), each of which is headed by a district commissioner appointed by the central government. Regions, municipalities, and rural

municipalities are the principal administrative entities within the districts.

### *Foreign Relations*

Israeli foreign relations have been dominated by the requirements of survival in an environment marked by persistent hostility on the part of neighboring Arab states, whose overt measures have ranged from denying Israel use of the Suez Canal (wholly mitigated upon ratification of the 1979 peace treaty) to encouraging terrorist and guerrilla operations on Israeli soil. Once committed to “nonidentification” between East and West, Israel encountered hostility from the Soviet Union and most other communist governments (Romania and Yugoslavia being the most conspicuous exceptions) and began to rely primarily on Western countries, principally the United States, for political, economic, and military support. A member of the United Nations since 1949, Israel has frequently incurred condemnation by UN bodies because of its reprisals against Arab guerrilla attacks and its refusal both to reabsorb or pay compensation to Arab refugees from the 1948–1949 war and to accept the internationalization of Jerusalem as envisaged in the 1947 UN resolution. Enactment on July 30, 1980, of a law reaffirming a unified Jerusalem as the nation’s capital evoked additional condemnation.

In May 1974 a Golan disengagement agreement was concluded with Syria, while Sinai disengagement accords were concluded with Egypt in January 1974 and September 1975. Under the latter, Israel withdrew its forces from the Suez Canal and evacuated the Abu Rudeis and Ras Sudar oil fields. Both Egypt and the United States agreed to make a “serious effort” to bring about collateral negotiations with Syria for further disengagement on the Golan Heights, although no such negotiations were initiated prior to the launching of U.S.-inspired Middle East peace talks in early 1991.

In what was hailed as a major step toward peace in the region, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat startled the world in November 1977 by accepting an Israeli invitation to visit Jerusalem. While Sadat

yielded little during an unprecedented address to the *Knesset* on November 20, his very presence on Israeli soil kindled widespread hope that the lengthy impasse in Arab-Israeli relations might somehow be broken. Subsequent discussions produced potential bases of settlement in regard to the Sinai but no public indication of substantial withdrawal from established positions, on either side, in regard to the West Bank and Gaza. Israel, in responding to Egyptian demands for a meaningful “concession,” announced a willingness to grant Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank “self-rule,” coupled with an Israeli right to maintain military installations in the occupied territories. Egypt, on the other hand, rejected the idea of an Israeli military presence and continued to press for Palestinian self-determination.

The prospects for a meaningful accord fluctuated widely during the first eight months of 1978, culminating in a historic summit convened by U.S. President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, Maryland, on September 5. The unusually lengthy discussions yielded two major agreements—a “Framework for a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel” and a “Framework for Peace in the Middle East”—which were signed by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin at the White House on September 17. In the course of subsequent negotiations in Washington, representatives of the two governments agreed on the details of a treaty and related documents, but the signing was deferred beyond the target date of December 17 because of disagreement about linkage to the second of the Camp David accords, which dealt with autonomy for the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and provided for Israeli withdrawal into specified security locations. In addition, Egypt wished to modify an important treaty provision by an “interpretive annex,” stating that prior commitments to other Arab states should have precedence over any obligations assumed in regard to Israel. Progress toward resolving the impasse was registered in early March 1979, and the treaty was formally signed at Washington on March 26, followed by an exchange of ratifications on April 25. In a set of minutes accompanying the treaty, the parties agreed that “there is no assertion that this treaty

prevails over other treaties or agreements” and that, within a month after the exchange of instruments of ratification, negotiations would be instituted to define “the modalities for establishing the elected self-governing authority” for the Gaza Strip and West Bank. While no significant progress on autonomy for the two regions was immediately forthcoming, the sixth and final phase of withdrawal from the Sinai, save for Taba, was completed on schedule in April 1982.

On June 6, 1982, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon. While the immediate precipitant of the incursion appeared to have been the shooting on June 3 of Israel’s ambassador to the United Kingdom, the attack was far from unanticipated in view of a substantial buildup of Israeli military strength along the border in May. Code-named “Peace for Galilee,” the attack was justified initially as necessary to establish a PLO-free zone extending 40–50 kilometers inside Lebanon. By June 14, however, Israeli forces had completely surrounded Beirut, shortly after U.S. President Ronald Reagan had announced that he would approve the dispatch of 800–1,000 U.S. marines to participate in an international force that would oversee the evacuation of Palestinian and Syrian forces from the Lebanese capital. On August 6 U.S. envoy Philip Habib reached agreement, through Lebanese intermediaries, on the PLO withdrawal, which commenced on August 21.

In what was officially described as a “police action” necessitated by the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel on September 14, 1982, Israeli contingents entered West Beirut and took up positions around the Chatila and Sabra Palestinian refugee camps, where a substantial number of “terrorists” were alleged to have been left behind by the PLO. On the morning of the 18th it was revealed that a large-scale massacre of civilians had occurred at the hands of right-wing Phalangist militiamen, who had been given access to the camps by Israeli authorities. While the Israeli cabinet expressed its “deep grief and regret” over the atrocities, the affair generated widespread controversy within Israel, with Prime Minister Begin resisting demands for the ouster of Defense

Minister Sharon as well as for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into the circumstances of the massacre. Following the largest protest rally in Israeli history in Tel Aviv on September 25, the prime minister reversed himself and asked the chief justice of the Supreme Court to undertake a full investigation. The results of the inquiry (published in February 1983) placed direct responsibility for the slaughter on the Phalangists but also faulted Sharon and several senior officers for permitting the militiamen to enter the camps in disregard for the safety of the inhabitants. In addition, while absolving the prime minister of foreknowledge of the entry, the commission expressed surprise, in view of “the Lebanese situation as it was known to those concerned,” that a decision on entry should have been taken without his participation. Talks between Israeli and Lebanese representatives on military withdrawal commenced in late December 1982 but became deadlocked on a number of issues, including Israeli insistence that it should continue to staff early-warning stations in southern Lebanon. On May 17, 2003, an agreement was concluded among Israeli, Lebanese, and U.S. negotiators that provided for Israeli withdrawal, an end to the state of war between Israel and Lebanon, and the establishment of a jointly supervised “security region” in southern Lebanon. Although unable to secure a commitment from Syria to withdraw its forces from northern and eastern Lebanon, Israel redeployed its forces in early September to a highly fortified line south of the Awali river. However, a number of attacks by guerrilla groups had concurrently been mounted against Israeli troops and contingents of the international peacekeeping force, and they culminated in simultaneous bomb attacks on U.S. and French detachments in Beirut on October 23 that left over 300 dead.

In March 1984, following departure of the multinational force from Beirut, the Lebanese government, under pressure from Syria, abrogated the troop withdrawal accord, although the Israeli cabinet in January 1985 approved a unilateral three-stage withdrawal that was implemented in several stages over the ensuing six months. Despite the withdrawal announcement, Shiite militants in

Lebanon mounted a terror campaign against the departing Israelis, who retaliated with an “iron-fist” policy that included the arrest and transfer to a prison camp in Israel of hundreds of Shiites. On June 14, 1985, the militants hijacked an American TWA jetliner, demanding release of the prisoners in exchange for their hostages. After two weeks of negotiations, the Americans were freed, and Israel began gradual release of the Lebanese, both Israel and the United States insisting that the two events were unrelated. Meanwhile, negotiations had been renewed with Egypt to resolve the Taba dispute—a move that was condemned by *Likud* and was further jeopardized by the assassination of an Israeli diplomat in Cairo in August, by an Israeli air attack on the PLO’s Tunis headquarters (in retaliation for the murder of three Israelis in Cyprus) in September, and by the killing of seven Israeli tourists in Sinai during October.

Throughout 1986 Peres (as prime minister until October 30 and as foreign minister thereafter) continued his efforts on behalf of a comprehensive peace settlement. An unprecedented public meeting in July with King Hassan of Morocco was described as “purely exploratory” but was viewed as enhancing the position of moderate Arab leaders, including Jordan’s King Hussein, whose peace discussion with the PLO’s Yasir Arafat had broken down in January. Late in the year, the Israeli government was hard-pressed to defend its role in the U.S.-Iranian arms affair, Peres insisting that Israel had transferred arms to Iran at Washington’s request and was unaware that some of the money paid by Tehran had been diverted to Nicaraguan *contras*. The government was also embarrassed by the March 1987 conviction in a Washington court of Jonathan Jay POLLARD on charges of having spied for Israel. Defense Minister Rabin insisted that Pollard was part of a “rogue” spy operation set up without official sanction and that no one else had engaged in such activity since Pollard’s arrest in 1985. However, the case aroused deep pro-Pollard feeling within Israel, and it was later reported that “state elements” had paid approximately two-thirds of Pollard’s legal expenses. (Pollard, serving a life sentence in the United

States, was granted Israeli citizenship in January 1996.)

During 1989 the government drew increasing criticism from international civil rights groups for actions triggered by the continuing Palestinian Arab uprising (*intifada*) in the occupied territories. It also experienced a cooling of relations with Washington because of Prime Minister Shamir’s failure to respond positively to the so-called “Baker plan” for Palestinian peace talks, the essentials of which corresponded to proposals advanced by Rabin. By the end of the year the future of the occupied Arab lands had become increasingly critical because of an escalation of immigrants from the Soviet Union, some of whom were settling in the disputed areas.

With the launching of military action against Iraq by UN-backed forces in mid-January 1991, Israel came under attack by Soviet-made Scud missiles. U.S. President George H. W. Bush’s administration thereupon dispatched two batteries of Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Israel, while urging Israeli authorities not to retaliate against Baghdad, lest it weaken the Arab-supported coalition. Having obliged with a posture of restraint, the Shamir government on January 22 requested that it be provided with \$3 billion in compensation for damages, plus \$10 billion in loan guarantees to resettle immigrants from the Soviet Union. Washington responded in late February by approving a \$400 million housing loan guarantee, followed, in early March, by a \$650 million aid package to help cover increased military and civil defense expenditures. On October 5, 1992, the U.S. Congress approved the \$10 billion guarantee program after the new Labor government in Israel had announced that it would halt large-scale investment in the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. On the same date a U.S. foreign aid appropriation bill was approved that included renewal of the annual \$3 billion in economic and military aid earmarked for Israel in the wake of the 1978 Camp David accords.

Subsequently, in what was quickly branded a “public relations disaster,” Israeli authorities on December 18, 1992, ordered the deportation of more than 400 Palestinians charged with being

leaders of the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance Movement (see *Hamas* in the article on the Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization) that had recently been responsible for a series of attacks on Israeli military personnel and civilians. Because Lebanon refused to accept the deportees, they were confined to a portion of the buffer strip inside the Lebanese border. The action drew almost universal condemnation from abroad, including demands by both the U.S. government and the UN Security Council that the group be returned to the occupied territories. Subsequently, Israel agreed to permit 10 (later 16) of those “wrongly deported” to return. In early February 1993 Israel also authorized the return of 100 of the others, with the remainder to be repatriated by the end of the year. The latter offer was resisted by the deportees, who demanded that all those remaining be released immediately, but was nonetheless implemented by the Israelis.

The Palestinian deportation issue proved particularly disruptive of lengthy Middle East peace talks that had begun in Madrid, Spain, on October 30, 1991, among Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, and joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegations, with a number of other governmental and intergovernmental representatives present as observers. It was agreed at the meeting that further “two-track” negotiations would be held on Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian matters directed at an interim period of Palestinian self-rule and, eventually, a final settlement with Israel. However, no substantial progress was reported in three rounds of bilateral talks that concluded in mid-January 1992. Subsequently, the 19 participants in a revival of multilateral talks in Moscow on January 28–29 established working groups dealing with environment, water, disarmament and security, economic development, and refugee issues, although the Palestinians boycotted the meeting because of a dispute over the composition of its delegation. In addition, Syria and Lebanon refused to participate on the ground that Israel had shown no territorial flexibility in the bilateral discussions. Six inconclusive bilateral rounds followed, with a tenth round from June 15–July 1, 1993, also ending in deadlock, largely

because of Israeli refusal to discuss the status of Jerusalem.

In late June 1993, *Hezbollah* began launching rockets against Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and South Lebanese Army (SLA) targets in the South Lebanese “security zone.” Within days the IDF began moving more troops into the area, and in mid-July the Israeli cabinet declared that the IDF would respond to any further attacks in the security zone or on its northern settlements. *Hezbollah* nonetheless launched a rocket attack on the Galilee panhandle late in the month. The IDF thereupon commenced bombing raids against reputed terrorist installations north of the security zone that caused widespread civilian casualties prior to a cease-fire on July 21. Further heavy fighting occurred in 1996, and Israeli support for involvement in Lebanon subsequently reportedly declined, particularly after 73 Israeli soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in February 1997. Consequently, although previous negotiations had always been based on the premise of a comprehensive regional settlement, the Netanyahu government in early 1998 proposed a “Lebanon first” strategy through which Israel would withdraw from Lebanon in return for stringent security guarantees. During the prime ministerial campaign in Israel in early 1999, Labor’s Ehud Barak pledged to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon if elected, although he hoped it would be as part of a peace agreement with Syria and the Palestinians. The broader initiatives having stalled in early 2000, the Israeli *Knesset* in March voted to initiate a unilateral withdrawal, which was completed on May 24 (see article on Lebanon for additional information).

On August 19, 1993, some 14 months of secret talks in Norway between Israeli and PLO representatives yielded a Declaration of Principles on interim self-rule for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories. The declaration provided for a five-year transitional period beginning with Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho and culminating in a transfer of authority in most of the rest of the West Bank in all matters save foreign relations, defense, and “other mutually agreed matters” to “authorized Palestinians.” Formalized

in a historic signing by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chair Arafat in Washington on September 13, the process was targeted for completion by April 13, 1999.

A number of meetings to implement the Israeli/PLO accord were subsequently held in Egypt, but they failed to clear the way for commencement of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho on the agreed date of December 13. An initial dispute turned on Jericho's size, the Israelis proposing 21 square miles, with the PLO insisting on 39 square miles extending south to the Dead Sea. Subsequent disagreement centered on security provisions for Israeli settlers in Gaza, in addition to control over the passage of Palestinians from Egypt into Gaza and from Jordan into Jericho. These problems appeared to have been overcome in an agreement initialed by Israeli Prime Minister Peres and PLO Chair Arafat in Cairo on February 9, 1994; however, the massacre of 29 worshippers at a Muslim mosque in Hebron by a follower of the late extremist Rabbi Meir KAHANE (see Kahane Lives, under Political Parties, below) brought the peace process to a sudden halt.

It was not until May 4, 1994, that a definitive accord implementing the 1993 declaration was signed in Cairo by Prime Minister Rabin and Arafat. Under the settlement, Israel was to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho within three weeks, legislative and executive powers for the two areas were to be assigned to a "Palestinian authority," and a 9,000-person Palestinian police force was to be established. On the other hand, Israel was to retain authority over Jewish settlements in Gaza, a military base on the Egyptian border, and external security. The actual degree of Palestinian autonomy was further constrained by annexes to the agreement that provided for an Israeli role at all levels of decision making for the territories. Nonetheless, Palestinian policemen entered the Gaza Strip on May 10, and on May 13 Israeli troops withdrew from Jericho, ending a 27-year occupation.

In a January 1994 meeting with President Clinton in Geneva, Syrian President Assad declared that he was ready for "normal, peaceful relations" with Israel. However, it was noted that peace would

require significant concessions by Israel, including withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Israel appeared to respond on May 17 by offering to withdraw from the Golan in three phases over a five- to eight-year period in return for peace and normalized relations with its longtime adversary. However, observers were quick to point out the sticking point: disagreement as to whether normalization or withdrawal should come first.

Israel was more successful in its quest for normalization with Jordan, U.S.-brokered contacts yielding another important White House ceremony on July 25, 1994, when King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin signed a declaration ending the 46-year-old state of war between their two countries. On October 26 a peace treaty was signed, and it was ratified shortly thereafter by their respective legislatures. As called for by the treaty, diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level were established on November 27. (The relationship was severely tested in September 1997 when Israeli intelligence officers attempted to assassinate Khaled MESHAL, a *Hamas* official in Amman. The attack on a Jordanian citizen enraged King Hussein, who threatened to break diplomatic relations and put two captured Mossad agents on trial. Prime Minister Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders reportedly made a secret visit to Amman in an effort to reduce tension, and the agents were returned to Israel in early October following the release of *Hamas* leader Sheikh Ahmed YASSIN and a large group of Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.)

Relations with most other Arab states (Iraq, Libya, and Sudan being conspicuous exceptions) improved measurably as the peace process gained momentum. In mid-1994 first-ever joint naval exercises, involving Israel, Egypt, Tunisia, Qatar, Canada, Italy, and the United States, were held off the Italian coast. In August a senior Israeli foreign ministry official visited Bahrain and Kuwait; in early September agreement was reached with Morocco and Tunisia on the establishment of liaison offices; and on September 30 the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) lifted the "secondary" and "tertiary" aspects of its economic boycott of Israel, although retaining the ban on direct trade. In early



November Tansu Çiller became the first Turkish prime minister to visit Israel, and on December 26 Rabin became the first Israel prime minister to visit Oman. Turkey and Israel also signed an agreement in August 1996 for the exchange of “technical expertise” on defense matters, a development that was criticized in many Arab capitals, and the two countries conducted a small, yet highly symbolic, joint military exercise in the Mediterranean in January 1998. In addition, Ehud Barak in October 1999 became the first Israeli prime minister to visit Turkey.

In a historic ceremony in Jerusalem on December 30, 1993, Israel and the Vatican agreed to establish diplomatic relations. Representatives from both sides expressed the hope that a 2,000-year rupture between Christians and Jews could thus be overcome.

The funeral of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 attracted Israel’s largest ever gathering of foreign leaders, including several from prominent Arab states, underscoring, among other things, international concern that the assassinated prime minister might prove nearly irreplaceable in the ongoing Middle East peace process. Despite the shock of his death, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from six more West Bank towns (as authorized in the second Israeli/PLO accord) proceeded smoothly throughout the rest of the year.

As was widely expected, Benjamin Netanyahu’s election as Israeli prime minister in 1996 slowed progress on the Palestinian front. (See the article on the Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization for details from 1996 through 1999.) A number of Arab states closed their offices in Israel following the outbreak of the “second *intifada*” in late 2000, and a March 2001 Arab League summit endorsed the Palestinian “right to resist” Israeli “aggression.” In early 2002 Saudi Arabia proposed the full normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states in return for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Arab leaders subsequently urged Washington to propose a specific timetable for creation of a Palestinian state, arguing that the lack of progress in resolving the Palestinian/Israeli conflict was generating widespread anti-U.S. sentiment in the Arab world.

At the end of April 2003, the Middle East Quartet (the EU, Russia, the UN, and the United States) formally unveiled the much-discussed “road map” toward a final comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute involving establishment of an “independent, democratic, and viable” Palestinian state. Final negotiations were slated for completion by the end of 2005, assuming Palestinian institutions had been “stabilized” and Palestinian security forces had proven adequate in combating attacks against Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon offered “qualified” support for the road map, as did the *Knesset*, although the latter insisted that it be made clear that Palestinian refugees would not be guaranteed the right to return to their former homes in Israel.

In February 2004 the Sharon government announced its intention to disengage unilaterally from the Gaza Strip, sending the message that it would not deal with Yasir Arafat’s Palestinian Authority but instead would withdraw from Palestinian territories on its own terms. The decision was met with tacit approval from the George W. Bush administration, which, while preferring that major decisions be made within the context of a negotiated solution, viewed Yasir Arafat’s leadership of the PA as the major obstacle to such a solution. This disengagement occurred over August and September 2005 and resulted in Sharon’s voluntary exit from *Likud* to form *Kadima*.

Sharon’s massive stroke in January 2006 left a degree of uncertainty in Israeli politics as his newly-formed *Kadima*-led government seemed to rely heavily on his stature. Sharon’s deputy, Ehud Olmert, assumed the prime ministership and was almost immediately faced with the reality of *Hamas*’s sweeping win in the January 2006 Palestinian legislative elections. The United States and Israel stated they both would refuse to deal with an authority governed by *Hamas*. Meanwhile, Olmert’s government faced the challenge of navigating its policy of “convergence”—including further unilateral disengagement from parts of the West Bank—which it presented successfully to Israeli electors in March.

In mid-July 2006 attention shifted to the Israeli-Lebanese border when *Hezbollah* conducted a cross-border raid and abducted two Israeli soldiers. Israel subsequently launched a series of air raids on Lebanon, targeting not just *Hezbollah*-controlled areas in the south of Lebanon but also Beirut and other cities. Civilian deaths in Lebanon rapidly mounted and reached 340 in the first week of bombings. A further 1,000 Lebanese were wounded. The Israeli air force also targeted civilian infrastructure, including the Beirut airport, bridges, power plants, and fuel depots. *Hezbollah*, meanwhile, continued to fire rockets into northern Israel, killing 15 Israeli civilians over the same time period. On August 14 Israeli troops began to withdraw from southern Lebanon in support of a resolution adopted on August 11 by the UN Security Council calling for a cease-fire to the hostilities. The resolution proposed that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon be expanded from 2,000 to 15,000 troops to assist in preserving order along the Israeli-Lebanese border while negotiations continued toward the disarmament of *Hezbollah*. It was reported that 117 Israeli soldiers had been killed in the conflict, while 41 Israeli civilians had died, primarily from the 4,000 rocket attacks launched by *Hezbollah*. The Israeli withdrawal was nearly complete by late September, while the Olmert government faced increasing criticism in Israel for its perceived failure to have accomplished its main goal in the war—the removal of *Hezbollah* as a security threat. The anti-*Hezbollah* campaign also drew heavy criticism from most Arab states, particularly in regard to the killing of civilians and widespread damage to infrastructure throughout Lebanon. However, the United States firmly supported the initiative as a component of the “war on terrorism,” and in mid-2007 Washington announced a new \$30-billion, ten-year military aid package for Israel.

In October 2007 Israeli jets reportedly bombed a desert site in Syria that some analysts concluded may have been a nascent nuclear reactor. (The charge was denied by Syria.) Nuclear issues also exacerbated tensions between Israel and Iran. Prime Minister Olmert traveled to Russia in October to urge Russian leader Vladimir Putin to agree

to additional sanctions against Tehran in an effort to thwart Iran’s perceived nuclear ambitions.

### *Current Issues*

Following his inauguration in July 1999, new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak called for a comprehensive peace settlement with the Palestinians, Syria, and Lebanon within 15 months. Little progress was achieved by the spring of 2000, however, except for some redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank. In April Barak appeared to accept the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian “entity” (he avoided using the word “state”) comprising Gaza and 60–70 percent of the West Bank. However, he indicated a “majority” of the Jewish settlers in the disputed areas would remain under Israeli sovereignty. At the same time, popular sentiment in Israel appeared to be turning away from the proposed return of the Golan Heights to Syria, and the construction of additional Golan settlements (suspended since the previous December) resumed in April.

Faced with a collapsing coalition (see Political background, above), Barak attended a “make-or-break” summit with Arafat and U.S. President Clinton at Camp David in July 2000. Although agreement appeared close on several issues, the summit ended unsuccessfully when common ground could not be found regarding the status of Jerusalem and sovereignty over holy sites there. Although Barak subsequently indicated a willingness to endorse the establishment of two “separate entities” in Jerusalem, negotiations collapsed in October in the face of the “second *intifada*” and heavy reprisals by the Israeli military that included the use of assault helicopter and rocket attacks.

Barak’s defeat by Ariel Sharon in the February 2001 special prime ministerial balloting appeared to doom prospects for any settlement soon, particularly in view of the fact that the new Bush administration in Washington had announced it did not consider itself in any way bound by the “parameters” endorsed previously by the Clinton administration. Sharon pledged that Jerusalem would remain “whole and unified” under Israeli sovereignty

and that no Jewish settlements would be dismantled. Suicide bombings continued unabated in early 2002, and Israel in April launched an offensive of unprecedented scale that left it in control of most West Bank towns. When that initiative failed to restrain the suicide bombers, the Sharon government announced at midyear that it would begin to construct a “security fence” around the West Bank.

Not surprisingly, security issues dominated the January 2003 *Knesset* balloting. *Likud*’s solid victory appeared to indicate a repudiation of the “peace agenda” of Labor’s new leader, Avraham Mitzna. At the same time, Sharon warned that “painful concessions” regarding Palestinian statehood would eventually be required.

In June 2004 the cabinet endorsed Sharon’s plan for unilateral disengagement from Gaza, while Labor agreed to provide a safety net in the *Knesset* for Sharon in order to allow him to proceed toward disengagement. In October the *Knesset* endorsed the proposal by a vote of 67–47, and in February it approved \$900 million in compensation for the Israeli settlers who faced displacement.

Following the death of Yasir Arafat in November 2004, the Israeli government called upon the new Palestinian leadership—headed by the new president, Mahmoud Abbas—to finally come to terms with “terrorism” on the part of Palestinian militants. However, momentum regarding Sharon’s unilateral disengagement plan continued to grow, and forced evacuation of settlements from Gaza (and a few in the northern West Bank) were conducted in August–September 2005, marking the end of 38 years of Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip.

Staunch opposition to the Gaza disengagement from within Sharon’s own *Likud*-led government compelled him to leave the party and form *Kadima* in November 2006. Sharon had concluded that further Israeli disengagement from Palestinian territories could only happen through the establishment of a party that would take the broad center in the Israeli polity, which recognized that holding on to territories where Palestinians formed a demographic majority was untenable to Israel’s security. When Sharon left *Likud* he said that the party, in its present form, was “unable to lead Israel to its na-

tional goals.” Sharon was able to continue as prime minister, although Labor’s departure from the unity government in November—after Amir Peretz defeated Shimon Peres in a party ballot for Labor leader—forced Sharon to call for elections in early 2006.

Prime Minister Sharon’s stroke in January 2006 seemed to plunge Israel into a period of political uncertainty, especially given that he was leader of a new governing party that was barely three months old. Further uncertainty rocked the Israeli government—with acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at the helm—when *Hamas* trounced *Fatah* in the Palestinian legislative elections in late January 2006. However, in the March *Knesset* poll, Ehud Olmert’s *Kadima* won a significant plurality, allowing Olmert to form a new coalition government.

Following his election success in the spring of 2006, Prime Minister Olmert promised that Israel’s final borders would be drawn by 2010—unilaterally by Israel if he was unable to find a “Palestinian partner” other than *Hamas* with whom to negotiate a final treaty. He also praised the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and insisted that the larger settlements would be expanded. However, despite apparent majority popular support for Olmert’s Palestinian stance, the administration faced growing criticism for its handling of the July–August conflict with *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, which failed to defeat *Hezbollah* while eliciting broad international concern over the damage inflicted on civilians in Lebanon. A number of military leaders subsequently resigned their posts as investigations into the war continued, and a leaked interim report from a special commission reportedly challenged Olmert’s “judgement” and “prudence” in the matter. In addition, a number of scandals subsequently buffeted the cabinet, and corruption allegations apparently contributed to a demonstration in Tel Aviv in May 2007 by some 100,000 protesters demanding Olmert’s resignation. Subsequently, operating with what was described as a “survival cabinet,” Olmert appeared to base his future prospects on plans for renewed talks toward a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement, which were formally

launched in the United States in November (see article on the Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization for details). By that time Olmert had signaled his readiness to discuss the eventual division of Jerusalem and the Israeli withdrawal from much of the West Bank as part of a final two-state settlement. However, *Likud's* Benjamin Netanyahu, enjoying a recent surge in popularity polls, criticized the talks as a “continuation of one-sided concessions,” while the rightist parties in the cabinet (Shas and *Yisrael Beiteinu*) also expressed concern about where the negotiations might lead.

## Political Parties

### *Government and Government-Supportive Parties*

**Forward** (*Kadima*). *Kadima* was formed by Prime Minister Sharon after he left *Likud*, then the leading party in the coalition government, in November 2005. Sharon aimed to start a new party in Israel's political center that would grant him the freedom to carry out his policy of unilateral disengagement from Palestinian territories, a move that was staunchly opposed by members of *Likud*, such as former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Following *Kadima's* formation, senior figures from both *Likud* and Labor joined Sharon's new party, including former mayor of Jerusalem and Finance Minister Ehud Olmert, former justice minister Tzipi Livni (both from *Likud*), and former prime minister Shimon Peres (Labor). Following Sharon's debilitating stroke in January 2006, Olmert became acting prime minister.

*Kadima* won the largest number of seats (29 out of 120) in the March 2006 Knesset balloting. *Kadima's* platform included a pledge to make further disengagements from Palestinian territory, although Jerusalem and the larger settlement blocs in the West Bank would remain under Israeli control.

*Leaders:* Ehud OLMERT (Prime Minister), Tzipi LIVNI (Deputy Prime Minister), Shimon PERES (President of Israel), Dalia ITZIK (Speaker of the *Knesset*), Yohanan PLESNER, Eli AFLALO.

**Israel Labor Party**—ILP (*Mifleget Ha'avoda Ha'yisra'elit*). The ILP was formed in January 1968 through merger of the Israel Workers' Party (*Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael*—Mapai), a Western-oriented socialist party established in 1929 and represented in the government by prime ministers David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin; the Israel Workers' List (*Reshimat Poalei Yisrael*—Rafi), founded by Ben-Gurion as a vehicle of opposition to Prime Minister Eshkol; and the Unity of Labor—Workers of Zion (*Achdut Ha'avoda*—*Poalei Zion*), which advocated a planned economy, agricultural settlement, and an active defense policy.

In January 1969 the ILP joined with Mapam (see *Meretz*, below) in a coalition known initially as the Alignment (*Ma'arakh*) and subsequently as the Labor Alignment (*Ma'arakh Ha'avoda*). The latter was technically dissolved upon Mapam's withdrawal to protest the formation of the national unity government, although the term was subsequently used to reference a linkage between Labor and *Yahad* (Together), a party led by former air force commander and former *Likud* leader Ezer Weizman, who had urged direct talks with Arab leaders until his retirement from partisan politics before the 1992 election.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995, the party's Central Committee endorsed Shimon Peres, who had been serving as foreign minister and the lead Israeli negotiator regarding emerging Palestinian autonomy, to succeed Rabin as party leader and prime minister. Subsequently, in a significant policy change, the committee in April 1996 eliminated the long-standing section in the party platform that formally opposed the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state.

Labor retained a slight majority in the May 1996 *Knesset* balloting, (securing 34 seats on the strength of 26.8 percent of the vote); however, Peres was narrowly defeated in the concurrent election for prime minister. Later in the year, amid reports of intraparty friction, Peres announced he would not run for prime minister in 2000 or for reelection as party chair.

In May 1997 the party rejected the proposed creation of a new post of party president for Peres, setting the stage for a subsequent “generational” change of leadership. In early June, Ehud Barak, a hawkish former army chief of staff and foreign minister under Peres, was elected as Labor’s new leader with 57 percent of the votes, easily defeating runner-up Yossi BEILIN, a Peres supporter who garnered 29 percent of the vote. Barak subsequently attempted to move the ILP closer to the center of the political spectrum, and, after securing unanimous nominations in January 1999 as the party’s candidate for prime minister, he announced in March that Labor would contest the upcoming legislative balloting in a One Israel coalition with *Gesher* and *Meimad*.

The ILP secured 23 of the 26 seats won by One Israel (20.2 percent of the vote) in the May 17, 1999, legislative elections, while Barak was elected prime minister with 56 percent of the vote. However, the ILP suffered a major blow when Peres was defeated by *Likud*’s Moshe Katzav for state president in July 2000, and Barak was soundly beaten in the special prime ministerial balloting in February 2001. Barak subsequently resigned as ILP leader, and new elections for that post were held in September 2001. Initial results showed Avraham BURG, the speaker of the *Knesset*, with a small majority over Benjamin BEN-ELIEZER, the current defense minister. However, Ben-Eliezer’s supporters challenged the results, and after a partial rerun in December, Ben-Eliezer, a hard-liner regarding the Palestinian question, was declared the winner.

Gen. (Ret.) Avraham Mitzna, the mayor of Haifa, was elected leader of the ILP in November 2002 and subsequently proposed a “radical peace agenda” for the January 2003 *Knesset* balloting (which the ILP contested in a coalition with *Meimad*). Following a poor performance in the elections, Mitzna resigned the ILP leadership in May, and he was succeeded in an acting capacity by Peres.

In December 2004 Labor joined Ariel Sharon’s *Likud* to form a unity government in order to implement Israel’s disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip. In November 2005, however, Shimon Peres

was replaced as the leader of Labor in an internal party ballot by left-wing union leader Amir PERETZ.

Peretz had previously served as the leader of One Nation (*Am Ehad*), which had been formed in early 1999 by several dissident members of *Likud* with strong ties to organized labor. One Nation campaigned for the 1999 *Knesset* balloting in support of greater benefits for pensioners and workers. It secured two seats in the May 1999 legislative balloting on a vote share of 1.9 percent and three seats in the January 2003 balloting on a vote share of 2.8 percent. In 2004 Peretz, the longtime head of Israel’s leading labor federation, announced the planned merger of *Am Ehad* with the ILP.

Following his assumption of the Labor leadership post, Peretz stated his intention to reassert the party’s traditional domestic socialist orientation. Labor concurrently left Sharon’s government, prompting a call for an early election for March 2006, in which Labor/*Meimad* won the second-highest number of seats with 19. Peretz was subsequently appointed deputy prime minister and defense minister in the new government.

Peretz finished third in the first round of balloting for party leader in May 2007 after having faced severe criticism for his role in Israel’s 2006 war with *Hezbollah* in Lebanon. In the subsequent runoff, Barak (returning to politics after a six-year absence) secured the leadership post with 51.2 percent of the vote against Ami AYALON, a former head of Israel’s internal security who had promised to withdraw Labor from the government unless Prime Minister Olmert resigned. Upon being named deputy prime minister and defense minister, Barak pledged “level-headed” leadership, which appeared, for the time being at least, to include continued participation in the government pending developments in proposed rejuvenation of negotiations with Palestinian leaders.

*Leaders:* Ehud BARAK (Chair), Collette AVITAL (2007 presidential candidate), Eitan CABEL (General Secretary).

**Dimension** (*Meimad*). Founded in the late 1980s by former NRP members who believed

the parent grouping had become too right-wing, *Meimad* competed unsuccessfully in the 1992 *Knesset* elections. In February 1998 *Meimad* announced its intention to participate in the next legislative balloting as an “Orthodox but open-minded and open-hearted” grouping that could provide a voice for Zionists who supported the peace process. In early 1999 *Meimad* agreed to join the One Israel electoral coalition with the Labor Party and *Gesher*. *Meimad* secured 1 of the 26 seats won by One Israel in the May *Knesset* balloting, and leader Rabbi Michael Melchior was named to the subsequent Barak cabinet. *Meimad* ran in coalition with Labor in the 2003 and 2006 *Knesset* elections.

*Leaders:* Rabbi Michael MELCHIOR, Rabbi Yehuda AMITAL.

**Sephardi Torah Guardians** (*Shomrei Torah Sephardim*—Shas). An offshoot of *Agudat Yisrael* (below), Shas was formed prior to the 1984 *Knesset* balloting, at which it won four seats. It is an orthodox religious party that draws support from Jews of Oriental (Sephardi) descent from North Africa and the Middle East. In December 1984 the group withdrew from the national unity coalition in a dispute with the NRP over the allocation of portfolios, with the then Shas leader Yitzhak PERETZ subsequently returning to the interior ministry with a budget enhanced by a transfer of funds from religious affairs. Shas withdrew again in February 1987 over the issue of registering a U.S. convert as Jewish but rejoined the coalition after the 1988 election, at which it won six *Knesset* seats. Its representation was unchanged at the 1992 poll, after which it joined the Labor coalition. In September 1993 Shas leader Aryeh DERI was obliged to resign as interior minister after a lengthy inquiry into alleged corruption had yielded formal charges against him. The result was a six-month withdrawal of Shas from the government coalition, followed by the group’s return to opposition status in February 1995.

Shas won 8.5 percent of the vote and 10 seats in the May 1996 *Knesset* balloting, thereby becoming the third largest legislative party. Its suc-

cess was in part attributed to the large Shas network of schools and social services, which had won growing grassroots support even among relatively nonobservant Sephardic Jews. In June Shas accepted an invitation to join the new Netanyahu government, in which its two portfolios included, not surprisingly, the ministries of labor and social affairs. In the national campaign of early 1999, Shas was described as “thoroughly domestic” in its political concerns and appeared to be surging in popularity, despite Deri’s conviction in February on bribery and other charges. Shas won 17 seats on a 13 percent vote share in the May legislative balloting and joined Ehud Barak’s subsequent Labor-led government.

Deri resigned as chair of Shas in June 1999. He was imprisoned in September 2000 after his four-year sentence was upheld by the appellate courts.

In the 2003 *Knesset* elections Shas won 11 seats. The party performed slightly better in 2006, gaining 12 seats, and Shas joined the *Kadima*-led coalition government formed by Prime Minister Olmert in May.

*Leaders:* Rabbi Ovadia YOSEF (Spiritual Leader), Eli YISHAI (Chair and Deputy Prime Minister).

**Pensioners Party** (*Gimla’ey Yisrael LaKnesset*—Gil). Gil’s primary concerns are domestic, and it pledges to protect pensioner rights, including the right to housing. It also advocates the enlargement of national health insurance and other services for pensioners. Gil stunned electoral observers in the 2006 *Knesset* poll by winning 7 seats with nearly 6 percent of the vote. The party’s ascent was underscored by its invitation to join the coalition government formed in May.

*Leader:* Rafael EITAN (Party Leader and Minister for Pensioner Affairs office).

**Israel is Our Home** (*Yisrael Beiteinu*). Founded in 1999 as a party representing the interests of immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union, *Yisrael Beiteinu* is led by Avigdor Lieberman, a former minister of the Sharon government. Adopting a hard-line stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the party won 4 seats in the

May 1999 *Knesset* balloting with 2.6 percent of the vote, subsequently forming a single *Knesset* faction with the National Union (see below). However, in the 2006 *Knesset* polling *Yisrael Beiteinu* left the National Union coalition and campaigned on its own. It performed strongly and won 11 seats with 9 percent of the vote. The party joined the *Kadima*-led coalition government in October 2006, with Lieberman heading the new strategic affairs ministry.

*Leaders:* Avigdor LIEBERMAN, Yuri STERN.

### *Opposition Parties*

**Unity–National Liberal Party** (*Likud–Liberalim Leumi*). Its “Unity” rubric reflecting its contention that Israel was entitled to all land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, *Likud* was formed under the leadership of Menachem Begin in September 1973 in an effort to break the legislative monopoly of the Labor Alignment (see ILP, above). Joining in the grouping were the Herut-Liberal Bloc (*Gush Herut-Liberalim—Gahal*), composed of the *Herut* (Freedom) and Liberal parties, and the Integral Land of Israel movement. Peace to Zion (*Schlomzion*), Ariel Sharon’s small right-wing party, entered *Likud* after the 1977 election. Although often maintaining a common outlook in regard to captured territory, the constituent parties subsequently differed somewhat on domestic policy, though theoretically tending to favor the denationalization of certain industries in the context of a free-enterprise philosophy.

In September 1985 *La’am* (For the Nation), a *Likud* faction that had been launched in 1969 from Rafi (a 1965 offshoot of Mapai, see ILP, above) by former prime minister David Ben-Gurion as the State List, merged with *Herut*. Prior to the 1988 election, two additional groups merged with *Likud*: the Movement for Economic Recovery/Courage (*Ometz*), founded in early 1984 by former Mapai member Yigael HURWITZ, and the Movement for Israel’s Tradition (*Tenuat Masoret Yisrael—Tami*), an Oriental orthodox party founded in 1981 as an offshoot of the NRP by Aharon ABU-HAZEIRA.

Relations between *Likud* leader Benjamin Netanyahu and former foreign minister David Levy became tense following the latter’s loss to Netanyahu in the March 1993 party election. In early 1995 the situation worsened further, with Levy insisting that the adoption of a primary system to choose party candidates for the next election would marginalize the numerically dominant Sephardi community, of which he was a member. As a result, Levy formed a new party—*Gesher*—although he subsequently supported Netanyahu in the May 1996 prime ministerial balloting. *Likud* also agreed to present joint candidates with *Gesher* and *Tzomet* for the concurrent *Knesset* balloting on a platform that emphasized “security” as the “first condition” in any peace agreement and opposed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as well as “land-for-peace” negotiations with Syria regarding the Golan Heights.

Surprising many observers, Netanyahu won the 1996 prime ministerial election with 50.5 percent of the vote. At the same time, the *Likud/Gesher/Tzomet* alliance garnered 25.1 percent of the *Knesset* votes, thereby securing 32 seats, 22 of which went to *Likud* under the formula previously established with its electoral partners. Meanwhile, within *Likud* the most contentious issue involved a cabinet post for Sharon, who had reportedly agreed not to challenge Netanyahu for party supremacy in return for a major ministry in the event of a *Likud* victory. Last-minute negotiations finally produced agreement on the creation of a new ministry of national infrastructure for Sharon, who became one of eight *Likud* members to join Netanyahu in the new cabinet. However, friction between Netanyahu and Sharon continued, as evidenced by Sharon’s vote against the new Israeli/Palestinian accord when it was presented to the cabinet for approval by Netanyahu in January 1997. Benjamin Begin, Menachem Begin’s son and a longtime opponent of territorial negotiations with the Palestinians, also voted against the agreement and resigned as minister of science to protest Netanyahu’s decisions in the matter.

In June 1997 Finance Minister Dan MERIDOR, seen as a rival to Netanyahu within *Likud*, resigned

his cabinet post, the fissure representing, in the opinion of many observers, growing disenchantment among some party faithful over a perceived lack of influence upon national policy. Potential factionalization was also apparent at the November party convention when Netanyahu's supporters pushed through a change whereby the former primary system for choosing legislative candidates was replaced by selection by the Central Committee, dominated by Netanyahu loyalists.

In January 1999 Netanyahu was named as *Likud's* candidate for prime minister, securing 82 percent of the primary vote against Moshe ARENS. (Arens, one of Netanyahu's mentors and a former defense minister, had challenged Netanyahu in order to "stop the hemorrhaging" within the party.) By that time, several prominent *Likud* dissenters had defected to the new Center Party (below), while Benjamin Begin had founded his own party (see *New Herut*, below, under *New Freedom*) and decided to run for prime minister against Netanyahu.

Following his loss to Labor's Ehud Barak in the May 1999 balloting for prime minister, Netanyahu resigned as *Likud's* leader. He was succeeded on an interim basis by Sharon, who was elected in a permanent capacity on September 3 with 53 percent support of the party membership over two other candidates. Netanyahu declined to challenge Sharon for the party's nomination for prime minister in the February 2001 election. However, in mid-2002 he positioned himself for another run at *Likud* leadership, his supporters sponsoring a resolution that was approved by the Central Committee stating that the party would never support the creation of an independent Palestinian state. However, Sharon easily defeated Netanyahu in the November 28 leadership balloting. Despite their often bitter previous history, Netanyahu was named finance minister in the cabinet appointed in February 2003.

Although Sharon had survived several confrontations with dissident *Likud* members opposed to his plan for unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip (which took place in August 2005), he left *Likud* in November and launched *Kadima*. Benjamin Netanyahu assumed leadership of *Likud* after Sharon's departure, winning an internal party

ballot held in December 2005. *Likud's* electoral fortunes were severely compromised by the launching of *Kadima*, and *Likud* won only 12 seats in the March 2006 *Knesset* balloting (down from 39 seats in 2003) on a vote share of 9 percent. However, Netanyahu easily won reelection as party leader in an August 2007 vote against far-right candidate Moshe FEIGLIN, a West Bank settler. Netanyahu immediately announced his intention to pursue a return to the prime ministership at the next election, and subsequent popularity polls showed him leading all other potential candidates in that regard.

*Leader:* Benjamin NETANYAHU (Chair), Reuven RIVLIN (2007 presidential candidate).

**National Religious Party**—NRP (*Miflegat Datit Leumit*—Mafdal). Dedicated to the principles of religious Zionism, the NRP was formed in 1956 through the union of two older organizations, *Mizrahi* and the *Mizrahi Workers (Hapoel Hamizrahi)*. The NRP subsequently evolved into a militantly nationalist group calling for outright annexation of the West Bank.

Formerly allied with Labor, the NRP went into opposition following the 1973 election because of a dispute over religious policy, but it subsequently reentered the government. In December 1976 Prime Minister Rabin ousted the three NRP cabinet members after nine of the party's ten legislative deputies had abstained on a no-confidence vote, thus precipitating a government crisis that led to a call for the May 1977 election. On the eve of the 1977 balloting, the NRP concluded a coalition with *Likud*, subsequently participating in the Begin government formed on June 20. The arrangement continued after the 1981 election, at which the NRP's representation fell from 12 to 6 seats. The electoral decline continued through 1984, when the NRP won only 4 seats.

Prior to the 1988 balloting (at which it won five seats) the NRP absorbed Heritage (*Morasha*), a religious grouping formed prior to the 1984 election by merger of the Rally of Religious Zionism (*Miflegat Tzionut Dati*—Matzad) with the Agudat Israel Workers (*Poalei Agudat Yisrael*). The party's legislative strength grew to six in 1992 and nine



in 1996, and it secured two seats in the June 1996 government.

Underscoring the tenuous nature of the alliance between *Likud* and the ultra-religious parties, the NRP ministers voted against Prime Minister Netanyahu in January 1997 when the recent Israeli/Palestinian agreement was presented to the cabinet. Zevulun HAMMER, longtime chair of the NRP and deputy prime minister in the Netanyahu cabinet, died in January 1998. He was succeeded as minister of education and culture and party chair by Yitzhak LEVY, the NRP secretary general. The NRP, by then considered the primary political voice of the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, strongly opposed the Wye agreement of October 1998, contributing significantly to the subsequent collapse of the Netanyahu government. The NRP secured five seats in the May 1999 *Knesset* balloting on a vote share of 4.2 percent. It left the new Barak government in mid-2000 in protest over discussion of the possible return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Effi Eitam, a brigadier general in the national reserves, succeeded Levy as NRP chair in April 2002 as the NRP prepared to join the Sharon government. In the 2003 *Knesset* poll the NRP won six seats, and the party again joined Prime Minister Sharon's government. However, Sharon's plan to disengage unilaterally from Gaza subsequently split the NRP, some of whose *Knesset* members joined the National Union in February 2005. In the 2006 poll the NRP campaigned on a joint list with the National Union, with the combined slate winning nine seats on a 7 percent of the vote.

*Leaders:* Zevulun ORLEV (Chair), Effi EITAM, Shalom JERBI (Secretary General).

**National Union** (*Halchud HaLeumi*). Formed as an electoral alliance in early 1999 by *Moledet*, *Tequma* (see below), and New *Herut*, the right-wing National Union won 4 seats (*Moledet*, 2; *Tequma*, 1; and New *Herut*, 1) in the May *Knesset* elections on the strength of 3 percent of the vote. Shortly thereafter, the National Union formed a joint *Knesset* faction with *Yisrael Beiteinu*, although the New *Herut* legislator objected to that initiative, and New *Herut* left the National Union.

The National Union–*Yisrael Beiteinu* (NU–YB) faction joined the Sharon government in March 2001 but subsequently found itself to the right even of Sharon regarding the Palestinian question. On October 15 the NU–YB ministers, including Tourism Minister Rechavam Zeevi of *Moledet*, announced their intention to resign from the cabinet. However, that decision was temporarily rescinded after Ze'evi was assassinated on October 17 by Palestinian militants. In March 2002 the NU–YB finally left the coalition, subsequent efforts by Sharon failing to persuade the ultra-rightists to return. In 2003 the NU–YB won seven seats in the *Knesset* election. In February 2005 two members of the NRP joined the National Union in protest at what they saw as the NRP's lack of robust opposition to Ariel Sharon's Gaza disengagement plan. The Renewed Religious National Zionist Party, constituting former NRP *Knesset* members, formed a coalition with *Moledet* and *Tequma* under the National Union umbrella. In 2006 this combined National Union coalition (without *Yisrael Beiteinu*) ran with the NRP on one slate, winning a total of nine seats.

*Leader:* Benjamin ELON (Chair).

**Homeland** (*Moledet*). *Moledet* is an ultra-Zionist secular party founded in 1988 by a reserve major general, Rechavam ZEEVI, who called for annexation of the occupied territories and the ouster of their Arab inhabitants. In a controversial move that was opposed by several senior ministers, Ze'evi was appointed to the Shamir cabinet in February 1991, but the party went into opposition after the 1992 election, at which it increased its representation from two to three seats. In early July 1994 plans were announced for a merger of *Moledet* with the equally right-wing Renaissance (*Tehiya*) party. (For additional information on *Tehiya*, see the 2007 *Handbook*.)

*Moledet* won two seats in the 1996 *Knesset* balloting. Initially it was reported that the party was considering adopting a position of support for the government from outside the cabinet. However, that premise had collapsed by the end

of the year, with the *Moledet* legislators presenting a token no-confidence motion in December to protest the government's negotiations regarding further troop withdrawals in the occupied territories.

*Leader:* Benjamin ELON (Chair).

**Revival** (*Tequma*). Launched in late 1998 by spiritual leaders and activists among Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, *Tequma* subsequently joined the National Union electoral coalition with *Moledet* and *New Herut*, the right-wing parties having concluded they all would face difficulty passing the 1.5 percent vote threshold for *Knesset* representation running individually.

*Leaders:* Rabbi Menahem FELIBUS, Uri ARIEL, Benny KATZOVER, Zvi HENDEL.

**Renewed Religious National Zionist Party.**

This group is a right-wing religious Zionist party that split from the NRP prior to the 2006 *Knesset* elections and joined *Tequma* and *Moledet* in the National Union.

*Leaders:* Ephraim EITAM, Yitzhak LEVY.

**United Torah Judaism**—UTJ. Also known as the Orthodox Torah bloc, the UTJ was formed prior to the 1992 balloting as a coalition of the two parties below. It won four *Knesset* seats in 1992 and 1996, and one of its members was appointed deputy minister for housing and construction in the June 1996 Netanyahu government. The UTJ won five seats in the May 1999 legislative balloting on a vote share of 3.7 percent and subsequently agreed to support the Barak government in the *Knesset*, albeit without cabinet representation. The UTJ was given several deputy ministerial posts in the Sharon government in March 2001 but lost those positions in May 2002 when the UTJ opposed Sharon's emergency budget cuts. (Rabbi Eliezer SHACH, the longtime spiritual leader of the UTJ as well as its two component groupings, died in November 2001.)

The UTJ won five seats (on a vote share of 4.3 percent) in the 2003 *Knesset* balloting but resisted repeated invitations to join Sharon's subsequent coalition governments because of the presence of

*Shinui* in the cabinet. However, after *Shinui* fell out with *Likud* in late 2004, the UTJ agreed to join the cabinet formed in January 2005. The two factions of UTJ briefly split in 2005 but reunited in time for the 2006 poll, in which the party won six seats on 4.7 percent of the vote.

*Leaders:* Meir PORUSH (*Agudat Yisrael*), Rabbi Avraham RAVITZ (*Degel Hatorah*).

**Union of Israel** (*Agudat Yisrael*). A formerly anti-Zionist orthodox religious party, *Agudat Yisrael* was allied prior to the May 1977 election with the *Poalei Agudat Yisrael* in the United Torah Front, which called for strict observance of religious law and introduced the no-confidence motion that led to Prime Minister Rabin's resignation in December 1976. The party's *Knesset* representation fell from four in 1981 to two in 1984 as a result of the loss of Oriental Jewish votes to the recently organized Shas. After winning five seats in 1988, *Agudat Yisrael* declined government representation at full ministerial level but agreed to the appointment of one of its representatives as deputy minister of labor and social affairs. It accepted a Jerusalem Affairs portfolio in November 1990 after Prime Minister Shamir had agreed to endorse a number of its legislative objectives. *Agudat Yisrael* members secured four of the six seats that UTJ won in the 2006 *Knesset* polling.

*Leaders:* Meir PORUSH, Ya'acov LITZMAN.

**Torah Flag** (*Degel Hatorah*). Formed in 1988 by a group of *Agudat Yisrael* dissidents, the *Degel Hatorah* is a non-Zionist ultra-orthodox religious party that captured two *Knesset* seats at the 1988 poll. Its members secured two of the six *Knesset* seats won by the UTJ in the 2006 *Knesset* polling.

*Leaders:* Rabbi Avraham RAVITZ, Moshi GAFNI.

**Movement for Israel and Immigration** (*Yisrael B'Aliya*). *Yisrael B'Aliya* was originally launched in 1992 as the National Movement for Democracy and Aliya ("ingathering") as a means

of promoting the economic well-being of the ex-Soviet immigrant community. *Yisrael B'Aliya* won six seats in the May 1999 legislative balloting on a vote share of 5.1 percent. After joining the subsequent Barak government, it left the cabinet in early August 2000 in opposition to consideration being given to a possible return of the Golan Heights to Syria. The party was awarded cabinet seats in the new Sharon government in early 2001, with Natan SHARANSKY serving as deputy prime minister. Following the poor showing of *Yisrael B'Aliya* in the January 2003 *Knesset* balloting (two seats on a 2.2 percent vote share), Sharansky resigned his cabinet post with the stated goal of “rebuilding” the party. However, it was quickly announced that the deputies from *Yisrael B'Aliya* would “merge” with the *Likud* faction in the *Knesset*. Sharansky was subsequently named minister for diaspora affairs, but he resigned that post in May 2005 to protest Sharon’s disengagement plan. *Yisrael B'Aliya* finally merged with *Likud* before the 2006 *Knesset* poll, and its former leader Sharansky subsequently served as a *Likud* representative in the *Knesset* before announcing his retirement from politics in October 2006.

**Power–Democratic Israel** (*Meretz–Yisrael Democrati*). *Meretz* was formed prior to the 1992 election as a coalition of the Civil Rights and Peace Movement—CRM (*ha-Tenua le-Zechouot ha-Ezrakh*—Ratz), the United Workers’ Party (*Mifletet Hapoalim Hamenchedet*—Mapam), and *Shinui*. The *Meretz* platform called for a phased peace settlement with the Palestinians, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, based on withdrawal from the occupied territories and guarantees for the security of Israel through interim agreements, security arrangements, and demilitarization. It also advocated religious pluralism, liberalization of the “law of return,” the adoption of a bill of rights, equal status for women, and strict enforcement of anti-pollution legislation. *Meretz* won 12 *Knesset* seats in 1992 and 9 (Ratz, 4; Mapam, 3; and *Shinui*, 2) in 1996, having prior to the latter endorsed the creation of an independent Palestinian state and “land-for-peace” negotiations with Syria.

In February 1996 it was reported that Yossi SARID, a Ratz member and (then) environmental minister in the Peres cabinet, had been elected to succeed Shulamit ALONI as *Meretz* chair. In early 1999 Ratz and Mapam agreed to a formal merger of their groupings, with *Meretz* becoming a political party rather than a coalition. Some *Shinui* members also participated in that initiative, although *Shinui* ultimately retained its own identity and campaigned on its own for the May 1999 *Knesset* elections, at which *Meretz* won ten seats on a vote share of 7.6 percent.

*Meretz* won six seats in the 2003 *Knesset* balloting on a vote share of 5.2 percent. Subsequently, it was announced that *Meretz* would merge with several other left-wing groups to form a new party, known as *Meretz-Yahad* (“Together”), which opposed Prime Minister Sharon’s disengagement plan, calling instead for negotiations with the Palestinians toward a comprehensive settlement. Party leaders hoped to draw support from disaffected ILP members. However, in the 2006 *Knesset* election *Meretz-Yahad* won only five seats (on a 3.8 percent vote share), one less than *Meretz* had won in 2003 and just half of the representation it had after the 1999 election.

*Leaders*: Yossi BEILIN (Chair), Yaron SHOR (Secretary General).

**United Arab List**—UAL. The UAL was formed prior to the 1996 *Knesset* elections by Arab groups hoping to increase the electoral clout of the estimated 1 million Israeli Arabs by presenting a joint list of candidates. Although reports agreed that one core component of the new grouping was the **Arab Democratic Party**, there was confusion regarding other participants. Israeli government publications said that the other two components of the UAL were the **Islamic Movement in Israel** and an **Arab Islamic List**.

The UAL won four seats in the 1996 balloting, as several other Arab groupings apparently decided to present their own candidates. The UAL increased its representation in the May 1999 *Knesset* election to five seats on the strength of 3.4 percent of the vote but fell to two seats in 2003. In the 2006 *Knesset*

election, the UAL ran on a single list with the **Arab Movement for Change**, led by Ahmed Tibi. The combined grouping won four seats with just over 3 percent of the vote.

*Leader:* Ibrahim SARSUR.

**Democratic Front for Peace and Equality** — DFPE (*Hazit Democratit le-Shalom ve-Shivayon—Hadash*). The Democratic Front was organized prior to the 1977 election to present candidates drawn from the former New Communist List (*Rashima Kommunistit Hadasha—Rakah*), a section of the “Black Panther” movement of Oriental Jews, and a number of unaffiliated local Arab leaders. The DFPE retained its existing four *Knesset* seats in 1988, lost one in 1992, rebounded to five in 1996 (campaigning on behalf of an independent Palestinian state and “equality” for Israeli Arabs), and fell back to three in 1999 on a 2.6 percent vote share. The party retained its three seats in the 2003 and 2006 *Knesset* elections.

*Leaders:* Muhammad BAREKA, Awdah BISHARAT (Secretary General).

**National Democratic Alliance** (*Balad*). This pro-Arab grouping is led by Azmi Bishara, a former member of Rakah who had been elected to the *Knesset* in 1996 on the Hadash list. In March 1999 Bishara, a Christian, announced his candidacy for prime minister, thereby potentially becoming the first non-Jew to run for that post. *Balad* campaigned primarily in opposition to perceived government discrimination against Israeli Arabs. It was subsequently reported that Ahmed TIBI, a Palestinian leader, had associated his Arab Movement for Change with *Balad*. Formed in early 1996 by Tibi (described as an adviser to Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat), the movement was one of the groupings expected to participate in the UAL. However, according to government publications, it presented its own candidates (unsuccessfully) in the 1996 *Knesset* elections before aligning with *Balad* for the 1999 balloting.

Bishara withdrew from the prime minister’s race shortly before the May 17, 1999, balloting; he did not specifically endorse Labor’s Ehud Barak, but most Bishara supporters were expected to vote for

Barak. *Balad* won two seats (filled by Bishara and Tibi) in the concurrent *Knesset* election. The *Knesset* stripped Bishara of his parliamentary immunity in November 2001, and the *Balad* leader went on trial in February 2002 on charges of “incitement to violence” by, among other things, a speech he had given in Syria supporting “popular resistance” on the part of Palestinians. (The charges were subsequently dropped after the courts ruled that Bishara’s immunity had been in place when the statements were made.)

The Israeli government was unsuccessful in its efforts to have *Balad* disqualified from the 2003 *Knesset* balloting, at which *Balad* secured three seats on a 2.3 percent vote share. In 2006 *Balad* again won 3 seats. However, in April 2007 Bishara (by then resident abroad) reportedly resigned his *Knesset* seat after Israeli police confirmed that they were investigating him on suspicion of having “aided an enemy” during the 2006 war between Israel and *Hezbollah* in Lebanon. (Bishara had denounced Israel’s actions in that conflict.)

*Leader:* Azmi BISHARA.

### *Other Parties that Participated in the 2006 Knesset Elections*

**Change** (*Shinui*). The original *Shinui* movement under Amnon RUBINSTEIN joined in November 1976 with the Democratic Movement of former army chief of staff Yigael Yadin to form the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC), which, with 15 seats, emerged as the third largest party at the 1977 election, after which it supported the Begin government. Following a split in the DMC in September 1978, the *Shinui* group and supporters of (then) Transport and Communications Minister Meir AMIT withdrew to form the opposition Change and Initiative (*Shinui ve Yozma—Shai*). The DMC was formally dissolved in February 1981, its remnants regrouping with supporters of Shai to contest the June election under the *Shinui* label. A member of the national unity government after the 1984 balloting, *Shinui* withdrew from the coalition in May 1987. It presented a joint list with the New Liberal Party in 1988.

Two *Shinui* members were elected to the *Knesset* in 1996 as part of *Meretz*. However, *Shinui* in early 1999 opted to contest the upcoming *Knesset* balloting on its own under the leadership of Tommy LAPID, a political commentator and television personality who accepted the *Shinui* chairmanship in March. *Shinui*'s subsequent campaign was primarily devoted to opposing the increasing influence of ultra-orthodox parties. It secured six seats in the May 1999 *Knesset* balloting on a vote share of 5 percent. *Shinui* subsequently maintained a position of refusing to join any government that included any ultra-orthodox parties. Lapid resigned from the party in early 2006, and a number of *Shinui* members reportedly joined *Kadima*. The rump *Shinui* received only 4,675 votes in the March *Knesset* balloting.

*Leader:* Ron LEVANTAL.

**Crossroads** (*Tzomet*). Also known as the Zionist Revival Movement, *Tzomet* was formed by the defection of former army chief of staff Rafael Eitan from *Tehiya* prior to the 1988 balloting, at which it won two *Knesset* seats; *Tzomet* won eight seats in 1992 but split in 1994, when two of its legislators defected to form a separate faction, which in June took the name *Yiud* and subsequently joined the Labor coalition. *Tzomet* joined *Likud* and *Gesher* in an electoral coalition in early 1996, supporting Benjamin Netanyahu for prime minister and presenting joint *Knesset* candidates. *Tzomet* was allocated five of the *Knesset* seats won by the alliance in May, and Eitan was named deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture and rural development in the new cabinet formed in June. As was the case with several other ministers from hard-line groupings, Eitan voted against the accord providing for additional Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank when it was presented to the cabinet in January 1997. *Tzomet* contested the 1999 *Knesset* balloting on its own, securing only 0.1 percent of the vote. Former *Tzomet* leader Rafael EITAN drowned in November 2004. *Tzomet* won only 1,509 votes in the 2006 *Knesset* poll.

*Leader:* Moshe GREEN.

**New Freedom** (*Herut Hahadasha*). New *Herut* was launched in 1998 by former *Likud* member Benjamin (Benny) BEGIN as a revival of the original *Herut*, which had been formed in the 1970s by his father, Menachem Begin. Benjamin Begin, a steadfast opponent of any "land-for-peace" agreement with the Palestinians, subsequently announced his candidacy for the prime ministerial election of May 1999. He also was a leading figure in the formation of the right-wing National Union electoral coalition with *Moledet* and *Tequma* for the concurrent *Knesset* balloting. However, Begin, who had withdrawn his prime ministerial candidacy shortly before the balloting, resigned his National Union leadership post following the election and retired from politics. New *Herut* left the National Union when the Union agreed to form a single *Knesset* faction with *Yisrael Beiteinu*, the New *Herut* legislator thereby becoming a single-member faction. The party won less than 0.1 percent of the vote in the 2006 *Knesset* balloting.

*Leader:* Michael KLEINER

Other parties that presented candidates in 2006 included: the **Greens** (*Hayerukim*), an environmental grouping that won 1.5 percent of the vote under the leadership of Peer WEISNER; the left-wing **Green-Leaf** (*Ale-Yarok*) party (1.2 percent of the vote), a grouping led by Boaz WACHTEL that promotes, among other things, the liberalization of marijuana laws; *Hetz* (0.3 percent), a religiously liberal, pro-market grouping led by Avraham PORAZ; the **National Arab Party** (less than 0.1 percent), led by Muhamad KANAN; *Tafnit* (0.5 percent) an anticorruption grouping led by Uzi DAYAN; *Brit Olam* (0.1 percent), led by Ofer LIFSCHITZ; the **Workers' Party** (0.1 percent), led by Agvaria ASAMA; the **National Jewish Front** (0.8 percent), led by Baruch MARZEL; **New Zionism** (less than 0.1 percent), led by Yaakov KFIR; **One Future** (0.4 percent), led by Avraham NEGUSA; the **Party for the Struggle with the Banks** (0.1 percent), led by Elizer LEVINGER; **Strength to the Poor** (less than 0.1 percent), led by Felix ANGEL; **LECHEM** (less than 0.1 percent), led by Yisrael TVITO; **LEEDER** (less than

0.1 percent), led by Alexander RADKO; **LEV** (less than 0.1 percent), led by Ovadia FATCHOV; and **Justice for All** (*Tsedek Lakol*; 0.1 percent), led by Yaakov SHLUSSER.

### *Other Parties*

**Center Party.** Formed in mid-1998 by Ronni MILO, a former mayor of Tel Aviv who had recently left *Likud* in opposition to the policies of Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Center Party subsequently attracted the support of other *Likud* dissenters, such as former finance minister Dan Meridor, as well as independents, such as Amnon LIPKIN-SHARAK, a former chief of the general staff of the Israeli Defense Force. Prior to joining the Center Party, Lipkin-Sharak had announced his intention to run for prime minister against Netanyahu. It initially appeared that Lipkin-Sharak would become the Center Party's nominee, but that designation ultimately went to Itzhak MORDECHAI, who joined the party shortly after being dismissed as defense minister by Netanyahu in January 1999. (The four prominent politicians in the Center Party had reportedly agreed to determine the strongest potential nominee among themselves and coalesce behind his candidacy.) Mordechai, arguing that Netanyahu was "incapable" of producing a permanent peace settlement, was attracting the support of about 25 percent of the voters, according to preelection public opinion polls. However, he withdrew from the race shortly before the election, throwing his support to Labor's Ehud Barak.

The Center Party won six seats in the May 1999 *Knesset* balloting on a vote share of 5 percent. It joined the original Barak cabinet but withdrew in August 2000. It joined the Sharon government in August 2001. In mid-2002 it was reported that several Center Party legislators were considering a return to *Likud*. Party leader Meridor also subsequently rejoined *Likud*, and the Center Party was subsequently described as defunct.

### *Banned Party*

**Kahane Lives** (*Kahane Chai*). *Kahane Chai* is a derivative of Thus (*Kach*), which served as the

political vehicle of Rabbi Meir KAHANE, founder of the U.S.-based Jewish Defense League. *Kach* elected its leader to the *Knesset* in 1984, after having competed unsuccessfully in 1977 and 1981. Linked to the activities of the anti-Arab "Jewish underground," the group advocated the forcible expulsion of Palestinians from both Israel and the occupied territories. It was precluded from submitting a *Knesset* list in October 1988, when the High Court of Justice ruled in favor of an Election Commission finding that it was "racist" and "undemocratic." Kahane was assassinated in New York in November 1990, with a number of his followers, including his son, Rabbi Binyamin Zeev KAHANE, subsequently forming *Kahane Chai*.

Baruch GOLDSTEIN, the Jewish settler who killed 29 Muslim worshippers at a Hebron mosque on February 25, 1994, was a Kahane disciple. Three weeks later, on March 13, the Israeli cabinet voted to ban both *Kach* and *Kahane Chai*, although a subsequent official report on the incident found that Goldstein had acted alone.

Binyamin Kahane and his wife were killed in late December 2000 in a drive-by shooting allegedly conducted by Palestinian militants. In late 2001 the United States added *Kahane Chai* to its list of terrorist organizations, despite objections from the Israeli government. *Kahane Chai* was subsequently described as "highly visible" among Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

## Legislature

The *Knesset* (Assembly or Congregation) is a unicameral legislature of 120 members elected by universal suffrage for four-year terms (subject to dissolution either by the *Knesset* itself or the prime minister [with the consent of the president]). The members are elected on a nationwide proportional basis, each voter casting one vote for the party or coalition of his or her choice. (The minimum vote percentage for a party to gain representation was raised from 1 percent to 1.5 percent in 1992 and to 2.0 percent in 2006.)

At the most recent balloting on March 28, 2006, the newly formed *Kadima* secured a

## Cabinet

As of November 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Ehud Olmert ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Vice Prime Ministers	Haim Ramon ( <i>Kadima</i> ) Tzipi Livni ( <i>Kadima</i> ) [f]
Deputy Prime Ministers	Ehud Barak (Labor) Avigdor Lieberman ( <i>Yisrael Beiteinu</i> ) Gen. Shaul Mofaz ( <i>Kadima</i> ) Eli Yishai (Shas)

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Rural Development	Shalom Simhon (Labor)
Communications	Ariel Atias (Shas)
Defense	Ehud Barak (Labor)
Development of the Negev and Galilee	Yaakov Edri ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Education	Yael Tamir (Labor) [f]
Environmental Protection	Gideon Ezra ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Finance	Roni Bar-On ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Foreign Affairs	Tzipi Livni ( <i>Kadima</i> ) [f]
Health	Yaacov Ben Izri (Gil)
Housing and Construction	Zeev Boim ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Immigrant Absorption	Yaakov Edri ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Industry, Trade, and Labor	Eli Yishai (Shas)
Interior	Meir Sheetrit ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Internal (Public) Security	Avraham Dichter ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Justice	Daniel Friedman (ind.)
National Infrastructures	Benjamin Ben-Eliezer (Labor)
Pensioner Affairs Office	Rafael Eitan (Gil)
Science, Culture, and Sport	Raleb Majadele (Labor)
Social Affairs and Social Services	Yitzhak Herzog (Labor)
Strategic Affairs	Avigdor Lieberman ( <i>Yisrael Beiteinu</i> )
Tourism	Yizhak Aharonovitch ( <i>Yisrael Beiteinu</i> )
Transportation and Road Safety	Gen. Shaul Mofaz ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Welfare	Ehud Olmert ( <i>Kadima</i> )
Without Portfolio	Ami Ayalon (Labor) Yitzhak Cohen (Shas) Meshulam Nahari (Shas)

[f] = female

plurality of 29 seats followed by the coalition of the Israel Labor Party and *Meimad*, 19; the Sephardic Torah Guardians (Shas), 12; *Likud*, 12; *Yisrael Beiteinu*, 11; the joint list of the National Union and the National Religious Party, 9; the Pensioners Party, 7; United Torah Judaism,

6; *Meretz-Yahad*, 5; the coalition of the United Arab List and the Arab Movement for Renewal, 4; the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (*Hadash*), 3; and the National Democratic Alliance (*Balad*), 3.

*Speaker:* Dalia ITZIK.

## Communications

Israeli newspapers are numerous and diversified, although many of the leading dailies reflect partisan or religious interests. Censorship is largely on national security grounds.

### *Press*

The following are dailies published in Hebrew at Tel Aviv, unless otherwise noted: *Yedioth Aharonoth* (300,000 daily, 600,000 Friday), independent; *Ma'ariv* (160,000 daily, 270,000 Friday), independent; *Ha'aretz* (65,000 daily, 75,000 Friday), independent liberal; *al-Quds* (Jerusalem, 50,000), in Arabic; *Davar* (39,000 daily, 43,000 Friday), General Federation of Labor organ; *Jerusalem Post* (Jerusalem, 30,000 daily, 50,000 Friday, not including North American edition published weekly at New York), in English; *Globes* (29,000), business organ; *Hatzofeh* (16,000), National Religious Front organ; *Hamodia* (Jerusalem, 15,000), *Agudat Yisrael* organ. There are also smaller dailies published in Arabic, Bulgarian, French, German, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, voweled Hebrew, and Yiddish.

### *News Agencies*

The domestic agency is the News Agency of the Associated Israel Press (*Itonut Yisrael Me'uchedet*—ITIM); numerous foreign bureaus also maintain offices in Israel, including the Jewish Telegraphic Agency of New York.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The commercial, government-controlled Israel Broadcasting Authority (*Reshut Hashidur Hayisra'elit*) provides local and national radio service over six programs, international radio service in 16 languages, and television service in Hebrew and Arabic. *Galei Zahal*, the radio station of the Israeli defense forces, broadcasts from Tel Aviv, as does the Israel Educational Television. As of 2005 there were approximately 734 personal computers and 244 Internet users for every 1,000 inhabitants. In

that same year there were about 112 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Sallai Moshe MERIDOR

**U.S. Ambassador to Israel:** Richard Henry JONES

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Dan GILLERMAN

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** BIS, EBRD, IADB, Interpol, IOM, PCA, WCO, WTO

## Occupied and Previously Occupied Territories

The largely desert Sinai Peninsula, encompassing some 23,000 square miles (59,600 sq. km.), was occupied by Israel during the 1956 war with Egypt but was subsequently evacuated under U.S. and UN pressure. It was reoccupied during the Six-Day War of 1967 and, except for a narrow western band bordering on Suez, was retained after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, signed in Washington, D.C., on March 26, 1979, provided for a phased withdrawal, two-thirds of which—to beyond a buffer zone running roughly from El Arish in the north to Ras Muhammad in the south—was completed by January 1980. Withdrawal from the remainder of the Sinai, to “the recognized international boundary between Egypt and the former mandated territory of Palestine,” was completed on April 25, 1982 (three years from the exchange of treaty ratification instruments), “without prejudice to the issue of the status of the Gaza Strip.”

Title to Taba, a small Israeli-occupied area adjoining the southern port of Eilat, was long disputed. A 1906 Anglo-Egyptian/Turkish agreement fixed the border as running through Taba itself. However, a 1915 British military survey (admitted to be imperfect) placed the border some three-quarters of a mile to the northeast. A decision to



submit the matter to arbitration was made during talks between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Alexandria in September 1986; two years later a five-member tribunal supported the Egyptian claim in regard to a boundary marker 150 yards inland from the shore, and in early 1989 Egypt acquired ownership of a luxury hotel on the beach itself, after agreeing to pay compensation to its owner.

### *Golan Heights*

The mountainous Golan Heights, embracing a natural barrier of some 600 square miles (1,550 sq. km.) at the juncture of Israel and Syria southeast of Lebanon, was occupied by Israel during the

1967 war. Its interim status (including demarcation of an eastern strip under UN administration) was set forth in a disengagement agreement concluded with Syria in May 1974. In an action condemned by many foreign governments, including that of the United States, the area under Israeli military control was formally made subject to Israeli “law, jurisdiction, and administration” on December 14, 1981. The Israeli-controlled area is largely Druze-populated, with a minority of Jewish settlers; the number of inhabitants in mid-2006 was approximately 40,000.

**Note:** For information on the Gaza Strip (formerly occupied by Israel) and the West Bank (which currently contains Israeli settlements as well as Palestinian-controlled areas) see the article on the Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization.

# JORDAN

## HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

*al-Mamlakah al-Urduniyah al-Hashimiyah*

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**Note:** In regularly scheduled elections for the lower House of Representatives on November 20, 2007, unofficial results indicated that the Islamic Action Front (IAF) won six seats, and supporters of King Abdullah II won an overwhelming majority. On November 22, the king named Nader al-Dahabi as the new prime minister. Al-Dahabi was expected to form a new government on November 25.

### The Country

Jordan, a nearly landlocked kingdom in the heart of the Middle East, is located on a largely elevated, rocky plateau that slopes downward to the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea, and the Gulf of Aqaba. Most of the land is desert, providing the barest grazing for the sheep and goats of Bedouin tribesmen, whose traditional nomadic lifestyle has largely been replaced by village settlement. With Israeli occupation in June 1967 of the territory on the West Bank of the Jordan River, the greater part of the country's arable area was lost. The population is mainly Arab, but numerous ethnic groups have intermixed with the indigenous inhabitants. Islam is the state religion, the majority being members of the Sunni sect. Less than 10 percent of Jordanian women are in the work force, mainly in subsistence activities and trading; more than half are illiterate (as compared with 16 percent of men), with the percentage of women enrolled in school dropping dramatically at marriage age. Although enfranchised in 1974, female participation in government has been minimal. Some cabinets have included several female appointees; in addition, a woman was elected to the House of Representatives for the first time in 1993. Although no women won a seat in elections held June 17, 2003, six women were appointed to the house under a February 2003 amended law reserving six seats for them.

Jordan's economy and its political life have been dominated over the past three decades by dislocations and uncertainties stemming from the Arab conflict with Israel. The original East Bank population of some 400,000 was swollen in 1948–1950 by the addition of large numbers of West Bank Palestinian Arabs and refugees from Israel, most



of them either settled agriculturalists or townspeople of radically different background and outlook from those of the seminomadic East Bankers. Additional displacements followed the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. The society has also been strained by a 3.5 percent annual natural increase in population, rapid urbanization, scarce water resources, and the frustrations of the unemployed refugees, many of whom have declined assimilation in the hope of returning to "Palestine." (It has recently been estimated that over 50 percent of the people currently residing in Jordan are of Palestinian origin, about two-thirds of them still formally considered refugees.)

Agricultural production is insufficient to feed the population and large quantities of foodstuffs (especially grain) have to be imported, while many of the refugees are dependent on rations distributed by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Major exports include phosphates, potash, and fertilizers. Manufacturing is dominated by production of import substitutes, mainly cement, some consumer goods, and processed foods.

Although it is not an oil-producing country, Jordan was greatly affected by the oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s. An estimated 350,000 Jordanians, including many professionals trained in one of the most advanced educational systems in the region, took lucrative jobs in wealthy Gulf states, their remittances contributing significantly to the home economy. Lower-paying jobs in Jordan were filled by foreign laborers, primarily Egyptians. However, the subsequent oil recession led to the repatriation of many Jordanians in addition to reduced assistance from other Arab countries. Consequently, the government agreed in April 1989 to an austerity program prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in return for \$100 million in standby funds and partial rescheduling of payments on its \$8 billion external debt. Conditions were subsequently strained further as the result of the influx of more than 300,000 Palestinians expelled from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia following the Gulf war of early 1991.

The government promoted its 1994 peace treaty with Israel as a crucial step toward economic development, and, indeed, the accord prompted an immediate influx of aid from the West, which had curtailed assistance because of Amman's stance during the 1990–1991 Gulf crisis and war. Although Jordan lost key export markets in Iraq, under UN sanctions, and on the West Bank during the 1990s, its economy benefited from trade with other Arab states. Exports to the United States have grown since a bilateral free trade agreement took effect in 2001. GDP growth of 5 percent was recorded in 2002, dipping to 3.2 percent in 2003 but outpacing population growth for the first time in years. Jordan's external debt, however, neared \$8 billion, further discouraging foreign investors who were already concerned about corruption in the public and private sectors. In 2004 the economy grew "at an exceptionally strong pace," according to the IMF, with real GDP growth of 7.7 percent. Despite the increasing budget deficit, a rapid increase in oil prices, and a significant decline in external grants, GDP growth declined only marginally (to 7.2 percent) in 2005; the unemployment rate was 15 percent. The IMF commended authorities for their controversial plan to eliminate fuel subsidies (see Current issues, below), urged reform of the tax system to bring in additional revenue, and cited the need for antiterrorism legislation to counter money laundering. Jordan's economic performance remained strong in 2006, the IMF citing the country's far-reaching structural reforms of the past ten years and "buoyant" domestic consumption and investment. External debt was considerably reduced, owing in part to increased exports. In 2007 the IMF commended the government for its plan to set a new public debt limit by 2011.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

The territory then known as Transjordan, which only included land east of the Jordan River, was carved out of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I, during which Arabs, with the

**Political Status:** Independent constitutional monarchy established May 25, 1946; present constitution adopted January 8, 1952.

**Area:** 34,495 sq. mi. (89,206 sq. km.), excluding West Bank territory of 2,270 sq. mi. (5,879 sq. km.).

**Population:** 4,139,458 (1994C); 5,583,000 (2006E). Both figures exclude Palestinians in the West Bank, over which Jordan abandoned de jure jurisdiction in 1988.

**Major Urban Center (2005E):** AMMAN (2,378,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (official rate November 2, 2007: 1 dinar = \$0.71US).

**Sovereign:** King ABDULLAH ibn Hussein (King Abdullah II); assumed the throne on February 7, 1999, following the death of King HUSSEIN ibn Talal; coronation ceremony held on June 9, 1999.

*Heir to the Throne:* Undesignated. Prince HAMZEH ibn Hussein, half-brother of the king, had been designated crown prince on February 7, 1999, but on November 28, 2004, Abdullah stripped him of the crown, making the king's eldest son, 11-year-old Hussein, heir apparent.

**Prime Minister:** Marouf BAKHET; appointed by the king on November 24, 2005, to succeed Adnan BADRAN and sworn in with the new government on November 27, 2005. (*See headnote.*)

assistance of British forces, had rebelled against Turkish rule. British administration of the region was formalized under a League of Nations Mandate, which also covered the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean (Palestine). Over the next two decades, gradual autonomy was granted to Transjordan under the leadership of ABDULLAH ibn Hussein, a member of the region's Hashemite dynasty who had been named emir by the British in 1921. Full independence came when Abdullah was proclaimed king and a new constitution was promulgated on May 25, 1946, although

special treaty relationships with Britain were continued until 1957. The country adopted its current name in 1949, its boundary having expanded into the West Bank under an armistice concluded with Israel, with which Arab states had been in conflict since Britain relinquished its Palestinian mandate in 1948.

Following the assassination of Abdullah in 1951 and the deposition of his son TALAL in 1952, Talal's son HUSSEIN ascended the throne at the age of 16 and was crowned king on May 2, 1953. Hussein's turbulent reign was subsequently marked by the loss of all territory west of the Jordan River in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (see Israel map, p. 630), assassination and coup attempts by intransigent Arab nationalist elements in Jordan and abroad, and intermittent efforts to achieve a limited *modus vivendi* with Israel. The most serious period of internal tension after the 1967 war involved relations with the Palestinian commando (*fedayeen*) organizations, which began to use Jordanian territory as a base for operations against Israel. In 1970 in what became known as Black September, a virtual civil war ensued between commando and royalist armed forces, with the *fedayeen* ultimately being expelled, primarily to Lebanon, in mid-1971. The expulsion led to the suspension of aid to Jordan by Kuwait and other Arab governments; it was restored following Jordan's nominal participation in the 1973 war against Israel.

In accordance with a decision reached during the October 1974 Arab summit conference in Rabat, Morocco, to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, King Hussein announced that the PLO would thenceforth have responsibility for the West Bank but stopped short of formally relinquishing his kingdom's claim to the territory. The Jordanian government was subsequently reorganized to exclude most Palestinian representatives, and the National Assembly, whose lower house contained 30 West Bank members, entered what was to become a ten-year period of inactivity (see Legislature, below).

In a move toward reconciliation with Palestinian elements, King Hussein met in Cairo in March

1977 with PLO leader Yasir ARAFAT, a subsequent meeting occurring in Jordan immediately after the September 1978 Camp David accords. In March 1979 the two met again near Amman and agreed to form a joint committee to coordinate opposition to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, while in December the king named Sharif Abd al-Hamid SHARAF to replace Mudar BADRAN as head of a new government that also included six West Bank Palestinians. Sharaf's death on July 3, 1980, resulted in the elevation of Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Qasim al-RIMAWI, whose incumbency ended on August 28 by the reappointment of Badran. Following a breakdown of negotiations with Arafat in April 1983 over possible peace talks with Israel and a continued deceleration in economic growth, the king reconvened the National Assembly on January 9, 1984, and secured its assent to the replacement of deceased West Bank deputies in the lower house. The next day the king appointed Interior Minister and former intelligence chief Ahmed OBEIDAT to succeed Badran as prime minister in a cabinet reshuffle that increased Palestinian representation to 9 members out of 20. Obeidat resigned on April 4, 1985, the king naming Zaid al-RIFAI as his successor.

In mid-1988, after the outbreak of the *intifada* and following an Arab League call for PLO governance of the West Bank, Hussein abruptly severed all "legal and administrative" links to it, discontinued the five-year (1986–1990) aid package for its Palestinian population, and dissolved the House of Representatives. Subsequently, a declared intention to elect a house composed exclusively of East Bank members was suspended pending amendments to the electoral law.

On April 24, 1989, Prime Minister Rifai resigned because of widespread rioting in response to price increases imposed as part of the IMF-mandated austerity program. Three days later a new government, headed by Field Marshal Sharif Zaid ibn SHAKER (theretofore Chief of the Royal Court), was announced, with a mandate to prepare for a parliamentary balloting.

On November 8, 1989, following a campaign revealing continued support for the monarchy but

intolerance of martial law and government corruption, Jordan held its first national election in 22 years. Urban fundamentalist and leftist candidates won impressive victories, generating concern on the part of a regime whose principal supporters had long been the country's rural conservatives. Nevertheless, following the election, the king lifted a number of martial law restrictions, appointed a new Senate, and reappointed Badran as prime minister. The cabinet that was announced on December 6 included six Palestinians but no members of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite the latter's strong electoral showing.

During the first half of 1990 the regime signaled continued interest in a more inclusive political process, meeting with Palestinian and Communist Party leaders and in April appointing a broadly representative group of individuals to a newly formed National Charter Commission. Subsequently, in a move indicative of popular support for Iraq's position in the Gulf crisis and the enhanced status of the Muslim fundamentalists, the king on January 1, 1991, named a prominent Palestinian, Tahir al-MASRI, and five Muslim Brotherhood members to the cabinet.

At a national conference on June 9, 1991, the king and the leaders of all the country's major political groups signed an annex to the constitution that granted parties the right to organize in return for their acceptance of the legitimacy of the Hashemite monarchy. Additional political reform was also expected with the appointment on June 18 of the liberal and (despite his Gulf war stance) generally pro-Western Masri to replace the conservative Badran as prime minister. However, Masri's attempt to form a broad-based coalition government foundered as the Muslim Brotherhood, excluded from his cabinet because of its strident opposition to Middle East peace negotiations, and conservatives, apparently concerned over accelerated democratization as well as their dwindling cabinet influence, joined in October to demand the government's resignation. Their petition, signed by a majority of the members of the (then recessed) House of Representatives being tantamount to a nonconfidence vote, Masri felt obliged to step

down on November 16. Signaling a reassertion of monarchical control and an apparent slowdown in the pace of democratization, the king reappointed Shaker to head a new government, which, accommodating the conservatives but not the Brotherhood, survived a nonconfidence motion on December 16 by a vote of 46–27.

On April 1, 1992, King Hussein abolished all that remained of martial law regulations introduced in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Several months later the political party ban was formally lifted, and party registration began in December.

On May 29, 1993, Prime Minister Shaker was replaced by Abd al-Salam al-MAJALI, whose initial mission was to oversee the election of a new house. Although the balloting on November 8 was the first to be conducted on a multiparty basis, the effect was minimal, some of the new groups charging that electoral law changes and campaign restrictions had hindered their effectiveness. Only the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Action Front (IAF), with 16 seats, secured significant representation while 47 independents, many of them expected to be broadly supportive of the king, were elected.

Majali was reappointed to lead the new government announced on December 1, 1993, his caretaker status being extended pending the outcome of the talks launched between Amman and Tel Aviv in the wake of the recent Israeli-PLO accord. On January 5, 1995, following the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty (see Foreign relations, below), Majali stepped down as prime minister in favor of Shaker, whose new government was appointed three days later. Included in the 31-member cabinet were 17 house members, although the IAF, leader of the anti-treaty opposition, was again unrepresented.

As on three earlier occasions, Shaker, the king's cousin and longtime confidant, assumed the prime ministership in 1995 at a time of some difficulty for the regime. Although the government preferred to emphasize its economic plans, public attention focused primarily on the peace treaty, opposition to normalizing relations with Tel Aviv having been wider, or at least more vocal, than expected. How-

ever, the king adopted a relatively hard line toward the accord's opponents, stifling dissent somewhat, even at the expense, in the opinion of some observers, of a slowdown in the democratization process. Consequently, a conference planned by antitreaty Islamic, leftist, and nationalist parties for late May was banned by the government. Perhaps partly as a consequence, the impact of many of the parties was minimal when the first multiparty municipal elections were conducted on July 11–12, entrenched tribal influence dominating the balloting.

On February 4, 1996, King Hussein appointed Abd al-Karim KABARITI, another close friend of his and the former foreign affairs minister, to succeed Shaker. Once again the IAF was excluded from the new cabinet, although members of several other fledgling parties were given portfolios. Charged with revitalizing the economy, Kabariti imposed IMF-mandated reforms that led to increases in the price of bread, precipitating Jordan's worst unrest of the decade when riots broke out in mid-August in the northern city of Karak and the poorer sections of Amman. While many of the demonstrators were arrested as government forces quashed the disturbances, the king later in the year quietly ordered a rollback in the price of bread and granted amnesty to those involved in the riots.

On March 19, 1997, Hussein dismissed Prime Minister Kabariti and reappointed Majali, whose primary task once again was to oversee the election of a new lower house. Most opposition parties and groups (including the Muslim Brotherhood) boycotted the November 4 balloting, citing new press restrictions and perceived progovernment bias in the electoral law. A number of prominent personalities, including former prime ministers Obeidat and Masri, also urged voters to stay away from the polls. Consequently, the balloting was dominated by progovernment, independent tribal candidates. On November 22 Hussein appointed a new 40-member House of Notables, none of whom was a member of the Islamist opposition. Meanwhile Majali remained as prime minister, although the cabinet was extensively reshuffled on February 17, 1998, in the wake of an outbreak of pro-Iraqi

demonstrations, which had been quashed by security forces.

In mid-1998 it was confirmed that King Hussein was being treated for cancer, and on August 12 he delegated some authority to his brother, HASSAN ibn Talal, who had been crown prince and heir to the throne since 1965. On August 19 Prime Minister Majali submitted his government's resignation, and the following day Crown Prince Hassan appointed a new cabinet headed by Fayez TARAWNEH, a U.S.-educated economist and former chief of the royal court.

King Hussein, with his health declining rapidly, dismissed Hassan as his appointed successor on January 24, 1999, and replaced him with his eldest son, ABDULLAH. King Hussein died on February 7, and Abdullah assumed the throne the same day, becoming Abdullah II and taking an oath to protect "the constitution and the nation" before the National Assembly. (Formal coronation ceremonies were held on June 9.) On March 4 King Abdullah appointed a new 23-member cabinet headed by Abd al-Rauf al-RAWABDEH, a prominent proponent of economic reform. However, Rawabdeh, reportedly under pressure from the king and his government, resigned on June 18, 2000. Ali ABU al-RAGHEB, a businessman and former trade minister, was appointed to form a new government, which was sworn in on June 19.

On April 23, 2001, Abdullah announced the postponement of legislative elections scheduled for November. On July 22, he approved a new electoral law calling for the redrawing of voting districts, increasing the number of seats in the House of Representatives from 80 to 104 (later raised to 110 to accommodate a six-seat quota for women), and lowering the voting age from 19 to 18.

After elections were held on June 17, 2003, a new 28-member cabinet, headed by al-Ragheb, was announced. Criticized for failing to bring about promised reform, al-Ragheb resigned in October and was replaced on October 25 by Faisal al-FAYIZ, formerly chief of the royal court.

On April 4, 2005, Fayiz resigned amid criticism of his slow pace of reform. The king appointed Adnan BADRAN, a 70-year-old academic, to replace

him and reduced the number of cabinet positions as part of his effort to streamline government. Widely reported to be unpopular, the finance minister, Basam AWADALLAH, resigned on June 15, forcing Badran to announce a shuffled cabinet on July 3 that included eight new ministers. Fifty-three legislators had threatened a no-confidence vote unless Badran overhauled his economic team and included more ministers from the south. The reshuffled cabinet included four women, and Adel QUDAH replaced Awadallah. Following bombings of three Amman hotels on November 9 (see Current issues, below), the king appointed Marouf BAKHET, Amman's ambassador to Israel, as national security chief. On November 24, Badran resigned amid reports that opinion polls rated the government the lowest of any administration after 200 days in office. The king named Bakhet, described as a reformist, to replace him. Bakhet and his new government were sworn in on November 27. The cabinet was reshuffled on November 22, 2006. In March 2007 the parliament approved a new political parties law that requires political parties have a founding membership of 500 rather than 50 in order to be legally recognized (see Current issues, below).

### *Constitution and Government*

Jordan's present constitution, promulgated in 1952, provides for authority jointly exercised by the king and a bicameral National Assembly. Executive power is vested in the monarch, who is also supreme commander of the armed forces. He appoints the prime minister and cabinet; orders general elections; convenes, adjourns, and dissolves the assembly; and approves and promulgates laws. The assembly, in joint session, can override his veto of legislation and must also approve all treaties. The House of Representatives comprises 80 members elected via universal suffrage, while members of the senate-like House of Notables are appointed by the king. The present multiparty system was authorized in a National Charter signed by the king and leaders of the country's major political movements in 1991. The judicial system is headed by the High Court of Justice. Lower courts include

courts of appeal, courts of first instance, and magistrates' courts. There are also special courts for religious (both Christian and Muslim) and tribal affairs. Martial law, imposed at the time of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, provided for military tribunals to adjudicate crime against "state security." Although many other martial law elements—such as the ban on large public meetings and restrictions on the press and freedom of speech—were suspended by King Hussein in 1989 and 1991 decrees, the special courts were not abolished until martial law was totally repealed on April 1, 1992.

Local government administration is now based on the five East Bank provinces (*alwiyah*) of Amman, Irbid, Balqa, Karak, and Man, each headed by a commissioner. The *liwas* are further subdivided into districts (*aqdiyah*) and subdistricts (*nawahin*). The towns and larger villages are governed by partially elected municipal councils, while the smaller villages are often governed by traditional village headmen (*mukhtars*).

### *Foreign Relations*

Historically reliant on aid from Britain and the United States, Jordan has maintained a generally pro-Western orientation in foreign policy. Its pro-Iraqi tilt during the Gulf crisis and war of 1990–1991 (see below) was a notable exception, prompting the suspension of Western aid and imposition of a partial blockade of the Jordanian port of Aqaba to interdict shipments headed for Iraq in violation of UN sanctions. However, relations with the West improved rather quickly thereafter, several meetings between King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton yielding preliminary agreement on external debt rescheduling and the resumption of aid.

Regional affairs have long been dominated by the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jordan's particular concerns being the occupation of the West Bank by Israel since 1967 and the related Palestinian refugee problem, both of which gave rise to policy disputes between King Hussein and PLO Chair Arafat. Jordan tended to be somewhat less intransigent toward Israel than many of its Arab neighbors. After initially criticizing the PLO for conducting secret

talks with Israel, Hussein (who over the years had also had secret contacts with Israel) eventually endorsed the Israeli-PLO accord signed in September 1993. Subsequently, Jordanian and Israeli officials began meeting openly for the first time in decades to discuss such matters as water resources, the refugee problem, border delineation, and economic cooperation. Then, on July 25, 1994, King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed a declaration ending the 46-year-old state of war between their two countries. The agreement was followed by the signing at the Jordanian-Israeli border on October 26 of a formal peace accord in which each nation pledged to respect the other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, based on a recently negotiated demarcation of their mutual border. Cooperation was also pledged in trade, tourism, banking, finance, and numerous other areas. Significantly, President Clinton attended the treaty ceremony, promising substantial debt relief and increased aid to Jordan in return for its participation in the peace process. Arafat was conspicuously absent from the 5,000 invited guests, many Palestinians having been angered by the agreement's reference to Jordan's "special role" as "guardian" of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. However, the concern appeared to lessen somewhat in January 1995 when Jordan and the PLO signed an accord endorsing the Palestinian claim to sovereignty over East Jerusalem while also committing the signatories to wide-ranging cooperation in the financial, trade, and service sectors. In October 1996 King Hussein visited the West Bank for the first time since 1967, the trip apparently having been designed to underscore the king's support for the development of Palestinian autonomy under Arafat's direction. The king also played a significant intermediary role in the January 1997 agreement reached by Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding additional Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank.

Diplomatic relations with Egypt, suspended in 1979 upon conclusion of the latter's accord with Israel, were reestablished in September 1984. Prior to the Gulf crisis of the 1990s, relations with Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern monarchies were



for the most part more cordial than those with such left-wing republics as Libya.

Relations with Syria have been particularly volatile, a period of reconciliation immediately after the 1967 war deteriorating because of differences over guerrilla activity. In September 1970 a Syrian force that came to the aid of the *fedayeen* against the Jordanian army was repulsed, with diplomatic relations being severed the following July but restored in the wake of the 1973 war. Despite numerous efforts to improve ties, relations again deteriorated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, exacerbated by Jordanian support for Iraq in the Gulf war with Iran. A cooperation agreement signed in September 1984 was immediately threatened by Syria's denunciation of the resumption of relations with Egypt; earlier, on February 22, relations with Libya had been broken because of the destruction of the Jordanian embassy in Tripoli, an action termed by Amman as a "premeditated act" by the Qadhafi regime. Thereafter, renewed rapprochement with Syria, followed by a resumption of diplomatic relations with Libya in September 1987, paved the way for a minimum of controversy during a November Arab League summit in Amman. A Syrian-Jordanian economic summit in February 1989 was preceded in January by a meeting between Hussein and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd to renegotiate an expiring agreement that in 1988 was reported to have provided approximately 90 percent of Jordan's foreign aid receipts.

Jordan's professed goal of maintaining neutrality in the wake of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1990 was challenged by the anti-Iraqi allies who accused the regime of being sympathetic to Baghdad, citing the king's description of Saddam Hussein as an "Arab patriot" and Amman's resistance to implementing UN sanctions against Iraq. On September 19 Saudi Arabia, angered by King Hussein's criticism of the buildup of Western forces in the region, suspended oil deliveries to Jordan and three days later expelled approximately 20 Jordanian diplomats. Meanwhile, fearful that Jordan's location between Israel and Iraq made it a likely combat theater, King Hussein intensified his calls

for a diplomatic solution, declared an intention to defend his country's airspace, and reinforced Jordanian troops along the Israeli frontier. In January 1991 Jordan temporarily closed its borders, complaining that it had received insufficient international aid for processing over 700,000 refugees from Iraq and Kuwait. Thereafter, in a speech on February 6, 1991, King Hussein made his most explicit expression of support for Iraq to date, assailing the allies' "hegemonic" aims and accusing the United States of attempting to destroy its neighbor. Following the war, the king quickly returned to a more moderate position, calling for "regional reconciliation" based on "forgiveness" among Arabs and a permanent resolution of the Palestinian problem.

In what was perceived as a further effort to rebuild relations with Arab neighbors, who before the war had provided annual aid estimated at \$500 million, King Hussein called in late 1992 for the installation of a democratic government in Iraq. In May 1993 the king openly broke with Iraq, charging it with activities inimical to Jordanian interests and declaring his opposition to Saddam Hussein's continued rule. King Hussein also condemned the Iraqi buildup along the Kuwaiti border in October 1994 and, in August 1995, granted asylum to the members of President Hussein's family and governmental inner circle who had recently fled Iraq. In addition, he invited Iraqi opposition groups to open offices in Jordan. The king's unequivocal anti-Iraq stance assisted in the reestablishment of normal relations with all the Gulf states except Kuwait by August 1996, when he was greeted in Saudi Arabia by King Fahd for the first time since the 1990 invasion.

In December 1996 the United Nations implemented its "oil-for-food" deal with Iraq (see article on Iraq), which broke Jordan's informal "monopoly" on trade with its neighbor, and precipitated a decline in annual bilateral trade from \$400 million in 1996 to just \$250 million in 1997. As conflict loomed between the United States and Iraq in the early part of 1998, Amman managed to stay in the good graces of both countries by opposing any U.S. military attack while banning

demonstrations in support of Iraq and calling on that country to abide by UN resolutions.

Efforts to normalize relations with Israel faced setbacks in early 1997 when Israel announced plans to build another settlement in East Jerusalem. Relations were in part assuaged when, following the shooting death of seven Israeli schoolgirls in Jordan on March 13 by a corporal in the Jordanian army, Hussein immediately responded by visiting the families of the Israeli schoolchildren and expressing sympathy for their losses. Nevertheless, relations again took a turn for the worse on September 25 when agents from the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad were caught in Amman attempting to poison *Hamas* leader Khaled Meshal. Furious at this attack on Jordanian soil, King Hussein demanded the antidote to the poison and threatened to break off relations with Israel. The Israeli government furnished the antidote and subsequently exchanged a large group of Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners held in Israel for the captured Mossad agents. (See Current issues, below, for subsequent developments.)

### *Current Issues*

The world was first alerted to the seriousness of King Hussein's health problems in August 1998, when he delegated broad powers to Crown Prince Hassan while undergoing extended treatment in the United States. Hassan quickly orchestrated the removal of the Majali government, which had become the focus of popular discontent over a number of issues, including the mishandling of a water crisis in Amman and the embarrassing overstatement of economic growth figures. The crown prince also launched a dialogue with the nation's political parties and groups (including the Muslim Brotherhood), which had remained marginalized as Jordan's proposed democratization program stalled under the influence of ongoing regional tensions, and pledged that the administration of Prime Minister Tarawneh would provide a "safety net" to protect the poor from the effects of IMF-mandated fiscal reforms. Moreover, Hassan subsequently attempted to effect changes at the top levels of the

military, an initiative that angered Hussein, who returned in the fall to resume full monarchical authority. The perceived "meddling" in army matters was one of the reasons King Hussein cited for the dismissal of his brother as heir apparent in January 1999. Other factors reportedly included the king's long-standing interest in reestablishing a direct father-to-son line of succession and his belief that his eldest son Abdullah (married to a Palestinian woman) would ultimately prove a more popular leader than Hassan.

Representatives from some 75 countries (including nearly 50 heads of state) attended the funeral of King Hussein on February 8, 1999, underscoring the widespread respect he had earned for his peacemaking efforts and his skillful management of Jordanian affairs during his 46-year reign. World leaders also wanted to signal their support for King Abdullah II, a newcomer to the international stage suddenly forced into the role of a prominent participant in the Mideast peace process. The new king, who had been educated in the West and whose mother was from the United Kingdom, promised a more open government with fewer press restrictions and possible revision of the electoral code to facilitate greater party influence. However, he declared the economy to be his top priority, announcing his support for budget reduction and other reforms recommended by the IMF.

Immediately upon assuming the throne, King Abdullah announced that he was "absolutely committed" to peace with Israel, despite the fact that many Jordanians appeared to have become disenchanted with that particular aspect of his father's legacy. Underscoring its antimilitancy posture, the regime in the fall of 1999 ordered the closing of the Jordanian offices of *Hamas* and expelled several leaders of that Islamic fundamentalist movement, which spearheads hard-line anti-Israeli sentiment in the West Bank (and Gaza). In addition, security forces arrested a group of militants with reported ties to the alleged international terrorism organization of Osama bin Laden, charging the detainees with plotting to attack U.S. and Israeli targets. At the same time, Abdullah concentrated on improving ties with Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, and other

neighbors, and, in an apparent further attempt to promote Arab solidarity, called for the end of UN sanctions against Iraq.

The change in prime ministers in June 2000 was attributed to the perceived failure of the Rawabdeh government to achieve effective economic change as well as to Rawabdeh's reported "autocratic" style, which had apparently contributed to friction between his administration and the National Assembly. The appointment of Abu al-Ragheb as prime minister was well received in most quarters, the business community in particular endorsing his stated goals of attracting foreign investment and promoting tourism. Investors also welcomed the country's accession to the World Trade Organization in April 2000 and the signing of a rare free trade agreement with the United States later in the year. Meanwhile, political reform remained subordinate to the economic focus, King Abdullah reportedly relying even more heavily on secret security and intelligence services than his father had in the later years of his reign.

On June 16, 2001, the king dissolved the National Assembly in anticipation of new balloting for the House of Representatives, expected in November. However, in view of the roiling Israeli-Palestinian conflict, polling was subsequently postponed until September 2002. The king in August 2002 further delayed new elections until March 2003, citing "difficult regional circumstances" that now included a potential U.S. attack on neighboring Iraq. Analysts suggested that the government feared that "radical elements" might take advantage of surging anti-Israel and anti-U.S. sentiment within the Jordanian population to present a significant electoral challenge to the establishment unless regional tensions were reduced. The elections were finally held on June 17, 2003, two months after the fall of Baghdad to U.S.-led invading forces and the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. Progovernment legislators held a clear majority in the new legislature, but Islamist and tribal members opposed the king's promotion of women's rights. Reforms allowing women to initiate divorce, raising the legal age for marriage to 18, and stiffening penalties for "honor killings"

of women were weakened or blocked by legislators arguing that such measures threatened family stability.

Popular opinion presented the government with a difficult act in maintaining strong ties with the United States, with King Abdullah calling on Washington to establish a definite timetable for creation of a Palestinian state as a means of tempering Arab frustration over the lack of progress in the Mideast peace process. At the same time, Jordan was a solid supporter of the U.S.-led "war on terrorism" following the al-Qaida attacks on the United States in September 2001. In addition to contributing troops to peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban and al-Qaida, the government also announced in 2002 that it had thwarted planned attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets through several roundups of Islamic militants. However, critics of the government charged that the crackdown had undercut political liberalization by barring most public demonstrations, dampening legitimate dissent, and tightening restrictions on the media.

On October 28, 2002, Laurence Foley, senior U.S. diplomat, became the first Western official to be assassinated in Jordan. Of the 11 suspects tried for the crime, 8 were sentenced to death. Among them was Abu Musab al-ZARQAWI, who was tried in absentia and subsequently linked to the armed resistance to U.S. forces in Iraq. He was sentenced to death (in absentia) two more times for plotting failed attacks inside Jordan and at the border with Iraq. (Al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike near Baquba, Iraq, in June 2006.)

King Abdullah's effort to maintain Jordan's role as mediator in the Middle East resulted in the June 2003 summit he hosted in the Red Sea port of Aqaba with U.S. President George W. Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Prime Minister Mahmud Abbas in attendance to launch the U.S.-backed "road map" for peace.

U.S.-Jordanian relations were strained by the 2003 Iraq invasion, which Jordanians strongly opposed. In the run-up to war, Abdullah warned the United States and the United Kingdom that an

attack on Iraq could lead to “regional destabilization.” He ultimately adopted an ambivalent stance, accepting the stationing of U.S. forces near the Iraqi border while opposing the invasion. When Iraq’s Sunnis boycotted legislative elections held January 30, 2005, the king warned of an impending “Shiite crescent” stretching from Iran to Lebanon that might destabilize the Sunni-led status quo in the Arab world. Relations with Iraq warmed in 2005 after King Abdullah agreed to pardon Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi, who had been sentenced in absentia by a Jordanian court in 1992 for bank fraud. In October 2005 the interim Iraqi prime minister visited Amman, and the two countries signed a security cooperation agreement. Amid increased tensions in the region, Jordan, at the request of the Iraqi government, closed its border with Iraq to all Arab citizens (including Jordanians) traveling to Iraq in early 2006, and it subsequently temporarily closed its border to Palestinian refugees. Meanwhile, tensions heightened inside Jordan as the government increased fuel prices in anticipation of the expiration of oil grants from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. Islamist groups’ requests to hold demonstrations against the increases, set to end by 2007, were repeatedly denied by the government.

On November 9, 2005, near-simultaneous bombings at three hotels in Amman frequented by Westerners killed 60 people and injured more than 100, prompting King Abdullah to call for a “global strategy” against terrorism. Demonstrators filled the streets, denouncing the attacks and those who claimed responsibility: al-Zarqawi and al-Qaida (see al-Qaida under article on Afghanistan). Eleven top officials, including the national security adviser, resigned on November 15, and days later Abdullah appointed Marouf Bakhet to the national security post. Vowing that he would not allow the attacks to derail the government’s National Agenda for reform, the king subsequently named Bakhet—widely regarded as a proponent of change—as prime minister.

Increasing fuel prices continued to cause public outcry, though the government said it would spend \$150 million to help low-income residents affected

by the rate hikes. In the wake of the Palestinian election victory by *Hamas* in 2006, King Abdullah adopted a moderate approach, stating that Jordan would not “disregard the new Palestinian government before reviewing its agenda,” and he continued to endorse Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. However, Jordan subsequently took a harder line, accusing *Hamas* of smuggling arms and plotting attacks inside the country. According to reports, Jordan was fearful that the “rising tide of radical Islam it sees originating from Iran” threatened its stability.

A woman convicted in the 2005 hotel bombings was sentenced to death in September 2006, shortly after a gunman was arrested in an unrelated incident in which he was charged with killing 1 tourist and wounding 6 other people, including a Jordanian police officer. In several other cases throughout the year, numerous people identified as belonging to various terrorist organizations, including al-Qaida, received death sentences or lengthy prison terms. Among those convicted were nine men involved in a 2005 rocket attack on a U.S. warship in the port of Aqaba and two al-Qaida members who were planning to carry out attacks on Jewish and U.S. targets during the millennium celebration.

Attention continued to focus on security concerns in 2007 with the sentencing of several more people convicted of plotting terrorist attacks and the trial of three Jordanian men accused of plotting to assassinate U.S. President George W. Bush during his 2006 visit to Amman. Addressing another significant issue—fuel prices—the government increased the minimum wage to help offset the rising prices. Among the more controversial topics was a new political parties law, which Islamic and other political groups protested vehemently, claiming it would severely reduce the number of parties in the country. The Islamic Action Front—IAF (*Jabhat al-Amal al-Islami*) and other parties criticized King Abdullah for what they claimed was his failure to follow through on a recent pledge to institute more liberal political reforms. The leaders of the IAF and 27 other parties staged a sit-in to protest the law, which, to be enacted, requires the king’s approval. Meanwhile, municipal elections, originally

scheduled for July 17, were pushed back to July 31, and no date was set for parliamentary elections, although the king asserted they would be held on schedule in November. (*See headnote.*)

In 2007 King Abdullah continued to press for a two-state solution to resolve Palestinian-Israeli violence and the resumption of peace talks, as well as dialogue between *Fatah* and *Hamas*. Meanwhile, the king reiterated his “full support” for the Palestinian National Authority and sought international aid for the Palestinians in Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was reported to have made a secret visit to Jordan in July to discuss bilateral relations, and a meeting with the foreign ministers of Egypt and Jordan was scheduled to take place in Israel later in the month.

## Political Parties and Groups

Parties were outlawed prior to the 1963 election. Subsequently, an “official” political organization, the Arab National Union (initially known as the Jordanian National Union), held sway from 1971 to February 1976, when it was disbanded. On October 17, 1989, King Hussein announced that some party activity could resume but left standing a prohibition against party-affiliated candidacies for the November legislative election. The National Charter signed in June 1991 recognized the right of parties to organize, on condition that they acknowledge the legitimacy of the monarchy. Legislation formally lifting the ban on parties was approved by the National Assembly in July 1992 and by King Hussein on August 31. The first groups were recognized the following December.

### *Legal Parties*

**National Constitutional Party** (NCP). The NCP was officially formed on May 1, 1997, reportedly by nine pro-government parties and the **Jordanian Arab Masses Party** (*Hizb al-Jamahir al-Arabi al-Urduni*), the **Popular Unity Party** (*Hizb al-Wahdah al-Shabiyah*), and the **Jordanian Popular Movement**. (Some reports indicated that the component groupings had dissolved them-

selves in favor of the NCP, although their institutional status, as well as that of the NCP, subsequently remained unclear.) Under the slogan “rejuvenation, democracy, and unity,” the NCP ran in the November elections on an agenda of peace with Israel, support for the IMF economic program, and the “Jordanization” of political life. It won only two seats. Many observers believe that the NCP was meant by its leaders to serve as a counterweight to the historical dominance of the Islamic, leftist and pan-Arabist movements. The formation of the NCP was one of the reasons that the Islamic and most of the leftist and pan-Arabist parties decided to boycott the elections.

In 2002 the NCP was one of five centrist parties that urged the government to carry out political reforms that would allow for less restrictive policies.

*Leader:* Ahmad SHUNNAQ (General Secretary).

**Islamic Action Front**—IAF (*Jabhat al-Amal al-Islami*). The IAF was formed in late 1992 by the influential Muslim Brotherhood (below) as well as other Islamists, some of the latter subsequently withdrawing because of Brotherhood domination. Like the Brotherhood, the IAF promotes the establishment of a sharia-based Islamic state with retention of the monarchy. Although the IAF is generally perceived as opposing Israeli-PLO and Jordanian-Israeli peace talks, a significant “dovish” minority reportedly exists within the Front.

IAF leaders objected to electoral law changes introduced in mid-1993 and accused the government of interfering in the Front’s campaign activities prior to the November house elections. However, after initially threatening to boycott the balloting, the Front presented 36 candidates, 16 of whom were elected.

IAF candidates did not perform as well as anticipated in the July 1995 municipal elections, potential support having apparently gone instead to tribal-based parties. Subsequently, in December, Front/Brotherhood leaders suggested that King Hussein was “trying to restore authoritarian rule.” No IAF members were included in the new government announced in February 1996.

In view of the recently enacted press restrictions and continued complaints over electoral laws, the IAF boycotted the 1997 legislative balloting. A member of the IAF, Abd al-Rahim AKOUR, accepted a post in the new cabinet of June 2000 but was suspended from the party for that decision.

After reportedly winning about 15 seats in the 2003 parliamentary elections, the IAF became the principal opposition party in the legislature. Following the suicide bombing attacks on hotels in Amman in 2005, which the IAF denounced, the Front urged the government to consider individual freedoms as it began drafting antiterror laws.

The victory of *Hamas* in the Palestinian elections in 2006 was seen by observers as likely to further widen the gap between hawks and doves in the IAF. The hawks, who contended that the government continued to marginalize Islamists, appeared to be strengthened by the *Hamas* victory, observers said. Subsequently, the IAF elected Zaki Said Bani-Irshayd, who was supportive of *Hamas*, as its new secretary general. (The dovish leader of the associated Muslim Brotherhood decided not to run for reelection in the group in 2006.) A government crackdown on Islamists, including the dismissal of two deputies from the lower house of parliament, furthered the tensions between the government and the IAF, and resulted in a walkout by IAF deputies for several weeks in early 2007. The IAF continued lobbying for the elimination of the one-person, one-vote system and protested vehemently against a new law approved by the parliament in 2007, which required political parties to have a minimum of 500 members (instead of 50) in order to be officially recognized. Numerous other groups joined the IAF in a demonstration, in defiance of a government ban, against the political parties law, which they regard as a “major setback to the country’s democratic process.” The IAF was highly critical of what it said was the king’s lack of movement on promised political reforms, as well as reports that the 2007 parliamentary elections might not be held as scheduled in November, despite the king’s assertion that the balloting would be conducted on time. The IAF also was outspoken in its criticism of a change to the press law involving imprisonment for

journalists (later removed by legislators), claiming that it undermined national reform efforts.

Also in 2007 the IAF elected the first Christian to its administrative board, but he resigned within a month. The IAF said the Christian member, who had been active in the group for years, probably resigned due to political and other pressures. After several IAF members were arrested in midyear on charges of forming armed organizations, the party debated whether to boycott municipal elections scheduled for July 31, but ultimately the group decided to participate.

*Leaders:* Hamza MANSUR, Rahil al-GHARA-YIBAH, Abd al-Latif ARABIYAT, Ziad Abu GHANIMA, Zaki Said BANI-IRSHAYD (Secretary General).

**Jordanian National Alliance Party** —JNAP (*Hizb al-Tajammu al-Watani al-Urduni*). At the time of its recognition in December 1992, the JNAP was described as a “coalition of central and southern Bedouin tribes” with, as yet, no stated political or economic platform. It was subsequently viewed as essentially “pro-establishment” and supportive of King Hussein’s position on Middle East peace negotiations, Secretary General Mijhim al-Khurraysha having previously served as an adviser to the king. In November 1993 the JNAP announced the formation of a Jordanian National Front (JNF) with *al-Yaqazah*, *al-Watan*, and the PJP (below).

The alliance was seen as primarily a parliamentary bloc (all members but the PJP being represented in the 1993 House of Representatives). The JNAP was represented in the February 1996 cabinet, but the party did not appear to play a role in the 1997 elections.

*Leader:* Mijhim al-KHURAYSHA (Secretary General).

**Homeland Party** (*Hizb al-Watan*). Two members of *al-Watan*, recognized in May 1993, were successful in the 1993 house balloting. Distancing itself from the other JNF components on the issue, *al-Watan* in late 1994 announced its opposition to the recent Jordanian-Israeli peace accord.

Nevertheless, it was granted portfolios in the new cabinet announced in February 1996.

*Leader:* Hakam KHAIR (Secretary General).

**Pledge Party** (*Hizb al-Ahd*). One of the first parties to be recognized, the centrist *al-Ahd* supports a free market economy and development of a strong “national Jordanian identity” in which there would be “a clear distinction” between the Jordanian and Palestinian political entities. The *al-Ahd* secretary general, a former army chief of staff, was one of the party’s two members elected to the house in 1993. He initially called for creation of a common front among centrist parliamentary parties as a counterbalance to the IAF. However, when parliamentary blocs were subsequently announced, *al-Ahd* was aligned not with the other centrist parties in the JNF but rather with a group of 15 independent deputies in a National Action Front (NAF), which was accorded five ministries in the government formed in January 1995. *Al-Ahd* was represented in the February 1996 cabinet.

In 2006 the Pledge Party was one of several groups that asked the government for permission to hold a protest march against U.S. President Bush’s upcoming visit.

*Leader:* Abd al-Hadi al-MAJALI (Speaker of the House of Representatives), Khaldun al-NASIR (Secretary General).

**Awakening Party** (*Hizb al-Yaqazah*). Two members of *al-Yaqazah*, including Secretary General Abd al-Rauf al-Rawabdeh, were elected to the House of Representatives in 1993. Rawabdeh was also appointed deputy prime minister in the subsequent Majali and Shaker cabinets; he was named prime minister by King Abdullah in March 1999.

*Leader:* Abd al-Rauf al-RAWABDEH (Secretary General).

**Progress and Justice Party**—PJP (*Hizb al-Taqaddumi wa-al-Adl*). The PJP was listed as one of the founding members of the JNF, which was primarily a parliamentary bloc, even though no PJP members were elected to the house in 1993.

*Leader:* Muhammad Ali Farid al-SAAD.

**Democratic Unionist Arab Party—The Promise** (*al-Hizb al-Wahdawi al-Arabi al-Dimaqrati—al-Wad*). The centrist *al-Wad* was formed in early 1993 as a merger of three unrecognized groups (the Democratic Unionist Alliance, the Liberal Unionist Party, and the Arab Unionist Party) with similar platforms regarding greater free market activity and the pursuit of foreign investment. Although *al-Wad* was recognized in February, it was subsequently reported to be in disarray as leaders of the founding groups squabbled over the new party’s leadership posts.

*Leaders:* Talal al-UMARI (Assistant Secretary General), Anis al-MUASHIR (Secretary General).

**Future Party** (*Hizb al-Mustaqbil*). A conservative pan-Arabist grouping described as strongly supportive of the Palestinian *intifada*, *al-Mustaqbil* was recognized in December 1992. Many of its leaders are businessmen and/or former government officials, including former secretary general Suliman Arrar, who had previously served as a cabinet minister and speaker of the House of Representatives, and former prime ministers Obeidat and Masri. The party boycotted the November 1997 elections.

In 2006 the Future Party joined several other parties in staging a protest against the November visit by U.S. President Bush and against U.S. policies in the region.

*Leaders:* Abd al-Salam FREIHAT (Secretary General), Yusuf GHAZAL (Deputy Secretary General).

**Communist Party of Jordan**—CPJ (*al-Hizb al-Shuyui al-Urduni*). Although outlawed in 1957, the small pro-Moscow CPJ subsequently maintained an active organization in support of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank, where other communist groups also continued to operate. About 20 of its leaders, including (then) Secretary General Faik (Faiq) Warrad, were arrested in May 1986 for “security violations” but were released the following September. More than 100 members were detained for five months in 1989 for allegedly leading antigovernment rioting. One CPJ member, Isa Madanat, was elected to the House of

Representatives in 1989 and the following spring he and several party associates participated in negotiations on the proposed National Charter, the January repeal of the nation's anti-Communist act having ostensibly put the CPJ on the same footing as other parties preparing for official recognition. After initially being rejected for legal party status in late 1992 on the ground that communism was "incompatible" with the Jordanian constitution, the CPJ was recognized in January 1993. By that time Madanat and his supporters had left the CPJ to form the JSDP (below, under JUDP).

Despite the opposition of its youth wing, the CPJ participated in November 1997 national elections.

*Leader:* Munir HAMARENEH (General Secretary).

**Jordanian Arab Democratic Party**—JADP (*al-Hizb al-Arabi al-Dimaqrati al-Urduni*). The JADP is a leftist group recognized in mid-1993, its supporters including former Baathists and pan-Arabists. The two JADP members who were elected in the 1993 house balloting subsequently joined a parliamentary bloc called the Progressive Democratic Coalition, which also included representatives from the JSDP and *al-Mustaqbil* as well as 18 (mainly liberal) independents. The JADP subsequently announced its opposition to any "normalization" with Israel without full "restoration of Palestinian rights," a stance that aligned the JADP with Palestinian groups opposed to the Israeli-PLO peace accord. The issue appeared to divide the party, some 17 members reportedly resigning in early 1995 in support of the PLO and in protest over a perceived "absence of democracy" within the JADP. One of the party's leaders, Muhammad Daudia, is a former cabinet minister.

*Leaders:* Muhammad DAUDIA, Muniz RAZ-ZAZ (Secretary General).

**Jordanian Baath Arab Socialist Party**—JASBP (*Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki al-Urduni*). The Baathists, who had supported a number of independent candidates in the 1989 house election, were initially denied legal status in December 1992 as the Baath Arab Socialist Party in Jordan because of apparent ties to its Iraqi coun-

terpart. However, the Interior Ministry reversed its decision in early 1993 after the grouping revised its name and offered "assurances of independence" from Baghdad. An Arab nationalist party that opposes peace talks with Israel as "futile," the JASBP presented three candidates in the 1993 house balloting, one of whom was elected. In late 1996 the government accused the JASBP of having helped to incite "bread riots," and a group of Baathists were arrested in connection with those events. However, some observers questioned the government's assertions, a correspondent for *Middle East International* describing the party as too "splintered and shrunken" to be capable of generating effective action. The newspaper *al-Dustur* reported on May 15, 1997, that the JASBP had formed an alliance with two other pan-Arabist parties—the **National Action Front** (*Haqq*), led by Muhammad al-ZUBI, and the **Arab Land Party**, led by Mohammad Al OURAN. The new grouping was reportedly called the **Nationalist Democratic Front** (NDF), led by Hamad al-FARHAN. The NDF parties did not boycott the November 1997 elections, and the JASBP won one seat in the lower house.

*Leaders:* Ahmad NAJDAWI, Abdullah al-AHMAR, Taysir al-HIMSI (Secretary General).

**Jordan People's Democratic Party** (*Hizb al-Shaab al-Dimaqrati al-Urduni*—Hashd). The leftist Hashd was formed in July 1989 by the Jordanian wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), a component of the PLO (see separate article). Its initial application for recognition was rejected because of its DFLP ties, but, as an independent "on a friendly basis" with the DFLP, the party was legalized in early 1993. Like the DFLP, the Hashd opposed the Israeli/PLO accord of September 1993 although it supports the peace process in general as a means of resolving the Palestinian problem. In 2002 the party rallied in support of Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion. In 2004 the party joined other groups in calling on Muslims worldwide to support Iran in the wake of U.S. involvement in the region.

*Leader:* Said DHIYAB (Secretary General).



**Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party**—JUDP. Formed in 1995 as a merger of the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party—JSDP (*al-Hizb al-Dimaqrati al-Ishtiraki al-Urduni*) and the Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party—JPDP (*al-Hizb al-Taqaddumi al-Dimaqrati al-Urduni*), the JUDP supports “Arab unity, democracy, and social progress” and opposes the normalization of relations with Israel. The JSDP, whose secretary general (Isa Madanat) had been a former leader of the CPJ, had been recognized in early 1993 even though it had refused a government request to delete “socialist” from its name and references to “socialism” from its party platform. Meanwhile, the JPDP had been formed in late 1992 by the merger of three leftist groups—the Jordanian Democratic Party, the Palestinian Communist Labor Party Organization, and the Jordanian Party for Progress. (The latter subsequently withdrew from the JPDP, its leader later founding the Freedom Party, subsequently the Progressive Party, below.) The JPDP was recognized in January 1993 after its leaders bowed to government pressure and deleted references to socialist objectives from the party platform. Several leaders of the JPDP were former members of the Palestinian National Council.

The creation of the JUDP was widely attributed to the desire of its leftist components to develop a stronger electoral presence, their impact having been negligible in the 1995 municipal elections. However, in 1997 political differences precipitated the resignation of over 150 members, including former secretary general Mazen al-SAKET. The JUDP fielded four candidates in the November 1997 elections and won one seat.

*Leaders:* Isa MADANAT, Ali Abd al-Aziz AMER, Musa al-MAAYTAH (Secretary General).

**Progressive Party.** Formed in 1993 as the Freedom Party (*Hizb al-Hurriyah*) by a former official of the CPJ, this grouping is described as “trying to combine Marxist ideology with Islamic tradition and nationalist thinking.” The Progressive Party participated in the 1997 lower house elec-

tion boycott but was represented in parliament in 2003.

*Leader:* Nael BARAKAT (Deputy Secretary General), Fawaz Mahmoud Muflih ZOUBIL (Secretary General).

**Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party**—JDPUP (*Hizb al-Wahdah al-Shabiyah al-Dimaqrati al-Urduni*). The leftist JDPUP was formed in 1990 by Jordanian supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, see article on the PLO). True to its PFLP heritage, the JDPUP opposes peace negotiations with Israel. The JDPUP joined the boycott of the 1997 lower house elections. In 2002 the JDPUP and five other opposition parties failed in their attempt to form a coalition, citing ideological differences. In 2007 the party was among several that protested the country’s new political parties law.

*Leader:* Saeed THIYAB (Secretary General).

**Democratic Arab Islamic Movement Party—Propagate** (*Hizb al-Harakah al-Arabiyah al-Islamiyah al-Dimaqrati—Dua*). A liberal Islamist grouping founded in 1993, *Dua* was critical of the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood for their “regressive” interpretation of the Koran. Both women and Christians were included in the party’s initial temporary executive committee. *Dua* boycotted the 1997 lower house elections.

*Leaders:* Mahmouh Abu KHOUSAH, Munir JARRAR, Yusuf Abu BAKR (Secretary General).

**Pan-Arab Action Front Party**—PAAFP (*Hizb al-Jabhat al-Amal al-Qawmi*). Described as having close ties with Syria, the PAAFP was legalized in January 1994, its members reportedly including several prominent Palestinian hard-liners. Ideological differences subsequently led a faction of the PAAFP to form a new grouping, the **Nationalist Action Party**.

*Leader:* Muhammad al-ZUBI.

**Liberal Party** (*Hizb al-Ahrar*). Described as a “pro-peace” grouping, the Liberal Party is led by Ahmad al-Zubi, a prominent attorney. In mid-1995 al-Zubi was reportedly disbarred after having met

with Israeli leaders, that penalty reflecting a strong bias against the recent peace accord in Jordanian professional groups such as the Bar Association.

*Leader:* Ahmad al-ZUBI.

**Christian Democratic Party** The Christian Democratic Party was reportedly formed in part by a number of dissidents from the Jordan People's Democratic Party (*Hashd*) and the National Action Front (*Haqq*), as well as independents. At its founding in May 1997 the party announced that it would boycott the November elections to the lower house.

Other legal parties include the **al-Ansar Party**, a moderate grouping recognized in December 1995 and headed by Muhammad MAJALI; the **Arab Land Party**, which was organized in 1996 and contested the 1997 balloting under the leadership of Mohammad al-BATAYNEH, but later led by Muhammad al-ORAN; the **Jordanian Arab Constitutional Front Party**, led by Milhem al-TALL, who in 1989 election campaign called for Jordanian-Syrian union and participated in the 1997 boycott; the **Jordanian Peace Party**, a strong supporter of the peace process with Israel and headed by Shaher KHREIS; the **Jordanian People's Committees Movement**, launched in 2001 under the leadership of Khalid SHUBAKI; the **Jordanian Welfare Party**, launched in 2001 and led by Mohammad Rijjal SHUMALI; the **Progressive Arab Baath Party** (*Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Taqaddumi*), led by Fouad DABOUR and said to have a political philosophy similar to that of the Syrian Baath Party; the **Ummah Party** (Community), led by Ahmed HANANDEH and recognized in June 1996 after reportedly having failed to convince other moderate parties to merge with it; the **Jordanian National Movement**, led by Samir AWAMLEH, was formed in 2004 and included 11 small parties in what was described as a pro-government centrist front; the **Prosperity** (*al-Rafah*) party, led by Mohammed AJRAMI after party infighting in 2002; the **Renaissance** (*al-Nahdah*) party, led by Mijhim al-KHURAYSHAH; the **New Dawn** (*al-Fajr al-Jadid*), a centrist party

legalized in 1999; and the **Islamic al-Wasat** party, led by Marwan al-FAURI.

### *Other Groups*

**Muslim Brotherhood** (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*). An outgrowth of the pan-Arab Islamic fundamentalist group of the same name established in Egypt in 1928, the Brotherhood has played a prominent role in Jordanian political affairs. It promotes the creation of an Islamic state based on strict adherence to Islamic law (sharia) but does not advocate abolition of the monarchy, having generally maintained a cooperative relationship with King Hussein.

Following an impressive showing in the 1989 elections, the Brotherhood was given ten seats on the National Charter Commission formed in April 1990. In November one of its leaders, Abd al-Latif Arabiyat, was elected speaker of the House of Representatives while five of its members entered the government on January 1, 1991. However, it was unrepresented in the subsequent Masri or Shaker cabinets, underscoring the rift between the Brotherhood and the government regarding Jordan's participation in the U.S.-led Middle East peace negotiations. In December 1992 members of the Brotherhood and other fundamentalists established the IAF (above) as their official political party. Primarily because of the Brotherhood's strong opposition to the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, it was not represented in the January 1995 cabinet, reports surfacing that King Hussein and Prime Minister Shaker pointedly had failed even to consult new Brotherhood leader Abd al-Majid THUNIBAT concerning the formation of the government. Indicative of the credibility of the Muslim Brotherhood as an opposition force, it was its decision to boycott the November 1997 elections that led other Islamic as well as non-Islamic opposition parties to also suspend their participation. The dovish Thunibat decided not to run for a fourth term as leader in 2006.

In 2007 the Muslim Brotherhood was caught up in the divisive issue of support for *Hamas*. The

## Cabinet

As of July 1, 2007 (see headnote)

Prime Minister	Marouf Bakhet
Deputy Prime Minister	Ziad Fareiz
Royal Court Chief	Salem al-Turk

### *Ministers*

Agriculture	Mustafa Qurunfulah
Culture	Adel Toweisi
Defense	Marouf Bakhet
Education, Higher Education, and Scientific Research	Khalid Touqan
Energy and Mineral Resources	Khalid al-Shuraydah
Environment	Khalid al-Irani
Finance	Ziad Fareiz
Foreign Affairs	Abdul Ilah Khatib
Health	Saud al-Kharabishah
Industry and Trade	Salem Khazaleh
Interior	Eid Al Fayeiz
Justice	Sharif al-Zubi
Labor	Bassam al-Salim
Municipal Affairs	Nader Thherat
Planning and International Cooperation	Suhair al-Ali [f]
Political Development	Mohamad al-Uran
Public Sector Development	Mohamad al-Dhunaybat
Public Works and Housing	Husni Abu Gheida
Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs	Abdul Fattah Salah
Social Development	Suleiman Tarawneh
Telecommunication and Information Technology	Basim al-Rusan
Tourism and Antiquities	Usamah al-Dabbas
Transportation	Saud Nsairat
Water and Irrigation	Mohamad Thafir al-Alem

### *Ministers of State*

Cabinet Affairs	Muhyi al-Din Tawq
Legal Affairs	Khalid Samarah al-Zubi
Parliamentary Affairs	Mohamad al-Dhunaybat

[f] = female

Brotherhood, as part of a 14-party Coordination Committee, wanted the group of diverse parties to meet and discuss the Palestinian crisis, but political differences among the parties eventually scuttled the Brotherhood's efforts. The Brotherhood was also described by observers as facing a crossroads

in its relationship with Iran as a result of increasing sectarian tensions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in the region.

*Leaders:* Abd al-Latif ARABIYAT, Muhammad Abd al-Rahman al-KHALIFA, Abd al-Munim ABU ZANT.

In January 1991 Islamic *Jihad* leader Sheikh Asad Bayyud al-TAMINI and **Islamic Liberal Party** leader Atta Abu RUSHTAH called for suicide attacks on Western targets, Rushtah subsequently being arrested by the Jordanian police. In addition, five party members were sentenced to death (two in absentia) in 1994 for allegedly plotting to assassinate King Hussein. In 1996 Rushtah was sentenced to three years in prison for allegedly slandering King Hussein.

Nearly 100 people identified as belonging to the **Prophet Mohammad Army** were arrested in mid-1991 in connection with a series of bomb attacks dating back more than a year. Although many of the detainees were subsequently released, 20 were convicted in November of crimes “against state security.”

In 1992 four persons (including two members of the House of Representatives) were convicted by a state security court of belonging to a new illegal organization called the **Vanguard of Islamic Youth** (*Shabab al-Nafir al-Islami*). They were subsequently pardoned by a royal amnesty that also applied to a group of detainees belonging to the **Islamic Resistance Movement** (*Hamas*), the fundamentalist organization based in the occupied territories (see under Israel: Political Groups in Occupied and Previously Territories). A wave of arrests was also reported in mid-1995 of members of an Islamist grouping called the **Renewal Party** (*Hizb al-Tajdid*.)

## Legislature

The bicameral **National Assembly** (*Majlis al-Ummah*) consists of an appointed House of Notables and an elected House of Representatives. The assembly did not convene between February 1976 and January 1984, a quasi-legislative National Consultative Council, appointed by King Hussein, serving from April 1978 to January 1984.

**House of Notables** (*Majlis al-Ayan*). The upper chamber consists of 55 members appointed by the king from designated categories of public

figures, including present and past prime ministers, twice-elected former representatives, former senior judges and diplomats, and retired officers of the rank of general and above. The stated term is four years although actual terms, until recently, have been irregular because of various royal decrees directed primarily at the elected House of Representatives, whose suspension requires a cessation of upper house activity.

The House of Notables appointed in January 1984 consisted of 30 members, while the body designated in November 1989 was expanded to 40 in keeping with a requirement that the upper house be half the size of its elected counterpart. The king formed a new 55-member upper chamber, including 7 women, on November 17, 2003, although activity remained suspended pending new elections to the House of Representatives. In the wake of bombings at three hotels in Amman on November 9, 2005, and the subsequent resignations of several government officials, the king dissolved the upper chamber on November 16 and appointed a new House of Notables the next day. The speaker retained his post.

*President:* Zaid al-RIFAI.

**House of Representatives** (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*). The most recently elected lower chamber consisted of 110 members elected from 45 districts containing 1 to 7 seats each. Twelve seats were reserved for members of the Christian and Circassian minorities and 6 for women. The constitutionally prescribed term of office is four years, although no full elections were held from 1967 to 1989 as the result of turmoil arising from Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

The house seated in 1967 contained 60 members (30 from West Jordan and 30 from East Jordan) elected in nonparty balloting. After being dissolved by the king in November 1974, its members were called back into session by royal decree in February 1976, at which time the king was authorized to postpone new elections indefinitely and call future special sessions as needed. However, the house did not meet again until January 1984. By-elections were held two months later to fill eight vacant East Bank

seats; it being deemed impossible to conduct elections in the West Bank, the 6 vacant seats from the occupied territory were filled by voting within the house itself. The house continued to meet in special session until its dissolution on July 30, 1988, following which King Hussein announced the severance of all legal and administrative ties with the West Bank. Consequently, the November 8, 1989, election of a new house (expanded to 80 members) excluded the West Bank. Political party activity remained proscribed, although the Muslim Brotherhood (defined as a charitable organization rather than a party) was permitted to present candidates, 20 of whom were elected.

The balloting conducted on November 8, 1993, was the first to be held on a multiparty basis since 1956, though most seats (47) were won by independents, with the largest opposition bloc being the Islamic Action Front (16 seats) and no other party holding more than 4 seats. With the Muslim Brotherhood/IAF and eight other parties boycotting the November 4, 1997, elections, only six political parties fielded a total of 22 candidates, with the vast majority of the 524 candidates running as independents and most of these representing pro-government and tribal interests.

King Abdullah dissolved the house on June 16, 2001, in anticipation of new elections in the fall. They were postponed repeatedly, however, amid violence in the West Bank and domestic criticism of his policy allowing U.S. troops into Jordan before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The king finally permitted elections to be held on June 17, 2003. A total of 765 candidates competed for 110 seats, raised from 80 by a 2003 decree that also set aside 6 seats for women. Ending a six-year boycott of the legislature, the IAF contested 30 seats, reportedly winning about 15. The IAF charged that the elections were "illegitimate" on the ground that changes to electoral districts had been designed to prevent the country's Palestinian majority from dominating the legislature. Fifty-nine percent of the 2.3 million eligible voters turned out. Pro-government and independent tribal candidates retained their comfortable majority, winning 62 seats (56 percent), while opposition Islamists captured 22

seats (22 percent) (see Current issues, above, for additional information).

The next elections were to take place in November 2007. (*See headnote.*)

*Speaker:* Abdul Hadi MAJALI.

## Communications

The press has long been subject to censorship, with publication of most papers having been suspended at various times for publishing stories considered objectionable by the government. In early 1989 the government purchased the two largest dailies, *al-Rai* and *al-Dustur*, but concerns that the takeover would result in further press censorship were eased in May when Prime Minister Shaker lifted press restrictions imposed in August 1988. Press freedom expanded somewhat under the National Charter approved in June 1991, and further liberalization was anticipated in conjunction with the legalization of political parties and other democratization measures. However, contrary to that expectation, the House of Representatives in late 1992 approved government-sponsored legislation requiring the licensing of journalists, forbidding criticism of the royal family or the military, and otherwise restricting press activities. The government has reportedly initiated some 40 court cases against journalists or publishers since a new press law was enacted in May 1993. In May 1997 the government announced amendments to the 1993 law that provided for heavy fines for various journalistic transgressions and increased the capital requirements for newspapers 25 fold. However, in January 1998 the Jordanian Supreme Court struck down the May 1997 amendments. The National Assembly in 1998 was considering the reimposition of some of the 1997 provisions, reportedly upon the recommendation of King Hussein; however, following his assumption of the throne in February 1999, King Abdullah indicated his intention to ease, rather than tighten, government influence over the press. Nevertheless, additional restrictions were imposed in late 2001 by royal decree, with journalists now facing prison terms for "sowing the seeds of hatred." The government

defended the new penalties as necessary to maintain stability in light of regional and domestic tensions. The extent of press restrictions became apparent in February 2003, when three journalists for *al-Hilal* (Crescent), a weekly newspaper, received sentences ranging from two to six months for libeling and defaming the Prophet Muhammad.

In 2004 the first independent and private daily, *al-Ghad* (Tomorrow), began publishing. In 2006 the cabinet approved a new private weekly, *Dar al-Hayat*, published in English and Arabic.

In March 2007 the parliament adopted amendments to the press and publications law that allowed for heavy fines for journalists who committed perceived violations. However, following widespread criticism from media groups and human rights organizations, legislators struck down imprisonment for journalists for various offenses. According to the 2007 annual report of the watchdog Reporters Without Borders, Jordanian journalists “are closely watched by the country’s intelligence services.”

### Press

The following are Arabic dailies published in Arabic in Amman, unless otherwise noted: *al-Rai* (Opinion, 100,000), partially government-owned; *al-Aswaq* (Markets, 40,000); *al-Ghad* (55,000), privately owned; *Sawt al-Shaab* (Voice of the People, 30,000); *al-Dustur* (The Constitution, 70,000), partially government-owned; *al-Akhbar* (15,000); *The Jordan Times* (10,000), in English; *al-Arab al-Yawm*, independent; *al-Masaiyah*, independent.

### News Agencies

The domestic facility is the government-owned Jordan News Agency (PETRA). Agence France-Presse, AP, Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), and Reuters are among the foreign bureaus that maintain offices in Amman.

### Broadcasting and Computing

Radio and television are controlled by the governmental Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTV), although three private radio stations are permitted to broadcast. In 2007 an independent television station, ATV, under the same ownership as *al-Ghad*, was preparing to go on air. As of 2005 there were approximately 53 personal computers and 112 Internet users per 1,000 people. As of the same year there were about 289 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

### Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Zeid Bin Ra’ad al-HUSSEIN

**U.S. Ambassador to Jordan:** David M. HALE

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Mohammed F. al-ALLAF

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, CAEU, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OIC, PCA, WCO, WTO

# KUWAIT

## STATE OF KUWAIT

*Dawlat al-Kuwayt*

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### The Country

Located near the head of the Persian Gulf, Kuwait is bordered on the north and west by Iraq and on the south by Saudi Arabia. It shared control of a 2,500-square-mile Neutral Zone with the latter until the area was formally partitioned in 1969, with revenues from valuable petroleum deposits in the zone being divided equally by the two states. An extremely arid country, Kuwait suffered from an acute shortage of potable water until the 1950s, when the installation of a number of desalination plants alleviated the problem.

About 95 percent of native Kuwaitis, who constitute less than 35 percent of the country's population, are Muslims; an estimated 70 percent belong to the Sunni sect and the remainder are Shiites. The noncitizen population, upon which the sheikhdom has long depended for a labor pool, is composed chiefly of other Arabs, Indians, Pakistanis, and Iranians who settled in Kuwait after World War II. Some 97 percent of native Kuwaitis are employed in the public sector, which accounts for 75 percent of GDP. Women comprise approximately 31 percent of the paid labor force; those who are native Kuwaitis are concentrated in health care and education, with the remainder primarily employed as teachers and domestic servants. In 2005 women were granted the right to vote and to hold elected office, but the debate on the matter revealed a deep split, even among women, in the Kuwaiti populace, many of whom still hold to traditional customs. There is also a distinct rift between rural tribal society and what has been described as the "urban oligarchy" dominated by the ruling family.

Kuwait's petroleum reserves, reported as 101.5 billion barrels in 2004, comprise 10 percent of proven global reserves. (However, in 2006 oil-industry reports claimed authorities had been exaggerating, and that reserves were actually about 48 billion barrels.) The oil sector was nationalized in 1975, and Kuwait had become, prior to the Iraqi invasion and occupation of 1990–91, a highly developed welfare state, providing its citizens with medical, educational, and other services without personal income taxes or related excises. In May 2005 the Kuwaiti government granted a \$171



monthly pay raise to tens of thousands of workers and pensioners to help them meet the rising cost of living.

Surging oil prices and the relative political stability in the region since the fall of Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein in April 2003 have bolstered Kuwait's booming economy: a \$23 billion budget surplus was reported in 2005. Yet non-oil revenues continued to lag, prompting the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May 2005 to urge a value-added tax. Real GDP growth, about 10 percent in 2004, was 8.5 percent in 2005 and 6.2 percent in 2006.

Free from the threat of invasion by Iraq, analysts said Kuwait has an opportunity to further enhance the role of the private sector and carry out long-overdue structural reforms. The IMF in 2006 noted progress in structural reforms, "albeit at a slow pace," as well as increased privatization, particularly in telecommunications, airlines, and infrastructure. In light of Kuwait's plans to expand oil production (see Current issues, below) and soaring oil revenue, the IMF urged the government toward greater fiscal transparency and economic diversity through private sector development to help absorb the fast-growing labor force. Also in 2006, the parliament approved a one-time payment of \$692 to each citizen to help meet the cost of living.

In 2007 real GDP growth was expected to be about 8 percent as a result of increased oil production in response to global demand. Increases in the production of all petrochemical products were planned for 2008, according to the IMF, which encouraged the government to better manage surpluses and save for future generations to ensure Kuwait's "long-term fiscal viability."

## Government and Politics

### *Political background*

Kuwait's accession to complete independence in 1961 was preceded by a period of close association with Great Britain that began in the late 19th century when the then-semiautonomous Ottoman province sought British protection against foreign invasion and an extension of Turkish con-

trol. By treaty in 1899, Kuwait ceded its external sovereignty to Britain in exchange for financial subsidies and defense support, and in 1914 Britain recognized Kuwait as a self-governing state under its protection. Special treaty relations continued until the sheikhdom was made fully independent by agreement with reigning Emir Abdallah al-Salim al-SABAH on June 19, 1961. Iraqi claims to Kuwaiti territory were rebuffed shortly afterward by the dispatch of British troops at Kuwait's request and were subsequently reduced to a border dispute that appeared to have been substantially resolved in 1975.

On August 29, 1976, the government of Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-SABAH resigned in the wake of alleged "unjust attacks and denunciations against ministers" by members of the National Assembly. Sheikh Sabah al-Salim al-SABAH, who succeeded Emir Abdallah in 1965, responded on the same day by dissolving the assembly, suspending a constitutional provision that would have required a new election within two months, and instituting severe limitations on freedom of the press. On September 6 Sheikh Jabir, who succeeded Emir Sabah in 1977, formed a new government that was virtually identical in membership to the old.

Observers attributed the drastic measures of 1976 to the impact of the Lebanese civil war upon Kuwait, which then counted some 270,000 Palestinians among its nonnative population. The continuing exclusion of immigrant elements from political life accounted in large part for the lack of significant political change during the remainder of the decade, despite growing dissatisfaction among some groups, most noticeably Shiite Muslims, upon commencement of the Iranian revolution in early 1979.

Following a return to the earlier constitutional practice, a nonparty poll for a new National Assembly was held on February 23, 1981. Five days later, the heir apparent, Sheikh Saad al-Abdallah al-Salim al-SABAH, who had first been appointed in 1978, was redesignated as prime minister. He was reappointed on March 3, 1985, after balloting on February 20 for a new assembly that was itself dissolved on July 3, 1986, in the wake of a series of confrontations between elected and ex officio



**Political Status:** Constitutional hereditary emirate; independent since June 19, 1961, save for occupation by Iraq from August 2, 1990, to February 26, 1991.

**Area:** 6,880 sq. mi. (17,818 sq. km.).

**Population:** 1,575,983 (1995C), including 655,820 Kuwaitis and 920,163 non-Kuwaitis; 3,220,000 (2006E). The 1995 figure is not adjusted for underenumeration.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** KUWAIT CITY (32,000), Salmiya (145,000), Hawalli (107,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (official rate November 2, 2007: 1 dinar = \$0.28US).

**Sovereign (Emir):** Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH; inaugurated on January 29, 2006, after

unanimous confirmation the same day by the National Assembly, following the abdication on January 24 of Sheikh Saad al-Abdallah al-Salim al-SABAH, who became emir on January 15 upon the death of his cousin, Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH.

**Heir Apparent:** Sheikh Nawaf Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH; appointed crown prince by his brother, emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah on February 7, 2006, replacing Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH.

**Prime Minister:** Sheikh Nasser Muhammad al-Ahmad al-SABAH; appointed February 7, 2006, by his uncle and predecessor, emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH and sworn in with new government on February 20.

government members over fiscal and internal security issues. Echoing the events of 1976, the emir postponed new elections and implemented strict press controls.

In early 1989 a group of ex-parliamentarians, led by former speaker Ahmad Abd al-Aziz al-SADUN, launched a petition drive to revive the 1962 constitution and restore the National Assembly, reportedly gathering over 30,000 signatures by December. The government's response was that it was pursuing a "new form of popular participation" centered on a National Council of 50 elected and 25 appointed members to serve as a surrogate for the former legislature for the ensuing four years. The opposition nonetheless continued to insist on revival of the earlier body and mounted a largely successful boycott of National Council balloting on June 10, at which all of the contested seats were won by government supporters.

The Iraqi invasion of August 2, 1990, resulted in the flight of virtually all members of the country's ruling elite. In March 1991 they returned, amid massive physical destruction, to face widespread demands for meaningful representative government. Opposition leaders vehemently denounced the composition of a new government formed on April 20 as little more than an extension of its predecessor, in which all major posts were held by

members of the royal family. The emir responded with a promise that elections to a new National Assembly would be held in 1992, and on July 9 the interim National Council was reconvened with orders to discuss and organize the elections. Meanwhile, the regime was buffeted by foreign and domestic criticism of its postwar policies, including the perfunctory trials of alleged Iraqi collaborators and the expulsion of tens of thousands of non-Kuwaiti citizens. Subsequently, the government commuted the death sentences of convicted collaborators, promised defendants the right to a fair trial, and on August 14 created criminal appeals courts.

National Assembly balloting was held on October 5, 1992, with candidates considered opponents of the government capturing a majority of the seats. Sheikh Saad resigned as prime minister two days later but was reappointed by the emir on October 12, despite growing demands from the opposition that someone else be named to the post. On the other hand, in a significant concession to the opposition, six members of the assembly were named to the new cabinet announced on October 17. The cabinet was also extensively reshuffled on April 13, 1994, the new government subsequently announcing it would move ahead with economic reforms, including privatization.

In addition to intensifying Kuwait's "siege mentality" the October 1994 border confrontation with Iraq (see Foreign relations, below) also exacerbated the sheikhdom's budget difficulties, the government in 1995 announcing plans to impose new fees on many public services in an effort to control the deficit. On the political front, attention focused on the conflict between the National Assembly and the government over whether the assembly had the right to review decrees issued during its 1986–1992 hiatus. Legislators were also pressing for the prosecution of former officials, most of whom are members of the royal family, on corruption charges. In part, the schism reflected the influence of Islamic fundamentalists within the assembly, 39 of whose 50 elected deputies in 1994 endorsed an appeal, subsequently rejected by the government, to make Islamic religious law (*sharia*) the sole source of Kuwaiti law. Growing fundamentalist support was also noted within the population as a whole, although many young Kuwaitis were described as having "embraced" Western culture as the outgrowth of a belief that the country's survival hinged on continued strong ties with the United States and Europe.

Following the balloting for a new assembly on October 7, 1996, it was reported that 17–22 "solidly progovernment" candidates had been elected with the remainder including an estimated 14–18 representatives from the generally antigovernment Islamist camp. The prime minister again entered a pro forma resignation on October 8, but he was reappointed on October 12 and his new, moderately reshuffled government was sworn in on October 15.

Sheikh Saad and his cabinet resigned on March 15, 1998, as legislators continued to press various ministers on several fronts (see Current issues, below). However, the emir immediately reappointed Sheikh Saad as prime minister, and a new, substantially reshuffled government was announced on March 23.

The cabinet again resigned on January 29, 2001, and substantial debate was reported within the ruling family over the makeup of the next government. On February 17, 2001, the cabinet included eight new members and, significantly, oil and fi-

nance ministers who were not members of the ruling family. Although aging Prime Minister Saad remained the titular head of government, many of his responsibilities were turned over to the deputy prime minister, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, the brother of the emir. With age and illness taking a toll on the ruling family, the question of succession weighed heavily on the state.

On June 1, 2003, four ministers resigned to stand for election. After the assembly elections on July 5, 2003, Sheikh Sabah was appointed prime minister, replacing the heir apparent, Sheikh Saad al-Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, and separating the post from the crown prince for the first time in a move that made the prime minister more accountable to the people. Meanwhile, Islamists and progovernment candidates swept to victory, crushing the pro-Western liberals and the full cabinet resigned, in a routine move, the day after the elections. The responsibility for forming a new government fell to the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, reportedly because Sheikh Saad had been ill for some time, and a new cabinet was installed on July 17, 2003. Despite the more conservative trend, the assembly did grant women the right to vote for the first time in the country's history in May 2005, and in June the first woman was appointed to the cabinet.

A group of former Salafists formed what they described as Kuwait's first political party in 2005, a move that was unsettled since political parties are officially illegal (see Political Parties, below).

Upon the death of Sheikh Jabir on January 15, 2006, cabinet ministers immediately proclaimed the crown prince, Sheikh Saad, as the new emir. Several days later, however, it was reported that the ruling family proposed that the prime minister and de facto ruler, Sheikh Sabah, be appointed emir in place of the ailing Sheikh Saad. On January 23 the cabinet asked the National Assembly to hold a special session to discuss whether Sheikh Saad was fit to rule, and the following day a letter of abdication from the emir was delivered to the legislators. On January 29 the assembly voted unanimously in favor of Sheikh Sabah, who took the oath of office the same day. The cabinet resigned the

following day. On February 7 the emir appointed 65-year-old Sheik Nasser Muhammad al-Ahmad al-SABAH (the emir's nephew) as prime minister and 68-year-old Sheik Nawaf Ahmad al-Jabir al-SABAH (the emir's brother) as crown prince and heir apparent. The prime minister and the new government were sworn in on February 20. Following a dispute with opposition legislators over proposed changes to electoral districts (see Current issues, below), the emir dissolved the National Assembly on May 21, following an unprecedented walkout a week earlier by 29 members and their equally surprising demand that they be allowed to question the prime minister about the controversial electoral proposal. The information minister resigned in protest in the midst of the dispute and was replaced on May 14. Following dissolution of the assembly, the emir called for new elections, which were held on June 29, a year ahead of schedule (see Legislature, below). A new cabinet was sworn in on July 11 and shortly thereafter approved the controversial electoral reform measure, which parliament approved on July 17.

The cabinet resigned on March 4, 2007 (see Current issues, below). On March 25 the emir appointed a new cabinet, again headed by Sheik Nasser al-Sabah. The new government, which reportedly included 10 members of the previous government and four Islamists, was sworn in on April 2.

### *Constitution and Government*

The constitution promulgated in 1962 vests executive power in an emir selected from the Mubarak line of the ruling Sabah family, whose dynasty dates from 1756. The emir rules through an appointed prime minister and Council of Ministers, while legislative authority is shared by the emir and a National Assembly that is subject to dissolution by decree. The judicial system, since its revision in 1959, is based on the Egyptian model and includes a Constitutional Court, courts of the first degree (criminal assize, magistrates', civil, domestic, and commercial courts), and a Misdemeanors Court of Appeal. The domestic court, which deals with cases

involving such personal matters as divorce and inheritance, is divided into separate chambers for members of the Sunni and Shiite sects, with a third chamber for non-Muslims. Civil appeal is to a High Court of Appeal and, in limited cases, to a Court of Cassation. Although the 1962 basic law theoretically accorded equal rights to men and women, an election law adopted at the same time precluded women from voting or holding elected office. After decades of controversy over the elimination of these proscriptions, the assembly amended the country's election law on May 16, 2005, granting women the right to vote in and contest parliamentary and local elections for the first time in the country's history.

### *Foreign Relations*

As a member of the Arab League, Kuwait has closely identified itself with Arab causes and through such agencies as the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries has contributed to the economic development of other Arab countries. In 1967 it launched a program of direct aid to countries experiencing hardship as a result of conflict with Israel. In 1981 Kuwait joined five other regional states in forming the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Dominating external concerns in the 1980s was the Iran-Iraq war, which curtailed oil exports and generated fear of Iranian expansionism in the event of a victory for the Khomeini regime. After a number of attacks on shipping by both participants and a decision by Washington to increase its naval presence in the Gulf, Kuwait, which had previously declined an offer of American tanker escort, proposed in April 1987 that a number of its vessels be transferred to U.S. registry. The reflagging provided enhanced security for oil shipments but was interpreted as solidifying the sheikdom's pro-Iraqi posture. Diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Iran were eventually restored in November 1988, three months after the Iran-Iraq cease-fire.

Despite its support of Iraq during the latter's conflict with Iran, the emirate had experienced

periodic strain with Baghdad long before the Gulf crisis of August 1990. For many decades Iraq had laid intermittent claim to all of Kuwait on the basis of its status within the Ottoman province of Basra at the turn of the century. However, the merits of such a case were substantially weakened by an Iraqi agreement in 1963 to respect the independence and sovereignty of its southern neighbor. Unresolved by the 1963 accord was the question of boundary demarcation, in regard to which earlier diplomatic references had been quite vague. Nor was the land boundary the only problem: Iraq had also claimed offshore territory, including, most importantly, Bubiyan Island, which dominated access to the Iraqi port and naval base of Umm Qasr via the Khor Abdallah waterway. The boundary uncertainties also lent a degree of credibility to claims that Kuwait was encroaching on Iraqi oil fields, allegedly by "slant drilling," while Baghdad had long complained of the failure of the Gulf emirates, including Kuwait, to hold to OPEC-mandated oil production quotas. Such problems were unaddressed by Security Council Resolution 687, which provided the basis of a formal cease-fire between Iraq and UN forces. (For a chronology of events associated with the Gulf war, see p. 969 in the 1991 *Handbook*.)

In June 1991 the Kuwaiti government withdrew its diplomats from Algeria, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen, saying that it was "reducing" relations with the six countries because of their lack of support during the Gulf crisis. Meanwhile, a ten-year military cooperation agreement signed with the United States on September 19 authorized the United States to stockpile military equipment and provided its navy with port access; however, the accord did not sanction the permanent stationing of troops. The agreement came in the immediate aftermath of an Iraqi "invasion" of Bubiyan Island that, although easily repelled by Kuwaiti forces, had heightened Kuwait's anxiety about the Hussein regime.

In February 1992 a UN border commission issued a draft document on delineation of the Kuwait-Iraq border, which included the division of Umm Qasr. Observers described the commission's rec-

ommendations as an attempt to punish Iraq for its invasion. On November 23 the UN commission revised the border even further north, giving Kuwait complete control of the naval base as well as additional oil fields in the area, effective January 15, 1993. However, Iraq strongly objected to the decision and sent troops into the disputed territory in early January (ostensibly to retrieve weapons), with friction over the issue contributing to a brief resumption of allied air attacks on Iraqi military targets. Subsequently, Kuwait sought and received Western assurance that the 2,000 American troops still in the emirate would be quickly reinforced if Baghdad maintained a confrontational posture.

On April 14, 1993, George H. W. Bush received an enthusiastic reception on his arrival for a three-day visit to the emirate. Subsequently, there were reports of an Iraqi plot to assassinate the former U.S. president, with 14 people charged in the matter being placed on trial in early June. As the result of what U.S. President Clinton termed "compelling evidence" of Iraqi involvement in such a plot, the United States launched a missile attack against Baghdad on June 26. (Subsequent reports suggested that the evidence in question was seriously flawed, although a number of Iraqis were among those ultimately convicted in the case.)

In November 1993 Kuwait signed a ten-year defense cooperation agreement with Russia, similar to post-Gulf war pacts with Britain, France, and the United States. A trade and investment agreement with Russia in November 1994 was considered, in part, an outgrowth of Kuwait's announcement several months earlier that it intended to buy some \$800 million in Russian armaments.

The specter of another Iraqi incursion was raised in early October 1994 when Iraqi troops were once again deployed near the Kuwaiti border. However, Baghdad retreated quickly from its threatening stance in the face of Western military preparations and dropped a long-standing claim to its "19th province" by formally recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty in early November, including acceptance of the UN's recent demarcation of the border between the two countries. The Kuwaiti government called the recognition "a step in the right

direction,” although tension remained high, with Kuwait charging that more than 600 of its nationals were still being held as “hostages” in Iraqi jails. Meanwhile, Kuwait agreed to the permanent stationing on its territory of a squadron of U.S. warplanes. Subsequently, additional U.S. planes and troops were deployed in the sheikhdom as a precaution when Iraqi soldiers moved into the Kurdish “safe area” in northern Iraq in August 1996.

Not surprisingly, Kuwait remained uncompromising in its anti-Iraq stance in 1997, even though Gulf neighbors Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were promoting the “rehabilitation” within the Arab world of the regime in Baghdad. Consequently, in early 1998 Kuwait was the only Arab state to unequivocally endorse U.S. plans to take military action against Baghdad in the wake of the recent breakdown of UN inspections there. Additional U.S. troops and warplanes were granted staging rights in Kuwait, with an attack unleashed on Baghdad in December.

In early September 2000, in conjunction with renewed Iraqi complaints of Kuwaiti oil “theft,” tensions rose significantly. The UN Security Council agreed that Kuwait ultimately should be awarded \$15.9 billion in reparations for the 1990–1991 occupation. However, relations improved significantly following the Arab League Summit in March 2002 at which Iraq reportedly agreed to honor Kuwait’s independence and territorial integrity. Tensions continued to escalate between Kuwait and Baghdad until after the United States defeated Saddam Hussein, and Kuwait was on board to support creation of a new government in Iraq in 2005. As recently as February 2005 there were reports of a series of gunfights between Islamist groups described as armed extremists and Kuwaiti security forces. These militant groups were reportedly tied to al-Qaida, suggesting that Kuwait has some security concerns in the war against terrorism. Relations appeared to have improved with Jordan and Palestinian officials since the end of the Gulf war, and in May 2005 Kuwait agreed to send 150 soldiers to Sudan as part of the UN peacekeeping mission to help end civil war.

In May 2005 Kuwait’s foreign minister, Sheikh Muhammad Sabah al-Salim al-SABAH, met with U.S. National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley in Washington and reiterated that Kuwait supported the so-called “road map” as the only viable solution to peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Kuwait and the other countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman—had been working toward a common market in 2007 and a common currency by 2010. However, in June 2007 Kuwait withdrew from the agreement, rejecting the plan to peg its currency to the U.S. dollar.

### *Current issues*

A significant change for the country occurred in 2003 when Sheikh Sabah was appointed as prime minister, marking the first time in Kuwait’s history that the crown prince did not hold the post. The aging emir and Sheikh Saad, the former prime minister and official heir apparent, were widely reported to be in ill health, resulting in questions about the next generation of Kuwaiti leaders.

Tensions eased to a great extent in Kuwait after U.S. and coalition forces toppled the regime of Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein in April 2003, greatly relieving security issues for Kuwait. However the government has downplayed the arrests of suspected al-Qaida terrorists in the intervening years and repeated clashes between government security forces and Islamic militants as the acts of a select few. Kuwait has pledged to help support the new Iraqi government in its efforts to achieve stability.

In an unexpected move on May 16, 2005, the National Assembly granted women the right to vote for the first time in the country’s history. The prime minister, who had been pushing for the amendment to Kuwait’s election law, said women could become cabinet ministers, the first being sworn in on June 20. (Islamist lawmakers protested loudly as she took her oath, while liberals applauded the move.) The assembly’s 35–23 vote, with 1 abstention, came after decades of heated debates, demonstrations, and riots, and a 2002 decree by the emir insisting that women be given full political rights

by 2003. Finally, in October 2003, despite the objections of Islamists and male politicians, the cabinet approved allowing women to stand for office and vote in municipal elections. Although the cabinet approved a draft law in May 2004 that gave women the right to vote and to run in parliamentary elections, the measure was repeatedly rejected in the assembly. In early May 2005—with the assembly deadlocked with 29 members abstaining and only 29 votes in favor (shy of the necessary 33 votes)—it appeared as though women again would be denied voting rights. Ultimately, the government invoked a rarely used urgency order to push the measure through in one session, despite heated arguments by Islamists. The Islamists did include a requirement that “females abide by Islamic law,” which has been widely interpreted to mean there would be separate polling places for men and women.

The granting of full suffrage to women was hailed throughout the West as a “victory for democracy” and a change that ultimately would affect the political landscape of the country. Shortly after the vote, the speaker of the assembly called for further, though unspecified, steps toward democracy in Kuwait.

The governmental changes of January 2006 (see Political background, above) reportedly caused a rift between the two branches of the royal family, a majority of whom believed the crown prince, Sheik Saad, was too ill to rule. They instead endorsed the prime minister, Sheikh Sabah, and the cabinet took the issue to the assembly for resolution, citing a constitutional procedure that would allow the transfer of power for health reasons if two-thirds of lawmakers approved. Adding to the week-long leadership crisis, the two branches of the ruling family—the Jabirs and the Salims—were pitted against each other in what observers reported was “an extraordinary public battle for control.” The tensions underscored the longtime rivalry between Sheik Sabah and Sheik Saad, and upset the tradition of alternating leadership between the two royal branches. Meanwhile, the upheaval postponed for an indefinite time a significant assembly vote on the \$8.5 billion Project Kuwait, in which international

companies would help boost oil production in the northern region of the country.

More political turmoil ensued in May when the assembly prepared to vote on a bill to reduce the number of electoral districts, with reformist members backing a plan to cut the number of districts from 25 to 5. However, the majority supported a government-endorsed plan that would reduce the number of districts to 10 but would first refer the measure to the constitutional court for a ruling on its legality. The move to refer the measure to court was seen as a delaying tactic, since court action could take months or years, giving the government what critics said was an advantage through alleged vote-buying in the next election. The delay would also allow the government to maintain the 25 districts while demonstrating it had attempted to change the system, observers said. Prior to the vote, 29 opposition members shocked those in chambers by walking out, leaving the “stunned” cabinet members behind until an opposition crowd outside the chambers jeered them into leaving as well. In an unprecedented move, the 29 opposition members demanded that they be allowed to question the prime minister about the proposed electoral law changes. The next day, with the reformists boycotting, the assembly voted 33–1 to send the controversial measure to the court. A week later, on May 21, 2006, the emir dissolved the assembly and called for parliamentary elections on June 29, a year ahead of schedule. Liberal reformists, campaigning on an anti-corruption platform, and Islamists reportedly won a total of 33 seats in the assembly, with the support of many women’s groups participating for the first time in elections. On July 17 parliament approved the redrawing of 25 electoral districts to create 5 larger ones, making it difficult for vote buying to influence elections, according to observers. The electoral revisions were hailed as a victory by advocates of democratic reforms, leading some observers to speculate that Kuwait might be heading toward a constitutional monarchy.

Political tensions continued, however, as a result of further accusations of improprieties. In July 2006 the energy minister was dismissed for

allegedly tampering with the parliamentary elections, and in December the minister of information resigned in the wake of charges that he tried to restrict media freedom and failed to cooperate with parliament. The full cabinet resigned on March 4, 2007, reportedly to avoid a planned no-confidence vote in the assembly against the health minister, who is a member of the royal family. Had the minister lost the no-confidence vote, observers said, it would have been a major embarrassment to the Sabah family. The emir named a new government on March 25, retaining his nephew, Sheik Nasser Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, as prime minister, and putting ruling family members in the key ministries of defense, foreign affairs, interior, and oil. The oil minister, who was accused of financial irregularities, was questioned by the assembly in June and faced a possible no-confidence vote in the forthcoming months.

## Political Parties

Although political parties are not legal in Kuwait, a number of political “groupings,” many of them loosely organized, have been permitted to function in public without restriction. More candidates in the 2003 National Assembly balloting were identifiable as supported by several of the groupings below. The government in mid-2004 acknowledged that political parties are likely to fully develop at some point, but no specific encouragement appears forthcoming.

Prior to the 2006 elections several opposition groups and independents reportedly participated in a loose alliance named Kuwait Rally. Among those in the alliance were the ICM, the KDF, and others described as fundamentalists.

**Islamic Constitutional Movement—ICM.** A moderate Sunni Muslim organization with reported ties to the Muslim Brotherhood in other Arab states such as Egypt and Jordan, the ICM has called for the “adjustment” of all Kuwaiti legislation so as not to “conflict” with *sharia* (Islamic religious law). In conjunction with the Kuwaiti Democratic Forum (KDF, below), the ICM led the prodemocracy

movement that developed in Kuwait following the expulsion of Iraqi troops in early 1991, with a call for new assembly elections and formation of a more representative cabinet. However, ICM leaders subsequently stressed that they sought “small steps, not jumps” in liberalization and did not question the authority of the royal family. Several ICM members were victorious in the 1992 and 1996 assembly balloting, but lost seats in the 2003 election.

In May 2006 the ICM reportedly dismissed leader Ismail al-SHATTI after he reportedly refused to resign as transport minister following his pro-government vote to sending a draft electoral law to the constitutional court (see Current issues, above). The ICM opposed the move, along with thousands of Kuwaitis who protested in front of the National Assembly in late May.

The ICM increased its representation from two seats in 2003 to six seats in 2006, a change attributed to the group’s broad support among women. In July 2006 al-Shatti was named minister of state for cabinet affairs, and in October he was also referenced as a deputy prime minister, in addition to his other portfolio.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Jasim Muhalhal al-YASIM, Badr al-NASHI (Secretary General).

**Kuwaiti Democratic Forum—KDF.** The secularist, center-left KDF was initially described as the best organized of Kuwait’s political groupings, with a membership based primarily in urban areas. Several KDF leaders (including “veteran leftist” Ahmad al-Khatib), who had been instrumental in the growth of the prodemocracy movement following the Gulf crisis, were elected to the assembly in October 1992, where they aligned with Islamic representatives in a campaign to make the royal family “more accountable.” However, Khatib did not run for reelection in 1996.

KDF leader Abdallah Nibari, described as a “leading liberal member of the opposition” in the assembly, was wounded in an apparent assassination attempt in June 1997. Nibari had been critical of the government’s handling of recent large military contracts, contending “middlemen” were being exorbitantly enriched by the process. KDF

lost its parliamentary representation in the 2003 assembly balloting when Abdallah Nibari lost his seat.

*Leaders:* Ahmad al-KHATIB, Abdallah NIBARI.

**Islamic Salafi Alliance**—ISA. This hard-line Sunni group appears to have replaced the Islamic Popular Group (IPG) among the major Sunni Muslim organizations. The so-called scientific Salafis also fall under this umbrella and are known as the Salafi Movement. It advocates social reform and a return to “true Islam.” The Salafi gained some seats in the 2003 assembly balloting. In 2006 the group supported the proposed reduction in the number of electoral districts and reportedly won two seats in the assembly.

*Leader:* Khalid al-ISSA.

**Islamic National Alliance**—INA. The INA, whose leader was elected to the assembly in October 1992, represents Kuwaiti Shiites. The INA reportedly derived from the Cultural Social Society (*Jamiyyat al-Thaqafah al-Ijtimaiyyah*), established by forces loyal to the Iranian revolution of 1979. However, Shiite pressure has been described as less severe on the Kuwaiti government than on other neighboring regimes (such as the one in Bahrain) in part because some Shiite leaders in Kuwait are participating in the political process while others remain wealthy supporters of the ruling family.

*Leader:* Adnan Sayid Abd al-Samad Sayid ZAHIR.

**Nation Party** (*Hizb Al-Ummah*). This group was formed on January 29, 2005, by former Salafists “to promote pluralism and a multiparty system of government” and is described as the first true political party ever formed in Kuwait. The group has called for the removal of foreign troops from Kuwait. Since the constitution and Kuwaiti laws do not provide for the establishment of political parties, the government has not been quite sure how to deal with the group. The founders of the group were called in for questioning by police at the end of January “for violating the public gatherings law,” according to a party official. In

February the government imposed a travel ban on all 15 party members. All 15 members were acquitted of the public gatherings violations in May, although party official Hakim al-Mutairi was fined for circulating publications without proper authorization. Three party members said they would run in the 2006 assembly elections, though leaders said the party would boycott the elections, alleging the elections would be fraudulent. In May 2006 the party announced its backing of full political rights for women, becoming the first Sunni Muslim group to do so.

*Leader:* Dr. Mohammed al-HADRAN, Hakim al-MUTAIRI (Secretary General).

**National Democratic Movement**—NDM. Launched in May 1997 by some 75 founding members (reportedly including national legislators and cabinet ministers), the NDM announced it would pursue broader “personal freedoms” for Kuwaitis as well as new legislation designed to give the assembly a greater role in overseeing government contracts. A number of NDM members were elected in the 2003 assembly balloting.

*Leaders:* Ahmad BISHARA, Khaled al-MUTAIRI.

## Legislature

A **National Assembly** (*Majlis al-Umma*) was organized in 1963 to share legislative authority with the emir, although it was dissolved by decree of the ruler from August 1976 to February 1981 and from July 1986 to October 1992. Under the 1962 basic law, the assembly encompasses 50 representatives (2 each from 25 constituencies) elected for four-year terms, in addition to ministers who, if not elected members, serve *ex officio*. Only literate, adult, native-born males over 21 years old whose families have resided in Kuwait since 1920 have been allowed to vote, though as of 2005 women are allowed to participate as candidates and voters in assembly elections.

Balloting for the most recent assembly was conducted on June 29, 2006. In a field of 252 candidates, 28 of them women, opponents of the ruling



## Cabinet

As of June 1, 2007

Prime Minister  
First Deputy Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Ministers

Sheikh Nasir al-Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah  
Sheikh Jabir Mubarak al-Hamad al-Sabah  
Sheikh Muhammad Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah  
Faisal Muhammad al-Hajji Bukhadhour

### Ministers

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs  
Commerce and Industry  
Communications  
Defense  
Education and Higher Education  
Electricity and Water  
Finance  
Foreign Affairs  
Health  
Information  
Interior  
Justice  
Oil  
Public Works and Housing  
Social Affairs and Labor

Dr. Abdullah Matuq al-Matuq  
Falah Fahd Mahmoud al-Hajiri  
Shareedah Abdullah Saad al-Musohirji  
Sheikh Jabir Mubarak al-Hamad al-Sabah  
Nouria Sabeeh Barrak al-Sabeeh [f]  
Muhammad Abdullah Hadi al-Olaim  
Badir Mishari al-Humaidhi  
Sheikh Muhammad Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah  
Massouma Saleh al-Mubarak [f]  
Abdullah Saud al-Mhilbi  
Sheikh Jabir Mubarak al-Hamad al-Sabah  
Dr. Abdullah Matuq al-Matuq  
Sheikh Ali Jarrah Sabah al-Sabah  
Moussa Hossein Abdullah al-Sarraf  
Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Hamad al-Sabah

### Ministers of State

Cabinet Affairs  
Housing Affairs  
Municipal Affairs  
National Assembly Affairs

Faisal Muhammad al-Hajji Bukhadhour  
Abdulwahid Mahmoud al-Awadhi  
Moussa Hossein Abdullah al-Sarraf  
Shareedah Abdullah Saad al-Musohirji

[f] = female

family, including liberal reformists and Islamists, won 33 seats, while members of the ruling family and their supporters won the remaining 17 seats. No women were elected.

*Speaker:* Jassim al-KHURAFI.

## Communications

The emir suspended constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press on August 29, 1976. Following the National Assembly election of 1981, censorship was relaxed, permitting the reemergence of what the *New York Times* called “some of the

most free, and freewheeling, newspapers in the region.” However, in conjunction with the dissolution of the assembly in July 1986 the government imposed new press restrictions, subjecting periodicals to prior censorship and announcing it would suspend any newspapers or magazines printing material “against the national interest.” The government also continued its drive to bring more Kuwaitis into the news media and deported an estimated 40 journalists from other Arab countries to open jobs for nationals.

In January 1992 the government lifted the 1986 censorship codes in conjunction with an agreement

by the major press groups to self-monitor the content of their publications, and the press was subsequently described as having returned to the vitality and relative openness of the early 1980s, with direct criticism of the emir remaining as the only proscription.

In May 2006 the parliament approved a new press law that prohibits the arrest or detainment of journalists unless there is a Supreme Court verdict making such action necessary. The law also allows citizens whose application for a publishing license is rejected to sue the government. In addition, the law forbids jailing journalists unless they criticize the emir, threaten to overthrow the government, or commit religious offenses. The changes, approved unanimously after strenuous debate, reverse provisions of a 1961 press law.

### *Press*

The following dailies (in Arabic, unless otherwise noted) are published in Kuwait City: *al-Anbaa* (The News, 107,000); *al-Rai al-Aam* (Voice of the People, 87,000, published in Shuwaikh); *al-Qabas* (Firebrand, 80,000); *al-Siyasah* (Policy, 80,000); *al-Watan* (Homeland, 60,000); *Kuwait Times* (28,000), in English; *Arab Times* (42,000), in English; and *al-Jamahir* (83,000). A weekly, *al-Rissalah* (The Message), is published in Shuwaikh. During the 1990–1991 Iraqi occupation a number of clandestine newsletters were issued on an irregular basis, including one that was converted at liberation into a full-fledged tabloid, *26th of February*, with a circulation of 30,000; however, the paper suspended publication in March 1991 because it lacked a government license.

### *News Agencies*

The domestic facility is the Kuwait News Agency—KUNA (*Wakalat al-Anbaal-Kuwayt*); in addition, numerous foreign agencies maintain bureaus in Kuwait City.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The Radio of the State of Kuwait and Kuwait Television (*Tilifziyun al-Kuwayt*) are both controlled by the government. In November 2002 Kuwait closed the office of *Al-Jazeera* satellite television station, which broadcasts from Qatar, officially for “security reasons,” though it also reportedly accused the station of lacking objectivity. In May 2005 the station was allowed to resume broadcasts. There were approximately 223 personal computers and 260 Internet users for every 1,000 inhabitants. In that same year there were 886 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Sheikh Salem Abdullah al-Jaber al-SABAH

**U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait:** (Vacant)

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Abdullah al-MURAD

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, BADEA, BDEAC, CAEU, GCC, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO, WTO

# LEBANON

## REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

*al-Jumhuriyah al-Lubnaniyah*

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### The Country

Lebanon is bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, on the north and east by Syria, and on the south by Israel. A long-standing presumption of roughly equal religious division between Christians and Muslims is no longer valid because of a high birthrate among the latter. (No formal census has been conducted since 1932 for fear that the results might provoke political unrest.) The largest Muslim sects are the Shiites and the Sunni, each traditionally encompassing about one-fifth of the permanent population, although recent estimates place the number of Shiites at approximately 40 percent of the entire population and 70 percent of the Muslim population. Druses number nearly 200,000, and Christian sects include Maronites, Orthodox Greeks, Greek Catholics, Orthodox Armenians, and Armenian Catholics. An estimated 350,000 Palestinian refugees live in long-standing "camps" in Lebanon. Women comprise approximately 30 percent of the paid labor force, concentrated in lower administrative, commercial, and educational sectors.

Because of a commercial tradition, Lebanon's living standard until the mid-1970s was high in comparison to most other Middle Eastern countries and developing nations in general. The leading contributor to national income was the service sector, encompassing banking, insurance, tourism, transit trade, income from petroleum pipelines, and shipping. Industrial development, though largely limited to small firms, was also important, the principal components being food processing, textiles, building materials, footwear, glass, and chemical

products. However, the civil war that erupted in 1975 and 1976 severely damaged the economy, with 1976 GNP dropping 60 percent compared to 1974. In addition, casualties and dislocations among the civilian population yielded an estimated loss of two-thirds of skilled industrial workers. Although nearly half the plunge in GNP had been recovered by 1978, renewed turmoil contributed to further decline prior to the full-scale Israeli invasion in mid-1982. By 1985 some 70 percent of the country's production had come to a halt, 35 percent



**Political Status:** Independent parliamentary republic proclaimed November 26, 1941, with acquisition of de facto autonomy completed upon withdrawal of French troops in December 1946.

**Area:** 4,036 sq. mi. (10,452 sq. km.).

**Population:** 3,556,000 (2006E). Estimates vary widely; the most recent official figure (2,126,325 in 1970), which excluded Palestinian refugees, was based on a population sample and was much lower than UN estimates of the period. In recent years the UN appears to have accepted the 1970 figure, discarding most of its previous estimates for the late 1970s and early 1980s.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** BEIRUT (1,300,000), Tarabulus (Tripoli, 215,000), Saida (Sidon, 151,000), Tyre (120,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic (French is widely used).

**Monetary Unit:** Lebanese Pound (market rate July 1, 2006: 1,502 pounds = \$1US).

**President:** Gen. (Ret.) Emile LAHOUD (Maronite Christian); elected for a six-year term by the National Assembly on October 15, 1998, and inaugurated on November 24 to succeed Ilyas HRAWI (Maronite Christian). Although the president's tenure is limited to one six-year term, on September 4, 2004, the National Assembly voted to amend the constitution to extend Lahoud's term for an additional three years until November 2007.

**Prime Minister:** Fouad SINIORA (Sunni Muslim); appointed by the president on June 30, 2005, to succeed Najib Mikati; formed new government on July 19, 2005.

appeared and the once-stable Lebanese pound lost more than 99 percent of its 1982 value by late 1989.

Although inflation and unemployment continued to run at 100 and 30 percent, respectively, the country's economic future was viewed with cautious optimism following the appointment of multi-billionaire Rafiq Hariri as prime minister in October 1992 after the end of the civil war. The United Nations estimated the war's damage at about \$25 billion. Lebanon experienced a heavy inflow of foreign investment as it attempted to rebound from the devastation caused by the war. GDP, up about 75 percent since 1990, grew by 4 percent in 1997, with annual inflation running at 8.5 percent. Although described by the World Bank as having made a "remarkable" recovery in the 1990s, the economy remained negatively influenced by high external debt, a growing budget deficit, and severe unemployment.

Consequently, GDP growth began to plummet in 1999, to only 1 percent, and fell to -0.5 percent in 2000 under the continued influence of a plodding bureaucracy, corruption, and resistance by vested interests to reform. Economic growth rebounded from 2 percent in 2001 and 2002 to 4.9 percent in 2003 and a projected 6.3 percent in 2004. Lebanon's modest recovery in GDP growth was due to stronger regional goods exports. The depreciation of the U.S. dollar, to which the Lebanese pound is pegged, also strengthened economic competitiveness. Nevertheless, Lebanon's growth remained below potential, and unemployment stayed high with job prospects for recent graduates poor. Furthermore, the country continued to suffer from a crippling external debt, estimated in 2004 at 175 percent of its GDP. The economy also suffered severely from Israeli air attacks in July and August 2006 during the Israel-*Hezbollah* conflict. According to the Beirut-based Center for Economic Research, the bill for reconstruction was around \$7 billion. The Economist Intelligence Unit estimated that the country's economy contracted 6.4 percent in 2006. Growth in 2007 is expected to be an anemic 2 percent. International donors pledged around \$7.6 billion in aid to assist Lebanon in rebuilding infrastructure damaged during the

of all factories had been destroyed, 80 percent of industrial workers had been laid off, and the national debt had grown by 700 percent in four years to \$30.4 billion. The budget deficit grew from \$1 billion in 1981 to \$10 billion in 1984, absorbing one-third of the gross national product. The agricultural sector declined by 36 percent in 1984 alone, while most government income from customs duties dis-

war. The country's tourism industry, which was thriving until the conflict, continues to suffer.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Home to the Phoenicians in the third millennium B.C., Lebanon was later subjected to invasions by the Romans and the Arabs, with Turkish control being established in the 16th century. During the 19th century Mount Lebanon, the core area of what was to become the Lebanese Republic, acquired a special status as a result of European intervention on behalf of various Christian factions. Following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the country became a French mandate under the League of Nations, France adding to Mount Lebanon areas detached from Syria to enlarge the country's area and its Muslim population. Independence, proclaimed in 1941 and confirmed in an agreement with Free French representatives in 1943, was not fully effective until the withdrawal of French troops in 1946, following a series of national uprisings during the tenure of the republic's first president, Bishara al-KHURI. The National Pact of 1943, an unwritten understanding reflecting the balance of religious groups within the population at that time, provided for a sharing of executive and legislative functions in the ratio of six Christians to five Muslims. Although this arrangement helped moderate the impact of postwar Arab nationalism, the country was racked by a serious internal crisis in the summer of 1958 that led to the temporary landing of U.S. Marines at the request of President Camille CHAMOUN. The crisis was alleviated in July 1958 by the election of a compromise president, Gen. Fuad CHEHAB, who was acceptable to the dissident leadership. Internal stability was further consolidated by the peaceful election of Charles HELOU as president in 1964.

Although Lebanon was an active participant in only the first Arab-Israeli war, Palestinian guerrilla groups based in southern Lebanon began launching attacks on Israel in the mid-1960s. In Novem-

ber 1969 Yasir ARAFAT, who had emerged as chair of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) the previous February, met with representatives of the Lebanese Army in Cairo, Egypt, to conclude a secret pact under which Lebanon recognized the right of Palestinians to engage in action against the Jewish state, with the military agreeing to facilitate movement of commandos through border zones. Although the so-called Cairo Agreement was subsequently amended to restrict Palestinian activity, a sharp increase in the number of cross-border raids, particularly after the expulsion of the Palestinian guerrilla groups from Jordan in 1970 and 1971, generated Israeli reprisals and, in turn, demands from the Christian right that the Lebanese government restrain the commandos.

Serious fighting between the Maronite right-wing Phalangist Party and Palestinian guerrilla groups erupted in Beirut in April 1975, exacerbated by growing tensions between status quo and anti-status quo factions. The status quo forces, mainly Maronite, opposed demands by nationalists, most of whom were Muslim, who wanted the government to identify more closely with the Palestinians and other pan-Arab causes, and also demanded revisions in Lebanon's political system to reflect Muslim population gains.

The conflict escalated further in 1976, causing widespread destruction and the virtual collapse of the economy. In March a group of Muslim army officers, calling for the resignation of President Sulayman FRANJIYAH, mounted an abortive coup, and on April 9 regular Syrian army units intervened in support of the Lebanese leadership following its break with the leftists headed by Kamal Jumblatt. The Syrian intervention permitted the election by the Lebanese parliament on May 8 of Ilyas SARKIS to succeed President Franjyah.

During a meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on October 17 and 18, 1976, Syrian president Assad and Egyptian president Sadat agreed on the establishment of a definitive cease-fire, commencing October 21, to be maintained by a 30,000-man Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) theoretically directed by President Sarkis but actually under Syrian control. Despite appeals from Iraq and Libya for a

limit on Syrian participation, the plan was approved during an Arab League summit meeting in Cairo on October 25 and 26. By late November, hostilities had largely ceased, and on December 9 President Sarkis designated Salim Ahmad al-HUSS to form a new government (Prime Minister Karami tendered his resignation on September 25).

Notwithstanding the assassination of Muslim Druse leader Jumblatt on March 16, which negated efforts by President Sarkis and Prime Minister Huss to secure agreement on constitutional reform, an uneasy truce prevailed throughout much of the country during 1977. The principal exception was the southern region, where fear of Israeli intervention prevented deployment of Syrian-led peacekeeping units. Thus insulated, rightist forces made a strenuous effort to bring the entire border area under their control, but they were rebuffed in the coastal sector, which remained in Palestinian hands.

The formation of a new Israeli government under Likud's Menachem Begin in June 1977 resulted in an escalation of support for the Phalange-led Maronite militia, which now called for withdrawal of the Syrian-led ADF from Lebanese territory. As a result, the political situation during 1978 became more complex, and the level of conflict intensified. On March 15 Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in an attempt to "root out terrorist bases" that had supported a guerrilla raid four days earlier on the highway between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Less than a month later, the UN Security Council authorized the dispatch of an Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to assist in restoring peace to the area.

On April 18, 1979, Maj. Saad HADDAD, commander of some 2,000 Christian militiamen loyal to the rightist Lebanese Front, proclaimed an "independent free Lebanese state" consisting of an eight-mile-wide strip of southern Lebanon along the Israeli border. The move was prompted by the deployment of units of the Lebanese army, which Haddad had accused of complicity with both Syria and Palestinian guerrillas, alongside UNIFIL forces in the south. A week later, the Israeli government, which was providing matériel to Haddad's troops, announced that it would initiate preemptive

strikes in response to continuing infiltration from Lebanon. On June 6, in the context of increased Israeli shelling, "search-and-destroy" missions, and air strikes, the PLO and the National Movement stated that they would remove their forces from the port city of Tyre as well as villages throughout the south in order to protect the civilian population. In both June and September, Israeli and Syrian jet fighters dueled south of the Litani River (below the so-called red line, beyond which Israel refused to accept a Syrian presence), while UNIFIL forces were, at various times throughout the year, attacked by all sides, despite a series of UN-sponsored cease-fires. The situation was no better in Beirut and farther north. On the right, Phalangist, National Liberal Party (NLP), Armenian, and Franjyah loyalists clashed; on the left, intrafactional fighting involved Nasserites, members of the Arab Socialist Union, Arafat's *al-Fatah* and other Palestinian groups, and forces of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party. Meanwhile, Syrian troops found themselves fighting elements of the right, the left, and increasingly militant pro-Iranian Shiites.

By mid-1981, in addition to the largely emasculated Lebanese military, the Syrian presence, and the sporadic incursion of Israeli units, it was estimated that more than 40 private armies were operating throughout the country, including *al-Amal*, a military wing of the Shiite community, which had grown to a force of some 30,000 men engaged largely in operations against the Palestinians and Lebanese leftist groups sympathetic to Iraq. The most important engagements during the first half of the year, however, occurred between Syrian forces and Phalangist militiamen in Beirut and in the strategically important town of Zahlé in the central part of the country. In the course of the fighting in Zahlé, the Israeli air force intervened to assist Phalangist forces against Syrian air attacks. As Israeli attacks in Lebanon intensified and PLO guerrilla actions increased in Israel, U.S. presidential envoy Philip Habib arranged a cease-fire between Israeli and PLO forces. The uneasy peace ended on June 6, 1982, when Israel again attacked PLO forces in Lebanon, supposedly in retaliation for an

unsuccessful assassination attempt by a Palestinian gunman on the Israeli ambassador to Britain. In little more than a week, the Israeli army succeeded in encircling PLO forces in West Beirut while driving the Syrians back into the eastern Bekaa Valley. Subsequently, on August 6, U.S. envoy Habib announced that agreement had been reached on withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon, the actual evacuation commencing on August 21 and concluding on September 1.

On August 23, 1982, Maronite leader Bashir GEMAYEL was designated by the Lebanese Assembly to succeed President Sarkis; however, the president-elect was assassinated in a bombing of the Phalangist Party headquarters on September 14. His brother, Amin Pierre GEMAYEL, was named on September 21 as his replacement and was sworn in two days later. The new president promptly reappointed Prime Minister Wazzan, whose new government was announced on October 7.

The assassination of Bashir Gemayel was followed, on September 16–18, 1982, by the massacre of numerous inhabitants of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, where a group of fighters had allegedly been left behind by the PLO. While the perpetrators of the massacre were right-wing Phalangist militiamen, they had been given access to the camps by Israeli authorities, whose de facto complicity generated intense controversy within Israel and widespread condemnation from abroad.

During late 1982 and early 1983 the presence of a multinational peacekeeping force of U.S., French, Italian, and British units helped stabilize the situation in the vicinity of Beirut, while direct negotiations between Israeli and Lebanese representatives yielded, with U.S. participation, a troop withdrawal agreement on May 17, 1983, that included provision for the establishment of a “security region” in southern Lebanon. The agreement was strongly opposed by Lebanese Arab nationalists and by Syria, which refused to discuss the withdrawal of its own forces from northern and eastern Lebanon, and Israel began construction in August of a defense line along the Awali River, to which it redeployed its troops in early September. The action was followed

by a resurgence of militia activity in West Beirut, clashes between pro- and anti-Syrian groups in the northern city of Tripoli, and fighting between Druse and Phalangist forces in the Chouf Mountains and elsewhere.

A series of “national reconciliation” talks, involving all the leading factions, commenced in Geneva, Switzerland, in late September 1983, but they were adjourned six weeks later, following simultaneous bomb attacks on the headquarters of the U.S. and French peacekeeping contingents in Beirut. Subsequently, the Western peacekeeping forces were withdrawn, and on March 5 Lebanon, under strong pressure from Syria, abrogated the unratified withdrawal accord concluded ten months earlier.

In March 1985 a rebellion broke out within the Lebanese Forces against the political leadership of the Phalange and its ostensible leader, Amin Gemayel. Deeply opposed to the president’s close ties to Syria, the anti-Gemayel forces seized much of the Maronite-held sector of Beirut, the area around the port of Junieh, and the mountains north of the capital. The rebellion was led by Samir GEAGEA, a young Phalangist commander who had led the raid in which Tony Franjyah had been slain in 1978. Geagea’s forces, styled the “Independent Christian Decision Movement,” called for a confederation of sectarian-based mini-states and rejected an appeal in April by 50 of Lebanon’s senior Christian leaders for intercommunal talks to achieve national reconciliation. In May, reportedly under pressure from Syria, Phalangist officials removed Geagea as head of their executive committee; his successor, Elie HOBEIKA, who reportedly had commanded the forces that perpetrated the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982, immediately affirmed the “essential” Syrian role in Lebanon and Lebanon’s place in the Arab world.

Within Muslim-controlled West Beirut, the Shiite *al-Amal* militia fought several battles against the Nasserite *al-Murabitun*, the Palestinians, and its former ally, the Druse-led Progressive Socialist Party (PSP); it also continued the struggle against government forces across the Green Line in East Beirut. In April a coalition of *al-Amal* and PSP

forces defeated *al-Murabitun* and seized control of West Beirut. Subsequently, *al-Amal* opened a campaign against Palestinian forces in Beirut and laid siege to two Palestinian refugee camps. The renewed "war of the camps" precipitated an emergency session of the Arab League Council in June, which called for a cease-fire, and, under pressure from Syria, *al-Amal* agreed to withdraw its forces.

While the siege of the camps was momentarily lifted, *al-Amal* and the PSP repeatedly clashed during the ensuing three months for control of Beirut. Damascus attempted to end the fighting between its Lebanese allies with a security plan drawn up under the auspices of Syrian vice president Khaddam in September. According to the plan, the Lebanese army and police would end the rule of sectarian militias in Beirut under supervision of Syrian observers. Earlier, although the various militias continued their struggle for control of the city, PSP leader Walid JUMBLATT and *al-Amal* chief Nabih BERRI had launched a National Unity Front that included the Lebanese Communist Party, the *Baath*, the PSNS, and 50 independent political leaders, several of them Christian. Formed under Syrian auspices, the Front called for a political program rejecting partition, confessionalism, or other division of the country.

In mid-September 1985 the northern city of Tripoli became the scene of some of the most violent clashes in the civil war. The chief protagonists were the Islamic Unification Movement, allied with pro-Arafat Palestinians against the pro-Syrian Arab Democratic Party. Although surrounded by Syrian forces, Tripoli had become the base of an anti-Syrian coalition that Damascus wished to destroy. As a result of the fighting, 80 percent of the city's 400,000 inhabitants fled.

Events in southern Lebanon were dominated by the redeployment of Israeli troops and its consequences. During the phased departure, militant Shiites stepped up guerrilla activity against the Israelis. In retaliation, as part of its "iron fist" policy, Israel seized several hundred men from Shiite villages and imprisoned them in Israel. To obtain their release, a fundamentalist Shiite faction hijacked an American TWA airliner en route from Athens to

Rome, forced the plane to land in Beirut, and removed the passengers to various locations throughout the city. After 17 days the hostages were released through the intercession of *al-Amal* leader Berri. Concurrently, Israel began a gradual release of the Shiites, both the United States and Israel denying that there was any link between the two actions.

The departure of the Israelis precipitated bloody clashes among Shiite, PSP, Palestinian, and Maronite forces seeking to gain control of the evacuated areas. However, most Maronite and Palestinian forces were defeated, the southern part of the country falling largely under Shiite control, with PSP forces confined to traditionally Druse enclaves.

Although the Israeli occupation of Lebanon officially ended on June 6, 1985, numerous Israeli security advisors remained with the South Lebanese Army (SLA), which retained control of a narrow border strip, with Israel continuing its policy of hot pursuit of forces that continued their attacks on the SLA.

During 1986 the military alignments within Lebanon underwent substantial (in some cases remarkable) change. In January, following the conclusion of a December 28 "peace agreement" in Damascus between Druse leader Jumblatt, Shiite leader Berri, and Phalangist leader Hobeika, Lebanese Forces units commanded by Hobeika were decisively defeated in heavy fighting north and east of Beirut by hard-line Phalangists loyal to his predecessor, Samir Geagea. After Hobeika had fled to Paris (although returning within days to Damascus), both Jumblatt and Berri called for the removal of President Gemayel, who declared that he was "not the problem" and would refer the accord to the National Assembly, which contained a Christian majority. In the south, numerous clashes occurred in ensuing months between Palestinian and Lebanese groups, on the one hand, and opponents of the Israeli-backed SLA on the other, with increased anti-Israeli guerrilla activity by an "Islamic Resistance Front" that included the pro-Iranian *Hezbollah*, a radical Shiite group that had refused to endorse the December agreement. By the end of the year, it was apparent that the



more moderate *al-Amal* had lost many of its militiamen to *Hezbollah*. Of greater consequence, however, was the reappearance of numerous PLO guerrillas, many of whom had returned via the Phalangist-controlled port of Junieh, north of Beirut. In November the Palestinians surged from refugee camps near Sidon and, in heavy fighting, forced *al-Amal* units to withdraw from hillside positions around the adjacent town of Maghdousheh. Druse leader Jumblatt, who had previously supported the Palestinians, immediately announced that his forces would join with other pro-Syrian leftist groups to “confront jointly any attempt by the Palestinians to expand outside their camps.” By early 1987 the “war of the camps” had returned in the north, while fighting broke out in Beirut between Shiites and their intermittent Druse allies, prompting a renewed intervention by Syrian army forces to restore a semblance of order to the battle-scarred capital.

The assassination, in a helicopter bombing on June 1, 1987, of Prime Minister Karami reportedly shocked a country already traumatized by seemingly endless bloodshed. Although Karami had earlier declared his wish to resign because of an inability to resolve the nation’s political and economic crises, he had been one of Lebanon’s most durable and widely respected Muslim leaders.

The most important development during the latter half of 1987 was the increased influence of *Hezbollah*, which had supplanted *al-Amal* in many of the poorer Shiite areas, particularly in the south. During early 1988 the group also moved to augment its strength in the suburbs of West Beirut, provoking violent clashes with *al-Amal* that were contained in May by the second deployment of Syrian army units to the area in 15 months. Further conflict between the two Shiite groups broke out in southern Lebanon in October and in Beirut in early January 1989, after *al-Amal* had entered into a peace agreement with the PLO. However, on January 30, during a meeting convened in Damascus by high-level Syrian and Iranian representatives, a cease-fire was concluded, under which *Hezbollah* agreed to accept *al-Amal*’s primacy in the south.

Meanwhile, the political process in Lebanon had come to a virtual standstill. The National Assembly failed to secure a quorum to elect a successor to President Gemayel, despite a compromise agreement in Damascus on September 21, 1988, in support of a Christian deputy, Michel DAHER. Maronite leaders immediately denounced Syrian “imposition” of the candidate, and, bowing to pressure before leaving office on September 22, Gemayel appointed an interim military government headed by Gen. Michel AOUN, the commander in chief of the Lebanese Army. Pro-Syrian Muslim groups responded by branding the action a military coup and pledged their continued support of the Huss administration, which, following the resignation of its Christian members, continued to function on a caretaker basis in Muslim West Beirut.

Bitter fighting resumed between Lebanese Army and Muslim forces in Beirut in March 1989 in the wake of an attempted Christian naval blockade of ports controlled by Druse and Muslim militias, with General Aoun declaring a “war of liberation” against Syria. Fighting subsequently broke out between units of the Lebanese Army reporting to Aoun and Geagea’s Lebanese Forces, placing Lebanese civil war for the first time squarely within the Christian community.

In late September 1989, 62 of the 70 survivors of the 99-member assembly elected in 1972 met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to discuss a peace plan put forward by the Arab League that called for transfer of most executive powers of the traditionally Maronite Christian president to the Sunni Muslim prime minister, an end of sectarianism in the civil and military services, and an increase in legislative seats to permit more accurate representation of the country’s varied socioreligious groupings. Aoun rejected the plan in late October because it did not call for an immediate Syrian troop withdrawal. Nevertheless, the assembly members convened at the northern town of Qlailaat on November 5 to ratify the Taif accord and elect René MOUAWAD as the new president. Less than three weeks later, on November 17, President Mouawad was assassinated, with the legislators assembling again on November 24 to elect

Ilyas HRAWI as his successor. On the following day Prime Minister Huss formed a new government that was carefully balanced between Muslim and Christian officeholders.

Despite Aoun's objection, President Hrawi on September 21, 1990, approved a series of constitutional amendments implementing the Taif accord, and in mid-October Lebanese and Syrian forces ousted the renegade general from his stronghold in East Beirut. Subsequently, most other militia units withdrew from the vicinity of the capital, and on December 20 Hrawi asked Umar KARAMI, the brother of the former prime minister, to form a "government of the second republic," the composition of which was announced on December 24 and accorded a parliamentary vote of confidence on January 9, 1991.

In early 1992 a severe decline in the value of the Lebanese pound yielded an escalation in prices that triggered mass protests by consumers. With no relief forthcoming, the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU) launched a general strike on May 6 (the fourth in two months), in response to which Prime Minister Karami submitted his government's resignation. On May 7 the CTU suspended the strike, and on May 16 Rashid al-Sulh, who had served as prime minister 17 years earlier, formed a new government that won a vote of confidence from the National Assembly on May 29. On October 31, following the country's first general election in 21 years, Rafiq HARIRI, a wealthy businessman who held dual Lebanese-Saudi citizenship, formed a predominantly "technocratic" administration that contained representatives of most of the former militias with the conspicuous exception of *Hezbollah* and the (Maronite) Lebanese Forces.

In mid-July 1993 Israel launched an extensive bombing campaign of both military and civilian targets in and north of its self-proclaimed security zone in response to a series of attacks by Palestinian and *Hezbollah* forces opposed to the Middle East peace talks. In early August regular Lebanese army units, with apparent backing by both the U.S. and Syrian governments, were deployed to the south in an effort to maintain a cease-fire that had

taken somewhat tenuous effect on July 31. However, additional clashes in late August included two *Hezbollah* ambushes that yielded a number of Israeli deaths and renewed Israeli air strikes against *Hezbollah* installations. In mid-November the guerrillas launched a major offensive against SLA positions.

On October 17, 1995, the assembly approved a "one-time" amendment to the constitutional provision limiting presidents to a single six-year term, President Hrawi's stay in office thereby being extended for three years (until November 24, 1998). Legislative elections were held in August and September 1996, with progovernment (and by implication, Syrian-backed) candidates dominating. However, the balloting generated much more controversy than expected. Among other things, the government was accused of intimidating and/or bribing voters, unconstitutionally restructuring the sensitive Mount Lebanon voting district, and harassing opponents, who pointed to the presence of some 35,000 Syrian soldiers as evidence of how limited Lebanese autonomy really was. Following the election, Hrawi invited Hariri on October 24 to form a new government. However, the cabinet was not announced until November 7, Syrian intervention having reportedly been required to settle differences among Hrawi, Hariri, and Berri regarding ministerial seats. Although some new cabinet members were appointed, the changes did not appear to reflect any significant revision of government philosophy. Following Hrawi's policy statement to the assembly, in which he emphasized continued "economic recovery" and support for the "liberation" of the Israeli-occupied area of southern Lebanon, the government received a 102–19 vote of confidence from the legislators.

Labor unrest in March 1996 prompted the government to impose a state of emergency banning public demonstrations. Also during the first part of the year the cycle of attacks and retaliatory strikes between *Hezbollah* guerrillas and Israeli forces intensified, and on April 11 the Israel government launched the Grapes of Wrath campaign against suspected *Hezbollah* locations throughout southern Lebanon and on the outskirts of Beirut. More

than two weeks of Israeli air raids and shelling displaced some 400,000 people, caused widespread damage, and left more than 200 Lebanese civilians dead. Many of the casualties occurred when Israeli rockets hit a UN Palestinian refugee camp in Qana; although Israel (facing severe international criticism) claimed the incident had been a mistake arising from “technical errors,” UN personnel assigned to review the matter concluded that the Israeli interpretation was difficult to accept. In any event, a five-nation monitoring group (France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and the United States) was established to oversee a cease-fire against civilian targets brokered as of April 26.

Heavy fighting resumed in 1997 in southern Lebanon, as it became apparent that *Hezbollah*'s military capacity had increased to the point of making an indefinite standoff possible. At the same time, Israeli public opinion turned against their military's involvement in Lebanon, the death of 73 soldiers in a February helicopter crash helping convince many Israelis that they had become mired in their own “Vietnam.”

Domestic political attention in the first half of 1998 focused on the first municipal balloting in 35 years, scheduled for May and June and including the Christian parties, many of which had boycotted the 1992 and 1996 elections. Observers described the voting as “fairly clean,” an important assessment for the nation's fledgling democratic system in view of the controversy surrounding the 1996 national poll. On October 15 the National Assembly unanimously elected Gen. Emile LAHOUD, the army chief of staff, as the next head of state. (Lahoud had been made eligible for the post the day before, when the assembly eliminated the constitutional provision that required state officials to resign their positions six months prior to running for office.) Following his inauguration on November 24, Lahoud asked Hariri to stay on as head of a new cabinet, but the prime minister ultimately declined over what he described as Lahoud's “inappropriate” involvement in the selection of ministers. Lahoud therefore on December 2 appointed former prime minister Huss to the post for the fourth time; the new “technocratic” cabinet (containing only two

incumbents) was announced on December 4 and received the required legislative vote of confidence on December 17, following several days of intense debate on Huss's economic proposals.

In May 2000, Israeli forces unilaterally withdrew from southern Lebanon. (Earlier in the year in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, Israel and Syria had held unsuccessful meetings.) Within weeks, the United Nations demarcated a “line of withdrawal” between Lebanese territory on the one side and Israel and the Golan Heights on the other and declared Israel's withdrawal complete. *Hezbollah* claimed, however, that the “Shaba farms,” a 25-square-kilometer patch of land on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, was actually part of Lebanon and that continued “resistance” to “Israeli occupation” was therefore justified. Under pressure from *Hezbollah* and Syria, the Lebanese government officially voiced claims to Shaba farms, thus endorsing the “resistance,” and declined to post Lebanese army troops to the border with Israel and the Golan Heights.

Later in 2000 national elections brought *Hezbollah* into parliament and Rafiq Hariri back to the premiership. Over the next three years, Syria would gradually reduce the public profile of its military presence in Lebanon by moving forces from Beirut to the Biqa Valley and by reducing the overall size of its Lebanese contingent, all the while strengthening its political and economic domination of the country. Meanwhile, *Hezbollah* fighters harassed Israeli forces in the Shaba farms area and responded to Israeli military overflights by sending unpiloted drones into Israeli airspace and firing anti-aircraft guns at angles that permitted debris to rain down on Israeli border towns.

In March 2002 Syrian president Bashar al-Assad made an official visit to Lebanon, calling on his close ally President Lahoud. Relations between Lahoud and Prime Minister Hariri, never good, deteriorated steadily during their joint incumbencies. Hariri had employed part of his vast personal fortune in spearheading the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, controversially increasing the country's national debt. Lahoud (and Syria) tolerated

Hariri's premiership out of grudging respect for his ties to France, Saudi Arabia, and the United States and his ability to prime the pump of economic reconstruction.

By mid-2004 speculation ran rife concerning who would succeed Lahoud. By August Syria had made the decision: Emile Lahoud would remain in office three years beyond his legal mandate (thus requiring amendment of the constitution). Hariri bitterly opposed the extension, but was ordered by Assad to comply. He did so but subsequently resigned, setting in motion a dramatic series of events leading ultimately to his assassination in February 2005.

The February 14, 2005, assassination of Rafiq Hariri set in motion considerable political turbulence, which turned to gridlock. Two weeks after the assassination, Prime Minister Karami resigned. He was replaced on April 19 by Najib Mikati, who formed a caretaker government to oversee national elections. International pressure and Lebanese protesters obliged Syria to withdraw the last of its forces on April 26; a UN team verified the withdrawal on May 23. Meanwhile, retired general Michel Aoun, an arch foe of Syria, returned to a hero's welcome after 14 years in exile and announced his intention to compete in the forthcoming elections. Saad Hariri, the son of the assassinated former prime minister, in alliance with Druse leader Walid Jumblatt, unveiled his own list of candidates. Unable to agree with Hariri and Jumblatt on terms for a unified list of anti-Syrian candidates, Aoun formed his own list in alliance with pro-Syrian Christian politicians from northern Lebanon.

National elections in June 2005 produced mixed results. The Hariri list won 72 of parliament's 128 seats. Although Aoun emerged as Lebanon's leading Maronite political figure, *Hezbollah* increased its parliamentary strength in alliance with *al-Amal*, and Lebanon's Maronite community (led by its patriarch) insisted that Lahoud be kept in office as a symbol of Christian political status, notwithstanding his close relationship with Syria. Confusion over Lebanon's political direction was punctuated by car bombings that killed several crit-

ics of Syria, including journalist Samir QASEER, former Communist Party leader George HRAWI, and journalist-parliamentarian Jibrán TUENI and injured anti-Syrian journalist May CHIDIAC and caretaker defense minister Elias MURR, a former ally of Syria who backed Aoun in the election.

On February 14, 2006, some 500,000 people gathered in central Beirut to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of former prime minister Hariri, but the show of solidarity could not mask a chronic lack of popular political consensus on the country's direction. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora arrived in Washington, D.C., for an official visit in mid-April 2006, but fundamental issues about Lebanon's presidency, *Hezbollah's* role, and the country's relationship with Syria remained unresolved.

President Lahoud's weakened status seemed at first to advantage former general Michel Aoun, but Aoun and the Hariri bloc did not trust each other, making the ex-general a questionable near-term replacement or eventual successor to Lahoud. The parliament called in February 2006 for Lahoud to vacate the presidency by March 14, 2006. Aoun rejected the call of the "March 14th Movement" for Lahoud's ouster and reached out to Shiites by means of a February 2006 accord between Aoun's "Free Patriotic Movement" and *Hezbollah*. After 15 years of exile in France, Aoun's backing of Lahoud and outreach to *Hezbollah* signified his recognition of the central role Damascus continued to play in Lebanon and his need for Syrian acquiescence were he ever to succeed Lahoud.

*Hezbollah's* insistence on retaining its arms and its status as the Lebanese "resistance" contributed to the political stalemate. As part of an ongoing "National Dialogue" begun in early 2006, Lebanon's top 14 political leaders agreed in March 2006 that the Shaba farms were Lebanese lands, irrespective of the June 2000 edict of the United Nations. Some Lebanese leaders reportedly believed that Israeli withdrawal from this sliver of land on the Golan Heights might be the key to *Hezbollah's* disarmament and the full deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces to the country's southern border.

### *Constitution and Government*

Lebanon's constitution, promulgated May 23, 1926, and often amended, established a unitary republic with an indirectly elected president, a unicameral legislature elected by universal suffrage, and an independent judiciary. Under the National Pact of 1943, the principal offices of state were divided among members of the different religious communities. The president, traditionally a Maronite Christian, is elected by a two-thirds majority of the legislature, while the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim formally nominated by the president following endorsement by a legislative majority. The Taif Accord provides for an equal number of Christian and Muslim parliamentary deputies. The National Assembly is comprised of 128 seats.

Lebanon is administratively divided into six provinces (*muhafazat*), each with a presidentially appointed governor who rules through a Provincial Council. The judicial system is headed by 4 courts of cassation and includes 11 courts of appeal and numerous courts of the first instance. Specialized bodies deal with administrative matters (Council of State) and with the security of the state (Court of Justice) and also include religious courts and a press tribunal.

### *Foreign Relations*

A member of the United Nations and the Arab League, Lebanon has traditionally pursued a foreign policy reflecting its self-image as a democratic Arab state with a significant Christian population, a country serving as a "bridge" between the West and the balance of the Arab world. From 1948 until 1975 the salient characteristics of this approach were good relations with the West (particularly the United States and France), an arm's-length relationship with Arab nationalists and the Palestinian resistance, a cordial (if wary) relationship with Syria, and conflict avoidance with Israel.

During the first three decades of its existence, Lebanon's foreign policy aimed squarely at preserving domestic tranquility. In 1948 the country participated in the first Arab-Israeli war but did the

absolute minimum in terms of combat. Its 1949 armistice with Israel restored the 1922 Palestine-Lebanon border as an armistice demarcation line. Although Lebanon and Israel remained technically at war, the Israel-Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission under UN auspices was a model of Arab-Israeli cooperation. For nearly 20 years the Lebanese-Israeli frontier was unfenced and quite peaceful. Lebanon avoided involvement in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973.

The catastrophic defeat of Arab armies in the June 1967 war and the rise of an independent Palestinian resistance movement posed a new challenge to Lebanon's foreign policy. In 1948 some 100,000 Palestinian refugees had made their way into Lebanon to be housed in UN-run camps. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Palestinian fighters from these camps and from Jordan and Syria began to establish a "state within a state" in southern Lebanon, a largely Shiite area of subsistence farms and poor villages all but neglected by Lebanon's Christian, Sunni, and Druse political elite. The Lebanese government tried simultaneously to appease Palestinian fighters intent upon raiding and firing into Israel while persuading Israel (through the West) that it harbored no aggressive intent and was itself a victim.

Growing Palestinian-Israeli violence exposed deep fissures in Lebanon's body politic, as Muslims and Druse generally sympathized with Palestinian fighters while Christians (especially Maronites) generally resented the Palestinian presence. Lebanon's descent into civil war in 1975 reflected the failure of foreign policy to preserve domestic tranquility in a country lacking consensus on the vital issue of national identity.

Lebanon's reputation for moderation and its tradition of effective participation in the United Nations made it the object of international interest, sympathy, and occasional intervention during its 15-year civil war. UN observers were deployed to the southern part of the country before, during, and after Israel's 1982 invasion. Multinational forces consisting mainly of American and French troops tried to stabilize the country in 1982 and 1983. The UN Secretariat exerted considerable effort in

2000 to confirm the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon by actually drawing a “line of withdrawal.”

In the end, however, Syrian intervention and influence proved decisive. From 1990 to 2005 Syria was Lebanon’s suzerain, and Lebanese foreign policy reflected Syria’s vital interests. Lebanon’s traditional inclination toward warm relations with the West manifested itself clearly whenever Syria’s normally frigid relationship with the West thawed. Yet when Syrian interests dictated that the Lebanese government endorse *Hezbollah*’s “resistance” to Israeli occupation—even after the occupation ended in May 2000—the government complied. Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon had seemingly robbed Syria of a convenient way to remind Israel—through violence along the Lebanon-Israel frontier—that there could be no peace without the return of the Golan Heights. When *Hezbollah* and Syria claimed that the Shaba farms, a small piece of the Golan Heights, was actually part of Lebanon and therefore an appropriate object of continued “resistance,” the Lebanese government complied, although a map of Lebanon on the country’s currency clearly showed the Shaba farms to be part of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights—that is, part of Syria.

In August 2004 Syria dictated the extension of President Emile Lahoud’s term of office. This action on Syria’s part produced UN Security Council Resolution 1559, calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces, free elections, and the disarmament of the militias. Lebanon’s parliament nonetheless approved Lahoud’s extension, and Prime Minister Hariri resigned and began organizing opposition to Syria. Lahoud immediately appointed veteran politician Omar Karami as prime minister.

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 in September 2004 also placed the Lebanese government in an awkward position with the international community. The government objected to the UN demand for the removal of Syrian forces until Syria itself decided to end its military presence there. Even after elections in June 2005 produced a majority opposed to Syrian suzerainty, the resolution’s call for the disarmament of militias

presented a potentially explosive dilemma. *Hezbollah*’s electoral success among Lebanon’s Shiite community and its decision to join a cabinet headed by Fouad Siniora seemed to dictate that the incoming government would continue to define the party’s armed wing as the “Lebanese resistance” rather than a “militia,” thereby raising the possibility of increasing tensions between Lebanon’s freely elected, post-“Syrian occupation” government and the West—particularly the United States, which considers *Hezbollah* a terrorist organization. Indeed, on the eve of his visit to the United States in April 2006, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora indicated that he would inform President George W. Bush of Lebanon’s position that Israel should withdraw from territory known as the Shaba farms, a position that *Hezbollah* took in response to demands that it disarm and terminate its military role. Lebanon’s government remained deadlocked over demands by the anti-Syrian coalition in parliament for the removal of pro-Syrian president Emile Lahoud from office, reflecting the protracted nature of Lebanon’s relationship with Syria.

Lebanon’s internal peace was visibly shaken by the July–August 2006 war between Israel and *Hezbollah*. The Siniora government, a U.S. ally, was powerless to stop Israeli air strikes and deployment of forces into southern Lebanon to combat *Hezbollah*. Israel was determined to see *Hezbollah*’s military capabilities destroyed, despite mounting civilian casualties, which resulted in international outcry and demands for a UN-sponsored ceasefire. The Siniora government’s decision to deploy Lebanese troops to the Lebanon-Israel border was significant in getting Israel to agree to an eventual ceasefire but not before major damage was inflicted on Lebanon’s economy and infrastructure. Saudi Arabia, the United States, and other Western countries pledged substantial reconstruction funds to strengthen the weakened Siniora government. The United States and its allies also sought to counterbalance Iran’s funding of *Hezbollah*’s reconstruction efforts in heavily damaged Shiite population centers in southern Lebanon and southern Beirut.

### Current Issues

On July 12, 2006, *Hezbollah* plunged Lebanon into its deepest crisis since the civil war. *Hezbollah* fighters crossed into Israel, took two Israeli soldiers prisoner and ambushed an Israeli tank that had entered Lebanon in pursuit. *Hezbollah* also began launching rocket volleys in the direction of Nahariya, Haifa, and other Israeli locations in response to concentrated Israeli air attacks on Lebanese infrastructure and populated areas believed to shelter *Hezbollah*'s leaders, weapons, and fighters. Within ten days some 20 percent of Lebanon's population had been uprooted by the Israeli air campaign, mainly in the southern suburbs of Beirut, south of the Litani River, and the Biqa Valley. Clearly *Hezbollah*'s leadership had miscalculated the magnitude of Israel's response, no doubt believing that the international community would intervene in the early stages of the conflict to arrange a prisoner exchange. The timing of the operation also suggested that *Hezbollah* thought it might take advantage of ongoing Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip in two ways: by claiming a leadership role for the organization in the Palestinian struggle against Israel, and by hitting Israel when it was otherwise occupied.

On August 11, 2006, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1701 to end the fighting between Israel and *Hezbollah*. Three days later the fighting ended with a truce and by August 17, Lebanese troops began moving toward the Israeli border. UNIFIL was expanded, *Hezbollah* fighters were removed from the border, and reconstruction began. For the first time in decades, it appeared that a stable security regime for southern Lebanon might emerge.

Syria made clear its opposition to Lebanese cooperation with a UN investigation (and potential tribunal) of the murder of Rafiq Hariri and was reportedly behind the November 21, 2006, murder of Pierre Amin Gemayel, the anti-Syrian minister of industry. Ten days earlier five Shiite ministers representing *Hezbollah* and *al-Amal* had resigned from the government. On December 1 *Hezbollah*, with the support of Michel Aoun, brought hundreds

of thousands of demonstrators to downtown Beirut to demand the resignation of the Siniora government. Siniora refused to step down and continued to govern with a cabinet that included no Shiite representatives.

With the end of Emile Lahoud's presidency (scheduled for November 2007), Lebanon may face a constitutional crisis. Speaker Nabih Berri refuses to call the parliament to session, and Prime Minister Siniora refuses to yield to the opposition, claiming that his cabinet represents a majority of Lebanese. The current stalemate and the country's chronic instability may prevent parliament from electing a new president, lead to renewed civil war, and spark conflict between *Hezbollah* and Israel.

### Political Parties and Groups

Lebanese parties have traditionally been ethnic and denominational groupings, rather than parties in the Western sense, with seats in the National Assembly distributed primarily on a religious, rather than on a party, basis.

**Phalangist Party** (*al-Kataib al-Lubnaniyah/Phalanges Libanaises*). Founded in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel, the Phalangist Party, a militant Maronite organization and the largest member of the Lebanese Front, was deeply involved in provoking the 1975 civil war. Phalangist leader Amin Gemayel became president of Lebanon in 1982, following the assassination of his brother, Bashir Gemayel. Amin Gemayel went into exile in 1988 at the end of his term, after which the Phalangist movement lost direction and broke into different factions, thus losing its predominant role in the Lebanese political landscape.

Amin Gemayel returned to Lebanon in mid-2000 and subsequently accused other leaders of the Phalangist Party of being "too cooperative" with Syria. The party today has effectively split into two groups—one that supports Karim Paqruduni and one that backs Amin Gemayel's **Kataib Corrective Movement**, which takes a strong anti-Syrian stance. On November 21, 2006, the movement's

Pierre Gemayel, the staunchly anti-Syrian minister for industry and son of former president Amin Gemayel, was assassinated.

**Lebanese Forces Party.** Organized as a Maronite militia by Bashir Gemayel in 1976 and subsequently commanded by Samir Geagea, the Lebanese Forces was licensed as a political party in 1991. In March 1994 the party was banned, and a number of members (including Geagea's deputy, Fouad MALIK) were arrested because of alleged involvement in the February bombing of a Maronite church north of Beirut. On April 21 Geagea was arrested and charged with complicity in the November 1990 assassination of Maronite rival Dany Chamoun. In June 1995 Geagea and a codefendant, Karim KARAM, were found guilty and sentenced to death for the 1990 killing, but the sentences were immediately commuted to life imprisonment at hard labor. Subsequently, in 1996, Geagea was also charged with the assassination of Prime Minister Karami in 1987. In the 2005 elections the Lebanese Forces Party was part of the anti-Syrian coalition led by the son of assassinated prime minister Rafiq Hariri. Following the election, the Lebanese parliament passed legislation to release Geagea from prison.

**Al-Waad Party.** *Al-Waad* was formed in 1991 by members of the Lebanese Forces loyal to Elie HOBEIKA, the pro-Syrian former chair of the militia's Executive Committee. Hobeika was assassinated in a bomb attack in Beirut in January 2002, and another party leader, Jean GHANEM, died the same month in a car crash considered suspicious by his supporters.

*Leader:* Jina HOBEIKA.

**Free Patriotic Movement** (*Tayyar al-Watani al-Hurr*—FPM). This party is led by Michel Aoun, former general in the Lebanese Army, who served as the provisional prime minister of one of two governments that contended for power in the final years of the civil war. Most of its leadership and support comes from Lebanon's Christian community. Aoun led the FPM from abroad while he was exiled in Paris. He returned to Lebanon in

May 2005 to run in the legislative elections held in May and June. The Free Patriotic Movement and its allies won 21 seats in the 128-member National Assembly.

**National Liberal Party** (*Hizb al-Ahrar al-Watani/Parti National Libéral*—NLP). The NLP, a largely Maronite right-wing grouping founded in 1958, rejected any coalition with Muslim groups with Palestinian involvement. It repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Syrian and other Arab troops from Lebanon and argued that only a federal system could preserve the country's unity. Periodic clashes between NLP and Phalangist militias culminated in early July 1980 in a major defeat for National Liberal forces.

The NLP has lost considerable influence over the last decade, despite the return from exile of its leader Dory Chamoun in 1998, the older brother of former leader Dany Chamoun, who was assassinated in October 1990. In 2005 Dory Chamoun became a prominent figure in demands for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, and the NLP participated in that year's parliamentary elections.

**National Bloc** (*al-Kutlah al-Wataniyah/Bloc National*). The National Bloc, a Maronite party formed in 1943, has been opposed to military involvement in politics. In the 2005 parliamentary elections, the bloc became part of the anti-Syrian coalition.

*Leaders:* Carlos EDDE, Antoine KLIMOS (General Secretary).

**Future Movement** (*Tayyar al-Mustaqbal*). Formed by the late Rafiq Hariri after he resigned from the post of prime minister. (To protest the extension of President Lahoud's tenure, this movement became the largest bloc in the anti-Syrian coalition that successfully competed in the 2005 National Assembly elections. It is now led by Saad Hariri, the former prime minister's son.)

**Progressive Socialist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Taqqaddumi al-Ishtiraki/Parti Socialiste Progressif*—PSP). Founded in 1948, the PSP is a largely Druse group that advocates a socialist program with nationalist and anti-Western overtones. Relations



between former party president Kamal Jumblatt and President Assad of Syria soured in the 1970s, before the Syrian intervention of April 1976. Jumblatt was assassinated in March 1977, and the party leadership shifted to his son, Walid, who subsequently became a Syrian ally and during the Israeli occupation established close ties with the Shiite *al-Amal* organization (see below). The alliance ended in early 1987, when the PSP intervened on the side of the PLO in the war of the camps in Beirut. The PSP became steadily more vocal in its opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon and opposed the three-year extension given by the National Assembly for President Lahoud's term. The PSP became part of the broad anti-Syrian coalition in the 2005 parliamentary elections.

**Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party** (*Parti Socialiste Nationaliste Syrien*—PSNS). Organized as the Syrian Nationalist Party in 1932 in support of a “Greater Syria” embracing Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, the PSNS was considered a rightist group until 1970. Also known as the Syrian People's Party, it was banned from 1962 to 1969 after participating in an attempted coup in December 1961. The party split into two factions in 1974; one group, led by Abdallah SAADA, subsequently joined the National Movement, and the other, led by George KENIZEH and Issam MAHAYRI, participated in the pro-Syrian Nationalist Front. In November 1978 its leadership announced that the party had been reunited.

**Lebanese Communist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Shuyuii al-Lubnani/Parti Communiste Libanais*—LCP). The LCP was founded in 1924 as the Lebanese People's Party, banned in 1939 by the French Mandate Authority, but legalized in 1970. Although primarily Christian in the first half-century of its existence, the party became predominantly Muslim in the wake of the civil war. Its long-time secretary general, George Hrawi, also served as a vice president of the National Movement. In January 1999, at its eighth congress, the LCP reelected Faruq Dahruj as secretary general, while Hrawi was named president of the party's National Congress. In June 2005 Hrawi was assassinated,

making him the third highly visible anti-Syrian identity in Lebanon to be killed in that year.

**Movement of the Deprived** (*al-Amal*). Most familiarly known by the name of its militia, *al-Amal*, an acronym for *Afwaj al-Muqawa al-Lubnaniyah* (Groups of the Lebanese Resistance), which also means “hope,” the movement was founded by Imam Musa SADR, an Iranian who disappeared in August 1978 while in Libya. Although allied with the Palestinian Left during the civil war, *al-Amal* subsequently became increasingly militant on behalf of Lebanon's Shiites, many of whom had been forced from their homes in the south, and in support of the Iranian revolution of 1979.

After the 1982 Israeli invasion, several pro-Iranian offshoots of *al-Amal* emerged as well-organized guerrilla movements, among them *Hezbollah*, which operated against U.S., French, and Israeli forces with great effectiveness.

A “war of words” developed between *al-Amal* and *Hezbollah* prior to the 1996 legislative balloting, and it initially appeared that they would present competing candidates (unlike in 1992). However, reportedly under pressure from Syrian leaders, the two groups finally agreed (a week before the balloting) on a joint accord and national list, which secured nearly all the seats in southern Lebanon. *Al-Amal* leader Nabih Berri was subsequently reelected speaker of the National Assembly. *Al-Amal* has been largely disarmed in recent years, as *Hezbollah* presented the primary military opposition to Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. Following the parliamentary elections of 2005, Berri was reelected speaker of the National Assembly. Most of *al-Amal*'s support today comes from coastal cities in Lebanon's south. Following the 2005 election, *al-Amal* joined *Hezbollah* in the Lebanese cabinet, but on November 11, 2006, it supported *Hezbollah*'s decision to leave the Siniora government.

*Leader:* Nabih BERRI (President of the Party and Speaker of the National Assembly).

**Party of God** (*Hizb Allah*, commonly rendered as *Hezbollah*). *Hezbollah* rose to

prominence in the mid-1980s, when it engaged in a bitter power struggle with its parent, *al-Amal*, and subsequently became involved in the kidnapping of numerous Westerners. The group participated for the first time as an electoral party in the balloting of August–September 1993.

*Hezbollah* subsequently assumed the major role in the “war of liberation” against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. It was widely believed to be financed by Syria and Iran. By 1996, however, *Hezbollah* was thought to have earned significant grassroots support within the Shiite populace because of its network of health and other social services and might therefore be less “subservient” to Syria. At the time, *Hezbollah* bowed to pressure from Damascus in agreeing, at the last minute, to present joint candidates with *al-Amal* for the 1996 legislative balloting.

Although *Hezbollah* formally endorsed the “liberation” of Jerusalem through jihad (holy war) and condemned Western culture and political influence, its primary goal was the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. Following the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon in 2000, *Hezbollah* was widely viewed in the Middle East as having engineered the first Arab “victory” in the long-standing conflict with Israel.

In late 2001 the United States, having included *Hezbollah* on its list of terrorist organizations, called on countries to freeze *Hezbollah*’s financial assets. Washington cited continuing, albeit significantly reduced, conflict between *Hezbollah* and Israeli forces and reports of the transfer of missiles to *Hezbollah* from Iran and Syria. However, as expected, the Lebanese government rejected the U.S. demand, calling *Hezbollah*’s anti-Israeli stance legitimate “resistance” and praising the organization for its social programs. The European Union also declined to include *Hezbollah* on the list of organizations that it considers supportive of terrorism.

The adoption of UNSC Resolution 1559, which calls for “the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias,” put pressure on *Hezbollah*, particularly after the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. However, *Hezbollah* performed well in the 2005 parliamentary elections, winning 35

seats as part of a coalition with *al-Amal*. In July 2005 *Hezbollah* agreed to join a government, heading a ministry for the first time. On November 11, 2006, *Hezbollah* and its allies in the cabinet resigned from the Siniora government.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Mohammad Hossein FADLALLAH (Spiritual Leader), Ibrahim MUSSAWI, Sheikh Nabil QAOUK (Military Commander), Sheikh Naim QASSEM, Sheikh Hassan NASRALAH (Secretary General).

**Note:** For a discussion of Palestinian groups formerly headquartered in Lebanon, see article on the PLO.

## Legislature

The former Chamber of Deputies, which in March 1979 changed its name to the **National Assembly** (*Majlis al-Ummah/Assemblée Nationale*), is a unicameral body elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term (subject to dissolution) through a proportional system based on religious groupings. The National Pact of 1943 specified that the presiding officer of the body be a Shiite Muslim. The distribution of seats was on the basis of a 6:5 Christian to Muslim ratio until 1990 when, in implementation of a provision of the Taif accord, the total number of seats was raised from 99 to 108, with half being assigned to each group. That ratio was maintained in 1996, when the number of seats was increased to 128.

Candidates are not presented as nominees of political parties, but rather on lists supportive of prominent politicians or alliances of political organizations. An anti-Syrian coalition polled successfully in the 2005 elections, winning 72 of 128 seats. *Hezbollah*, *al-Amal*, and their allies won 35 seats while 21 seats went to Michel Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement. *Al-Amal*’s Nabih Berri was subsequently reelected as speaker by the new assembly.

*Speaker:* Nabih BERRI.

## Communications

For a time, relative to other Middle Eastern countries, in Lebanon the press was traditionally

## Cabinet

As of September 4, 2007

Prime Minister	Fouad Siniora (Sunni, Future Movement)
Vice-Prime Minister	Elias Murr (Greek Orthodox, Lahoud ally)

### *Ministers*

Agriculture	Vacant (Talal al-Sahili [Shiite, <i>al-Amal</i> ally] resigned November 11, 2006)
Culture	Tarek Mitri (Greek Orthodox, independent)
Defense	Elias Murr (Greek Orthodox, Lahoud ally)
Displaced	Nehmé Tohmé (Greek Catholic, Progressive Socialist Party)
Economy and Trade	Sami Haddad (Maronite, independent)
Education and Higher Education	Khaled Kabbani (Sunni, Future Movement ally)
Energy and Water	Vacant (Mohamed Fneich [Shiite, <i>Hezbollah</i> ] resigned November 11, 2006)
Environment	Vacant (Yaccoub Sarraf [Greek Orthodox, Lahoud ally] resigned November 11, 2006)
Finance	Jihad Azour (Maronite, independent)
Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Vacant (Fawzi Salloukh [Shiite, <i>Hezbollah</i> ] resigned November 11, 2006)
Industry	Vacant (Pierre Gemayal [Maronite, Kataib Corrective Movement] assassinated November 21, 2006)
Information	Ghazi Aridi (Druse, Progressive Socialist Party)
Interior	Ahmad Fatfat (Sunni, Future Movement ally)
Justice	Charles Rizk (Maronite, Lahoud ally)
Labor	Vacant (Tarrad Hamadé [Shiite, <i>Hezbollah</i> ally] resigned November 11, 2006)
Public Health	Vacant (Mohamed Jawad Khalifé [Shiite, <i>al-Amal</i> ally] resigned November 11, 2006)
Public Works and Transportation	Mohamed Safadi (Sunni, Future Movement ally)
Social Affairs	Nayla Mouawad (Maronite) [f]
Telecommunications	Marwan Hamadé (Druse, Progressive Socialist Party)
Tourism	Joseph Sarkis (Maronite, Lebanese Forces)
Youth and Sports	Ahmad Fatfat (Sunni, Future Movement)

### *Ministers of State*

Administrative Development	Jean Ogassabian (Armenian Orthodox, Future Movement)
Parliamentary Affairs	Michel Pharaon (Greek Catholic, Future Movement)

[f] = female

free from external controls, but Syrian troops forced suspension of a number of newspapers in December 1976. Following the imposition of formal censorship on January 1, 1977, most suspended newspapers were permitted to resume publication; a number of newspapers and periodicals decided to publish from abroad. Between March and July

1994 the government also banned political broadcasting by private stations.

### *Press*

The following are published daily in Beirut in Arabic, unless otherwise noted: *al-Nahar* (78,000),

independent; *al-Anwar* (The Light, 59,000), independent; *al-Safir* (The Envoy, 50,000), independent; *al-Amal* (Hope, 35,000), Phalangist; *al-Hayat* (Life, 32,000), independent; *al-Dunya* (The World, 25,000); *al-Liwa* (The Standard, 15,000); *al-Mustaqbal* (The Future), founded by Rafiq Hariri; *al-Sharq* (The East, 36,000); *al-Nida* (The Appeal, 10,000), Communist; *al-Jaridah* (The News, 22,000), independent; *Daily Star*, independent (in English); *L'Orient-Le Jour* (in French, 23,000), independent; *Le Soir* (in French, 17,000).

### *News Agencies*

The principal domestic facility is the National News Agency (*Wakalat al-Anba al-Wataniyah*). In addition, most foreign bureaus maintain offices in Beirut.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The government-controlled Radio Lebanon (*Idhaah Lubnan/Radio Liban*) broadcasts nationally in Arabic, Armenian, English, and French and internationally to three continents. Television Lebanon (*Tilifiziyun Lubnan/Tele Liban*) broadcasts over three channels. In addition, the chaotic conditions of the lengthy civil war prompted the unlicensed launching of some 100 radio and 20 television stations that the government, since early 1992, has been attempting to shut down. In 1994 a law was enacted that revoked the monopoly held by Television Lebanon and Radio Lebanon over licensed broadcasting and laid the legal groundwork

for the operation of privately owned television and radio stations. In 1996 the government approved new licensing regulations that were expected to result in the closing of about two-thirds of television and radio stations. However, the enterprises in jeopardy continued to operate, pending a government review of the new code, which had prompted domestic and international complaints regarding attempted "press muzzling."

Today there are several legal private television and satellite channels. Some, such as Manar TV (operated by *Hezbollah*) and Future TV (operated by the Future Movement), were founded by political organizations. Others include the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, New TV, and the National Broadcasting Network. As of 2005 there were approximately 115 personal computers and 196 Internet users per 1,000 people. As of the same year there were about 277 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** (Vacant)

**U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon:** Jeffrey D. FELTMAN

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Nawaf SALAM

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OIC, OIF, PCA, WCO

# LIBYA

## GREAT SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

*al-Jamahiriyah al-Arabiyyah al-Libiyah al-Shabiyah  
al-Ishtirakiyyah al-Uzma*

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### The Country

Extending for 910 miles along Africa's northern coast, Libya embraces the former Turkish and Italian provinces of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Some 95 percent of its territory is desert and barren rockland, and cultivation and settlement are largely confined to a narrow coastal strip. Tribal influences remain strong within a population that is predominantly Arab (with a Berber minority) and almost wholly Sunni Muslim in religion. Arabic is the official language, but Italian, English, and French are also spoken. The government has made efforts in recent years to increase the education of females (about 50 percent of whom are reportedly illiterate), and women comprised 21 percent of the official labor force in 1996, up from less than 9 percent in the 1980s. Female representation in government continues to be minimal.

Libya's reputation as a country largely devoid of natural resources was rendered obsolete by the discovery of oil in the late 1950s; the ensuing development of export capacity resulted in its achieving the highest per capita GNP in Africa (more than \$8,600 in 1980). However, world market conditions subsequently reduced the country's oil revenue from a high of \$22 billion in 1980 to \$5 billion in 1988, with per capita GNP declining to less than \$5,500 through the same period. Oil production (about 1.6 million barrels per day) accounts for more than 95 percent of export income, the primary market being

Western Europe. Other industry has been limited by the weakness of the domestic market, uneven distribution of the population, and a shortage of skilled manpower. Recent large-scale development has focused on building chemical and steel complexes, in addition to the controversial Great Man-Made River Project, a \$30 billion plan to pipe water from aquifers deep below the Sahara Desert to coastal areas. The government hopes that the project, the first phase of which was inaugurated in mid-1991 and the second in 1996, will eventually permit dramatic agricultural expansion as well as provide bountiful drinking water to major cities. Due to



**Political Status:** Independent state since December 24, 1951; revolutionary republic declared September 1, 1969; name changed from Libyan Arab Republic to Libyan Arab People's Republic in 1976; present name adopted March 2, 1977.

**Area:** 679,358 sq. mi. (1,759,540 sq. km.).

**Population:** 5,678,484 (2003C, provisional); 6,009,000 (2006E). Both figures include nonnationals.

**Major Urban Centers (2003C):**

TARABULUS (TRIPOLI, 1,197,000), Benghazi (Benghazi, 680,000), Misratah (Misurata, 351,000), Surt (Sirte, 162,000). (Many secretariats have reportedly been relocated recently to Sirte—about 400 miles east of Tarabulus—and other cities.)

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (official rate November 2, 2007: 1.23 dinar = \$1US).

**Revolutionary Leader** (De Facto Head of State): Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-QADHAFI (Col. Moammar GADDAFY); assumed power as Chair of Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) following coup d'état of September 1, 1969; became prime minister in January 1970, relinquishing the office in July 1972; designated General Secretary of General People's Congress concurrent with abolition of the RCC on March 2, 1977, relinquishing the position March 1–2, 1979.

**Secretary General of General People's**

**Congress:** Zunati Muhammad al-ZANATI; appointed by the General People's Congress on November 18, 1992, to succeed Abd al-Raziq al-SAWSA; most recently reappointed on March 1, 2000.

**Secretary General of General People's**

**Committee** (Prime Minister): Al-Baghdadi Ali al-MAHMUDI; appointed by the General People's Congress on March 5, 2006, to succeed Shukri Muhammad GHANIM.

output. Barley, wheat, tomatoes, olives, citrus, and dates are the primary crops.

After decades of rigid state control of the economy, liberalization measures, including the promotion of limited private enterprise, were introduced in 1988. Results were initially viewed as encouraging, but domestic opposition was kindled by concurrent government efforts to eliminate food subsidies, reduce state employment, and trim financing for medical, educational, and other social programs. Consequently, about 70 percent of the economy remains under government control, and much of the populace still relies heavily on various subsidies. Falling oil prices in 1998 contributed to a devaluation of the dinar in November and cutbacks in the proposed 1999 budget before economic pressures were eased by the return of high oil prices in the second half of 1999 and 2000. Early in the 21st century, leader Muammar al-Qadhafi's perceived resistance to even modest free-market reforms constrained foreign investment.

Economic affairs, particularly in regard to the West, changed dramatically in September 2004 when the United States lifted most of its long-standing unilateral sanctions against Libya. Western companies immediately began to negotiate substantial oil contracts with Tripoli in conjunction with pledges from the Qadhafi regime to enact broad economic policy changes (see Foreign relations and Current issues, below). Real GDP growth of 5 percent in 2004 and 6.3 percent in 2005 reflected improved performance mainly in the non-oil sector, particularly construction, transportation, hotels, and trade. In 2006 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cited the government's efforts to ease trade restrictions, the recent move toward a market economy, and continuing overall economic progress, including real GDP growth of 5.6 percent. Following Libya's withdrawal from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, the IMF encouraged the government to structure its creditor agreements with other poor countries on terms similar to those of the HIPC. The IMF also encouraged Libya to better manage its oil revenue, restructure its public banks, and move forward with structural reforms.

limited rainfall and an insufficient labor pool resulting from migration to the cities, agriculture currently contributes only minimally to domestic

In 2007 a U.S.-based consultant hired by Qadhafi to assess Libya's economy reported that the country's schools, hospitals, and infrastructure were "in serious disrepair" despite the nation's oil wealth. Additionally, unemployment was in double digits. With the help of the aforementioned consultant and several others, Qadhafi embarked on a long-term plan to modernize the economy. Partial privatization of the country's central bank was under way, and improving the tourism infrastructure became a top priority.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Successively ruled by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Spaniards, and others, Libya was under Ottoman Turkish control from the middle of the 16th century to the beginning of the 20th century. It was conquered by Italy in 1911 and 1912 and was ruled as an Italian colony until its occupation by British and French military forces during World War II. In conformity with British wartime pledges and a 1949 decision of the UN General Assembly, Libya became an independent monarchy under Emir Muhammad IDRIS al-Sanussi (King IDRIS I) on December 24, 1951. A constitution promulgated two months earlier prescribed a federal form of government with autonomous rule in the three historic provinces, but provincial autonomy was wiped out and a centralized regime instituted under a constitutional amendment adopted in 1963.

The 1960s witnessed a growing independence in foreign affairs resulting from the financial autonomy generated by rapidly increasing petroleum revenues. This period marked the beginnings of Libyan radicalism in Third World politics and in its posture regarding Arab-Israeli relations. Increasingly, anti-Western sentiments were voiced, especially in regard to externally controlled petroleum companies and the presence of foreign military bases on Libyan soil. The period following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict saw a succession of prime ministers, including the progressive Abd

al-Hamid al-BAKKUSH, who took office in October 1967. His reforms alienated conservative leaders, however, and he was replaced in September 1968 by Wanis al-QADHAFI. The following September, while the king was in Turkey for medical treatment, a group of military officers led by Col. Muammar al-QADHAFI seized control of the government and established a revolutionary regime under a military-controlled Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).

After consolidating his control of the RCC, Colonel Qadhafi moved to implement the goals of his regime, which reflected a blend of Islamic behavioral codes, socialism, and radical Arab nationalism. By June 1970 both the British and U.S. military installations had been evacuated, and in July the Italian and Jewish communities were dispossessed and their members forced from the country. In June 1971 an official party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was organized, and in September the Federation of Arab Republics (a union of Egypt, Libya, and Syria) was approved by separate referenda in each country. The federation, while formally constituted at the legislative level in March 1972, became moribund shortly thereafter. Meanwhile, the regime had begun acquiring shares in the country's petroleum industry, resorting to outright nationalization of foreign interests in numerous cases; by March 1976 the government controlled about two-thirds of oil production.

Periodically threatening to resign because of conflicts within the RCC, Colonel Qadhafi turned over his prime-ministerial duties to Maj. Abd al-Salam JALLUD in July 1972 and was in seclusion during the greater part of 1974. In August 1975 Qadhafi's rule was seriously threatened by a coup attempt involving army officers—some two dozen of whom were ultimately executed; a number of drastic ant subversion laws were promptly enacted. In November a quasi-legislative General National Congress (renamed the General People's Congress a year later) was created, while in March 1977 the RCC and the cabinet were abolished in accordance with "the installation of the people's power" under a new structure of government headed by Colonel Qadhafi and the four remaining members of the

RCC. The political changes were accompanied by a series of sweeping economic measures, including limitations on savings and consolidation of private shops (“nests of exploitation”) into large state supermarkets, which generated middle-class discontent and fueled exile-based opposition activity. The government was further reorganized at a meeting of the General People’s Congress in March 1979, Colonel Qadhafi resigning as secretary general (but retaining his designation as revolutionary leader and supreme commander of the armed forces) in favor of Abd al-Ati UBAYDI, who was in turn replaced as secretary general of the General People’s Committee (prime minister) by Jadallah Azzuz al-TALHI.

At a congress session in January 1981, Secretary General Ubaydi was succeeded by Muhammad al-Zarruq RAJAB, who, in February 1984, was replaced by Miftah al-Usta UMAR and named to succeed Talhi as secretary general of the General People’s Committee. Talhi was returned to the position of nominal head of government in a major ministerial reshuffle announced on March 3, 1986; in a further reshuffle on March 1, 1987, Talhi was replaced by Umar Mustafa al-MUNTASIR.

In October 1990 a government shakeup was undertaken that included the appointment of Abd al-Raziq al-SAWSA to succeed Umar as secretary general of the General People’s Congress and Abu Zaid Umar DURDA to succeed Muntasir as head of the General People’s Committee. Durda was reappointed in November 1992 while Sawsa was replaced by Zanati Muhammad al-ZANATI. The 1992 reorganization was otherwise most noteworthy for the designation of Muntasir, a moderate who had earlier cultivated a good working relationship with the West, as the equivalent of foreign secretary.

The sanctions imposed by the United Nations in 1992 (see Foreign relations, below) subsequently contributed to what was widely believed to be growing domestic discontent with the regime. Internal difficulties were most sharply illustrated by an apparent coup attempt in early October 1993, reportedly involving thousands of troops at several military locations. Although loyalist

forces quashed the revolt in about three days, the government was described as “severely shaken” by the events.

In a cabinet reshuffle on January 29, 1994, Abd al-Majid al-QAUD was named to succeed Durda as secretary general of the General People’s Committee. Qaud was succeeded on December 29, 1997, by Muhammad Ahmad al-MANQUSH, who was reappointed, along with most other senior ministers, in a cabinet reshuffle on December 15, 1998. On March 1, 2000, Manqush was succeeded by Mubarak Abdullah al-SHAMIKH, Colonel Qadhafi concurrently ordering a sharp reduction in the number of ministries in the name of further devolution of power to local “people’s” bodies. SHAMIKH remained in his post during a reshuffle on October 1, 2000, but was replaced in a subsequent reorganization on June 13, 2003, by Shukri Muhammad GHANIM, theretofore the secretary for economy and trade. The secretary for public security, Nasr al-Mabruk ABDALLAH, was suspended on February 18, 2006, after a violent protest a day earlier at the Italian embassy in Benghazi. Six new secretaries were added to the cabinet, and Ghanim was dismissed, in a reorganization on March 5, 2006, when the former assistant secretary general of the General People’s Committee, Al-Baghdadi Ali al-MAHMUDI, was appointed to succeed Ghanim. The cabinet was reshuffled on January 22, 2007.

### *Constitution and Government*

Guided by the ideology of Colonel Qadhafi’s *Green Book*, which combines elements of nationalism, Islamic theology, socialism, and populism, Libya was restyled the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in March 1977. The *Jamahiriyah* is conceived as a system of direct government through popular organs interspersed throughout Libyan society. A General People’s Congress is assisted by a General Secretariat, whose secretary general serves as titular head of state, although effective power has remained in Colonel Qadhafi’s hands since the 1969 coup. Executive functions are assigned to a cabinet-like General People’s



Committee, whose secretary general serves as the equivalent of prime minister. The judicial system includes a Supreme Court, courts of appeal, courts of the first instance, and summary courts. In 1988 the government also established a People's Court and a People's Prosecution Bureau to replace the unofficial but powerful "revolutionary courts" that had reportedly assumed responsibility for nearly 90 percent of prosecutions. In what was seen as an effort to placate the expanding Islamic fundamentalist movement, Colonel Qadhafi in April 1993 called for more widespread implementation of *sharia* (Islamic religious law), and in February 1994 the General People's Congress granted new powers to the country's religious leaders, including (for the first time under Colonel Qadhafi) the right to issue religious decrees (*fatwas*).

Libya's three provinces are subdivided into ten governorates, with administration based on "Direct People's Authority" as represented in local People's Congresses, People's Committees, Trade Unions, and Vocational Syndicates.

### *Foreign Relations*

Under the monarchy, Libya tended to adhere to a generally pro-Western posture. Since the 1969 coup its foreign policy has been characterized by the advocacy of total war against Israel, a willingness to use petroleum as a political weapon, and (until 1998—see Current issues, below) a strong commitment to Arab unity that has given rise to numerous failed merger attempts with sister states (Libya, Egypt, Sudan, and Syria in 1969; Libya, Egypt, and Syria in 1971; Libya and Egypt in 1972; Libya and Tunisia in 1974; Libya and Syria in 1980; Libya and Chad in 1981; Libya and Morocco in 1984).

Libya's position within the Arab world has been marked by an improbable combination of ideological extremism and pragmatic compromise. Following the 1978 Camp David accords, relations were severed with Egypt, both sides fortifying their common border. Thereafter, Tripoli strove to block Cairo's reentry into the Arab fold (extending its condemnation to Jordan following the warming

of ties between Jordan and Egypt) and provided support to Syrian-based elements of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) opposed to Yasir Arafat. Relations with the Mubarak government began to warm, however, during an Arab League meeting in Casablanca, Morocco, in May 1989 and, stimulated by a "reconciliation" summit in Mersa Metruh, Egypt, in October, continued to improve with a series of cooperation agreements in 1990 and the opening of the border between the two countries in 1991. By mid-decade, Egypt had become what one correspondent described as Libya's most important potential "bridge to the West," Cairo's supportive stance reflecting the importance of Libya as a provider of jobs for Egyptian workers and the value attached by the Mubarak regime to Colonel Qadhafi's pronounced antifundamentalist posture.

Relations with conservative Morocco, broken following Tripoli's 1980 recognition of the Polisario-backed government-in-exile of the Western Sahara, resumed in 1981. Ties with neighboring Tunisia, severely strained during much of the 1980s, advanced dramatically in 1988, the opening of the border between the two countries precipitating a flood of option-starved Libyan consumers to Tunis. Regional relations stabilized even further with the February 1989 formation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), although Colonel Qadhafi remained a source of controversy within the ineffective and largely inactive grouping.

A widespread expression of international concern in the 1980s and 1990s centered on Libyan involvement in Chad. Libya's annexation of the Aozou Strip in the mid-1970s was followed by active participation in the Chadian civil war, largely in opposition to the forces of Hissein Habré, who in 1982 emerged as president of the strife-torn country. By 1983 Libya's active support of the "National Peace Government" loyal to former Chadian president Goukhouni Oueddei (based in the northern Tibesti region) included the deployment of between 3,000 and 5,000 Libyan troops and the provision of air support for Oueddei's attacks on the northern capital of Faya-Largeau. Although consistently denying direct involvement and condemning the use of French troops in 1983 and 1984 as "unjustified

intervention,” Qadhafi agreed in September 1984 to recall “Libyan support elements” in exchange for a French troop withdrawal. The agreement was hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough for Paris but was greeted with dismay by Habré and ultimately proved to be an embarrassment to the Mitterrand government because of the limited number of Libyan troops actually withdrawn. Two and a half years later, in March 1987, the militarily superior Qadhafi regime suffered the unexpected humiliation of being decisively defeated by Chadian government forces, which, after capturing the air facility at Quadi Doum, 100 miles northeast of Faya-Largeau, forced the Libyans to withdraw from all but the Aozou Strip, leaving behind an estimated \$1 billion worth of sophisticated weaponry.

In early August 1987, Chadian forces, in a surprise move, captured Aozou, administrative capital of the contested border area, although the town was subsequently retaken by Libya. Skirmishes continued as the Islamic Legion, comprised largely of Lebanese mercenaries, attacked Chadian posts from bases inside Sudan, with Libyan jets supporting counteroffensives in the Aozou Strip. A year later, Libya reportedly had lost 10 percent of its military capability, although it retained most of the disputed territory.

In July 1989 the Organization of African Unity (OAU, subsequently the African Union—AU) sponsored negotiations between President Habré and Colonel Qadhafi, which set the stage for the signing of a peace treaty by the countries’ foreign ministers on August 31. The treaty called for immediate troop withdrawal from the disputed territory, exchange of prisoners of war, mutual “noninterference,” and continued efforts to reach a permanent settlement. Relations subsequently deteriorated, however, with Habré accusing Libya of supporting Chadian rebels operating from Sudan. A year of talks having achieved little progress, the dispute was referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) several months before the ouster of the Habré regime in December 1990.

New Chadian president Idriss Déby announced in early 1991 that a “new era” had begun in relations between Chad and Libya, the belief being

widespread that Libya had supplied arms and logistical support (but not personnel) to the victorious Chadian rebels. However, Déby subsequently described the Aozou issue as still a “bone of contention” requiring resolution by the ICJ. Consequently, hearings in the case began in June 1993 at The Hague, Netherlands, and in February 1994 the ICJ ruled by a vote of 16–1 that Libya had no rightful claim to the Aozou Strip or any other territory beyond the boundary established in a 1955 treaty between Libya and France. On May 30 the lengthy dispute ended with Libya’s withdrawal and a symbolic raising of the Chadian flag. Shortly thereafter, Colonel Qadhafi received President Déby in Tripoli for the signing of a friendship and cooperation treaty, which, among other things, provided for a Libyan–Chadian Higher Joint Committee to discuss mutual concerns. Following the inaugural meeting of the Committee in July, (then) Chadian prime minister Kassiré Koumakoyé reportedly described the Aozou issue as “settled for good,” while announcing his country’s support for Libyan efforts to have UN economic sanctions lifted.

Relations with the West have been problematic since the 1969 coup and the expulsion, a year later, of British and U.S. military forces. Libya’s subsequent involvement in negotiations between Malta and the United Kingdom over British naval facilities on the Mediterranean island contributed to a further strain in relations with London. In December 1979 the United States closed its embassy in Tripoli after portions of the building were stormed and set afire by pro-Iranian demonstrators, while in May 1981 the Reagan administration ordered Tripoli to shut down its Washington “people’s bureau” in response to what it considered escalating international terrorism sponsored by Colonel Qadhafi. Subsequent U.S.–Libyan relations were characterized as “mutual paranoia,” with each side accusing the other of assassination plots amid hostility generated by U.S. naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Sirte, which Libya has claimed as an internal sea since 1973.

Simultaneous attacks by Palestinian gunmen on the Rome and Vienna airports on December 27, 1985, brought U.S. accusations of Libyan

involvement, which Colonel Qadhafi vehemently denied. In January 1986 President Reagan announced the freezing of all Libyan government assets in U.S. banks, urged Americans working in Libya to depart, banned all U.S. trade with Libya, and ordered a new series of air and sea maneuvers in the Gulf of Sirte. (U.S. officials charged that Libya was harboring members of the Revolutionary Council of Fatah, the radical Palestinian grouping led by Abu Nidal and allegedly behind the 1985 attacks. See PLO article for further details.) Three months later, during the night of April 14, eighteen F-111 bombers based in Britain, assisted by carrier-based attack fighters, struck Libyan military targets in Tripoli and Benghazi. The action was prompted by what Washington termed “conclusive evidence,” in the form of intercepted cables, that Libya had ordered the bombing of a Berlin discotheque nine days before, in the course of which an off-duty U.S. soldier had been killed. The U.S. administration also claimed to have aborted a planned grenade and machine-gun attack on the American visa office in Paris, for which French authorities ordered the expulsion of two Libyan diplomats.

Tripoli’s adoption of a more conciliatory posture during 1988 did not yield relaxation of tension with Washington, which mounted a diplomatic campaign against European chemical companies that were reported to be supplying materials for a chemical weapons plant in Libya. Despite Libyan denial of the charges, reports of U.S. readiness to attack the site were believed to be the catalyst for a military encounter between two U.S. F-14s and two Libyan MiG-23 jets over the Mediterranean Sea on January 4, 1989, which resulted in downing of the Libyan planes. Concern subsequently continued in some Western capitals over the alleged chemical plant (the site of a much-publicized fire in March 1990), as well as Libya’s ongoing efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Suspicion also arose over possible Libyan involvement in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, which blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, and the crash of a French DC-10 in Niger near the Chad border in September 1989.

Colonel Qadhafi was described as maintaining an “uncharacteristically low profile” following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (which he publicly criticized) and the U.S.-led Desert Storm campaign against Iraqi forces in early 1991. However, the respite from the international spotlight proved short-lived as the investigations into the Lockerbie and Niger plane explosions once again focused Western condemnation on Libya.

In October 1991 the French government issued warrants for six Libyans (one of them a brother-in-law of Colonel Qadhafi) in connection with the Niger crash, while American and British authorities announced in mid-November that they had filed charges against two Libyan nationals in connection with the Pan Am bombing. In early December the Arab League Council expressed its “solidarity” with Libya in the Lockerbie matter and called for an inquiry by a joint Arab League–UN committee. Two days later a Libyan judge declared that the two suspects were under house arrest and that Tripoli would be willing to send judicial representatives to Washington, London, and Paris to discuss the alleged acts of terrorism.

On January 21, 1992, the UN Security Council unanimously demanded extradition of the Lockerbie detainees to either Britain or the United States and insisted that Libya aid the French investigation into the Niger crash. Although Libya announced its willingness to cooperate with the latter demand, which involved no extradition request, it refused to turn over the Lockerbie suspects, declaring it would try the men itself. Consequently, the Security Council ordered the imposition of selective sanctions, including restrictions on air traffic and an embargo of shipments of military equipment as of April 15.

On May 14, 1992, in partial compliance with the Security Council, Libya announced that it would sever all links with organizations involved in “international terrorism,” admit UN representatives to verify that there were no terrorist training facilities on its soil, and take action to preclude the use of its territory or citizens for terrorist acts. In addition, a special session of the General People’s Congress in June agreed that the Lockerbie suspects could be tried in a “fair and just” court in a neutral country

as suggested by the Arab League. However, the Security Council reiterated its demand for extradition to the United States or United Kingdom, ordered that the sanctions be continued, and warned that stiffer measures were being considered. After mediation efforts by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali failed to resolve the impasse, the Security Council voted on November 11, 1993, to expand the sanctions by freezing Libya's overseas assets and banning the sales to Libya of certain oil-refining and pipeline equipment. The sanctions were subsequently regularly extended, although the Security Council rejected a U.S. proposal for a total oil embargo.

Libya continued to face heavy pressure from the United States in 1996. In April, U.S. defense secretary William Perry warned that force would be used if necessary to prevent Libya from completing an alleged underground chemical weapons plant.

Attention in 1998 and 1999 remained focused on efforts to negotiate a resolution of the Lockerbie impasse, the Libyan government having previously argued (with the support of the OAU and the Arab League) that the suspects should be tried in a neutral country. Finally, Libya agreed in late March 1999 to send the two men (Abd al-Basset al-MEGRAHI and Lamin Khalifah FHIMAH) to the Netherlands in early April to face a trial under Scottish law before three Scottish judges. Colonel Qadhafi's acceptance of the plan apparently was predicated on assurances that the trial would not be used to attempt to "undermine" his regime. For their part, Washington and London appeared to compromise on the issue of the trial's location, in part at least, out of recognition that international support for continued sanctions was diminishing. The Security Council announced that the UN sanctions had been suspended as soon as the suspects arrived in the Netherlands on April 5. However, unilateral U.S. sanctions remained in place as long as Libya stayed on Washington's official list of countries perceived to be "state sponsors of terrorism."

An antiterrorism court in Paris convicted in absentia six suspects in the Niger plane crash case, including Abdallah SENOUSI, Qadhafi's brother-

in-law, in March 1999 and issued warrants for their arrest, which could be enforced only if they left Libya. Meanwhile, Colonel Qadhafi had also permitted German investigators to question Libyan intelligence officers concerning the 1986 Berlin disco bombing, although prosecution of the case had been thrown into disarray in 1997 when the main witness apparently recanted his previously incriminating testimony against alleged Libyan operatives. (Four defendants were convicted of the Berlin bombing in October 2001, the court also accepting the prosecution's argument that the Libyan secret service had been involved in planning the attack.)

In July 1999 full diplomatic relations were reestablished with the United Kingdom, which had severed ties after a British policewoman was killed during an anti-Qadhafi demonstration outside the Libyan mission in London. (It had been argued that the policewoman was killed by gunfire directed from the mission at the demonstrators.) Resolution of the dispute included Libya's agreement to cooperate in the investigation and to pay compensation to the victim's family.

The Lockerbie trial opened in May 2000, and on January 31, 2001, Megrahi was convicted of murder in connection with the bombing, the judges having accepted the admittedly circumstantial evidence that he had been at the airport when the bomb was allegedly planted and was working for Libyan intelligence at the time. Megrahi was sentenced to life in prison, but Fhimah returned to Libya after the judges did not convict him of any charges. (For subsequent developments see Current issues, below.)

### *Current Issues*

Colonel Qadhafi announced in the late 1990s that he was turning his focus away from pan-Arabism and toward pan-Africanism, having described most other Arab states as "defeatist" in dealing with the West and Israel. The quixotic Libyan leader attended his first OAU summit in 20 years in July 1999 to promote his new vision and hosted a special summit in September to address proposed changes in the charter that would permit

creation of OAU peacekeeping forces. Subsequently, Qadhafi participated prominently in efforts to resolve the conflicts in Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo and served as a mediator in the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. However, Libya's image as a potential continental unifier suffered a severe blow in late September 2000 when scores of black African workers died in a series of attacks by Libyans on nonnational workers in a suburb of Tripoli. (Underscoring the continued deterioration of the African initiative, in 2003 Libya recalled its troops from the Central African Republic, a trade agreement with Zimbabwe collapsed, and Qadhafi abolished the ministry for African unity.)

In early 2001 Colonel Qadhafi criticized the conviction of one of the defendants in the Lockerbie trial (see Foreign relations, above) as politically motivated. However, by that time it was widely accepted that the Libyan government had not supported any terrorist activities or groups in several years and was genuinely interested in reintegration into the global community. Qadhafi had also improved his international image by cooperating extensively with the U.S.-led "war on terrorism," by freeing a number of political prisoners and by indicating a willingness to discuss the proposed payment of compensation to the families of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing.

Qadhafi subsequently continued his drive to improve Libya's international standing, and the initiative appeared to reach critical mass with an August 2003 announcement of final resolution of the Lockerbie affair. Under the carefully crafted language of the settlement, Libya accepted "responsibility for the actions of its officials" and agreed to pay an estimated \$10 million (in three installments) to each of the families of the 270 killed in the attack. The UN Security Council formally lifted UN sanctions against Libya in September, permitting payment of the Lockerbie settlements to begin. In January 2004 Libya also agreed to pay a total of \$170 million to the families of those killed in the 1989 Niger plane crash. The final piece of the puzzle appeared to be put in place in September 2004 when Libya agreed to pay \$35 million to the non-U.S. victims of the 1986 bombing in Berlin.

Meanwhile, dramatic progress was also achieved regarding the other long-standing area of intense Western concern, that is, Libya's perceived pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In December 2003 the United States and UK announced that after nine months of secret negotiations Qadhafi had agreed to abandon all WMD programs and to permit international inspectors to verify compliance. (Some analysts suggested that the process had been accelerated by the aggressive stance taken by the U.S. Bush administration against Iraq.) Washington announced in February 2004 that it would permit flights to Libya and allow U.S. oil companies to launch talks with Tripoli aimed at further exploitation of oil fields. Many U.S. commercial sanctions were lifted the following April, and in October the European Union (EU) removed its embargo on arms sales to Libya, and other economic sanctions. Underscoring the dramatic transformation of the West's perception of Qadhafi, he was visited in 2004 by the British, French, and German heads of state, and a number of U.S. companies were awarded permits in 2005 for oil exploration. Collaterally, the Libyan regime, which celebrated its 35th year in power in 2004, pledged sweeping economic reforms to broaden trade and expand investment opportunities. Libya officially remained on the U.S. list of terrorist-sponsoring states, possibly in part to permit investigation of charges by Saudi Arabia that then-Crown Prince Abdallah (now king) had been the target of an assassination plot, but Libya and Saudi Arabia reestablished diplomatic relations in late 2005.

In a diplomatic move that observers said was also meant to send a message to Iran and North Korea (both developing nuclear capabilities), the United States restored full relations with Libya on May 15, 2006. The United States also removed Libya from its list of state sponsors of terrorism (the latter requiring congressional approval within 45 days). Some of the families of Lockerbie bombing victims were angered, however, that they had not been notified first and demanded that the U.S. Congress ensure Libya fulfilled its financial commitment to them. (Libya halted its final payment to

the families until it was removed from the list of states sponsoring terrorism.) With diplomatic ties restored, further restrictions on American oil companies were lifted, allowing for increased exploration. For its part, Libya opened bidding on its oil reserves to international companies in an effort to boost production over the next ten years and bring in a projected \$7 billion.

In January 2007 it was reported that the government planned to lay off 400,000 civil servants (though that figure was later revised to 120,000) in an effort to reduce government spending and encourage private sector development. Those who lost their jobs were to be paid their full salary for three years or up to \$40,800 in loans to start a new business. Meanwhile, Qadhafi was said to be embarking on an extensive economic modernization plan (see Country section, above, for details).

The Lockerbie bombing was back in the headlines in June 2007 when a Scottish judicial panel issued a ruling upon completion of its three-year investigation that Megrahi, the only person convicted in the case, should be granted a new appeal. The panel stated that “a miscarriage of justice may have occurred,” citing questions about the testimony of one witness, among other details of the case.

## Political Parties

Under the monarchy, all political parties were banned. In 1971 an official government party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was founded with the Egyptian ASU as its model. The formation was designed primarily to serve as a “transmission belt,” helping implement government decisions at local levels and serving to channel local concerns upward to the central government; however, there was no public reference to it after 1975. At present all parties are proscribed, Colonel Qadhafi arguing that their legalization would only lead to disorder.

### *Opposition Groups*

**National Front for the Salvation of Libya**  
—NFSL. Formation of the NFSL was announced

in Khartoum, Sudan, on October 7, 1981, under the banner “Finding the democratic alternative.” In September 1986 the Front published a list of 76 regime opponents that it claimed had been assassinated in exile, and in January 1987 it joined with a number of other exile formations in establishing a joint working group during a meeting in Cairo, Egypt. The NFSL also participated in the formation of the LNLA (below), which, however, announced its independent status in early 1994.

Operating out of Egypt and the United States, the NFSL was in the forefront of efforts to coordinate anti-Qadhafi activity in the first half of the 1990s, including a conference in Washington in late 1993 attended by most of the regime’s leading opponents. However, a “statement of principles” of a proposed front was not negotiated.

In early 1994 it was reported that the NFSL had begun to transmit its antiregime radio program, the *Voice of the Libyan People*, via European Satellite. The program had previously been intermittently broadcast by shortwave radio from neighboring countries. In 1997 the NFSL issued a report alleging that more than 300 Qadhafi opponents had been killed by government operatives abroad or by domestic security forces between 1977 and 1994. In mid-2004 NFSL leaders warned Western leaders that the Qadhafi regime continued to hold political prisoners despite the country’s improved international reputation.

Jabal MATAR, described as leader of the NFSL’s “military wing,” has been missing since 1990.

*Leaders:* Ibrahim SAHAD, Mahmud DAKHIL, Muhammad Fayiz JIBRIL, Muhammad MAGARIAF (Secretary General).

**Libyan National Liberation Army**—LNLA. The LNLA was formed in Chad in 1988 as a paramilitary unit organized with covert U.S. backing to destabilize the Libyan government. The existence of the army, comprising an estimated 600–700 Libyan soldiers taken prisoner by Chadian forces and subsequently molded into an anti-Qadhafi force, became known following the overthrow of the Habré regime in late 1990.

Washington quickly airlifted the Libyan “*contras*” out of Chad after the fall of Ndjamena, U.S. embarrassment over the affair increasing as the LNLA participants entered a “floating exile.” About 250 eventually returned to Libya, the rest reportedly finding temporary asylum in Zaire and, subsequently, Kenya. In late 1991 some of the guerrillas were reported to have been moved to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) training base in the United States, and in April 1992 LNLA members participated in an NFSL congress in Dallas, Texas. Two years later, as the apparent result of a policy dispute, the LNLA severed its links to the NFSL. There has been little subsequent information regarding any LNLA activity.

*Leaders:* Col. Khalifa HIFTER, Braek SWE-SSI.

In May 1996 a number of opposition groups reportedly issued a statement condemning the “despotic practices” of the Qadhafi regime, according to the *Africa Research Bulletin*, which said signatories included the **Libyan Constitutional Union**, the **Libyan Nationalist Organization**, and the **Libyan Democratic Nationalist Grouping**. Also listed were a **Movement for Change and Reform** (a nationalist grouping) and the **Libyan Islamic Group**, an underground but nonviolent organization that has been compared to groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. A number of supporters of the Libyan Islamic Group (including professors and other professionals) were reportedly arrested in Benghazi and other northeastern cities in mid-1998. Libyan security forces also reportedly clashed at that time with members of the **Libyan Islamic Fighting Group** (LIFG, also referenced as the Libyan Militant Islamic Group—LMIG), an Islamic fundamentalist grouping that had earlier been linked to the antigovernment disturbances in northeastern Libya in March 1996 and had claimed that it had planned an assassination of Colonel Qadhafi. The Libyan leader subsequently criticized the United Kingdom for permitting the group to maintain operations in London in view of its avowed goal of overthrowing the Libyan government. In 1998 leaders of the LIFG

denied that UK intelligence forces had been involved in the earlier assassination plot, which was aborted when Qadhafi changed travel plans suddenly. (A “rogue” UK agent had reportedly alleged that the LIFG had been given money to assist in the plot, a charge that London vehemently denied.) The LIFG has been accused of having connections to the al-Qaida terrorist network, and in 2001 it was included on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations whose assets were to be frozen. Meanwhile, a number of LIFG members remained in prison in Libya in 2002. The United States and the UK reportedly helped Libya in 2006 in a crackdown on group members to prevent militants from plotting attacks against Qadhafi and against U.S. forces in Iraq. In late 2006 the LIFG, led by Abdallah al-SADIQ, said the government had released 60 of the group’s members who had been held on allegations of promoting violence. The action reportedly followed months of negotiations between Libyan authorities and the LIFG’s former leader, Numan bin-UTHMAN, in which the government tried to persuade the group to disband. The LIFG members were freed after they reportedly agreed to renounce violence.

Another group reportedly involved in clashes with security forces is the **Islamic Martyrs Movement**, whose reputed leader Muhammad al-HAMI, was believed to have been killed by government security forces in July 1996. (Abdullah AHMAD subsequently was identified as a spokesman for the movement.) The grouping, described as comprising Libyan veterans of the Afghan war operating out of the mountains near Benghazi, claimed that it had wounded Qadhafi in an attack on his motorcade on the night of May 31–June 1, 1998. (The government denied that such an attack had taken place.) Meanwhile, the formation of the **Libyan Patriots Movement** had been announced in London in January 1997, founders calling for the ouster of Colonel Qadhafi and creation of a “free Libya” based on free-market economic principles. In April 1998 the movement reportedly staged an attack on security forces in Benghazi.

In August 2000 the formation of a new external opposition grouping—the **National Reform**

## Cabinet

As of June 1, 2007

Secretary General, General People's Committee  
Assistant Secretary General

Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmudi  
Abd-al-Hafid Mahmud al-Zulaytini

### *Secretaries*

Agriculture and Livestock  
Culture and Information  
Economy, Trade, and Investment  
Electricity, Water Resources, and Gas  
Finance  
Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation  
General Education  
Health and Environment  
Higher Education  
Industry and Mines  
Justice  
Planning  
Public Security  
Social Affairs  
Telecommunications and Transport  
Workforce, Training, and Employment  
Youth and Sports

Abu-Bakr Mabruk al-Mansuri  
Nuri Dhaw al-Humaydi  
Ali Abd-al-Aziz al-Isawi  
Umran Ibrahim Abu-Kraa  
Muhammad al-Huwayj  
Abdurrahman Muhammad Shalgam  
Abd-al-Qadir Muhammad al-Baghdadi  
Muhammad Abu-Ujaylah Rashid  
Aqil Husayn Aqil  
Ali Yusuf Zikri  
Mustafa Muhammad Abd-al-Jalil  
Ali Tahir al-Juhaimi  
Brig. Gen. Salih Rajab al-Mismari  
Ibrahim al-Zarruq Sharif  
Muhammad Abu-Ujayl al-Mabruk  
Matuq Muhammad Matuq  
Mustafa Miftah Belid al-Dersi

**Congress**—was reported as a vehicle for promoting a multiparty system in Libya.

### Legislature

The Senate and House of Representatives were dissolved as a result of the 1969 coup, Colonel Qadhafi asserting that all such institutions are basically undemocratic, “as democracy means the authority of the people and not the authority of a body acting on the people’s behalf.”

A government decree of November 13, 1975, provided for the establishment of a 618-member General National Congress of the ASU to consist of the members of the Revolutionary Command Council and leaders of existing “people’s congresses,” trade unions, and professional groups. Subsequent to its first session held January 5–18,

1976, the body was identified as the **General People’s Congress (GPC)**.

*Secretary General:* Zanati Muhammad al-ZANATI.

### Communications

In October 1973 all private newspapers were nationalized, and censorship remains heavy. Despite claims in 2006 by a Libyan media company, encouraged by Qadhafi’s son, Sayif al-Islam al-Qadhafi, that the government was prepared to allow private media within the year, Reporters Without Borders found no such changes taking place. To the contrary, the watchdog organization stated in its 2007 report that “despite Qadhafi’s democratic pretensions, his regime still keeps a very tight rein on news.” The report also stated that “criticizing



Qadhafi is a taboo that can lead directly to prison.” Reporters Without Borders did note that Libyans are free to access the Internet, although their online activity is closely monitored.

### *Press*

The country’s major daily, *al-Fajr al-Jadid* (The New Dawn, 40,000), is published in Tripoli in Arabic, by JANA. Also published daily in Arabic in Tripoli are the “ideological journal” *Al-Zahf al-Akhdar* (The Green March), *Al Jamahiriya*, and *Al Shams*. The daily *Tripoli Post* is published in English.

### *News Agencies*

The official facility is the Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA). Italy’s ANSA and Russia’s ITAR-TASS maintain offices in Tripoli.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Radio and television transmission in both Arabic and English is under the administration of the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Broadcasting Corporation. As of 2005 there were approximately 36 Internet users per 1,000 people. As of that same year there were about 42 cellular mobile subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

There were no diplomatic relations between Libya and the United States until June 2004, when, in the wake of perceived progress toward the resolution of several long-standing areas of severe contention (see Foreign relations and Current issues, above), Washington announced it would open a liaison office in Tripoli.

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** (Vacant)

**U.S. Ambassador to Libya:** Giadalla A. ET-TALHI

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** (Vacant)

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AU, AFESD, AMF, AMU, BADEA, CAEU, Comesa, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO

# MOROCCO

## KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

*al-Mamlakat al-Maghribiyah*

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**Note:** Following legislative elections on September 7, 2007, which witnessed the lowest turnout in Morocco's history at 37 percent, the distribution of seats was as follows: Independence Party (*Istiqlal*), 52; Party of Justice and Development, 46; Popular Movement, 41; National Assembly of Independents, 39; Socialist Union of Popular Forces, 38; Constitutional Union, 27; Party of Progress and Socialism, 17; Democratic Forces Front, 9; Democratic and Social Movement, 9; Union of the National Democratic Party and al-Ahd (Covenant), 14 [National Democratic Party-Al-Ahd Union, 8; Al-Ahd, 3; National Democratic Party, 3]; Union of the Democratic Socialist Avant-Garde, Unified National Congress Party and the Unified Socialist Party, 6; Workers' Party, 5; Party of Environment and Development, 5; Renewal and Equity Party, 4; Socialist Party, 2; Moroccan Union for Democracy, 2; Party of Citizens' Forces, 1; Alliance of Freedom, 1; Development and Citizenship Initiative, 1; Party of Renaissance and Virtue, 1; Independents, 5. *Istiqlal's* leader, Abbas El Fassi, was appointed prime minister September 19, announcing a cabinet reflecting the king's desire for a moderately conservative, reformist government on October 15.

### The Country

Located at the northwest corner of Africa, Morocco combines a long Atlantic coastline and Mediterranean frontage facing Gibraltar and southern Spain. Bounded by Algeria on the northeast and (following annexation of the former Spanish Sahara) by Mauritania on the south, the country is topographically divided into a rich agricultural plain in the northwest and an infertile mountain and plateau region in the east that gradually falls into the Sahara Desert in the south and southwest. The population is approximately two-thirds Arab and one-third Berber, with small French and Spanish minorities. Islam is the state religion, most of the population adhering to the Sunni sect and following the Maliki school. Arabic is the language of the majority, most others speaking one or more dialects of Berber; Spanish is common in the northern regions and French among the educated elite. Women comprise 35 percent of the paid labor force, concentrated mainly in textile manufacture and domestic service; overall, one-third of the

female population is engaged in unpaid family labor on agricultural estates. While an increasing number of women from upper-income brackets



have participated in local and national elections, they have thus far obtained only minimal representation, although women were allocated 30 seats in the House of Representatives in advance of the September 2007 elections in an attempt to address this issue.

The agricultural sector employs approximately 40 percent of the population; important crops include cereals and grains, oilseeds, nuts, and citrus fruits. One of the world's leading exporters of phosphates, Morocco also has important deposits of lead, iron, cobalt, zinc, manganese, and silver; overall, mining accounts for about 45 percent of export receipts. The industrial sector emphasizes import substitution (textiles, chemicals, cement, plastics, machinery), while tourism and fishing are also major sources of income. Trade is strongly oriented toward France, whose economic influence has remained substantial. Since the early 1980s the economy has suffered from periodic droughts, declining world demand for phosphate, rapid urbanization, and high population growth. Unemployment remains a problem, with youth and talent seeking opportunity in Europe. Economic growth has been disappointing according to a report by the country's Higher Planning Authority: Morocco has failed to meet targets in growth, investment, and exports. One piece of good news has been the improved performance of agriculture, which has benefited because of better rainfall, which points to Morocco's continued dependence on that sector of the economy. Remittances from workers abroad and steady tourist receipts have also helped the economic picture, although there are concerns that the recent spate of terrorist attacks and the discovery of a series of militant cells during 2007 will have a negative impact on tourism. Trade liberalization continues with the European Union, and in 2004 Morocco and the United States signed a free trade agreement. While these measures were expected to strengthen foreign business and investment, they also represented competition to Moroccan farmers and textile industries.

Living conditions remain low by regional standards, and wealth is poorly distributed. However, with its low inflation rate and cheap labor pool,

Morocco is considered by some as a potential target for substantial investment by developed (particularly European) countries. To encourage such interest, the government continues to privatize many state-run enterprises, address the high (52 percent) illiteracy rate, and reform the stock market, tax system, and banking sector. However, the pace of reform remains somewhat sluggish. Recent political liberalization has reportedly been aimed, at least in part, at securing additional Western support.

A more costly wage structure and higher oil subsidies contributed to a rapidly rising budget deficit and a concomitant drop in the GDP growth rate to 1.2 percent in 2005. However, in 2007 the International Monetary Fund reported that average GDP growth has reached 5.4 percent per annum since 2001, a substantial improvement over the previous 6 years. Furthermore, the 2004 free trade agreement with the United States took effect in January 2006, improving prospects for increased direct foreign investment. Concurrently, Morocco's decision to allow private purchase of shares in the largest state-owned bank and the state telecommunications company further enhanced the climate for foreign capital.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Originally inhabited by Berbers, Morocco was successively conquered by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, and Arabs. From 1912 to 1956 the country was subjected to de facto French and Spanish control, but the internal authority of the sultan was nominally respected. Under pressure by Moroccan nationalists, the French and Spanish relinquished their protectorates, and the country was reunified under Sultan MOHAMED V in 1956. Tangier, which had been under international administration since 1923, was ceded by Spain in 1969.

King Mohamed V tried to convert the hereditary sultanate into a modern constitutional monarchy but died before the process was complete. It remained for his son, King HASSAN II, to

**Political Status:** Independent since March 2, 1956; constitutional monarchy established in 1962; present constitution approved March 1, 1972.

**Area:** 274,461 sq. mi. (710,850 sq. km.), including approximately 97,343 sq. mi. (252,120 sq. km.) of Western Sahara, two-thirds of which was annexed in February 1976 and the remaining one-third claimed upon Mauritanian withdrawal in August 1979.

**Population:** 29,891,708 (2004C); 33,733,175 (2006E).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** RABAT (1,654,000), Casablanca (2,957,000), Fez (967,000), Marrakesh (840,000), Oujda (406,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dirham (official rate November 2, 2007: 7.83 dirhams = \$1US).

**Sovereign:** King MOHAMED VI, became king on July 23, 1999, following the death of his father, HASSAN II.

**Heir to the Throne:** Crown Prince MOULAY HASSAN.

**Prime Minister:** (*See headnote.*) Driss JETTOU (nonparty), appointed by King Mohamed in October 2002, replacing Abderrahmane YOUSOUFI (Socialist Union of Popular Forces); reappointed on June 8, 2004.

implement his father's goal in a constitution adopted in December 1962. However, dissatisfaction with economic conditions and the social policy of the regime led to rioting at Casablanca in March 1965, and three months later the king assumed legislative and executive powers.

In June 1967 the king relinquished the post of prime minister, but the continued hostility of student and other elements led to frequent governmental changes. A new constitution, approved in July 1970, provided for a partial resumption of parliamentary government, a strengthening of royal powers, and a limited role for political parties. Despite the opposition of major political groups, trade unions, and student organizations, an election for a

new unicameral House of Representatives was held in August 1970, yielding a progovernment majority. However, the king's failure to unify the country behind his programs was dramatically illustrated by abortive military revolts in 1971 and 1972.

A new constitution was overwhelmingly approved by popular referendum in March 1972, but the parties refused to enter the government because of the monarch's reluctance to schedule legislative elections. After numerous delays, elections to communal and municipal councils were finally held in November 1976, to provincial and prefectural assemblies in January 1977, and to a reconstituted national House of Representatives in June 1977. On October 10 the leading parties agreed to participate in a "National Unity" cabinet headed by Ahmed OSMAN as prime minister.

Osman resigned on March 21, 1979, ostensibly to oversee reorganization of the proroyalist National Assembly of Independents (RNI), although the move was reported to have been precipitated by his handling of the lengthy dispute over the Western Sahara (see Disputed Territory, below). He was succeeded on March 22 by Maati BOUABID, a respected Casablanca attorney.

On May 30, 1980, a constitutional amendment extending the term of the House of Representatives from four to six years was approved by referendum, thus postponing new elections until 1983. The king indicated in June 1983 that the legislative poll, scheduled for early September, would be further postponed pending the results of a referendum in the Western Sahara to be sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, subsequently the African Union—AU). On November 30 a new "unity" cabinet headed by Mohamed Karim LAMRANI was announced, with Bouabid, who had organized a new moderate party eight months earlier, joining other party leaders in accepting appointment as ministers of state without portfolio.

The long-awaited legislative poll was finally held on September 14 and October 2, 1984, with Bouabid's Constitutional Union (UC) winning a plurality of both direct and indirectly elected seats, while four centrist parties collectively obtained a better than two-to-one majority. Following lengthy

negotiations, a new coalition government, headed by Lamrani, was formed on April 11, 1985.

Although King Hassan appeared to remain popular with most of his subjects, domestic opposition leaders and Amnesty International continued to charge the government with human rights abuses and repression of dissent, including the alleged illegal detention and mistreatment of numerous leftists and Islamic extremists arrested in 1985 and 1986. On September 30, 1986, the king appointed Dr. Azzedine LARAKI, former national education minister, as prime minister, following Lamrani's resignation for health reasons.

Attributed in large measure to improvements in the economy, calm subsequently ensued, with domestic and international attention focusing primarily on the Western Sahara. Thus, a national referendum on December 1, 1989, overwhelmingly approved the king's proposal to postpone legislative elections due in 1990, ostensibly to permit participation by Western Saharans following a self-determination vote in the disputed territory.

In mid-1992, amid indications that the referendum might be delayed indefinitely or even abandoned, the government announced that forthcoming local and national elections would include the residents of Western Sahara as participants. On August 11 King Hassan reappointed Lamrani as prime minister and announced a "transitional cabinet" to serve until a postelection cabinet could be established under new constitutional provisions (see Constitution and government, below).

The basic law revisions were approved on September 4, 1992, by a national referendum, which the government hailed as a significant step in its ongoing democratization program. Widespread disbelief greeted the government's claim that 97.5 percent of the electorate had participated and that a 99.9 percent "yes" vote had been registered.

In balloting for directly elective house seats, delayed until June 25, 1993, the newly established Democratic Bloc (*Koutla*), a coalition of center-left opposition groups led by the old-guard *Is-tiqlal* party and the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), secured 99 seats. They won only

15 more in the September 17 voting in electoral colleges made up of local officials, trade unionists, and representatives of professional associations. Meanwhile, the National Entente (*Wifaq*), a group of center-right royalist parties, increased its representation from 116 in the first round of balloting to 195 after the second. The Democratic Bloc subsequently charged that the indirect election encompassed widespread fraud, an allegation that received some support from international observers.

Although King Hassan rejected the Democratic Bloc's demand that the results of the indirect poll be overturned, he did propose that the bloc participate in the formation of a new cabinet, the first of what the king envisioned as a series of alternating left-right governments. The offer was declined because of the monarch's insistence that he retain the right to appoint the prime minister and maintain de facto control of the foreign, justice, and interior portfolios. Consequently, Lamrani formed a new nonparty government on November 11.

With his poor health again cited as the official reason for the change, Lamrani was succeeded on May 25, 1994, by former foreign minister Abdellatif FILALI, a longtime close advisor to the king. On June 7 Filali presented the monarch with a ministerial list unchanged from that of his predecessor, while King Hassan continued to seek Democratic Bloc leadership of a new coalition government. The negotiations eventually collapsed in early 1995, in part because of the king's wish that Driss BASRI, long-term minister of state for interior and information, remain in the cabinet. The opposition parties had objected to Basri's influence for many years, charging that he had sanctioned human rights abuses and tolerated electoral fraud. Nonetheless, Basri retained the interior post on February 28 when Filali's new government, including 20 members of the National Entente, was announced.

Despite his failure to draw the leftist parties into the government, the king continued to pursue additional democratization, particularly regarding the proposed creation of an upper house of the legislature that, theoretically, would redistribute

authority away from the monarchy to a certain degree. The king's proposal was affirmed by a reported 99.56 percent "yes" vote in a national referendum on September 13, 1996, most opposition parties having endorsed the amendment (see Constitution and government, below, for details).

Local elections were held on June 13, 1997, with seats being distributed along a wide spectrum of parties and no particular political dominance being apparent. Such was also the case with the November 14 balloting for a new House of Representatives as the *Koutla*, *Wifaq*, and a bloc of centrist parties each won about one-third of the seats. On the other hand, the indirect elections to the new House of Councilors revealed a decided tilt toward the *Wifaq*, not a surprising result considering its long-standing progovernment stance.

Continuing to pursue an alternating left-right series of governments, King Hassan was subsequently able to finally persuade the Democratic Bloc to assume cabinet control, and on February 4, 1998, he appointed Abderrahmane YOUSOUFI of the USFP (which had won the most seats in the House of Representatives) as the next prime minister. As formed on March 14, the new cabinet included representatives from seven parties, although the King's supporters (most notably Basri) remained in several key posts.

King Hassan, whose health had been a concern since 1995, died of a heart attack on July 23, 1999; Crown Prince SIDI MOHAMED succeeded his father immediately, the official ceremony marking his enthronement as King MOHAMED VI being held on July 30. Shortly thereafter, the long-suspect Driss Basri was dismissed as minister of the interior and moved to Paris, where he died in August 2007. The new king confirmed his support for Prime Minister Youssoufi and his government. The cabinet was reshuffled on September 6, 2000, with Youssoufi retaining the top post, but the new king replaced him with an independent, Driss JETTOU, in 2002. In 2004 the cabinet was again reshuffled, with many new cabinet appointments being made and Jettou remaining as prime minister.

Parliamentary elections were scheduled for September 2007. (*See headnote.*)

### *Constitution and Government*

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy, the Crown being hereditary and normally transmitted to the king's eldest son, who acts on the advice of a Regency Council if he accedes before age 20. Political power is highly centralized in the hands of the king, who serves as commander in chief and appoints the prime minister; in addition, he can declare a state of emergency, dissolve the legislature, veto legislation, and initiate constitutional amendments. Constitutional revisions approved in 1992 empowered the prime minister, instead of the king, to appoint and preside over the cabinet (albeit still subject to the king's approval); broadened the authority of the House of Representatives to include, inter alia, the initiation of confidence motions and the launching of investigations; and established new Constitutional and Economic/Social Councils. The preamble of the basic law was also altered to declare "the kingdom's attachment to human rights as they are universally recognized."

Until recently, legislative power had been nominally vested in a unicameral House of Representatives, one-third of whose members were indirectly designated by an electoral college. The new upper house (House of Councilors), provided for in the 1996 referendum, is elected indirectly from various local government bodies, professional associations, and employer and worker organizations. All members of the House of Representatives are now elected directly. Included in the new legislature's expanded authority is the power to censure the government and to dismiss cabinet members, although such decisions can still be overridden by the king.

The judicial system is headed by a Supreme Court (*Al-Makama al-Ulia*) and includes courts of appeal, regional tribunals, magistrates' courts, labor tribunals, and a special court to deal with corruption. All judges are appointed by the king on the advice of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary.

The country is currently divided into 49 provinces and prefectures (including four provinces in Western Sahara), with further division into municipalities, autonomous centers, and

rural communes. The king appoints all provincial governors, who are responsible to him. In addition, the basic law changes of September 1996 provided for 16 regional councils, with some members elected directly and others representing various professional organizations.

### *Foreign Relations*

A member of the UN and the Arab League, Morocco has been chosen on many occasions as a site for Arab and African Islamic conferences at all levels. It has generally adhered to a non-aligned policy, combining good relations with the West with support for African and especially Arab nationalism. Morocco has long courted economic ties with the European Union (EU, formerly the European Community—EC), although its request for EC membership was politely rebuffed in 1987 on geographic grounds. An association agreement was negotiated in 1995 and signed in 1996 with the EU, which reportedly had begun to perceive the kingdom as the linchpin of a European campaign to expand trade with North Africa. Morocco also joined the EU's European Neighborhood Policy and in this context developed an Action Plan, finalized in July 2005, which defined mutual priorities and objectives in the areas of political, economic, commercial, justice, security, and cultural cooperation. These objectives were broad ranging, including issues such as negotiating an agreement on liberalized trade, pursuing legislative reform and applying human rights provisions, managing migration flows more effectively, and signing a readmission agreement with the EU and developing the energy sector. The action plan also calls for an enhanced dialogue on combating terrorism.

Relations with the United States have been friendly, with U.S. administrations viewing Morocco as a conservative counter to northern Africa's more radical regimes. An agreement was signed in mid-1982 that sanctioned, subject to veto, the use of Moroccan air bases by U.S. forces in emergency situations. Periodic joint military exercises have since been conducted, with Washington serving as a prime supplier of equipment for Rabat's cam-

paign in the Western Sahara. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Morocco in February 2006 and praised the king for his cooperation with U.S. counterterrorism efforts. (Morocco is a signatory to the U.S.-led Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative, a seven-year program worth \$500 million.) Anti-U.S. protesters, particularly the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, expressed displeasure that domestic political freedoms and human rights in Morocco were apparently left off the agenda for discussion. There were suggestions that Morocco had offered to host the new U.S.-Africa command, AFRICOM, although this was denied by the Moroccan Foreign Affairs Ministry. Accepting such a sensitive proposal posed difficulties for the Moroccan regime given the robust criticism of the American government accepted by the general population. The United States, however, continues to view Morocco as a key ally in combating terrorism.

During early 1991 Rabat faced a delicate situation in regard to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the previous August. Many Arab capitals were critical of King Hassan for contributing 1,700 Moroccan troops to the U.S.-led Desert Shield deployment in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states; domestic sentiment also appeared to be strongly tilted against Washington. However, the king defused the issue by permitting a huge pro-Iraq demonstration in the capital in early February and by expressing his personal sympathy for the Iraqi people during the Gulf war. His middle-of-the-road approach was widely applauded both at home and abroad.

Morocco's role in regional affairs has been complicated by a variety of issues. Relations with Algeria and Mauritania have been marred by territorial disputes (until 1970, Morocco claimed all of Mauritania's territory). The early 1970s brought cooperation with the two neighboring states in an effort to present a unified front against the retention by Spain of phosphate-rich Spanish Sahara, but by 1975 Morocco and Mauritania were ranged against Algeria on the issue. In an agreement reached in Madrid on November 14, 1975, Spain agreed to withdraw in favor of Morocco and Mauritania, who proceeded to occupy their assigned sectors (see

map) on February 28, 1976, despite resistance from the Polisario Front, an Algerian-backed group that had proclaimed the establishment of an independent Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Following Mauritanian renunciation of all claims to the territory in a peace accord with Polisario on August 5, 1979, Moroccan forces entered the southern sector, claiming it, too, as a Moroccan province.

Relations with Algeria were formally resumed in May 1988 prior to an Arab summit in Algiers on the uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories. The stage was thus set for diplomatic activity, which in the wake of first-ever talks between King Hassan and Polisario representatives in early 1989 appeared to offer the strongest possibility in more than a decade for settlement of the Western Sahara problem. Although little progress was achieved over the next seven years on a proposed UN-sponsored self-determination vote, a new UN mediation effort in 1997 rekindled hopes for a settlement (see Disputed Territory, below). Relations with Algeria improved further following the 1999 election of the new Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who suggested that bilateral affairs be handled independently of the conflict in the Western Sahara. Nevertheless, tensions between the two states persisted and the border remained closed from 1994. However, this rivalry does not prevent the two states from cooperating on common strategic concerns, such as security, including extradition of terrorist suspects. Long strained ties with Libya (which had been accused of complicity in several plots to overthrow the monarchy) began to improve with a state visit by Muammar Qadhafi to Rabat in mid-1983. The process of rapprochement culminated in a treaty of projected union signed by the two leaders at Oujda on August 13, 1984. An inaugural meeting of a joint parliamentary assembly was held in Rabat in July 1985, and commissions were set up to discuss political, military, economic, cultural, and technical cooperation. By February 1989, cordial relations paved the way for a summit in Marrakesh, during which Qadhafi joined other North African leaders in proclaiming the Arab Maghreb Union.

Morocco's attitude toward Israel has been markedly more moderate than that of many Arab states, in part because more than 500,000 Jews of Moroccan ancestry live in Israel. King Hassan was known to relish his conciliatory potential in the Middle East peace process and was believed to have assisted in the negotiations leading up to the Israeli/PLO agreement of September 1993. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a surprise visit to Rabat on his return from the historic signing in Washington, his talks with King Hassan being heralded as an important step toward the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In late 2001 relations between Morocco and Spain were strained by disagreements over illegal immigration, fishing rights, and smuggling. In July 2002, the countries were involved in a brief military standoff over an uninhabited islet (called Perejil by Spain, Leila by Morocco, and claimed by both) off the coast of Ceuta. With U.S., EU, and Egyptian mediation, the two sides agreed to withdraw their troops from the islet and to begin cooperating on various issues. The March 2004 bombings in Madrid, which were partly perpetrated by Moroccan immigrants, encouraged the states to coordinate security policy and exchange counterterrorism intelligence. Tensions eased dramatically when Spain's conservative government was replaced by the Spanish Socialist Workers Party in March 2004. In January 2005, Spain's King Juan Carlos paid an official visit to Morocco, a further sign of improved relations.

### *Current Issues*

In advance of the September 2007 balloting, some commentators suggested that the leader of the *Istiqlal* Party, Abbas EL FASSI, was unlikely to be chosen as the new prime minister due to his alleged involvement in the Al-Najat scandal during his tenure as employment minister. (Several Moroccan officials were charged with supporting a 2002 scheme by the Al-Najat company, which allegedly sought to employ 30,000 Moroccans in its Gulf-based shipping company. Thousands of



young applicants paid for costly medical exams in order to be approved, only to later find the jobs did not exist.) (See *headnote*.)

Past abuses of human rights, including the disappearance of dissenters, seem to have diminished. The status of women in Moroccan society has been officially reformed, with the legal age for marriage raised from 15 to 18 and polygamy virtually outlawed.

The rise of radical Islamists—spurred on by the suicide attacks and the war in Iraq—has been of concern to the palace. Several blasts on one day in early 2003 in Casablanca killed more than 40 people. Some 2,000 Moroccans were convicted of the bombings, with several given death sentences and others long prison terms. A new anti-terrorism law was swiftly passed amid concerns in the media that increased powers of detention and surveillance would erode the gains in human rights. Although a survey by the U.S.-based Pew Research Center indicated that 45 percent of Moroccans had a favorable view of Osama Bin Laden (compared with 65 percent in Pakistan and 55 percent in Jordan), Moroccans seemed to support the government's efforts to crack down on perpetrators of political violence. Also encouraging was the government's initiation of a new housing program and renewed efforts to industrialize the northern coast, in recognition that poverty and joblessness in the slums had created potential breeding grounds for radicalism.

Despite government efforts to address the problem, much of the population continued to live in dire poverty, while militancy appeared to be increasing in the poor shanty towns around the country's major cities. In March and April 2007, police raids on a series of militant cells in Casablanca resulted in some members exploding themselves to avoid capture. In August 2007 a young suicide bomber attacked a bus of tourists in Meknes. The palace was also alarmed by a change of designation by the militant Algerian organization *Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et Combat* (GSPC) to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in January 2007, suggesting potential region-wide cooperation among militant groups. However, no

evidence indicated any of the militant cells uncovered in Morocco had formal linkages to the Algerian group.

The rate of unemployment continued to be a thorny issue, as unemployed graduates frequently protested outside parliament, demanding government jobs. In December 2005, several students set themselves on fire during such a protest, reportedly yelling "a civil service job or death." While none died, a number were badly burned. Official unemployment figures stood at 9.4 percent in the second quarter of 2007, revealing an increase from the previous year, which was due largely to the impact from a drought on the agricultural sector.

As 2005 came to a close, a Moroccan truth commission—formally called the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER)—released its final report on alleged human rights abuses during the reign of King Hassan. The commission, described as the first of its kind in the Arab world, had been set up in January 2004. The commission reported that between independence in 1956 and the end of Hassan's rule in 1999, nearly 600 people were killed, and opposition activists were systematically suppressed, with numerous instances of torture and disappearances. The commission heard from more than 16,000 people and recommended that more than 9,000 victims receive compensatory payments. Many pro-democracy activists, including the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, criticized the panel for its policy of withholding the names of those found responsible for the abuses and for not recommending prosecution of the perpetrators. They also disputed the IER's numbers, maintaining that at least 1,500 people had been killed during protests on March 21, 1965, alone, and another 500 to 1,000 in protests during 1981. The hearings were televised throughout the country, an event unprecedented in the region. In July 2007 the government announced that the state would foot the medical bills of all past victims of human rights abuses between 1956 and 1999.

In spite of this softened line, limits on dissent remained. In July 2007, a Moroccan court jailed five activists for criticizing the monarchy, giving

each one a four-year prison sentence and a 10,000-dirham fine. Morocco has also been criticized by international NGOs for its decision to imprison Sarahwi human rights campaigners who had been involved in demonstrations in the Western Sahara in 2005. Furthermore, Morocco's continued detention of terrorist suspects has drawn criticism from human rights groups.

## Political Parties

### *Governing Coalition*

**Democratic Bloc** (*Bloc Démocratique*). Launched in May 1992 to promote the establishment of a "healthy democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy," the Democratic Bloc or *Koutla* ("coalition") currently includes the following three groups: the Socialist Union for Popular Forces (*Union Socialiste des Forces Populaire—USFP*), Independence Party (*Parti de l'Istiqlal, or Istiqlal—PI*), and the Party of Progress and Socialism (*Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme—PPS*).

All of the bloc's founding members, except the PPS, urged voters to abstain from the September 1992 constitutional referendum, and in February 1993 ceased participation in the national commission created to supervise upcoming legislative elections. The protesters charged that the commission was failing to pursue electoral law revision necessary to ensure "free and fair elections." However, all of the bloc's components participated in the 1993 balloting, securing 114 seats overall, with affiliated labor organizations winning six more. Most of the bloc's success (99 seats) came in the direct election, leading to its contention that the results of the indirect election had been "falsified." After protracted debate, the bloc in November rejected King Hassan's invitation to name most of the ministers in a new government, insisting that it should be given a right of veto over all appointments. However, after its components secured 102 seats in the 1997 balloting for the House of Representatives, the *Koutla* agreed to lead a new coalition government, which was appointed in March 1998 under

the leadership of the USFP's Abderrahmane Youssef. In October 2002, Youssef was replaced by the independent Driss Jettou, who was renominated in 2004.

*Leader:* Driss JETTOU (nonparty). (See *headnote*.)

**Independence Party** (*Parti de l'Istiqlal, or Istiqlal—PI*). Founded in 1943, *Istiqlal* provided most of the nation's leadership before independence. It split in 1959, and its members were relieved of governmental responsibilities in 1963. Once a firm supporter of the throne, the party now displays a reformist attitude and only supports the king on selected issues. Stressing the need for better standards of living and equal rights for all Moroccans, it has challenged the government regarding alleged human rights abuses. In July 1970 *Istiqlal* formed a National Front with the UNFP (below) but ran alone in the election of June 1977, when it emerged as the (then) leading party. It suffered heavy losses in both the 1983 municipal elections and the 1984 legislative balloting.

In May 1990 *Istiqlal* joined the USFP (below), the PPS (see below), and the OADP (below) in supporting an unsuccessful censure motion that charged the government with "economic incompetence" and the pursuit of "antipopular" and "antisocial" policies. In November 1991 *Istiqlal* announced the formation of a "common front" with the USFP to work toward "establishment of true democracy," and the two parties presented a joint list in 1993, *Istiqlal's* 118 candidates securing 43 seats in the direct *Majlis* poll. As with many other long-standing Moroccan parties, *Istiqlal's* older and younger members have been at odds recently. *Istiqlal* was the leading party in the June 1997 local elections but fell to fifth place in the November house balloting. In the 2002 direct elections, the party won 48 seats, and its secretary general, Abbas El Fassi, was named minister of state.

*Leader:* Abbas EL FASSI (Secretary General). Hashmi al-Qilali, Abu Baker al-Qadiri, Abdelkarim Ghalab, Mohamed Bu Sittar,

M'hamid Douiri (*Executive Council*). (See *headnote*.)

**Socialist Union of Popular Forces** (*Union Socialiste des Forces Populaire*—USFP). The USFP was organized in September 1974 by the UNFP-Rabat Section (see UNFP, below), which had disassociated itself from the Casablanca Section in July 1972 and was accused by the government of involvement in a Libyan-aided plot to overthrow King Hassan in March 1973. The USFP subsequently called for political democratization, nationalization of major industries, thorough reform of the nation's social and administrative structures, and the cessation of what it believed to be human rights abuses by the government. It secured the third-largest number of legislative seats in the election of June 1977 but withdrew from the House in October 1981 in protest at the extension of the parliamentary term. A year later it announced that it would return for the duration of the session ending in May 1983 so that it could participate in the forthcoming electoral campaigns. The majority of nearly 100 political prisoners released during July–August 1980 were USFP members, most of whom had been incarcerated for alleged anti-government activities in 1973–1977.

After 52 of its 104 candidates (the USFP also supported 118 *Istiqlal* candidates) won seats in the June 1993 *Majlis* balloting, the union was reportedly divided on whether to accept King Hassan's offer to participate in a coalition government, the dispute ultimately being resolved in favor of the rejectionists. Subsequently, the USFP was awarded only four additional house seats in the September indirect elections. First Secretary Abderrahmane Yousseoufi resigned his post and departed for France in protest over “irregularities” surrounding the process. The party also continued to denounce the “harassment” of prominent USFP member Noubir EL-AMAOUI, secretary general of the **Democratic Confederation of Labor** (*Confédération Démocratique du Travail*), who had recently served 14 months in prison for

“insulting and slandering” the government in a magazine interview.

Yousseoufi returned from his self-imposed exile in April 1995, apparently in response to overtures from King Hassan, who was again attempting to persuade leftist parties to join a coalition government. Although observers suggested that the USFP would soon “redefine” the party platform and possibly select new leaders, a July 1996 congress simply reconfirmed the current political bureau. Meanwhile, one USFP faction was reportedly attempting to “re-radicalize” the party under the direction of Mohamed BASRI, a longtime influential opposition leader. In June 1995 Basri returned from 28 years in exile, during which he had been sentenced (in absentia) to death three times.

The USFP was the leading party in the November 1997 house balloting, securing 57 seats and distancing itself somewhat from its *Koutla* partner *Istiqlal* (32), with which it had been considered of comparable strength. Subsequently, the 74-year-old Yousseoufi (once again being referenced as the USFP first secretary) was named by King Hassan to lead a new coalition government, although many younger USFP members reportedly opposed the party's participation. Internal dissent continued, as some radical members charged Yousseoufi and the party administration with acting timidly in government and failing to push for further reforms in state institutions. Demands for a leadership change were reportedly voiced in the party congress in March 2001, especially by younger members and those associated with labor unions. However, Yousseoufi managed to retain his post, prompting some members to leave the party to form the **National Ittihad Congress** (CNI, below). USFP was the leading party in the 2002 elections, winning 50 seats. In 2003 Yousseoufi resigned and Mohammed EL YAZGHI took over as first secretary. (See *Prime minister and headnote*.)

*Leaders:* Mohammed El YAZGHI (First Secretary), Abdelwahed RADI, Fathallah OUALALOU.

**Socialist Democratic Party** (*Parti Socialiste et Démocratique*—PSD). The PSD was established in October 1996 by OADP members who disagreed with that group's rejection of King Hassan's proposed constitutional changes. The party won six seats in 2002 balloting. In December 2005 the party decided to dissolve itself and integrated into the USFP.

*Leaders:* Abdessamad BELKEBIR, Mohamed Habib TALEB, Aissa QUARDIGHI (Secretary General).

**Party of Progress and Socialism** (*Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme*—PPS). The PPS is the successor to the **Moroccan Communist Party** (*Parti Communiste Marocain*), which was banned in 1952; the **Party of Liberation and Socialism** (*Parti de la Libération et du Socialisme*), which was banned in 1969; and the **Party of Progress and Socialism** (*Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme*—PPS), which obtained legal status in 1974. The single PPS representative in the 1977 chamber, Ali YATA, was the first Communist to win election to a Moroccan legislature. The fourth national congress, held in July 1987 in Casablanca, although strongly supportive of the government's position on the Western Sahara, criticized the administration's recent decisions to privatize some state enterprises and implement other economic liberalization measures required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, by mid-1991 the PPS was reported to be fully converted to *perestroika*, a stance that had apparently earned the party additional support within the Moroccan middle class. In late 1993 Yata unsuccessfully urged his Democratic Bloc partners to compromise with King Hassan in formation of a new government.

Ali Yata, who had been reelected to his post of PRP secretary general in mid-1995, died in August 1997 after being struck by a car. Ismail Alaoui was elected as the new secretary general. In March 2002 the PPS and the PSD (above) announced that they had launched the **Socialist Alliance** (*Alliance Socialiste*) and that they were planning to cooperate in the legislative poll in

September. In that election the PPS collected only 11 seats. (*See headnote.*)

*Leaders:* Nadir YATA, Khalid NACIRI, Ismail ALAOUI (Secretary General).

### *Legislative Parties*

**National Assembly of Independents** (*Rassemblement National des Indépendants*—RNI). The RNI was launched at a Constitutive Congress held October 6–9, 1978. Although branded by left-wing spokesperson as a “king's party,” it claimed to hold the allegiance of 141 of 264 deputies in the 1977 Chamber. Subsequent defections and other disagreements, both internal and with the king, resulted in the party's designation as the “official” opposition in late 1981. It won 61 house seats in 1984, thereafter returning to a posture of solid support for the king and the government. RNI leader Ahmed OSMAN, a former prime minister and former president of the House of Representatives, is one of the country's best-known politicians and is also the son-in-law of the former king. Previously affiliated with the National Entente, the RNI participated (as did the MNP) in the November 1997 elections as an unaligned “centrist” party (winning 46 seats) and subsequently agreed to join the *Koutlalled* coalition government named in early 1998. In 2002 RNI won 41 seats. (*See headnote.*)

In April 2007 Ahmed Osman was ousted by younger members who organized an extraordinary congress and demanded a successor be found. In May 2007 Mustafa MANSOURI was elected as the new president after Ahmed Osman agreed not to nominate himself again. Mansouri was also minister for employment and vocational training.

*Leaders:* Mustafa MANSOURI (President), Moulay Mustafa Ben Larbi ALAIOU.

**Popular Movement** (*Mouvement Populaire*—MP). Organized in 1958 as a monarchist party of Berber mountaineers, the MP was legally recognized in 1959. The MP was a major participant in government coalitions of the early 1960s. It secured the second-largest number of legislative seats in the election of June 1977 and was third-ranked after the 1984 and 1993 elections.

In October 1986 an extraordinary party congress voted to remove the MP's founder, Mahjoubi Aherdane, from the post of secretary general, replacing him with Mohand Laenser. Aherdane subsequently formed a new Berber party (see MNP, below). It is known to be loyal to the monarchy and still draws its support base from rural Berber areas. In the 2002 elections the MP won 27 seats and Laenser was named minister of agriculture. (*See headnote.*)

*Leader:* Mohand LAENSER (Secretary General).

**Justice and Development Party** (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement*—PJD). The PJD was formerly known as the **Popular Constitutional and Democratic Movement** (*Mouvement Populaire Constitutionnel et Démocratique*—MPCD). The MPCD was a splinter from the Popular Movement. It won three legislative seats in 1977 and none in 1984 or 1993. In June 1996 the moribund MPCD was rejuvenated by its merger with an unrecognized Islamist grouping known as **Reform and Renewal** (*Islah wa al-Tajdid*), led by Abdelillah BENKIRANE. The Islamists were allocated three of the MPCD's secretariat seats, and Benkirane was generally acknowledged as the party's primary leader. He announced that his supporters had relinquished their "revolutionary ideas" and were now committed to "Islam, the constitutional monarchy, and non-violence." The party won 9 seats in the House of Representatives in 1997, while Benkirane was successful in a by-election on April 30, 1999. The PJD has gained popularity, taking 42 seats in the House of Representatives in 2002, having won in most districts where it was permitted to run a candidate. In local elections in 2003, it scaled back the candidates it presented, with new leader Saad Eddine OTHMANI explaining that the party did not want to scare off foreign investors with high-profile wins.

The PJD had been expected to make major gains in the 2007 parliamentary elections with the party being viewed as a test case for an Islamist parliamentary victory in the Arab world. It has also been buoyed up by the victory in Turkey of the moder-

ate Islamist AKP in July 2007. While the party had fielded candidates in just 50 constituencies in 2002, the PDJ planned to campaign in 94 constituencies in the September elections. (*See headnote.*)

*Leader:* Saad Eddine OTHMANI (Secretary General).

**Popular National Movement** (*Mouvement National Populaire*—MNP). The MNP was organized in October 1991 by longtime Berber leader Mahjoubi Aherdane, who was ousted as secretary general of the MP in 1986. The new party won 25 house seats in 1993. A number of MNP members left the party in mid-1996 to form the MDS (below). The MNP won 19 seats in the 1997 balloting for House of Representatives, having shed its National Entente orientation. Ahmed MOUSSAOUI, the minister of youth and sports, was expelled from the MNP in April 2001 and was subsequently reported to have joined the new Democratic Union.

The MNP won 18 seats in 2002. (*See headnote.*)

*Leaders:* Mahjoubi AHERDANE (Secretary General), Hassan MAAOUNI.

**Democratic Forces Front** (*Front des Forces Démocratiques*—FFD). Launched in 1997 by PRP dissidents, the FFD won 9 seats in the November house balloting, and its leader was named to the March 1998 cabinet. In 2002 the party won 12 seats. (*See headnote.*)

*Leader:* Thami KHYARI (National Secretary).

**Constitutional Union** (*Union Constitutionnelle*—UC). Founded in 1983 by Maati Bouabid, the UC is a moderate party that emphasizes economic self-sufficiency. Said to have royal support, the party won 83 house seats in 1984. The UC's representation fell to 54 seats in 1993, although it retained a slim plurality and one of its members was elected president of the new house. Bouabid died in November 1996, exacerbating problems within a party described as already in disarray. The UC was the second leading party in the November 1997 house balloting, winning 50 seats, but dropped to 16 in 2002. (*See headnote.*)

*Leader:* Mohamed ABIED.

**Democratic and Social Movement** (*Mouvement Démocratique et Social*—MDS). Launched in June 1996 (as the National Democratic and Social Movement) by MNP dissidents, the right-wing Berber MDS is led by a former policeman. The party held seven seats following the 2002 balloting for the House of Representatives. (See headnote.)

*Leader:* Mahmoud ARCHANE (Secretary General).

**Democratic Party for Independence** (*Parti Démocratique pour l'Indépendance*—PDI). The PDI, a small but long-standing grouping (also referenced as the Parti de la Choura et de l'Istiqlal, or Choura), won three seats in the 1993 direct house election and a surprising six seats in the indirect election.

*Leader:* Abdelwahed MAACH.

**National Democratic Party** (*Parti National Démocrate*—PND). The PND was founded as the Democratic Independents (*Indépendants Démocrates*—ID) in April 1981 by 59 former RNI deputies in the House of Representatives. At the party's first congress on June 11–13, 1982, its secretary general, Mohamed Arsalane al-JADIDI, affirmed the PND's loyalty to the monarchy while castigating the RNI for not providing an effective counterweight to the "old" parties.

*Leader:* Abdallah KADIRI.

**Action Party** (*Parti de l'Action*—PA). The PA was organized in December 1974 by a group of Berber intellectuals dedicated to the "construction of a new society through a new elite." It won two legislative seats in 1977, none in 1984, two in 1993 and 2000, and 13 in 1997.

*Leader:* Mohammed EL IDRISSEI.

**United Socialist Left** (*Gauche Socialiste Unifiée*—GSU). The GSU is a left-wing formation that was launched at a constitutive congress in July 2002 when the OADP (see below) merged with three minor radical groupings, namely the Movement of Independent Democrats, the Movement for Democracy, and the Independent Left Potentials.

*Leader:* Mohamed Bensaid AIT BADR (Secretary General).

**Organization of Democratic and Popular Action** (*Organisation de l'Action Démocratique et Populaire*—OADP). Claiming a following of former members of the USFP and PPS, the OADP was organized in May 1983. It obtained one seat in 1984 balloting and two seats in 1993. A new 74-member Central Committee was elected at the third OADP congress, held November 5–6, 1994, in Casablanca.

The OADP was one of the few major parties to oppose the king's constitutional initiatives of 1996, some of its members subsequently splitting off to form the PSD (above) because of the issue. The OADP won four seats in the November 1997 Majlis elections. Although the OADP was a member of the ruling Democratic Bloc, it was not listed as having any members in the March 1998 cabinet. The OADP sources defined the group's stance as one of "critical" support of the coalition government. In 2002 it merged with other groups to form the United Socialist Left.

*Leader:* Mohamed Bensaid AIT BADR (Secretary General).

### *Other Parties*

**National Union of Popular Forces** (*Union Nationale des Forces Populaires*—UNFP). Formed in 1959 by former *Istiqlal* adherents, the UNFP subsequently became a coalition of left-wing nationalists, trade unionists, resistance fighters, and dissident members of minor parties. Weakened by internal factionalism, government repression, the disappearance of its leader, Mehdi BEN BARKA (while visiting France in 1965), and the neutrality of the Moroccan Labor Union (UMT), the party subsequently split into personal factions. In 1972 the National Administrative Committee replaced the ten-person Secretariat General and three-person Political Bureau with a group of five permanent committees. The Political Bureau thereupon formed its own organization, UNFP–Rabat Section, which was banned for several months in 1973 for activities against the state and subsequently reorganized as the USFP (above). The UNFP formally boycotted the legislative elections

of 1977 and 1984, as well as the municipal balloting of June 1983; it won no seats in 1993.

*Leader:* Moulay Abdallah IBRAHIM (Secretary General).

**Party of the Democratic Socialist Avant-Garde** (*Parti de l'Avant-Garde Démocratique Socialiste*—PADS). Formed by USFD dissidents in 1991, the PADS boycotted the 1997 elections on the ground that its members had been harassed by the government.

*Leader:* Ahmed BENJELLOUNE

**Workers' Party** (*Parti Travailleiste*). This left-wing party was established in May 2006. It was set up by trades unionist and old militants from the USFP. Among its founders was Abdelkrim Benatiq who was close to the former prime minister, Abderrahman Youssoufi.

*Leader:* Abdelkrim BENATIQ

**Renaissance and Virtue Party** (*Parti de la Renaissance et de la Vertu*). This Islamist party was set up in December 2005 by Mohamed Khalidi, a former member of the PJD.

*Leader:* Mohamed Khalidi

Other parties, a number of which won seats in 2002 and in 2006, include the **Alliance of Freedoms** (*Alliance des Liberté*—ADL), led by Ali BEL HAJ; the **Citizens' Initiatives for Development** (*Initiatives Citoyennes pour le Développement*—ICD), led by Mohammed BENHAMOU; the **Democratic Union** (*Union Démocratique*—UD), led by Bouazza IKKEN; the **Moroccan Liberal Party** (*Parti Marocain Libéral*—PML), led by Mohammed ZIANE; the **National Ittihad Congress** (*Congrès National Ittihad*—CNI), a breakaway group from the USFP led by Abdelmajid BOUZOUBAA; the **National Party for Unity and Solidarity** (*Parti National pour l'Unité et la Solidarité*—PNUS), led by Muhammad ASMAR; the **Party of Citizens' Forces** (*Parti des Forces Citoyennes*—PFC), led by Abderrahim LAHJOUJI; the **Party of Environment and Development** (*Parti de l'Environnement et du Développement*—PED), led by Ahmed AL

ALAMI; the **Covenant Party** (*Parti al-Ahd*), led by Najib EL OUAZZANI; the **Party of Reform and Development** (*Parti de la Réforme et du Développement*—PRD), led by former RNI member Abderrahmane EL KOHEN; the **Party of Renewal and Equity** (*Parti du Renouveau et de l'Équité*—PRE), led by Chakir ACHEHBAR; and the **Social Center Party** (*Parti du Centre Social*—PCS), led by Lachen MADIH.

### *Clandestine Groups*

**Justice and Welfare** (*Adl wa-al-Ihsan*). The country's leading radical Islamist organization, *Adl wa-al-Ihsan* was formed in 1980. Although denied legal party status in 1981, it was informally tolerated until a mid-1989 crackdown, during which its founder, Sheikh Abd Assalam Yassine, was placed under house arrest and other members were imprisoned. The government formally outlawed the group in January 1990; two months later, five of its most prominent members were given two-year prison terms, and Yassine's house detention was extended, touching off large-scale street disturbances in Rabat. Although the other detainees were released in early 1992, Yassine remained under house arrest, with King Hassan describing extremism as a threat to Moroccan stability. An estimated 100 members of *Adl wa-al-Ihsan* were reportedly among the prisoners pardoned in mid-1994, although Yassine was pointedly not among them. He was finally released from house arrest in December 1995 but was soon thereafter placed under "police protection" for apparently having criticized the government too strenuously. (Among Yassine's transgressions, in the eyes of the government, was his failure to acknowledge King Hassan as the nation's supreme religious leader.) His house arrest prompted protest demonstrations in 1998 by his supporters, whom the government also charged with responsibility for recent protests among university students and a mass demonstration in late December 1998 protesting U.S.–UK air strikes against Iraq. Although the group remained proscribed, Yassine was released from house arrest in May 2000. He reportedly

continued to be critical of the royal family and the government, but based on Yassine's rejection of violence, the government tolerated the group's activities. However, in May 2006 the government arrested hundreds of *Adl wa-al-Ihsan* members across the country, apparently in reaction to rumors that the party had planned an uprising. Those rounded up were later freed, but party members claimed that materials such as computers and books had been seized from party offices.

In a separate matter, Yassine's daughter, Nadia YASSINE, head of the organization's feminist branch, was charged with insulting the monarchy after she gave an interview to a Moroccan newspaper in June 2005, in which she asserted that the monarchy "was not suitable for Morocco," that a republic would be preferable, and that the king's regime was likely to collapse soon. She faced up to five years in prison. After the United States expressed opposition to her prosecution, her trial was postponed indefinitely.

Despite the postponement, authorities have continued to put pressure on the party. In July 2006 *Adl wa-al-Ihsan* member Hayat Bouida was allegedly abducted and tortured for three hours by six intelligence agents in Safi, a city 300 kilometers south of Casablanca. In May 2007 she was stabbed by two intelligence agents in front of her house.

*Leader:* Sheikh Abd Assalam YASSINE.

In 1985 and 1986 there were a number of arrests of people appearing to be members of two left-wing groups: *Ila al-amaam* (To the Future), formed in the 1960s by a number of PPS Maoist dissidents, and The Base (*Qaidiyyun*), an outgrowth of a 1970s group, 23 *Mars*, most of whose supporters entered the OADP. Many of the detainees were released in mid-1989 under a royal amnesty. *Ila al-Amaam's* former leader, Abraham SERFATY, was allowed to return to Morocco in late 1999. Members of another banned organization, Islamic Youth (*Shabiba al-Islamiya*), have also been sentenced to prison terms, often in absentia, for anti-regime activity. The group was founded by Abdelkarim MOUTIA, a former nationalist.

## Legislature

The constitutional amendments of September 1996 provided for a bicameral **Parliament** (*Barlaman*) comprising an indirectly elected House of Councilors and a directly elected House of Representatives. Previously, the legislature had consisted of a unicameral House of Representatives, two-thirds of whose members were directly elected with the remainder being selected by an electoral college of government, professional, and labor representatives.

**House of Councilors** (*Majlis al-Mustasharin*). The upper house consists of 270 members indirectly elected for nine-year terms (one-third of the house is renewed every three years) by local councils, regional councils, and professional organizations. In the first election on December 5, 1997, the National Assembly of Independents won 42 seats; the Democratic and Social Movement, 33; the Constitutional Union, 28; the Popular Movement, 27; the National Democratic Party, 21; the Independence Party, 21; the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, 16; the Popular National Movement, 15; the Action Party, 13; the Democratic Forces Front, 12; the Party of Progress and Socialism, 7; the Socialist Democratic Party, 4; the Democratic Party for Independence, 4; and various labor organizations, 27. In the election to renew one-third of the house on September 15, 2000, the National Assembly of Independents won 14 seats; the Popular National Movement, 12; the National Democratic Party, 10; the Popular Movement, 9; the Constitutional Union, 8; the Independence Party, 7; the Democratic and Social Movement, 6; the Democratic Forces Front, 5; the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, 3; the Party of Renewal and Progress, 2; the Action Party, 2; the Socialist Democratic Party, 2; the Democratic Party for Independence, 1; and various labor organizations, 3.

*Speaker:* Mustapha OUKACHA.

**House of Representatives** (*Majlis al-Nawwab*). The lower house has 325 members directly elected on a proportional basis for five-year



## Cabinet

As of October 1, 2007 *see headnote*

Prime Minister	Driss Jettou (ind.)
Minister of State	Abbas El Fassi ( <i>Istiqlal</i> )

### *Ministers*

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Marine Fisheries	Mohand Laenser (MNP)
Communication, Spokesman of the Government	Mohamed Nabil Benabdallah (ind.)
Culture	Mohamed Achaari (USFP)
Energy and Mining	Mohammed Boutaleb (ind.)
Employment and Vocational Training	Mustapha Mansouri (RNI)
Environment, Territory Development and Water	Mohamed El-Yazghi (USFP)
Equipment and Transport	Karim Gellab (ind.)
Finance and Privatization	Fathallah Oualaou (USFP)
Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	Mohamed Benaissa (RNI)
Foreign Trade	Mustapha Mechahouri (ind.)
General Secretary of the Government	Abdessadek Rabiaa (ind.)
Habous (Religious Endowments) and Islamic Affairs	Ahmed Toufig (ind.)
Health	Mohammed Chaik Biadillah (ind.)
Human Rights	Mohammed Ojar (RNI)
Industry, Trade, and Upgrading the Economy	Salaheddine Mezouar (ind.)
Interior	Chakib ben Moussa (ind.)
Justice	Mohamed Bouzoubaa (ind.)
Modernization of the Public Sector	Mohamed Boussaid (ind.)
National Education, Higher Education, Staff Training, and Scientific Research	Habib El Malki (ind.)
Relations with Parliament	Mohammed Saad El Alami ( <i>Istiqlal</i> )
Social Development, the Family, and Solidarity	Abderrahman Harouchi (ind.)
Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social Economy	Adil Douiri ( <i>Istiqlal</i> )

### *Ministers Delegate (Ministries)*

Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	Tayeb Fassi Fihri
Foreign Affairs, Moroccans Living Abroad	Nouzha Chekrouni [f]
Foreign Trade	Mustapha Mechahouri (ind.)
General and Economic Affairs	Rachid Talbi Alami
Housing and Urbanism	Toufig Hijra

### *Secretaries of State*

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Sea Fisheries	Mohamed Mohattane
Development of Water and Environment	Abdelkabar Zahoud
Employment and Vocational Training	Said Oulbacha
National Education, Higher Education, Staff Training, and Scientific Research	Anis Birou
Social Development, Family, and Solidarity	Yasmina Baddou [f]
Youth	Mohammed El Gahs

[f] = female

terms. (Under electoral law revision of May 2002, 30 seats were set aside for women; those seats were to be contested on a proportional basis from national lists for the September 2002 balloting, while the other 295 seats were to be elected on a proportional basis from 92 multi-member constituencies.) Following the election of September 27, 2002, the distribution of seats was as follows: Socialist Union of Popular Forces, 50; Independence Party (*Istiqlal*), 48; Justice and Development, 42; National Assembly of Independents, 41; Popular Movement, 18; Constitutional Union, 16; National Democratic Party, 12; Democratic Forces Front, 12; Party of Renewal and Progress, 11; Democratic Union, 10; Democratic and Social Movement, 7; Socialist Democratic Party, 6; Covenant Party, 5; Alliance of Freedom, 4; Party of Reform and Development, 3; United Socialist Left, 3; Moroccan Liberal Party, 3; Party of Citizens' Forces, 3; Party of Environment and Development, 2; Unified National Congress Party, 1 (*see headnote*).

*Speaker:* Abdelwahed RADI (*see headnote*).

## Communications

### Press

Moroccan newspapers have a reputation for being highly partisan and outspoken, although those incurring the displeasure of the state face reprisal, such as forced suspension, and government control has at times been highly restrictive. The following are published daily in Casablanca in French, unless otherwise noted: *Le Matin du Sahara* (100,000), replaced *Le Petit Marocain* following government shutdown in 1971; *al-Alam* (Rabat, 100,000), *Istiqlal* organ, in Arabic; *L'Opinion* (Rabat, 60,000), *Istiqlal* organ; *Maroc Soir* (50,000), replaced *La Vigie Marocaine* in 1971; *al-Maghrib* (Rabat, 15,000), RNI organ; *al-Mithaq al-Watani* (Rabat, 25,000), RNI organ, in Arabic; *al-Anbaa* (Rabat, 15,000), Ministry of Information, in Arabic; *al-Bayane* (5,000), PRP organ, in French and Arabic; *Libération*, USFP organ; *al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki*, USFP organ, in Arabic; *Risalat al-Umma*, UC organ, in Arabic; *Anoual* (Rabat), OADP weekly, in Arabic; *al-Mounaddama*, in Arabic. *Al-Mouharir*,

a USFP organ, and *al-Bayane* were suspended in the wake of the June 1981 riots in Casablanca. The latter was permitted to resume publication in mid-July but, having had a number of its issues confiscated in early 1984 because of its reporting of further Casablanca disturbances, it was suspended again from October 1986 until January 1987. Two months later, the government seized an issue of *Anoual*, apparently in response to its coverage of prison conditions, and took similar action against *al-Bayane* in January 1988 because of its stories on problems in the educational system and recent demonstrations at Fez University. The USFP's *al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki* was also informed that it would be censored because of its coverage of the student disturbances. In mid-1991 the government banned distribution of the first issue of *Le Citoyen*, a weekly established by political dissidents to promote government reform. Following the enthronement of the reform-minded King Mohamed VI in 1999, the government somewhat relaxed its grip on the print media. However, from 2000 through mid-2002 various issues of *Le Journal*, the independent weekly *L'Economiste*, *Maroc-Hebdo*, the Islamist weekly *Risalat al-Foutawah*, *Le Reporter al-Moustaquil*, *Le Quoditien du Maroc*, *Chamal*, *Demain*, and *Al-Sahifa* were banned. Domestic and international journalists' organizations criticized a libel law adopted in April 2002, accusing the government of eroding civil and press liberties by making it easier to file libel suits. In May 2006, Human Rights Watch issued a report critical of tightening controls on the press, citing recent harassment of independent news weeklies that had questioned government policies. In August 2007 alone three journalists were called into court for countering the monarchy. This included Ahmed BENCHEMSI, editor of the Arabic language weekly *Nichane* (Forthright), and of its French-language sister publication *Tel Quel* (As It Is), who was charged with showing disrespect towards the monarchy.

### News Agencies

The Moroccan Arab News Agency (*Wikalat al-Maghrib al-Arabi*—WMA), successor to the

former *Maghreb Arabe Presse*, is an official, government-owned agency. Most major foreign agencies maintain offices in Rabat.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Broadcasting is under the supervision of the Broadcasting Service of the Kingdom of Morocco (*Idhaat al-Mamlakat al-Maghribiyah*). The government-controlled *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Marocaine* provides radio service over three networks (national, international, and Berber) as well as commercial television service; transmission by a private television company was launched in 1989. In addition, the Voice of America operates a radio station in Tangier. As of 2005 there were approximately 25 personal computers and 152 Internet users for every 1,000 inhabitants. In that same year there were an estimated 409 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Aziz MEKOUAR

**U.S. Ambassador to Morocco:** Thomas RILEY

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Mustapha SAHEL

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AMU, BADEA, EBRD, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OIC, OIF, PCA, WCO, WTO

## Disputed Territory

### *Western Sahara*

The region known since 1976 as Western Sahara was annexed by Spain in two stages: the coastal area in 1884 and the interior in 1934. In 1957, the year after Morocco attained full independence, Rabat renewed a claim to the territory, sending irregulars to attack inland positions. In 1958, however, French and Spanish troops succeeded in quelling the attacks, with Madrid formally uniting Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro, the two historical components of the territory, as the province of Spanish Sahara. Mauritanian independence in 1960 led to

territorial claims by Nouakchott, with the situation being further complicated in 1963 by the discovery of one of the world's richest phosphate deposits at Bu Craa. During the next dozen years, Morocco attempted to pressure Spain into relinquishing its claim through a combination of diplomatic initiatives (the UN first called for a referendum on self-determination for the Sahrawi people in 1966), direct support for guerrilla groups, and a legal challenge in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Increasing insurgency led Spain in May 1975 to announce that it intended to withdraw from Spanish Sahara, while an ICJ ruling the following October stated that Moroccan and Mauritanian legal claims to the region were limited and had little bearing on the question of self-determination. Nevertheless, in November King Hassan ordered some 300,000 unarmed Moroccans, in what became known as the Green March, to enter the territory. Although Spain strongly objected to the action, a tripartite agreement with Morocco and Mauritania was concluded in Madrid on November 14. As a result, Spanish Sahara ceased to be a province of Spain at the end of the year; Spanish troops withdrew shortly thereafter, and Morocco and Mauritania assumed responsibility for Western Sahara on February 28, 1976. On April 14 Rabat and Nouakchott reached an agreement under which Morocco claimed the northern two-thirds of the region and Mauritania claimed the southern one-third.

The strongest opposition to the partition was voiced by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario, see below), which in February 1976 formally proclaimed a government-in-exile of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), headed by Mohamed Lamine OULD AHMED as prime minister. Whereas Polisario had originally been based in Mauritania, its political leadership was subsequently relocated to Algeria, with its guerrilla units, recruited largely from nomadic tribes indigenous to the region, establishing secure bases there. Neither Rabat nor Nouakchott wished to precipitate a wider conflict by operating on Algerian soil, which permitted Polisario to concentrate militarily against the weaker of the two occupying regimes and thus to aid in the overthrow of Mauritania's Moktar Ould

Daddah in July 1978. On August 5, 1979, Mauritania concluded a peace agreement with Polisario in Algiers, but Morocco responded by annexing the southern third of Western Sahara. Meanwhile, Polisario launched its first raids into Morocco, while continuing a diplomatic offensive that by the end of 1980 had resulted in some 45 countries according recognition to the SADR.

During a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 1981, King Hassan called for a referendum on the future of the disputed territory, but an OAU special implementation committee was unable to move on the proposal because of Rabat's refusal to engage in direct negotiations or to meet a variety of other conditions advanced by Polisario as necessary to effect a cease-fire. As a result, conflict in the region intensified in the second half of the year.

At an OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on February 22, 1982, a SADR delegation was, for the first time, seated, following a controversial ruling by the organization's secretary general that provoked a walkout by 18 member states, including Morocco. For the same reason, a quorum could not be declared for the next scheduled Council of Ministers meeting in Tripoli, Libya, on July 26, or for the 19th OAU summit, which was to have convened in Tripoli on August 5. An attempt to reconvene both meetings in November, following the "voluntary and temporary" withdrawal of the SADR, also failed because of the Western Sahara impasse, coupled with disagreement over the composition of a delegation from Chad. Another "temporary" withdrawal of the SADR allowed the OAU to convene the long-delayed summit in Addis Ababa in May 1983 at which it was decided to oversee a referendum in the region by the end of the year. Morocco's refusal to meet directly with Polisario representatives forced postponement of the poll, while the 1984 Treaty of Oujda with Libya effectively reduced support for the front's military forces. Subsequently, Moroccan soldiers crossed briefly into Algerian soil in "pursuit" of guerrillas, while extending the area under Moroccan control by 4,000 square miles. The seating of a SADR delegation at the twentieth

OAU summit in November 1985 and the election of Polisario Secretary General Mohamed Abd al-AZZIZ as an OAU vice president prompted Morocco's withdrawal from the organization.

At the sixth triennial Polisario congress, held in "liberated territory" in December 1985, Abd al-Azziz was reelected secretary general; he subsequently appointed a new 13-member SADR government that included himself as president, with Ould Ahmed continuing as prime minister. The following May a series of "proximity talks" involving Moroccan and Polisario representatives concluded at UN headquarters in New York with no discernible change in the territorial impasse. Subsequently, Rabat began construction of more than 1,200 miles of fortified sand walls that forced the rebels back toward the Algerian and Mauritanian borders. Polisario, while conceding little likelihood of victory by its 30,000 fighters over an estimated 120,000 to 140,000 Moroccan soldiers, nonetheless continued its attacks, hoping that the economic strain of a "war of attrition" would induce King Hassan to enter into direct negotiations—a position endorsed by a 98–0 vote of the forty-first UN General Assembly. The UN also offered to administer the Western Sahara on an interim basis pending a popular referendum, but Rabat insisted that its forces remain in place. In 1987 the SADR reported an assassination attempt against Abd al-Azziz, alleging Moroccan complicity. Rabat denied the allegation and suggested that SADR dissidents may have been responsible.

Following the resumption of relations between Rabat and Algiers in May 1988, which some observers attributed in part to diminishing Algerian support for Polisario, progress appeared to be developing toward a negotiated settlement of the militarily stalemated conflict. On August 30, shortly after a new SADR government had been announced with Mahfoud Ali BEIBA taking over as prime minister, both sides announced their "conditional" endorsement of a UN-sponsored peace plan that called for a cease-fire and introduction of a UN peacekeeping force to oversee the long-discussed self-determination referendum. However, agreement was lacking on the qualifications of those who would be permitted to participate in the

referendum and whether Moroccan troops would remain in the area prior to the vote. Underlining the fragility of the negotiations, Polisario launched one of its largest attacks in September before calling a cease-fire on December 30, pending face-to-face talks with King Hassan in January 1989. Although the talks eventually broke down, the cease-fire continued throughout most of the year as UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar attempted to mediate an agreement on referendum details. However, Polisario, accusing Rabat of delaying tactics, initiated a series of attacks in October, subsequent fighting being described as some of the most intense to date in the conflict. Another temporary truce was implemented in March 1990, and in June the UN Security Council formally authorized creation of a Western Saharan mission to supervise the proposed referendum. However, it was not until April 29, 1991, that the Security Council endorsed direct UN sponsorship of the poll, with the General Assembly approving a budget of \$180 million, plus \$34 million in voluntary contributions, for a UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (referenced by its French acronym, MINURSO). The mission's charge included the identification of bona fide inhabitants of the territory, the assembly of a voting list, the establishment of polling stations, and supervision of the balloting itself. The plan appeared to be in jeopardy when fierce fighting broke out in August between Moroccan and Polisario forces prior to the proposed deployment of MINURSO peacekeeping troops; however, both sides honored the UN's formal cease-fire date of September 6.

By early 1992 the broader dimensions of the Western Sahara conflict had significantly changed. The collapse of the Soviet Union and heightened internal problems for Polisario's principal backers, Algeria and Libya, created financial and supply problems for the rebels. At midyear it was estimated that more than 1,000 rank and file had joined a number of dissident leaders in defecting to Morocco. Meanwhile, Morocco had moved tens of thousands of settlers into the disputed territory, thereby diluting potential electoral support for Polisario. In addition, the proposed

self-determination referendum, which the UN had planned to conduct in February, had been postponed indefinitely over the issue of voter eligibility, Polisario leaders charging that UN representatives had compromised their impartiality through secret dealings with Rabat. An unprecedented meeting, brokered by the UN at El Aaiún between Moroccan and Polisario representatives, ended on July 19, 1993, without substantial progress. The main difficulty lay in a dispute about voting lists, Polisario insisting they should be based on a census taken in 1974 and Morocco arguing that they should be enlarged to include the names of some 100,000 individuals subsequently settling in the territory.

A second round of face-to-face talks, scheduled for October 1993, was cancelled at the last moment when Polisario objected to the presence of recent defectors from the front on the Moroccan negotiating team. Although the prospects for agreement on electoral eligibility were regarded as slight, MINURSO began identifying voters in June 1994 with the hope that balloting could be conducted in October 1995. Registration proceeded slowly, however, and UN officials in early 1995 protested that the Moroccan government was interfering in their operations. In April, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali reluctantly postponed the referendum again, sentiment reportedly growing within the UN Security Council to withdraw MINURSO if genuine progress was not achieved shortly.

In May 1996 the Security Council ordered a reduction in MINURSO personnel, UN officials declaring an impasse in the voter identification dispute and observers suggesting that hostilities could easily break out once again. However, face-to-face contacts between Polisario and Moroccan officials resumed in September, but no genuine progress ensued. It was reported that only 60,000 potential voters had been approved, with the cases of some 150,000 other "applicants" remaining unresolved at the end of the year.

New UN Secretary General Kofi Annan made the relaunching of the UN initiative in Morocco one of his priorities in early 1997 and in the

spring appointed former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker as his personal envoy on the matter. Baker's mediation led to face-to-face talks between Polisario and representatives of the Moroccan government in the summer, culminating in the announcement of a "breakthrough" in September. Essentially, the two sides agreed to revive the 1991 plan with the goal of conducting the self-determination referendum in December 1998. They also accepted UN "supervision" in the region pending the referendum and agreed to the repatriation of refugees under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. MINURSO resumed the identification of voters in December 1997; however, the process subsequently again bogged down, with most observers concluding that the Moroccan government bore primary responsibility for the foot-dragging. Annan launched what he said would be his final push for a resolution in early 1999, calling for the resumption of voter registration at midyear leading up to a referendum by the end of July 2000.

In September 1999 several pro-independence riots in Western Sahara were suppressed by what some saw as an over-reaction by the police, who beat and arrested scores of demonstrators. The heavy-handedness of the security forces reportedly strengthened the resolve of King Mohamed VI to oust the "old guard" of the Moroccan regime, especially Interior Minister Driss Basri. Although the new king later espoused a more flexible stance toward the Western Sahara issue, UN special envoy Baker noted in April 2000 that he remained pessimistic about the prospects of a resolution of the conflict, citing Morocco's insistence that Moroccan settlers in Western Sahara be eligible in the proposed referendum. In September 2001 Polisario rejected Baker's proposal to grant the Western Sahara political autonomy rather than hold an independence referendum. Recent interest in oil drilling in the region reportedly further complicated the matter. In November 2002 King Mohamed described the notion of a self-determination referendum as "obsolete." In mid-2004 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution urging Morocco and Polisario to accept the UN plan to grant West-

ern Sahara self-government. Morocco rejected the proposal and continued to insist that the area be granted autonomy within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty. In August 2005 Polisario released 404 Moroccan prisoners, the last of the soldiers it had captured in fighting. The front said it hoped that the gesture would lead to Moroccan reciprocity and then a peace settlement. In November 2005, the king renewed his call for autonomy for the region within "the framework of Moroccan sovereignty," but the Polisario Front quickly rebuffed what it referred to as the king's "intransigence."

The stalemate lasted into 2006. Morocco continued to administer the annexed territory as four provinces: three established in 1976 (Boujdour, Es-Smara, El-Aaiún) and one in 1979 (Oued ed-Dahab). The SADR administers four Algerian camps, which house an estimated 190,000 Sahrawis, and claims to represent some 83,000 others who remain in the Western Sahara.

In April 2007, the Moroccan government submitted a proposal called the "Moroccan Initiative for Negotiating an Autonomy Status for the Sahara," to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon. Under this proposal the territory would become an autonomous region and would enjoy a measure of self-government but within the framework of the kingdom's sovereignty and national unity. The idea of autonomy was encouraged by both the United States and France, who viewed it as the most workable solution to the crisis. At the same time, however, Polisario submitted its own proposal to the UN, called "Proposal of the Frente Polisario For A Mutually Acceptable Political Solution Assuring The Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara," which called for "full self-determination through a free referendum with independence as an option." As such these proposals simply reflected the ongoing impasse. However, Morocco and Polisario agreed to attend UN-sponsored talks in June 2007, a groundbreaking development given that this was the first time in ten years that the two sides had sat down at the same table. Nevertheless, no breakthrough was reached during the two-day meeting, and the deadlock looks set to continue.

*Sahrawi Front*

**Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro** (*Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Rio de Oro*—Polisario). Established in 1973 to win independence for Spanish (subsequently Western) Sahara, the Polisario Front was initially based in Mauritania, but since the mid-1970s its political leadership has operated from Algeria. In consonance with recent developments throughout the world, the once strongly socialist Polisario currently promises to institute a market economy in “the future Sahrawi state,” except in regard to mineral reserves (which would remain state property). The front also supports “eventual” multipartyism, its 1991 Congress, held in Tindouf, Algeria, pledging to draft a “democratic and pluralistic” constitution to present for a national referendum should the proposed self-determination vote in the Western Sahara go in Polisario’s favor. In other activity, the Congress reelected longtime leader Mohamed Abd al-Azziz as secretary general of the front and thereby president of the SADR. However, in August 1992 the defection to Morocco of the SADR foreign minister, Brahim HAKIM, served to point up the increasingly tenuous position of the rebel movement. Subsequently, a new SADR government-in-exile announced in September 1993 was most noteworthy for the appointment of hard-liner Brahim GHALI as defense minister.

In 1995 Polisario reportedly was still threatening to resume hostilities if the UN plan collapsed. However, it was widely believed that the front’s military capacity had by then diminished to about 6,000 soldiers.

The Ninth Polisario Congress, held August 20–27, 1995, reelected Abd al-Azziz as secretary general and urged the international community to pressure the Moroccan government regarding its perceived stonewalling. In September a new SADR government was announced under the leadership of Mahfoud Ali Larous Beiba, a former SADR health minister. On October 12 the first session of a SADR National Assembly was convened in Tindouf, its 101 members having been elected via secret ballot at local and regional “conferences.” A new SADR government was named on January 21, 1998, although Beiba remained as prime minister and a number of incumbents were reappointed. Beiba was succeeded on February 10, 1999, by Bouchraya Hamoudi Bayoun.

In the summer and fall of 2005, many Sahrawis had begun referring to their campaign against Morocco as an “*intifada*,” and Abd al-Azziz called for assistance from South Africa’s Nelson Mandela and U.S. President George W. Bush in resolving the Western Sahara standoff.

*Secretary General:* Mohamed Abd al-AZZIZ (President of the SADR).

*Prime Minister of the SADR:* Bouchraya Hamoudi BAYOUN.

# OMAN

## SULTANATE OF OMAN

### *Sultanat Uman*

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### The Country

The Sultanate of Oman (known prior to August 1970 as Muscat and Oman), which occupies the southeast portion of the Arabian Peninsula and a number of offshore islands, is bounded by the United Arab Emirates on the northwest, Saudi Arabia on the west, and Yemen on the extreme southwest. A small, noncontiguous area at the tip of the Musandam Peninsula extends northward into the Strait of Hormuz, through which much of the world's ocean-shipped oil passes. Although the Omani population is predominantly Arab (divided into an estimated 200 tribes), small communities of Iranians, Baluchis, Indians, East Africans, and Pakistanis are also found. Ibadhi Muslims constitute up to 75 percent of the population; most of the remainder are Wahhabis of the Sunni branch, although there is a small Shiite population. In addition to Arabic, English, Farsi, and Urdu, several Indian dialects are spoken.

Prior to 1970 the Sultanate was an isolated, essentially medieval state without roads, electricity, or significant educational and health facilities; social behavior was dictated by a repressive and reclusive sultan. However, following his overthrow in 1970, the country underwent rapid modernization, fueled by soaring oil revenue. Oman currently provides free medical facilities, housing assistance for most of its citizens, and schools for more than 550,000 students. Economic growth has been concentrated in the coastal cities with an accompanying construction boom relying on a large foreign work force. However, under a government program designed to reduce migration to urban areas,

services have in the last several years been extended to most of the vast rural interior. It has been estimated that about half of the population still engages in farming, herding, or fishing, with a large percentage of the country's women working as unpaid agricultural laborers on family landholdings. Growing access to education (more than 40 percent of Omani students are female) has reduced the once high illiteracy rate among women. Women have visible roles in both private and public sectors in part because of the relatively moderate (in regional terms) stance of the sultan.





Although much of the work force works in agriculture, most food must be imported; dates, nuts, limes, and fish are exported. Cattle are bred extensively in the southern province of Dhofar, and Omani camels are prized throughout Arabia. Since petroleum production began in 1967, the Sultanate has become heavily dependent on oil revenue, which, at a production rate of more than 700,000 barrels per day, accounts for more than 70 percent of government revenue and 40 percent of GDP. However, liquefied natural gas continues to be a rapidly growing segment of the economy. In a further effort to offset the nation's dependence on oil, the government has launched a program of economic diversification, intended to encourage foreign investment, promote small-scale private industry, and enhance the fledgling tourism sector. Recent initiatives include changes in investment law to permit Omani companies to be owned by non-nationals. The government of Oman solicited for a number of large infrastructure projects, including the construction of the giant maritime trans-shipment terminal at the port of Mina Ray-sut, and development of gas exports.

Real GDP growth was 3.5 percent in 2004, 5.7 percent in 2005, and 6.1 percent in 2006. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in recent years has commended Oman's sound economic policies, including diversification and the reduction of public debt. These policies, in combination with high crude oil prices, rising consumption and investment, and an improved business climate, have contributed to the positive economic forecast. Oman was expected to maintain GDP growth of 6 percent in 2007, according to the IMF.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Conquered by the Portuguese in 1508, the Omanis successfully revolted in 1650 and subsequently extended their domain as far south as Zanzibar. A brief period of Iranian intrusion (1741–1743) was followed in 1798 by the establishment of a treaty of friendship with Great Britain; thereafter,

the British played a protective role, although formally recognizing the Sultanate's independence in 1951.

Oman is home of the Ibadhi sect, centered in Nazwa, which evolved from the egalitarian Kharijite movement of early Islam. During much of the twentieth century, Omani politics centered on an intrasect rivalry between imams, who controlled the interior, and sultans of the Said dynasty, who ruled over the coastal cities of Muscat and Muttrah, although the Treaty of Sib, concluded in 1920, acknowledged the nation's indivisibility. On the death of the incumbent imam in 1954, Sultan Said ibn Taymur Al SAID attempted, without success, to secure election as his successor. However, revolts against the sultan by the new imam's followers were ended with British help in 1959, thus cementing the sultan's authority over the entire country. The foreign presence having become the subject of a number of UN debates, the remaining British bases were closed in 1977, although a number of British officers remained attached to the Omani armed forces.

The conservative and isolationist Sultan Said was ousted on July 23, 1970, by his son, Qabus ibn Said Al SAID. The former sultan fled to London, where he died in 1972. Qabus, whose takeover was supported by the British, soon began efforts to modernize the country, but his request for cooperation from rebel groups who had opposed his father evoked little positive response. In 1971–1972 two left-wing guerrilla groups merged to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (renamed in July 1974 as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman—PFO), which continued resistance to the sultan's regime, primarily from bases in the (then) People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Qabus maintained his superiority with military assistance from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, and Pakistan, and in December 1975 he asserted that the rebellion had been crushed, with a formal cease-fire being announced in March 1976.

Although the sultan subsequently stated his desire to introduce democratic reforms, a Consultative Assembly established in 1981 consisted

**Political Status:** Independent sultanate recognized December 20, 1951; present regime instituted July 23, 1970; new “basic law” decreed on November 6, 1996.

**Area:** 119,500 sq. mi. (309,500 sq. km.).

**Population:** 2,340,815 (2003C); 2,613,000 (2006E). Both figures include non-Omanis (559,257 in 2003).

**Major Urban Center (2005E):** MUSCAT (urban area, 640,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Oman Rial (official rate November 2, 2007: 1 rial = \$2.60US).

**Head of State and Government:** Sultan Qabus ibn Said Al SAID; assumed power July 23, 1970, in a coup d'état that deposed his father, Sultan Said ibn Taymur Al SAID.

entirely of appointed members, and Oman remained for all practical purposes an absolute monarchy. In November 1990 the sultan announced plans for a Consultative Council of regional representatives in an effort to provide for more citizen participation.

By the mid-1990s the Consultative Council had become the forum for rigorous questioning of government ministers, as well as sporadic grumbling over alleged corruption on the part of members of the ruling elite.

On November 6, 1996, Sultan Qabus issued “The Basic Law of the Sultanate of Oman,” the nation’s first quasi-constitutional document. Although it confirmed the final authority of the sultan in all government matters, it also codified the responsibilities of the Council of Ministers and provided for a second consultative body, the Council of State (see Legislature, below). Subsequently, following preliminary balloting for a new Consultative Council on October 16, 1997, Sultan Qabus reshuffled his cabinet on December 16, designating several “young technocrats” as new ministers.

New elections to the Consultative Council were held on September 14, 2000, successful candidates for the first time not being subject to approval by the sultan. Elections were next held on October

4, 2003, with women continuing to hold two seats. Members were elected to four-year terms in the first balloting open to all citizens (see Current issues and Legislature, below).

### *Constitution and Government*

Lagging behind most other Arab states in this regard, Oman until recently had no constitution or other fundamental law, absolute power resting with the sultan, who ruled by decree. However, on November 6, 1996, Sultan Qabus issued “The Basic Law of the Sultanate of Oman,” formally confirming the government’s status as a hereditary Sultanate, which is an “independent, Arab, Islamic, fully sovereign state” and for which sharia (Islamic religious law) is the “basis for legislation.” Total authority for the issuance of legislation remains with the sultan, designated as head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. The “ruling family council” is authorized to appoint a successor should the position of sultan become vacant. The sultan rules with the assistance of a Council of Ministers, whose members he appoints. The first woman was appointed to the cabinet in 2004. The sultan may appoint a prime minister but is not so required. Consultation is also provided by the Oman Council, comprising a new Council of State and the Consultative Council. (See Legislature, below.) Among other things, the basic law provides for freedom of opinion, expression, and association “within the limits of the law.” The basic law can be revised only by decree of the sultan.

The judicial system is also based on sharia and is administered by judges (*qadis*) appointed by the minister of justice. Appeals are heard in Muscat. In remote areas the law is based on tribal custom. Administratively, the country is divided into nine regions in the north and one province in the south (Dhofar). Governors (*walis*) posted in the country’s 59 *wilayats* (administrative districts) work largely through tribal authorities and are responsible for maintaining local security, settling minor disputes, and collecting taxes. Municipal councils are presently being established in the larger towns as instruments of local government.

### *Foreign Relations*

Reversing the isolationist policy of his father, Sultan Qabus has fostered diplomatic relations with most Arab and industrialized countries. Britain has been deeply involved in Omani affairs since 1798, while the United States and the Sultanate signed their first treaty of friendship and navigation in 1833. In recent years Japan has also become a major trading partner. Diplomatic relations were established with the People's Republic of China in 1978 and with the Soviet Union in September 1985. In June 1989 the Sultanate signed a military cooperation agreement with France.

Relations with the more radical Arab states, already cool, were not improved by Sultan Qabus's endorsement of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of March 1979. However, Oman broke off relations with Israel in the wake of the Intifada. Long-standing tension with the (then) People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, occasioned largely by that country's support of the sultan's opponents in Dhofar, moderated substantially at an October 1982 "reconciliation" summit, which was followed by an exchange of ambassadors in late 1983. In October 1988 the steady improvement in relations yielded a cooperation pact between the two regimes, and in 1997 Oman concluded a formal border agreement with the Republic of Yemen.

In June 1980, after statements by Sultan Qabus opposing what he viewed as Soviet efforts to destabilize the Middle East, Washington and Muscat concluded an agreement granting the United States access to Omani air and naval facilities in return for economic and security assistance. Since that time, and despite a May 1988 rebuff in regard to the purchase of Stinger missiles, Oman has become a base for U.S. military activities in the Persian Gulf.

Sultan Qabus strongly supported the Saudi decision to invite U.S. forces to defend the Gulf in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and Oman subsequently contributed troops to Operation Desert Storm. Following the end of the war, Sultan Qabus proposed that a 100,000-member regional army be established to combat future security threats; however, the plan was even-

tually rejected by Oman's partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Oman's already warm relations with Washington further improved after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. Oman and Saudi Arabia issued a joint statement calling for greater cooperation in combating terrorism, and Oman was subsequently described as highly cooperative in the U.S.-led "war on terrorism." In 2006 the United States signed a free trade agreement with Oman.

The sultan also favors stronger ties with Iran as a means of promoting long-term stability in the region. For a similar reason, Oman has held to the moderate Arab position concerning a possible peace settlement with Israel and an independent Palestinian state. (Oman did not send a representative to an Arab League meeting called in May 2006 to discuss a trade boycott against Israel.) In 2007 Oman continued to reinforce bilateral cooperation in meetings with Jordan and Iran. Oman considers Iran's nuclear power an asset to the region inasmuch as there is a peaceful application of the technology.

Despite its importance as an oil-producing state, Oman is not a member of either the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) or the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). However, since the late 1980s it has cooperated with OPEC regarding production quotas.

### *Current Issues*

The balloting for the Consultative Council in September 2000 attracted significant international attention because only one other GCC member (Kuwait) had conducted such a nationwide election and because no other member had extended the franchise in national elections to women. (Qatar in 1999 permitted women to participate in municipal elections.) The Omani government continued to pursue "quiet progress" toward political liberalization by mandating that 30 percent of the electors in the electoral college be women. As it turned out, only two women candidates were successful then and in the October 4, 2003, elections, the first time

that all citizens could participate. Voters appeared to favor fellow tribesmen, as in the previous election, making it less likely that women would be elected.

Significantly, of the hundreds arrested in early 2005 for allegedly attempting “to form an organization to tamper with national security,” those convicted were neither jihadists linked to al-Qaida nor Shiites loyal to Iran or Iraq. The 31 people convicted by a state security court of plotting to overthrow the government and membership in a banned organization were Islamists who belonged to an Ibadhi sect that seeks to restore the Imamate, or leadership by an imam. There is reportedly a long history of conflict between the interior-dwelling Ibadhi sect and the authorities of the coastal region. Moreover, the Ibadhi sect believes the community leader should not be designated by heredity but decided by popular vote. In June the sultan pardoned the 31 Islamists. It was also reported that another, similar trial followed in July, resulting in the conviction of 43 Islamists, all of whom were also pardoned. Western news sources noted that the sultan’s conciliatory moves and the presence of the moderate Ibadhi sect may have spared Oman from the kind of terrorist attacks experienced by other countries in the region.

## Political Parties

There are no political parties in Oman. Most opposition elements previously were represented by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO), although there has been no reference to PFLO activity for many years. (See the 1999 edition of the *Handbook* for a history of the PFLO.)

## Legislature

The basic law decreed by the sultan in November 1996 provided for a consultative **Oman Council**, consisting of a new, appointed Council of State and the existing Consultative Council.

**Council of State** (*Majlis al-Dawlah*). Considered roughly the equivalent of an upper house in a

bicameral legislature, the Council of State was expected to debate policy issues at the request of the sultan, although the ultimate extent of its authority and its relationship to the Consultative Council remained unclear. On December 16, 1997, Sultan Qabus appointed 41 members (including four women) from among prominent regional figures to the first Council of State. In 2006 the council had 59 members, 9 of whom were women, all serving four-year terms.

*President:* Yahya bin Mafouz al-MUNTHERI.

**Consultative Council** (*Majlis al-Shura*). The former Consultative Assembly, established in 1981, was replaced on December 21, 1991, by the Consultative Council, an advisory body appointed by the sultan (or his designee) from candidates presented by local “dignitaries” and “people of valued opinion and experience.” The council is authorized to propose legislation to the government but has no formal lawmaking role. The initial council consisted of 59 regular members (one from each *wilayat*) and a speaker who served three-year terms. In 1994 the council was expanded to 80 regular members (two from each *wilayat* with a population over 30,000 and one from each of the other *wilayats*) and a president. For the first time women were allowed to stand as candidates (albeit only from six constituencies in or around Muscat), and two women were among those seated at the new council’s inaugural session on December 26, 1994. The council was expanded to 82 members in 1997, and women from all of Oman were allowed to stand as candidates and participate in the preliminary balloting for the new council on October 16. An “electoral college” of 51,000 people (all approved by the government, primarily based on literacy requirements) elected 164 potential council members from among 736 candidates (also all approved by the government). Final selections were made in December by the sultan, who had essentially been presented with two candidates from which to choose for each seat.

Elections were most recently held on October 4, 2003, for an expanded council of 83 elected members to serve a four-year term. This was the first

## Cabinet

As of July 1, 2007

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs  
Secretary General of the Cabinet

Sultan Qabus ibn Said al-Said  
Said Fahd ibn Mahmud al-Said  
Hamud ibn Fasal ibn Said al-Busaidi

### Ministers

Agriculture and Fisheries  
Civil Service  
Commerce and Industry  
Defense  
Diwan of Royal Court  
Education  
Foreign Affairs  
Health  
Heritage and Culture  
Higher Education  
Housing, Electricity, and Water  
Information  
Interior  
Justice  
Legal Affairs  
Manpower  
National Economy  
Palace Office Affairs  
Personal Representative of the Sultan  
Petroleum and Gas  
Regional Municipalities, Environment, and Water  
Religious Trusts (*Awqaf*) and Islamic Affairs  
Social Development  
Sports  
Tourism  
Transportation and Telecommunications

Sheikh Salim ibn Hilal al-Khalili  
Sheikh Hilal ibn Khalid ibn Nassir al-Mawali  
Maqbul ibn Ali Sultan  
Said Badr ibn Saud ibn Hareb al-Busaidi  
Said Ali ibn Hamad al-Busaidi  
Yahya ibn Saud al-Sulaimi  
Yusuf ibn Alawi ibn Abdallah  
Dr. Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Musa  
Said Haitham bin Tariq al-Said  
Rawya bint Saud al-Busaidi [f]  
Khamis ibn Mubarak Isa al-Alawi  
Hamid ibn Muhammad al-Rashdi  
Said Saud ibn Ibrahim al-Busaidi  
Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdallah ibn Zahir al-Hinai  
Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Nasir al-Alawi  
Juma ibn ali ibn Juma  
Ahmed ibn Abd al-Nabi al-Makki  
Gen. Ali ibn Majid Mamari  
Said Thuwainy bin Shihab al-Said  
Muhammad ibn Saif al-Ramhi  
Sheikh Abdallah ibn Salim al-Ruwas  
Sheikh Aballah ibn Muhammad al-Salimi  
Dr. Sharifa bint Khalifan bin Nasir al-Yahya [f]  
Ali bin Masoud bin Ali al-Sunaidy  
Rajihah bint Abdallah Amir [f]  
Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdallah ibn Isa al-Harhi

### Ministers of State

Governor of the Capital  
Governor of Dhofar

Said al-Mutasim ibn Hamud al-Busaidi  
Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ali al-Qatabi

[f] = female

ballot open to all citizens. The president of the council, appointed by the sultan, serves as the eighty-fourth member. The next election was scheduled for October 2007.

*President:* Sheikh Abdullah ibn Ali al-QATABI.

## Communications

### Press

Strict press censorship is maintained. The following are published in Muscat: *al-Watan* (32,500),

Arabic daily; *Uman* (15,000), daily government publication, in Arabic; *Times of Oman* (15,000), English weekly; *Oman Daily Observer* (22,000), in English.

### *News Agency*

There is an official Oman News Agency (*Wikalat al-Anba al-Umaniyah*) located in the capital.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Radio Oman transmits from Muscat in Arabic and English, and Radio Salalah from Salalah in Arabic and Dhofari; both are government controlled. The BBC Eastern Relay on Masirah Island transmits Arabic, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu programming. Color television was initiated in Muscat

in 1974 and in Salalah in 1975. As of 2005 there were approximately 47 personal computers and 111 Internet users for every 1,000 people. In that same year there were 519 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 inhabitants.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Hunaina Sultan Ahmed al-MUGHAIRY

**U.S. Ambassador to Oman:** Gary A. GRAPPO

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Fuad al-HINAI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, GCC, IDB, Interpol, IOR-ARC, LAS, NAM, OIC, WCO, WTO

# PAKISTAN

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

### *Islami Jamhuriya-e-Pakistan*

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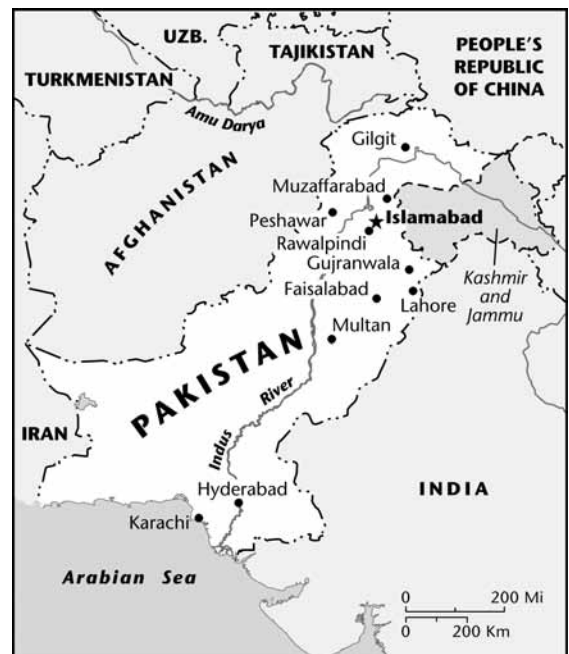
**Note:** Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, apparently by Islamist extremists, while leaving a campaign rally in Rawalpindi on December 27, 2007. Shortly after, her 19-year-old son, Bilawal Zardari, a college student in the United Kingdom, was named titular head of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP), while her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was given responsibility for running day-to-day party operations. On January 8, 2008, despite objections from the PPP and other opposition parties, the Pakistan Election Commission postponed the scheduled legislative election from January 8 to February 18, citing the violent disturbances that followed Bhutto's death.

### The Country

Located in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, Pakistan extends from the Arabian Sea a thousand miles northward across eastern plains to the Hindu Kush and the foothills of the Himalayas. The racial stock is primarily Aryan, with traces of Dravidian. The dominant language is Punjabi (50 percent), followed by Pushtu, Sindhi, Saraiki, Urdu, Gujarati, and Baluchi. In addition, English is widely spoken in business and government. Islam, the state religion, is professed by over 95 percent of the people; Christians and Hindus constitute most of the balance. Women make up only 18 percent of the active labor force, but many others participate in unpaid agricultural work. In addition, women are often engaged in home-based or cottage industry. Female participation in government has been constrained by Islamic precepts, although Benazir BHUTTO was the Muslim world's first woman prime minister (1988–1990, 1993–1996). Only about half the adult population is literate—less in the case of women.

Much of the country consists of mountains and deserts, but some of the most fertile and best-irrigated land in the subcontinent is provided by the

Indus River system. Agriculture continues to employ 40 percent of the active labor force, the principal crops being cotton, wheat, rice, sugarcane, and maize. In addition, the western province of



**Political Status:** Formally became independent on August 15, 1947; republic established on March 23, 1956; national territory confined to former West Pakistan with de facto independence of Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) on December 16, 1971; independence of Bangladesh formally recognized on February 22, 1974; martial law regime instituted following military coup of July 5, 1977; modified version of 1973 constitution introduced on March 2, 1985; martial law officially lifted December 30, 1985; constitution suspended and state of emergency imposed on October 14, 1999, following military coup of October 12; constitution restored on November 16, 2002, as amended by Legal Framework Order (LFO) promulgated by the president on August 21; 17th constitutional amendment, containing many of the LFO provisions, approved by Parliament on December 29–30, 2003, and signed by the president on December 31; constitution most recently suspended under state of emergency declared on November 3, 2007, but scheduled to be lifted by December 16.

**Area:** 310,402 sq. mi. (803,943 sq. km.), excluding Jammu and Kashmir, of which approximately 32,200 sq. mi. (83,400 sq. km.) are presently administered by Pakistan.

**Population:** 130,579,571 (1998C), excluding population of Pakistani-controlled portion of Jammu and Kashmir (see Related Territories); 156,954,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** ISLAMABAD (974,000), Karachi (11,767,000), Lahore (6,317,000), Faisalabad (2,514,000), Rawalpindi (1,778,000), Gujranwala (1,460,000), Multan (1,436,000), Hyderabad (1,374,000), Peshawar (1,241,000). Opponents of the 1998 census, claiming widespread urban underenumeration,

estimated the population of Karachi at close to 15 million.

**National Language:** Urdu.

**Monetary Unit:** Rupee (market rate November 2, 2007: 60.79 rupees = \$1US).

**President and Chair of the National Security**

**Council:** Pervez MUSHARRAF; as chief of the army staff, deposed Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz SHARIF (Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz) on October 12, 1999, and assumed title of chief executive two days later; assumed, ex officio, chair of National Security Council, the civilian members of which were sworn in on November 6; assumed the presidency on June 20, 2001, upon his dismissal of President Rafiq TARAR (Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz); confirmed in office for an additional five years by disputed referendum of April 30, 2002; took the oath of office as president again on November 16, 2002, upon restoration of the amended constitution; transferred chief executive authority to the newly installed prime minister on November 23, 2002; confirmed in office by joint vote of the Parliament and the four provincial assemblies on January 1, 2004; reelected for a five-year term by an electoral college comprising Parliament and the provincial assemblies on October 6, 2007; resigned position as chief of the army staff on November 28 and sworn in as civilian president on November 29, 2007.

**Caretaker Prime Minister:** Mohammad Mian SOOMRO; appointed by the president on November 16, 2007, to head a caretaker government until after the legislative election scheduled for January 8, 2008, succeeding Prime Minister Shaukat AZIZ (Pakistan Muslim League), whose government had stepped down the previous day at the completion of the legislative term.

Baluchistan supplies a rich crop of fruits and dates. The agricultural sector contributes about 22 percent of GDP, while industry accounts for 23 percent of GDP and 19 percent of employment. Though not heavily endowed in mineral resources, the country extracts petroleum, natural gas, iron, limestone, rock salt, gypsum, and coal. Manufacturing in-

cludes production of cotton and other textile yarns and fabrics, which account for half of merchandise export earnings; other leading manufactures are clothing and accessories, cement, petroleum products, sugar and other foodstuffs, and fertilizer. Pakistan's exports also include fruits, seafood, carpets, and handicrafts.



Overall, the economy registered an average growth rate of 6–7 percent during the 1980s, with remittances from Pakistanis employed in the Arabian Gulf largely offsetting a substantial trade imbalance. Annual GDP growth averaged about 4 percent in the 1990s.

In the first quarter of 2000 the newly installed government moved forward on privatizing non-strategic state-owned enterprises, improving tax collection, and cutting nonessential spending as components of an economic program partly designed to secure additional assistance from the International Monetary Fund. By fiscal year 2003–2004 the growth rate had risen to 7.5 percent and then reached 8.6 percent in the following year—the highest growth rate in two decades. That rate of expansion continued in 2005–2006.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Subjected to strong Islamic influences from the 7th century onward, the area that comprises the present state of Pakistan and former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) became part of British India during the 18th and 19th centuries and contained most of India's Muslim population. First articulated in the early 1930s, the idea of a separate Muslim state was endorsed in 1940 by the All-India Muslim League, the major Muslim political party. After the league swept the 1946–1947 election, the British accepted partition and Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, which incorporated the principle of a separate Pakistan. Transfer of power occurred on August 14, 1947, with the new state formally coming into existence at the stroke of midnight, August 15. Mohammad Ali JINNAH, head of the All-India Muslim League, became independent Pakistan's first governor general.

India's Muslim-majority provinces and princely states were given the option of remaining in India or joining Pakistan. Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan, and three-fifths of the Punjab accordingly combined to form what became West Pakistan, while a part of Assam and

two-thirds of Bengal became East Pakistan. The Hindu maharaja of the predominantly Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir subsequently acceded to India, but Pakistan challenged the action by sending troops into the territory; resultant fighting between Indian and Pakistani forces was halted by a UN cease-fire on January 1, 1949, leaving Pakistan in control of territory west and north of the cease-fire line. Communal rioting and population movements stemming from partition caused further embitterment between the two countries.

In March 1956 the tie to the British Crown was broken with implementation of a republican constitution, under which President Iskander Ali MIRZA served as Pakistan's first president. In October 1958, however, Mirza abrogated the constitution, declared martial law, dismissed the national and provincial governments, and dissolved all political parties. Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub KHAN, appointed supreme commander of the armed forces and chief martial law administrator, took over the presidency from Mirza and was confirmed in office by a national referendum of "basic democrats" in February 1960.

Constitutional government, under a presidential system based on indirect election, was restored in June 1962, with Ayub Khan continuing to rule until March 1969, when, in the context of mounting political and economic disorder, he resigned. Gen. Agha Mohammad Yahya KHAN, army commander in chief, thereupon assumed authority as chief martial law administrator, suspended the constitution, dismissed the national and provincial assemblies, and took office as president.

Normal political activity resumed in 1970, the major unresolved issue being East Pakistani complaints of underrepresentation in the central government and an inadequate share of central revenues. In preparing for the nation's first direct election on the basis of universal suffrage (ultimately held in December 1970 and January 1971), efforts were made to assuage the long-standing political discontent in the more populous East Pakistan by allotting it majority representation in the new assembly, rather than, as in the previous legislature, mere parity with West Pakistan. Of the 300 seats

up for direct election (162 from East Pakistan, 138 from West Pakistan), Sheikh Mujibur RAHMAN's East Pakistani Awami League won 160 and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), 82.

After repeated postponements of the assembly opening, originally scheduled to take place in Dacca (East Pakistan) in March 1971, the government banned the Awami League and announced in August the disqualification of 79 of its representatives. By-elections to the vacated seats, scheduled for December, were prevented by the outbreak of war between Pakistan and India in late November and the occupation of East Pakistan by Bengali guerrilla and Indian military forces. Following the surrender of some 90,000 of its troops, Pakistan on December 17 agreed to a cease-fire on the western front. Yahya Khan stepped down as president three days later and was replaced by Zulfikar Ali BHUTTO as president and chief martial law administrator. In July 1972 President Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi met in Simla, India, and agreed to negotiate outstanding differences. As a result, all occupied areas along the western border were exchanged, except in Kashmir, where a new "Line of Control" (LoC) was drawn. In July 1973 the National Assembly granted Bhutto the authority to recognize Bangladesh, and in August a new constitution was adopted. The speaker of the assembly, Fazal Elahi CHAUDHRY, was elected president of Pakistan, and Bhutto was designated prime minister.

A general election held in March 1977 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the ruling PPP; however, the opposition Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) denounced the returns as fraudulent and initiated a series of strikes and demonstrations that led to outbreaks of violence throughout the country. Faced with impending civil war, the army mounted a coup on July 5 that resulted in the arrest of many leading politicians, including Prime Minister Bhutto, and the imposition of martial law under Gen. Mohammad ZIA ul-Haq. Shortly after President Chaudhry's term expired in August 1978, General Zia assumed the presidency, announcing that he would yield to a regularly elected successor following a legislative election in 1979.

In April 1979, despite worldwide appeals for clemency, former prime minister Bhutto was hanged. Riots immediately erupted in most of the country's urban areas, and PNA representatives withdrew from the government. Later in the year, Zia postponed elections, banned all forms of party activity, and imposed strict censorship on the communications media.

An interim constitution promulgated in March 1981 provided for the eventual restoration of representative institutions "in conformity with Islam," while the formation the same year of the PPP-led Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) created a force against both the regime and right-wing Islamic parties. In late 1984 the president announced a referendum on an "Islamization" program, endorsement of which would also grant him an additional five-year presidential term. In the wake of an MRD call for a referendum boycott, the size of the turnout was hotly disputed, estimates ranging from as low as 15 percent to as high as 65 percent. Nevertheless, citing an overwhelming margin of approval, Zia scheduled parliamentary elections on a nonparty basis for February 1985. Despite another opposition call for a boycott, five incumbent ministers and a number of others associated with the martial law regime lost their bids for parliamentary seats. As a result, the president dissolved the cabinet and designated Mohammad Khan JUNEJO, of the center-right Pakistan Muslim League (PML), as the country's first prime minister in eight years. In the absence of legal parties, the assembly divided into two camps—a government-supportive Official Parliamentary Group (OPG) and an opposition Independent Parliamentary Group (IPG).

In October 1985 the assembly approved a political parties law, despite objection by President Zia, who continued to view a multiparty system as "un-Islamic." Dissent immediately ensued within the MRD; some components—including the PML and the moderate *Jamaat-e-Islami*, which controlled the OPG and IPG, respectively—announced their intention to register, while others termed the entire exercise "fraudulent" and continued to press for fresh elections under a fully restored 1973

constitution. Without responding to the pressure, Zia proceeded with the scheduled termination of martial law on December 30.

In what was dubbed a “constitutional coup,” in May 1988 President Zia abruptly dismissed the Junejo government because of alleged corruption. He also dissolved the National Assembly, the provincial assemblies, and local governments. In June he appointed a PML-dominated caretaker administration headed by himself and in July announced that “free, fair, and independent” elections to the national and provincial assemblies would be held on November 16 and 19, respectively.

On August 17, 1988, General Zia, the U.S. ambassador, and a number of senior military officers were killed in a plane crash in southeastern Punjab. Immediately afterward the Senate chair, Ghulam Ishaq KHAN, was sworn in as acting president and announced the formation of a caretaker Emergency National Council to rule the country pending the November elections. Intense political maneuvering followed, with the PPP securing a substantial plurality in the National Assembly poll but achieving only second place in three of the four provincial elections. Nonetheless, in what some viewed as a political “deal,” on December 1 Ishaq Khan formally appointed as prime minister Benazir BHUTTO, daughter of the executed prime minister, and was himself elected to a five-year term as president on December 12.

By 1990 relations between the president and the prime minister were becoming increasingly strained. Accusing her government of corruption, abuse of power, and various other unconstitutional and illegal acts, President Khan dismissed Bhutto on August 6, 1990, appointing as her interim successor Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, leader of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA), a somewhat disparate coalition of conservative anti-Bhutto groups that had been organized two years earlier. Two months later the PPP was decisively defeated in national and provincial elections, including a loss in its traditional stronghold of Sindh. On November 6 the IDA’s Mian Mohammad Nawaz SHARIF was sworn in as Pakistan’s first Punjabi prime minister.

On April 18, 1993, in the wake of a failed effort by Nawaz Sharif to curtail the president’s constitutional power, Ishaq Khan dismissed the Sharif government, naming Balkh Sher MAZARI, a dissident member of Sharif’s PML, as acting prime minister. In May, however, the Supreme Court reinstated Sharif, thereby canceling a general election that had been scheduled for July. The action failed to resolve the widening split within the PML, and on July 18, following intervention by the recently appointed army chief of staff, Gen. Abdul WAHEED, both the president and prime minister stepped down. Ishaq Khan was succeeded, on an acting basis, by Senate chair Wasim SAJJAD. A relatively unknown former World Bank vice president, Moeenuddin Ahmad QURESHI, succeeded Nawaz Sharif.

Nawaz Sharif attempted to regain power as leader of the PML’s largest faction. Although the PML-N outpolled the PPP 41–38 percent at the National Assembly election of October 1993, the latter gained a plurality of seats (86, as opposed to 72 for Sharif supporters), and Bhutto was returned to office. In electoral college balloting for president in November, the PPP’s Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan LEGHARI defeated the acting incumbent.

In July 1996, in the wake of increased tension with India over Kashmir and heightened domestic unrest on the part of Islamic fundamentalists and activists of the *Muhajir Qaumi* Movement (MQM), 13 opposition parties announced an alliance to topple Bhutto. On July 31 the prime minister greatly enlarged her cabinet. Among 14 new appointees was her controversial husband, Asif Ali ZARDARI, who, in his first ministerial assignment, was named to head an investment portfolio. In September the prime minister’s estranged brother, Murtaza BHUTTO, was one of seven breakaway PPP faction members killed in a gunfight outside his Karachi home.

Citing evidence of corruption, intimidation of the judiciary, misdirection of the economy, and failure to maintain law and order, President Leghari on November 5, 1996, dismissed Prime Minister Bhutto, naming Malek Meraj KHALID, a former legislative speaker and long-estranged Bhutto

confidant, as her successor in a caretaker capacity pending balloting for a new National Assembly in February 1997. In the interim, President Leghari announced formation of a Council for Defense and National Security (CDNS) comprising himself, the prime minister, several cabinet ministers, and the heads of the branches of the armed forces.

Voter turnout was low for the February 1997 legislative election, in which the PML-N swept to power by securing 134 of the 207 seats, compared to 19 seats for Bhutto's PPP. The PML-Nawaz subsequently invited a number of smaller parties to join the governing coalition, giving it more than the two-thirds majority required for constitutional amendment. Following the installation of a new cabinet on February 26, Prime Minister Sharif quickly oversaw the abolition of the CDNS and directed constitutional revision that, among other things, removed the president's authority to dismiss the prime minister and assembly at will and to appoint military leaders.

In the wake of renewed violence in Karachi (much of it perpetrated by rival MQM factions) as well as conflict between minority Shiite and majority Sunni Muslim militants in Punjab, a new antiterrorism bill was adopted in August 1997, granting sweeping new powers to security forces and establishing special courts to try terrorism cases. The collateral usurpation of power from traditional courts served to exacerbate tension between the government and the judiciary. On December 2, calling Sharif an "elected dictator," President Leghari resigned rather than comply with the prime minister's order to swear in a new acting chief justice. On December 31 a Sharif ally, Mohammad Rafiq TARAR, was elected president by an overwhelming majority of electors.

Throughout 1998 the upsurge in religious, ethnic, and political violence resisted resolution. In August the Sharif administration's failure to contain the violence led the principal MQM faction to withdraw its support for the government, which in February had already lost a leading ally when the Awami National Party (AWP) left the cabinet because of the prime minister's reluctance to endorse renaming the NWFP as *Pakhtoonkhwa* (Land of

the Pakhtoon). Demands for greater provincial autonomy also continued to gather momentum in the NWFP and elsewhere.

A deeply divided society came together briefly in late May 1998 when Pakistan exploded six nuclear weapons beneath the Chagai Hills of the Baluchistan desert. The tests on May 28 and 30 came in response to similar explosions conducted earlier in the month by India. Pakistan's Muslim fundamentalists were particularly jubilant, welcoming the tests as confirmation that Islamabad had developed the first "Islamic bomb."

To the surprise of many observers, on October 7, 1998, Gen. Jehangir KARAMAT, chair of the joint chiefs of staff, resigned, two days after calling for greater military participation in the government and criticizing the prime minister for his administration's economic shortcomings and its inability to stem domestic disorder. On April 9, 1999, Prime Minister Sharif named Karamat's replacement as army chief of staff, Gen. Pervez MUSHARRAF, to the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Although relations with India had improved following the May 1998 nuclear weapons tests, culminating in a meeting between Prime Ministers Sharif and Atal Vajpayee in Lahore in February 1999 (see Foreign relations, below), renewed conflict in Kashmir once again disrupted diplomatic progress. In early May 1999 India discovered that militant Islamic separatists, backed by Pakistani forces, had crossed the LoC into the mountainous Kargil area. For two months heavy shellings and clashes ensued, with India gradually gaining the upper hand. Military commanders from both sides met in July and agreed to a timetable for withdrawal, which was completed late in the month, but sporadic fighting continued as the government's perceived retreat was widely denounced within Pakistan, particularly by Islamic groups.

On October 12, 1999, while attending a conference in Sri Lanka, General Musharraf was alerted by supporters within the army that Prime Minister Sharif was replacing him. Musharraf immediately flew back to Pakistan on a commercial flight, but, on the prime minister's order, his plane was denied permission to land in Karachi, whereupon

the army moved in and secured the airport. At the same time, the military arrested Prime Minister Sharif and his cabinet. On October 14 Musharraf proclaimed a state of emergency (but not martial law), suspended the constitution, and named himself “chief executive” of Pakistan. President Tarar continued in office. Addressing the nation on October 17, Musharraf identified his priorities as preventing economic collapse, pursuing corruption, and paving the way for “true democracy.” He also announced that he had ordered troop reductions along the Indian border, but not the LoC. On October 25 the chief executive named the initial civilian members of a governing National Security Council (NSC), which also included, ex officio, the naval and air force chiefs. The civilian members of the NSC and a nonparty cabinet were sworn in by President Tarar on November 6.

On April 6, 2000, an antiterrorism court sentenced Nawaz Sharif to life imprisonment following his conviction for hijacking and terrorism in connection with his refusal to let General Musharraf’s plane land. The terrorism conviction was ultimately overturned on appeal, and on December 10, 2000, Musharraf granted a pardon to Nawaz Sharif, who flew to exile.

Ruling unanimously on May 12, 2000, the Supreme Court legitimized the October 1999 coup as justified and necessary to end political corruption and lawlessness, despite being “extra-constitutional.” It also ruled that democratic national and provincial assembly elections should be held no later than October 2002. On August 15 the NSC was reconstituted to include four civilian ministers, and the cabinet was expanded.

On June 20, 2001, General Musharraf dismissed President Tarar, assumed the presidency himself, dissolved both houses of Parliament, and also disbanded all provincial legislatures. In an apparent effort to legitimize his standing, General Musharraf called an April 30, 2002, referendum in which voters were asked to extend his presidency for another five years, to support a crackdown against Islamic extremists, and to support economic reforms. Although 97.7 percent of those casting ballots reportedly voted “yes,” the referendum was replete

with irregularities, and the outcome was rejected by the boycotting Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), an umbrella grouping of more than a dozen opposition parties, including the PPP and the PML-N.

In August–December 2001, searching for domestic stability as well as increased international legitimacy following the September 11 al-Qaida attacks on the United States, Musharraf had begun freezing assets and detaining the leaders of some militant Islamic groups. On January 12, 2002, in what was widely regarded as a landmark speech, Musharraf rejected the “intolerance and hatred” of extreme sectarianism; banned a number of militant Islamic political parties and groups (see Banned Organizations, below); stated that all fundamentalist Islamic schools (madrassas) would be brought under government supervision to ensure that they adopted adequate educational goals; and called for creation of a modern, progressive Islamic society based on the “true teachings of Islam.”

On August 21, 2002, President Musharraf promulgated a controversial Legal Framework Order (LFO) that incorporated 29 constitutional amendments, including the creation of a permanent NSC to institutionalize a governmental role for the military leadership. The LFO also enlarged both houses of Parliament and gave the president sweeping powers, including the right to dismiss the cabinet, dissolve the National Assembly, appoint provincial governors if he saw fit, name Supreme Court judges, and unilaterally increase his term of office.

An election for the 272 directly elective seats in Pakistan’s reconfigured, 342-seat National Assembly took place on October 10, 2002, with the Musharraf-supportive *Qaid-i-Azam* faction of the PML (PML-Q) finishing ahead of the newly registered PPP Parliamentarians (PPPP) and the *Mut-tahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA), an Islamic coalition. Most international observers regarded the electoral process as seriously deficient in meeting democratic standards. When the 60 seats reserved for women and 10 seats reserved for religious minorities were distributed at the end of the month, the PML-Q held a plurality of 118 seats, followed by the PPPP with 81 and the MMA with 60.

In simultaneous provincial assembly elections, the PML-Q won in Punjab and the MMA assumed control in the NWFP, with the two parties forming coalition administrations in Baluchistan and, in conjunction with smaller parties, in Sindh. Immediately upon assuming power in the NWFP, the MMA government announced that it would impose Islamic law in the province. The MMA's success in the NWFP was also viewed as a setback for efforts by Musharraf and the United States to track down members of the al-Qaida terrorist network and the deposed Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan, given the MMA's opposition to Islamabad's participation in the U.S.-led "war on terrorism" and the consequent presence of U.S. forces on Pakistani soil.

At the central level, over the next several weeks the PML-Q and PPPP jockeyed for MMA support in an effort to establish a governing coalition, but neither succeeded. The process culminated on November 21, 2002, when the National Assembly confirmed Zafarullah Khan JAMALI of the PML-Q as prime minister after he had secured the backing of several small parties and of ten dissenters within the PPPP, who organized as the PPP-Patriots. Runner-up in the voting was the MMA's Fazlur RAHMAN, followed by the PPPP's Shah Mahmood QURESHI.

During the following year the National Assembly was unable to overcome the obstructive tactics of LFO opponents, including the PPPP and MMA, who also demanded that President Musharraf should resign as chief of the army staff. Indirect elections to the Senate were held on February 25 and 27, 2003, with the PML-Q again attaining a plurality, but the opposition parties extended their LFO protest into a Senate boycott. The stalemate over the LFO was not resolved until late December, when Musharraf announced an agreement with the MMA under which he agreed to step down as army chief by December 2004, to submit to a vote of confidence by Parliament, and to permit review by the Supreme Court of any presidential decision to dissolve the National Assembly. In addition, it was agreed that the NSC would be established by legislative act, not by constitutional amendment. With

the deadlock broken, on December 29 the National Assembly voted, 248–0, to incorporate most LFO provisions as the 17th amendment to the constitution, although the PPPP and the PML-N walked out of the session. The Senate, 72–0, approved the amendment the following day. On January 1, 2004, Musharraf received a vote of confidence from both houses, 191–0 in the assembly (the MMA abstaining and the ARD boycotting), and 56–1 in the Senate, as well as from the provincial assemblies. A bill establishing a 13-member NSC, to include the chiefs of the army, navy, and air force, was signed into law by the president on April 19.

On June 26, 2004, Prime Minister Jamali resigned under pressure from President Musharraf. Chaudhry Shujaat HUSSAIN, leader of the largely reunited PML (minus the PML-N), was confirmed as an interim successor on June 29 and sworn in on June 30. He was expected to serve until Finance Minister Shaukat AZIZ won a National Assembly seat, thereby making him eligible for designation as prime minister. Following a by-election victory on August 18, Aziz won assembly approval as prime minister on August 28 and assumed office on August 29. Most members of a substantially reconfigured cabinet were sworn in three days later.

On November 30, 2004, Mohammad Mian SOOMRO, chair of the Senate and acting president during a trip abroad by General Musharraf, signed into law a bill permitting Musharraf to continue as both army chief of staff and president. The new law, which proponents justified as necessary to maintain stability in the face of terrorism and subversion, was attacked by the MMA as a betrayal of its December 2003 agreement with Musharraf.

In September 2006 the government concluded an agreement with tribal leaders in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of North Waziristan that tacitly acknowledged the failure of the military and security agencies to bring the region under its control despite years of efforts. In effect, the government turned control of the agency over to tribal leaders. Modeled on a pact that Musharraf had concluded in February 2005 in South Waziristan, the agreement called for Islamabad to withdraw an estimated 70,000 troops,

release prisoners, and provide amnesty to Taliban and tribal militants, in return for which the tribal leaders agreed to end attacks against army and law enforcement personnel, prevent the Taliban from launching attacks into Afghanistan, and expel foreigners who fail to honor the agreement.

On March 8, 2007, President Musharraf set off a political firestorm by suspending Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed CHAUDHRY on grounds of misconduct and abuse of authority. In response, dozens of judges tendered their resignations, while the opposition and the legal establishment condemned the action as an attack on judicial independence. The crisis widened on May 12–13, when members of the government-supportive MQM clashed with Chaudhry supporters in the streets of Karachi, leaving over 40 individuals dead. On July 20 Chaudhry was reinstated by the Supreme Court, which unanimously ruled Musharraf's action illegal.

Less than a week earlier, tribal militants in North Waziristan, responding to the storming by security forces of Islamabad's Red Mosque (*Lal Masjid*), had canceled the September 2006 agreement with the government. The Red Mosque assault concluded a July 3–11, 2007, siege that had been precipitated by clashes with militant students, who for six months had been aggressively promoting Islamization in the capital, sometimes by attacking noncompliant civilians. Following unsuccessful negotiations with the students and their clerical mentors, military personnel cleared the mosque and adjacent madrassas in a prolonged assault that cost over 100 lives. Among those killed in the fighting was the radical cleric Abdul Rashid GHAZI. Although President Musharraf's decision to storm the mosque won considerable praise in the West and from domestic secularists, Islamists vowed retaliation, which led to an upsurge in suicide bombings, ambushes, and other attacks.

On August 23, 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif could not be prevented "from returning to his motherland." Nevertheless, when he flew into Islamabad on September 10, the government detained him at the airport and then deported him to Saudi Arabia

within hours. Four days later, Benazir Bhutto, in the context of negotiations with Musharraf on power-sharing arrangements, announced that she planned to return to Pakistan in October.

With Chief Justice Chaudhry having recused himself, the Supreme Court ruled 6–3 on September 28, 2007, that President Musharraf could stand for reelection while still serving as army chief. Although Musharraf had stated that, should he win reelection, he would resign from the military before inauguration, most of the opposition declared that it would boycott the presidential voting. On October 6 an electoral college of Parliament and the four provincial assemblies reelected Musharraf to a five-year term by a margin of 671–8 against token opposition from a former judge, Wajihuadin AHMAD. A day earlier, however, the Supreme Court had announced that the results could not be declared official until it ruled on opposition challenges.

Although power-sharing discussions with former prime minister Bhutto remained incomplete, on October 5, 2007, President Musharraf promulgated a "reconciliation ordinance" that quashed corruption charges against politicians for illegalities allegedly committed during 1988–1999. On October 18 Bhutto ended eight years in exile, returning to Karachi. The triumphal occasion turned grim, however, when suicide bombers attacked her motorcade from the airport, killing 145 and wounding more than 200 others.

On November 3, 2007, citing the need to combat rising Islamic extremism, President Musharraf, in his capacity as chief of the army staff, suspended the constitution and declared a state of emergency. Chief Justice Chaudhry was immediately dismissed, while most of his fellow justices resigned or refused to take a new oath under a provisional constitutional order. The emergency declaration provoked demonstrations by many of those associated with the July protests. Over 5,000 activists were temporarily jailed in the following days, and Bhutto was twice placed under house arrest.

Soon afterward, Musharraf announced that parliamentary elections would proceed on January

8, 2008. On November 16, 2007, a day after the completion of the 2002–2007 legislative term, he swore in a caretaker government headed by Senate Chair Mohammadmian Soomro, an ally. On November 22 the Supreme Court, now packed with Musharraf supporters, dismissed the last of four opposition petitions challenging Musharraf's reelection, which paved the way for his stepping down as chief of the army staff on November 28 and his taking the presidential oath of office as a civilian on November 29. Shortly before, he had designated Gen. Ashfaq KAYANI as his military successor.

On November 25, 2007, opposition demands for restoration of the constitution had been further strengthened by the successful return to Pakistan of Nawaz Sharif, following intervention on his behalf by the king of Saudi Arabia.

### *Constitution and Government*

Between 1947 and 1973 Pakistan adopted three permanent and four interim constitutions. In August 1973 a presidential system introduced by Ayub Khan was replaced by a parliamentary form of government. Following General Zia's assumption of power in 1977, a series of martial law decrees and an interim constitution promulgated in March 1981 progressively increased the powers of the president, as did various "revisions" accompanying official restoration of the 1973 document in March 1985. Constitutional changes introduced in April 1997 revoked major provisions of the 1985 changes, reducing the president to little more than a figurehead.

On October 15, 1999, General Musharraf, who had suspended the constitution and assumed the title of chief executive the previous day, issued Provisional Constitution Order No. 1 of 1999, which specified that Pakistan would continue to be governed, "as nearly as may be," in accordance with the constitution. The order also mandated the continued functioning of the existing court system, with the proviso that no court could act against the chief executive, his orders, or his appointees; restricted the president to acting on the "advice" of the chief

executive; and left intact all fundamental constitutional rights, including freedom of the press, not in conflict with the state of emergency.

The LFO instituted by General Musharraf in August 2002, effective from October 12, incorporated 29 constitutional changes, enhancing presidential power, enlarging both houses of Parliament, and creating as a permanent body a civilian-military NSC that would include the president, the prime minister, the speaker of the National Assembly, the chair of the Senate, the leader of the parliamentary opposition, the four provincial governors, the chair of the joint chiefs of staff, and the chiefs of staff of the army, navy, and air force. The LFO also disqualified convicted criminals from running for the legislature, thereby ensuring that neither Benazir Bhutto nor Nawaz Sharif could stand in the October 2002 election. Opposition to promulgation of the LFO ultimately led to a December 2003 compromise under which most of the LFO provisions were enacted as the 17th amendment to the constitution. The NSC provision was removed, however, and enacted by law in April 2004.

The president, who serves a five-year term, is chosen by vote of the Parliament and the four provincial assemblies sitting jointly as an electoral college. The bicameral Parliament includes an indirectly elected Senate and a popularly elected National Assembly; the latter includes reserved seats for women and religious minorities, and it has sole jurisdiction over money bills. Sitting in joint session, the Parliament may by a simple majority enact bills that have been returned to it by the president. The prime minister, who must be a member of the National Assembly, may be removed by a majority vote of the house's total membership; the president may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the full Parliament.

The judicial system includes a Supreme Court, a Federal Shariat Court to examine the conformity of laws with Islam, high courts in each of the four provinces (Baluchistan, North-West Frontier, Punjab, and Sindh), and a number of antiterrorism courts authorized by legislation in 1997. The assembly approved a measure in May 1991 that called for formal appeal to the Koran as the



country's supreme law. In August 1991 it mandated the death penalty for blasphemy.

Centrally appointed governors head provincial administrations. Each province also has an elected Provincial Assembly and a Council of Ministers led by a prime minister, the latter named by the governor. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), located between the NWFP and Afghanistan, and the Federal Capital Territory are governed by central appointees. The seven FATA agencies, roughly from north to south, are Bajaur, Mahmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan.

A Federal Legislative List defines the exclusive authority of the center; there also is a Concurrent Legislative List, with residual authority assigned to the provinces. To safeguard provincial rights, a Council of Common Interests is mandated, comprising the chief ministers of the four provinces plus four federal ministers.

### *Foreign Relations*

Relations between India and Pakistan reflect a centuries-old rivalry based on mutual suspicion between Hindus and Muslims. The British withdrawal in 1947 was accompanied by widespread communal rioting and competing claims to Jammu and Kashmir. A start toward improved relations was made in 1960 with an agreement on joint use of the waters of the Indus River basin, but continuing conflict over Kashmir and the Rann of Kutch on the Indian Ocean involved the two countries in armed hostilities in 1965, followed by a withdrawal to previous positions, in conformity with the Tashkent Agreement negotiated with Soviet assistance in January 1966. After another period of somewhat improved relations, the internal crisis in East Pakistan, accompanied by India's open support of the Bengali cause, led to further hostilities in 1971.

Following recognition by Pakistan of the independent nation of Bangladesh, bilateral negotiations were renewed, and a number of major issues were resolved by the return of prisoners of war, a mutual withdrawal from occupied territory, and

the demarcation of a new LoC in Kashmir. Further steps toward normalization were partially offset by Pakistani concern over India's explosion of a nuclear device in May 1974, and formal diplomatic ties were not resumed until July 1976.

A rapprochement followed General Zia's death in August 1988 but abruptly ended in early 1990 as Kashmir became the scene of escalating violence on the part of Muslim separatists. By April thousands of residents had fled to Pakistan from the Indian-controlled Kashmir valley.

On April 6, 1998, Pakistan test fired its first domestically produced medium-range surface-to-surface missile, which provoked immediate criticism from India's recently installed Vajpayee administration. Then on May 11 and 13 India exploded five nuclear weapons in underground testing, prompting Pakistan to respond on May 28 and 30 with six nuclear tests of its own. The international community quickly condemned the tests, with a number of countries imposing economic sanctions against both governments. Shortly after, however, Prime Ministers Sharif and Vajpayee adopted less belligerent stances, meeting during the July session of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and again in September in New York, where they announced renewed talks on Kashmir and other matters.

Although the Kashmir talks produced no tangible results, the prime ministers met again in February 1999 in Lahore. The resulting Lahore Declaration included pledges by both administrations to reduce the possibility of accidental nuclear war. Pakistan, however, continued to reject India's proposed "no first use" policy, citing India's superiority in conventional weapons.

Diplomatic moves, both public and behind the scenes, stalled in May 1999 because of the renewed fighting in Kashmir. In October India reacted cautiously to Prime Minister Sharif's overthrow. General Musharraf met for the first time with Prime Minister Vajpayee in Agra, India, in July 2001. Although the two sides agreed to further meetings, they remained far apart, with Pakistan insisting on the primacy of Kashmir and with India

unsuccessfully attempting to broaden the discussion to such other concerns as trade and cultural relations. On October 1 militants carried out an assault on the state assembly building in Srinagar, the summer capital of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in nearly 40 deaths. Charging that Pakistan had failed to stop terrorist infiltrators, India ordered additional troops to Kashmir, with Pakistan responding in kind. On December 13 terrorists attacked India's Parliament, leaving 14 dead, including the terrorists, and by May 2002, when three gunmen stormed a Kashmiri army base and left nearly three dozen dead, India and Pakistan had a combined million troops or more stationed along the LoC. Diplomatic intervention, led by the United States, ultimately helped to diffuse the immediate situation.

When Prime Minister Vajpayee called on April 18, 2003, for "open dialogue" with Pakistan, Islamabad announced its willingness to cooperate, which led to a mutual upgrading of diplomatic relations. On November 26 the two governments instituted a cease-fire, the first in 14 years, between Pakistani and Indian forces in the disputed border region. The cease-fire was followed by an announcement at the January 4–6, 2004, SAARC session that the two governments would undertake "composite talks" on bilateral issues, and in late June 2005 Prime Minister Aziz described the peace process as "irreversible." Nevertheless, scant progress was made in the following two years.

Relations with Bangladesh have improved considerably in recent years, although no formula has yet been found for relocating some 300,000 Biharis, most of whom have been stranded in the former East Pakistan since the 1972 breakup. An agreement in August 1992 led to the airlifting of an initial contingent to Lahore in early 1993, but the Bhutto government suspended the program later in the year. Although Pakistan recommitted itself in early 1998 to resettling the Biharis, no substantive move toward that goal had been achieved by mid-2007.

Although Pakistan and Afghanistan had long been at odds over the latter's commitment to the creation of an independent Pushtunistan out of a

major part of Pakistan's NWFP, Islamabad reacted strongly to the Soviet invasion of its neighbor in 1979, providing Muslim rebel groups (*habe mujaheddin*) with weapons and supplies for continued operations against the Soviet-backed regime. Support for the rebels occasionally provoked bombing raids in the area of Peshawar, the NWFP capital, and the presence of over 3.5 million Afghan refugees proved economically burdensome.

Following the Soviet departure, which was completed in early 1989, Pakistan supported the installation of an interim coalition government in Kabul, and by late 1992 some 1.5 million of the displaced Afghans were reported to have returned home. Kabul later accused Islamabad of supporting the fundamentalist Taliban militia, which Pakistan in fact recognized as Afghanistan's government shortly after it took power in September 1996.

Following the U.S.-led ouster of the Taliban in 2001, relations have been complicated by the fact that Islamic fundamentalists, having been permitted to establish education and training camps in the Peshawar area during the Afghan revolution, became increasingly active within Pakistan itself, particularly in the FATA and the NWFP as well as within the divided Kashmir. Relations with Afghanistan took a downturn in early 2006 when President Hamid Karzai accused Pakistan of failing to secure Pakistan's side of the border and of not curbing Pakistani-based al-Qaida and Taliban militants.

From the mid-1990s U.S.-Pakistani relations were dominated by concerns over terrorism. In February 1995 the government permitted American agents to join in the apprehension of Ramzi Ahmed YOUSEF, the suspected mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York, and then approved his prompt extradition. In the wake of the March killing by Pakistani gunmen of two U.S. consular officials, Prime Minister Bhutto appealed for foreign assistance in closing down Muslim schools and other facilities used as fronts for international terrorism. In 1997 agents of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation apprehended in Pakistan Mir Aimal KASI, who in January 1993

had shot five people, killing two of them, outside the Virginia headquarters of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Kasi, who described his assault as a protest against American involvement in Islamic countries, was sentenced to death in January 1998 by a Virginia court and executed in November 2002. In addition, in August 1997 Pakistan arrested three suspects in the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist assaults on the United States, relations with the new U.S. George W. Bush administration were significantly strengthened by Pakistan's assistance against the al-Qaida terrorist network and, ultimately, the Taliban.

In early 2002 the Musharraf regime reacted swiftly to the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan. The principal suspect, Ahmad Omar SHAIKH, a UK national, was captured in February and later sentenced to death. Three codefendants received life in prison. Another leading suspect, Amjad Hussain FAROOQI, allegedly a member of the outlawed militant group *Lashkari-Jhangvi*, was killed in a shootout with police in September 2004.

The United States continues to praise and support Musharraf, despite Pakistan's decision not to support the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Not even a February 2004 public admission by Abdul Qadeer KHAN, the former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, that he had passed nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya, and North Korea damaged the U.S.-Pakistani relationship. Musharraf immediately pardoned Khan, a national hero, without protest from Washington. (The International Atomic Energy Agency subsequently speculated that Khan's revelations were merely the "tip of the iceberg" in an operation that also involved the sale of nuclear components in a number of countries.) In March U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, making his fourth visit to Pakistan, announced that Pakistan was regarded as a "major non-NATO ally," and a week later U.S. President Bush lifted the few remaining sanctions imposed after the 1998 nuclear tests and the 1999 coup. As of mid-2005 Pakistan had reportedly handed

over to the United States some 700 al-Qaida suspects since September 2001, including key operatives. Pakistan's armed forces had also launched several major offensives against tribal Islamists, al-Qaida, and Taliban remnants in the NWFP and especially in the FATA, where Islamabad has never had firm control. Predictably, Washington criticized Musharraf's September 2006 pact with North Waziristan's tribal leaders, although it subsequently offered a five-year, \$750 million FATA development program in an effort to undermine pro-Taliban elements.

### *Current Issues*

On May 14, 2006, meeting in London, former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif signed a "Charter of Democracy," which decried "the erosion of the federation's unity" and "the military's subordination of all state institutions." The charter called for repealing the LFO and the 17th constitutional amendment, establishing a Federal Constitutional Court to resolve constitutional issues, providing for minority representation in the Senate, releasing all political prisoners and permitting the return of political exiles, installing neutral caretaker governments prior to national elections, and creating a Defense Cabinet Committee (in place of the NSC) that would exert control over the military and its nuclear capability. By August 2007, however, Nawaz Sharif and Bhutto appeared to be moving in opposite directions. Whereas Sharif remained staunchly opposed to any continuation of Musharraf's presidency and was joining forces with anti-Western but moderate Islamists, Bhutto was engaged in power-sharing talks with the president, who was attempting to shore up political support and preempt challenges to his pending reelection.

Musharraf's attempt to oust Chief Justice Chaudhry in March 2007 had been a serious miscalculation in that it gave his diverse opponents—middle-class democrats, Islamists, Nawaz Sharif supporters, and the legal establishment—a common rallying point. With the presidential term set to expire in November, Musharraf apparently had

perceived Chaudhry as an obstacle to his reelection. Musharraf wanted the sitting national and provincial legislators—the same ones who had confirmed him in January 2004—to authorize another term, without his stepping down as army chief. The opposition, arguing that any such procedure would be antidemocratic and unconstitutional, pledged to appeal to the Supreme Court, which, under Chaudhry, had previously demonstrated its independence.

Bhutto, like Musharraf, is Western oriented and a committed secularist. Moreover, she has expressed concern that, without stability at the center during the transition back to democracy, Pakistan could become a failed state with nuclear weapons. She therefore appeared willing to support Musharraf's reelection, but she also insisted that Musharraf resign from the military, drop criminal charges against her and dozens of other politicians, remove other obstacles to her becoming prime minister again, and renounce the authority to dissolve the legislature and dismiss the government. In late July in the United Arab Emirates, Bhutto and Musharraf met face-to-face, but negotiations remained incomplete when she returned in mid-October, even though Musharraf's "reconciliation ordinance" had quashed 11 corruption charges (involving some \$1.5 billion) against Bhutto and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari.

Contributing to Musharraf's difficulties were challenges posed by a mix of Islamists and nationalists. Critics of the September 2006 North Waziristan agreement, such as the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, accused Musharraf of permitting the "Talibanization" of the NWFP and FATA amid clear evidence that al-Qaida as well as the Taliban were reorganizing in the tribal areas. At the same time, objections to central authority continued to flare up in Baluchistan Province. Underlying disputes involved demands for greater provincial autonomy and an increased share of revenue from exploitation of Baluchistan's natural resources. Baluchistan has also witnessed its share of sectarian violence between Shiite and Sunni communities—a persistent problem throughout much of Pakistan.

In November 2006 the NWFP legislature passed an Islamic accountability law, but Musharraf successfully petitioned the Supreme Court for a stay. In August the court had thrown out 20 subsections of a previous law authorizing clerics to oversee media content and social behavior, including interactions between the sexes. The central government had successfully argued that the law overstepped constitutional bounds. A collateral debate focused on efforts by Musharraf to pass a national Protection of Women Bill, which was ultimately signed into law on December 1, despite fierce opposition from all but the most moderate Islamic organizations. Under the new law rape cases were assigned to civil rather than religious courts and for the first time permitted conviction on the basis of forensic and circumstantial evidence rather than the testimony of male witnesses.

Throughout his tenure as head of state, Musharraf has adamantly opposed fundamentalist movements toward an Islamic republic, a stance supported by a majority of Pakistanis. The most dramatic recent confrontation between Islamists and the government, the July 2007 storming of Islamabad's Red Mosque, directly led to a renewal of hostilities in the FATA and elsewhere, which Musharraf then cited in declaring November's state of emergency. Critics noted, however, that the timing of the declaration permitted Musharraf to remove the chief justice of the Supreme Court once again and then to pack the court with handpicked members shortly before it was to rule on the legitimacy of his reelection.

Although Musharraf's retiring as chief of the army staff was accepted as a step in the right direction, opponents further insisted that he end the state of emergency, restore an independent Supreme Court, and release remaining political detainees. In a televised speech shortly after his presidential inauguration on November 29, Musharraf announced that the emergency would be lifted by December 16 and committed himself to elections "held free and transparent under the constitution." It remained unclear whether any major opposition parties would boycott the January 2008 election, as they had threatened.

## Political Parties and Groups

Political activity has often been restricted in independent Pakistan. Banned in 1958, parties were permitted to resume activity in 1962. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML), successor to Mohammad Ali Jinnah's All-India Muslim League, continued its dominance during Ayub Khan's tenure. Opposition parties, though numerous, were essentially regional in character and largely ineffectual. The military government of Yahya Khan did not ban political formations as such, but the lack of opportunity for overt activity restricted their growth.

The election of December 1970 provided a major impetus to the reemergence of parties. The PML's supremacy ended with the rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in West Pakistan and the Awami League in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). At the election of March 1977, the PPP faced a coalition of opposition parties organized as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). Although formal party activity was suspended following the coup of July 5, the ban was subsequently relaxed, and the PNA, with but minor defection from its ranks, became a de facto government party until withdrawing in 1979. In October all formal party activity was again proscribed.

In February 1981 nine parties agreed to form a joint Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), of which the most important component was the PPP under the leadership of Begum Nusrat Bhutto and her daughter, Benazir Bhutto. The composition of the alliance changed several times thereafter, although it remained the largest opposition grouping for the balance of the Zia era. Despite the president's denunciation of parties as "non-Islamic" and the fact that the 1985 assembly balloting was on a nonparty basis, some political leaders subsequently organized informal legislative coalitions and immediately prior to the lifting of martial law supported legislation permitting legalization of parties under highly controlled circumstances. While most MRD participants declined to register under the new law, the PML, led by Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, did

so in February 1986, thus becoming the de facto ruling party.

Following the legislative dissolution of May 1988, all of the leading parties agreed to participate in the upcoming national and provincial elections. As the result of disagreement with the PPP over electoral strategy, the other MRD parties decided in October to campaign separately in a loose coalition of their own, the MRD becoming, for all practical purposes, moribund. Concurrently, two factions within the PML, which had split after Zia's death in August, reunited and joined a number of other groups, including the *Muhajir Qaumi* Movement (MQM), the National People's Party (NPP), and the *Jamaat-e-Islami* Pakistan (JIP), to form the Islamic Democratic Alliance—IDA (*Islam-e-Jamhoori Ittehad*). The IDA routed the PPP at the balloting of October 1990 but fell into disarray thereafter. The PPP recovered to defeat the PML's Nawaz Group (PML-N) in a basically two-party contest on October 6, 1993.

On February 3, 1997, the PML-N scored a smashing victory over Benazir Bhutto's PPP. Although initially governing with the support of several smaller parties, including the principal faction of the MQM and the Awami National Party (ANP), by late 1998 the PML-N was essentially governing on its own. Meanwhile, as in the past, various groups were attempting to coordinate their policies through loose multiparty alliances, the principal ones being the Islamic *Milli Yakjehti* Council—MYC (National Unity Council), spearheaded by the *Jamaat-e-Islami*; the largely secular Pakistan National Conference (PNC), formed in June 1997 by 12 opposition parties; and the Pakistan *Awami Ittehad* (PAI), an amalgam of 15 secular, religious, and regional opposition groups, including the PPP and two anti-Nawaz PML factions. In early 1999 some 16 mostly regional parties, several of them with concurrent connections to the PAI, were still in the process of formally establishing another alliance, the **Pakistan Oppressed Nations' Movement** (PONM), which had been announced in October 1998 at a conference called to advance the cause of autonomy for Sindhis, Pushtoons, Baluchs, and Seraikis within a federal

system. Some party leaders had already raised the possibility that the PAI-PONM interconnections might lead to formation of a “grand alliance,” but the PONM remained aloof from the anti-Nawaz Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) formed on September 14, 1999, by the PAI, the MQM, the ANP, and the *Tehrik-e-Insaaf*. Of these alliances, all are defunct except the PONM, which reportedly encompasses some 30 parties that support, among other things, election of a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution.

In mid-April 2000 the GDA and the PML-N began discussions on forming a “political front” devoted to restoring democracy. Despite the objections of some party leaders, the PML-N allied with the PPP and over a dozen other parties in November 2000. Subsequently named the **Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy** (ARD), the grouping selected veteran politician Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan of the Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP) as its president. (Khan died in September 2003 and was succeeded in October by Makhdoom Javed Hashmi of the PML-N.)

A total of 73 parties and alliances contested the October 2002 election. In addition to the ARD, whose constituent parties ran independently, the principal alliances were the newly formed Islamic *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA; see below) and the government-supportive National Alliance (NA), which included the Millat Party (MP), National Awami Party (NAP), NPP, Sindh Democratic Alliance (SDA), and Sindh National Front (SNF). A looser Grand National Alliance encompassed the PML’s dominant *Qaid-i-Azam* faction and the NA plus the ANP, the MQM, the PPP (Sherpao), and a number of other progovernment, predominantly regional groups, all running independently. In 2004 some of the NA parties merged with the substantially reunited PML.

On July 11, 2007, following the conclusion of an All Parties Conference held in London, attended by Nawaz Sharif, some 30 parties, led by the PML-N, the MMA, and members of the PONM, announced formation of the anti-Musharraf **All Parties Democratic Movement** (APDM). Creation of the APDM marked a split in the ARD: Benazir

Bhutto’s PPP and a handful of small allied parties, more accommodating toward Musharraf and more willing to negotiate a power-sharing arrangement, remained aloof.

### *Leading Party*

**Pakistan Muslim League** (PML). The PML was launched in 1962 as successor to the preindependence All-India Muslim League. Long ridden by essentially personalist factions, it split over participation in the February 1985 election. A “Chatta Group,” led by Kawaja KHAIRUDDIN, joined the MRD’s boycott call, while the mainstream, led by Pir Sahib Pagaro, participated in the election “under protest” and won 27 seats. Mohammad Khan Junejo, a longtime party member, became prime minister.

In the absence of a party-based legislature, the PML served as the core of the government-backed Official Parliamentary Group (OPG) and was the first to register as a legal party following the lifting of martial law in 1986. Later in the year a cleavage emerged between grassroots party loyalists, led by Pagaro, and office holders (many with no previous party affiliation), led by Junejo. The PML split again in August 1988, an army-supported faction of Zia loyalists (the PML-Fida) emerging under Fida Mohammad KHAN. The party reunited as a component of the IDA prior to the November balloting, at which the IDA routed the PPP, Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of the PML thereupon being named prime minister. Pagaro formed his own party, the PML-Functional (PML-F, below), in mid-1992.

In May 1993, two months after Junejo’s death, the Junejo group split into a majority (Nawaz, or PML-N) faction headed by Nawaz Sharif and a rump (Junejo, or PML-J) faction led by Hamid Nasir Chatta. The latter joined the Bhutto government following the October 1993 election, while the PML-N became the core of the parliamentary opposition.

Following the elections of February 3, 1997, at which it won a majority of the assembly seats, the PML-N took power. The party remained prone to factionalism, however, with the PML-J and a

Qasim Group (PML-Qasim) joining the opposition PAI alliance upon its formation in 1998. Following the October 1999 coup another faction, the **PML-Qaid-i-Azam** (“Father of the Nation,” a reference to Mohammad Ali Jinnah), or the PML-Q, was formed with the tacit support of the military.

Entering the 2002 election, the PML-Q was allied with the National Alliance in the Grand National Alliance. The separate PML-N ran independently as part of the ARD. The PML-J, although running independently, appeared to be drawing closer to the PML-Q. Also running independently were the PML-F; the PML-Zia ul-Haq (PML-Z), which had been formed by the son of the late president in August 2002; and the PML-Jinnah, which had been established in 1998 following a factional dispute within the PML-J. Electoral results gave the PML-Q 118 seats; the PML-F, 5; the PML-J, 3; and the PML-Z, 1.

With the PML-Q in the ascendancy, holding a plurality of seats in both houses of Parliament and dominating the government, efforts to unite the PML factions gathered strength in 2003, leading to the announcement in May 2004 of a “united PML,” excluding only the PML-N. In August, however, objecting in particular to the leadership of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Pir Sahib Pagaro declared that he intended to restore the PML-F’s separate standing.

Days after the formation of the “united PML,” the National Alliance (NA) parties, which had won 16 seats at the October 2002 election, announced that they were merging with the PML. (One of the founding NA parties, the Sindh National Front, had already withdrawn from the alliance.) The Sindh Democratic Alliance (SDA), led by Arbab Ghulam RAHIM (chief minister of Sindh since June 2004), had been launched in September–October 2001 and had already established a working relationship at the provincial level with the PML-Q. The Millat Party (MP) had been launched in August 1998 by former president Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari. There was, however, opposition to the merger within the other NA parties. In the end, the National People’s Party (NPP, below) and

the National Awami Party (see the ANP, below) retained separate identities.

In mid-June 2004 the Election Commission approved the merger of the PML-F, PML-J, PML-Jinnah, PML-Z, and SDA into the PML-Q and the redesignation of the latter as, simply, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), although the PML-*Qaid-i-Azam* or PML-Q designation is still commonly used. Formal incorporation of the MP followed.

In 2005 vocal opposition surfaced to the continued leadership of the party president, Shujaat Hussain, and to the prominent role of the Punjab chief minister, Chaudhry Pervez ELAHI, who allegedly ignored the recommendations of National Assembly representatives in choosing candidates for local council elections. The “forward bloc” dissident group, numbering about 30 members of the National Assembly, were led by Mian Riaz Hussain PIRZADA, Farooq Amjad MIR, and Mazhan QURESHI. In May 2006 President Musharraf, looking toward the next general election, asked Shujaat Hussain to form a dispute resolution board to resolve the differences.

*Leaders:* Chaudhry Shujaat HUSSAIN (President), Shaukat AZIZ (Former Prime Minister), Manzoor Ahmad WATTOO (Senior Vice President of the Party and Former Leader of the PML-Jinnah), Chaudhry Hamid Nasir CHATTA (Former Leader of the PML-J), Muhammad Ijaz ul-HAQ (Former Minister of Religion and Former Leader of the PML-Z), Mushahid HUSSAIN (Secretary General).

### *Other Parties in 2002–2007 Governing Coalition*

**Muttahida Qaumi Movement**—MQM (Nationalist People’s Movement). Organized in 1981 as the *Muhajir* National Movement, the MQM was primarily concerned with the rights of postpartition migrants to Pakistan, whom it wanted to see recognized as constituting a “fifth nationality.” Originally backed by Zia ul-Haq as a counter to Zulfikar Bhutto’s Sindh-based PPP, the party became the third-largest National Assembly grouping, with 13 seats, after the 1988 election. It was subsequently

allied, at different times, with both the PPP and the PML.

The assassination of party chair Azim Ahmad TARIQ on May 1, 1993, exacerbated a violent cleavage that had emerged within the group the year before, the principal leaders being Altaf Husain (MQM-Altat), currently resident in London, and Afaq Ahmed of the MQM-*Haqiqi* (below). Although the party boycotted the National Assembly balloting in 1993, it was runner-up to the PPP in the Sindh provincial elections. In 1994 Altaf Husain and two of his senior associates were sentenced in absentia to 27-year prison terms for terrorism, but in January 1997 the convictions were quashed.

In February 1997 the MQM-Altat, under the banner of the **Haq Parast Group**, won 12 National Assembly seats, all from Sindh, and thereafter entered a governing alliance with the PML-N at both provincial and national levels. Also in 1997, the party changed its name from “*Muhajir*” to “*Mut-tahida*” to indicate that its interests had broadened to encompass Pakistanis in general rather than only the Muslim migrants from India.

In August 1998 the MQM announced its intention to withdraw from the governing coalitions, in part because the Nawaz Sharif administration had not done enough to stem increasingly violent clashes in Karachi between the MQM-Altat and the MQM-*Haqiqi*, the latter of which was functioning primarily as a collection of urban street fighters. However, when Islamabad responded to the violence by dismissing the Sindh provincial government and imposing federal rule, Altaf Husain loyalists accused the Nawaz Sharif government of trying to take away the party’s power base. In 1999 a number of party leaders broke with Husain and threatened to form a separate party unless he adopted a stronger stance toward autonomy for Sindh.

At the 2002 National Assembly election, the MQM won 17 seats, after which it joined the Jamali government. In July 2006, however, it threatened to pull its ministers from the cabinet and to leave the Sindh government because President Musharraf would not fire the Sindh chief minister. The

crisis was resolved a week later, and the MQM remained in the government.

*Leaders:* Altaf HUSSAIN (President), Farooq SATTAR (Parliamentary Leader).

**Pakistan Muslim League (Functional)**—PML-F. The PML-F was established by longtime PML leader Pir Sahib Pagaro, who broke with his party in mid-1992. In 2002 the PML-F won five National Assembly seats and one in the Senate.

Although Pagaro initially appeared willing to participate in the reunification of the various PML parties with the dominant PML-Q in 2004, he soon retreated from that position. In 2005 the largely reunited PML indicated that it regarded the PML-F as a separate, allied party.

*Leaders:* Pir Sahib PAGARO, Makhmood Ahman MAHMOOD.

**Pakistan People’s Party**—PPP [Regd.]. The PPP is often referenced as the PPP (Patriots) and the PPP (Sherpao), the two organizations that merged in June 2004 and were officially registered by the Election Commission simply as the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) later that month. Benazir Bhutto’s PPP had been deregistered after affirming her status as chair for life despite a proscription against convicted criminals being party officeholders. Bhutto’s PPP immediately appealed the Election Commission’s decision on the grounds that use of the PPP name by another party would deceive and defraud the electorate. The Sindh High Court allowed Bhutto’s petition against the merger but as of November 2007 had yet to resolve the issue. (Note: For clarity, the *Political Handbook* has appended the unofficial “Regd.” to the party acronym to distinguish the registered PPP from Bhutto’s PPP.)

The **Pakistan People’s Party (Sherpao)**, or PPP(S), was established by Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao following Benazir Bhutto’s 1999 decision to dismiss him as PPP senior vice president for breaking party discipline over political developments involving the NWFP government. At the 2002 general election the PPP (Sherpao) won two seats in the Senate and two in the National Assembly.



The **Pakistan People's Party (Patriots)**, or PPP (Patriots)—sometimes referenced as the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (Patriots)—resulted from a split in the Bhutto-supportive Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP, below) following the October 2002 national election. Ten PPPP representatives supported the installation of the Jamali government, with six of the defectors being offered cabinet posts. The group then organized under Rao Sikander Iqbal as the PPP (Patriots).

*Leaders:* Aftab Ahmad Khan SHERPAO (President of the Party and Former Minister of the Interior), Rao Sikander IQBAL (Chair of the Party and Former Senior Minister of Defense), Sayed Faisal Saleh HAYAT (General Secretary of the Party and Former Minister of the Environment).

### *Other Parliamentary Parties in 2002–2007*

**Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians**—PPPP. To get around a proscription against the electoral participation of any party having a convicted criminal as an officeholder, Benazir Bhutto's **Pakistan People's Party** (PPP) organized the legally separate PPPP in August 2002.

An avowedly Islamic socialist party founded in 1967 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the PPP held a majority of seats in the National Assembly truncated by the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Officially credited with winning 155 of 200 assembly seats in the election of March 1977, it was the primary target of a postcoup decree in October that banned all groups whose ideology could be construed as prejudicial to national security. Bhutto was executed in April 1979, the party leadership being assumed by his widow and daughter, both of whom, after being under house arrest for several years, went into exile in London. After having briefly returned to Pakistan in July 1985 to preside over the burial of her brother, Shahnawaz, Benazir Bhutto again returned in April 1986. The PPP won a sizable plurality (92 of 205 contested seats) at the National Assembly election of November 1988, and Bhutto became prime minister. The party lost ministerial control with Bhutto's dismissal in August 1990; its legislative strength was subsequently cut by more

than half at the election of October 24 and 27 (for which it joined with a number of smaller groups to campaign as the People's Democratic Alliance—PDA). It regained its plurality at the 1993 legislative poll, with Ms. Bhutto being reinstated as prime minister.

In December 1993 the PPP's Executive Council ousted Prime Minister Bhutto's mother, Begum Nusrat BHUTTO, as party cochair. The action was the product of estrangement between the two over the political role of Benazir's brother, Murtaza Bhutto, who had returned from exile in November to take up a seat in the Sindh provincial legislature and who in March 1995 announced the formation of a breakaway faction of the PPP. Murtaza died in a firefight with gunmen in September 1996. Following the ouster of Prime Minister Bhutto in November, her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was charged with complicity in the killing. The new PML-led government formed an "accountability" department to investigate the allegations and corruption in general, a principal target being the PPP leadership. Meanwhile, Benazir Bhutto was meeting with leaders of smaller opposition parties, which ultimately led to the formation of the PAI alliance in February 1998.

Earlier, at the end of 1996, allegations about the death of Murtaza Bhutto had led his widow, Ghinwa BHUTTO, to form the **Pakistan People's Party (Shaheed Bhutto)**, or PPP-SB, to challenge Benazir Bhutto's hold on the party. The subsequent national legislative campaign in early 1997 contained an added element of personal hostility between the two women, although both suffered disastrous defeats in the election.

During 1998–1999 new corruption allegations or charges were repeatedly brought against Benazir Bhutto and her husband: kickbacks involving gold transactions, commissions from foreign defense manufacturers, abuse of power in making political appointments, and use of Swiss bank accounts to launder money. Bhutto's political viability suffered a major blow in April 1999 when a Lahore court sentenced her and her husband to five years in prison, disqualified them from public office for five years, and fined them \$8.6 million for corruption and abuse of power. Bhutto asserted from

England that she would appeal the conviction to the Supreme Court, which in April 2001 threw out the decision and ordered a retrial because of apparent government involvement in the verdict.

In March 1999 the party leadership elected the former prime minister chair for life, a decision reiterated by a party convention in September 2000 in defiance of the government's August announcement that convicted criminals could not hold party offices. Bhutto remained in self-imposed exile, the Musharraf regime having refused to lift outstanding arrest warrants.

In July 2002 Bhutto was again convicted, in absentia, of corruption, as was her husband in September. He had been imprisoned since 1986. Other cases against the two were pending in Switzerland, the United States, and the United Kingdom as well as Pakistan. In September 2004 Zardari's corruption conviction was overturned, and on November 22 he was released on bail. He later left the country.

Two months after its formation in 2002 the PPPP won 81 National Assembly seats, but in November it suffered the defection of 10 representatives who supported the installation of the Jamali government. (The move was possible because the antidefection clause of the constitution remained suspended.) The defectors then organized under Rao Sikander Iqbal as the Pakistan People's Party (Patriots)—see the PPP (Regd.), which also encompasses the PPP (Sherpao), a 1999 splinter.

On July 27, 2007, President Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto met in Abu Dhabi in the context of ongoing discussions between the government and her representatives on a power-sharing arrangement. On September 1, Bhutto indicated that she intended to end her exile soon, although negotiations with Musharraf had stalled, in part because of objections within the PML. Bhutto returned on October 18, but the imposition in November of a state of emergency resulted in her calling, while under house arrest, for Musharraf's resignation.

*Leaders:* Benazir BHUTTO (Former Prime Minister and PPP Chair for Life), Makhdoom Amin FAHIM and Syed Yousaf Raza GILANI (PPP Vice Chairs), Begum Nusrat BHUTTO,

Chaudhry Aitzaz AHSAN (PPPP National Assembly Leader), Mian Raza RABBANI (PPPP Senate Leader), Raja Pervez ASHRAF (PPPP Secretary General of the Federal Council), Jehangir BADER (PPP Secretary General).

**Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal**—MMA (United Council for Action). The MMA was organized in June 2001 by the Islamic parties discussed below. The MMA campaigned on a platform that included restoration of the constitution, creation of an Islamic state, and resolution of the Kashmir issue through negotiation. Only the two JUI factions supported the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, but all of the constituent parties opposed Musharraf's subsequent decision to join the U.S.-led "war on terrorism" and to permit U.S. forces to operate from Pakistani soil.

Having won 60 seats in the National Assembly, the MMA was courted by both the PML-Q and the PPPP (with which it had little in common ideologically) to form a coalition government, but it rejected both. Its firm opposition to the 2002 Legal Framework Order was largely responsible for the year-long stalemate in the National Assembly, until an agreement was reached with President Musharraf in December 2003.

Although the MMA was chaired from its inception by the moderate Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani SIDDIQUI of the JUP until his death in December 2003, the JUI-F's Fazlur Rahman and the JIP's Qazi Hussain Ahmad have exerted more influence. More recently, differences between the two largest parties, the JUI-F and the JIP, have threatened the MMA's effectiveness. One contentious issue has been the JIP's objections to participation in President Musharraf's National Security Council. As leader of the opposition, Fazlur Rahman holds a seat on the council, as does the chief minister of the NWFP, JUI-F member Akram Khan Durrani.

In July 2007 the MMA participated in the anti-Musharraf All Parties Conference and joined in forming the APDM.

*Leaders:* Qazi Hussain AHMAD (President), Sajid Ali NAQVI, Fazlur RAHMAN (Leader of the Opposition).

**Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rahman Group**—JUI-F. The *Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam* (Assembly of Islamic Clergy) was founded in 1950 as a progressive formation committed to constitutional government guided by Sunni Islamic principles. In 1988 the JUI's Darkhwasty Group withdrew from the IDA to reunite with the parent formation, although a faction headed by Maulana Sami ul-Haq remained within the government coalition until November 1991. Factionalization subsequently remained a problem, with Sami ul-Haq heading one group, the JUI-S (below), and Fazlur Rahman heading another, the JUI-F. The latter, which won two National Assembly seats from Baluchistan in 1997, emerged as the dominant faction. Fazlur Rahman supported Afghanistan's Taliban and, following the 1999 coup, condemned ousted prime minister Sharif's "lust for unlimited powers." He was placed under house arrest in October 2001, at the opening of the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan. At the 2002 National Assembly election the JUI-F claimed the most MMA seats.

*Leaders:* Maulana Fazlur RAHMAN (Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly), Akram Khan DURRANI (Chief Minister of NWFP), Hafiz Hussein AHMAD.

**Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam Sami ul-Haq Group** (JUI-S). The JUI-S began as a faction of the parent JUI. Under the leadership of Sami ul-Haq, the JUI-S has generally adopted a more conservative course than the "modernist" JUI-F, promoting fundamentalist Islam causes but also outwardly opposing terrorism despite vocal objections to U.S. intervention in the region.

Sami ul-Haq was prominent in the MYC alliance and participated in formation of the MMA. At the 2002 National Assembly election the JUI-S finished third among the MMA parties, and Sami ul-Haq currently sits in the Senate. Relations with the MMA have, however, become increasingly tenuous, leading to repeated reports that the JUI-S was separating from the

alliance or that Sami ul-Haq had been expelled from the leadership, in part because of his alleged ties to the ruling coalition. In December 2005 the MMA recognized Pir Abdul Rahim Naqshbandi as leader of the JUI-S. In June 2007 ul-Haq, criticizing the dominance of the JUI-F and the JIP (below), characterized the MMA as defunct.

*Leaders:* Sami ul-HAQ, Pir Abdul Rahim NAQSHBANDI, Qari Gul RAHMAN (Secretary General).

**Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan**—JIP (Pakistan Islamic Assembly). Organized in 1941, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* is a right-wing fundamentalist group that has called for an Islamic state based on a national rather than a purely communalistic consensus. Members of the party ran as individuals in the 1985 assembly election, and ten were elected; subsequently, although party leaders agreed to legislative coordination with the PML, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* dominated the Independent Parliamentary Group (IPG) and, despite its unregistered status, functioned as the largest legislative opposition party.

The group participated in formation of the IDA in 1988 but withdrew in 1992, in part because the coalition had failed to implement a promised Islamization program. In 1993 it was instrumental in launching a Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF), which won only three seats at the October legislative poll. Although the JIP held no national legislative seats following the 1997 election, it remained politically influential. It welcomed the October 1999 coup but called for setting up a caretaker civilian government.

Officially a branch of the *Jamiat-e-Islami* in Pakistan but so independent that it might well be considered a separate movement, the **Jammu and Kashmir Jamiat-e-Islami** was active in electoral politics by 1970 and even participated to a limited degree in Indian *Lok Sabha* and provincial elections. In 1997 the party denied that it was the political wing of the militant *Hizb-ul-Mujaheddin*, and in October 40 of its members challenged the militant campaign as

not contributing to the goal of an independent Kashmir.

*Leaders:* Amir Qazi Hussain AHMAD (Chair), Liaqat BALOCH, Syed Munawwar HASAN (Secretary General).

**Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan**—JUP (Assembly of Pakistani Clergy). Founded in 1968, the JUP is a popular Islamic group that withdrew from the PNA in 1978. It joined the MRD in February 1981, severed its membership the following March, then rejoined in August 1983 at the commencement of the civil disobedience campaign. Its president, Maulana Shah Ahmed NOORANI, was among those failing to secure an assembly slot in 1988; its secretary general, Maulana Abdul Sattar Khan NIAZI, quit the Nawaz Sharif cabinet in 1991 after being criticized by the prime minister for not supporting government policies on the Gulf War against Iraq. The party subsequently split into Noorani and Niazi factions, the latter emphasizing religious issues. Niazi died in May 2001 and Noorani, in December 2003.

At the 2002 election the JUP won no National Assembly seats, but Sahibzada Karim of the JUP (Niazi) was elected on the PML-N list. In May 2006 the JUP (Niazi), which has supported the ARD, indicated that it would sign the Charter of Democracy that had been drafted by former prime ministers Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif.

*Leaders:* Shah Muhammad Anas NOORANI (President, Noorani Group), Sahibzada Fazil KARIM (President, Niazi Group), Muhammad Hashim SIDDIQUI (Joint Secretary).

**Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith**—MJAH. A militant Sunni group, the MJAH had close ties to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Originally a component of the MMA, it withdrew when the latter decided to function as an electoral alliance for the 2002 National Assembly election, although it later returned. Its leader, Sajid Mir, was elected to the Senate in 2006 with the joint endorsement of the PML-N.

*Leader:* Sajid MIR.

**Islami Tehrik-i-Pakistan** —TiP. The TiP, successor to the banned *Tehrik-e-Jafariya-e-Pakistan*—TJP (Pakistan Jafari Movement), is also frequently identified in English transliteration as the **Tehrik-i-Islami Pakistan**. The TJP was an outgrowth of the Movement for the Implementation of Shia Jurisprudence (*Tehrik-e-Nifaz Fiqh Jafariya*—TNFJ), an activist group representing Pakistan's Shia minority. The TNFJ launched a campaign in 1980 against the government's Islamization campaign, insisting that it was entirely Sunni-based. In 1987 it decided to reorganize as a political party committed to the principles of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. An electoral ally of the PPP in 1990, it was frequently a target of Sunni violence.

The TJP was closely associated with the extremist Shiite **Sipah-i-Muhammad**, which has been a major participant in Pakistan's ongoing sectarian warfare. The latter group was banned in August 2001, as was the TJP in January 2002. In an effort to get around the ban, the organization assumed the TiP designation, but the TiP was itself banned in November 2003. Its leader, Sajid Naqvi, was arrested in the same month in connection with the assassination of Maulana Azam Tariq of the Sunni *Sipah-i-Sahaba* (below), but he was acquitted in November 2004.

*Leaders:* Allama Sajid Ali NAQVI, Abdul Jalil NAQVI.

**Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)**—PML-N. Under the leadership of former Punjab chief minister and then Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N emerged from the PML-Junejo Group in 1993 and quickly established itself as the dominant PML grouping. In 1997 the PML-N won a parliamentary majority under Nawaz Sharif. Following the October 1999 coup the PML-N established a 15-member Coordination Committee to consider party reorganization. It did not, however, call for the immediate restoration of the Sharif government, having concluded that directly confronting the military would be inadvisable.

As a condition of his release from prison in December 2000, Sharif agreed to abandon politics for

at least two decades, although he continued to exert considerable influence from exile. In May 2004 his brother, Shabaz, having received a favorable ruling from the Supreme Court on his right to return, attempted to end his four-year exile but was immediately ushered back out of the country by officials.

At the October 2002 National Assembly election the PML-N ran as part of the ARD, winning 19 seats. A year later the party's acting president, Javed Hashmi, was arrested for distributing a letter, allegedly written by army officers, that was critical of President Musharraf. Despite widespread expressions of outrage from the ARD and other elements of the opposition, Hashmi was convicted in April 2004 of treason, mutiny, and forgery. In August he was put forward as the opposition candidate for prime minister.

In August 2007 Hashmi was freed on bail by the Supreme Court after nearly four years' incarceration. Late in the same month, the justices also ruled that Nawaz Sharif could return from exile, but his attempt to do so on September 10 was thwarted by the government, which ordered him detained at the airport, served him an arrest warrant for corruption and money-laundering, and immediately deported him to Saudi Arabia. Nawaz Sharif returned again on November 25, following the intervention of Saudi Arabia's king, and was greeted by thousands of supporters.

*Leaders:* Mohammad Nawaz SHARIF (Leader), Mian Shahbaz SHARIF (President of the Party and Former Chief Minister of Punjab), Makhdoom Javed HASHMI (Acting President), Raja Muhammad ZAFAR-UL-HAQ (Chair), Khawaja Saad RAFIQ (National Assembly Leader), Ishaq DAR (Senate Leader), Iqbal Zafar JHAGRA (Secretary General).

**Awami National Party**—ANP. The Awami ("People's") National Party was formed in July 1986 by four left-of-center groups: the National Democratic Party (NDP), a group of Pakistan National Party (PNP) dissidents led by Latif Afridi, and elements of the *Awami Tehrik* (PAT, below) and the *Mazdoor Kissan Party* (MKP). As originally constituted under the direction of Pushtun

leader Khan Abdul WALI KHAN, the ANP was unusual in that each of its constituent groups drew its primary support from a different province.

The NDP had been organized in 1975 upon proscriptio of the National Awami Party, a remnant of the National Awami Party of Bangladesh that, under the leadership of Wali Khan, was allegedly involved in terrorist activity aimed at secession of Baluchistan and the NWFP. A founding component of the PNA, the NDP withdrew in 1978, and in 1979 a group of dissidents left to form the PNP.

The ANP won three assembly seats in October 1993 and ten seats—all from the NWFP—in February 1997. A year later the ANP terminated its alliance with the governing PML-N because of the latter's refusal to support the redesignation of the NWFP as Pakhtoonkhwa, the area's precolonial name. Later in 1998 the ANP was a prime mover in formation of the PONM opposition alliance, but it parted ways in 1999 with what it considered the PONM's unrealistic goals for national reconfiguration.

The ANP failed to win representation at the National Assembly election of 2002 but won two Senate seats in February 2003. The party's founder, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, died in January 2006.

Despite some reservations, in June 2006 the central party leadership endorsed the Charter of Democracy proposed by former prime ministers Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. In the same month, the National Awami Party (NAP), a 2000 offshoot led by Arbab Ayub Jan and Sharif Khattak, reunited with the parent party.

*Leaders:* Asfandiyar WALI KHAN (President), Begum Nasim WALI Khan, Latif AFRIDI, Arbab Ayub JAN, Sharif KHATTAK.

**Baluchistan National Party**—BNP. One of several rival political formations in Baluchistan, the BNP was formed by the 1997 merger of the Baluchistan National Movement (Mengal Group) and the Pakistan National Party of Mir Ghaus Baksh BIZENJO. It won three National Assembly seats that year and initially backed the Nawaz Sharif government, but it later withdrew its support. The party soon split into BNP-Mengal and

BNP-Awami factions. At the 2002 National Assembly election the BNP-Mengal won one seat; at the 2003 Senate election the BNP-Mengal and the BNP-Awami each won one. The BNP-Awami, which had been closely associated with the National Alliance, joined in forming the National Party (NP, below) in 2003. In June 2006 party chief Sardar Ataullah Mengal resigned as head of the PONM, which he had helped found.

In December 2006 the party president, Sardar Akhbar Mengal (son of Sardar Ataullah), was detained in connection with the kidnapping and torture of intelligence personnel. In early June 2007 a number of other party leaders were detained by authorities prior to a scheduled party gathering in Quetta.

*Leaders:* Sardar Ataullah MENGAL, Sardar Akhbar MENGAL (President), Jhanzaib JAMAL-DINI (Acting President), Habib JALID (Secretary General).

**Jamhoori Watan Party**—JWP. A successor to the Baluchistan National Alliance (BNA), the JWP is active at both provincial and national levels. The JWP, which was formed in 1990 by Nawab Akbar BUGTI, won two seats from Baluchistan at the 1997 National Assembly election and as of early 1999 held five Senate seats. Although initially extending support to the Nawaz Sharif government, the JWP later moved into opposition, but without joining either the PNC or the PAI alliance. As a participant in the ARD, the JWP won one lower house seat in 2002 and one Senate seat in 2003. The death of its prominent founder in an August 2006 military operation precipitated widespread rioting. The first anniversary of his death was observed by a general strike across Baluchistan.

*Leaders:* Nawabzada Talal BUGTI (President), Mir Ghulam Haider BUGTI (National Assembly Member).

**National Party**—NP. The NP was formed in 2003 by merger of the Baluchistan National Party—Awami (BNP-Awami) and the Baluchistan National Democratic Party (BNDP). Competing primarily against supporters of the BNP's Sardar Ataullah Mengal, the NP has had little electoral

success at the national level. It currently holds one Senate seat.

*Leader:* Abdul HAYEE Baluch (Chair).

**Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf**—PTI (Pakistan Justice Movement). The *Tehrik-e-Insaaf* was launched in 1996 by former national cricket captain Imran Khan, who announced that the new group's objective was to work for change in a country "on the brink of disaster" by "demanding justice, honesty, decency and self-respect." Despite high expectations, Khan failed to attract voter support in the February 1997 national election, and the party won no assembly seats. In August 2000 Imran Khan was expelled from the GDA for "undemocratic" comments.

The party won one assembly seat in October 2002. More recently, Khan has voiced opposition to President Musharraf and his close ties to the United States. In July 2007 he played a significant role in forming the APDM, and he was one of the most vocal critics of the state of emergency imposed in November.

*Leader:* Imran KHAN (Chair).

**Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party**—PkMAP. Drawing its support mainly from the Pakhtoon ethnic group in the NWFP, the PkMAP has campaigned for greater regional autonomy. It elected three National Assembly members in 1993 but none in 1997. In 1998 it participated in formation of the PONM opposition alliance.

At the 2002 National Assembly election the PkMAP won one seat; in 2003 it won two Senate seats, picking up a third in 2006. The party's chair and National Assembly member, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, was elected president of the PONM in June 2006.

*Leaders:* Mahmood Khan ACHAKZAI (Chair), Abdul Rahim Khan MANDOKHEL (Senator and Senior Deputy Chair).

### *Other Parties*

**Awami Qiadat Party**—AQP (People's Leadership Party). Formed in 1995, the AQP serves primarily as a personal vehicle for Aslam Beg, a retired general. Linked to Pakhtoon issues, the party

also supports the military. Although committed to democratic procedures, General Beg has argued for a stronger response to civil disorder and sectarian violence. Prior to the 2002 National Assembly election he chastised the secular opposition parties for failing to unite. In May 2006 he called on Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to join forces and mobilize the opposition to President Musharraf.

*Leader:* Gen. (Ret.) Mirza Aslam BEG (Chair).

**Khaksar Tehrik** (Service Movement). A right-wing Islamic organization advocating universal military training, the *Khaksar Tehrik* is also known as *Bailcha Bardar* (Shovel Carriers) because the group's founder, Inayatullah Khan MASHRIQI, adopted the spade as a symbol of self-reliance. Following the 1999 coup, which the party leader termed a "blessing," the party called for an anticorruption drive. It subsequently opposed the Musharraf government, however, supporting restoration of the constitution and democracy and endorsing the 2006 Bhutto–Nawaz Sharif Charter of Democracy.

*Leader:* Hameeduddin al-MASHRIQI.

**Muhajir Qaumi Movement–*Haqiqi***—MQM-*Haqiqi*. The MQM-*Haqiqi* (Real) resulted from a 1992 rupture within the MQM. Violent clashes between the current MQM and the MQM-*Haqiqi* have periodically flared into open warfare in Karachi. Although unrepresented at the national level since the April 2003 death of its sole National Assembly representative, MQM-*Haqiqi* members continue to hold elective office in Sindh.

In December 2004 the party's secretary general, Amir Khan, was sentenced to ten years in prison in connection with the murder of two rival MQM members. Three other MQM-*Haqiqi* members were given life sentences. Appeals were continuing as of September 2007. Khan was reelected party chair in April 2007.

*Leaders:* Amir KHAN (Chair), Iqbal QURESHI and Younas KHAN (Vice Chairs), Sharif KHAN (Secretary General).

**National People's Party**—NPP. The NPP was formed in 1986 by a group of PPP moderates led by

former Sindh chief minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, who accused Benazir Bhutto of "authoritarian tendencies" prior to being removed as provincial PPP president. Jatoi served as interim prime minister following the dismissal of Bhutto in 1990. The NPP entered the first Sharif government coalition but was expelled in 1992 because of alleged collusion with the PPP. The NPP turned to the PPP (Shaheed Bhutto) for an electoral alliance in 1997, winning one seat.

The NPP became a founding member of the National Alliance in May 2002. Two years later, following the announcement that some alliance parties were merging with the PML, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi stated that, while the party's parliamentary group may have decided to join the PML, he had not. The NPP has since maintained its independence.

*Leader:* Ghulam Mustafa JATOI.

**Pakistan Awami Tehrik**—PAT (Pakistan People's Movement). The *Awami Tehrik* originally served as a Sindh-based Maoist youth group. Its leader, Rasul Bakhsk PALEJO, was released from prison in 1986, having been held without trial since 1979, and later served as secretary general of the ANP. Party leader Tahir ul-Qadri left the leadership of the PAI alliance in 1999, apparently because of policy differences with the PPP and the ANP, but the PAT subsequently joined the GDA. In August 2000, however, the GDA expelled Qadri.

In May 2002 the PAT was a founding member of the National Alliance (see PML, above), but it withdrew a month later and contested the October 2002 National Assembly election independently, winning one seat. In December 2004 Qadri resigned the seat after passage of a bill permitting President Musharraf to remain in uniform.

*Leader:* Tahir ul-QADRI.

**Pakistan Democratic Party**—PDP. A former component of the PNA and the MRD, the PDP is a strongly Islamic party organized in 1969. Its president, Nawabzada Nasrullah KHAN, joined with the PPP and a number of smaller parties to launch the PAI opposition alliance in early 1998 and the GDA in September 1999. Khan later assumed the

leadership of the postcoup ARD. He died in September 2003 and was succeeded as PDP leader by his son, who was reelected in February 2007.

*Leader:* Nawabzada Mansoor Ali KHAN (President).

**Sindh National Front**—SNF. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, an uncle of the former prime minister, launched the SNF following the dissolution in 1989 of the Sindh-Baluch-Pushtoon Front (SBPF), of which Bhutto had been a leader. Like the SBPF, the SNF called for a confederation of Pakistan's four provinces, with each free to establish its own domestic and foreign policies. Although a founder of the National Alliance in preparation for the 2002 general election, the SNF later withdrew.

*Leader:* Mumtaz Ali BHUTTO (Chair).

**Tehrik-e-Istiqlal** (Solidarity Movement). The *Tehrik-e-Istiqlal* is a democratic Islamic group that was a founding member of the PNA, from which it withdrew in November 1977. One of its leaders, Air Mar. (Ret.) Mohammad Asghar Khan, was a leading proponent of election boycotts, stating "there can be no compromise" under martial law; however, following the lifting of martial law, the party broke ranks with its coalition partners by announcing its intention to register as a legal party. It was a leading component of the MRD until September 1986, when most of its leadership withdrew in opposition to Benazir Bhutto's domination of the alliance.

In October 1988 *Tehrik-e-Istiqlal* formed an electoral alliance with the JUP (above) for the November legislative balloting, although agreeing not to contest seats for which the IDA was presenting candidates. Asghar Khan resigned from the presidency of *Tehrik-e-Istiqlal* in December in the wake of poor results in the November poll. The party was subsequently a member of the PPP-led PDA in 1990.

Following the 1997 national elections, which the *Tehrik-e-Istiqlal* boycotted, Asghar Khan returned as head of the party and became a major figure in the development of the PNC opposition alliance. In January 2002 his son, Omar Asghar KHAN, formed a new *Qaumi Jamhoori* Party, but

he died five months later under disputed circumstances, which the authorities labeled a suicide.

More recently, Asghar Khan has campaigned for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute, a reduced role for the military in government, and an end to the funding of politicians by the Inter Services Intelligence agency.

*Leader:* Mohammad Asghar KHAN (Chair).

Pakistan has many other relatively small legal parties, most with a provincial or religious focus. Parties on the left include the **Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party**—PMKP (Pakistan Workers' and Peasants' Party), which was known from 1994, when it merged with the Communist Party of Pakistan, until 2003 as the Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party (CMKP). A revived **Communist Party of Pakistan** (CPP) separated from the CMKP in 1999, as did a new **Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party** from the PMKP in 2003. Other leftist groups include the **National Workers' Party** (NWP); the **Labor Party Pakistan** (LPP); and the **Social Democratic Party of Pakistan**. In March 2006 half a dozen leftist groups, including the LPP, the PMKP, and the NWP, announced formation of a prodemocracy **People's Democratic Movement** (*Awami Jamhoori Tehrik*—AJT) led by the NWP's Abid Hasan MANTO.

### *Banned Organizations*

**Jaish-e-Muhammad Mujaheddin-e-Tanzeem**—JMMT or JeM (Movement of the Army of the Holy Warriors of Muhammad). Formation of the *Jaish-e-Muhammad* was announced on February 4, 2000, by Masood Azhar. A founding member of the *Harkat-ul-Ansar* (subsequently renamed the **Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin** [Islamic Freedom Fighters]), he had been detained by India from 1994 until late December 1999, when the hijackers of an Indian Airlines jet demanded his release before freeing their hostages. Azhar has called for a holy war against India as part of the effort to establish an independent, Islamic Kashmir. He was detained in December 2001 but released three months later. Since then, Azhar has



repeatedly been listed by India among suspected terrorists that it wants Pakistan to extradite.

Having been banned in January 2002, the JeM restyled itself as the **Khudam-ul-Islam** (Servants of Islam), which was then banned in November 2003 along with the **Jamaat-al-Ansar** (Party of Helpers), the new designation of the *Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin*, led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman KHALIL. In 2002 a JeM splinter, the **Jamaat-ul-Furqan** (JuF), had been established by Abdul JABBAR; the JuF was also banned in November 2003. Jabbar, who was imprisoned for involvement in a December 2003 assassination attempt against President Musharraf, was released in October 2006.

The JeM and the *Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin* are both regarded by the United States as terrorist organizations. Reports in 2007 indicated that the *Jamaat-al-Ansar*, now led by Maulana Badar MUNIR, and the JuF may have merged. Fazlur Khalil, who has been linked to the Taliban and al-Qaida, reportedly served as a negotiator in an unsuccessful effort by the government to diffuse the 2007 Red Mosque crisis.

*Leaders:* Maulana Masood AZHAR, Abdul RAUF.

**Lashkar-i-Taiba**—LiT (Army of the Pure). The LiT was established in 1993 as the military wing of an above-ground religious group, the **Markaz ad-Dawa Wal Irshad** (Center for Religious Learning and Propagation), which was formed in 1986 to organize Pakistani Sunni militants participating in the Afghan revolution. The *Markaz* was officially dissolved in December 2001 and all its assets transferred to the “new” **Jamaat-ud-Dawa** (Party for Religious Propagation) in an effort to avoid proscription. The LiT, which the United States has labeled a terrorist group, was banned by Pakistan in January 2002. Since then it has often been referenced as the *Jamaat-ud-Dawa*, which was placed on a “watch list,” but not banned, by the Pakistani government in November 2003.

The LiT, which may be the largest Pakistan-based militant group seeking separation of Jammu and Kashmir from India, with bases in Azad Kashmir and near the LoC, has claimed responsibility

for and been implicated in innumerable attacks within Kashmir and elsewhere. Following a series of transport blasts that killed several hundred people in Mumbai, India, in July 2006, the Indian government placed suspicion on the LiT, which denied involvement.

Following a massive earthquake that struck the NWFP and Azad Kashmir on October 8, 2005, several reports from the stricken region particularly credited the rescue and recovery work performed by the LiT and *Jamaat-ud-Dawa*.

*Leader:* Hafiz Mohammed SAYEED.

**Sipah-i-Sahaba**—SiS (Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet). The SiS is a militant Sunni group founded in 1982 as a JUI breakaway by Maulana Haq Nawaz JHANGVI, who was later murdered. It has close connections to the extremist **Lashkar-i-Jhangvi** (LiJ) and the equally militant TNSM (below), both of which have been involved in sectarian bloodshed.

In February 2000 the SiS announced that it was prepared to give nearly 100,000 workers to Maulana Masood Azhar’s newly organized JMMT (above) to aid in holy war (*jihad*). Both were banned in January 2002, as the LiJ had been in August 2001. The LiJ’s leader, Riaz BASRA, was killed by Indian police in May 2002. Another leader, Asif RAMZI, who had been linked to the kidnapping and murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl, was killed in a bomb explosion in December 2002. ATTAULLAH, an alleged LiJ leader, was sentenced to death in September 2003. Another alleged LiJ member was also sentenced to death in June 2005 for his involvement in the bombing of Shia mosques that killed 45 in May 2004.

In October 2003 SiS leader Muhammad Azam TARIQ, who had won election to the National Assembly a year earlier as an independent while still in prison, was assassinated, allegedly by members of the Shiite TJP (see TiP, above). Earlier, the SiS had been renamed the **Millat-i-Islamia Pakistan** (MIP) to circumvent a government ban, but the MIP was then proscribed in November 2003. The United States has placed both the SiS and the LiJ on its list of terrorist organizations; both

reportedly have links to al-Qaida. The Pakistani government has reportedly considered allowing the MIP to operate legally but with restrictions, although it remains on the list of proscribed organizations.

*Leader:* Maulana Muhammad Ahmad LUDHIANVI.

**Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi** — TNSM (Mohammadan Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Law). The TNSM is a fundamentalist group that was blamed by the government for the deaths of 11 persons in May 1994 and of 10 more the following November as the result of tribal demands in the northern areas of Malakand and Swat for the introduction of Islamic law. The TNSM responded to the August 1998 U.S. missile attack against terrorist camps in Afghanistan by organizing a rally in Peshawar at which it threatened to lay siege to U.S. property and kidnap Americans. It was banned in January 2002 but has since condemned attacks on the army and police as well as public bombings. A militant faction led by Maulana FAZLULLAH is based in Swat.

*Leader:* Maulana Sufi MUHAMMAD (in prison).

**Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin al-Alami**—HMA. A splinter from the **Hizb-ul-Mujaheddin** (HuM), the HMA was implicated in an April 2002 assassination attempt against President Musharraf and a June 2002 bombing at the U.S. consulate in Karachi that killed 12. (In 2006 most related convictions were set aside by the Sindh High Court.) Some of its members were previously associated with the banned **Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami**. The two groups and the LiJ are believed to be linked in the **313 Brigade**.

**Hizb-ut-Tahrir.** Based in London, England, but present in many areas of Central Asia, the Islamist *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* was banned by the Pakistani government in November 2003. It has ostensibly disavowed terrorism but is believed to have links to many jihadist groups around the world.

In April 2006 the government banned the **Baluchistan Liberation Army** (BLA) as a terror-

ist organization. In the preceding year the BLA had been blamed for a number of separatist attacks within Baluchistan, although its very existence as an organization remained in question. A Baluchistan government minister asserted that the BLA was in fact just a name that provided “an excuse for anti-state activities.”

## Legislature

The **Parliament** (*Majlis-e-Shoora*), also known as the Federal Legislature, is a bicameral body consisting of the president, an indirectly elected Senate, and a directly elected National Assembly. The 87-member Senate and the 217-member National Assembly were suspended by proclamation of Chief Executive Musharraf on October 15, 1999, and dissolved by him on June 20, 2001. Elections to expanded lower and upper houses were held in October 2002 and February 2003, respectively.

### *Senate*

The current upper house comprises 100 members: 22 elected by each of the four provincial legislatures (14 general seats, 4 reserved for women, and 4 reserved for technocrats/*ulema*), plus 8 from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and 4 from the Federal Capital (2 general, 1 woman, 1 technocrat/*aalim*). In 2003 the FATA and Islamabad senators were chosen by the National Assembly members of their respective jurisdictions. Senatorial terms are six years, with one-half of the body retiring every three years, although the election of February 24 and 27, 2003, was for the full, reconfigured house. The most recent election was held March 6 and 10, 2006, after which the Pakistan Muslim League held 39 seats; *Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal* (MMA), 17; Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians, 9; *Muttahida Qaumi* Movement, 6; Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz, 4 (including 1 held by the leader of the *Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith*); Pakistan People’s Party–Sherpao, 3; *Paktoonkhwa Milli Awami* Party, 3; Awami National Party, 2; Baluchistan National Party–Awami, Baluchistan National

## Cabinet

As of November 17, 2007

Caretaker Prime Minister

Mohammadmian Soomro

*Caretaker Ministers*

Commerce and Textile Industry	Shahzada Alam Monnoo
Communication	Habibur Rehman
Culture and Sport	Sikander Jogezeai
Defense and Defense Production	Salim Abbas Jillani
Education, Science, and Technology	Shamsh K. Lakha
Food, Agriculture, Cooperatives, and Livestock	Prince Essa John
Environment, Local Government, and Rural Development	Syed Wajid Bokhari
Finance, Economic Affairs, Revenue, and Statistics	Salman Shah
Foreign Affairs	Inan ul-Haque
Housing and Works	Nisar Ali Khan
Human Rights	Ansar Burney
Industries and Production, and Special Incentives	Salman Taseer
Information and Broadcasting	Nisar A. Memon
Information Technology	Abdullah Riar
Interior and Narcotics Control	Hamid Nawaz Khan
Kashmir Affairs, Northern Areas, and States and Frontier Regions	Abbas Sarfraz
Labor, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis	Nisar Ghumman
Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs	Syed Afzal Haider
Minorities	Raja Tri Dev Roy
Petroleum and Natural Resources	Ahsan Ullah Khan
Ports and Shipping	Fahim Ansari
Religious Affairs, <i>Zakat</i> , and <i>Ushr</i>	Khawaja Attaullah Taunsa Sharif
Tourism and Youth Affairs	Muhammad Ali Saif
Women's Development, Social Welfare, and Special Education	Shahida Jamil [f]

[f] = female

Party–Mengal, *Jamhoori Watan* Party, *Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam* Sami ul-Haq Group\$, \$ National Party, and Pakistan Muslim League–Functional, 1 each; independents, 11. The 8 FATA senators are all considered to be independents, but the majority were reported to support the MMA.

*Chair:* Mohammad Mian SOOMRO.

### *National Assembly*

Serving a five-year term, subject to premature dissolution, the current National Assembly has 342 seats: 272 directly elected in single-member con-

stituencies, 60 seats reserved for women and distributed on a proportional basis, and 10 proportional seats designated for members of religious minorities (4 Christian; 4 Hindu; 1 Sikh, Buddhist, or Parsi; 1 Qadiani). The most recent balloting for the directly elected seats took place on October 10, 2002, after which the Election Commission ordered a revote in two constituencies that was held on November 2 and 18. Seats reserved for women were allocated on October 31; religious minority representatives were announced on November 1.

Some 29 independent candidates were elected on October 10, but by early November 2002 most

had declared party allegiances. The following totals represent the standing of the parties when the final seat was filled on November 18, 2002: Pakistan Muslim League–*Qaid-i-Azam*, 118 seats; the Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians, 81; the *Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal* (MMA), 60; the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz, 19; the *Muttahida Qaumi* Movement, 17; the National Alliance, 16; the Pakistan Muslim League–Functional, 5; the Pakistan Muslim League–Junejo, 3; the Pakistan People’s Party–Sherpao, 2; the Baluchistan National Party–Mengal, *Jamhoori Watan* Party, *Muhajir Qaumi* Movement–*Haqiqi*, Pakistan *Awami Tehrik*, Pakistan Muslim League–Zia, Pakistan *Tehrik-e-Insaaf*, *Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami* Party, 1 each; independents, 14. Although all 12 representatives elected from the FATA were regarded as independents, the majority supported the MMA.

The legislative term ended on November 15, 2007. The next election was scheduled for January 8, 2008.

*Speaker:* Chaudhry Amir HUSSAIN (2002–2007).

## Communications

The constitution guarantees press freedom, but formal censorship has been imposed during periods of martial law. In the late 1990s journalists asserted that the Nawaz Sharif government was engaged in a “systematic pattern of harassment and victimization.” Under President Musharraf greater freedom returned, although in July 2003 a court in the NWFP, where Islamic law was imposed in 2002, sentenced an editor of the *Frontier Post* to life in prison for blasphemy.

In June 2007, in the context of ongoing public protests against the March dismissal of the country’s chief justice, a presidential decree gave the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority increased powers to close broadcast facilities, halt transmissions, and impose fines. The decree was quickly rescinded, however, in response to domestic and international criticism. In April Human Rights Watch had accused the government of systematically subjecting journalists to harassment,

arbitrary arrests, torture, and other violations of press freedoms. Media restrictions were reimposed under the state of emergency declared in November, although most had been lifted by the end of the month.

### *Press*

The following are among the more than 400 daily Pakistani newspapers: *Daily Jang* (Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, and Rawalpindi, 750,000), in Urdu, independent; *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Voice of the Time, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, and Islamabad, 560,000), in Urdu and English, conservative; *Dawn* (Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore, 110,000 daily; 125,000 Sunday), in English and Gujarati; *Jasarat* (Karachi, 50,000), in Urdu, conservative; *The Nation* (Lahore, 50,000), in English; *Frontier Post* (Peshawar and Lahore), in English, leftist.

### *News Agencies*

There are three principal domestic news agencies: the government-owned Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) and the privately owned Pakistan Press International (PPI) and News Network International (NNI); a number of foreign agencies also maintain offices in leading cities.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

The government-owned Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) offers regional, national, and international programming. Private radio stations are prohibited from broadcasting news. In addition to broadcasts by the public Pakistan Television Corporation (PTC), private cable and satellite service is available. In December 2005 the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority banned 35 foreign television channels, but some Indian channels remain accessible.

In 2005 there were about 68 Internet users and 83 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Mahmud Ali DURRANI

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan:** Anne Woods PATTERSON

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Munir AKRAM

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** ADB, CWTH, ECO, IDB, Interpol, IOM, NAM, OIC, PCA, SAARC, WCO, WTO

## Related Territories

The precise status of predominantly Muslim Jammu and Kashmir has remained unresolved since the 1949 cease-fire, which divided the territory into Indian- and Pakistani-administered sectors. While India has claimed the entire area as a state of the Indian Union, Pakistan has never regarded the portion under its control as an integral part of Pakistan. Rather, it has administered Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas as de facto dependencies for whose defense and foreign affairs it is responsible.

**Azad Kashmir.** Formally styled Azad (Free) Jammu and Kashmir, the smaller (4,200 sq. mi.) but more populous (estimated at 3,623,000 in 2006) of the Jammu and Kashmir regions administered by Pakistan is a narrow strip of territory lying along the northeastern border adjacent to Rawalpindi and Islamabad. It is divided into two divisions (Muzaffarabad and Mirpur) and eight districts (Bagh, Bhimber, Kotli, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Poonch, and Sudhnuti). Muzaffarabad City serves as the territory's capital. An Interim Constitution Act of 1974 provided for a Legislative Assembly, now comprising 49 members—41 directly elected plus 5 women and single representatives for technocrats, overseas Kashmiris, and *mashaikh* (Muslim spiritual leaders), all named by those directly elected. In addition, an Azad Kashmir Council consists of the president of Pakistan (chair), the president of Azad Kashmir (vice chair), the prime minister of Azad Kashmir, members designated by the Legislative Assembly, and others.

In the June 1996 Legislative Assembly election the governing **All Jammu and Kashmir Mus-**

**lim Conference** (also known simply as the Muslim Conference—MC) suffered an unprecedented drubbing by candidates from the Azad Kashmir affiliate of the PPP, and on July 30 Sultan Mahmood CHAUDHRY, president of the Azad Kashmir PPP, was sworn in as prime minister, replacing the MC's Sardar Abdul QAYYUM Khan. Except for a brief period in 1990, the MC had been in power for 13 years. On August 12 President Sikander HAYAT Khan, also of the MC, lost a no-confidence motion in the assembly, in which the PPP now controlled more than three-fourths of the seats. On August 25 Mohammad IBRAHIM Khan was sworn in as his successor. The transition marked the fourth time the octogenarian Ibrahim had assumed the presidency.

The MC turned the tables on the PPP at the July 5, 2001, election, winning 25 out of 40 directly elected seats to the PPP's 8 and then picking up 5 more of the reserved seats. The PPP ended up with a total of 9 seats and the PML, 8. When the new council convened, Sikander Hayat defeated the incumbent by a vote of 30–17 and thereby returned as prime minister.

Seventeen parties contested the legislative election of July 11, 2006, at which the MC won 22 of 41 elective seats (after a revote in one district) and quickly gained the support of several independents. The PPP Azad Kashmir, led by Sahibzada Ishaq ZAFAR, won 7 seats; a PML alliance, 4; the MQM, 2; and Sardar Khalid IBRAHIM Khan's **Jammu and Kashmir People's Party**, 1. Immediately after the election the MMA, which had fielded a large slate of unsuccessful candidates, led a chorus of opposition parties in accusing the central government of vote-rigging, particularly in refugee camps set up in the wake of a devastating October 8, 2005, earthquake, which affected some 2,800 villages in Azad Kashmir and the NWFP, killed over 73,000, and left 3.3 million homeless. On July 22 the MC added 6 of the 8 reserved seats to its total, with the others going to the PPP and the JUI.

With Sikander Hayat having chosen not to seek reelection to the Legislative Assembly, the MC proposed Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, son of Sardar Abdul Qayyum, as prime minister, and he was

sworn in on July 24, 2006. Three days later, the new legislature elected the MC's Raja Zulqarnain Khan as president by a vote of 40–8 over the PPP Azad Kashmir candidate, Sardar QAMAR-U-ZAMAN.

A September 2006 report by Human Rights Watch labeled the Azad Kashmir government a “façade” dominated by Islamabad, the military, and the intelligence services. Free expression is routinely curtailed and torture employed. The report added that there is little freedom for open advocates of Kashmiri independence, who are not allowed to seek public office and often face persecution.

*President:* Raja ZULQARNAIN Khan.

*Prime Minister:* Sardar ATTIQUE AHMED Khan.

**Northern Areas.** The Northern Areas encompass approximately 28,000 square miles, with a population (2006E) of 970,000. The Northern Areas have served as the principal conduit for supplying troops and matériel to the Line of Control, facing Indian Kashmir. Pakistan's overland route to China, the Karakoram Highway, also traverses the Northern Areas, which currently comprises three regions, each with two districts: Baltistan (Ghanche and Skardu), Diamir (Astore and Diamir), and Gilgit (Ghizar and Gilgit). Approximately half the population is Shiite, with the other half divided between Sunnis and Ismailis.

In 1993 Pakistan's caretaker government announced that some provincial powers would be delegated to the region, with the minister for Kashmir and the Northern Areas serving as chief executive.

In May 1999 Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that residents of the Northern Areas were entitled to full constitutional rights, including an elected legislature and an independent judiciary, and gave the government six months to institute the changes. In early October the Sharif administration announced that party-based elections would be held

on November 3 for a Northern Areas Legislative Council having the same powers as provincial assemblies. The announcement marked a significant departure in that the government had previously argued that no permanent institutions could be established until the fate of the entire Jammu and Kashmir was determined through a UN-sponsored plebiscite.

Although the October military coup in Islamabad intervened, the November 1999 balloting took place as scheduled. Of the leading parties, the PML won 6 seats (5 more than it had previously held); the PPP, 6; and the *Tehrik-e-Jafariya-e-Pakistan* (TJP), 6. Voter turnout was very low, which analysts attributed in part to the council's severely limited role. After the 5 seats reserved for women were finally filled nearly nine months later, a PML-TJP alliance controlled 19 of the 29 seats. As a result, the PML's Sahib KHAN was elected speaker of the council and the TJP's Fida Muhammad NASHAD became deputy chief executive.

At the Northern Area Legislative Council election of October 12, 2004, the PML and PPP Parliamentarians (PPPP) each won 6 of the 24 directly elective seats, and the PML-N won 2, the balance being claimed by independents, 8 of whom then aligned with the PML. When the 12 reserved seats (6 for women and 6 for technocrats, all chosen by the elected members) were finally filled on March 22, 2006, the PML picked up 10 of them, with independents claiming the remaining 2. The PPPP immediately protested that the election had been rigged and argued that seats should have been assigned on a proportional basis.

The Northern Areas has frequently seen outbreaks of sectarian violence involving Sunni and Shiite groups. In Gilgit in June 2006 assailants killed an antiterrorism court judge who had been trying cases related to the violence.

*Caretaker Chief Executive of the Northern Areas:* Abbas SARFRAZ.

# QATAR

## STATE OF QATAR

*Dawlat al-Qatar*

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### The Country

A flat, barren, peninsular projection into the Persian Gulf from the Saudi Arabian mainland, Qatar consists largely of sand and rock. The climate is quite warm with very little rainfall, and the lack of fresh water has led to a reliance on desalination techniques. The population is almost entirely Arab, but indigenous Qataris (mainly Sunni Muslims of the conservative Wahhabi sect) comprise substantially less than a majority, as thousands have flocked from abroad to cash in on Qatar's booming economy; the nonindigenous groups include Pakistanis, Iranians, Indians, and Palestinians. The percentage of women in the work force grew substantially in the 1990s, and religious and governmental strictures upon women are less severe than in most other Gulf states. However, most women continue to wear veils in public, accept arranged marriages, and generally defer to the wishes of the male members of their families. Qatari culture as a whole continues to reflect the long history of "feudal tribal autocracy" and the "puritanical" (in the eyes of many Western observers) nature of Wahhabism, which is also practiced in Saudi Arabia, Qatar's influential neighbor.

The economy remains largely dependent upon revenue from oil, which has been produced for export since 1949 and under local production and marketing control since 1977. During the oil boom years of the 1970s, Qatar became one of the world's wealthiest nations. The sheikhdom was therefore able to develop a modern infrastructure, emphasizing schools, hospitals, roads, communication facilities, and water and electric plants. As a re-

sult of declining oil prices in the mid-1980s and a downturn in the economy, government investment also plummeted, leaving some projects unimplemented or incomplete. However, discoveries in oil-recovery techniques, along with soaring oil prices, have since propelled the economy, although Qatar only produces a fraction of the oil output of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Qatar is also home to the world's third-largest reserves of liquid natural gas. As domestic supplies dwindle elsewhere, other industrialized countries



**Political Status:** Traditional sheikhdom; proclaimed fully independent September 1, 1971; first permanent constitution, approved in referendum of April 29, 2003, went into effect on June 8, 2004.

**Area:** 4,247 sq. mi. (11,000 sq. km.).

**Population:** 744,029 (2004C); 843,000 (2006E), including nonnationals, who constitute more than two-thirds of the resident population.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** DOHA (al-Dawhah, 353,000), Rayyan (276,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Qatar Riyal (official rate November 2, 2007: 3.64 riyals = \$1US).

**Sovereign (Emir):** Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa Al THANI; assumed supreme power June 27, 1995, deposing his father Sheikh Khalifa ibn Hamad Al THANI; also served as prime minister July 11, 1995–October 28, 1996.

**Heir to the Throne:** Crown Prince Sheikh Tamin ibn Hamad Al THANI, designated August 5, 2003, replacing his brother, Sheikh Jassim ibn Hamad Al THANI.

**Prime Minister:** Sheikh Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al THANI, appointed by the emir on April 3, 2007, replacing Sheikh Abdallah ibn Khalifa Al THANI, who had resigned the same day.

are poised to invest in Qatar's developing natural gas sector. The government has invested heavily in projects designed to exploit that resource. Attention has also focused on the development of new small- and medium-scale industries under joint public/private ownership. The government recently established a Qatari stock exchange partly to facilitate that process and rewrote investment laws to encourage foreign investment. In early 2005 Qatar was named the most competitive Arab economy by the World Economic Forum. Investments in new projects totaling more than \$60 billion indicated growing confidence in the economy, with much of the revenue going to improve Qatar's infrastructure. Annual GDP growth averaged 8.1 percent from 2004–2006, bolstered by the soaring price of crude oil.

Recognizing that oil and gas reserves are finite, the Qatari government has continued to put great emphasis on diversification. The government is investing in its lucrative tourism sector and in health and education, including Doha's multibillion-dollar Education City, which incorporates branches of five U.S. universities and plans for a science and technology park and a research and teaching hospital. The financial forecast remained positive, as in 2007 the International Bank of Qatar issued a report stating that economic growth was likely to double by 2012.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Qatar was dominated by Bahrain until 1868 and by the Ottoman Turks from 1878 through World War I, until it entered into treaty relations with Great Britain in 1916. Under the treaty, Qatar stipulated that it would not conclude agreements with other foreign governments without British consent; in return, Britain agreed to provide for the defense of the sheikhdom. When the British government announced in 1968 that it intended to withdraw from the Persian Gulf by 1971, Qatar attempted to associate itself with Bahrain and the Trucial Sheikhdoms in a Federation of Arab Emirates. Qatar declared independence when it became apparent that agreement on the structure of the proposed federation could not be obtained; its independence was realized in 1971.

The new state was governed initially by Sheikh Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Abdallah Al THANI, who proved to be an inattentive sovereign. In February 1972 his cousin, Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa ibn Hamad Al THANI, deposed Sheikh Ahmad in a bloodless coup approved by the royal family. Although modernist elements subsequently emerged, the sheikhdom remained a virtually absolute monarch with close relatives of the emir occupying senior government posts.

In May 1989 Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa Al THANI, the emir's heir apparent, was named head of the newly formed Supreme Council for



Planning, which was commissioned to oversee Qatar's resource development projects. The government's economic efforts gained additional momentum on July 18 when the first cabinet reshuffling since 1978 resulted in the replacement of seven elderly ministers.

Like its Arab neighbors, Qatar faced international and domestic pressure for political reform following the 1990–1991 Gulf crisis, which focused Western attention on the dearth of democratic institutions in the region. The issue came to a head in early 1992 when 50 prominent Qataris expressed “concern and disappointment” over the ruling family's “abuse of power” and called for economic and educational reform, ultimately demanding the abolition of the Consultative Council in favor of a true legislative body. However, the government responded harshly to the criticism and briefly detained some of the petitioners, effectively muting the debate over democratization. On the other hand, reformists considered it a hopeful sign that the new cabinet, announced September 1, 1992, included men who were not members of the royal family in several key ministerial positions.

Though Qataris liked Sheikh Khalifa on a personal level, they reportedly believed he was allowing Qatar to slip behind other Gulf countries in economic and political progress. They expressed little dissent when Sheikh Hamad deposed his father on June 27, 1995, while the emir was on a private visit to Switzerland. Sheikh Hamad consolidated his authority and reorganized the cabinet on July 11, naming himself as prime minister and defense minister. (Sheikh Khalifa, who now resides in Europe, returned to Qatar on October 14, 2004, to attend his wife's funeral. It was his first visit to Qatar since he was deposed in the 1995 palace coup.)

In February 1996 the government announced that it had uncovered a coup plot, and those arrested reportedly included army and police officers. Although Sheikh Khalifa strongly denied any involvement in the alleged plot, he argued that it indicated popular support for his reinstatement. The government concluded an out-of-court financial settlement with Sheikh Khalifa in October 1996, which

permitted Sheikh Hamad to establish a sense of permanence to his reign and facilitated an at least partial reconciliation between father and son. In November 1997 some 110 people, including many military officers, were tried for alleged participation in the February 1996 coup attempt. While 85 of the defendants were acquitted in February 2000, about 30 were convicted and received sentences of either life in prison or death. An appeals court upheld their sentences in May 2001. Meanwhile, Sheikh Hamad had gained broader support from the populace and continued to promote his liberalized administration as a potential model for other countries in the region where long-standing regimes have resisted political and economic reform.

On October 22, 1996, Sheikh Hamad appointed his third son, Sheikh Jassim ibn Hamad Al THANI, as crown prince and his heir apparent. Six days later the emir appointed his younger brother, Sheikh Abdullah ibn Khalifa AL THANI, as prime minister to the government named on October 20, which included a number of younger ministers.

On March 8, 1999, the nation's first elections were held for the transitional Consultative Central Municipal Council, which the government established to introduce representative popular elections in the country. In July a committee newly appointed by the emir held its first meeting to draft a constitution that would ultimately provide for a popularly elected legislature.

In 2002 Qatar established a national human rights committee.

The crown prince relinquished his position on August 5, 2003, to his younger brother, Sheikh Tamin ibn Hamad Al THANI. In September the emir conferred the title of deputy prime minister upon two of his ministers, and the new crown prince also was named commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Sheikh Hamad also appointed the first woman to the Qatari cabinet, Sheikha Ahmad al-MAHMUD, in 2003 (see Cabinet, below).

The new constitution was overwhelmingly approved by voters (96.6 percent) in a national referendum on April 29, 2003, and promulgated on June 8, 2004 (see Constitution, below).

In April 2005 the emir fired two ministers and his chief of staff, reportedly because of their alleged involvement in investment fraud.

Sheikh Abdallah ibn Khalifa Al Thani resigned as prime minister on April 3, 2007, and was replaced the same day by Sheikh Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al Thani. The new prime minister was sworn in along with a reshuffled cabinet on April 3.

### *Constitution and Government*

Qatar employs traditional patterns of authority, onto which a limited number of modern governmental institutions have been grafted. The provisional constitution of 1970 provided for a Council of Ministers, headed by an appointed prime minister, and an Advisory Council (Consultative Council) of 20 (subsequently 35) members. Three of the Advisory Council members were to be appointed and the rest elected, although national elections were not held. The judicial system embraces five secular courts (two criminal as well as civil, labor, and appeal) and religious courts, which apply Muslim law (*sharia*).

In November 1998 Sheikh Hamad announced that a constitutional committee would draft a new permanent basic law, one that should provide for a directly elected National Assembly to replace the Consultative Council. The emir announced that all Qataris over 18, including women, would be permitted to vote, while those over 25, also including women, would be allowed to run for the new legislative body. The new constitution, promulgated on June 8, 2004, after gaining approval in a national referendum in 2003, sanctions Islam as the state religion. However, officials say Muslim law only “inspires” the new charter and is not the only source for its content. Under the new charter, the emir retains executive powers, including control over general policy and the appointment of a prime minister and cabinet. The new constitution also states that 30 of 45 members of the Consultative Council will be elected, the remainder appointed by the emir. (No elections had been scheduled as of mid-2007.)

### *Foreign Relations*

Until 1971 Qatar’s foreign relations were administered by Britain. Since reaching independence it has pursued a policy of nonalignment in foreign affairs as a member of the United Nations (UN), the Arab League, and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In 1981 Qatar joined with five other Gulf states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) in establishing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and has since participated in joint military maneuvers and the formation of economic cooperation agreements. However, territorial disputes between Qatar and its neighbors have sporadically threatened GCC unity. In April 1986 fighting nearly erupted between Qatari and Bahraini troops over a small, uninhabited island, Fasht al-Dibal, that Bahrain had reclaimed from an underlying coral reef. Although Qatar subsequently acquiesced to temporary Bahraini control of the island, sovereignty remained in question. In mid-1991 Qatar asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule on Fasht al-Dibal as well as several other Bahraini-controlled islands of contested ownership. In 1997 GCC mediation produced an apparent truce under which Qatar and Bahrain agreed to open embassies in each other’s capitals and await the ICJ ruling. Ultimately, in 2001 the ICJ awarded the disputed islands to Bahrain while reaffirming Qatar’s sovereignty over the town of Zubara and its surrounding territory (which Bahrain had claimed as part of the case). Relations between the two countries have warmed, and in 2006 they signed a deal to begin construction of a causeway connecting them.

Another long-simmering dispute erupted in violence in late September 1992 when two Qatari border guards were killed in a confrontation along the border with Saudi Arabia. Saudi leaders dismissed the incident as an inconsequential clash among Bedouin tribes, but Qatar reacted with surprising hostility, boycotting several GCC ministerial sessions over the issue and reportedly threatening to quit the organization altogether. After years of negotiations, Qatar accepted Saudi Arabia’s

demands and a final agreement on land and sea border demarcation was signed in June 1999.

The sheikhdom denounced the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and responded further by offering its territory as a base for allied forces, expelling PLO representatives, and taking part in joint military exercises. At the GCC's December summit Qatar supported the "Doha Declaration," which called for a plan to prevent a repetition of Iraqi aggression, the departure of "friendly" forces upon the resolution of the crisis, and an Iranian role in security arrangements. In early 1991, Qatari forces (composed primarily of foreigners) participated in allied air and ground actions. Qatar remained closely aligned with the other GCC states on most security issues following the war and signed a defense agreement with the United States in June 1992 in the wake of similar U.S. pacts with Bahrain and Kuwait.

At the same time, Qatar distanced itself from the GCC majority by calling for improved relations with Iran as a means of promoting regional stability. In May 1992 Doha signed a number of agreements with Teheran (covering such matters as air traffic, customs procedure, and the possibility of supplying the sheikhdom with fresh water via a trans-Gulf pipeline); Qatar's good relations with Iran continue, with Doha calling for peaceful negotiations to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue.

Qatar has also adopted a more lenient posture than most of its GCC partners regarding Iraq. In early 1995 it called for the lifting of UN sanctions against Iraq, for humanitarian reasons. However, in the wake of the brief crisis generated by the massing of Iraqi troops near the Kuwaiti border in October 1994, Doha agreed to let the U.S. permanently store its armor in Qatar.

Qatar has recently become an important American ally in the Middle East. In mid-2000 the United States financed and built a massive staging area for its ground troops in eastern Qatar, which later became the U.S. Central Command site in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

On another front, Qatar has faced troubled relations with Russia, dating to 1999, when Qatar har-

bored an exiled Chechen rebel leader. Two members of the Russian secret service were sentenced to life in prison in Qatar in 2004 for assassinating the Chechen exile. Russia denied any involvement but later detained two Qatari sports officials passing through the country. Qatar then retaliated by expelling a Russian diplomat.

On the second anniversary of the U.S.-Iraqi invasion in March 2005, a car bomb exploded in a Qatari theater frequented by Westerners. It was the first incident of its kind in Qatar; an Egyptian expatriate, allegedly linked to al-Qaida, was later blamed in the attack.

Qatar made efforts "to bring Israel into the Gulf" as a contribution to the Middle East peace process, despite contrary sentiments in the region. For example, Arab neighbors "forced" Qatar to close an Israeli trade office in 2000, but reports persisted that the office is still staffed. In May 2005 Israel agreed to Qatar's unprecedented request for support of Doha's candidacy for a rotating seat in the UN Security Council. The request marked the first time an Arab state had sought Israel's help in such a matter, and signaled the potential for increasingly positive relations between the two countries. In early 2006, however, Qatar was among 14 Arab nations attending a summit in Damascus to discuss tightening the boycott against Israel, angering the United States. Qatar allowed the governing Palestinian group, Hamas, to have an office in Doha in 2006 and pledged \$50 million in aid to Hamas, despite pressure from the United States to dissuade Qatar from helping to finance the anti-Israel group.

Relations with Russia improved in 2007, evidenced by President Vladimir Putin's trip to Qatar, and the two countries' announcement that they would explore setting up an OPEC-style cartel for natural gas.

### *Current Issues*

The constitution promulgated on June 8, 2004 (see Constitution and government, above) codified equal rights for women, as well as general rights of freedom of association, expression, and

## Cabinet

As of July 1, 2007

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister

Sheikh Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al Thani  
Abdallah ibn Hamad al-Attiyah

### *Ministers*

*Awqaf* and Islamic Affairs  
Education  
Energy and Industry  
Economy and Trade (Acting)  
Finance  
Foreign Affairs  
Interior  
Justice  
Labor and Social Affairs  
Municipal Affairs and Agriculture

Faisal ibn Abdallah al-Mahmud  
Sheikha Ahmad al-Mahmud [f]  
Abdallah ibn Hamad al-Attiyah  
Yusuf Hussein al-Kamal  
Yusuf Hussein al-Kamal  
Sheikh Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al Thani  
Sheikh Abdallah ibn Nasir Khalifa Al Thani  
Hassan ibn Abdallah al-Ghanim  
Sultan Hassan al-Dhabit al-Dousari  
Sheikh Abdul Raman bin Khalifa bin Abdul  
Azziz Al Thani

### *Ministers of State*

Cabinet Affairs (acting)  
Energy and Industrial Affairs  
Foreign Affairs  
Interior Affairs  
Without Portfolio

Sultan Hassan al-Dhabit al-Dousari  
Muhammad Saleh al-Sada  
Ahmad Abdallah al-Mahmud  
Sheikh Abdallah ibn Nasir ibn Khalifa Al Thani  
Sheikh Muhammad ibn Khalid Al Thani

[f] = female

worship. The constitution also endorses a free press and independent judiciary, but does not provide for the formation of political parties. Although Sheikh Hamad ordered a new constitutional committee to provide a draft law that would include a directly elected national legislature, polling had not been scheduled as of mid-2007. The prime minister, Sheikh Abdallah ibn Khalifa Al Thani, resigned on April 3, 2007, though no reason was given. Some observers said his departure was expected in the wake of recent reports that he was “tired.” The new prime minister, Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al Thani, formerly the first deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, has long been influential in the politics of Qatar, observers said.

## Political Parties

There are no political parties in Qatar.

## Legislature

The **Consultative Council** (*Majlis al-Shura*), created in 1972, was increased from 20 members to 30 in 1975 and to 35 in 1988. Although the provisional constitution of 1970 stipulated that members would serve three-year terms and that all but three are to be elected, the present council consists exclusively of the emir’s appointees, most of them named in 1972 and subsequently reappointed. Arrangements for a partially elected National Assembly are

included in the new constitution that was promulgated in June 2004. (See Constitution and government, above). On June 27, 2006, the emir appointed 35 members for a term of 1-year to the Consultative Council. On July 2, 2007, the emir extended the term of Consultative Council members, though the length of the new term was unclear.

*Speaker:* Muhammad ibn Mubarak al-KHALIFI.

## Communications

Sheikh Hamad relaxed censorship of the press following his assumption of power in 1995. The constitution guarantees freedom of the press, and Qatari newspapers generally operate in a less restricted fashion than their counterparts in other Gulf states.

### *Press*

The following are published in Doha: *Al Watan* (The Nation, 25,000, daily), in Arabic; *al-Rayah* (The Banner, 25,000), Arabic political daily; *al-Arab* (The Arab, 25,000), Arabic daily; *al-Sharq* (The Orient, 45,000), Arabic daily; *Gulf Times* (15,000 daily), in English; *Daily News Bulletin*, in English and Arabic; the *Peninsula*, in English; and the *Qatar Tribune*, in English.

### *News Agency*

The domestic facility is the state-run Qatar News Agency (*Wikalat al-Anba al-Qatariya*).

## *Broadcasting and Computing*

Radio programming is provided by the government-operated Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS) and television by Qatar Television Service (QTS). In addition, the government in 1997 launched the *Al Jazeera* satellite television station, which has become well known in the Gulf and elsewhere for offering “differing” and, according to many in the West, at times inaccurate views (particularly on the Iraqi conflict). The station’s broadcasts gained global attention after showing videos of al-Qaida leaders in the early 2000s. The government of Qatar claimed the station was independent following criticism by the U.S. government that *Al Jazeera* broadcasts were promoting anti-American sentiments in the region. The watchdog group, Reporters Without Borders, noted that *Al Jazeera* does not address domestic Qatari issues. In 2006 *Al Jazeera* launched an English-language channel.

In 2005 there were approximately 179 personal computers and 282 Internet users for every 1,000 inhabitants. In that same year there were 912 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** (Vacant)

**U.S. Ambassador to Qatar:** (Vacant)

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Nasir Abd al-Aziz al-NASIR

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, GCC, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO, WTO

# SAUDI ARABIA

## KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

*al-Mamlakah al-Arabiyyah al-Saudiyyah*

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### The Country

A vast, largely desert country occupying the greater part of the Arabian Peninsula, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exhibits both traditional and contemporary lifestyles. Frontiers were poorly defined for many years, and no census was undertaken prior to 1974. Some 85 percent of the indigenous inhabitants, who have traditionally adhered to patriarchal forms of social organization, are Sunni Muslim of the conservative Wahhabi sect. The Shi'ite population (15 percent) is located primarily in the east. A strict interpretation of Islam has limited female participation in the paid labor force to about 5 percent, though they have made gains under recent reforms. Mecca and Medina, the two holiest cities of Islam and the goals of an annual pilgrimage by Muslims from all over the world, lie within the western region known as the Hijaz, where the commercial and administrative center of Jiddah is also located.

Saudi Arabia is the leading exporter of oil and possesses the largest known petroleum reserves (estimated at upwards of 200 billion barrels), which have made it one of the world's richest nations. The government acquired full interest in the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco) in 1980. Dramatic surges in oil revenue permitted heightened expenditures after 1973 that focused on the development of airports, seaports, and roads, as well as the modernization of medical, educational, and telecommunications systems. In addition, large-scale irrigation projects and heavy price subsidies yielded agricultural self-sufficiency in a

country that once produced only 10 percent of its food needs. Vast sums were also committed to armaments, particularly modern fighter planes, missiles, and air defense systems.

Because of a reversal in oil prices and substantial support to Iraq in its eight-year war with Iran, the Saudis experienced a major recession in the early 1980s. An economic revival was sparked in the early 1990s, however, by increased oil production as an offshoot of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991. Subsequently, concern over falling cash



reserves and growing external debt prompted substantial budgetary retrenchment, including reductions in the traditionally high subsidies upon which Saudis had come to rely. The government also introduced programs designed to help move Saudis into private-sector jobs, which are held primarily by foreign workers.

Generally higher oil prices in 1996 and 1997 permitted a return to moderately expansive budgets, with emphasis being placed on infrastructure designed to promote private-sector development. However, financial difficulties returned in 1998 as the result of a sharp drop in oil prices and the effects of the Asian economic crisis. In July 2003 the government bolstered its "Saudization" effort to help reduce unemployment, most significantly by replacing 17,800 foreign white-collar workers with Saudis. Unemployment, widely estimated at nearly 30 percent (though the government says it is in the single digits), is a particular problem among those under age 20, a group that constitutes more than half the population.

As a result of the U.S. war in Iraq since 2003, Saudi oil prices and production have increased significantly. In September 2003 Russia and Saudi Arabia agreed to a landmark deal paving the way for a multibillion-dollar Saudi investment in the Russian oil industry, thus ensuring long-term capacity. As a result of surging economic growth, the kingdom has improved roads, schools, and hospitals. It has also continued to move ahead with privatization efforts and in 2006 opened its stock market to foreign investors. GDP growth was 6.6 percent in 2006 and was expected to continue at the same pace in 2007, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), based on the global demand for oil. The IMF encouraged Saudi Arabia to sustain its broad-based expansion of the non-oil sector and to use its substantial oil revenue to promote private sector growth.

In 2007 the government accelerated its efforts to stem unemployment by encouraging more private sector hiring of Saudi citizens, and it increased the number of scholarships for Saudis studying abroad, among other incentives.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Founded in 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was largely the creation of King Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD (Ibn Saud), who devoted 30 years to reestablishing the power his ancestors had held in the 18th and 19th centuries. Oil concessions were granted in the 1930s to what later became Aramco, but large-scale production did not begin until the late 1940s.

Ibn Saud was succeeded in 1953 by an ineffectual son, Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD, who was persuaded by family influence in 1958 to delegate control to his younger brother, Crown Prince Faysal (Faisal) ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD. Faysal began a modernization program, abolished slavery, curbed royal extravagance, adopted sound fiscal policies, and personally assumed the functions of prime minister prior to the formal deposition of King Saud on November 2, 1964. Faysal was assassinated by one of his nephews, Prince Faysal ibn Musaid ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD, while holding court in Riyadh on March 25, 1975, and was immediately succeeded by his brother, Crown Prince Khalid ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD.

Despite a number of coup attempts, the most important occurring in mid-1969 following the discovery of a widespread conspiracy involving civilian and military elements, internal stability has tended to prevail under the monarchy. The regime was visibly shaken, however, in late 1979 when several hundred Muslim extremists seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca during the annual pilgrimage. Under the leadership of a *mahdi* (messiah), the men involved in the takeover called for an end to corruption and monarchical rule, and for a return to strict Islamic precepts. They held parts of the complex for two weeks; several hundred casualties resulted among the insurgents, hostages, and government forces. Citizens of several other predominantly Muslim countries, including Egypt and South Yemen, were among the 63 participants publicly beheaded on January 9, 1980, for their role in the seizure. Collaterally, the Shiite minority

**Political Status:** Unified kingdom established September 23, 1932; under absolute monarchical system; Basic Law of Government based on Islamic law promulgated by royal decree on March 1, 1992.

**Area:** 829,995 sq. mi. (2,149,690 sq. km.).

**Population:** 16,948,388 (1992C); 22,682,000 (2006E). The figures include approximately 4,624,000 foreign nationals in 1992 and 6,045,000 in 2006.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** RIYADH (royal capital, 5,126,000), Jiddah (administrative capital, 3,557,000), Makkah (Mecca, 1,446,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Riyal (official rate November 2, 2007: 3.74 riyals \$1US).

**Ruler and Prime Minister:** King Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD; confirmed on August 1, 2005, by the royal court upon the death of King Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD.

**Heir Apparent:** Crown Prince Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD; appointed crown prince and heir to the throne on August 1, 2005.

initiated antigovernment demonstrations in eastern areas of the kingdom.

King Khalid died on June 13, 1982, and was immediately succeeded as monarch and prime minister by his half-brother and heir, Crown Prince Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD. On the same day, Prince Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD was designated heir to the throne and first deputy prime minister. King Fahd's rule subsequently encountered potential instability, with declining oil revenues threatening social programs, and a radical Islamic movement, supported by Iran, attempting to undermine the regime diplomatically and militarily.

King Fahd's decision in August 1990 to request Western, as well as regional, assistance in defending Saudi Arabia's border against the possibility of an Iraqi invasion was widely supported within the kingdom. However, the presence of Western forces

and media resulted in intense scrutiny of Saudi government and society, raising questions about the nation's inability to defend itself despite massive defense expenditures; generating calls for modernization of the political system, which the king answered by promising reforms; and eliciting signs of dissent, including a quickly suppressed, but highly publicized, protest by Saudi women for greater personal liberties. The government also faced growing pressure from Islamists, even though the regime was already considered one of the most conservative in the Arab world because of its active enforcement of Islamic interdictions. In May 1991 Islamist leaders sent a highly publicized letter to King Fahd demanding 12 reforms, including extended implementation of sharia and creation of an independent consultative council that would be responsible for domestic and foreign policy.

In a partial response to Islamists as well as to "liberals," King Fahd issued royal decrees on March 1, 1992, creating Saudi Arabia's first written rules of governance and providing for the formation of a national Consultative Council. At the same time, he rejected the notion that "the prevailing democratic system in the world" was suitable for Saudi Arabia and insisted that no elections would be in the offing.

In September 1992 Islamist leaders again formally challenged government policy, this time in a "memorandum" to religious leaders that was viewed as "more defiant and bolder" than the 1991 document. The action was followed in May 1993 by the establishment of a Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR; see Political Groups, below). However, the government quickly declared the organization illegal, with King Fahd warning the Islamists to cease distributing antigovernment material and using mosques as "political pulpits."

The most conspicuous result of a July 1993 cabinet reshuffle was the creation of a new Ministry of Islamic Guidance, which was seen as an attempt to buttress the kingdom's "religious establishment" against Islamist pressure within the Shiite and Sunni populations. The following month



the king appointed the members of the national Consultative Council.

The council consisted entirely of men, none drawn from the royal family, representing a broad social spectrum. Although the government heralded the inauguration of the council in December 1993 as a major advance, some observers derided it as a “public relations exercise,” noting that council sessions would not be open to the public and that topics for debate required advance approval by the king.

Questions also surrounded the king’s October 1994 appointment of the new Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs, which was dominated by members of the royal family and technocrats owing their livelihood to the government. The new body was viewed as a further effort by the monarchy to undercut the appeal of the Islamists, who had been pressing for further Islamization of government policy and a curtailment of Western ties since the 1990–1991 Gulf crisis and war.

On August 2, 1995, in the most sweeping ministerial shakeup in two decades, no less than 13 portfolios, including those of finance, industry, and petroleum, changed hands, with many political veterans being succeeded by younger, Western-educated technocrats. While members of the royal family were left in charge of several key ministries (notably defense, interior, and foreign affairs), the obvious intent was to improve efficiency by bringing in a new generation of officials.

King Fahd was hospitalized in early November 1995, suffering from what was widely reported but never officially confirmed to be a stroke. On January 1, 1996, he formally transferred responsibility for “affairs of state” to Crown Prince Abdallah. Although that decision had been expected by many observers to lead to a permanent succession, King Fahd formally reassumed full authority on February 22.

An explosion near a U.S. Air Force building, the Khobar Towers, in Dhahran in June 1996 killed 19 U.S. servicemen and wounded 350, prompting the transfer of American forces to more secure desert bases. Meanwhile, in what was seen as a related development, the Saudi government launched

a crackdown on Shiite dissidents in the east, where anti-monarchical and anti-Western sentiment appeared to be the strongest. Members of a pro-Iran Shiite group were later accused by the United States of being responsible for the attack (see Political Groups, below).

A cabinet reshuffle was announced on June 6, 1999, with members of the ruling family retaining six key posts. A Supreme Economic Council was established in August to oversee proposed reform in non-oil sectors, and a Supreme Council for Petroleum and Mineral Affairs was created in January 2000. By 2003 major reforms had begun to take shape. In an unprecedented move in January of that year, Crown Prince Abdallah met with reformists, some of whom the government had jailed in the 1990s for advocating reforms. Government representatives also met for the first time on Saudi soil with a UN human rights group, and in October, for the first time a woman was named dean at a major university. The most stunning news, however, came on October 13, 2003, when the government announced that it would hold nationwide elections for municipal councils in 2004 (postponed to 2005) to be followed by elections for city councilors and, ultimately, members of the Consultative Council. The announcement coincided with the country’s first human rights conference, held in Riyadh, October 13–15.

Further, King Fahd granted greater legislative powers to the Consultative Council in November 2003, effectively shifting some influence from the cabinet to the legislative body. The reforms followed in the wake of increasing pressure from “liberals,” but more significantly after an attack in May 2003 on a luxury residential compound that killed 35 and wounded hundreds (see Foreign relations, below). The government has been under increasing pressure from the United States since the September 11, 2001, attacks to undertake social and political reforms.

King Fahd died on August 1, 2005, at age 82 after an extended illness and a 23-year reign. He was immediately succeeded by 82-year-old Crown Prince Abdallah, his half-brother. Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD, the longtime defense minister,

replaced Abdallah as crown prince (while continuing to hold the defense portfolio and several other positions).

### *Constitution and Government*

Saudi Arabia is a traditional monarchy with all power ultimately vested in the king, who is also the country's supreme religious leader. The kingdom held its first national elections in some 30 years on February 10, 2005, though women continued to be disenfranchised. There are no political parties in Saudi Arabia, and legislation is by royal decree, though in 2003 King Fahd granted a greater legislative role to the Consultative Council, shifting some influence from the cabinet. In recent years an attempt was made to modernize the machinery of government by creating ministries to manage affairs of state. However, the king serves additionally as prime minister, and many sensitive cabinet posts are held by members of the royal family, often for long periods of time. The judicial system, encompassing summary and general courts, a Court of Cassation, and a Supreme Council of Justice, is largely based on Islamic religious law (sharia), but tribal and customary law are also applied. Sweeping judicial reforms were announced on April 3, 2005, including establishment of a supreme court and appeals courts in the 13 provinces.

For administrative purposes Saudi Arabia is divided into 13 provinces or regions, each headed by a governor appointed by the king. In April 1994 the provinces were subdivided into 103 governorates. The principal urban areas have half-elected, half-appointed municipal councils, while villages and tribes are governed by sheikhs in conjunction with legal advisers and other community leaders.

On March 1, 1992, King Fahd authorized the creation of a 60-member national Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) headed by a chair (speaker) appointed by the king to a four-year term. The *Majlis* (inaugurated on December 29, 1993) was empowered to initiate laws, review domestic and foreign policies, and scrutinize budgets "in the tradition of Islamic consultation." Council mem-

bership was raised to 90 in 1997 and to 120 in 2001. In late 1993 the king also issued a decree authorizing the formation of consultative councils in each province, encompassing the provincial governor and at least ten appointed individuals. Another decree codified a "basic system of government" based on Islamic law. The 83-article document is widely described as the country's first written constitution, which went beyond previous unwritten conventions by guaranteeing individual rights. It also formally delineated the rules of succession, institutionalizing the king's unilateral authority to designate (and dismiss) his heir, a son or grandson of King Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, who died in 1953.

In October 1994 King Fahd appointed the Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs to review educational, economic, and foreign policies to ensure that they were conducted in concert with Islamic precepts.

On October 20, 2006, the king issued a new law establishing a committee made up of the sons and grandsons of King Fahd to choose future kings and crown princes. The changes do not go into effect until the current crown prince becomes king. (See Current issues, below.)

The first Consultative Council elections were still under consideration by the ruling family as of mid-2007.

### *Foreign Relations*

Since the late 1950s Saudi Arabia has stood as the leading conservative power in the Arab world. The early 1960s were marked by hostility toward Egypt over North Yemen, with Riyadh supporting the royalists and Cairo backing the ultimately victorious republicans during the civil war that broke out in 1962. By 1969, however, Saudi Arabia had become a prime mover behind the pan-Islamic movement and subsequently sought to mediate such disputes as the Lebanese conflict in 1976 and the Iran-Iraq war. An influential member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the kingdom was long a restraining influence on oil price increases. Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, Saudi Arabia, a swing

producer, has been authorized by OPEC to continue to boost production to meet global demand.

The Saudis provided financial support for other Arab countries involved in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts and broke diplomatic relations with Cairo in April 1979 to oppose the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Otherwise, the kingdom has been generally allied with the United States. The outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran in September 1980 prompted the Carter administration, which earlier in the year had rejected a Saudi request for assistance in upgrading its military capability, to announce the "temporary deployment" of four Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWAC aircraft). An additional factor was the strong support given by Riyadh to Washington's plan, introduced following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, to increase the U.S. military presence throughout the Gulf region. Subsequently, despite vehement Israeli objections, the Reagan administration secured Senate approval in October 1981 of a major package of arms sales to Saudi Arabia that included five of the surveillance aircraft, although delivery did not commence until mid-1986 because of controversy over U.S. supervisory rights. Earlier, in an effort to win congressional support for their arms purchases, the Saudis had indicated a willingness to allow American use of bases in the kingdom in the event of Soviet military action in the Gulf. As the U.S. Iran-*contra* scandal unfolded in late 1986 and 1987, it was alleged that the Saudis had agreed to aid anti-Communist resistance groups around the world as part of the AWAC purchase deal, ultimately making some \$32 million available to the Nicaraguan rebels between July 1984 and March 1985 after U.S. funding for the *contra* cause had been suspended by Congress. Subsequently, plans announced by the White House in May 1987 to sell more than a billion dollars' worth of planes and missiles to Saudi Arabia were delayed by congressional hearings into the Iran-*contra* affair. In July 1988 relations were further strained when Riyadh, citing congressional delays and other "embarrassments" caused by Washington's criticism of Chinese missile imports, purchased \$25 billion of British armaments, thus undercutting

reliance on the United States as its leading military supplier.

During 1987 and 1988 the Iran-Iraq war yielded continued political tension between revolutionary Teheran and pro-Western Riyadh. In July 1987 the seizure of Mecca's Grand Mosque by Muslim extremists resulted in the death of an estimated 400 Iranian pilgrims; subsequently, Iranian officials called for the immediate "uprooting" of the Saudi royal family, while King Fahd, supported by most of the Arab states, vowed to continue as "custodian" of Islam's holy shrines. In April 1988, citing the Mecca riot and increasing Iranian attacks on its shipping vessels, Saudi Arabia became the first member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to sever diplomatic relations with Teheran. The Khomeini regime's subsequent decision to forbid its citizens from participating in the 1988 pilgrimage was seen as an attempt to discredit Saudi administration of the holy cities. (However, the subsequent rise of a more moderate leadership in Iran paved the way for a restoration of diplomatic relations in March 1991.)

In late 1982 Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal became the first representative of the monarchy known to have traveled to the Soviet Union in several decades. Remarks by the prince that Moscow could play a role in Middle East negotiations gave rise to speculation that relations between the two countries might improve. In 1985 there were indications that the kingdom was moving closer to establishing formal diplomatic relations (suspended since 1938), but not until Moscow's 1988 announcement that it would withdraw from Afghanistan (Riyadh long having been a highly vocal supporter of the rebel president-in-exile, Sibghatullah Mojaddidi) did the 50-year-old impasse appear capable of resolution. Diplomatic relations were restored in 1990, and in return for the Soviet Union's support during the Gulf crisis, Saudi Arabia provided some \$2 billion in previously pledged emergency economic aid to Moscow. Saudi Arabia also established diplomatic ties with China in 1990. In 1992 the kingdom moved quickly to establish ties with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), offering economic aid and pursuing

private-sector ties. Particular attention was given to the Central Asian republics, where the Saudis were expected to vie with Turkey and Iran for influence.

In March 1989 Iraqi and Saudi officials signed a mutual noninterference pact. However, in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and amid reports that Iraqi troops were massing on the Saudi border, the Saudi government shed its traditional role as regional consensus builder, criticized the invasion as "vile aggression," and called for international assistance to prevent further Iraqi gains. The ensuing buildup of Western and regional forces along the Saudi border with Kuwait caused a rupture in relations with pro-Iraqi leaders of Yemen, Jordan, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). On September 19 Riyadh rescinded special privileges for Yemeni and PLO workers, prompting repatriation of more than half of the 1.5 million Yemeni citizens in the kingdom. Shortly thereafter oil deliveries to Jordan were suspended, Jordanian diplomats were expelled, and the Saudi ambassador to Amman recalled. Meanwhile, the Saudi government moved to reimburse and reward its allies, particularly Egypt and Syria. The kingdom's most dramatic Gulf crisis decision, however, was to acknowledge its effective alliance with the United States, which responded by promising to sell the Saudis \$20 billion in armaments. Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in the U.S.-led anti-Iraqi coalition during the 1991 war included participation in 6,500 air sorties, the eviction of Iraqi forces from Khafji, and the liberation of Kuwait City.

The stationing of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia became a sensitive matter after the Gulf war. The Saudi government allowed U.S. troops to remain in the kingdom—the birthplace of Islam and home to its most sacred places—angering many, including Osama bin Laden and his supporters. During the buildup to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, King Fahd announced that the kingdom would not participate in a war against Iraq, and he proposed that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein go into exile to avert a war. However, U.S. forces were eventually allowed to deploy to Saudi Arabia prior to the war. After the May 12, 2003, suicide bombings of a compound

in Riyadh that killed 35 and wounded hundreds, Riyadh became more attuned to the U.S. war on terror, with the government declaring its own such war in August 2003.

The kingdom strengthened its relationship with the United States in 2004 when the two countries joined in asking the United Nations to crack down on one of the kingdom's largest charities, which reportedly helped fund al-Qaida. In June 2005 some 57 Islamic nations—Saudi Arabia among them—met in Yemen and agreed to fight terrorism, now a defining issue in the Middle East. Among the concerns for Riyadh, analysts said, was that sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq might eventually make its way into Saudi Arabia if armed militants crossed the border and gained support from Shiite hardliners in the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's relations with North Yemen and South Yemen and, since 1990, the unified Republic of Yemen have often been strained, particularly regarding border demarcations. In March 2005 the two countries signed a border agreement, influenced heavily by their increasing desire to halt the flow of weapons and drug smuggling and an increasing number of terrorist suspects, and the following month Yemen and Saudi Arabia held their first joint military exercise.

Saudi Arabia has played a role in supporting a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, at times acceding to foreign pressure. In early 1993 the Saudis responded favorably to a U.S. request for resumption of aid to the PLO as an inducement to the Palestinians to rejoin stalled peace talks with Israel. Riyadh also underscored its backing for the regional peace process the following September, when it convinced the GCC countries to end their long-standing boycott of companies doing business with Israel (see Arab League article for details). In 2003 Crown Prince Abdallah presented the Arab League an initiative for peace with Israel in return for its withdrawal from occupied territories. (The following day, however, Israel launched a massive invasion to reoccupy the West Bank.) When Saudi Arabia was granted membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2005, the kingdom granted assurances

that it had ended its trade boycott against Israel. Subsequently, however, Saudi Arabia acknowledged that it had lifted only “certain aspects” of the boycott. (As of 2007 the boycott was still in effect.) In February 2006 Riyadh joined other Arab countries in rejecting a U.S. request that they cut off aid to Hamas (which won election to the new Palestinian government a month earlier).

As of 2006 Saudi Arabia and Iran were working toward developing cordial relations, capped by a visit to Teheran by the Saudi foreign minister. Saudi Arabia was still uneasy, however, in the wake of reports about Iran’s nuclear program and its growing influence in Iraq and Lebanon.

In February 2007 Saudi Arabia invited the leaders of Hamas and Fatah to a summit in Mecca, where the warring Palestinian factions agreed to form a unity government (which subsequently failed). Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia reportedly has continued to try to revive the Middle East peace initiative presented by Crown Prince Abdallah in 2003. Also in February, Russian president Vladimir Putin visited Riyadh to discuss expansion of trade and cooperation on nuclear power, as well as possible arms sales to the kingdom.

### *Current Issues*

Crown Prince Abdallah became for many years the de facto ruler in Saudi Arabia in light of King Fahd’s poor health, adopting a clearly pro-Arab stance designed to enhance regional ties. Abdallah was considered the primary architect of March 1999 OPEC production cutbacks that triggered a dramatic surge in oil prices to the benefit, among others, of the GCC states. Although Riyadh responded to pressure from Washington and other Western capitals in 2000 by supporting production increases to dampen prices, the Saudi government again underscored its growing outspokenness on the international stage by criticizing European governments for contributing to high energy prices through taxation.

In 2000 and 2001 Abdallah continued to emphasize the economic reform program he launched in 1998, courting foreign investment with tax re-

ductions and easing of land ownership restrictions while the kingdom pursued membership in the WTO. The government also invited Western companies to help develop largely untapped natural gas resources and participate in related applications of the gas sector within Saudi Arabia. Domestic political reform proceeded at a slower pace, however, in view of the heavy influence of religious conservatives as well as other “vested interests” in government. Meanwhile, the international community intensified its criticism of alleged human rights violations and discrimination against women in Saudi Arabia. Responding to external pressure and perhaps to criticism by reformists, the kingdom on March 9, 2004, established the National Human Rights Association, composed of 41 members, including 10 women.

The al-Qaida attacks on the United States in September 2001 put an unwelcome spotlight on Saudi Arabia since 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens, while Osama bin Laden, the presumed mastermind behind the plot, is a member of one of the wealthiest Saudi families. (For complete information on bin Laden, who was stripped of his Saudi citizenship in 1995, and al-Qaida, see the article on Afghanistan.) After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, with al-Qaida-linked organizations targeting Westerners with increasing frequency and ferocity, Riyadh launched a major crackdown on Islamic extremists and Islamic religious leaders preaching violence. It also attempted to overcome criticism of previous years for its support of Islamic extremists by implementing laws to combat the financing of terrorism. Concurrently, reformists renewed their efforts to push the royal family toward more democratic elections and allowing women to vote. Progress was notable in social and political reforms, with changes to the judicial system (see Constitution and government, above), and in April 2005 the grand mufti, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz al-Asheikh, issued an edict opposing the practice of forcing women to marry against their will. (In an unprecedented series of events in 2005, a new labor law gave women the right to maternity leave, and women were allowed to campaign openly for seats on Jiddah’s Chamber of

Commerce, with two women subsequently securing seats.) Meanwhile, thousands of alleged terror suspects were arrested or killed (including a top al-Qaida leader) by security forces within the country and at the border with Yemen, and three Saudi dissidents were sentenced for up to nine years after petitioning for a constitutional monarchy.

As expected during municipal elections held in February, March, and April 2005, Islamists dominated in Riyadh, Mecca, and Medina after three rounds of voting. In the eastern provinces, a number of Shiites were elected as they comprise most of the populace there. Turnout was low in the major cities, and there were accusations that, in violation of election laws, some Islamists had formed coalitions to garner votes.

Joining the WTO in 2005 was called a “key achievement” for King Abdallah after more than a decade of negotiations, reflecting Saudi Arabia’s progress in economic reforms and bilateral relations. However, the kingdom came under increasing criticism from the United States in 2006 for its alleged mistreatment of foreign workers, depriving women of the right to vote, arresting dissidents, restricting religious freedom, and lagging in progress toward democratization. On a more positive note, the high price of oil continued to boost revenue by billions of dollars, increasing GDP and bolstering the government’s efforts to employ more Saudis. Plans were also announced for what was described as the kingdom’s single largest private sector investment, the \$26 billion King Abdallah Economic City project on the Red Sea near Jiddah, which aims to create 1 million jobs for Saudi citizens.

In a move observers hailed as “the most important reform since King Abdallah ascended the throne,” according to the *Financial Times*, the king set up a committee of heirs of King Fahd, empowering them to vote by secret ballot on the eligibility of future kings and crown princes. The measure was designed to ward off power struggles within the Al Saud family and ensure that consensus candidates would be chosen by giving different branches of the ruling family a voice in the selection process, observers said.

Turmoil in the region in 2006 inevitably affected Saudi Arabia, whose ambassador to the United States abruptly resigned in December, reportedly because he backed the idea of U.S. talks with Iran as a way of helping to resolve the war in Iraq. The Saudi government, which supports the Sunnis in Iraq, has become increasingly concerned that if the United States were to accede to mounting pressure in Washington to withdraw its forces from Iraq, the minority Sunni population there would be targeted by Shiite militias. Meanwhile, with sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shiites on the rise in the Middle East, Shiites in Saudi Arabia reportedly were worried that they would have to give up significant gains they had made in recent years. On a more positive note, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made his first visit to Saudi Arabia in March, and the leaders of both countries agreed to try to ease Sunni-Shiite tensions in the region.

In February 2007 ten men were arrested on charges of financing terrorism. It was subsequently reported that three of the men were well-known reformists who had been circulating petitions seeking political change in the kingdom. In April 172 Islamist militants were accused of planning attacks on public figures, military areas, and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, according to the government. Also in April, the government announced a program of re-education and rehabilitation as part of an intensive effort to counter the “radicalization” of Islamist militants. The government said it would help the reformed militants find jobs and wives and would help their families financially.

## Political Groups

There are no political parties, as such, in Saudi Arabia.

**Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights**—CDLR. The CDLR was formed in early May 1993 by several prominent Islamists who described the grouping as the kingdom’s first human rights organization. However, the government

charged that the CDLR was in reality a vehicle for extending fundamentalist criticism of the monarchy, which had been on the rise since the Gulf crisis. Consequently, the CDLR was ordered to disband only two weeks after its creation; in addition, CDLR leader Muhammad al-Masari and some 1,000 followers were arrested, and a number of CDLR supporters were fired from their government positions. After his release the following November, al-Masari moved to London, where the CDLR was reestablished in April 1994 as an exile organization. The committee subsequently issued numerous communiqués criticizing the Saudi regime's human rights and economic policies. Although accused by Riyadh of attempting to promote "destabilization" so as to facilitate elimination of the monarchy in favor of a fundamentalist regime, CDLR leaders took no official antimonarchical stance and steadfastly avowed a policy of nonviolence. However, the CDLR remained critical of what it alleged to be widespread corruption within the ruling family and direct in its call for imposition of strict Islamic rule in the kingdom. (In 1998 the Saudi government released Sheikh Sulaymah al-RUSHUDI, reportedly one of the founders of the CDLR.)

In 1996 a conflict was reported between CDLR leaders Muhammad al-Masari and Saad al-FAQIH, with the latter forming a breakaway grouping called the **Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia** (MIRA). Subsequent activity has been minimal on the part of both groups, although in 2003 MIRA led an unprecedented demonstration in Riyadh, coinciding with the opening of the kingdom's first human rights conference. MIRA's antigovernment website in March 2005 posted an audiotape purporting to represent the new al-Qaida leader in Saudi Arabia. According to MIRA, he was killed in April 2005. A year later, Abd al Aziz al SHANBARI, a former Saudi dissident who had been affiliated with MIRA, denounced the group during a meeting with King Abdallah. Al Shanbari returned to Saudi Arabia after two years in exile in London, reportedly having made some sort of private arrangement with the king. MIRA reportedly operates out of London.

MIRA's website in 2006 addressed the new succession law issued by the king, claiming that the real aim of the law was to exclude Prince Nayif ibn Abd al-Aziz Al SAUD, the interior minister and a brother of King Fahd, from ascending to the throne. The reported reasons for excluding Nayif were his alleged defiance of many of the king's orders and pressure from U.S. officials who were said to be dissatisfied with the level of cooperation from Nayif.

*Leader:* Muhammad al-MASARI.

**Reform Movement.** A loosely organized Shi'ite grouping, the Reform Movement (also referenced as the Islamic Revolutionary Organization in the Arabian Peninsula) originally operated out of London and Damascus, its activities including publication of the *Arabian Peninsula*, a newsletter critical of, among other things, the Saudi government's human rights record. In late 1993 the movement's leaders agreed to discontinue its attacks on the government in return for the release of Shi'ite dissidents from prison and permission for Shi'ite expatriates to return to Saudi Arabia. However, some members reportedly remained in "revolutionary" mode and opposed to the proposed reconciliation pact. A number of Shiites were arrested in the government crackdown that followed the 1996 bombing in Dhahran, prompting observers to suggest that the agreement with the Reform Movement had collapsed. However, little formal activity was subsequently reported on behalf of the movement, though it continues to press for change and its members are routinely arrested, convicted, and jailed. The leader, Sheikh Hassan al-Safar, was reportedly living in exile in Damascus in 1993. At some point al-Safar, a cleric, returned to the Shi'ite-dominated area of eastern Saudi Arabia. In 2003 al-Safar was among those invited to participate in the king's "national dialogue" in Mecca, where measures to counter extremism were among the topics. It was reported to be the first such gathering in the country to include Shiites and Sunnis, and observers made note of the fact that leaders from the two main religious branches were seen together on television.

*Leader:* Sheikh Hassan al-SAFAR.

## Cabinet

As of July 1, 2007

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister

King Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud  
Prince Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud

### *Ministers*

Agriculture	Fahd ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Sulayman Balqhanaim
Civil Service	Muhammad ibn Ali al-Fayiz
Commerce and Industry	Hashim ibn Abdallah ibn Hashim al-Yamani
Communications and Information Technology	Muhammad ibn Jamil ibn Ahmad Mulla
Culture and Information	Iyad ibn Amin Madani
Defense and Aviation	Prince Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
Economy and Planning	Khalid ibn Muhammad al-Qusaibi
Education	Abdallah ibn Salih Ubayd
Finance	Ibrahim ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Assaf
Foreign Affairs	Prince Saud al-Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
Health	Hamad ibn Abdallah al-Mani
Higher Education	Khalid ibn Muhammad al-Angari
Interior	Prince Nayif ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call, and Guidance	Salih ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Ashaikh
Justice	Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Ashaikh
Labor	Ghazi ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Qusaibi
Municipal and Rural Affairs	Prince Mitib ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
Petroleum and Mineral Resources	Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Naimi
Pilgrimage	Fuad ibn Abd al-Salaam ibn Muhammad al-Farsi
Social Affairs	Abd al-Muhsin ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Akkas
Transport	Jubarah ibn Ayd al-Suraysiri
Water and Electricity	Abdallah ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Husayn

### *Ministers of State*

Foreign Affairs

Musaid ibn Muhammad al-Ayban  
Abd al-Aziz ibn Abdallah al-Khuwaytir  
Mutlaab ibn Abdallah al-Nafissa  
Prince Abd al-Aziz ibn Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud  
Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Yusuf Zaynal  
Nizar Ubayd Madani  
Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn Abd al-Aziz

Secretary General, Supreme Commission for Tourism

In January 1992 a number of fundamentalist groups reportedly coalesced under the banner of the **Islamic Awakening** with the intention of leading a demonstration against government policies. However, the rally was canceled after the group was warned that the government had ordered secu-

rity forces to arrest protestors. In October 1996 the government reportedly arrested “scores” of alleged adherents of a Shiite dissident group known as **Saudi Hezbollah**, operating in eastern Saudi Arabia under the leadership of Sheikh Jafar al-MUBARAK. According to the U.S. government,



13 of the 14 people charged in connection with the Khobar Towers bombing in 1996 were involved with the pro-Iran Saudi *Hezbollah* group.

## Legislature

On March 1, 1992, King Fahd decreed that a **Consultative Council** (*Majlis al-Shura*) of 60 members (plus a speaker) would be appointed within six months. In accordance with the decree, a speaker was named the following September. Other members were not appointed until August 20, 1993, and the council convened on December 29. Upon the expiration of the first term of the council in July 1997, King Fahd increased its membership to 90 for the subsequent four-year term. Membership increased to 120 for the new council appointed on May 24, 2001, and the council was renewed on April 11, 2005. Elections to the Consultative Council were still under consideration by the ruling family in 2007.

*Chair:* Dr. Salih ibn HUMAYD.

## Communications

Most newspapers and periodicals are published by privately (but not individually) owned national press institutions. The government also publishes a number of periodicals. Although censorship was formally abolished in 1961, criticism of the king and government policy is dealt with harshly by the government, and a genuinely free flow of ideas from the outside world is discouraged. In May 2003 the editor of the liberal daily *al-Watan* was removed after criticizing Wahhabi Islam as extremism. However, earlier in 2003 the government allowed journalists to organize and form their own association. In 2006 two journalists were dismissed by the government for reporting on topics outside the strict limits set by the authorities. In 2007 the watchdog group Reporters Without Borders said, "The Saudi regime maintains very tight control of all news and self-censorship is pervasive. Enterprising journalists pay dearly for the slightest criticism of the authorities or the policies of 'brother Arab' countries."

The government also reportedly blocks access to a wide range of Internet sites it believes are offensive.

## Press

The following papers are Arabic dailies published in Jiddah, unless otherwise noted: *al-Asharq al-Awsat* (224,992); *Okaz* (107,614); *Urdu News* (30,000); *Riyadh Daily* (Riyadh, 50,000) in English; *al-Hayat*; *al-Massaiyah*; *al-Riyadh* (Riyadh, 150,000); *Ukaz* (110,200); *al-Jazirah* (Riyadh, 94,000); *al-Bilad* (66,200); *Arab News* (110,000), in English; *al-Yaum* (Dammam, 50,000); *Saudi Gazette* (50,000), in English; *al-Madina* (46,370); *al-Nadwah* (Mecca, 35,000); *al-Watan* (Abha); *al-Sharq al-Awsat*.

## News Agency

The Saudi Press Agency (*Wakalat al-Anba al-Saudiyah*—SPA) is located in Riyadh.

## Broadcasting and Computing

The Broadcasting Service of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (*Idhaat al-Mamlakat al-Arabiyyat al-Saudiyyah*), a government facility in charge of all broadcasting in the country, operates a number of radio stations broadcasting in both Arabic and English, while Aramco Radio broadcasts from Dhahran in English. Television is transmitted from a dozen locations, including Riyadh, Jiddah, and Medina. On January 11, 2004, a state-owned all-news satellite TV channel was launched, with the country's first female news presenter. Also, *Al Jazeera* began airing TV broadcasts from its base in Qatar. Founded in Riyadh in September 1991, Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC), now based in Dubai, transmits Western-style news and entertainment shows throughout the region. The MBC operates with the king's tacit approval. As of 2005, there were approximately 354 personal computers and 66 Internet users for every 1,000 residents. In that same year there were an estimated 541 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Adel bin Ahmed al-JUBEIR

**U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia:** Ford M. FRAKER

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Fawzi A. SHOBOKSHI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, BADEA, BIS, GCC, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, WCO, WTO

# SUDAN

## REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN

*Jumhuriyat al-Sudan*

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### The Country

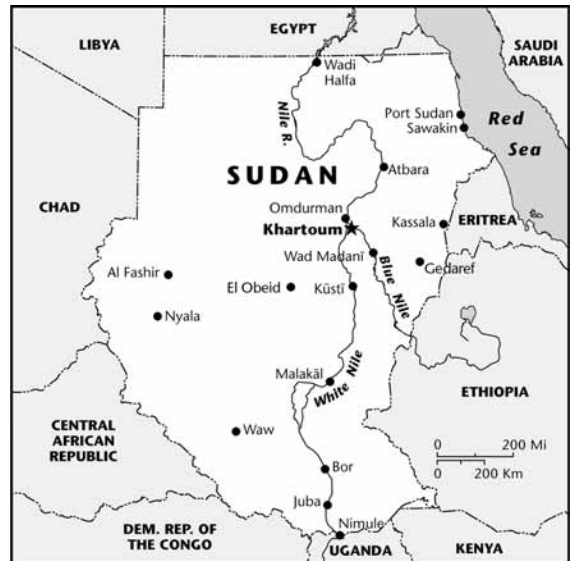
The largest country in Africa, Sudan borders on nine neighboring states as well as the Red Sea and forms part of the transitional zone between the continent's largely desert north and its densely forested, subtropical south. The White Nile flows north for almost 2,500 miles, from the Ugandan border, past the river's union with the Blue Nile near Khartoum, to Egypt above Aswan. Approximately 70 percent of the population is Arab and/or Muslim and occupies the northern two-thirds of the country, while the largely black south is a mix of Christian and animist. The geographic, ethnic, and religious cleavages have yielded political discord marked by prolonged periods of southern rebellion.

The economy is predominantly agricultural, although only a small part of the arable land is actually cultivated. Cotton is the most important cash crop, followed by gum arabic, of which Sudan produces four-fifths of the world supply. Other crops include sesame seeds, peanuts, castor beans, sorghum, wheat, and sugarcane. The country has major livestock-producing potential, and large numbers of camels and sheep are raised for export. At present, industry is largely limited to the processing of agricultural products and the manufacture of light consumer goods.

Sudan was plagued in the 1980s and 1990s by persistent drought, which led to the death by starvation of more than 200,000 people in 1985 and 1988, as well as by fighting in the south, which impeded relief efforts and dislocated large segments of the population. In 1999 it was estimated that as many as 1.5 million Sudanese had died in the previous

16 years as the result of famine and war, while more than 2 million were in danger of starving as a result of the most recent drought. The situation was further exacerbated by a twofold refugee crisis: An estimated 1 million people, fleeing both the southern insurgency and drought conditions, sought refuge in Khartoum or in neighboring countries while, ironically, large numbers of civilians poured into Sudan to escape fighting in adjacent lands.

One result of the economic distress was an external debt of more than \$15 billion and excessive reliance on foreign aid, which for many years was provided largely by the United States, West Germany, Britain, and Saudi Arabia. However, Western assistance, save for contributions to



**Political Status:** Independent republic established in 1956; revolutionary military regime instituted in 1969; one-party system established in 1971; constitution of May 8, 1973, suspended following military coup of April 6, 1985; military regime reinstated on June 30, 1989; ruling military council dissolved and nominal civilian government reinstated on October 16, 1993; nonparty presidential and legislative elections held on March 6–17, 1996; new constitution providing for limited multiparty system signed into law on June 30, 1998; peace agreement signed between the government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement on January 9, 2005, effectively ending a civil war between the north and the south; six-year power-sharing period initiated on July 9, 2005, with the signing of an interim constitution; peace agreement signed on October 14, 2006, between the government of Sudan and the Eastern Front, effectively ending the rebellion by eastern rebel groups.

**Area:** 967,494 sq. mi. (2,505,813 sq. km.).

**Population:** 24,940,683 (1993C); 37,696,000 (2006E). The 1993 figure does not include an adjustment for underenumeration, while a government estimate of 40,200,000 for 2005 appears to be too high.

**Major Urban Centers (Population in 2000 based on the 1993 Census):** KHARTOUM (925,000), Omdurman (229,000), Port Sudan (305,000), Kassala (234,000), El Obeid (228,000), Wad Madani (219,000), Gedaref (189,000), Juba (115,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic (English has been designated the "principal" language in the southern region).

**Monetary Unit:** Sudanese pound (Sudan introduced the Sudanese pound in early 2007 at a rate of S£1=SD100, planning to complete the transition from the dinar to the pound by September 2007). Market rate November 2, 2007: S£2.04 = \$1US.

**President and Prime Minister:** Umar Hassan Ahmad al-BASHIR (National Congress [partial successor to the National Islamic Front]); installed as chair of the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCC) following overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-MAHDI (Umma Party) on June 30, 1989, succeeding the former chair of the Supreme Council, Ahmad al-MIRGHANI (Democratic Unionist Party); assumed title of prime minister upon formation of government of July 9, 1989; named president by the RCC on October 16, 1993; elected to a five-year term as president in nonparty multicandidate balloting on March 6–17, 1996, and inaugurated on April 1; formed new government on April 21, 1996; reelected on December 13–20, 2000, and inaugurated for a second five-year presidential term on February 13, 2001; formed new government on February 23, 2001.

**First Vice President:** Salva KIIR Mayardit (Sudan People's Liberation Movement); appointed on August 11, 2005, to succeed John GARANG (Sudan People's Liberation Movement), who died in a helicopter crash on July 30, 2005.

**Second Vice President:** Ali Uthman Muhammad TAHA (National Congress) appointed on February 17, 1998, to succeed Maj. Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad SALIH, who had died in a plane crash on February 12, 1998.

UN food relief operations, was cut back sharply in the 1990s amid concern over Khartoum's human rights abuses and its failure to pursue democratization. In addition, responding to what it perceived to be long-standing government mismanagement of the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1990 declared Sudan to be a "noncooperating" state. Negotiations were resumed in early 1992 after Khartoum agreed to reduce agricul-

tural subsidies, privatize financially untenable government enterprises (including large cooperative farms), and institute a series of austerity measures. However, Sudan's voting rights in the IMF were formally suspended in August 1993 because of an accumulation of arrears, and in early 1994 the country reportedly faced the prospect of becoming the first member ever to be expelled from the Fund. However, in 1998 the IMF described Sudan as having

made “substantial progress” regarding economic reform, which had included austerity measures that had earlier prompted antiregime protests while failing to curb the estimated 100 percent annual rate of inflation. Moreover, in August 1999 the IMF lifted its Declaration of Noncooperation from Sudan because of its progress in implementing macroeconomic policies. Nevertheless, the civil war continued to drain resources in all regions and to force substantial internal and external dislocations. The situation was made worse by fighting in Darfur in the west, starting in early 2003, with an estimated 113,000 villagers fleeing to Chad by January 2004 and a death toll leading U.S. officials to declare the killing a genocide (see Current issues, below).

By 2005 the economic outlook for Sudan had become more positive, owing primarily to higher revenues from oil and other sectors. IMF analysts cautioned, however, that progress in resolving Sudan’s \$15 billion debt hinged on resolution of the Darfur crisis and successful implementation of the peace agreement with the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM). The economy continues to be hampered by ongoing conflict. In 2006 it was reported that oil production had doubled since 2004, due in part to new investments by Indian and Chinese energy firms. Real GDP growth surpassed 9.5% in 2006.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Historically known as the land of Kush, Sudan was conquered and unified by Egypt in 1820–1821. Under the leadership of Muhammad Ahmad, the MAHDI (“awaited religious leader”), opposition to Egyptian administration broke into open revolt in 1881; the insurrection had succeeded by 1885, and the Mahdist state controlled the region until its reconquest by an Anglo-Egyptian force in 1896–1898. Thereafter, Sudan was governed by an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, becoming self-governing in 1954 and fully independent on January 1, 1956, under a transitional constitution that provided for a democratic parliamentary regime.

A civilian government, led successively by Ismail al-AZHARI and Abdallah KHALIL, was overthrown in November 1958 by Lt. Gen. Ibrahim ABBUD, whose military regime was itself dislodged following protest demonstrations in October and November 1964. The restored constitutional regime, headed in turn by Sir al-Khatim KHALIFA, Muhammad Ahmad MAHGUB, and Dr. Sadiq al-MAHDI (a descendant of the 19th-century religious leader), was weakened both by political party instability and by revolt in the southern provinces.

Beginning in 1955 as a protest against Arab-Muslim domination, the southern insurgency rapidly assumed the proportions of a civil war. Led by the *Anyanya* (scorpion) movement under the command of Joseph LAGU, the revolt prompted military reprisals and the flight of thousands of refugees to neighboring countries. While moderate southern parties continued to seek regional autonomy within the framework of a united Sudan, exile groups worked for complete independence, and a so-called Provisional Government of Southern Sudan was established in January 1967 under the leadership of Agrev JADEN, a prominent exile leader.

An apparent return to normalcy under a new Mahgub government was interrupted in May 1969 by a military coup organized by a group of nationalist, left-wing officers led by Col. Jafar Muhammad NUMAYRI. With Numayri assuming the leadership of a ten-man Revolutionary Council, a new civilian administration, which included a number of communists and extreme leftists, was formed by former chief justice Abubakr AWADALLA. Revolutionary activity continued, however, including successive communist attempts in 1969 and 1971 to overthrow the Numayri regime. The latter effort succeeded for three days, after which Numayri regained power with Egyptian and Libyan help and instituted reprisals that included the execution of Abd al-Khaliq MAHGUB, the Communist Party’s secretary general.

Reorganization of the government continued with the issuance of a temporary constitution in August 1971, followed by Numayri’s election to the

presidency in September. A month later, in an effort to consolidate his position, Numayri dissolved the Revolutionary Council and established the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU) as the only recognized political party. Of equal significance was the ratification in April 1973 of a negotiated settlement that temporarily brought the southern rebellion to an end. The terms of the agreement, which provided for an autonomous Southern Sudan, were included in a new national constitution that became effective May 8, 1973. In November the Southern Region voted for a Regional People's Assembly, while the first national election under the new basic law took place in May 1974 for a 250-member National People's Assembly.

In September 1975 rebel army personnel led by a paratroop officer, Lt. Col. Hassan Husayn USMAN, seized the government radio station in Omdurman in an attempted coup. President Numayri subsequently blamed Libya for instigating the uprising, which was quickly suppressed. The attack had been preceded by an army mutiny in Akobo on the Ethiopian border in March and was followed by an uprising in Khartoum in July 1976 that reportedly claimed 300 lives. At a news conference in London on August 4, former prime minister Mahdi, on behalf of the outlawed Sudanese National Front (SNF), a coalition of former centrist and rightist parties that had been organized in late 1969, accepted responsibility for having organized the July rebellion but denied that it had involved foreign mercenaries.

In the months that followed President Numayri undertook a broad-ranged effort to reach accommodation with the dissidents. In July 1977 a number of SNF leaders, including Dr. Mahdi, returned from abroad and were immediately appointed to the Central Committee of the SSU. A year later the Rev. Philip Abbas GHABUSH, titular president of the SNF, expressed his conviction that the government was committed to the building of "a genuine democracy in Sudan" and ordered the dissolution of both the internal and external wings of the Front.

In early 1980 the north was divided into five new regions to provide for more effective local

self-government, and in October 1981 the president dissolved both the National Assembly in Khartoum and the Southern Regional Assembly to facilitate decentralization on the basis of new regional bodies to which certain legislative powers would be devolved. Concurrently, he appointed Gen. Gasmallah Abdallah RASSA, a southern Muslim, as interim president of the Southern Region's High Executive Council (HEC) in place of Abel ALIER, who nonetheless continued as second vice president of the Republic. Immediately thereafter a plan was advanced to divide the south into three regions based on the historic provinces of Bahr al-Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile.

The projected redivision of the south yielded three regional blocs: a "unity" group led by Vice President Alier of the numerically dominant Dinka tribe, who branded the scheme a repudiation of the 1973 agreement; a "divisionist" group led by former rebel commander Joseph Lagu of the Wahdi tribe of eastern Equatoria; and a "compromise" group, led by Clement MBORO and Samuel ARU Bol, which styled itself "Change Two" (C2) after an earlier "Wind for Change Alliance" that had opposed Alier's election to the HEC presidency. None of the three obtained a majority at an April 1982 election to the Southern Regional Assembly, and on June 23 a divisionist, Joseph James TOMBURA, was designated by the assembly as regional president with C2 backing (the alliance being styled "C3"). Six days later President Numayri named General Lagu to succeed Alier as second vice president of the republic. Earlier, on April 11, Maj. Gen. Umar Muhammad al-TAYYIB (who had been designated third vice president in October 1981) was named to the first vice presidency in succession to Lt. Gen. Abd al-Majid Hamid KHALIL, who had been dismissed on January 25.

As expected, President Numayri was nominated for a third term by an SSU congress in February 1983 and reelected by a national plebiscite held April 15–26. In June the tripartite division of the south was formally implemented, with both the HEC and the southern assembly being abolished.

In the face of renewed rebellion in the south and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions, which

prompted food riots and the launching of a general strike in Khartoum, a group of army officers, led by Gen. Abd al-Rahman SIWAR al-DAHAB, seized power on April 6, 1985, while the president was returning from a trip to the United States. Numayri's ouster was attributed in part to opposition by southerners and some urban northerners to the adoption in September 1983 of Islamic religious law (sharia).

On April 9, 1985, after discussions between the officers and representatives of a civilian National Alliance for the Salvation of the Country (NASC) had proved inconclusive, General Siwar al-Dahab announced the formation of a 14-member Transitional Military Council (TMC), with himself as chair and Gen. Taq al-Din Abdallah FADUL as his deputy. After further consultation with NASC leaders, Dr. al-Gizouli DAFALLAH, who had played a prominent role in organizing the pre-coup demonstrations, was named on April 22 to head an interim Council of Ministers. On May 25 a seven-member southern cabinet was appointed that included representatives of the three historic areas (henceforth to be known as "administrative regions"). Concurrently, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which had become the primary rebel force in the south under the leadership of Col. John GARANG, resumed antigovernment military activity.

Adhering to its promise to hold a national election within a year, the TMC sponsored legislative balloting on April 1–12, 1986, despite continued insurgency that precluded returns in 41 southern districts. The new body, serving as both a Constituent and Legislative Assembly, convened on April 26 but was unable to agree on the composition of a Supreme (Presidential) Council and the designation of a prime minister until May 6, with a coalition government being formed under former prime minister Mahdi of the Umma Party (UP) on May 15. The UP's principal partner was the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which had finished second in the assembly balloting. Although several southern parties were awarded cabinet posts, most "African bloc" deputies subsequently boycotted assembly activity because of alleged lack of represen-

tation and unsatisfactory progress towards repealing sharia.

The Council of Ministers was dissolved on May 13, 1987, primarily because of a split within the DUP that had weakened the government's capacity to implement policy decisions. A new government was nonetheless formed on June 3 with little change in personnel. On August 22 the DUP formally withdrew from the coalition because of a dispute over an appointment to the Supreme Council, although it indicated that it would continue to cooperate with the UP. Eight months later the DUP rejected a proposal by Mahdi for formation of a more broadly based administration that would include the opposition National Islamic Front (NIF). Undaunted, the prime minister resigned on April 16, 1988, to make way for a government of "national reconciliation." Reappointed on April 27, he issued an appeal for all of the parties to join in a proposed national constitutional conference to decide the role of Islam in a future state structure. He formed a new administration that included the DUP and NIF on May 14.

In July 1988 the DUP, reversing an earlier position, joined the fundamentalists in calling for a legislative vote on the introduction of sharia prior to the constitutional conference. On September 19, following the government's introduction of a sharia-based penal code, the southern deputies withdrew from the assembly, and in mid-November, purportedly with the prime minister's approval, DUP representatives met with SPLA leader Garang in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa to negotiate a peace treaty that would entail abandonment of the sharia legislation, the lifting of the state of emergency, and the eventual convening of a national constitutional conference. However, rioting subsequently broke out in Khartoum, and on December 20, in the wake of a reported coup attempt and suspension of parliamentary debate on policy toward the south, Prime Minister Mahdi declared another state of emergency. On December 28 the DUP withdrew from the government in response to Mahdi's failure to recognize the agreement with the SPLA, the DUP ministerial posts being refilled by NIF representatives. On February

27, 1989, after another cabinet reshuffle in which the DUP did not participate, Mahdi threatened to resign if the army did not give him a free hand in working for peace with the rebels. On March 5 some 48 parties and trade unions indicated their general acceptance of the November peace accord, and on March 22 a new governing coalition was announced composed of the UP, the DUP, and representatives of the unions and southern parties, with the NIF in opposition.

In May 1989, while complaining that Khartoum had “done absolutely nothing” to advance the cause of peace, Colonel Garang announced a cease-fire in the south, and a month later he met with northern representatives in Addis Ababa for peace talks mediated by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter. Shortly thereafter, Khartoum agreed to implement the November 1988 accords and schedule a September constitutional conference. However, the plan was nullified on June 30, when the Mahdi regime was overthrown in a military coup led by Brig. Gen. Umar Hassan Ahmad al-BASHIR, who assumed the chairship of a Revolution Command Council for National Salvation (RCC). The RCC immediately suspended the constitution, dissolved the Constituent Assembly, imposed emergency rule, and freed military leaders arrested on June 18 for allegedly plotting an earlier coup. Claiming that factionalism and corruption had led to economic malaise and an ineffective war effort, the military regime banned all political parties and arrested senior government and party leaders. On July 9 Bashir assumed the additional office of prime minister, heading a 21-member cabinet composed primarily of career bureaucrats drawn from the NIF and supporters of former president Numayri.

Despite claims that “peace through negotiation” was its first priority, the new government rejected the November 1988 treaty, suggesting instead that the sharia issue be decided by national referendum. However, the SPLA, which sought suspension of sharia while negotiations continued, resumed military activities in October.

A major cabinet reshuffle on April 10, 1990, was viewed as a consolidation of Islamic fundamental-

ist influence, and on April 24 a total of 31 army and police officers were executed in the wake of an alleged coup attempt the day before. Another reshuffle in January 1991 was followed by the introduction of a nine-state federal system (see Constitution and government, below), and on March 22 a new sharia-based penal code was instituted in the six northern states, prompting a strong protest from the SPLA.

In the wake of heavy fighting between his supporters and several SPLA breakaway factions in the south, Garang announced a unilateral cease-fire in late March 1993 as far as the conflict with government troops was concerned. Khartoum endorsed the cease-fire several days later, and a new round of peace talks with Garang representatives resumed in Abuja in late April. The government also initiated parallel negotiations in Nairobi, Kenya, with the SPLA dissidents, who had recently coalesced as the SPLA-United. However, both sets of talks were subsequently suspended, with fighting between government forces and Garang’s SPLA faction having resumed near the Ugandan border by midyear.

On July 8, 1993, Prime Minister Bashir announced a cabinet reshuffle that was most noteworthy for what was described as an “overt increase in NIF involvement.” Subsequently, in a surprise, albeit essentially cosmetic, return to civilian control, the RCC dissolved itself on October 16 after declaring Bashir president and granting him wide authority to direct a transitional government. Shortly thereafter, Bashir announced his administration’s commitment to a largely undefined democratization program that would lead to national elections by the end of 1995. Nevertheless, the new cabinet announced on October 30 appeared to solidify NIF control even further, lending support to opposition charges that the military-fundamentalist alliance had no true intention of loosening its stranglehold on political power.

Following a September 1993 summit of the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD, later the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development—IGAD), a quadripartite committee of representatives from



Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda was established to mediate the Sudanese conflict. However, the talks ended in deadlock in late 1994 after the two sides had “adopted irreconcilable positions on southern self-determination and the relationship between state and religion.”

On March 27, 1995, Bashir announced a unilateral two-month cease-fire to facilitate another peace initiative launched by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter. While the truce was cautiously supported by the leading southern factions, no progress was reported in resolving the conflict, despite a two-month extension of the cease-fire on May 25.

Widespread rioting broke out in several locations, including Khartoum and Port Sudan, in September 1995, bolstering observations of a weakened northern regime. The outbreaks, which appeared to be spontaneous, involved both student protesters and conservative elements angered by low salaries and food shortages. Further violence erupted in Khartoum in early January 1996 between police and Muslim fundamentalists calling for conversion of the country’s Christians and animists to Islam.

In January 1996 the regime announced that elections would be held in March for president and a new National Assembly. However, that balloting (conducted March 6–17) was boycotted by nearly all the major opposition groups, most of whom had coalesced under the banner of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Some 40 independent candidates contested the presidential balloting, with Bashir being elected to a five-year term on the strength of a reported 75.7 percent share of the vote. Bashir was sworn in on April 1, and on the same day the new assembly convened and unanimously elected the NIF’s Hassan Abdallah al-TURABI (long considered the dominant political leader in the country) as its president. On April 21 Bashir appointed a new cabinet, which did not include (despite previous speculation to the contrary) any members of the SPLA-United or the Southern Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM), the two southern groups with which the government had recently signed a peace accord.

In January 1997 a major rebel offensive was reportedly launched under the leadership of a more cohesive and potent NDA. In April the regime reached another agreement with the SSIM, the SPLA-United, and four other SPLA breakaway groups, calling for suspension of sharia in the south and further discussions regarding autonomy there. Subsequently, with both the government and the SPLA having claimed military success, a preliminary agreement was reached in July on the resumption of peace talks under a “framework of principles” proposed by IGAD, which envisioned an eventual self-determination plebiscite in the south. However, negotiations, formally opened in October, were quickly suspended until April 1998, and fighting continued.

Elections were held for ten southern gubernatorial posts in November 1997, and on December 1 the SSIM’s Riak MACHAR was named head of a new Southern States’ Coordination Council (SSCC) and given a four-year mandate to govern the south pending a decision on its permanent political status. However, the exercise was widely viewed as futile, considering Colonel Garang’s depiction of the SSCC as a “sham.”

A plane crash on February 12, 1998, killed First Vice President Maj. Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad SALIH (one of the president’s oldest and most trusted associates) and a number of other government officials. On March 8 Bashir finally settled on Ali Uthman Muhammad TAHA, considered second in authority in the NIF, to succeed Salih. In addition, the NIF had an enhanced presence in the extensively reshuffled cabinet, which also included dissident Umma members and representatives of the southern rebels who had aligned with Khartoum.

In the face of heavy international pressure for political reform, the assembly, on March 28, 1998, approved the government’s proposed new constitution, which, among other things, authorized the legalization of “political associations.” The new basic law was endorsed by a reported 96.7 percent “yes” vote in a national referendum in late May and signed into law by President Bashir on June 30, the ninth anniversary of the coup that had brought him

to power. On November 23 the assembly approved the Political Association Act, which established the laws governing party activity, and registration of parties began in January 1999.

As conflict rapidly escalated between Bashir and Turabi, Turabi proposed a series of constitutional amendments in November 1999 to curb Bashir's power. Bashir responded by announcing a three-month state of emergency and dissolving the National Assembly on December 12, 1999 (effective December 13). Bashir's declaration occurred a mere 48 hours prior to the scheduled National Assembly vote regarding Turabi's proposed amendments. The cabinet responded by formally issuing its resignation on January 1, 2000. Bashir appointed a new cabinet on January 25, retaining his backers in some ministry posts. The power struggle continued, however, because Turabi, while holding no official position, remained secretary general of the National Congress (NC), the successor to the NIF. Meanwhile, the government also was buffeted in February by the departure of Machar and a number of his supporters from the government due to the perceived failure of Bashir to implement the 1997 accord.

On March 12, 2000, the cabinet extended the state of emergency until the end of the year. Bashir further consolidated power by removing Turabi as secretary general of the NC and replacing him with Ibrahim Ahmed OMAR.

Despite seemingly positive negotiations between the government and the UP (see UP under Political Parties and Groups, below), the UP led an opposition boycott of assembly and presidential elections on December 13–23, 2000. Consequently, the NC secured 355 of the 360 contested assembly seats, while Bashir was elected to a second five-year term with a reported 86.5 percent of the vote. (After returning from 14 years in exile in May 1999, former president Numayri, as the candidate of the Popular Working Forces Alliance, finished second with 9.6 percent of the vote in the presidential poll.) DUP dissidents were included in the new cabinet named on February 23, 2001, as were UP dissidents in the reshuffle of August 19, 2002. Two DUP dissidents were also among those

named to the cabinet in a reshuffle on November 30, 2002.

Following the signing of the peace agreement in January 2005 between the government and the SPLM (see Current issues, below), a new 30-member power-sharing cabinet was announced on September 22, 2005. Fifteen posts went to the NC, 9 to the SPLM, and 6 to northern and southern opposition groups. On October 21, the first cabinet of the Government of South Sudan was appointed. The 22-member southern unity cabinet included 16 seats designated for the SPLM, 3 for the NC, and 3 for other south Sudan opposition groups.

### *Constitution and Government*

The 1973 constitution provided for a strong presidential form of government. Nominated by the Sudanese Socialist Union for a six-year term, the president appointed all other executive officials and served as supreme commander of the People's Armed Forces. Legislative authority was vested in the National People's Assembly, a unicameral body that was partially elected and partially appointed.

The Southern Sudan Regional Constitution, abrogated by the June 1983 redivision, provided for a single autonomous region governed, in nonreserved areas, by the president of a High Executive Council (cabinet) responsible to a Regional People's Assembly. Each of the three subsequent regions in the south, like the five in the north, was administered by a centrally appointed governor, acting on the advice of a local People's Assembly. In a move that intensified southern dissent, President Numayri announced in June 1984 the incorporation into the north of a new province (*Wahdah*), encompassing territory theretofore part of the Upper Nile region, where oil reserves had been discovered.

Upon assuming power in 1985, the Transitional Military Committee (TMC) suspended the 1973 basic law, dissolved the central and regional assemblies, appointed a cabinet composed largely of civilians, and assigned military personnel to replace regional governors and their ministers. An interim constitution was approved by the TMC in October 1985 to provide a framework for assembly

elections. The assembly members chosen in April 1986 were mandated to draft a new basic law, although many southern districts were unrepresented because of rebel activity. The assembly's charge to act as a constituent body appeared to have ceased with Prime Minister Mahdi's call in April 1988 for the convening of a national constitutional conference.

In January 1987 the government announced the formation of a new Administrative Council for the South, comprising representatives of six southern political parties and the governors of each of the three previously established regions. The Council, although formally empowered with only "transitional" authority, was repudiated by both the "unity" and "divisionist" groups. Subsequently, following the signing of a pro-pluralism "Transitional Charter" on January 10, 1988, to serve as an interim basic law, the Council was suspended, and the administration of the southern provinces was assigned to the regional governors.

During negotiations between the Mahdi regime and southern rebels in early June 1989, an agreement was reached to open a constitutional conference in September. However, the Bashir junta rejected the June agreement and suspended the Transitional Charter. Subsequently, a national "political orientation" conference, held April 29–May 2, 1991, in Khartoum, endorsed the establishment of a pyramidal governmental structure involving the direct popular election of local councils followed by the successive indirect election of provincial, state, and national lawmaking bodies. On February 13, 1992, Prime Minister Bashir appointed a 300-member Transitional National Assembly, and he was named president on October 16, 1993, by the RCC, which then dissolved itself. Elections were held on March 6–17, 1996, to a new National Assembly, with concurrent nonparty balloting for president.

On February 5, 1991, the RCC announced the establishment of a new federal system comprising nine states—six (Central, Darfur, Eastern, Khartoum, Kordofan, and Northern) in the north and three (Bahr al-Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile) in the south—that were subdivided into

66 provinces and 281 local government districts. The states, each administered by a federally appointed governor, deputy governor, and cabinet of ministers, were given responsibility for local administration and some tax collection, although control over most major sectors remained with the central government. In early February 1994 President Bashir announced that the number of states had been increased from 9 to 26, new governors being appointed later in the month. A Southern States Coordination Council was named in December 1997 to govern the south pending final determination of the region's status, but the authority of the new body remained severely compromised by the opposition of the main rebel group, the SPLA. The 26 state administrative structure is still in use, though the southern state of Bahr al Jabal was renamed Central Equatoria in 2005 by the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS).

On March 22, 1991, a new penal code based on sharia went into effect in the north, the government announcing that the issue would be "open" in regard to the south, pending the outcome of peace negotiations.

The new constitution, which went into effect on June 30, 1998, annulled most previous decrees by the Bashir regime, thereby permitting the reintroduction of a multiparty system. The new basic law described Islam as "the religion of the majority," although it noted the "considerable number of Christians and animists" in the country and guaranteed freedom of religion. The controversial issue of sharia, particularly as it might apply to the south, was skirted, the constitution stating only that the "religion, customs, and consensus of the Nation shall be the sources of legislation."

Following the peace agreement reached on January 9, 2005, between the government and the SPLM, an interim constitution was signed on July 9, 2005, allowing for power sharing during a six-year transitional period. Whether the south would continue under Khartoum's rule was to be determined by a referendum in 2011. The south was given a large degree of autonomy, with Garang being named president of the south, as well as first vice president of Sudan. (Salva KIIR Mayardit

replaced Garang as president of the south and first vice president of Sudan on August 11, 2005, following the latter's death on July 30.)

Subsequent peace agreements in 2006 and 2007 failed to staunch bloodletting in remaining restive provinces, with rebel groups fearing government retaliation and responding skeptically to proposed solutions. In turn, the Sudanese government agreed in principle to arrangements while delaying implementation with disputes over logistics. In July 2007 the UN Security Council passed a resolution that included provisions for a joint AU-UN peacekeeping mission. Despite Khartoum's formal acceptance of the resolution, controversy over the size, troop competence, source countries, and command structure of the force delayed full deployment into 2008, while conflict continued unabated. However, in a gesture of cooperation, the government rescinded the old, "Islamist" currency, the dinar, in favor of the new Sudanese pound (see Current issues, below).

### *Foreign Relations*

During much of the Cold War Sudan pursued a policy of nonalignment, modified in practice by changing international circumstances, while focusing its attention on regional matters. Prior to the 1974 coup in Ethiopia, relations with that country were especially cordial due to the prominent role Ethiopian Emperor Haile SELASSIE had played in bringing about a settlement of the initial southern rebellion. However, Addis Ababa later accused Khartoum of providing covert support to Eritrean rebels, while Sudanese leaders charged that SPLA camps were flourishing in Ethiopia with the approval of the Mengistu regime. Not surprisingly, relations between the two countries improved dramatically following the May 1991 rebel victory in Ethiopia; the presumed SPLA contingents subsequently were forced back into Sudan by Ethiopian troops and the Bashir regime became a vocal supporter of the new leadership in Addis Ababa. By contrast, the secular administration in Asmara charged in early 1994 that Sudan was fomenting fundamentalist antigovernment activity in the new

nation of Eritrea, and in December it severed relations with Khartoum. Relations have since improved, as the Eritrean government played a significant role in mediating a peace agreement between Khartoum and eastern rebel groups (see Current issues, below).

Soon after taking power in 1969 Prime Minister Numayri forged close ties with Egyptian President Nasser within a federation scheme encompassing Sudan, Egypt, and the newly established Libyan regime of Colonel Qadhafi. Although failing to promote integration, the federation yielded joint Egyptian-Libyan military support for Numayri in defeating the communist insurgency of June 1971. However, Numayri was reluctant to join a second unity scheme—the abortive 1972 Federation of Arab Republics—because of Libyan-inspired conspiracies and opposition from the non-Arab peoples of southern Sudan. President Sadat's own estrangement from Qadhafi during 1973 led to the signing of a Sudanese-Egyptian agreement on political and economic coordination in February 1974. In subsequent years Sadat pledged to support Numayri against continued Libyan attempts at subversion, and Sudan followed Egypt into close alignment with the United States. While rejecting the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979, Sudan was one of the few Arab states that did not break diplomatically with Cairo. Egypt's main strategic interest in Sudan focuses on water supplied from the Nile River via Sudan, which is currently governed by a 1959 treaty granting Egypt access to Nile flow on very generous terms. Cairo officially supports the Comprehensive Peace Agreement CPA (see Current issues, below) but remains ambivalent towards the prospect of southern self-determination, as this would require renegotiation of the water treaty.

In 1985 Libya, which announced that it would terminate its support of the SPLA rebels, was the first country to recognize the post-Numayri regime, urging the TMC to sever Sudanese links with Egypt. Close military and economic ties were then reestablished with Tripoli, while relations with Cairo remained cool, in part, because of Egyptian President Mubarak's refusal to

extradite Numayri for trial by the new Khartoum government.

In October 1988 Prime Minister Mahdi, reportedly desperate for arms, signed a unity proposal with Colonel Qadhafi, which was immediately denounced by the DUP and in January 1989 labeled “inappropriate” by the United States following reports that Libyan forces had used chemical weapons in attacks on SPLA forces. Concurrently, Washington, whose nonintervention policy had drawn criticism from international aid groups, announced its intention to supply aid directly to drought victims in areas under SPLA control rather than through allegedly corrupt government channels. Four months later Washington cut off all nonfamine relief support because of Khartoum’s failure to service its foreign debt. The ban was reaffirmed (with specific reference to economic and military aid) in March 1990 because of Khartoum’s human rights record and lack of democratic commitment. Later in the year relations with the United States deteriorated even further when Sudan refused to join the UN coalition against Iraq, a decision that also cost the Bashir government financial support from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In addition, many Arab states subsequently expressed concern over the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism within the Bashir regime. On the other hand, Iran, anxious to support the fundamentalist cause, became a major source of Sudanese economic and, according to some reports, military aid.

In August 1994 authorities in Khartoum seized the long-sought international terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sanchez (a.k.a. “Carlos”), who was flown to Paris for trial on charges stemming from a 1983 attack in the French capital. In return, France was reported to have exercised its influence with the Central African Republic (CAR) to provide Sudanese military transit through CAR territory to the south Sudanese combat zone. In addition, Khartoum appeared to seek French assistance in restoring its relations with the United States following unexpectedly low aid grants from its ally Iran.

Meanwhile, relations with other neighboring states had deteriorated sharply. In September 1994 Egypt was accused of moving troops into Sudan’s

northern Halaib region, which was believed to contain substantial oil deposits, and relations plummeted further in mid-1995 after President Mubarak had intimated that the NIF might have been involved in the failed attempt on his life in Addis Ababa on June 26. In the south, Uganda canceled a 1990 agreement providing for a military monitoring team on its side of their border, and in April 1995 it broke relations because of the alleged bombing of a Ugandan village by Sudanese government forces; however, relations were restored in mid-June as the result of talks between presidents Bashir and Museveni that were brokered by Malawian president Bakili Muluzi.

By late 1995 Sudan had come under widespread criticism for its alleged sponsorship of international terrorism, including possible involvement in the Mubarak assassination attempt. On December 19 foreign ministers of states belonging to the Organization of African Unity (OAU, subsequently the African Union—AU), met in Addis Ababa and called on Khartoum to extradite three Egyptians wanted for questioning in the Mubarak affair. On January 31, 1996, the UN Security Council adopted a unanimous resolution to the same effect. Earlier, as an expression of its displeasure, Ethiopia had ordered a reduction in Sudan’s embassy staff to four, the closure of a Sudanese consulate, and the banning of all nongovernmental organizations linked to the Sudanese regime.

In 1997 and early 1998, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda cooperated to restrict the spread of militant fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa, further straining relations with Sudan, which accused the other governments of supporting the SPLM and NDA. (Relations with Ethiopia subsequently improved, however, in conjunction with the outbreak of hostilities between that nation and Eritrea, which Khartoum charged was still backing Sudanese rebels.) Meanwhile, South African President Nelson MANDELA played a prominent role in efforts to bring the Bashir regime and its opponents together for peace talks under the aegis of IGAD.

An improvement in regional and international relations was noted in 1999 and 2000, largely due

to a “charm offensive” on Bashir’s part. Sudan reestablished diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, and Tunisia. Additionally, in December 1999 Sudan and Uganda signed an accord agreeing not to support rebel forces working to overthrow each other’s respective governments. Sudan later requested that the UN Security Council lift sanctions imposed in 1996 following allegations of its involvement in the attempted assassination of Mubarak. The Security Council unanimously approved the request in September 2001.

Throughout 2004 and early 2005, the international response to the staggering human rights abuses in Darfur was slow to materialize (see Current issues, below). In April 2005 the UN Security Council voted to refer 51 Sudanese—many of them said to be high-ranking NIF officials—for prosecution in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in connection with crimes against humanity in Darfur. That same month, Western countries pledged \$4.5 billion in urgent food aid for southerners displaced by the civil war.

In response to continuing attacks on Uganda by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) from bases in Sudan, the newly installed Government of South Sudan signed a security protocol with Uganda in October 2005 calling for joint efforts to suppress the LRA. Reports indicated that the increased security collaboration led many members of the LRA to flee to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Meanwhile, relations with Chad worsened in 2005 as Chadian rebels launched a series of attacks from bases in Sudan. By December 2005 Chadian President Idriss Déby described the two countries as being in a state of “belligerency.” In April 2007 Chad severed diplomatic ties with Sudan after a rebel movement springing from Darfur attacked N’Djamena.

As an economic and military partner, China has been Sudan’s closest ally and has done the most to protect the regime in Khartoum from UN sanctions. China is Sudan’s largest trade partner both for imports and exports and the largest investor in Sudan’s oil industry, with about 60 percent of

Sudan’s oil exported to China since 2004. China has also supplied the Sudanese government with small arms, anti-personal mines, howitzers, tanks, helicopters, and ammunition in addition to constructing three arms factories in Sudan. Chinese ammunition castings were found in Darfur in late 2005 despite an UN-sanctioned arms embargo on the region. The government also ordered new fighter jets from China in late 2005.

In the last year, it appears that China has begun to put some limited pressure on Khartoum, hoping to relieve international criticism in advance of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. China voted in favor of the October 2006 resolution for a UN force in Darfur. In March 2007 officials from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army met with Sudan’s Joint Chief of Staff Haj Ahmed El Gaili. The Chinese reportedly discussed furthering military cooperation between the countries, to coincide with the end of the UN-Sudan impasse over Darfur. In May 2007 the Chinese government sent its first special envoy to the region as well. This adjustment in Chinese behavior was possibly due in part to a campaign by Western human rights groups calling for Western nations to boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympics over China’s support for the government in Khartoum. Despite this, China continues to be wary of severely pressuring the Sudanese government and will likely continue to shield Sudan from damaging sanctions.

### *Current Issues*

Running counter to the liberalization taking place throughout much of Africa, the Bashir regime and its fundamentalist supporters were charged with widespread abuse (including torture and execution) of political opponents in the 1990s, in addition to mistreatment of non-Muslim ethnic groups. The resultant decrease of Western support exacerbated the country’s long-standing economic crisis, and observers periodically questioned the government’s capacity to survive. However, due in part to the weakness of opposition political forces, the administration proved more resilient than anticipated.

In November 1997 Washington denounced the Bashir government's poor human rights record and alleged support for international terrorism and imposed economic sanctions against Sudan that included a ban on Sudanese exports and seizure of Sudanese assets in the United States. Highlighting the American position, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Colonel Garang and other NDA leaders in Uganda. The friction between the United States and Sudan subsequently intensified, and on August 20, 1998, U.S. missiles destroyed a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, in response to the bomb attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7. Washington claimed the Sudanese facility was producing chemicals used to make nerve gas and that it was connected to the "terrorist network" of militant Islamic fundamentalist Osama bin Laden. However, no evidence supporting the U.S. charges was forthcoming, and many observers ultimately concluded that Washington had erred regarding the possible connection of the plant to nerve gas production. For its part, the government in Khartoum, which had expelled bin Laden from the country in 1996 under U.S. pressure, strongly denied the U.S. accusations and branded U.S. President Clinton a "war criminal." Ironically, the episode generated a degree of sympathy on the international stage for Sudan, whose image also was improved by its new constitution and the return (notionally at least) to a multiparty system in early 1999. At the same time, however, the conflict in the south remained generally as intractable as ever; of particular interest to both sides were the oil-rich regions of the Upper Nile and the Nuba mountains.

Apparently as part of an overall effort to enhance his regime's image, President Bashir announced an amnesty for his opponents in June 2000. The SPLM, NDA, and most other opposition groups remained skeptical of the offer, however, and the political climate deteriorated when the state of emergency was again extended in January 2001 and former NIF strongman Turabi and several of his associates were arrested in February after Turabi's Popular National Congress (PNC) had signed an accord with the SPLA to "resist" the

government. (Most of the PNC members were released by presidential order in October, but Turabi remained under house arrest until October 2003. He was rearrested on March 31, 2004, along with ten military officers and seven PNC members for what government officials said was a plot to stage a coup. Some reports claimed that those arrested had links to rebels in the western province of Darfur [see below]. Turabi was released on June 30, 2005, when Bashir announced the release of all political detainees.)

Following the al-Qaida attacks in the United States in September 2001, the Sudanese government came under additional international scrutiny. One apparent outgrowth of that increased attention was significant progress toward resolution of the southern conflict, which had led to the death of more than 1 million people (as casualties of either the fighting or related food shortages) and the dislocation of an additional 4 million. A tentative cease-fire was negotiated under U.S. mediation in January 2002. Although there was sporadic fighting in the first half of the year, with the NIF reportedly bombing civilians, a potentially historic accord was signed in Kenya on July 20 by representatives of the government and the SPLM. The agreement, mediated by the IGAD, envisioned the establishment of a joint, six-year transitional administration for the south to be followed by a self-determination referendum in the region. The government also reportedly agreed that sharia would not be imposed in the south. The two sides signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 9, 2005, in Nairobi, bringing to an end the 21-year war in the south and, ironically, making former enemies Garang and Bashir partners in a new government.

The agreement called for national elections within four years and a referendum on independence for the south to be held in six years. It also stipulated the sharing of power and a 50–50 split of oil profits between the north and the south. In addition, it called for a six-month "pre-interim" period to draft a new constitution; a transitional government in Khartoum under Bashir; a separate administration in the south headed by a first

vice president; a national assembly to be appointed within two weeks of the drafting of the interim constitution, with members divided roughly 70–30 north-south, with full legislative authority by 2011; and shared governance by the NC and SPLM of Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SPLM was authorized to keep its army in the south but agreed to withdraw from the east, while the regime agreed to withdraw its troops from the south by July 2007. However, as of late August 2007, observers charged that 10,000 northern troops remained in the south, largely concentrated around the oil installations. Critics of the regime argued that this constituted a small part of a general pattern of government backsliding on some terms of the CPA.

Meanwhile, despite the far-reaching agreement between north and south, bloody struggle in the western region of Darfur continued unabated. The war, which erupted in February 2003, had been preceded by years of tribal clashes. Escalation occurred when the Darfur Liberation Front claimed in February 2003 to have seized control of Gulu, and government forces were sent to retake the village in early March. The conflict, fueled by the scarcity of water and grazing land, became an increasingly fierce rivalry between Arab tribesmen who raised cattle and needed the land, and black African farmers who relied on the water. The fighting intensified in 2004, as black Africans accused the government in Khartoum of using the mounted, Arab *Janjaweed* militias, sometimes accompanied by fighters in Sudanese military uniforms, to force people from their land.

The government in Khartoum steadfastly refused to apply self-rule to the west, as it had in its agreement with the south. While some 113,000 refugees fled across the border into Chad, fighting continued to intensify, and the U.S. administration of George W. Bush called on the parties to negotiate. The insurgent groups—the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)—claimed that the government had neglected the impoverished areas for years. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees decried the “scorched-earth” tactics used by the government and militias in response to the

rebellion in Darfur and appealed for serious efforts to resolve the conflict.

In May 2004 the *New York Times* reported that an estimated 1 million people had been uprooted by the conflict in Darfur. That same month, human rights workers charged that the government had used the *Janjaweed* to implement a policy resembling ethnic cleansing. Peace talks began in mid-July, as demanded by U.S. Secretary of State Colin POWELL, but soon dissolved when Khartoum rejected the rebels’ conditions, including a time frame for disarming the militias. On July 29 the UN Security Council threatened to enact punitive measures in short of sanctions. In response, 100,000 people reportedly protested against a Security Council resolution in Khartoum, prompting rebel groups and government authorities to agree to meet in Nigeria for peace talks starting on August 23, 2004. However, the talks had broken down completely by August 8, as the rebel leaders and Sudanese government representatives failed to agree to de-escalation measures. Specifically, the government refused to agree to stop aerial bombardment in the Darfur and to disarm the *Janjaweed* militias, and the rebel groups refused to move into AU-designated confinement sites, arguing they would be too vulnerable to government attack. Powell declared on September 10 that the United States considered the killing, rape, and destruction in Darfur to be genocide. On behalf of the United States, the secretary asked for urgent action by the Security Council.

On November 9, 2004, the government agreed to ban military flights over Darfur and signed two deals with the rebels after two weeks of talks in Nigeria. However, no agreement was reached on a long-term resolution to the fighting, and violence resumed within weeks. With Washington still pressing the UN for action, on March 23, 2005, the Security Council unanimously approved a resolution calling for 10,000 peacekeepers for Darfur and southern Sudan. However, resistance from the Sudanese government to a UN mission led to the continuation of the AU Mission in Sudan. Another round of peace talks between the two rebel groups and the government was scheduled



for later in the year. Rwanda and Nigeria were among the countries that began to send peacekeeping forces into Darfur in July 2005. In May 2005, NATO agreed to assist the AU-led mission in Darfur with transport and other logistical aid. The AU force eventually numbered some 7,000. By September 2005, estimates of those killed in the conflict ranged from 70,000 to 300,000, and 2 to 3 million people were believed to have been displaced.

On another unsettling front, a tense military situation in eastern Sudan in the states of Kassala and the Red Sea Hills began to escalate in 2005 led by a group called the Eastern Front. This group came out of an alliance between the Beja Congress and the Rashaida Free Lions, which had also long complained about the government ignoring them. The conflict was widely resolved in late 2006 with aid from the Eritrean government, which mediated talks that led to the signing of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) on October 14, 2006. The agreement granted the eastern states more representation in the national government and established the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund (see Political Parties and Groups, below).

On July 10, 2005, Bashir ended the national state of emergency in all but three of Sudan's provinces: Darfur, Kasala, and Red Sea Hills. Bashir also ordered the release of hundreds of political prisoners, including Turabi. The SLM/A subsequently launched a new offensive in Darfur, and the AU initiated a new round of peace talks between the government and the SLM/A and the JEM in Abuja, Nigeria. The AU developed a comprehensive peace plan, which the Sudanese government accepted on April 30, 2006. The plan called for the disarmament of the *Janjaweed* militias, elections within three years, and the provision of \$500 million for the establishment and operation of an autonomous regional authority. One faction of the SLM/A signed the agreement, but another major SLM/A faction and the JEM refused to sign. Meanwhile, Sudan rejected a proposal from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in April 2006 to replace the AU mission with a more expansive UN-led operation

that would have included European and, possibly, U.S. forces.

Unfortunately, the April 2006 peace agreement heightened tensions in Darfur, as rival rebel groups clashed and the government stepped up military offensives against the SLA/A and JEM. On October 20, 2006, Sudanese government threw out the UN Special Envoy Jan Pronk, accusing him of undermining Sudan's armed forces and of trying to force the government to accept an August 2006 Security Council Resolution calling for 20,000 UN peacekeeping troops in Darfur. In December 2006 a proposal presented at the AU's Joint Ceasefire Commission in Addis Abba called for a beefed up AU mission that would include only African troops with support staff of other nationalities. Bashir initially agreed in principle to the plan, but negotiation regarding details, such as the force's size, purpose, and command structure, were all subject to controversy, allowing the Sudanese government to stall the process.

In January 2007 Bill Richardson, governor of the American state of New Mexico, brokered a 60-day cease-fire agreement between the government and the main rebel groups, including the JEM and the SLA/A. However, this bore little fruit. In February 2007 the ICC formally accused two Sudanese of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Darfur crisis, the first potential prosecutions since the UN Security Council referred cases to the ICC in April 2005.

In a Security Council resolution passed in July 2007 the UN authorized a 26,000-strong force, with the Sudanese government announcing its formal acceptance of the plan, which outlines a joint AU-UN mission. The majority of troops will come from African countries with logistical support from other UN member countries. At the time, the UN-AU leadership hoped to have the force at least partially operational by October 2007. However, as of mid-September, the timeline appears to have been pushed back until early 2008, as squabbling with the Sudanese government over the makeup of the mission continues. Specifically, UN claims that many of the African troops that have volunteered to take part in the mission do not meet

UN peacekeeping standards in terms of training and equipment and should be supplemented with troops from other parts of the world. The government of Sudan and some AU leaders resist this and argue that the African troops are capable of carrying out the UN mandate. Rebel leaders, government representatives, and international ministers and mediators are also preparing for new peace talks set to begin in Tripoli, Libya, on October 27.

As part of the CPA mandate, the Central Bank of Sudan (CBS) introduced its new currency, the Sudanese pound, on January 8, 2007, valued at US\$2 = S£1. The pound became the official currency for all of Sudan, as many southerners view the use of the dinar, the former currency, as a symbol of Islamization and Arabization of Sudan. The new currency is also designed to replace the use of foreign currencies in southern Sudan, such as the Ugandan or Kenyan shilling or Ethiopian birr, which were commonly used during the civil war. As of June 30, 2007, the pound is the only legal currency in Sudan. To date, the new currency has received mixed reviews. Though it has been received favorably by much of the north, traders in the south argue that the central bank of Southern Sudan has not distributed enough small bills and coins, which hurts their business, and that it is not yet easily exchangeable in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia where many of their goods are traded.

## Political Parties and Groups

Following the 1969 coup, all political parties, except the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), were outlawed. After the failure of the SCP coup in July 1971, it also was driven underground, and many of its leaders were arrested. The following October President Numayri attempted to supplant the existing parties by launching the Sudanese Socialist Union, modeled after the Arab Socialist Union of Egypt, which remained the country's only recognized political group until its suspension by the TMC in April 1985. More than 40 parties were reported to have participated in the post-Numayri balloting of April 1986, although only the Umma

Party (UP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and National Islamic Front (NIF) obtained substantial legislative representation.

In July 1989 the newly installed military regime imposed a new ban on political groups and arrested numerous party leaders. Although most of the detainees were eventually released, the ban continued, with Bashir announcing in late 1990 that the regime had no intention of reestablishing a multiparty system.

In response to the NIF's assumption of substantial, albeit unofficial, political power, a number of the other parties (including the DUP, UP, and SCP, the SPLM, trade union and university organizations, and some disaffected military leaders) formed a loose antigovernment coalition known as the **National Democratic Alliance** (NDA). An NDA Summit, held in London January 26–February 3, 1992, called for the establishment of a transitional government in Sudan pending the formulation of a new constitution that would create a multiparty democracy, ensure human rights, and preserve the nation's religious and ethnic "diversity." A second NDA summit in London in February 1994 demonstrated, according to *Middle East International*, that the Alliance "exists only on paper," as no consensus was reached on the pivotal questions of proposed self-determination for the south and the role of sharia in the state envisioned by the NDA. By contrast, a third summit in Asmara, Eritrea, on June 15–23, 1995, yielded agreement that, if and when the opposition gained power, "religion should be separate from politics," and that a referendum should be held in the south on its secession from the republic. The NDA called for a boycott of the March 1996 presidential and general elections, describing them as a "farce." In June the Alliance charged the Bashir regime with having imposed "religious fanaticism" on Sudan and having established a "politically backward" system of government. A joint NDA military command was established in October under the direction of the SPLM's Col. John Garang.

The NDA suffered a blow in March 2000 when the UP withdrew from the Alliance in the wake of a preliminary agreement between Bashir and

UP leader Sadiq al-Mahdi (see UP, below, for additional information). It also was suggested that Mahdi may have been distressed by the authority being exercised by DUP leader and NDA Chair Usman al-Mirghani as well as the military dominance of the SPLM within the Alliance. For its part, the NDA subsequently continued to insist that Bashir step down in favor of a government of national reconciliation. In May 2001 the UP declined an invitation to rejoin the NDA, although Mahdi and Mirghani subsequently met in an effort to assist in devising a comprehensive peace plan. Although both the UP and DUP tentatively endorsed the proposed accords between Khartoum and the SPLM in 2002, the NDA was not officially included in those negotiations. In January 2005, the government reached an agreement in Cairo with the NDA that would reintegrate it into politics. In the following December, two NDA members took up cabinet posts, and the coalition filled 20 seats in the National Assembly.

The new constitution signed into law in June 1998 authorized the formation of political “associations,” and the government began to register parties in January 1999 under guidelines provided by the Political Association Act approved by the assembly in November 1998. Wide latitude was given to a government-appointed registrar of political associations to rule on applications; among other things, groups could be denied legal status if their activity was deemed incompatible with the country’s “cultural course,” an apparent reference to the government’s Islamization campaign. The March 2000 Political Organizations Act for the Year 2000 amended the 1998 act to allow the formation of parties opposed to the government; however, it maintained government power to close down any party. In addition, parties not registered, while permitted to operate freely, were precluded from participating in elections until registered. Subsequently, in August 2002, President Bashir called for a lifting of the ban on parties that had been represented in the legislature at the time of his assumption of power.

In January 2007 the National Assembly passed the Political Parties Bill, a controversial bill crit-

icized by the SPLA and the NDA, who withdrew from the vote in parliament in protest on January 22. The controversial bill allows for the suspension or dissolution of any political party that the government deems to be carrying out activities contrary to the terms of the CPA, including preventing parties from participating in elections. The bill also prevents any member of security forces, the police, diplomats, civil service heads, and judges from joining any political party with the exception of President Bashir and Vice President Kiir, who are both military commanders, until the end of the CPA’s transitional period. The NDA and SPLM argued that the bill was an assault on democracy and would be used by the NC to repress its political opponents.

### *Legislative Parties*

**National Congress**—NC. The NC is a partial successor to the National Islamic Front (*al-Jabha al-Watani al-Islami*—NIF), which was organized prior to the April 1986 balloting by the leader of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Hassan Abdallah al-Turabi, who as attorney general had been largely responsible for the harsh enforcement of sharia law under the Numayri government. The NIF displayed unexpected strength by winning 51 legislative seats but refused to enter the government until May 1988 because of the UP commitment to revise the sharia system, which the NIF had long wished to strengthen rather than weaken. The NIF gained a number of ministerial seats vacated by the DUP in December 1988 but withdrew from the coalition upon the latter’s return in March 1989. Although Turabi was arrested in July 1989, along with the leaders of many other parties, he was released in December and soon became one of the new regime’s most influential supporters. As it became more and more identified with fundamentalism, the Bashir government appointed numerous NIF adherents to key government posts, most observers agreeing that the Front had become a de facto government party. NIF/Muslim Brotherhood supporters also were reported to be directing the Islamic “security groups,” which had assumed

growing authority since 1990, particularly in dealing with government opponents.

Turabi, one of the world's leading Islamic fundamentalist theoreticians, was subsequently routinely described as the country's most powerful political figure. A follower of Iran's late Ayatollah Khomeini, he called for the creation of Islamic regimes in all Arab nations, a position that caused concern in several nearby states (particularly Egypt) as well as in major Western capitals. The NIF's "number two," Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha, was named foreign minister in February 1995 and first vice president in early 1998.

It was reported in 1996 that Turabi had directed that the NIF be renamed the National Congress (NC), apparently to reflect a proposed broadening of its scope to serve as an umbrella political organization open to all citizens and to act as a quasi-institutional governing body. Subsequent news reports appeared to use the two names interchangeably, with the NIF rubric predominating. In January 1999 it was announced that a National Congress had been officially registered as a political party, while reports in March indicated similar status had been accorded to a National Islamic Front Party. It was not immediately clear what relationship, if any, the two groupings had to each other or the traditional NIF. Meanwhile, reports (officially denied) surfaced of friction between Turabi and party reformists as well between Turabi and Sudanese President Bashir, who was named chair of the recently established NIF advisory council. Tensions between Turabi and Bashir resulted in the removal of Turabi as general secretary in May. Turabi subsequently formed a new party, the Popular National Congress (PNC, below), and Bashir's supporters formally used the NC rubric in the December 2000 elections.

*Leaders:* Umar Hassan Ahmad al-BASHIR (President of the Republic and Chair of the Party's *Shura* Council), Ibrahim Ahmed OMAR (Secretary General), Ahmad Abder RAHMAN, Ali Uthman Muhammad TAHA (First Vice President of the Republic), Ali al-Haj MUHAMMAD, Muhammad Ahmad SALIM (Registrar of Political Associations).

**Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army—SPLM/A.** The SPLM and its military wing, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), were formed in 1983 by Col. John Garang, until then an officer in the Sudanese army. Sent by the Numayri administration to negotiate with mutinous soldiers in southern garrisons, Colonel Garang joined the mutineers and, under his leadership, the SPLA became the dominant southern rebel force. The SPLM and SPLA were supported by Libya prior to Numayri's ouster, when Tripoli endorsed the new regime in Khartoum. The SPLA called a cease-fire immediately following the coup but thereafter initiated military action against the Khartoum government after failing to win concessions on the southern question. Relying on an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 troops the SPLA subsequently gained control of most of the non-urban south; sporadic negotiations with various northern representatives yielded several temporary cease-fires but no permanent solution to the conflict.

The SPLM, which in 1987 began to downplay its initial self-description as "Marxist-Leninist," did not propose secession for the south. Instead, it supported a unified Sudan in which the south would be granted a larger voice in national affairs and a greater share of the nation's economic development programs. However, under pressure from secession-oriented splinters, the SPLM's leaders in 1992 reportedly endorsed the proposed division of Sudan into two highly autonomous, albeit still confederated, states, with the south operating under secular law and the north under sharia.

Prior to mid-1991 the SPLA maintained large training camps in southern Ethiopia with the apparent blessing of the Mengistu regime. Following the change of government in Addis Ababa, however, its units were forced back across the border. In August the Movement was severely splintered when a group of second-tier leaders headquartered in the eastern town of Nasir announced their intention to wrest SPLA control from Garang, whom they accused of perpetrating a "dictatorial reign of terror." Long-standing tribal animosity also

appeared to contribute to the split, support for the Nasir faction coming primarily from the Nuer ethnic group, which has had a stormy relationship with Garang's Dinka supporters since the creation of the SPLA (see Anyanya II Movement, below). Several months of fighting between the two factions left thousands dead, with Garang's supporters charging the dissidents with the "massacre" of Dinka civilians in January 1992. Although a temporary reconciliation between the SPLA factions was achieved at the Abuja peace talks with the government in June, sporadic fighting resumed later in the summer.

In September 1992 William Nyuon BANY, who had been conducting negotiations with the splinter group on behalf of Garang, defected from the main SPLA branch to form his own faction, which in April 1993 coalesced with other anti-Garang groups as the SPLA-United (below). In early 1994 negotiations between the SPLA and the SPLA-United yielded a tentative cease-fire agreement in which Garang reportedly agreed to support a proposed self-determination vote for the south, which most observers believed would endorse secession. Although discussion also focused on possible reunification of the southern forces, there appeared to be ongoing friction between Garang and the SPLA-United's Riak Machar concerning their prospective leadership roles.

In April 1994 some 500 delegates attended the first SPLA-SPLM conference since 1983. The conference was reportedly called to shore up Garang's authority in the face of competition from the SPLA-United. The SPLM leader was put in charge of the joint military command announced by the NDA in October 1996 after the SPLA-United and Machar's SSIM signed a peace accord with the Bashir government. (See Current issues, above, for information on negotiations between the SPLM and the government.)

In late 2004 rumors surfaced of a "revolt" against Garang by some SPLA officers who favored the independence of the south and wanted Salva Kiir Mayardit to replace Garang as head of the SPLA. However, Kiir reminded the rebel officers of the uprising against Garang in 1991.

The rebel officers were impatient with Garang's seeming ineffectiveness in negotiations with Khartoum.

On July 30, 2005, Garang died in a helicopter crash, an event that ignited rioting leading to the death of more than 100 people. He was succeeded as SPLM leader by his deputy, Kiir. Kiir appointed Machar as vice president of the Government of Southern Sudan in August 2005.

In January 2006, the SPLA and the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) signed the Juba Declaration, merging the two groups. The SSDF had formerly supported the northern government. However, a splinter group of the SSDF loyal to Gordon Kong (SSDF-Kong rejected the Juba Declaration as well as the CPA and continues to fight against the SPLA).

*Leaders:* Salva KIIR Mayardit (First Vice President of the Republic, President of South Sudan, and Party Chair), Riak MACHAR (Vice President of South Sudan).

**Sudanese People's Liberation Army—United**—SPLA-United. The formation of the SPLA-United was announced in early April 1993 in Nairobi, Kenya, by SPLA dissidents who opposed the "one-man rule" of longtime SPLA leader John Garang. Included in the grouping was the Nasir faction (which had been fighting with Garang's forces since August 1991 [see SPLM, above]); William Nyuon Bany's self-styled **Forces of Unity**; and the so-called **Kerubino Group**, formed in February by Kerubino Kwanyin Bol and several other dissidents who had escaped from a Garang prison in the fall of 1992.

As of early 1994 the SPLA-United was facing heavy domestic and international pressure to reconcile with the SPLA, internecine fighting having yielded numerous civilian casualties and exacerbated famine conditions in the south. At the same time, the SPLA-United's advocacy of independence for southern Sudan appeared to be gaining widespread support.

A number of splits in the SPLA-United occurred in early 1995, the most important of which was the withdrawal of Nasir faction leader Riak Machar to

form a Southern Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM). Concurrently, Nyuon Bany was expelled from the SPLA-United after being accused of collaboration with Khartoum, although by early 1996 the rump group was itself reportedly an ally of the north, with Nyuon Bany resuming a pro-Garang posture within the SSIM. In April the SPLA-United and the SSIM signed an agreement with the government in which they endorsed the preservation of Sudan's "known boundaries," thereby apparently relinquishing their drive for independence. Several factions of the SPLA-United were among the groups that reached a peace accord with the government in April 1997.

The SPLA-United, under Lam Akol, subsequently gained strength through a merger with the Southern Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF) led by Machar. As an outgrowth of that agreement, Machar was named head of the new Southern States Coordination Council (SSCC, see Political background, above). However, Machar later pulled out of the government, accusing President Bashir of failing to consult with him regarding governmental appointments. Machar subsequently became the leader of the UDSF (above). Meanwhile, Akol continued to serve in Bashir's cabinet until August 2002, when he was dismissed after he and several supporters had announced they were leaving the NC to form a new party. By that time, Machar and his supporters had reintegrated into the SPLA as southern groups in general and attempted to present a unified front during increasingly promising peace negotiations. SPLA leader Akol was subsequently appointed foreign minister in the 2005 government of national unity.

*Leader:* Lam AKOL.

**United Democratic Salvation Front—UDSF.** The USDF was formed in 1999 by southern Sudanese political figures and dissidents from the SPLA under the leadership of Riak Machar. The UDSF included representatives of rebels groups who had signed the 1997 peace accord with the government in Khartoum and was seen as a pro-government grouping that advocated a peaceful resolution of the north-south conflict. In January

2000, Machar resigned as chair, and he rejoined the SPLA in 2002. He was replaced by Elijah HON at a party congress. In September 2001, the party's general secretary, Ibrahim al-TAWIL, led a large group of UDSF members in a defection to the NC. In October 2001, in an effort to unify the party, new leadership elections were conducted, and Eng Joseph Malwal was chosen chair. In March 2003 the USDF signed a cooperation agreement with the NC and was subsequently included in successive cabinets, including the 2005 unity government. The UDSF continue to hold a cabinet post, the minister of tourism, and takes part in the GOSS.

*Leaders:* Eng Joseph MALWAL (Chair), Faruq GATKOUTH (General Secretary).

### *Government Supportive Parties and Groups*

**Democratic Unionist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Ittihad al-Dimuqrati*—DUP). Also right of center, the DUP draws its principal strength from the Khatmiya Muslims of northern and eastern Sudan. Based on its second-place showing at the 1986 poll, the DUP was the UP's junior partner in subsequent government coalitions, although internal divisions prevented the formulation of a clearly defined outlook. The faction led by party chair Usman al-Mirghani included pro-Egyptian traditionalists once linked to the Numayri regime, who were reluctant to repeal sharia until an alternative code was formulated. Younger members, on the other hand, urged that the party abandon its "semi-feudal" orientation and become a secular, centrist formation capable of attracting nationwide support. In early 1986 the DUP reunited with an offshoot group, the Democratic People's Party (DPP), and subsequently appeared to have absorbed the small National Unionist Party (NUP), which had drawn most of its support from the Khartoum business community.

The party withdrew from government participation in late December 1988 because of failure to implement a southern peace accord that it had negotiated, with the prime minister's approval, a month earlier; it rejoined the coalition on March 22, 1989.

Party leaders Usman and Ahmad al-Mirghani were arrested following the June 1989 coup, but they were released at the end of the year and subsequently went into exile in Egypt.

Although significant divisions apparently remained on both questions, the DUP was described by *Middle East International* in early 1994 as still officially opposed to independence for the south and “not adverse to some form of Islamic state” for Sudan. The latter issue apparently had contributed to the defection in 1993 of the DUP faction led by former deputy prime minister Sharif Zayn al-Abidin al-HINDI, who advocated the separation of church and state despite his position as a religious leader. A possible change in the DUP’s stance toward fundamentalism and southern secession may have been signaled by the party’s participation in subsequent NDA summits.

DUP Chair Mirghani described the guidelines adopted in late 1998 for legalization of parties as too restrictive, and his supporters did not submit a request for registration, although a splinter group reportedly sought recognition under the DUP rubric. Ahmad al-Mirghani returned from exile in November 2001, but Usman al-Mirghani, who had been elected chair of the NDA in September 2000, remained outside the country despite requests from the Sudanese government for his return. Meanwhile, a DUP splinter faction, calling itself the DUP–General Secretariat, had accepted cabinet posts in the government in February 2001 and in the 2005 unity government. The mainstream DUP has since refused to take part in the unity government. In fact, the deputy secretary general of the party, Ali Mahmoud Hassanein, was arrested in July 2007 at gunpoint together with 27 other opposition politicians and charged with plotting to overthrow the government. The General Secretariat splinter continues to take part in the government and holds the chair of the ministry of industry.

*Leaders:* Usman al-MIRGHANI (Chair), Ahmad al-MIRGHANI, Dr. Ahmad al-Sayid HAMAD (Former DDP Leader), Ali Ahmed al-SAYYED, Mohammed al-AZHARI, Ali Mahmoud HASSANEIN.

**Sudanese National Party** (*al-Hizb al-Watani al-Sudani*—SNP). The SNP is a Khartoum-based party that draws most of its support from the Nuba tribes of southern Kordofan. The SNP deputies joined the southerners in boycotting the assembly in 1986 on the grounds that “African bloc” interests were underrepresented in the cabinet. In November 1987 the party’s leader, Rev. Philip Ghabush, was branded a “dictator” by dissidents.

The SNP was officially registered in April 1999, Ghabush having announced his support for the new constitution and laws regarding party formation. Father Ghabush and his party remain outside of government and critical of the CPA, which they claim did not benefit the people of the Nuba Mountains despite the destruction they faced during the civil war. They continue to call for unity in Sudan and say they will call for self-determination if Southern Sudan votes to succeed from Sudan in 2011.

*Leader:* Rev. Philip Abbas GHABUSH.

**Islamic Umma Party** (*Hizb al-Umma al-Islamiya*—IUP). This small party split off from the mainstream Umma Party (see below) in 1985. In applying for recognition in early 1999, the IUP announced it would advocate sharia as the sole source of law while promoting “Mahdist” ideology and a nonaligned foreign policy. The IUP was officially registered in April 1999 and convened its first general congress with delegates from all parts of Sudan the same month. The IUP officially supports the government.

*Leader:* Wali al-Din al-Hadi al-MAHDI.

### *Groups Cooperating with Government*

**Umma (People’s) Party** (*Hizb al-Umma*—UP). A moderate right-of-center formation, the UP has long been led by former prime minister Mahdi. Strongest among the Ansar Muslims of the White Nile and western Darfur and Kordofan provinces, it obtained a plurality of 100 seats at the 1986 assembly balloting. Most of its members traditionally advocated the repeal of sharia law and were wary of sharing power with the fundamentalist NIF. Despite an historic pro-Libyan, anti-Egyptian posture,

the party cultivated good relations with Western countries based, in part, on Mahdi's personal ties to Britain.

Prime Minister Mahdi and Idriss al-Banna were arrested shortly after the military coup in June 1989 (the latter being sentenced to 40 years in jail for corruption); Mahdi was released from prison and placed under house arrest in January 1990, amid rumors that the UP was considering some form of cooperation with the new regime. Subsequently, in light of growing fundamentalist influence within the Bashir government, the UP announced an alliance with the SPLM (see Other Groups, below) dedicated to overthrowing the government; ending the civil war; and reintroducing multiparty, secular democracy. The southern liaison notwithstanding, the UP membership was reported to be deeply divided following Mahdi's release from house arrest in May 1991. One faction apparently considered negotiations with the current regime to be pointless, while another supported the convening of a national conference (with full NIF participation), which would organize a national referendum on the nation's political future. With southern groups tending more and more to support independence for their region, the UP in early 1994 was described as "open" on the question. Mahdi was rearrested in June 1994 on charges of plotting against the government and again in May 1995 for a three-month period. He was reportedly invited by the Bashir regime to join the new government formed in April 1996 but declined and eventually fled to Asmara, Eritrea, in December.

The UP was one of the first groups to seek recognition in early 1999, the pro-negotiation faction having apparently gained ascendancy. For his part, Mahdi in November concluded an agreement with Bashir known as the "Call of the Homeland Accord," which proposed a new, pluralistic constitution for Sudan and a four-year transitional period that would conclude with a self-determination referendum for the south. Consequently, in March 2000 Mahdi announced that the UP had withdrawn from the NDA, which he criticized for refusing to negotiate with the government, and directed the *Umma* militia to honor a cease-fire. Mahdi returned

to Sudan in November after four years of exile in Egypt, but the UP nonetheless boycotted the December legislative and presidential elections, arguing that the balloting should be postponed pending comprehensive "national reconciliation." The UP also declined Bashir's invitation to join the cabinet in February 2001, again on the premise that a "bilateral" agreement was not appropriate while other opposition groups remained in conflict with the government. However, a UP splinter faction, led by Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi, accepted ministerial posts in August 2002 and in the 2005 unity government. The party officially favors the deployment of a hybrid AU-UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. The party remains active but outside of the unity government. It complains that the CPA served to solidify the NC's hold on power, leaving little room for northern opposition parties to contest Bashir's power. The current head of the *Umma* Party, Mubarak al-Fadil al-MAHDI, was arrested in July 2007 at gunpoint together with 27 other opposition leaders and charged with plotting to overthrow the government.

*Leaders:* Dr. Sadiq al-MAHDI (Former Prime Minister), Idris al-BANNA, Mubarak Abdullah al-MAHDI, Mubarak al-Fadil al-MAHDI (Assistant to the President of the Republic and dissident faction leader), Sarrah NAGDALLA, Umar Nur al-DAIM (Secretary General).

### *Regional Interests, Opposition Parties, and Rebel Groups*

**Progressive People's Party—PPP.** The PPP is one of the two major "Equatorial" parties (see SAPC, below) representing Sudanese living near the Zairian and Ugandan borders. Both the PPP and SAPC, unlike the SSPA, are "pro-divisionist," calling for strong provincial governments within a weak regional administration for the south. The PPP's leader, Elioba Surur, is considered a leader in southern Sudan and is a member of the GOSS.

*Leader:* Elioba SURUR.

**Sudan African National Union—SANU.** Founded in 1963, the SANU is a small southern party based in Malakal, SANU (adopting the same



name as a pre-Numayri party) supports the division of the south into separate regions for administration. The SANU remains an active party in the south and is participating in writing a constitution for Southern Sudan.

*Leader:* Andrew Wieu RIAK.

**Popular (People's) National Congress—PNC.**

The PNC is an Islamic fundamentalist organization that was formed by the Turabi faction of the NIF/NC. Turabi had earlier accused President Bashir of betraying the NC's Islamist tenets. Thus, Turabi claimed he was merely adding "Popular" to the original party's name and expelling members who had produced the crisis. Nevertheless, the PNC officially registered as a district party in July 2000. Turabi described the PNC as a "comprehensive *shura* organization," which indicated it would be outside the government. The PNC has few policy differences with the NC.

Turabi and several of his PNC supporters were arrested in February 2001 (see Current issues, above). Turabi was released in October 2003 and rearrested on March 31, 2004. The registrar of political parties issued a decree on April 1, 2004, to suspend the PNC's activities, following Turabi's arrest. Turabi was released as part of the general amnesty issued by Bashir in July 2005. Turabi has since refused to take part in the unity government and called for a popular uprising against the ruling party.

*Leaders:* Hassan Abdallah al-TURABI, Ali al-Hajj MUHAMMAD (Secretary General).

**Sudanese Communist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Shuy'i al-Sudani*—SCP). Founded in 1946 and a leading force in the struggle for independence, the SCP was banned under the Abbud regime and supported the 1969 Numayri coup, becoming thereafter the sole legal party until the abortive 1971 uprising, when it was again outlawed. The SCP campaigned as a recognized party in 1986, calling for opposition to Islamic fundamentalism; repeal of sharia; and the adoption of a secular, democratic constitution. It displayed no interest in joining the government coalition in 1988 but accepted one cabinet portfolio in March 1989. Secretary General Muhammad

Ibrahim Nugud Mansur was arrested following the June 1989 coup, and in September four more party members were detained for alleged involvement in an antigovernment protest. Nugud was released from prison in February 1990 but was placed under house arrest until May 1991, at which time he was freed under what the government described as a blanket amnesty for all remaining political detainees. The SCP, operating primarily from exile, subsequently remained active in the anti-NIF opposition, with some NDA members complaining in late 1992 that the SCP's influence continued at a higher level than was warranted in view of communism's worldwide decline. SCP reformers have recently urged the party to shed its communist orientation in favor of a more moderate left-of-center posture that would attract wider popular participation, but the group's "older generation of leaders" has thus far resisted such a move. The party leadership was reportedly critical in late 1998 and early 1999 of the closer ties apparently being established by UP leader Sadiq al-Mahdi with the NIF government. The SCP is currently led by Muhammad Ibrahim Nugud and plays only a marginal role in the national political scene. Officially, it supports a return to democratic rule and opposes the succession of Southern Sudan from the federation.

*Leaders:* Muhammad Ibrahim NUGUD Mansur (Secretary General), Ali al-Tijani al-TAYYIB Babikar (Deputy Secretary General).

**Legitimate Command.** The Command is a Cairo-based group of former Sudanese officers opposed to the Bashir regime that claims the support of "democratic" officers in the Sudanese army. The Command has participated in NDA summits in recent years, some observers going so far as to describe it as the NDA's "military wing."

*Leader:* Fathi Ahmad ALI.

**Sudan Liberation Movement/Army—SLM/A.** This group is a successor of sorts to the Darfur Liberation Front, a rebel group organized to combat repressive conditions in Darfur. The rebels split into two groups in 2004, as the SLM/A vehemently opposed Khalil Ibrahim, a radical opponent of Khartoum (see JEM, below). The SLM/A claimed

to represent the region's black African farmers, who were angry over alleged government support for Arab militias. One faction of the SLM/A, known as the *Mani Arkoi* and led by Minni Minnawi, signed the AU-backed 2006 Darfur peace accord, but the main SLM/A body, led by party chair Abdallah Wahid Mohamed Ahmad Nur, rejected the agreement.

*Leaders:* Abdallah Wahid Mohamed Ahmad NUR (Chair), Mustafa TIRAB (General Secretary), Minni MINAWAI (Leader of the *Mani Arkoi* faction).

**National Redemption Front**—NRF. This is a coalition of rebel groups operating in Darfur that did not sign the May 2006 peace agreement with the Sudanese government. NRF has come to symbolize opposition to the peace agreement and to the National Conference. Member groups include the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

*Leaders:* Khalil Ibrahim MOHAMED (JEM), Ahmed Ibrahim DIRAIGE, Sharif HARIR (SFDA), Khamis Abdalla ABAKAR.

**Justice and Equality Movement**—JEM. The JEM split from the SLM in mid-2004, further complicating peace negotiations with Khartoum, with each of the groups at odds with the others based on tribal rivalries. It is reportedly supported by Islamists close to Hassan Abdallah al-Turabi. In May 2006 the JEM refused to sign the AU-supported Darfur peace plan and is a member of the National Redemption Front (NRF) alliance. The JEM remains an active rebel group and as of mid-September plans to attend the peace talks scheduled for late October in Libya.

*Leader:* Khalil IBRAHIM Mohamed.

**Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance**—SFDA. The SFDA was launched in London in February 1994 under the chairship of Ahmed Dreige, a former Numayri cabinet member. The group has deemed “all means to be legitimate” in securing an end to the Bashir regime and has proposed a substantially decentralized federal

structure for Sudan in which the traditional parties would play no role. The SFDA is also a member of the NRF.

*Leaders:* Ahmed DREIGE (Chair), Sherif HARIR, Suleiman RAHAL.

**National Movement for Reform and Development in Dafur**—NMRD. This rebel group, which operates in the north and west, split from the JEM in August 2004 after its leader accused the JEM's Ibrahim of trying to have him assassinated. This group officially announced its formation on October 26, 2004. On July 20, 2005, the group signed a cease-fire agreement with the government and has since become defunct.

*Leaders:* Jibril Abdel KARIM, Nourene Manawi BARTCHAM.

**Eastern Front.** Formed on February 1, 2005, this group, which operated in the east, was composed of two rebel groups: the Rashaida Free Lions Association, whose members are Rashaida tribesmen, and the Beja Congress, which represents the non-Arab, nomadic Beja tribes. Unrest in the impoverished area of eastern Sudan, long ignored by the government, began as a grassroots movement in the 1990s and gained strength with the return of Umar Muhammad TAHIR, the exiled Beja Congress leader, in November 2003. The Congress was banned by the government in October 2003 for its use of violence. The Eastern Front and the government signed the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) on October 14, 2006, which granted the east greater representation in the national government and established the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund. On August 31, 2007, Chairman Ahmed was sworn in as a presidential advisor to President Bashir, and Secretary General Mubarak was given the post of minister of state in the ministry of transport. The Eastern Front also was given several parliamentary seats in the national government.

*Leaders:* Musa Muhamed AHMED (Chairman), Mubarak MUBARAK (Secretary General)

**Sudan Alliances Forces**—SAF. The SAF is a rebel group operating in eastern Sudan, reportedly

## Cabinet

As of July 10, 2007

President and Prime Minister	Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir (NC)
First Vice President	Salva Kiir Mayardit (SPLM)
Second Vice President	Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha (NC)

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Forestry	Mohammed al-Amin Essa Kabashi (NC)
Animal Resources	Brig. (Rtd) Galwak Deng (SPLM)
Cabinet Affairs/Council of Ministers	Denik Alor Kuol (SPLM)
Culture and Youth	Mohammed Youssef Abdullah (NC)
Defense	Lt. Gen. Abdel-Rahim Hussein (NC)
Education	Hamid Mohamed Ibrahim (NDA)
Energy and Mining	Awad Ahmed al-Jaz (NC)
Environment and Urban Planning	Ahmed Babakr Nahar (NC)
External Trade	George Bornik Neyami (SPLM)
Federal Governance	Abdel-Basit Sabdarat (NC)
Finance	Al-Zubair Hassan Ahmed (NC)
Foreign Affairs	Lam Akol (SPLM)
Health	Tabita Shwkaya (SPLM) [f]
Higher Education and Scientific Research	Peter Niyot Kok (SPLM)
Humanitarian Affairs	Kosti Manibi (SPLM)
Industry	Jalal Yusuf Mohammed Digair (DUP)
Information and Communications	El-Zahawi Ibrahim Malik (UP)
Interior	Zubair Bashir Taha (NC)
International Cooperation	Al-Tijani Saleh Fadel (NC)
Investment	Malik Akar Ayar (SPLM)
Irrigation and Water Resources	Kamal Ali Mohammed (NC)
Justice	Mohammed Ali al-Mardi (NC)
Labor, Public Service, and Human Resources	Alison Manani Makaya (NC)
Parliamentary Affairs	Joseph Okelo (SPLM)
Religious Guidance and Endowments	Azhari al-Taji Awad al-Sayyed (NC)
Republic Affairs	Maj. Gen. Bakri Hassan Salih (NC)
Science	Abdelrahman Saeed (NDA)
Tourism	Joseph Malwal (UDSF)
Transport and Roads	Kol Manyak Gok (SPLM)
Welfare and Social Development	Samia Ahmed Mohammed (NC)
Attorney General	Ali Mohamed Osman YASSIN
Governor, Central Bank of Sudan	Muhammad al-Hasan Sabir

[f] = female

from bases in Ethiopia and Eritrea. In late 1996 it was described as a participant in the NDA, although its fighters were not believed to be under the direct command of the SPLA's Colonel Garang.

*Leader:* Brig. Gen. Abd al-Aziz Khalid OSMAN.

**Nobility Movement** (*al-Shahamah*). This is a rebel group reportedly formed in October 2004 in West Kordofan state by a former leader of the pro-government paramilitary Popular Defense Forces. The leader, Musa Ali Muhammadayn (also a former governor of al-Rashad province), was dismissed from that post when he decided to remain loyal to Turabi in the latter's confrontations with Bashir.

*Leader:* Musa Ali MUHAMMADAYN.

### *Other Groups*

Other groups that have applied for recognition include the **Alliance for People's Working Forces**, led by Kamal al-Din Muhammad ABDULLAH and former president Numayri; **Party of God** (*Hizb Allah* or *Hezbollah*), led by Sulayman Hasan KHALIL; **Future Party** (*Hizb al-Mustaqbal*), led by Abd al-Mutal Abd al-RAHMAN; **Islamic-Christian Solidarity**, launched under the leadership of Hatim Abdullah al-Zaki HUSAYN on a platform of religious harmony and increased attention to social problems; the **Islamic Path Party**, led by Hasab al-RASUL; the **Islamic Revival Movement**, led by Siddiq al-Haj al-SIDDIQ; the **Islamic Socialist Party**, led by Sabah al-MUSBAN; the **Liberalization Party**; the **Moderate Trend Party**, led by Mahmud JINA; the **Muslim Brothers**, led by Sheikh Sadiq Abdallah Abd al-MAJID; the **National Popular Front**, led by Umar Hasan SHALABI and devoted to pan-Arab and pan-Islamic unity; the **National Salvation Party**; the **New Forces Association**, led by Abd al-Rahman Ismail KIBAYDAH; the **Popular Masses' Alliance**, founded by Faysal Muhammad HUSAYN in support of policies designed to assist the poor; the **Socialist Popular Party**, led by Sayyid Khalifah Idris HABANI; the **Sudanese Central Movement**, led by Muhammad Abu al-Qasim Haji HAMAD;

the **Sudan Federal Party**, launched by Ahmed DIRAIGE (a leader of the Fur ethnic group) in support of a federal system; the **Sudan Green Party**, led by Zakaraia Bashir IMAN; and the **Sudanese Initiative Party**, led by Jafar KARAR. The formation of a **National Democratic Party** (NDP) was reported in February 2006 as a merger of several small groupings with leftist or nationalist orientations.

## Legislature

Under the Numayri regime, the size and composition of the unicameral National People's Assembly changed several times, the assembly elected in 1974 being the only one to complete its full constitutional term of four years. All existing legislative bodies were dissolved by the TNC in April 1985.

On April 1–12, 1986, balloting was held for 260 members of a 301-member Constituent Assembly, voting being postponed in many southern districts because of rebel activity. The assembly was dissolved by the Bashir regime in July 1989.

On February 13, 1992, Prime Minister Bashir announced the appointment of a 300-member Transitional National Assembly, which met for the first time on February 24. Included in the new assembly were all members of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC); a number of RCC advisors; all cabinet ministers and state governors; and representatives of the army, trade unions, and former political parties. The prime minister decreed that the assembly would sit for an indeterminate period, pending the selection of a permanent body as the final step of the new pyramidal legislative structure envisioned by the government.

Elections to a new 400-member **National Assembly** were conducted on March 6–17, 1996, all candidates running as independents because political parties remained banned. Most of the 275 elected members of the assembly were selected during that balloting, although in October President Bashir appointed eight legislators from constituencies in the south, where voting had been deemed impossible due to the civil war. When the assembly convened on April 1, the elected legislators were

joined by 125 legislators who had been selected in January by representatives of local and state councils and numerous professional associations.

At the most recent balloting, held December 13–23, 2000, the National Congress won 355 of 360 contested seats, the remaining 5 being secured by independents. (Most major opposition groups boycotted the balloting, and elections were not held in three southern provinces due to the civil war.) On December 20, 2004, the National Assembly amended the constitution to extend the term of the sitting legislature for one year. Legislators serve four-year terms.

In accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed January 9, 2005, seats in the legislature were divided based on a power-sharing quota, with the NC holding 52 percent of the seats; the SPLM, 28 percent; northern opposition parties, 14 percent; and southern opposition parties, 6 percent. The new 450-member “national unity” assembly—appointed by decree by Bashir—convened for the first time on August 31, 2005. Members serve six-year terms. Also under the agreement, the south established its own assembly, the South Sudan Transitional Legislative Assembly, which convened for the first time on September 29, 2005.

*President:* Ahmed Ibrahim al-TAHIR.

## Communications

### *Press*

The Bashir government banned all newspapers and magazines with the exception of the weekly military paper, *al-Guwat al-Musallaha* (Armed Forces), upon its assumption of power in June 1989. The following September two new dailies were issued under government auspices, *al-Engaz al-Watani* and *al-Sudan al-Hadith*. In May 1990 a new English-language weekly, *New Horizon*, was launched. In April 1993 it was reported that *al-Khartoum*, one of the dailies banned in 1989, had resumed publication from exile in Cairo, Egypt.

Two months later the government announced a relaxation of its press monopoly; however, in April 1994 the country’s sole privately owned paper, *al-Sudan al-Dawli*, was shut down for criticizing the NIF’s continued support of the regime.

On May 10, 2003, the *Khartoum Monitor*, Sudan’s only English-language daily, was banned. On August 12, 2003, reportedly to bolster support for his regime, President Bashir issued a decree supposedly to end press censorship. Some open discussion of issues and criticism of the government is allowed. The SPLM has its own newspapers in the south, and some independent media has sprung up as well, generally based in Juba.

### *News Agencies*

The domestic facility is the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) (*Wakalat al-Anba al-Sudan*). A number of foreign agencies maintain bureaus in Khartoum.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Republic of Sudan Broadcasting (*Idhaat al-Jumhuriyah al-Sudan*) is a government facility transmitting in Arabic, Amharic, Somali, and Tigrinya as well as in English and French. Television service is provided by the commercial, government-controlled Sudan Television Service. As of 2005, there were approximately 93 personal computers and 80 Internet users for every 1,000 residents. In that same year there were an estimated 52 mobile cellular subscribers.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** (Vacant)

**U.S. Ambassador to Sudan:** (Vacant)

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamad

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AU, BADEA, CAEU, Comesa, IDB, IGAD, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OIC, PCA, WCO

# SYRIA

## SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

*al-Jumhuriyah al-Arabiyah al-Suriyah*

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### The Country

The Syrian Arab Republic is flanked by Turkey on the north; the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon, and Israel on the west; Jordan on the south; and Iraq on the east. Its terrain is distinguished by the Anti-Lebanon and Alawite mountains running parallel to the Mediterranean, the Jabal al-Druze Mountains in the south, and a semidesert plateau in the southeast, while the economically important Euphrates River Valley traverses the country from north to southeast. Ninety percent of the population is Arab; the most important minorities are Kurds, Armenians, and Turks. Islam is professed by 87 percent of the people, most of whom belong to the Sunni sect, which dominated the region for some 1,400 years prior to the assumption of power in 1970 by Hafiz al-Assad, an Alawite. (About 12 percent of the population is Alawite, a Shiite offshoot that also draws on some Christian traditions and is viewed as “non-Muslim” by many Sunnis. Alawites have dominated governmental affairs under the regimes of Hafiz al-Assad and, more recently, his son, Bashar al-Assad, which also have afforded greater latitude to the Christian community, which constitutes about 10 percent of the population, than many other Arab governments.) Arabic is the official language, but French and English are spoken in government and business circles.

Syria is one of the few Arab countries with adequate arable land. One-third of the work force is engaged in agriculture (more than half of the women work as unpaid family workers on rural estates). However, a lack of proper irrigation

facilities makes agricultural production dependent on variations in rainfall. An agrarian reform law, promulgated in 1958 and modified in 1963, limits the size of individual holdings. Wheat, barley, and cotton are the principal crops, while Syria is one of the world's leading producers of olive oil. Major industries have been nationalized, the most important of which are food processing, tobacco, and textiles. Industrial growth has been rapid since the 1950s, with petroleum, Syria's most valuable natural resource, providing an investment base. Increased agricultural production and oil transit



**Political Status:** Republic proclaimed in 1941; became independent on April 17, 1946; under military regime since March 8, 1963.

**Area:** 71,586 sq. mi. (185,408 sq. km.).

**Population:** 13,782,315 (1994C); 19,522,000 (2006E). Both figures include Palestinian refugees, numbering approximately 400,000.

**Major Urban Centers (2005E, including suburbs):** DAMASCUS (2,314,000), Aleppo (2,560,000), Homs (1,102,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Syrian Pound (principal rate November 2, 2007: 51.15 pounds = \$1US; market rate September 1, 2002, 48.85 pounds = \$1US).

**President:** Dr./Lt. Gen. Bashar al-ASSAD (*Baath* Party); sworn in for a seven-year term on July 17, 2000, following endorsement by the People's Assembly on June 27 and by a national referendum on July 10 of a successor to Lt. Gen. Hafiz al-ASSAD, who had died on June 10. President Assad was endorsed for a second seven-year term by a referendum held on May 27, 2007.

**Vice Presidents:** Farouk al-SHARAA and Najah al-ATTAH; appointed by President Bashar al-ASSAD on March 23, 2006. Al-Shara replaced former vice president Abdul al-Halim KHADDAM, who was branded a "traitor" after he publicly accused Damascus of being involved in the murder of Lebanese ex-prime minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005. Currently, Khaddam lives in exile in France, where he has formed a "government in exile."

**Prime Minister:** Muhammad Naji al-UTRI; appointed by the president on September 10, 2003, following the resignation of Muhammad Mustafa MIRO.

revenues contributed to a sharp increase in the GNP, which expanded by an average annual rate of 10 percent in the early 1980s. Subsequently, the economy deteriorated because of the cost of maintaining troops in Lebanon, increased arms purchases, closure of the Iraqi pipeline at the outset of the

Iran-Iraq war, a drop in oil prices, and a growing debt burden.

The economy rebounded in the early 1990s as the result of increased oil exports and aid payments from Gulf Arab states grateful for Syrian support against Iraq in the 1990–1991 Gulf crisis and war. Subsequent efforts to increase capital investment included liberal benefits for expatriate and regional investors, a new tax law, and an easing of foreign exchange restrictions. On the other hand, inefficient centralized planning remained a barrier to progress in the non-oil sectors. Consequently, in late 1994 the government announced that state-owned enterprises would be afforded greater autonomy and promised additional reforms concerning banking and exchange rate mechanisms. However, progress on those fronts was slow, with observers suggesting that the regime of President Hafiz al-Assad was reluctant to relinquish the extensive political control inherent in an extensive public sector. Pressure for liberalization has continued, particularly from the European Union (EU), which receives 65 percent of all Syrian exports.

In 1998 further liberalization efforts allowed foreign investors to own or rent land and permitted foreign banks to open branches. In 2003 six foreign banks were granted licenses to operate, and the government announced the establishment of a stock exchange. Negotiations with the EU over the signing of an association agreement are ongoing and have been complicated by the fallout from the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister. The influx of 1.5 million Iraqi refugees into Syria has placed pressure on the Syrian economy, driving real estate prices higher while straining government services and subsidies. Nevertheless, Syria's economy did "remarkably well" in 2006 according to the International Monetary Fund, with non-oil GDP growing between 6 and 7 percent, result of previous economic measures, such as exchange rate unification, elimination of restrictions on accessing foreign exchange, liberalized investment laws, and a more dynamic banking sector. Government revenue from oil exports, however, is expected to decline as a percentage of GDP over the next ten years.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Seat of the brilliant Omayyad Empire in early Islamic times before being conquered by the Mongols in 1400, Syria was absorbed by the Ottoman Turks in 1517 and became a French-mandated territory under the League of Nations in 1920. A republican government, formed under wartime conditions in 1941, secured the evacuation of French forces in April 1945 and declared the country fully independent on April 17, 1946. Political development was subsequently marked by an alternation of weak parliamentary governments and unstable military regimes. Syria merged with Egypt on February 1, 1958, to form the United Arab Republic but seceded on September 29, 1961, to reestablish itself as the independent Syrian Arab Republic.

On March 8, 1963, the *Baath* Arab Socialist Party assumed power through a military-backed coup, with Gen. Amin al-HAFIZ becoming the dominant figure until February 1966 when a second coup led by Maj. Gen. Salah al-JADID resulted in the flight of Hafiz and the installation of Nur al-Din al-ATASSI as president. With Jadid's backing, the Atassi government survived the war with Israel and the loss of the Golan Heights in 1967, but governmental cohesion was weakened by crises within the *Baath* Party that were precipitated by conflicts between the civilian and doctrinaire Marxist "progressive" faction that was led by Jadid and Atassi and the more pragmatic and military "nationalist" faction under Lt. Gen. Hafiz al-ASSAD. In November 1970 the struggle culminated in a coup by nationalist elements, with General Assad becoming president and subsequently being elected to the post of secretary general of the party. The new regime established a legislature—the first since 1966—and, following a national referendum in September 1971, joined with Egypt and Libya in a short-lived Federation of Arab Republics. The first national election in 11 years was held in 1973, with the National Progressive Front (NPF), consisting of the *Baath* Party and its allies, winning an overwhelming majority of seats in the

People's Assembly. In 1977 the Front won 159 of 195 seats, with 36 awarded to independents, while all of the seats were distributed among Front members in 1981.

General Assad's assumption of the presidency marked the growing political and economic prominence of the Alawite sect of northwestern Syria, which constitutes about 12 percent of the country's population. The Alawite background of Assad and some of his top associates triggered opposition among the country's predominantly urban Sunni majority, which had experienced economic adversity as a result of the regime's socialist policies. This opposition turned into a rebellion led by the Muslim Brotherhood (see Political Parties, below) after Syria's 1976 intervention on the Maronite side in the Lebanese civil war. The incidents perpetrated by the fundamentalists included the murder of 63 Alawite military cadets at Aleppo in June 1979; another 40 deaths at Latakia in August of the same year; a series of bombings that resulted in several hundred casualties at Damascus in 1981; and numerous clashes between the dissidents and the regime's special forces led by the president's brother, Col. Rifat al-ASSAD. The struggle reached its climax in a three-week uprising at the northern city of Hama in February 1982, which was suppressed with great bloodshed (estimates of the number killed range as high as 10,000). By 1983 the seven-year insurgency had been decisively crushed, along with the Muslim Brotherhood's stated aim of establishing an fundamentalist Islamic state.

In late 1983 President Assad suffered a serious illness (widely rumored to have been a heart attack), and a committee that included Abd al-Halim KHADDAM and Muhammad Zuhayr MASHARIQA was established within the *Baath* Party national command to coordinate government policy. In March 1984 Khaddam and Mashariqa were named vice presidents, as was Rifat al-Assad, a move that was interpreted as an attempt to curb the latter's ambitions as successor to the president by assigning him more carefully circumscribed responsibilities than he had theretofore exercised as commander of the Damascus-based Defense Forces. In addition, Rifat was temporarily exiled,



along with two adversaries, as apparent punishment for employing confrontationist tactics in the power struggle during his brother's illness. He returned in November to reassume responsibility for military and national security affairs. However, soon after the president's reelection to a third term in February 1985, Rifat al-Assad again went into exile and in April 1988 was reported to have relinquished all official responsibilities. The economic recovery in 1988 was attributed to the policies of Prime Minister Mahmud al-ZUBI, who had been appointed in November 1987 to replace Abd al-Rauf al-KASM.

President Assad was the sole presidential nominee in November 1991 and at a referendum on December 2 secured his fourth term with the reported support of 99.98 percent of the voters. In early 1992 Assad announced plans to adopt an economic liberalization program and hold a conference to discuss political reform and the formation of new national parties. However, the president rejected the possibility of an immediate transition to a democratic government, saying that a democracy would be appropriate only when the "income of the individual in Syria reaches that of the Western states." Collaterally, the regime announced that 600 political prisoners were being released.

The Zubi government resigned en masse on June 24, 1992, but the prime minister was requested by the president to form a new cabinet which, when announced on June 29, contained many former ministers in their old posts. Later in the year Rifat al-Assad returned to Syria from exile, once again prompting speculation regarding a successor to the president, about whom rumors of ill health had recently resurfaced. The succession question became the focus of even greater attention in early 1994 following the death in an automobile accident of President Assad's oldest son, Maj. Basel al-ASSAD, who had been assigned a growing number of official responsibilities in recent years. President Assad's next oldest son, Bashar al-ASSAD, was subsequently viewed as having assumed a role similar to that of his late brother.

More than 7,000 candidates reportedly contested the assembly balloting on August 24, 1994, with some 158 new members being elected. How-

ever, the *Baath* Party and its NPF partners retained solid control, securing 167 seats to 83 for independent candidates.

In December 1996 President Assad reportedly exiled his younger brother, Jamil al-ASSAD, to France in the wake of allegations concerning Jamil's business dealings. The delicate nature of the Assad family relationships—and their significance regarding succession—was further illustrated in February 1998 when the president formally dismissed Rifat al-Assad from his vice presidential post. Although no official reason was given for the decision, some observers suggested that Rifat's moderate advocacy of political pluralism and opposition to Syrian involvement in Lebanon had upset his brother.

The NPF remained in control of 167 legislative seats—all that it contested—in balloting on November 30–December 1, 1998, while President Assad, as the only candidate, was reelected to a seven-year term in a national referendum on February 10, 1999.

Reportedly under heavy pressure from President Assad and Bashar al-Assad, who had launched a highly publicized anticorruption campaign, Prime Minister Zubi and his cabinet resigned on March 7, 2000. President Assad invited Muhammad Mustafa MIRO, the governor of the city of Aleppo with a reputation for honesty, to form a new government which, as sworn in on March 14, contained 22 newcomers among its 36 members. Shortly thereafter, Zubi reportedly committed suicide as security forces prepared to arrest him on corruption charges.

After nearly 30 years in power, President Assad died on June 10, 2000. Vice President Khaddam assumed the position of acting president, although it was immediately apparent that careful plans had been laid for the swift succession of Bashar al-Assad to the presidency. Khaddam promoted Bashar from colonel to lieutenant general and named him commander-in-chief of the armed forces while also signing a constitutional amendment quickly approved by the Assembly reducing the minimum age of the president from 40 to 34 (Bashar's age). Shortly thereafter the *Baath* Party

Regional Command confirmed Bashar as its presidential nominee, endorsement by a full *Baath* Party congress ensuing within days. The Assembly nominated Bashar for the presidency by acclaim on June 27, and a “yes or no” national referendum on the question on July 10 yielded a reported 97.3 percent “yes” vote.

Prime Minister Miro and his cabinet resigned on December 10, 2001, after which President Assad reappointed Miro to head a new government, which was formed on December 13. This move was widely attributed to the new president’s pursuit of economic liberalization, as a number of independent and reform-minded new ministers were appointed. The retention of the prime minister and the defense and foreign ministers, however, implied the continued influence of the “old guard.” As reform efforts seemed to founder and relations with the United States worsened, on September 10, 2003, President Assad appointed Muhammad Najj al-Utri as the new prime minister and assigned him the task of picking up the pace of reform. Utri’s government remained, however, effectively hamstrung on the reform front, as Syria’s national security challenges multiplied with insurrection in Iraq, anti-Syrian ferment in Lebanon, and worsening relations with the United States. The *Baath* Party Regional Congress in June 2005 appeared to accord the government more freedom of action in designing and implementing economic reform measures, but it also seemed to fall far short of expectations in terms of political liberalization. Following this conference Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam resigned and went into exile, and in December 2005 he announced that Syrian officials had threatened former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, who had been assassinated earlier that year in February 2005. Khaddam has formed a government-in-exile even though the Syrian government remains secure. In February 2006 former Syrian ambassador to the United States Walid al-MUALLEM became foreign minister, succeeding Farouk al-Sharaa, who became vice president, in a cabinet reshuffle. On April 22 the *Baath*-dominated National Progressive Front predictably won 172 seats in the People’s Assembly (*Majlis al-Shaab*), with indepen-

dents winning 78. Turnout for the poll was just over 56 percent. President Assad was endorsed for a second seven-year term by a national referendum on May 27, 2007, with a “yes” vote of 97.62 percent.

### *Constitution and Government*

According to the 1973 constitution, which succeeded the provisional constitutions of 1964 and 1969, Syria is a “socialist popular democracy.” Nominated by the legislature upon proposal by the Regional Command of the *Baath* Party, the president, who must be a Muslim, is elected by popular referendum for a seven-year term. The chief executive wields substantial power, appointing the prime minister and other cabinet members, military personnel, and civil servants; he also serves as military commander-in-chief. Legislative authority is vested in a People’s Assembly, which is directly elected for a four-year term. The judicial system, based on a blend of French, Ottoman, and Islamic legal traditions, is headed by a Court of Cassation and includes courts of appeal, summary courts, courts of first instance, and specialized courts for military and religious issues. Constitutional amendments may be proposed by the president but must secure the approval of two-thirds of the assembly.

For administrative purposes Syria is divided into 13 provinces and the city of Damascus, which is treated as a separate entity. Each of the provinces is headed by a centrally appointed governor who acts in conjunction with a partially elected Provincial Council.

### *Foreign Relations*

Syrian foreign policy priorities are rooted in the fundamental objective of regime survival and center on four issues: Lebanon, the Arab–Israeli conflict, Syria’s place in the Arab world, and relations with the United States.

Lebanon has been a problem and an opportunity for Syria since the emergence of the two independent states in the mid-1940s. France carved Lebanon out of Ottoman Syria, adding coastal

cities, the Biqa Valley, the Akkar region of the north, and the Jabal Amal region of the south to Mount Lebanon to create a state containing a small Christian majority. Syrians have never accepted the legitimacy of this action. From the standpoint of successive Syrian governments dating back some 50 years, a real “red line” issue is the specter of Lebanon falling altogether out of Syria’s orbit and becoming a national security threat to the Damascus regime.

This possibility became manifest in two ways during Lebanon’s 1975–1990 civil war and reemerged in a new incarnation in 2005. In 1975 a rambunctious alliance of non-Christian Lebanese organizations and the Lebanon-based Palestinian resistance movement threatened to overthrow Lebanon’s system of political “confessionalism” (involving set-asides for various religious groups) and to plunge Syria into an unwanted war with an alarmed Israel. With tacit U.S. and Israeli blessing, Syrian forces entered Lebanon in 1976, under the official auspices of the Arab League, to neutralize the Lebanese Muslim/Druse-Palestinian alliance, to preserve the system (but-tressing Christian primacy), and to dampen the prospects of armed confrontation with Israel. Syria succeeded, but it then found itself faced with Christian militias resentful of its presence and influence and eager to make common cause with Israel against Syria, the Palestinians, and the Lebanese Muslim and Druse factions.

This volatile situation boiled over in June 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon, and Israeli and Syrian forces clashed. It appeared at first that Lebanon might be detached from Syria’s orbit—with Israeli forces in control—but Damascus took action, supporting the rise of the anti-Israeli, anti-U.S. *Hezbollah* and arming its erstwhile Lebanese Druse and Muslim foes. The resistance resulted in the withdrawal from Lebanon of U.S. and French “peace-keeping” forces, the redeployment of Israeli forces to the south of Lebanon, and the abrogation of a Lebanese-Israeli security pact. In 1990 Syrian suzerainty over Lebanon, except for the Israeli-occupied south, was solidified when Syrian forces ousted and exiled Michel Aoun, the Christian gen-

eral who headed a rival government in East Beirut. Syrian suzerainty spread to the entire country in May 2000, with the evacuation of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Syria aimed further to strengthen its position in Lebanon in the summer of 2004 by compelling the Lebanese parliament to adopt a constitutional amendment extending the term of President Emile Lahoud. By doing so, however, it fueled Lebanese resentment and drew international condemnation. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1559, calling for, among other things, the withdrawal of Syrian military and intelligence personnel from Lebanon and the holding of free elections. Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister, emerged as the focal point of opposition to Syria and was assassinated on February 14, 2005. International pressure and massive Lebanese protests against Syria ensued, as Damascus topped the list of suspects. Syrian military forces withdrew from Lebanon in April 2005, and Lebanese elections in June produced a majority in parliament supportive of ending Syrian suzerainty.

Reestablishing suzerainty in Lebanon has become a matter of special urgency with the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1757 in May 2007, which establishes (in coordination with the Lebanese government) a “Special Tribunal for Lebanon” to bring to justice those responsible for the February 2005 assassination of Lebanese former prime minister Rafik Hariri. Syria’s hard-line policy toward Israel dates back to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. At the war’s end, Syria alone among the Arab participants was in possession of land allotted to the Jewish state in the UN partition plan. Successive Syrian governments have employed anti-Zionist policies—including wars in 1967, 1973, and 1982—as an essential element of legitimacy within the country. Syrians have traditionally found the dispossession of the Palestinians, the occupation of the Golan Heights, and the willingness of other Arab states to make formal peace with Israel unacceptable and unjust. Yet Syrian policy has not been one of unremitting hostility toward Israel. Since 1974 Damascus has ensured that the cease-fire line on the Golan Heights

has remained quiet, even as it supported attacks by others from Lebanese territory to remind Israel of unresolved grievances. More important, however, since the mid-1990s—after the Palestinians embarked on their own peace process with Israel—Syria indicated its desire for a “strategic decision” for peace with Israel provided that Israel agree to withdraw from the Golan Heights to the “line of June 4, 1967”—the line in the Jordan River valley separating Syrian and Israeli forces on the eve of war in 1967. Syria under President Hafiz al-Assad and Israel under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had reportedly agreed to a full Israeli withdrawal in return for peace. Rabin, however, was assassinated before a deal could be formalized.

Just prior to Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 there was reason to believe that Syria and Israel—with U.S. assistance—might agree on terms for peace, but Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak effectively scuttled peace talks being held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, in January 2000 by leaking the substance of negotiations to the press. Later, he provided to President Bill Clinton “talking points” to deliver in Geneva to the dying President Hafiz al-Assad that clearly indicated Israel’s refusal to withdraw to the line of June 4, 1967. Assad, having consistently expressed that the only deal would require a full Israeli withdrawal, dismissed Clinton’s overture.

President Bashar al-Assad has publicly stated a willingness to resume negotiations. But Syria’s alliance with Iran, its support of *Hezbollah*, and its sheltering *Hamas* exile leaders have made Israel and the United States skeptical of Damascus’s motives. Indeed, Syria’s arms conduit to *Hezbollah* was an important factor in the July–August 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese organization—a conflict whose indecisive outcome gave rise to rumors of a possible Israeli-Syrian war in 2007. Syria would like to recover from Israel all of the territory it lost in 1967 without going to war, but only the president and his closest associates in Damascus know the regime’s true willingness to normalize relations with Israel. Syria’s search for a leadership role in the Arab world has likewise been an important tool for successive regimes

seeking to capture the elusive quality of governing legitimacy in a “nation-state” artificially created by France. The *Baath* Party—which has ruled Syria since 1963 and which has been, along with the military, the vehicle for the rise of minority Alawites in Syrian politics—was founded on the notion of an Arab nation, which would transcend states with boundaries established by colonial masters. Achieving the image and reality of an Arab nationalist leadership role has traditionally been a Syrian foreign policy objective with important domestic political implications, albeit a goal that has been modified—but not abandoned—considerably in recent years.

Syria’s striving and pretensions in the Arab leadership sphere have taken on many manifestations over the years. A combined fear of an internal communist takeover and devotion to Arab nationalism caused Syria’s leaders to subordinate the country to Egypt in 1958 by joining in the United Arab Republic; three years later the republic would be split by Syria’s secession. Syria’s pre-1967 rhetorical recklessness toward Israel—punctuated occasionally by military clashes in the Jordan Valley—spurred Egypt into making catastrophic provocations in the spring of 1967. In the wake of the June 1967 war, Syria steadfastly opposed the Egyptian-Israeli peace process and treaty and became a leader among the so-called rejectionist states of the Arab world. Its rivalry with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan culminated in a botched invasion in 1970 that encouraged Hafiz al-Assad to seize power in a coup. The desire by Damascus to dominate the Palestinian resistance movement led to a three-decade feud with Yasser Arafat that was played out in part during Syria’s intervention in the Lebanese civil war and through its support for Palestinian groups opposed to Arafat.

By the late 1970s, Syria had begun to perceive that the Arab nationalist movement characterized by Nasserism and even *Baathism* was running its course and that its call for a collective Arab approach toward Israel would not be heeded. Indeed, Syria’s decision to support Iran during the Iran–Iraq war placed it at odds with the entire Arab world. President Hafiz al-Assad’s intense dislike of Iraqi

leader Saddam Hussein, the rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi branches of the *Baath* Party, and fear of an emerging regional hegemon in Baghdad combined to dictate a national interests-driven break with the Arab world. This schism was eventually mended by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Although Syrian-Iranian relations remain cordial, Iraq is no longer the factor that brings them together. The Iran-Syria alliance is vital to both parties and has taken on added significance in the wake of the 2006 summer war between *Hezbollah* and Israel. *Hezbollah's* ability to fight Israel and avoid defeat gave the Shiite, pro-Iranian organization an image of heroism in the Sunni Arab streets of Cairo, Amman, and Riyadh, which alarmed the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. In their eyes, Syria had become Iran's junior partner and Tehran's tool to penetrate the Levant.

Syria's decisions to participate in the coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait and to join in the Arab-Israeli peace process launched at the 1991 Madrid Conference helped reconcile Damascus with Cairo and strengthened an already cordial relationship with Saudi Arabia, whose financial assistance was essential. At the same time, the PLO's closeness to Iraq under Hussein and its decision to seek a separate peace with Israel only hardened the enmity between Assad and Arafat and convinced Assad to pursue a peace process of his own.

In 1998 Turkey threatened to counter Syrian support of Kurdish nationalists with an invasion. Syria capitulated completely and eventually found common ground with Turkey over the issue of Kurdish separatism, a concern that overcame differences between the two countries over Euphrates River water and Syria's claim to the Turkish province of Hatay.

With U.S. forces fighting an insurgency in Iraq and jihadists entering the country across the largely unfortified Syria-Iraq border, U.S.-Syrian relations took on a new and dangerous salience in 2004–2005. Although the cold war had permitted Syria to oppose U.S. Middle East policies under the umbrella of a close security relationship with the Soviet Union, the fall of communism changed matters drastically, contributing to President Hafiz al-Assad's decisions concerning the Persian Gulf

War and the U.S.-sponsored peace process. Assad apparently calculated that only the United States could help bring about a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, a calculation that led to a fundamental shift in Syrian policy toward the United States in the early 1990s.

Although Syria's alleged links to international terrorism (including ongoing support for rejectionist Palestinian groups and Lebanon's *Hezbollah*) made cordial relations with Washington impossible and landed the country on the State Department's list of countries supporting terrorism, Syrian-U.S. relations during the Clinton administration rose to the level of "correctness" and featured sporadic U.S. efforts to broker a Syrian-Israeli treaty of peace. Yet these efforts failed in 2000, and the advent of the George W. Bush administration; the al-Qaida attacks of September 11, 2001; the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003; and the Lebanese crisis of 2004–2005 plunged U.S.-Syrian relations to a new nadir.

Syria's immediate reaction to the September 11 attacks was to cooperate with U.S. intelligence in neutralizing al-Qaida operations and personnel. Its cooperation, however, was not enough to sustain a correct, working relationship. The Bush administration saw the threat posed by terrorism as broader than al-Qaida and viewed Syria, with its support of radical Palestinian groups and *Hezbollah*, as a problem in this regard. Syria, in turn, saw the invasion of Iraq as a national security threat and reportedly permitted insurgents to cross into Iraq from Syria. The United States applied economic sanctions and called its ambassador home for extended "consultations" in February 2005. Although a combination of U.S. military difficulties in Iraq and ramped-up Syrian efforts to restrict the passage of insurgents into Iraq seemed to dampen speculation about an imminent U.S. attempt at "regime change," Damascus and Washington seemed as far apart as ever from establishing a relationship of cordiality. Indeed, U.S.-led international pressure to terminate Syrian suzerainty in Lebanon and disarm *Hezbollah* opened another line of confrontation between the two states in 2004–2005.

With the publication of the Report of the Iraq Study Group in December 2006, Syria became

a domestic political issue of sorts in the United States. The report recommended a U.S.-Syrian diplomatic dialogue to help stabilize Iraq and ameliorate Arab-Israeli tensions. Democratic speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi led a delegation to Damascus to meet with President Assad in April 2007. In the following month Secretary of State Rice met with her Syrian counterpart. Despite these gestures, however, Syria's apparent determination to restore its suzerainty over Lebanon placed it very much at odds with Washington, which evaluated events in Lebanon in the context of the "global war on terrorism" and regional "democratic transformation."

### *Current Issues*

The possibility of an international tribunal under UN Security Council Resolution 1757 to try those who directed the February 14, 2005, assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri of Lebanon is, from the point of view of Damascus, the key issue affecting the future of the Assad regime. Notwithstanding official Syrian denials of involvement in the murder, the regime's concern is genuine because the international community has presumed that Syrian security services, in league with Lebanese counterparts, arranged the murder and its cover-up.

Although the Assad regime faces hostility from the U.S. administration, which remains the driving force behind the "Special Tribunal for Lebanon," it is not without resources. Indeed, ongoing American difficulties in Iraq and domestic political fallout in Israel stemming from the July–August 2006 war with Hezbollah have enabled Damascus to "punch above its weight" in key contexts.

Syria seems determined to restore its power over Lebanon, even if the restoration does not entail the reintroduction of Syrian military forces. Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and the key Lebanese Shiite parties (*Hezbollah* and *Amal*) remain firmly in Syria's camp, while former general Michel Aoun, Damascus's enemy, cooperates tactically with the Assad regime in opposition to Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and his government. Assassinations of Lebanese parliamentarians continue

to reduce Siniora's majority, while *Hezbollah* and *Amal* abstain from participation in government. Damascus wants a Lebanese president and government that would refuse to cooperate with the UN-sanctioned tribunal and would accede to Syria. Outbreaks of violence in Lebanon (requiring, in June 2007, the intervention of the Lebanese Army in the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli) enable Syria to claim that the Lebanese government is unable to provide security for its populace.

Syria has declared its readiness to enter into peace negotiations with Israel. It may be able to regain the Golan Heights from Israel in exchange for stopping the arms flow from Iran to Lebanese *Hezbollah* and closing the Damascus offices of the Palestinian *Hamas*. Washington and Tel Aviv remain skeptical about Syria's sincerity and motives in calling for unconditional peace talks. Fearful of losing its influence in the region, Iran is reportedly increasing its investment in the Syrian economy. The Syrian regime remains strong internally, despite external upheaval in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Iraq.

### Political Parties

The *Baath* Party has enjoyed de facto dominance of the Syrian political system since 1963, its long tenure being partly attributable to its influence among the military. In 1972 President Hafiz al-Assad formed the NPF, a coalition of parties that has always been heavily dominated by the Syrian *Baathists*.

Following the death of Hafiz al-Assad in 2000, the other NPF components joined the *Baath* in endorsing his son, Bashar, as his presidential successor. Some observers suggested at that time that the future might hold a more significant role for the NPF, whose influence, never substantial, had become trifling during the elder Assad's later years. Meanwhile, reformists hoped that Bashar al-Assad's pledge to promote greater openness would translate into permission for new parties to form. Currently the *Baath*-dominated NPF (now comprising six parties) holds the vast majority of seats in the Syrian legislature.

### *National Progressive Front*

**Baath Party.** Formally known as the *Baath* (Renaissance) Arab Socialist Party (*Hizb al-Baath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki*), the *Baath* Party is the Syrian branch of an international political movement that began in 1940. The contemporary party dates from a 1953 merger of the Arab Resurrectionist Party, founded in 1947 by Michel Aflak and Salah al-Din Bitar, and the Syrian Socialist Party, founded in 1950 by Akram al-Hawrani. The *Baath* Party philosophy stresses socialist ownership of the principal means of production, redistribution of agricultural land, secular political unity of the Arab world, and opposition to imperialism.

At the *Baath* Party's 2005 Congress younger members were elected to key committee positions, reflecting efforts by President Bashar al-Assad to give the party a more youthful look. Nevertheless, in terms of policy direction there was little substantive change from the party's core principles.

*Leaders:* Bashar al-ASSAD (President of the Republic, Secretary General of the Party, and Chair of the NPF), Abdallah al-AHMAR (Assistant Secretary General), Suleiman al-QADDAH (Regional Assistant Secretary General).

Minor parties that make up the remainder of the NPF are the **Arab Socialist Union Party** (*Hizb al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki al-Arabi*), **Socialist Unionist Party** (*Hizb al-Tawhidayah al-Ishtirakiyah*), **Arab Socialist Movement** (*Harakat al-Ishtiraki al-Arabi*), **Syrian Communist Party** (*al-Hizb al-Shuyui al-Suri*), and **Democratic Socialist Unionist Party** (*Hizb al-Dimuqrati al-Tawhidayah al-Ishtiraki*).

### *Other Groups*

**Syrian Social Nationalist Party**—SSNP. Formally banned in the 1970s, the SSNP supports creation of a "Greater Syria."

### *Opposition Groups*

**Reform Party of Syria**—RPF. The Reform Party of Syria, led by Farid Ghadry, is a U.S.-based opposition party formed in 2001. It is opposed to

the *Baathist* (and what it calls "pan-Arabist") ideology of the Syrian government. The Reform Party of Syria hopes to "rebuild Syria" with economic and political reforms that will facilitate "democracy, prosperity, freedom of expression, and human rights." It also seeks to achieve peaceful relations with Syria's neighbors, including Israel.

**Muslim Brotherhood.** The Brotherhood is a Sunni Islamist movement that long maintained an active underground campaign against the *Baath* Party and its leadership, being charged, inter alia, with the massacres at Aleppo and Latakia in 1979 as well as the killing of a number of Soviet technicians and military advisers in 1980. In February 1982 it instigated an open insurrection at Hama that government troops quelled after three weeks of intense fighting that resulted in the devastation of one-fourth of the city and the deaths of thousands. The Brotherhood was subsequently viewed as a spent force in Syria, although it nominally participated in several domestic and expatriate opposition groupings. Brotherhood members were among political prisoners released in 2000, with the new government of Bashar al-Assad lending the impression of being more accommodating toward the Islamists and anxious to downplay any ongoing Sunni-Shiite friction. At the same time "antipathy" remained within the government toward any formal activity on the part of the Brotherhood, whose leadership, including Ali Sadr al-Din al-BAYANUNI, remained in exile.

More recently, the Brotherhood has stopped insisting on the right to use violence, no longer calls for the introduction of sharia, and claims to support a democratic system of government. At the same time, it has not accepted responsibility for violence in the 1970s and early 1980s and has not made it clear whether it will seek retribution for past human rights abuses.

**Islamic Liberation Party**—ILP. Hundreds of ILP members were reportedly detained by security forces in late 1999 and early 2000 in connection with a crackdown that coincided with fighting between Islamists militants and the Lebanese army in northern Lebanon. The ILP also had strongly

## Cabinet

As of September 4, 2007

Prime Minister	Muhammad Naji al-Utri
Agriculture	Adel Safar
Communications and Technology	Amre Nazir Salem
Construction and Building	Hamoud Al-Hussein
Culture	Riyadh Nasan Agha
Defense	Hasan Turkmani
Economy and Trade	Amer Husni Lutfi
Education	Ali Saad
Electricity	Ahmed Khaled Al-Ali
Environment	Hilal al-Atrash
Expatriates	Buthaina Shaaban [f]
Finance	Muhammad al-Hussein
Foreign Affairs	Waleed al-Muallem
Health	Maher Hussami
Higher Education	Gyath Barakat
Industry	Fuad Issa Jhoni
Information	Muhsen Bilal
Interior	Bassam Abdel Majid
Irrigation	Nader al-Buni
Justice	Muhammad al-Ghafri
Local Administration and Environment	Hilal al-Atrash
Oil and Mineral Resources	Sufian Alaw
Presidential Affairs	Ghassan al-Lahham
Religious Trusts	Muhammad Ziyad al-Ayubi
Social Affairs and Labor	Dialla al-Haj Aref [f]
Tourism	Sadalla Agha al-Kalla
Transport	Yrob Solaiman Bader
<i>Ministers of State</i>	Yussef Sulayman al-Ahmad
	Bashar al-Shaar
	Ghiyath Jaraatli
	Hussein Mahmoud Ferzat
	Joseph Soueid
	Hassan al-Sari

[f] = female

criticized the resumption of peace talks between Syria and Israel. Many of the ILP detainees were reportedly released in November 2000 under an amnesty issued by the new president, Bashar al-Assad. In 2003 five ILP members were sentenced to prison terms ranging from eight to ten years.

**Arab People's Democratic Party.** Led by Sumer al-Assad, the son of Rifat al-Assad, exiled brother of Hafiz al-Assad and a former vice president of Syria, this grouping positioned itself as a prodemocracy party following the death of Assad in 2000. Rifat al-Assad, living in Spain, initially laid claim to a constitutional right of succession to



his brother, although that assertion received little support within the *Baath* or the Syrian populace. In May 2005 Rifat al-Assad announced that he would return to Syria and resume political activities.

**Communist Party Politburo.** Previously referenced as the Communist Workers Party, the Communist Party Politburo is an antigovernment splinter of the Syrian Communist Party. A number of members, including Secretary General Riad Turk, were arrested in the 1980s after campaigning for “free elections,” the government charging them with belonging to an illegal organization. Turk was released in mid-1998, and many of the remaining detainees were granted amnesty in 2000. However, Turk was again detained in mid-2001 along with several other opposition figures. He was released in November 2002 on “humanitarian grounds,” reportedly due to his deteriorating health.

*Leader:* Riad TURK (Secretary General).

## Legislature

The **People’s Assembly** (*Majlis al-Shaab*) is a directly elected, unicameral body presently consisting of 250 members serving four-year terms. In elections held in April 2007 the NPF (which comprises the Syrian *Baath* Party and six small parties) won 172 seats, and independents won 78 seats.

*Speaker:* Abd al-Qadir QADDURAH.

## Communications

### *Press*

The press is strictly controlled, with most publications being issued by government agencies or under government license by political, religious, labor, and professional organizations. The following are Arabic dailies published at Damascus, unless otherwise noted: *Tishrin* (October, 75,000);

*al-Thawrah* (Revolution, 40,000); *al-Baath* (Renaissance, 40,000), organ of the *Baath* Party; *Syria Times* (15,000), in English; *al-Jamahir al-Arabiyah* (The Arab People, 10,000); *al-Shabab* (Youth, Aleppo, 9,000); *Barq al-Shimal* (The Northern Telegraph, Aleppo, 6,500); *al-Fida* (Redemption, Hama, 4,200). Other publications include the pro-Communist Party, *al-Nur*; the satirical newspaper, *al-Damari*; and the SNNP paper, *al-Sham*.

### *News Agencies*

The Syrian Arab News Agency (*Wakalat al-Anba al-Arabiyah al-Suriyah*—SANA) issues Syrian news summaries to foreign news agencies; several foreign bureaus also maintain offices at Damascus.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

Broadcasting is a government monopoly and operates under the supervision of the Syrian Arab Republic Broadcasting Service (*Idhaat al-Jumhuriyah al-Arabiyah al-Suriyah*). As of 2005, there were approximately 42 personal computers and 58 Internet users for every 1,000 people. In that same year there were an estimated 155 mobile cellular subscribers.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Imad MOUSTAPHA

**US Ambassador to Syria:** (Vacant)

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Bashar JAAFARI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, CAEU, IDB, Interpol, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, WCO

# TUNISIA

## REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

*al-Jumhuriyah al-Tunisiyah*

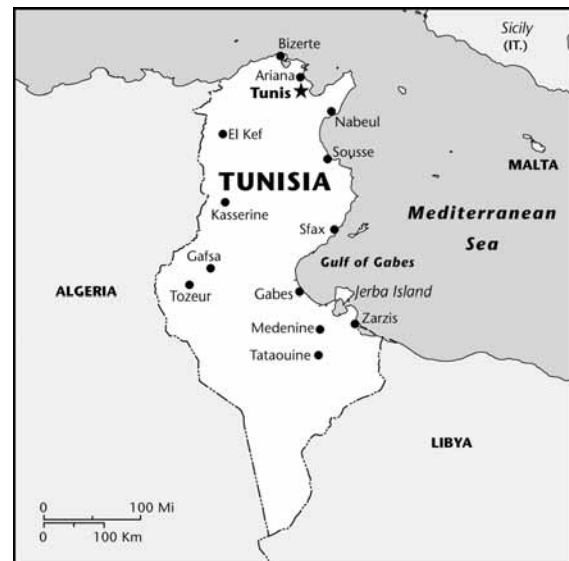
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### The Country

Situated midway along the North African littoral between Algeria and Libya, Tunisia looks north and eastward into the Mediterranean and southward toward the Sahara Desert. Along with Algeria and Morocco, it forms the Berber-influenced part of North Africa known as the “Maghreb” (West) to distinguish it from other Middle Eastern countries, which are sometimes referred to as the “Mashreq” (East). Tunisia’s terrain, well wooded and fertile in the north, gradually flattens into a coastal plain adapted to stock-raising and olive culture, and becomes semiarid in the south. The population is almost exclusively of Arab and Berber stock, Arabic in speech (save for a small Berber-speaking minority), and Sunni Muslim in religion. Although most members of the former French community departed after Tunisia gained independence in 1956, French continues as a second language, and small French, Italian, Jewish, and Maltese minorities remain. Women, who constitute approximately 31 percent of the paid labor force, are the focus of relatively progressive national policies on equal rights, educational access for girls, and family planning. In addition, by presidential decree, 20 women were elected to the national legislature in 1999 and 43 in 2004. Moreover, the current government includes female ministers and secretaries of state.

About one quarter of the working population is engaged in agriculture, which is responsible for about 13 percent of GNP; the main products are wheat, barley, olive oil, wine, and fruits. Petroleum has been a leading export, although there is also

some mining of phosphates, iron ore, lead, and zinc. Industry has expanded to more than 30 percent of GDP, with steel, textiles, and chemicals firmly established. Most development is concentrated in coastal areas, where tourism is the largest source of income; however, poverty is widespread in the subsistence farming and mining towns of the south. Rising oil exports underpinned rapid economic growth in the 1970s, but declining prices and reserves precipitated a tailspin in the early 1980s. Consequently, high unemployment, a large external debt, and growing budget and trade deficits led the government, with encouragement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, to abandon much of its former socialist orientation in



favor of economic liberalization in the second half of the decade. Led by growth in the agriculture and food processing sectors, the economy rebounded strongly in the 1990s as the government endorsed further privatization and measures designed to attract foreign investment. As a result, the IMF has touted Tunisia as an example of how effective adjustment programs can be in developing nations if pursued faithfully. At the same time economic advances have not been accompanied by significant democratization measures, and government at all levels remains totally dominated by the ruling party.

GDP grew at an annual average of 5.7 percent from 1996–2000, with inflation running at 3 percent in 2000. The most worrisome economic indicator involved unemployment, estimated at 15 percent (higher among young workers). Although the IMF in early 2001 continued to praise the government for “prudent” economic policies, the fund called for intensification of the privatization program (the government still controls 40 percent of economic production). Real GDP growth was 6.2 percent for 2005, though unemployment remained high. The IMF in 2006, while again commending the government’s fiscal policies that continued to help strengthen the economy, urged reduction of the country’s external debt and reform of the banking sector. GDP growth was 5.4 percent in 2006 and projected to be 6 percent in 2007, the IMF attributing the acceleration to improved performance in the agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors. To address continuing high inflation, the IMF encouraged education and training reforms and improvement the investment climate. Fund managers commended Tunisia for adopting new banking laws and praised the country’s efforts to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Seat of the Carthaginian empire destroyed by Rome in 146 BC, Tunisia was successively conquered by Romans, Arabs, and Turks before being

occupied by France in 1881 and becoming a French protectorate under a line of native rulers (beys) in 1883. Pressure for political reforms began after World War I and in 1934 resulted in establishment of the nationalist Neo-Destour (New Constitution) Party, which spearheaded the drive for independence under the leadership of Habib BOURGUIBA. Nationalist aspirations were further stimulated by World War II, and an initial breakdown in independence negotiations led to the outbreak of guerrilla warfare against the French in 1952. Internal autonomy was conceded by France on June 3, 1955, and on March 20, 1956, the protectorate was terminated, with the country gaining full independence.

A national constituent assembly controlled by the Neo-Destour Party voted on July 25, 1957, to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic with Bourguiba as president. A new constitution was adopted on June 1, 1959, while Bourguiba’s leadership and that of the party were overwhelmingly confirmed in presidential and legislative elections in 1959 and 1964.

Bourguiba was reelected in 1969, but his failing health precipitated a struggle for succession to the presidency (Bourguiba died at age 97 in 2000). One-time front-runner Bahi LADGHAM, prime minister and secretary general of the party, was apparently too successful: the attention he received as chair of the Arab Superior Commission on Jordan and as effective executive during the president’s absences led to a falling-out with an eventually rejuvenated Bourguiba; he was dismissed in 1970 and replaced by Hedi NOUIRA. President Bourguiba encountered an additional challenge from Ahmed MESTIRI, interior minister and leader of the liberal wing of the party. The liberals succeeded in forcing democratization of the party structure during the eighth party congress in October 1971, but Bourguiba subsequently reasserted his control over the party apparatus. Mestiri was expelled from the party in January 1972 and from his seat in the National Assembly in May 1973, while Bourguiba was named president for life on November 2, 1974.

In February 1980 Prime Minister Nourira suffered a stroke, and on April 24 Mohamed MZALI,

**Political Status:** Independent state since 1956; republic proclaimed July 25, 1957; under one-party dominant, presidential regime.

**Area:** 63,170 sq. mi. (163,610 sq. km.).

**Population:** 9,910,872 (2004C); 10,152,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Centers (2005E):** TUNIS (734,000), Sfax (Safaqs, 269,000), Ariana (252,000), Ettadhamen (116,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic; French is widely spoken as a second language.

**Monetary Unit:** Dinar (market rate November 2, 2007: 1.24 dinars = \$1US).

**President:** Gen. Zine El-Abidine BEN ALI (Democratic Constitutional Assembly); appointed prime minister on October 2, 1987; acceded to the presidency upon the deposition of Habib BOURGUIBA on November 7; returned to office, unopposed, at elections of April 2, 1989, and March 20, 1994; reelected in multicandidate balloting on October 24, 1999, and on October 24, 2004.

**Prime Minister:** Mohamed GHANNOUCHI (Democratic Constitutional Assembly); appointed by the president on November 17, 1999, to succeed Hamed KAROUI (Democratic Constitutional Assembly), who had resigned the same day; reappointed by the president following presidential balloting on October 24, 2004, and formed new government on November 10.

the acting prime minister, was asked to form a new government. Mzali was reappointed following a general election on November 1, 1981, in which three additional parties were allowed to participate, although none secured legislative representation. Bourguiba dismissed Mzali on July 8, 1986, replacing him with Rachid SFAR, theretofore finance minister.

Gen. Zine El-Abidine BEN ALI was named to succeed Sfar on October 2, 1987, reportedly because of presidential displeasure at recent personnel decisions. Five weeks later, after a panel of doctors had declared the aged president medically

unfit, Bourguiba was forced to step down in favor of Ben Ali, who designated Hedi BACCOUCHE as his prime ministerial successor.

Although widely termed a “bloodless coup,” the ouster of Bourguiba and succession of Ben Ali were in accord with relevant provisions of the Tunisian constitution. Moreover, the takeover was generally welcomed by Tunisians, who had become increasingly disturbed by Bourguiba’s erratic behavior and mounting government repression of the press, trade unions, legal opposition parties, and other sources of dissent, including the growing Islamic fundamentalist movement. (Following his deposition, Bourguiba retired from public view. He died in April 2000.)

Upon assuming office the Ben Ali government announced its commitment to domestic pluralism and launched a series of wide-ranging political and economic liberalization measures, which included the legalization of some political parties, the loosening of media restrictions, and the pardoning of more than 8,000 detainees, many of them fundamentalists. Additionally, in late 1988, the new regime negotiated a “national pact” regarding the country’s political, economic, and social future with a number of political and labor groups. However, the Islamic Tendency Movement (*Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique*—MTI) refused to sign the accord, foreshadowing a steady deterioration in relations between the fundamentalists and the government.

Presidential and legislative elections, originally scheduled for 1991, were moved up to April 2, 1989, Ben Ali declaring they would serve as an indication of the public’s satisfaction with the recent changes. No one challenged the popular Ben Ali in the presidential poll, but the legal opposition parties and fundamentalist independent candidates contested the House of Representatives balloting, albeit without success.

On September 27, 1989, Ben Ali dismissed Baccouche and named former Justice Minister Hamed KAROUI as prime minister. The change was reportedly precipitated by disagreement over economic policy, Baccouche having voiced concern over the “social effects” of the government’s

austerity program. Shortly thereafter, the government announced the formation of a “higher council” to oversee implementation of the national pact, although several opposition parties and MTI followers, now operating as the Renaissance Party (*Hizb al-Nahda*—generally referenced as *Nahda*) boycotted the council’s meetings. Charging that the democratic process was in reality being “blocked” by the government, the opposition also refused to contest municipal elections in June 1990 or national by-elections in October 1991. Apparently in response to criticism that the government’s enthusiasm for democratization had waned as its antifundamentalist fervor had surged, electoral law changes were adopted in late 1993 to assure opposition parties of some legislative representation in the upcoming general election (see Legislature, below). Nevertheless, the RCD, officially credited with nearly 98 percent of the vote, won all 144 seats for which it was eligible in the balloting for a 163-member House on March 20, 1994. On the same date, Ben Ali was reelected without challenge, two potential independent candidates being stricken from the ballot by their failure to receive the required endorsement of at least 30 national legislators or municipal council presidents.

The RCD won control of all 257 municipal councils in local elections on May 21, 1995. While opposition candidates (standing in 47 municipalities) won only 6 of 4,090 seats, it was the first time since independence that the opposition had gained any such representation at all.

Ben Ali was reelected to a third full presidential term (then the constitutional limit) in balloting on October 24, 1999, securing more than 99 percent of the vote against two candidates presented by small opposition parties. Meanwhile, the RCD again secured all the seats for which it was eligible (148) in the concurrent legislative poll. Two days after being sworn in for his new term, President Ben Ali appointed Mohamed GHANNOUCHI, theretofore the minister for international cooperation and foreign investment, as the new prime minister.

Constitutional revision in 2002 removed the limit on the number of presidential terms, thereby permitting Ben Ali on October 24, 2004, to seek

a fourth term, which he won with 95 percent of the vote against three other minor candidates. On the same date the RCD won all 152 seats contested on a district basis for an expanded assembly. Ghannouchi, who was retained as prime minister, headed a new government formed on November 10.

In the municipal election of May 8, 2005, to renew 264 councils comprising 4,366 seats, the RCD garnered 93.9 percent of the vote, while 4 opposition parties and 1 independent won representation with 6.1 percent of the vote. Three opposition groups whose candidates were barred from running boycotted the election. The RCD also dominated the new House of Advisers, which was established in balloting of July 3, 2005, in accordance with provisions adopted in the 2002 constitutional revision. The cabinet was reshuffled on August 17, 2005, and again on January 25, 2007.

### *Constitution and Government*

The constitution of June 1, 1959, endowed the Tunisian Republic with a presidential system backed by the dominant position of the (then) Neo-Destour Party. The president was given exceptionally broad powers, including the right to designate the prime minister and to rule by decree during legislative adjournments. In addition, the incumbent was granted life tenure under a 1975 amendment to the basic law. In the wake of President Bourguiba’s ouster in 1987, the life presidency was abolished, the chief executive being limited to no more than three five-year terms. (See Current issues, below, for details of constitutional revision in 2002 affecting the presidency.) The succession procedure was also altered, the president of the House of Representatives being designated to serve as head of state for 45–60 days, pending a new election, at which he could not present himself as a candidate. Other changes included reduction of the role of prime minister from leader of the government to “coordinator” of ministerial activities.

The legislature was a unicameral body until 2005, with only a House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives (styled the National Assembly until 1981 and also referenced as

the Chamber of Deputies) is elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. Under Bourguiba it had limited authority and in practice was wholly dominated by the ruling party, whose highly developed, all-pervasive organization served to buttress presidential policies both nationally and locally. Constitutional changes approved in July 1988 contained measures designed to expand the House's control and influence, although their impact has been minimal. Consultative bodies at the national level include a Social and Economic Council and a Higher Islamic Council. The judicial system is headed by a Court of Cassation and includes 3 courts of appeal, 13 courts of first instance, and 51 cantonal courts. Judges are appointed by the president. A new constitution approved in a referendum on May 26, 2002, and signed into law by the president on June 2, 2002, introduced a second legislative body, provisions for an upper house, the House of Advisers, (see *Legislature*, below); removed presidential term limits; and raised the age limit for a presidential candidate to 75 (from 70), among other things.

Tunisia is administratively divided into 23 provinces, each headed by a governor appointed by the president. The governors are assisted by appointed government councils and 264 elected municipal councils.

### *Foreign Relations*

Tunisia assumed a nonaligned posture at independence, establishing relations with both Eastern and Western countries, although placing particular emphasis on its relations with the West and with Arab governments. It became a member of the United Nations in 1956 and is active in all the UN-related agencies. It joined the Arab League in 1958 but boycotted its meetings from 1958 to 1961 and again in 1966 as a result of disagreements with the more "revolutionary" Arab states. As a signal of its support for peace negotiations (particularly the 1993 accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization), Tunisia exchanged low-level economic representatives with Israel in October 1994 in what was considered a possible

precursor to eventual establishment of full diplomatic relations. However, Tunisia recalled those representatives from Israel in 1997 as part of the broad Arab protest over a perceived intransigence on the part of the Netanyahu administration in Israel.

Beginning in 1979 a series of agreements were signed with Algeria, culminating in a March 1983 "Maghreb Fraternity and Co-Operation Treaty," to which Mauritania acceded the following December. Relations with Libya, though reestablished in 1982 after a 1980 rupture over seizure of a southern town by alleged Libyan-trained insurgents, continued to be difficult. President Bourguiba's visit to Washington in June 1985 led to a mass expulsion of Tunisian workers from Libya, as well as reported Libyan incursions into Tunisia and efforts to destabilize its government. After suspending relations with Tripoli in September 1986, Tunis resumed relations a year later following a pledge by Libya to reimburse the expelled workers. Further economic and social agreements, including provisions for the free movement of people and goods between the two countries, were announced in 1988 as Tunisia stepped up its call for regional cooperation and unity, the latter bearing fruit with the formation of the Arab Maghreb Union in February 1989 (see article under *Intergovernmental Organizations*). Also in 1988, relations were reestablished with Egypt after an eight-year lapse.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 appeared to precipitate a change in Tunisia's theretofore unwavering pro-Western orientation. Although critical of the Iraqi occupation, Tunis strongly condemned the subsequent deployment of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and the allied bombing of Iraq in early 1991. However, security forces clamped down on large-scale pro-Iraqi demonstrations during the Gulf war, apparently out of concern that the situation might be exploited by Islamic fundamentalists.

President Ben Ali welcomed the antifundamentalist stance adopted by the Algerian military in early 1992, and Tunis was subsequently in the forefront of efforts among North African capitals

to coordinate an “antiterrorist” campaign against Muslim militants. In October 1991 Tunisia recalled its ambassador from Sudan, charging Khartoum with fomenting fundamentalist unrest and providing sanctuary and financial support for groups intent on overthrowing the Tunisian government.

Tunisia is prominent among those nations hoping to develop economic cooperation, and possibly a free trade area, in the Mediterranean region. “Partnership” discussions have been emphasized with the European Union (EU), the focus of an estimated 80 percent of Tunisia’s trade, and Tunis signed an association agreement with the EU in 1995 that provided for the progressive reduction of tariffs (and elimination of many by 2008).

Relations with the United States warmed somewhat in 2006 when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, on a visit to Tunis, discussed strengthening military ties with Tunisia while at the same time encouraging greater political reform. (The United States had provided \$11 million to Tunisia for military training in 2006.)

In October 2006 Tunisia closed its embassy in Doha, Qatar, after Qatar-based *Al Jazeera* television broadcast an interview with Moncef MARZOUKI, leader of the banned Congress for the Republic and former head of the Tunisian Human Rights League, in which he criticized the government and the lack of freedom in Tunisia.

### *Current Issues*

Government/fundamentalist conflict dominated domestic affairs in the early and mid-1990s, the Ben Ali regime denouncing *Nahda* adherents as “terrorists” intent on seizing power. However, the government’s own hard-line tactics were the subject of increasing domestic and international condemnation, with human rights organizations accusing security forces of arbitrary detention and widespread mistreatment of prisoners. Government critics also alleged that the antifundamentalist campaign was being used to deflect attention from the RCD’s continuing status as “virtually a state party” and the retention of as many as 2,000 political prisoners. The situation was seen as cre-

ating a problem for Western capitals: on the one hand, the administration’s economic policies had generated widespread success while, on the other, its human rights record was difficult to condone. In 1998 the U.S. State Department described the Ben Ali administration as “intolerant of dissent,” and Amnesty International charged that human rights activists in Tunisia had become the targets of intimidation and imprisonment.

Once again adopting a seemingly unnecessarily restrictive stance, the administration announced that candidates in the 1999 presidential election would be allowed to run only if they had served five years as the leader of a party currently represented in the legislature. Only two challengers qualified and, although the administration heralded the multicandidate nature of the balloting as an important democratization step, critics dismissed the poll as a “parody,” citing the fact that each opposition candidate won less than 0.5 percent of the vote. The RCD’s total domination of the concurrent legislative poll and the municipal elections in May 2000 further supported the argument that the legal opposition parties remained “subservient or marginalized.”

Perhaps in response to growing criticism in the West over human rights issues and the lack of genuine political liberalization, the government released some political prisoners in late 1999 and appeared to accept a more vocal dissent in 2000. However, this modest “Tunisian spring” was the focus of a crackdown in early 2001 as the administration faced intensifying attacks from domestic human rights organizations and challenges in the form of several high-profile petitions and manifestos.

In November 2001 the government introduced controversial constitutional amendments that, among other things, called for the revocation of presidential term limits and the raising of the maximum age of presidential candidates from 70 to 75. Critics described the proposed changes as being designed to permit Ben Ali, currently 65, to govern for many more years. A national referendum on May 26, 2002, approved the basic law revisions by more than 99 percent, according to official reports.

Another focus of attention in 2002 was a reported increase in activity on the part of radical Islamic militants. In April an Islamic Army for the Liberation of Holy Places claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on a synagogue on the island of Djerba that killed more than 20 people. Several months later it was reported that a senior al-Qaida leader had suggested that al-Qaida had also been involved in the bombing. (Two men were sentenced to prison in Spain and one man was sentenced in Tunisia in 2006 for their involvement with the Djerba bombing.)

Despite continued criticism from human rights groups, there appeared to be little subsequent improvement in the treatment of political prisoners. Collaterally, in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, Washington concentrated less on the issue of human rights and more on Tunisia's antiterror efforts. (In December 2003 the Ben Ali administration adopted broad new antiterrorism legislation that critics claimed could be used to apply harsh penalties to nearly any crime.) Prior to the October 2004 presidential and legislative balloting, Ben Ali pledged to "deepen the democratic exercise," but opposition parties characterized those elections as a "charade" that was simply propelling Ben Ali toward a "life presidency." Among other things, the opposition candidates claimed they were victims of intense harassment by the government prior to the balloting.

Controversy arose during the July 3, 2005, election for the new House of Advisers when the General Union of Tunisian Workers (*Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens*—UGTT) refused to participate. The union, which was entitled to 14 seats in the house, protested what it claimed was a lack of independence in the candidate-selection process. Though the formation of the upper body had been touted by Ben Ali as a move toward democratic reform, the president appointed 41 of the body's 126 members.

In apparent response to ongoing criticism from human rights groups, the government agreed in 2005 to change its detention policy, promising to hold prisoners in solitary confinement for no more than 10 days. (Human Rights Watch claimed

Tunisia resorted to lengthy isolation terms for leaders of outlawed Islamist parties as a way of eradicating the Islamist movement.) Subsequently, in September 2005, the Tunisian Human Rights League (*Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme*—LTDH [see Other Groups under Political Parties, below]) was banned from holding its conference.

Syria extradited 21 suspected Tunisian Islamists in 2005, raising concerns in Tunis and Washington. Tunisia, according to observers, has been intent on reassuring its Western allies that it will not allow extremists to stir trouble abroad, concurrently intensifying the government's resolve to exclude such groups from the country's political process. In what some observers saw as a related development, the government in 2006 began a campaign against women wearing the traditional Islamic headscarf, with some offenders reportedly taken to police stations to sign a pledge that they would no longer wear them. The ban dates to a 1981 law introduced under former president Bourguiba. President Ben Ali began to clamp down on the headdress to ward against the rising influence of religiosity, which could strengthen the Islamic opposition, observers said.

From late 2006 through early 2007, security forces engaged in deadly clashes with terrorists described by the Tunisian government as Islamic extremists. Many were reported to be members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, based in Algeria. Tunisian authorities said some of those arrested carried blueprints of the British and U.S. embassies in Tunis, as well as the names of envoys, and were planning attacks. In May, 3 Tunisians were sentenced to terms of 4 to 11 years on terrorism charges, and 30 others arrested earlier in the year were facing similar charges. As the government continued its crackdown on extremists entering the country and allegedly recruiting members, the *International Herald Tribune* said Tunisia is one of the North African countries most vulnerable to terrorists "because its rigid repression of Islamists has created a well of resentment among religious youth, and its popularity with European tourists makes it an attractive target."



## Political Parties

Although not constitutionally mandated, Tunisia was effectively a one-party state from the time the Communist Party (PCT) was banned in January 1963 until its return to legal status in July 1981. In June 1981 the government had announced that recognition would be extended to all parties obtaining at least 5 percent of the valid votes in legislative balloting on November 1. On September 9 the PCT indicated that it would participate in the election after receiving official assurances that the 5 percent requirement would not be imposed in its case, and in 1983 recognition was extended to two additional opposition parties, the Popular Union Party (*Parti de l'Unité Populaire*—PUP) and the Democratic Socialist Movement (*Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes*—MDS [below]). All three boycotted the 1986 election because of the rejection of many of their candidate lists and administrative suspension of their publications. In November 1987 the Ben Ali government endorsed the legalization of any party that would consent to certain conditions, one (advanced by the House of Representatives in April 1988) being that “no party has the right to refer, in its principles, its objectives, its activities or its programs, to religion, language, race or a regime,” a stipulation that served as a barrier to the legalization of militant Islamic groups. Prior to the 1989 balloting, the government party (RCD, below) offered to head an electoral front that would have guaranteed at least minimal opposition representation in the house. However, the proposal was rejected, to the dismay of the legal opposition parties, none of which succeeded in winning more than 3 percent of the popular vote. In April 1991 the Ben Ali government agreed to provide the six legal opposition parties with moderate state financial support and limited access to government-controlled television and radio broadcasting facilities. Subsequently, in what the administration described as a further effort to strengthen the role of the opposition parties, the RCD also offered not to present candidates for the House by-elections in October. However, the opposition

boycotted the balloting as a protest against the government’s unwillingness to revise the electoral law or reduce the RCD’s “stranglehold” on the civil service. Electoral law changes guaranteed the opposition a minimal number of seats in the March 1994 national elections, but non-RCD candidates still secured less than 3 percent of the votes even though all the legal parties participated. The government announced in 1997 that the House would be expanded for the 1999 balloting and that electoral revision would attempt to promote opposition representation of up to 20 percent. The House was expanded to 182 members for the 1999 balloting, electoral revision in 1998 having guaranteed opposition representation of at least 34 members.

In December 2006 four opposition parties—the PUP, UDU, PSL, and PVP—formed an umbrella “Democratic Alliance” and met in February 2007 to explore ways to push for political reform.

### *Government Party*

**Democratic Constitutional Assembly** (*Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique*—RCD). Founded in 1934 as the Neo-Destour Party, a splinter from the old Destour (Constitution) Party, and known from October 1964 as the Destourian Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste Destourien*—PSD), Tunisia’s ruling party was given its present name in February 1988 to provide new impetus to “the practice of democracy” within its ranks. Its moderately left-wing tendency was of less political significance than its organizational strength, derived in large part from affiliated syndicates representing labor, agriculture, artisans and merchants, students, women, and youth. Party members have filled most major government positions since independence.

At the 12th party congress in June 1986 President Bourguiba personally selected a new 90-member Central Committee and 20-member Political Bureau, ignoring party statutes calling for election by delegates. By the end of the year the PSD had ended a 1985 rift in returning to close alignment with the UGTT. A special “Congress

of Salvation,” held in Tunis July 29–31, 1988, endorsed the political liberalization policies of new President Ben Ali (who was reelected party chair), included a number of young party members in a new 150-member Central Committee, and named a new 12-member Political Bureau.

At a congress held July 29–31, 1993, Ben Ali was unanimously reelected party chair and designated as the RCD presidential candidate in the elections scheduled for March 1994. A new Central Committee was selected, more than half of its 200 members serving for the first time in a reflection of the RCD’s “revitalization” campaign that also included enlargement of the Political Bureau to include several young cabinet ministers and the first female member. In addition, the congress reconfirmed its commitment to free-market economic policies and stated its strong opposition to Islamic fundamentalist “militancy.”

Ben Ali was reelected chair at the RCD congress in 1998, and he was nominated as the party’s candidate for the 1999 presidential election (which he won with more than 99 percent of the vote). In the 1999 legislative balloting, the RCD secured 92 percent of the vote; municipal elections in May 2000 and May 2005 produced similar support for the RCD.

On October 24, 2004, Ben Ali won a fourth term with 95 percent of the vote against three other minor candidates.

*Leaders:* Gen. Zine El-Abidine BEN ALI (President of the Republic and President of the Party), Mohamed GHANNOUCHI (Prime Minister and Second Vice President of the Party), Hamed KAROUI (First Vice President of the Party and Former Prime Minister), Abdallah KALLEL (Speaker of the House of Advisers), Ali CHAOUCH, Hédi MHENNI (Secretary General).

### *Other Legal Parties*

**Democratic Socialist Movement** (*Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes*—MDS). Organized as the Democratic Socialist Group in October 1977 by a number of former PSD cabinet minis-

ters who sought liberalization of the nation’s political life, the MDS was refused formal recognition in 1978, although its leader, Ahmed Mestiri, had served as an intermediary between the government and the trade union leadership in attempting to resolve labor unrest. The new grouping was runner-up at the 1981 election but obtained only 3.28 percent of the vote, thus failing to secure either legislative representation or legal status. However, recognition was granted by President Bourguiba in November 1983.

Mestiri was arrested in April 1986 and sentenced to four months in prison for leading demonstrations against the U.S. bombing of Libya. The conviction automatically disqualified him from running for legislative office, the MDS thereupon becoming an early advocate of the November electoral boycott. (Under the amnesty program initiated by the Ben Ali government in late 1987, Mestiri was pardoned for the conviction.) The MDS fared poorly in the 1989 balloting, and Mestiri was criticized for rejecting the RCD’s preelection offer of an electoral front with the MDS and other parties. Subsequently, Mestiri resigned as MDS secretary general, assistant secretary general Dali Jazi having earlier quit the party to join the government. Mestiri was reported to have left the party altogether in early 1992, as criticism grew of the “authoritarian” approach of its new leader, Mohamed MOUADA. Factionalization also contributed to the “suspension” by the MDS of another of its prominent leaders, Mustafa BEN JAAFAR.

The MDS supported President Ben Ali for reelection in 1994 but challenged the RCD in the national legislative balloting. Although no MDS candidates were successful on their own, ten were subsequently seated in the house under the proportional arrangement enacted to guarantee a multi-party legislature.

In October 1995 Mouada published a letter criticizing the “lack of political freedom” in Tunisia. Within days he was arrested on charges of having had illegal contacts with representatives of the Libyan government, and in February 1996 he was sentenced to 11 years in prison. Mouada dismissed

the charges as “obviously politically motivated,” and his conviction was widely condemned by international observers. Khemais CHAMMARI, a member of the MDS as well as the House of Representatives, was also given a five-year sentence in July for “attacking state security.” Both men were released in December, although Mouada was briefly detained again one year later. Meanwhile, an MDS congress in May 1997 had elected Ismaïl Boulahia to the new leadership post of secretary general, his discussion of the future of the “new MDS” apparently reflecting a diminution of Mouada’s authority. However, Boulahia was not eligible to contest the 1999 presidential election, since he had not held his MDS post the requisite five years, and he subsequently announced the MDS was supporting President Ben Ali for reelection. Meanwhile, the party secured 13 seats in the legislative balloting of 1999, again thanks solely to electoral law guarantees regarding opposition representation.

Mouada was held under house arrest for one month in late 1999 on a charge of defaming the government, and he was sent to prison in June 2001 for violations in connection with his earlier release on the 1999 charge. Two months earlier Mouada had issued a joint declaration with *Nahda* leader Rachid Ghanouchi calling for creation of a joint antigovernment front. However, apparently underscoring continued disagreement within the MDS regarding the extent of cooperation with the regime, Boulahia met with President Ben Ali in early 2001 and praised his commitment to “democratic values.” In March 2002 Ben Ali pardoned Mouada.

The party supported Ben Ali in the 2004 presidential election and won representation in municipal elections of 2005. Meanwhile, Ben Jafaar continued his heavy criticism of the administration through an unrecognized grouping called the **Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties** (*Forum Démocratique pour le Travail et les Libertés*—FDTL), of which he was described as the secretary general, and the **National Council for Tunisian Freedoms** (*Conseil National pour les*

*Libertés*—CNLT [below]), of which he was a founding member.

*Leader:* Ismaïl BOULAHIA (Secretary General).

**Renewal Movement** (*Harakat Ettajdid/Mouvement de la Rénovation*—MR). The Renewal Movement is heir to the Tunisian Communist Party (*Parti Communiste Tunisien*—PCT), which was founded in 1934 as an entity distinct from the French Communist Party. The PCT was outlawed in 1963 and regained legality in July 1981. Historically of quite limited membership, the party secured only 0.78 percent of the vote at the 1981 legislative balloting. Prior to the opposition boycott, the PCT had intended to participate in the 1986 election in alliance with the RSP (below). Delegates to the party’s 1987 congress denounced IMF-supported changes in the government’s economic policies, particularly the emphasis on the private sector and free-market activity. Subsequently, the PCT supported the political reforms instituted by the Ben Ali government, before joining the MDS and MUP in boycotting the municipal elections in 1990 to protest the “failure” of democratization efforts.

The party’s new name was adopted at an April 1993 congress, leaders announcing that Marxism had been dropped as official doctrine in favor of a “progressive” platform favoring “democratic pluralism.” None of the MR’s 93 candidates was successful in the 1994 national legislative balloting, although four MR members were subsequently seated in the House under the proportional arrangement established for opposition parties. Party leaders complained of widespread fraud in the legislative balloting and described Tunisia’s slow pace of political liberalization as a national “scandal.”

The MR secretary general, Mohamed Harmel, was constitutionally prohibited from contesting the 1999 presidential election due to his age (70). The MR was accorded five seats in the legislature elected in 1999.

MR Chair Mohamed Ali el-Halouani was one of three candidates to oppose President Ben Ali in the

2004 elections. In a rare occurrence, MR supporters demonstrated in Tunis after el-Halouani complained that the party had been blocked from distributing its manifesto. El-Halouani received about 1 percent of the vote and denounced the poll as a “sham.”

*Leaders:* Mohamed Ali el-HALOUANI (Chair and 2004 presidential candidate), Boujamma RMILI, Mohamed HARMEL (Secretary General).

**Unionist Democratic Union** (*Union Démocratique Unioniste*—UDU). Legalized in November 1988, the UDU was led by Abderrahmane TLILI, a former member of the RCD who had resigned from the ruling party to devote himself to the unification of various Arab nationalist tendencies in Tunisia. Tlili garnered 0.23 percent of the vote in the 1999 presidential balloting, the UDU securing seven of the seats distributed to the opposition following the concurrent legislative poll.

Tlili was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2004 on embezzlement charges relating to his former government tenure. The UDU supported President Ben Ali in the 2004 presidential election and won representation in municipal elections in 2005.

*Leader:* Ahmed INOUBI (Secretary General).

**Popular Union Party** (*Parti de l'Unité Populaire*—PUP). The PUP is an outgrowth of an “internal faction” that developed within the Popular Unity Movement (MUP, below) over the issue of participation in the 1981 legislative election. Although garnering only 0.81 percent of the vote in 1981, it was officially recognized in 1983 as a legal party, subsequently operating under its current name. The PUP attempted to offer candidates for the 1986 balloting, but most were declared ineligible by the government. The party therefore withdrew three days before the election, citing the same harassment that had led to the boycott by other opposition groups. It participated in “national pact” discussions with the government in 1988, thus asserting an identity separate from that of its parent. PUP Secretary General Mohamed Belhadj Amor won 0.31 percent of the vote in the 1999 presi-

dential campaign, during which he expressed deep dismay over the failure of the so-called opposition parties to mount any effective challenge to the RCD. He subsequently resigned the PUP leadership post. His successor, Mohamed Bouchiha, received 3.8 percent of the vote in the 2004 election.

The party won representation in the 2005 municipal elections.

*Leaders:* Jalloud AZZOUNA, Mohamed Belhadj AMOR (1999 presidential candidate), Mohamed BOUCHIHA (Secretary General and 2004 presidential candidate).

**Progressive Democratic Assembly** (*Rassemblement Démocratique Progressiste*—RDP). The RDP had been established as the Progressive Socialist Assembly (*Rassemblement Socialiste Progressiste*—RSP) by a number of Marxist groups in 1983. The pan-Arabist RSP was tolerated by the Bourguiba government until mid-1986. It formed a “Democratic Alliance” with the PCT and planned to field candidates for the 1986 balloting. However, the coalition boycotted the election after the government disqualified some of its candidates and sentenced 14 of its members to six-month jail terms for belonging to an illegal organization. The party was officially recognized in September 1988. The RSP did not secure any of the legislative seats reserved for opposition parties in 1994 or 1999, and it called for a boycott of the municipal elections of May 2000. The RSP changed its name to the RDP in July 2001 in an effort to “broaden its ideological base.” The RDP reportedly included many Marxists as well as moderate Islamists and liberals.

RDP Secretary General Ahmed Chebbi was blocked from contesting the 2004 presidential election because of a recent decree by President Ben Ali that candidates could be presented only by parties with legislative representation. The RDP consequently called for a boycott of the presidential balloting and withdrew its candidates from the legislative poll.

It was reported in 2006 that the RDP had elected May Eljeribi as its secretary general, replacing

Chebbi, who had held the post for 23 years. Eljeribi became the first woman to head a political party in Tunisia.

*Leader:* May ELJERIBI (Secretary General).

**Liberal Social Party** (*Parti Social Liberal*—PSL). The PSL, formed to advocate liberal social and political policies and economic reforms, including the privatization of state-run enterprises, was officially recognized in September 1988 under the name of the Social Party for Progress (*Parti Social pour le Progrès*—PSP). The PSL name was adopted at the first party congress, held in Tunis on October 29–30, 1994. The PSL secured 2 of the 34 seats reserved for opposition parties in the 1999 legislative balloting. The party's president, Mounir Beji, won less than 1 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll.

The name Liberal Social Democratic Party (*Parti Social Démocratique Liberal*—PSDL) was adopted at the party congress in April 2005, and Beji was reelected president. The party won representation in the May 2005 municipal elections. In 2007 the party called on unions to join in a “real partnership.”

*Leaders:* Hosni HAMMANI, Mounir BEJI (President of the Party and 2004 presidential candidate).

**Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties** (*Le Forum Démocratique pour le Travail et les Libertés*—FDTL). Legalized in 2002, the FDTL called for a boycott of the 2004 elections and urged opposition parties to work toward cohesion. The FDTL was barred by the government from participating in the 2005 municipal elections, along with the RDP and the MR. The three groups had formed a loose alliance called the Democratic Coalition for Citizenship, which the government said did not abide by electoral regulations.

*Leader:* Mustafa BEN JAFAR.

**Green Party for Progress** (*Parti Verte pour le Progrès*—PVP). Authorized by the government on March 3, 2004, the PVP was the first new party to be legally established since 2002. While the party focuses on a pro-environment platform, crit-

ics claim its members are loyal to the ruling RCD. (The government had recently refused to legalize the long-standing application of another environmental group, Green Tunisia.)

*Leader:* Mongi KHAMMASSI (Secretary General).

### *Other Groups*

**Popular Unity Movement** (*Mouvement de l'Unité Populaire*—MUP). The MUP was formed in 1973 by Ahmed Ben Salah, a former “super-minister” who directed the economic policies of the Bourguiba cabinet from 1962 to 1969. Ben Salah was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in 1969 for “high treason,” although the action was generally attributed to his having fallen out of favor with Bourguiba. After his escape from prison in 1973, Ben Salah directed the MUP from exile, urging the government to return to the socialist policies of the 1960s. The movement reorganized itself as a political party in June 1978 but was unable to gain legal recognition. In early 1981 friction developed within the MUP leadership after the government granted amnesty to all members theretofore subject to legal restriction, the sole exception being Ben Salah. Ben Salah subsequently declared his opposition to the group's participation in the November 1 balloting, causing a split between his supporters and an “internal” faction (see PUP, above). After maintaining a high international profile throughout his exile, Ben Salah returned to Tunisia in 1988 in the wake of Bourguiba's ouster. However, the MUP did not sign the “national pact” of late 1988, primarily to protest the government's refusal to restore Ben Salah's civil rights, a requirement for his participation in national elections. The MUP joined two legal parties (the MDS and the PCT, above) in an antigovernment coalition in 1990.

Ben Salah was one of several opposition leaders who issued a joint communiqué in London in November 1995 attacking the Tunisian government as repressive. In 1996 the MUP leader was described by *Africa Confidential* as no longer commanding a significant popular base, and he returned

to Tunisia from ten years of voluntary exile in Europe in September 2000.

*Leader:* Ahmed BEN SALAH (General Secretary).

**Renaissance Party** (*Hizb al-Nahda/Parti de la Renaissance—PR*). Also known as the Renaissance Movement (*Harakat al-Nahda/Mouvement de la Renaissance*), *Nahda* was formed as the Islamic Tendency Movement (*Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique—MTI*) in early 1981 by a group of Islamic fundamentalists inspired by the 1979 Iranian revolution. Charged with fomenting disturbances, many MTI adherents were jailed during a series of subsequent crackdowns by the Bourguiba government. However, the MTI insisted that it opposed violence or other “revolutionary activity,” and the Ben Ali government pardoned most of those incarcerated, including the movement’s leader, Rachid Ghanouchi, shortly after assuming power. The new regime also initiated talks that it said were designed to provide moderate MTI forces with a legitimate means of political expression in order to undercut support for the movement’s radical elements. As an outgrowth of that process, the MTI adopted its new name in early 1989; however, the government subsequently denied legal status to *Nahda*, ostensibly on the grounds that it remained religion-based. Undaunted, the group quickly established itself as the government’s primary opposition, its “independent” candidates collecting about 13 percent of the total popular vote (including as much as 30 percent of the vote in some urban areas) in 1989 legislative balloting.

*Nahda* boycotted “higher council” negotiations and municipal elections in 1990, Ghanouchi remaining in exile to protest the lack of legal recognition for the formation and the continued “harassment” of its sympathizers. Friction intensified late in the year following the arrest of three groups of what security forces described as armed extremists plotting to overthrow the government. Although the government alleged that some of those arrested had *Nahda* links, the party leadership strongly denied the charge, accusing the regime of conducting a propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting

the fundamentalist movement in order to prevent it from assuming its rightful political role.

On October 15, 1991, the government announced that it had uncovered a fundamentalist plot to assassinate President Ben Ali and other government officials in order to “create a constitutional vacuum.” However, *Nahda* leaders again denied any connection to violent antigovernment activity, reiterating their commitment to “peaceful methods” of protest and stressing that their vision for the “Islamization” of Tunisia was “compatible” with democracy and a pluralistic society. The disclaimers notwithstanding, the government flatly labeled *Nahda* “a terrorist organization” and intensified the campaign to “silence” it. Thousands of suspected *Nahda* sympathizers were detained, many later claiming that they had been tortured or otherwise abused in prison (a charge supported by Amnesty International). At a widely publicized trial in mid-1992 about 170 *Nahda* adherents were convicted of sedition. A number were sentenced to life imprisonment, including Ghanouchi and several other leaders who were tried in absentia. The government subsequently issued an international arrest warrant for Ghanouchi, who was living in London, but in mid-1993 the United Kingdom granted him political asylum. In 1994 Ghanouchi dismissed the recent Tunisian presidential and legislative elections as “a joke.” Despite the “banned and fragmented” status of *Nahda*, Ghanouchi was described in 1996 as still the only possible “serious challenger” to Ben Ali. A number of *Nahda* adherents were released in November 1999 from long prison terms. In March 2001 Ghanouchi, in conjunction with MDS leader Mohamed Mouada, proposed establishment by *Nahda* and the legal opposition parties of a National Democratic Front to challenge the RCD, suggesting to some observers that *Nahda* hoped to return to mainstream political activity. However, *Nahda* remained relatively quiescent during the 2004 election campaign.

In March 2006 the government released 1,600 prisoners on the 50th anniversary of Tunisia’s independence. Among those released were reportedly many political prisoners who had been jailed for 10 years because they were members of *Nahda*.

Further, in November President Ben Ali, marking his 19th year at the helm, pardoned 55 Islamists, all said to be members of *Nahda*, including leaders Habib Ellouze and Mohamed Akrouf, both of whom had received life sentences in 1992.

*Leaders:* Rachid GHANOUCI (President, in exile), Habib ELLOUZE, Mohamed AKROUT, Sahah KARKAR (in exile), Sheikh Abdelfatah MOURROU (Secretary General).

**Commandos of Sacrifice** (*Commandos du Sacrifice*—CS). Although the government insisted that the CS was the “military wing” of *Nahda*, the group’s leader, Habib Laasoued, described it as independent and, in fact, a rival to *Nahda* for support among fundamentalists. About 100 members of the commandos were convicted in mid-1992 of planning terrorist acts, although the trials were surrounded by allegations of human rights abuses and other governmental misconduct. Laasoued, who was sentenced to life imprisonment, reportedly acknowledged that the commandos had engaged in theoretical discussions of *jihad* (Islamic holy war) but denied that any antigovernment military action had actually been endorsed.

*Leader:* Habib LAASOUED (imprisoned).

**Party of Tunisian Communist Workers** (*Parti des Ouvriers Communistes Tunisiens*—POCT). An unrecognized splinter of the former PCT, the POCT is led by Hamma Hammani, who had been the director of the banned newspaper *El Badil* (The Alternative). Hammani was sentenced to eight years in prison in early 1994 on several charges, including membership in an illegal organization, his case being prominently cited in criticism leveled at the government by human rights organizations. Hammani and another POCT member who had been imprisoned with him were pardoned by President Ben Ali in November 1995. A number of POCT members were convicted in July 1999 of belonging to an illegal association, but most were released later in the year. Hammani and several associates were charged again in absentia in 1999 for having been members of an unrecognized group. In February 2002 they were retried and committed to various prison sentences. In September, however,

Hammani and some of the others were released following a hunger strike that had attracted increasing international scrutiny to their case. Hammani called for a boycott of the 2004 elections.

*Leader:* Hamma HAMMANI.

**Congress for the Republic.** Formed by activist Moncef Marzouki in July 2001, the political party was established to try to help create a democratic republic. Marzouki, who faced a year in prison (see below) for belonging to another illegal organization, lived in self-imposed exile in France for five years, returning to Tunisia in 2006 to encourage Tunisians to engage in peaceful demonstrations for human rights. Soon thereafter Marzouki was charged with “incitement to civil disobedience.”

*Leader:* Moncef MARZOUKI

Several human rights groups have been prominent in the increasingly vocal opposition movement in recent years. They include the unrecognized National Council for Tunisian Freedoms (*Conseil National pour les Libertés Tunisiennes*—CNLT), founded in 1998 by, among others, Moncef Marzouki, who had unsuccessfully attempted to run for president in 1994. In a case that attracted wide international attention, Marzouki was sentenced in December 2000 to one year in prison for belonging to an illegal organization. Meanwhile, as of 2007 the officially sanctioned Tunisian Human Rights League (*Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l’Homme*—LTDH) continued to be banned from repeated attempts to hold its congress since 2005. The ban was imposed after 22 members, alleged by critics to be members of the RCD, challenged the legality of the congress, claiming the LTDH refused to allow pro-government members to participate. (LTDH President Mokhtar TRIFI, who had sharply condemned the Ben Ali government after wresting control of the organization from RCD adherents, was arrested in March 2001 but subsequently released.)

In mid-1994 it was reported that a militant Islamic group had been organized among Tunisian exiles under the leadership of Mohamed Ali el-HORANI to support armed struggle against the

Ben Ali government. The group, which reportedly adopted the name of Algeria's outlawed **Islamic Salvation Front** (*Front Islamique du Salut*—FIS), was described as critical of *Nahda's* official rejection of violence. References have also been made to a **Tunisian Islamic Front** (*Front Islamique Tunisien*—FIT), which reportedly has committed itself to armed struggle against the Ben Ali regime. In addition, some 14 members of a fundamentalist group called *Ansar* were sentenced to jail terms in December 2000 for belonging to an illegal organization, which the government described as having Iranian ties.

## Legislature

**House of Representatives** (*Majlis al-Nuwab/Chambre des Députés*). The lower house consists of 189 members serving five-year terms. Under a new system adopted for the 1994 election, most representatives (148 in 1999 and 152 in 2004) are elected on a “winner-takes-all” basis in which the party whose list gains the most votes in a district secures all the seats for that district. (There are 25 districts comprising 2 to 10 seats each.) The remaining seats (19 in 1994, 34 in 1999, and 37 in 2004) are allocated to parties that failed to win in any districts, in proportion to the parties' national vote totals.

From the establishment of the house in 1959 until 1994, members of the ruling party (RCD) occupied all seats. Although six opposition parties were permitted to offer candidates at the 1989 balloting and a number of independent candidates sponsored by the unsanctioned Renaissance Party also ran, the RCD won all seats with a reported 80 percent of the vote. RCD candidates also won all nine seats contested in October 1991 by-elections, which were boycotted by the opposition parties. The house was enlarged from 141 members to 163 for the 1994 election and to 182 for the 1999 balloting. The membership was expanded to 189 seats for the most recent election on October 24, 2004, President Ben Ali decreeing that 43 seats be filled by women. The RCD won all 152 seats that were contested on a district basis. However, under the

proportional system for distributing 37 additional seats, 5 other parties were allocated seats as follows: The Democratic Socialist Movement, 14; the Popular Union Party, 11; the Unionist Democratic Union, 7; the Renewal Movement, 3; and the Liberal Social Party, 2.

*President:* Fouad MBAZAA.

**House of Advisers.** (*Majlis al-Mustasharin*). A referendum on May 26, 2002, provided for several constitutional changes, the creation of the upper house among them. The House of Advisers comprises 126 members, 85 of whom are directly elected and 41 appointed by the president, all serving six-year terms (half of the members are renewed every three years). The members include 14 from each of the 3 main professional unions and federations and 43 representatives from various regions of the country. The House of Advisers was seated after balloting on July 3, 2005, with the distribution as follows: the Democratic Constitutional Assembly, 43; the Tunisian Union of the Industry, Trade, and Draft Industry, 14; and the Tunisia Union of Agriculture and Fishing, 14. The General Union of Tunisian Workers, which was entitled to 14 seats, did not participate. It was unclear whether a separate election would be held to fill those seats.

*President:* Abdallah KALLEL.

## Communications

The media during most of the Bourguiba era were subject to pervasive party influence and increasingly repressive government interference. The Ben Ali government initially relaxed some of the restrictions, although the fundamentalist press remained heavily censored and mainstream publications continued to practice what was widely viewed as self-censorship, bordering on what one foreign correspondent described as “regime worship.” In addition, several foreign journalists were subsequently expelled and some international publications were prevented from entering the country for printing articles critical of the government. (The French dailies *Le Monde* and *Libération* were banned from March 1994 until March 1995



## Cabinet

As of August 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Mohamed Ghannouchi
Secretary General of the Government in Charge of Relations with the House of Representatives and the House of Advisors	Abdelhakim Bouraoui

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Water Resources	Mohamed Habib Haddad
Communication Technologies	Montassar Ouaiili
Communications and Relations with Parliament	Rafaâ Dekhil
Culture and Heritage Preservation	Mohamed El Aziz Ben Achour
Development and International Cooperation	Mohamed Nouri Jouini
Director of Presidential Cabinet	Tadh Ouderni
Education and Training	Sadok Korbi
Employment and Professional Integration of Youth	Chadli Laroussi
Environment and Sustainable Development	Nadhir Hamada
Equipment, Housing, and Territorial Management	Samira Khayach Belhadj [f]
Finance	Mohamed Rachid Kechiche
Foreign Affairs	Abdelawahab Abdallah
Governor of the Central Bank	Taoufik Baccar
Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Technology	Lazhar Bou Ouni
Industry, Energy, and Small and Medium Enterprises	Afif Chelbi
Interior and Local Development	Rafik Belhaj Kacem
Justice and Human Rights	Béchir Tekkari
National Defense	Kamel Morjane
Prime Minister's Office	Zouhair Mdhaffer
Public Health	Ridha Kechrid
Religious Affairs	Boubaker El Akhzouri
Social Affairs, Solidarity, and Tunisians Abroad	Ali Chaouch
State Property and Land Affairs	Ridha Grira
Tourism	Tijani Haddad
Trade and Handicrafts	Mondher Zenaïdi
Transport	Abderrahim Zouari
Women, Family, Children, and Elderly Affairs	Salova Ayachi Labben [f]
Youth, Sports, and Physical Education	Abdallah Kaâbi

### *Minister of State*

Special Adviser to the President	Abdelaziz Ben Dhia
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### *Secretaries of State*

Public Health, in Charge of Hospitals	Kamel Haj Sassi
Youth, Sports, and Physical Education, in Charge of Youth	Néziha Escheikh [f]

[f] = female

because of their coverage of events prior to the national elections.) In recent years international journalists' groups have called for Western nations to apply pressure upon the Tunisian government to reduce what has been widely perceived as pervasive restraints on freedom of the press, including the arrests of journalists. In 2005 Tunisia banned the Union of Tunisian Journalists from holding a conference for independent journalists, including some from international watchdog groups.

### Press

The following, unless otherwise noted, are published daily in Tunis: *As-Sabah* (The Morning, 50,000), government-influenced, in Arabic; *al-Amal* (Action, 50,000), RCD organ, in Arabic; *L'Action* (50,000), RCD organ, in French; *Le Temps* (42,000), weekly in French; *La Presse de Tunisie* (40,000), government organ, in French; *Le Quotidien* (The Daily, 30,000), independent, in French; *Le Renouveau* (23,000), RCD organ, in French; *La Presse-Soir*, evening; *as-Sahafa*, in Arabic; *al-Huriyya*, in Arabic; *as-Shourouq* (Sunrise), independent, in Arabic. An opposition weekly, *al-Mawkif* (The Stance) is an organ of the Progressive Democratic Assembly.

### News Agencies

The domestic facility is *Tunis Afrique Presse*—TAP (*Wakalah Tunis Afriqiyah al-Anba*); in addi-

tion, a number of foreign bureaus maintain offices in Tunis.

### Broadcasting and Computing

The *Etablissement de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Tunisienne* (ERTT) operates a radio network broadcasting in Arabic, French, and Italian. It also operates three television channels, one of which links the country with European transmissions. The first privately owned radio station was launched in 2003, and the first private television station began broadcasting in early 2005. (Although President Ben Ali portrayed these developments as expansion of freedom of the press, thus far programming on the new stations has lacked political commentary.) As of 2005, there were approximately 56 personal computers and 94 Internet users for every 1,000 residents. In that same year there were an estimated 563 mobile cellular subscribers.

### Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Mohamed Nejib HACHANA

**U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia:** Robert F. GODEC

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Habib MANSOUR

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AMU, AU, BADEA, IDB, Interpol, IOM, LAS, NAM, OIC, OIF, WCO, WTO

# TURKEY

## REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*

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**Note:** Following a series of deadly attacks spearheaded by the PKK based in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, Turkey threatened to launch cross-border raids in to Iraqi territory, potentially wrecking the stability of Iraq's most peaceful region in response to U.S. and Iraqi failure to neutralize an increasing threat, which put the Turkish government under severe public pressure. Consultations with Iraqi and U.S. officials throughout autumn 2007 yielded assurances that the United States would support the capture of PKK leaders in Iraq, as well as supply Turkey with "actionable intelligence" leading to their arrest. Nevertheless, Turkish troops remained massed on the Turkish-Iraqi border, complicating the security equation in an already volatile region.

### The Country

Guardian of the narrow straits between the Mediterranean and Black seas, present-day Turkey occupies the compact land mass of the Anatolian Peninsula together with the partially European city of İstanbul and its Thracian hinterland. The country, which borders on Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, has a varied topography and is subject to extreme variation in climate. It supports a largely Turkish population (more than 80 percent, in terms of language) but has a substantial Kurdish minority of approximately 12 million, plus such smaller groups as Arabs, Circassians, Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, Lazes, and Jews. Some 98 percent of the populace, including both Turks and Kurds, adheres to the Sunni branch of the Islamic faith, which maintains a strong position despite the secular emphasis of government policy since the 1920s. Sunni Muslims constitute a substantial majority, but between 10 and 20 percent of the population belong to the Alevi (Alawi) sect of Islam.

Women constitute approximately 36 percent of the official labor force, with large numbers serving

as unpaid workers on family farms. While only 10 percent of the urban labor force is female, there is extensive participation by upper-income women in such professions as medicine, law, banking, and education, with the government being headed by a female prime minister from 1993 to 1995.



**Political Status:** Independent republic established in 1923; parliamentary democracy since 1946, save for military interregna from May 1960 to October 1961 and September 1980 to November 1983; present constitution approved by referendum of November 7, 1982.

**Area:** 300,948 sq. mi. (779,452 sq. km.).

**Population:** 67,803,927 (2000C); 73,915,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Centers (2007E):** ANKARA (3,641,931), İstanbul (10,291,102), İzmir (2,61,568), Bursa (1,504,817), Adana (1,294,460), Gaziantep (1,136,281) and Konya (932,589).

**Official Language:** Turkish. A 1982 law banning the use of the Kurdish language was rescinded in early 1991.

**Monetary Unit:** Turkish New Lira (*Yeni Türk Lirası*-YTL) (market rate November 2, 2007: 1.18 Turkish New Liras = \$1US).

**President of the Republic:** Abdullah GÜL (Justice and Development Party); elected by the Grand National Assembly on August 28, 2007, and sworn in for a seven-year term on the same day to succeed Ahmet Necdet SEZER (nonparty).

**Prime Minister:** Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN (Justice and Development Party); invited by the president on March 11, 2003, to form a new government, following general elections on November 3, 2002; invited by the president on August 6, 2007, to form a new government, following general elections on July 22, 2007; reinstated in office on August 28, 2007.

Turkey traditionally has been an agricultural country, with about 50 percent of the population still engaged in agricultural pursuits; yet the contribution of industry to GDP growth exceeds that of agriculture (9 percent and 3 percent, respectively, in 2007). Grain (most importantly wheat), tobacco, cotton, nuts, fruits, and olive oil are the chief agricultural products; sheep and cattle are raised on the Anatolian plateau, and the country ranks among the leading producers of mohair. Natural resources in-

clude chrome, copper, iron ore, manganese, bauxite, borax, and petroleum. The most important industries are textiles, iron and steel, sugar, food processing, cement, paper, and fertilizer. State economic enterprises (SEEs) account for more than 60 percent of fixed investment, although substantial privatization has been implemented.

Economic growth during the 1960s was substantial but not enough to overcome severe balance-of-payments and inflation problems, which intensified following the oil price increases of 1973–1974. By 1975 the cost of petroleum imports had more than quadrupled and was absorbing nearly two-thirds of export earnings. A major devaluation of the lira in mid-1979 failed to resolve the country's economic difficulties, and in early 1980, with inflation exceeding 100 percent, a \$1.16 billion loan package was negotiated with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), followed in June by \$1.65 billion in credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Subsequently, aided by improving export performance and a tight curb on foreign currency transactions, the economy registered substantial recovery, with inflation being reduced to a still unsatisfactory level of 39 percent in 1987, before returning to 70 percent in 1989. High inflation rates plagued Turkey throughout the 1990s, reaching 99 percent by 1997. An economic stabilization program introduced in 1997 brought the rate down to 55 percent in 1998.

Although annual inflation had been lowered to about 35 percent in 2000 and solid GNP growth (estimated at over 6 percent) had been reestablished, a financial crisis erupted in late February 2001, forcing a currency devaluation and other intervention measures. In April 2001 the government announced it anticipated 3 percent economic contraction for the year. Among other things, resolution of the economic problems was considered a prerequisite to Turkey's long-standing goal of accession to the European Union (EU) (see Foreign relations, below, for details). The IMF approved a \$15.7 billion "rescue package" in May 2001 and endorsed up to \$10 billion in additional aid in November after the government pledged to intensify its efforts to reorganize the banking sector, improve tax

collection, combat corruption, promote foreign investment, and accelerate the privatization program. Consequently, the government narrowly avoided defaulting on its debt repayments, much to the relief of Western capitals, for whom Turkey represents a geographic, political, and military linchpin amid the turbulence of the Middle East.

Turkey weathered the financial crises of 2000–2001 and, thanks in part to conditions imposed by an agreement with the IMF, the economy began to stabilize. Indeed, inflation was down to 9.32 percent for 2004, and the government set a target of 8 percent inflation for 2005. At the same time, the country's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 8 percent in 2002 and 6 percent in 2003, and was projected to grow 5 percent in 2004.

Observers give much of the credit for Turkey's improved economic performance to tighter fiscal policies as well as to reform of the financial sector, especially the creation of an independent Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency, recapitalization of the state banks, and tighter auditing procedures. After its 2004 consultations with Turkey, however, the IMF has cautioned that Turkey's economy is still vulnerable. In particular, the IMF frowned upon recent government-backed increases in wages, which it feared would fuel inflation. The IMF also specifically recommended reform of the social security system, which had large deficits, calling on the government to refrain from large increases in public spending. On April 12, 2005, Turkey and the IMF reached agreement on a \$10 billion loan conditioned upon recent and continuing economic reforms.

In April 2006, parliament finally approved a long-sought social-security reform bill that raises the retirement age to 65 and deters abuse of the pension system through "double dipping" by those who retire to qualify for a pension only to then return to work. Despite this important move toward fiscal discipline, the IMF warned Turkey in May 2006 that the country needed to further rein in government spending. GDP grew 6.1 percent in 2006.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) grew exponentially between 2001 and 2006, with Turkey attract-

ing the highest FDI levels in its republican history within the last five years. In the period between 1990 and 2004, annual average FDI inflows amounted to \$1 billion, exceeding total FDI inflows during 1980–1990. FDI continued to increase from 2004 to 2006, netting 240 percent during 2004–2005 and 105 percent during 2005–2006. In 2006 Turkey attracted \$20.2 billion, the highest ever FDI in its history, ranking it among the top five developing countries.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

Present-day Turkey is the surviving core of a vast empire created by Ottoman rule in late medieval and early modern times. After a period of expansion during the 15th and 16th centuries in which Ottoman domination was extended over much of central Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa, the empire underwent a lengthy period of contraction and fragmentation, finally dissolving in the aftermath of a disastrous alliance with Germany in World War I.

A secular nationalist republic was proclaimed on October 29, 1923, by Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK, who launched a reform program under which Turkey abandoned much of its Ottoman and Islamic heritage. Its major components included secularization (separation of religion and state), establishment of state control of the economy, and creation of a new Turkish national identity. Following his death in 1938, Atatürk's Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP) continued as the only legally recognized party under his close associate, İsmet İNÖNÜ. One-party domination was not seriously contested until after World War II, when the opposition Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP) was established by Celal BAYAR, Adnan MENDERES, and others.

Winning the country's first free election in 1950, the DP ruled Turkey for the next decade, only to be ousted in 1960 by a military coup led by Gen. Cemal GÜRSEL. The military justified the coup as a response to alleged corruption within the DP

and the growing authoritarian attitudes of its leaders. Many of those so charged, including President Bayar and Prime Minister Menderes, were tried by martial courts and found guilty of violating the constitution, after which Bayar was imprisoned and Menderes and two of his ministers were executed.

Civilian government was restored under a new constitution in 1961, with Gürsel remaining as president until he suffered a stroke, and was replaced by Gen. Cevdet SUNAY in 1966. The 1961 basic law established a series of checks and balances to offset a concentration of power in the executive and prompted a diffusion of parliamentary seats among several parties. A series of coalition governments, most of them led by İnönü, functioned until 1965, when a partial reincarnation of the DP, Süleyman DEMİREL's Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*—AP), won a sweeping legislative mandate.

Despite its victory in 1965, the Demirel regime soon became the target of popular discontent and demands for basic reform. Although surviving the election of 1969, it was subsequently caught between left-wing agitation and military insistence on the maintenance of public order, a critical issue because of mounting economic and social unrest and the growth of political terrorism. The crisis came to a head in 1971 with an ultimatum from the military that resulted in Demirel's resignation and the formation of a "nonparty" government by Nihat ERİM. The new government amended the 1961 constitution, declared martial law in eleven provinces, arrested dissident elements, and outlawed the left-wing Turkish Workers Party (*Türkiye İçi Partisi*—TİP) and the moderate Islamist National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*—MNP). The period immediately after the fall of the Erim government in 1972 witnessed another "nonparty" administration under Ferit MELEN and the selection of a new president, Adm. (Ret.) Fahri KORUTÜRK. Political instability was heightened further by an inconclusive election in 1973 and by both foreign and domestic policy problems stemming from a rapidly deteriorating economy, substantial urban population growth,

and renewed conflict on Cyprus, which led to a Turkish invasion of the island in the summer of 1974.

Bülent ECEVİT was appointed prime minister in January 1974, heading a coalition of his own moderately progressive CHP and the smaller, more religious National Salvation Party (*Millî Selâmet Partisi*—MSP). Despite securing widespread domestic acclaim for the Cyprus action and for his insistence that the island be formally divided into Greek and Turkish federal regions, Ecevit was opposed by Deputy Prime Minister Necmettin ERBAKAN, who called for outright annexation of the Turkish sector and, along with his MSP colleagues, resigned, precipitating Ecevit's own resignation in September. After both Ecevit and former prime minister Demirel failed to form new governments, Sadi IRMAK, an independent, was designated prime minister on November 17, heading an essentially nonparliamentary cabinet. Following a defeat in the National Assembly only twelve days later, Irmak also was forced to resign, although he remained in office in a caretaker capacity until Demirel succeeded in forming a Nationalist Front coalition government on April 12, 1975.

At an early general election on June 5, 1977, no party succeeded in gaining a lower house majority, and the Demirel government fell on July 13. Following Ecevit's inability to organize a majority coalition, Demirel returned as head of a tripartite administration that failed to survive a vote of confidence on December 31. Ecevit then returned to his former position, organizing a minority government.

Widespread civil and political unrest throughout 1978 prompted a declaration of martial law in 13 provinces on December 25. The security situation deteriorated further during 1979, and, faced with a number of ministerial defections, Prime Minister Ecevit was obliged to step down again on October 16, with Demirel returning as head of an AP minority government on November 12.

Divided by rising foreign debt and increasing domestic terrorism, the National Assembly failed to elect a president to succeed Fahri Korutürk,

despite casting over 100 ballots. Senate President İhsan Sabri ÇAĞLAYANGİL assumed the office on an acting basis at the expiration of Korutürk's seven-year term on April 6. On August 29 Gen. Kenan EVREN, chief of the General Staff, publicly criticized the assembly for its failure both to elect a new president and to promulgate more drastic security legislation, and on September 12 he mounted a coup on behalf of a five-man National Security Council (NSC) that suspended the constitution, dissolved the assembly, proclaimed martial law in all of the country's 67 provinces, and on September 21 designated a military-civilian cabinet under Adm. (Ret.) Bülent ULUSU. The junta banned all existing political parties, detaining many of their leaders, including Ecevit and Demirel; imposed strict censorship; and arrested upwards of 40,000 persons on political charges.

In a national referendum on November 7, 1982, Turkish voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitution, under which General Evren was formally designated as president of the Republic for a seven-year term. One year later, on November 6, 1983, the recently established Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*—ANAP) of former deputy prime minister Turgut ÖZAL won a majority of seats in a newly constituted unicameral Grand National Assembly. Following the election, General Evren's four colleagues on the NSC resigned their military commands, continuing as members of a Presidential Council upon dissolution of the NSC on December 6. On December 7 Özal was asked to form a government and assumed office as prime minister on December 13.

Confronted with a governing style that was viewed as increasingly arrogant and ineffective in combating inflation, Turkish voters dealt Prime Minister Özal a stinging rebuke at local elections on March 26, 1989. ANAP candidates ran a poor third overall, securing only 22 percent of the vote and losing control of the three largest cities. Özal refused, however, to call for new legislative balloting and, despite a plunge in personal popularity to 28 percent, utilized his assembly majority on October 31 to secure the presidency in succession to Evren. Following his inauguration at a parliamen-

tary ceremony on November 9 that was boycotted by opposition members, Özal announced his choice of Assembly Speaker Yıldıırım AKBULUT as the new prime minister.

Motherland's standing in the opinion polls slipped to a minuscule 14 percent in the wake of a political crisis that erupted in April 1991 over the somewhat heavy-handed installation of the president's wife, Semra Özal, as chair of the ruling party's İstanbul branch. Both Özals declared their neutrality in a leadership contest at a party congress in mid-June, but they were viewed as the principal architects of an unprecedented challenge to Prime Minister Akbulut, who was defeated for reelection as chair by former foreign minister Mesut YILMAZ

Yılmaz called for an early election on October 20, 1991, "to refresh the people's confidence" in his government. The outcome, however, was a defeat for the ruling party, with former prime minister Demirel, now leader of the right-of-center True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP), negotiating a coalition with the left-of-center Social Democratic People's Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*—SHP) and returning to office for the seventh time on November 21, with the SHP's Erdal İNÖNÜ as his deputy.

Demirel's broad-based administration, which brought together the heirs of Turkey's two oldest and most prominent political traditions (the CHP and the DP), claimed greater popularity—50 percent voter support and more than 60 percent backing in the polls—than any government in recent decades. Thus encouraged, Demirel and İnönü launched an ambitious program to counter the problems of rampant inflation, Kurdish insurgency, and obstacles to full democratization.

On April 17, 1993, President Özal died of a heart attack, and on May 16 the Grand National Assembly elected Prime Minister Demirel head of state. The DYP's search for a new chair ended on June 13, when Tansu ÇİLLER, an economics professor, defeated two other candidates at an extraordinary party congress. On July 5 a new DYP-SHP coalition government, committed to a program of further democratization, secularization, and privatization,

was accorded a vote of confidence by the assembly, and Çiller became Turkey's first female prime minister.

A major offensive against guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*—PKK) in northern Iraq was launched on March 20, 1995. Six weeks later the government announced that the operation had been a success and that all of its units had returned to Turkey. The popularity of the action was demonstrated at local elections on June 4, when the ruling DYP took 22 of 36 mayoralties on a 39 percent share of the vote. However, on September 20 a revived CHP, which had become the DYP's junior coalition partner after absorbing the SHP in February, withdrew its support, forcing the resignation of the Çiller government. (The SHP has since left the CHP.)

On October 2, 1995, announced the formation of a DYP minority administration that drew unlikely backing from the far-right Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—MHP) and the center-left Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*—DSP). However, the prime minister was opposed within the DYP by former National Assembly speaker Hüsametdin CİNDORUK, who resigned on October 1 and was one of ten deputies expelled from the party on October 16, one day after Çiller's defeat on a confidence motion. On October 31 President Demirel appointed Çiller to head a DYP-CHP interim government pending a premature election in December.

At the December 24, 1995, balloting the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*—RP) emerged as the legislative leader, although its 158 seats fell far short of the 276 needed for an overall majority. Eventually, on February 28, 1996, agreement was reached on a center-right coalition that would permit the ANAP's Yılmaz to serve as prime minister until January 1, 1997, with Çiller occupying the post for the ensuing two years and Yılmaz returning for the balance of the parliamentary term, assuming no dissolution.

Formally launched on March 12, 1996, the ANAP-DYP coalition collapsed at the end of May amid renewed personal animosity between Yılmaz and Çiller over the former's unwillingness to back

the DYP leader against corruption charges related to her recent premiership. The DYP then opted to become the junior partner in an alternative coalition headed by RP leader Necmettin ERBAKAN, who on June 28 became Turkey's first avowedly Islamist prime minister since the creation of the secular republic in 1923. Under the coalition agreement, Çiller was slated to take over as head of government in January 1998. However, on February 28, 1997, the military members of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*—MGK) presented the civilian members of the council with a memorandum, reportedly expressing their concern that Erbakan's tolerance for rising religious activism would seriously threaten the country's secular tradition. After months of pressure from the military, Erbakan resigned on June 18, 1997, with the hope that a new government under the leadership of his coalition partner, Çiller, would bring the paralyzed government back to life. However, on June 20 President Demirel bypassed Çiller, whose DYP had been weakened by steady defections, and selected the ANAP's Yılmaz to return as the next prime minister. A new coalition composed of the ANAP, the DSP, and the new center-right Democratic Turkey Party (*Demokrat Türkiye Partisi*—DTP) was approved by Demirel on June 30, and Yılmaz and his cabinet were sworn in on the following day.

The new coalition government tried to reverse the Islamic influence of its predecessor and in July 1997 proposed an eight-year compulsory education plan that included the closure of Islamic secondary schools, prompting weeks of right-wing and militant Islamic demonstrations.

The Yılmaz government collapsed on November 25, 1998, when he lost a vote of confidence in the Grand National Assembly following accusations of corruption against members of his cabinet. President Demirel asked Bülent Ecevit to form a new government on December 2, thereby abandoning the long-standing tradition of designating the leader of the largest party in the legislature as prime minister. (Such action would have put Recai KUTAN's moderate Islamist Virtue Party [*Fazilet Partisi*—FP] in power, an option opposed by the



military.) When Ecevit proved unable to form a government, Demirel turned to an independent, Yalın EREZ, who also failed when former prime minister Çiller rejected his proposal that her DYP be part of a new coalition. After Erez abandoned his initiative on January 6, 1999, President Demirel again invited Ecevit to form the government. This time Ecevit succeeded in forming a minority cabinet made up of the DSP and independents; the DYP and ANAP agreed to provide external support.

Ecevit's cabinet survived a crisis that erupted in mid-March 1999, when the FP threatened to topple the government and joined forces with disgruntled members of parliament from various political parties who were not nominated for reelection. At balloting on April 18, 1999, Ecevit's DSP received 22 percent of the votes and became the largest party in the assembly, with 136 seats. On May 28 Ecevit announced the formation of a coalition cabinet comprising the DSP, MHP, and ANAP. Meanwhile, on May 16 Ahmet Necdet SEZER, chief justice of the Constitutional Court, was sworn in as the new president, following the legislature's rejection of President Demirel's request for constitutional revision that would have permitted him a second term.

In October 2001, the Grand National Assembly approved several constitutional amendments aimed at easing Turkey's path into the EU. The changes provided greater protection for political freedom and civil leaders, including protection for the Kurdish minority. Moreover, the number of civilians on the National Security Council was increased from five to nine, with the military continuing to hold five seats.

In January 2002, the Constitutional Court banned AKP leader Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN from running for the legislature because of alleged seditious activities. The court also ordered the party to remove Erdoğan from party leadership.

In July 2002, Prime Minister Ecevit was forced to call early elections to the Grand National Assembly as a result of resignations causing the DSP-led coalition to lose its majority in the legislature. The general election on November 3, 2002, was a disaster for the ruling DSP. The largest winner was the AKP, which attracted 34.3 percent of the vote

and 363 seats in the Grand National Assembly. The only other party to exceed 10 percent of the vote and win seats in the legislature was the CHP, which won 19.4 percent of the vote and 178 seats. The DSP won only 1.2 percent of the vote.

Because Erdoğan was prohibited from holding a seat in the Grand National Assembly, AKP deputy leader Abdullah GÜL was appointed prime minister, though Erdoğan reportedly acted as de facto prime minister. With its strong numbers in the Grand National Assembly, the AKP was able to enact constitutional reforms allowing Erdoğan to become prime minister. Erdoğan was elected to the Grand National Assembly on March 9, 2003, and was appointed prime minister on March 11. Under AKP leadership, the Grand National Assembly adopted further reforms aimed at eventual accession to the EU, including legislation allowing broadcasting and education in Kurdish. Another piece of legislation would have allowed peaceful advocacy of an independent Kurdish state. This measure was vetoed by President Sezur, only to be made law when the Grand National Assembly overrode the veto.

In March 2003, Turkey's Constitutional Court banned the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) from politics as a result of its alleged support for the PKK. In addition, 46 party members were individually banned from politics for five years.

In August 2003, for the first time, a civilian assumed control of the National Security Council. This event followed amendments to the constitution earlier in the year that reduced the number of seats reserved for the military in the council. Another sign of the waning power of the military in Turkey was the fact that, for the first time since the republic was founded in 1923, public spending on education (\$6.7 billion) exceeded that spent on defense (\$5.6 billion) in 2004.

The AKP further solidified its position with a strong showing in local elections on March 28, 2004, winning 42 percent of the vote. The CHP had the second-best showing, but won only 18 percent of the vote.

The AKP steadily dominated Turkish politics, until the presidential election of May 2007

triggered a serious political and constitutional crisis. The decision of Erdoğan to appoint Foreign Minister Gül as the AKP candidate caused widespread anxiety among secular elites and the military-bureaucratic establishment, who countered that Gül's Islamist leanings allegedly made him unfit for an office designed to protect Turkey's secular political regime. While Gül's election seemed imminent given the size of the AKP's parliamentary majority, a military memorandum published April, 27, 2007, attempted to derail the campaign by publicly opposing Gül's candidacy, asserting that the military could not remain indifferent to the threat of an Islamist takeover. A few days later, the Turkish Constitutional Court accepted the appeal of the opposition CHP, arguing that a quorum of two thirds, or 367 MPs, was necessary for a legal presidential election. This rendered the election impossible because opposition parties held over a third of parliamentary seats and pledged to boycott the election.

To overcome the deadlock, Erdoğan promptly called for early elections, following initiation of a constitutional reform package to amend the presidential election process and allow for direct popular election of the president. On July 22, 2007, the AKP scored a stunning electoral victory, improving upon its 2002 return by 12 percent to take 46.7 percent of votes and 341 seats in the National Assembly. The CHP and the MHP followed with 112 seats and 71 seats, respectively. Several smaller parties managed to circumvent the threshold and achieve small parliamentary representation by means of coalition or independent candidacies.

Despite secularist concerns regarding the mildly Islamist AKP's ascension to power, Prime Minister Erdoğan subsequently chose voter support as a higher priority, nominating the popular foreign minister, Abdullah Gül, to the presidency on August 28, 2007.

### *Constitution and Government*

The 1982 constitution provided for a unicameral 400-member Grand National Assembly elected for a five-year term, (the membership being increased

to 450 in 1987 and 550 in 1995). The president, elected by the assembly for a nonrenewable seven-year term, is empowered to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and other cabinet members; to dissolve the assembly and call for a new election, assuming the concurrence of two-thirds of the deputies or if faced with a government crisis of more than 30 days' duration; to declare a state of emergency, during which the government may rule by decree; and to appoint a variety of leading government officials, including senior judges and the governor of the Central Bank. Political parties may be formed if they are not based on class or ethnicity, linked to trade unions, or committed to communism, fascism, or religious fundamentalism. Strikes that exceed 60 days' duration are subject to compulsory arbitration.

The Turkish judicial system is headed by a Court of Cassation, which is the court of final appeal. Other judicial bodies include an administrative tribunal styled the Council of State, a Constitutional Court, a Court of Accounts, various military courts, and twelve state security courts.

The country is presently divided into 82 provinces, which are further divided into sub-provinces and districts. Mayors and municipal councils have long been popularly elected, save during the period 1980–1984.

### *Foreign Relations*

Neutral until the closing months of World War II, Turkey entered that conflict in time to become a founding member of the United Nations and has since joined all of the latter's affiliated agencies. Concern for the protection of its independence, primarily against possible Soviet threats, made Turkey a firm ally of the Western powers, with one of the largest standing armies in the non-Communist world. Largely on U.S. initiative, Turkey was admitted to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 and in 1955 became a founding member of the Baghdad Treaty Organization, later the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which was officially disbanded in September 1979, following Iranian and Pakistani withdrawal.

Relations with a number of Western governments stagnated in the 1960s, partly because of a lack of support for Turkey's position on the question of Cyprus. The dispute, with the fate of the Turkish Cypriot community at its center, became critical upon the island's attainment of independence in 1960 and nearly led to war with Greece in 1967. The situation assumed major international importance in 1974 following the Greek junta coup that resulted in the temporary ouster of Cypriot President Makarios and the subsequent Turkish invasion on July 20, which yielded Turkish occupation of the northern third of the island. (For details, see the articles on Cyprus and Cyprus: Turkish Sector.)

Relations with the United States, strained by a congressional ban on military aid following the Cyprus incursion, were further undermined by a Turkish decision in July 1975 to repudiate a 1969 defense cooperation agreement and force the closure of 25 U.S. military installations. However, a new accord was concluded in March 1976 that called for reopening of the bases under Turkish rather than dual control, coupled with substantially increased American military assistance. The U.S. arms embargo was finally lifted in September 1978, with the stipulation that Turkey continue to seek a negotiated resolution of the Cyprus issue.

While the Turkish government under Evren and Özal consistently affirmed its support of NATO and its desire to gain full entry to the EC (having been an associate member of the European Economic Community since 1964), relations with western Europe deteriorated in the wake of the 1980 coup because of alleged human rights violations.

Ankara submitted a formal membership request to the EC, and in December 1989 the commission had laid down a number of stringent conditions for admission to the community, including an improved human rights record, progress toward improved relations with Greece, and less dependence on agricultural employment. Because of these concerns, Turkey remained outside the EU upon the latter's inception in November 1993, although, in an action viewed as linked to its EC bid, it had become an associate member of the Western European Union in 1992.

On March 6, 1995, Turkey and the EU agreed to a customs union, which entered into force on January 1, 1996. However, in July 1997 the EU Commission included five East European states but excluded Turkey from among those invited to join first-round enlargement negotiations scheduled for early 1998. Moreover, the commission recommended Cyprus for full membership, a decision that Turkey saw as controversial given the lack of a settlement of the Cyprus question. In light of improving Turkish/Greek relations, a December 1999 EU summit finally accepted Turkey as an official candidate for membership.

Apart from Cyprus, the principal dispute between Greece and Turkey has centered on territorial rights in the Aegean. In late 1984 Ankara rejected a proposal by Prime Minister Papandreou to assign Greek forces on Lemnos to NATO, invoking a longstanding contention that militarization of the island was forbidden under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. The controversy revived in early 1989 with Turkey refusing to recognize insular sea and airspace limits greater than six miles on the premise that to do otherwise would convert the area into a "Greek lake." The dispute intensified in September 1994, with Greece declaring that it would formally extend its jurisdiction to 12 nautical miles upon entry into force of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on November 16. Turkey immediately warned that the move would be considered an "act of aggression," and on October 30 Athens announced that it would defer the introduction of what it continued to view as a "sovereign right." On June 8, 1995, the Turkish Parliament approved a declaration that an extension of Greek territorial waters in the Aegean to twelve miles would comprise a *casus belli* for Turkey, further straining bilateral relations with Greece.

Another territorial issue was addressed when Turkey concluded an agreement with Iraq in October 1984 that permitted the security forces of each government to pursue "subversive groups" (interpreted primarily as Kurdish rebels) up to a distance of five kilometers on either side of the border and to engage in follow-up operations for five days without prior notification.

The hot pursuit agreement notwithstanding, the Turkish government strongly supported UN-endorsed sanctions against Iraq in the wake of its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Despite considerable revenue loss, Turkey moved quickly to shut down Iraqi oil pipelines by banning ships from loading crude at offshore terminals. In September, despite opposition criticism, the legislature granted the administration special authority to dispatch troops to the Gulf and to allow foreign forces to be stationed on Turkish soil for non-NATO purposes (most important, the stationing of F-111 fighter bombers at İncirlik air base to monitor the UN-sanctioned Iraqi no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel).

Turkey's attention refocused on maritime issues in 1994 as Ankara angered Moscow by seeking to impose restrictions on shipping through the Bosphorus. The issue was highly charged because of the 1936 Montreaux treaty, which provided complete freedom of transit through both the Bosphorus and Dardanelles during peacetime. Turkey insisted that the new regulations (including the prohibition of automatic pilots for navigation and limitations on dangerous cargo) were prompted only by technical considerations that had not existed at the time of the treaty's adoption.

In 1992, Turkey faced another dilemma, this time in regard to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both the Bosnians and Turkish citizens of Bosnian descent appealed for action to oppose Serbian advances in Muslim areas; however, Atatürk's secularist heirs were reluctant to move in a manner that might be seen as religiously inspired. Deeply opposed to unilateral action, Turkey launched a pro-Bosnian campaign in various international venues, including the UN, the Conference on (subsequently the Organization for) Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE), NATO, the Council of Europe, and the OIC. Throughout, it urged limited military intervention by the UN and the lifting of the arms embargo for Bosnia should existing sanctions and diplomatic efforts prove ineffective.

Turkey commenced its own military action on March 20, 1995, targeting the Kurds in northern

Iraq, which provoked the condemnation of most West European governments. On April 10 the EU foreign ministers, while acknowledging Turkey's "terrorism problems," called on Ankara to withdraw its troops "without delay," and on April 26 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved a resolution calling for suspension of Turkey's membership if it did not leave Iraq by late June. For its part, the Turkish government reacted angrily to an announcement on April 12 that political exiles had established a Kurdish "parliament in exile" in the Netherlands, and a renewed cross-border offensive was launched by some 30,000 troops on July 5–10. In any event, no action was taken to suspend Turkey's Council of Europe membership, despite further vigorous Turkish action against the Kurdish insurgency and the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish villagers in southeastern Turkey. In July 1997 Turkey and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK) reached a preliminary agreement to boost security in northern Iraq. However, in August Turkish warplanes crossed the Iraqi border to bomb PKK rebel bases, drawing the condemnation of Baghdad.

A major diplomatic dispute erupted in 1998 over Syria's alleged sheltering of PKK rebels, with Ankara warning Damascus in October of possible military action unless Syrian policy changed. The crisis was also colored by Syria's concern over the recent rapprochement between Turkey and Israel, which had produced a defense agreement and a recent visit by Prime Minister Yılmaz to Israel. Following intense mediation by several Arab leaders from the region, Syria subsequently agreed that it would not allow the PKK to set up "military, logistical, or financial bases" on Syrian territory. Collaterally, PKK leader Abdullah ÖCALAN was forced to leave Syrian-controlled territory in Lebanon. Öcalan moved to Russia, which, under insistent Turkish pressure, also refused him asylum. He then entered Italy, prompting a row between Rome and Ankara. Italy rejected Turkey's extradition request on the grounds that it could not send a detainee to a country that permitted the death penalty. Italy therefore attempted to negotiate

Öcalan's transfer to Germany, where he also faced terrorism charges. However, Bonn, apparently fearing violence between its own Turkish and Kurdish minorities, declined to file an extradition request. Consequently, Öcalan was released from detention in Italy in mid-December and reportedly left that country in January 1999 for an unknown destination.

In mid-February 1999 Öcalan was arrested shortly after he left the home of the Greek ambassador in Nairobi, Kenya. The incident proved to be highly embarrassing for the government in Athens. Despite the renewed animosity surrounding Öcalan's arrest, Turkish-Greek relations thawed noticeably in late 1999 when Greece lifted its veto on EU financial aid earmarked to Turkey and agreed to a European Council decision that gave Turkey the status of a candidate state for EU membership. In early 2000 the two countries agreed to establish a joint commission to "reduce military tensions" in the Aegean and to pursue cooperation in several other areas.

In 2003, Turkey's relationship with the United States faced a major challenge with Turkey's refusal to allow U.S. troops to use Turkish territory as a staging area for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Some observers attributed this refusal, which was an embarrassment to the Turkish government and military, to a political power struggle taking place within Turkey. While the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) was in favor of such cooperation, many nationalistic members of the Grand National Assembly, including some AKP members, were not. Relations with the United States also cooled because the Turkish government felt that Washington was indifferent to Kurdish terrorist activity in Turkey and northern Iraq. Indeed, in November 2004, Turkish newspapers published unconfirmed reports that the Turkish government had formulated a plan to move 20,000 Turkish troops into northern Iraq to prevent Kurds from taking complete control of Kirkuk. On January 26, 2005, a senior Turkish army general said bluntly that the Turkish military was prepared to intervene if clashes erupted in northern Iraq or if Iraqi Kurds attempted to form an independent state.

Iran and Turkey signed a security agreement on July 30, 2004, to place rebels opposed to either government on each government's list of terrorist organizations.

Relations with Russia have also been further strained by Turkey's ongoing efforts to control the passage of oil tankers through the Bosphorus straits. Turkey says that the increased number of oil tankers represents an environmental threat to Turkey's coastline and waterways. Turkey has imposed tighter regulations on passage, which Russia claims have added greatly to transit time and, accordingly, to costs. In August 2004, Turkey also proposed, and offered to help fund, construction of pipelines to reduce waterborne traffic. Apart from the issue of the Bosphorus strait however, Turkish relations with Russia have been generally good. Tourism between the two countries has jumped to around \$1 billion a year and bilateral commerce has grown to about \$6.5 billion.

Iraq resurfaced as a contentious issue between Turkey and the United States in July 2006, when Turkey again called on the United States to crack down on Kurdish rebels based in northern Iraq and made veiled threats to attack rebel bases if steps were not taken against the rebels.

Turkey's relations with the EU reached a peak on December 17, 2004, when the European Council agreed to define October 3, 2005, as the starting date of EU-Turkey accession negotiations. However, accession to the EU by the Republic of Cyprus, and the political confusion caused by popular rejection of the European Constitution, downgraded Turkish membership on the EU agenda. Accession negotiations followed a rather slow pace in 2005, while the reform drive that had pleasantly surprised EU entities between 1999 and 2004 seemed to have been exhausted. A rise of Turkish nationalist sentiment (see Current Issues, below) made additional EU-mandated reforms even more difficult. This was complicated by the opposition of Germany and France, two of the most influential EU member states, whose political leaders objected to full EU membership and suggested a "privileged partnership" status for Turkey instead.

Even with Turkey's bid to join the EU under consideration, charges that the country is backtracking

on its commitment to required social and economic reforms came to the forefront. On July 14, 2005, after the indictment of author Orhan Pamuk and the conviction of Hrant DINK on charges of insulting the government, Olli Rehn, the European official supervising membership talks, warned that the Turkish courts were failing to comply with EU standards. Indeed, according to the Turkish Publishers' Association, 47 writers are being prosecuted on charges that include insulting Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, and "inciting racial hatred." (Hrant Dink was assassinated by Turkish nationalists in January 2007.)

EU representatives have also cited Turkey's failure to open air and sea connections with the Republic of Cyprus as a major hurdle to membership. "It is obvious to me [that] Turkey must respect the obligations it has entered into to allow goods coming from Cyprus access to its ports," French president Jacques Chirac told a news conference on July 16. "If it didn't, it would be putting in doubt its capacity" to pursue EU membership. Turkish prime minister Erdoğan was apparently unfazed. "So long as the Turkish Cypriots remain isolated, we will not open our ports and airports" to Greek Cypriots, Erdoğan explained to reporters. "If the negotiations halt, then let them halt," Erdoğan said.

(The World Bank advised Turkey in March 2006 that it would need to do a better job of getting women into the workforce and children into schools if it wanted to improve its chances of joining the EU.)

### *Current Issues*

Three intertwined issues have dominated politics in Turkey in recent years: accession to the EU, a significant rise in nationalist and Islamist sentiments among the populace, and the continuing Kurdish insurgency in the southeast part of the country.

While the Turkish government, along with the majority of Turks, is in favor of joining the EU, the reforms required as conditions for Turkey's membership are seen by some as interference in Turkish affairs. Nevertheless, since 2001 the Grand National Assembly has enacted a number of policies

aimed at easing the path to joining the EU. In October 2001 the legislature approved constitutional amendments that would extend civil liberties and human rights. In November legislation granting equal status to women in certain areas was passed. In February 2002 the legislature revoked a law that forced schoolgirls to undergo "virginity tests." In August 2002 the Grand National Assembly abolished the death penalty in peacetime.

Even as reforms were being implemented, 2003 and 2004 witnessed a resurgence of domestic unrest. In November 2003 a suicide bomber killed 25 people and injured 300 others outside of two of İstanbul's largest synagogues. Later in the month, suicide bombers attacked the British Consulate and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) headquarters in İstanbul. These attacks were attributed to domestic Islamic extremists with possible ties to al-Qaida.

Violence from the Kurdish insurgency has also been increasing over the past several years. In September 2003 the Kurdish rebel group PKK announced that it was ending its five-year ceasefire with the Turkish government. In a September 2004 offensive, the largest in five years, government troops killed 11 Kurdish rebels in the southeast province of Hakkari. The government blamed Kurdish rebels for a series of bombings—including two hotel bombings and the bombing of a pop concert—in August and September. The numbers of roadside bombings in the southeastern part of the country have also increased. While a proportion of the Kurdish population remains generally loyal to the PKK, many Kurds have started to question the rebels' tactics, particularly since government reforms aimed at EU membership have resulted in a steady increase in rights for Kurds.

Improved protections were expanded on September 26, 2004, when the Turkish parliament approved major revisions to the penal code, specifically intended to bring it in line with codes prevalent in the EU. A further reform of the penal code in June 2005 provided greater protections for women and children and imposed harsher penalties for torture and "honor" killings.

In 2005 and 2006, however, European officials charged Turkey's government with backtracking on

some reforms and slowing down implementation of others. External observers, along with some Turks, voiced concern about the growing tensions between Islamic and secular forces inside Turkey. The rift was emphasized in May 2006, following the murder of a senior judge by gunmen who shouted Islamic slogans. Some indications linked the murder to a recent decision to uphold a ban on traditional Islamic headscarves in public institutions.

While the Erdoğan government attempted to reassure Europe of Turkey's status as a secular country intent on reform, some domestic moves by the government generated concern within the military-bureaucratic establishment that Prime Minister Erdoğan, a devout Muslim, was intent on bringing Islamic values into government. Critics of the military-bureaucratic establishment retorted that secular elites were more concerned with protecting their tutelary positions in Turkish politics and society, which were carefully delineated through postcoup constitutions.

Competition between the AKP government and the secularist bureaucracy often took the shape of conflict between the AKP government and President Ahmet Necdet SEZER. In early March 2006 tensions between Islamic and secular forces were evident in the events surrounding the eventual veto by President Sezer of the government's nominee for central bank governor. There was speculation that the government of Prime Minister Erdoğan nominated Adnan BÜYÜKDENİZ, an economist and executive at an Islamic-style bank (neither paying nor charging interest), in part because of his religious convictions. In any event, the issue highlighted the distrust between the presidency, judiciary, and the military on the one hand and the government on the other hand.

As the Erdoğan government has shown more reticence in implementing reforms in 2005 and 2006, protests in the Kurdish sectors of the south-east have increased. Indeed, widespread protests in April 2006 resulted in the deaths of seven Kurds. (There was a considerable rise in PKK activity and government operations in eastern and southeastern Turkey in 2007. On May 22 a suicide bomb in Ulus, Ankara, killed seven people, including the

suicide bomber, who was most probably linked to the PKK.)

Turkish nationalism has manifested itself in the unprecedented commercial success of nationalist books and films and increased intolerance of intellectuals and minorities. The murder of a Catholic priest in Trabzon on February 6, 2006, preceded a series of murders of Christians, including three Protestants in the eastern city of Malatya on April 18. These murders were followed by the assassination of the ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink on January 19, 2007, in Istanbul. His death shocked the Turkish liberal intelligentsia, and his funeral became a large demonstration in favor of Turkey's democratization and protection of minorities.

The organization of a "Republican Demonstration" (*Cumhuriyet Mitingi*) in Ankara during April 14–15, 2007 by a number of secularist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) met with considerable success. These NGOs opposed the growing influence of the AKP in Turkish politics, underscored by Gül's candidacy, and feared a possible Islamization of the Turkish public sphere. Political rallies were also held in Istanbul on April 29 and in Izmir and several other Turkish cities on May 13. These demonstrations showed the growing concern among Turkish elites about the future of secularism, although some participants were accused of implicitly inviting the military to intervene in politics in order to prevent an AKP takeover.

Nevertheless, the AKP won reelection, with 47 percent of the vote on July 22, 2007, by focusing on Turkey's continuing economic growth, constitutional moves to strengthen democracy, pursuit of reforms and the EU accession, and removal of some Islamist candidates from its ballot. Worryingly for the generals, the AKP supported liberalizing restrictions on headscarves in public, particularly in universities and public service.

While societal divisions could be exacerbated by the controversy, the AKP has an opportunity to continue mitigating alienation among its minority populations because it has enjoyed unprecedented electoral support in Kurdish-inhabited regions. In addition to furthering minority rights, the AKP announced that it would hold on October 21, 2007, a

referendum on the direct election of the president. If approved, the new law would be in place before the next presidential election.

## Political Parties

Turkey's multiparty system developed gradually out of the monopoly originally exercised by the historic Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP), which ruled the country without serious competition until 1950 and which, under Bülent Ecevit, was most recently in power from January 1978 to October 1979. The Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP) of Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes, founded by CHP dissidents in 1946, came to power in 1950 and maintained control for the next decade but was outlawed following the military coup of May 27, 1960, with many of its members subsequently entering the conservative Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*—AP). Other formations included an Islamic group, the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selâmet Partisi*—MSP); the ultra-rightist Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—MHP); and the leftist Turkish Labor Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*—TİP). All party activity was banned by the National Security Council on September 12, 1980, while the parties themselves were formally dissolved and their assets liquidated on October 16, 1981.

Approval of the 1982 constitution ruled out any immediate likelihood that anything resembling the earlier party system would reappear. In order to qualify for the 1983 parliamentary election, new parties were required to obtain the signatures of at least 30 founding members, subject to veto by the National Security Council (NSC). Most such lists were rejected by the NSC, with only three groups (the Motherland, Populist, and Nationalist Democracy parties) being formally registered for the balloting on November 6 in an apparent effort to promote the emergence of a two-party system. Of the three, only the ruling Motherland Party remained by mid-1986: the Populist Party merged with the Social Democratic Party in November 1985 to form the Social Democratic People's Party (see under CHP, below), while the center-right

Nationalist Democracy Party (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi*—MDP) dissolved itself in May 1986.

In July 1992 the government lifted bans on all of the parties closed during the military interregnum and by mid-1996 their number had risen to over 30, distributed almost equally to the right and left of the political spectrum.

### Government Party

**Justice and Development Party** (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP). The AKP was launched in August 2001 by the reformist wing of the FP (see below) as a moderate religious, center-right formation. Out of the former parliamentarians from the FP and other parties, 53 later joined the AKP, making it the second-largest opposition party in the assembly (after the DYP). Some analysts noted that the AKP might prove to be a strong challenger to the coalition parties in the next legislative election.

In January 2002 the Constitutional Court ruled that AKP president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was ineligible to run for office due to his imprisonment in 1999 on charges of having “incited hatred on religious grounds.” In November 2002 elections, the AKP won 34.2 percent of the vote and 363 legislative seats. Abdullah Gül formed his government on November 18, 2002. Erdoğan's ineligibility for office was removed when the Turkish Grand National Assembly changed select articles of the constitution. Erdoğan was elected an MP in by-elections on March 9, 2003, and formed his government on March 14, 2003. (The AKP's legislative seats had decreased to 357 by July 2005).

The party revealed some cracks in its solidarity in February 2005 with the resignation from the government and the party of Erkan MUMCU, the minister for tourism and culture. Mumcu, a liberal and secular member considered a rising star in the party, indicated he was resigning because he felt he could no longer influence government decisions.

The elections of July 22, 2007, gave Erdoğan the chance to shift the outlook of the party toward the center. More than 150 MPs from the party's Islamist wing were removed from AKP candidate



lists. The new party lists included prominent liberal secularists, academics, and young professionals. The crushing electoral victory, in which the party improved its percentage by more than 12 percent to 46.7 percent despite a five-year incumbency, yielded 340 seats. This seat share was less than in 2002 due to the electoral system but, nevertheless, consolidated the party's political dominance.

*Leaders:* Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN (Prime Minister and President of the Party), Abdullah GÜL (President), Idris Naim ŞAHİN (Secretary General).

### *Opposition Parties*

**Republican People's Party** (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP). The CHP is a left-of-center party founded in 1923 by Kemal Atatürk. It was dissolved in 1981 and reactivated in 1992 by 21 MPs who resigned from the Social Democratic People's Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*—SHP) to reclaim the group's historic legacy. The CHP absorbed the SHP on February 18, 1995. (The SHP is again independent.) The CHP later absorbed the Party of Liberty and Change on June 8, 2007 (see below).

A member of the Socialist International, the SHP was formed in November 1985 by merger of the Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti*—HP), a center-left formation that secured 117 seats in the 1983 Grand National Assembly election, and the Social Democratic Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Parti*—SODEP), which was not permitted to offer candidates for the 1983 balloting. A leftist grouping that drew much of its support from former members of the CHP, SODEP had participated in the 1984 local elections, winning 10 provincial capitals. The SHP was runner-up to ANAP in November 1987, winning 99 assembly seats despite the defection in December 1986 of 20 of its deputies, most of whom joined the DSP. Its parliamentary representation was reduced to 82 upon formation of the People's Labor Party, whose candidates were, nevertheless, entered on SHP lists for the 1991 campaign. Subsequently, 18 of those so elected withdrew from the SHP, reducing its representation to 70.

On September 20, 1995, former CHP chair Deniz BAYKAL, who had been succeeded by the SHP's Hikmet CETİN at the time of the February merger, was reelected to his earlier post. Immediately thereafter he withdrew the party from the government coalition, thereby forcing Tansu Çiller's resignation as prime minister. In the resultant December election the CHP fell back to 49 seats on a 10.7 percent vote share. Baykal's CHP gave outside support to the Yılmaz-led ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition government of June 1998. However, amid accusations of corruption against various ministers, the CHP's call for a vote of no confidence against the Yılmaz cabinet brought the coalition down in November 1998. The CHP failed to surpass the 10 percent threshold in the April 18, 1999, elections, securing only 8.5 percent of the vote, and was therefore left out of the assembly. Baykal resigned from his chair's post on April 22. The CHP elected famous journalist and former tourism minister Altan ÖYMEN as its new leader on May 23; however, Baykal regained the post at an extraordinary congress in October 2000, defeating Öymen and two other minor candidates. The CHP's ranks were strengthened in 2002 by defections from the DSP.

In the November 2002 elections the CHP won 19.3 percent of the vote and 178 legislative seats, thus becoming the main opposition party. In October 2004 the New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*—YTP) merged with the CHP. YTP had been launched in July 2002 by former DSP cabinet ministers, legislators and members including, former cabinet minister Ismail Cem. YTP had scored poorly (1.1 percent) in the November 2002 elections. In January 2005, Baykal's presidency was challenged at a highly explosive CHP party congress by Mustafa SARIGÜL, the highly popular mayor of the İstanbul district of Şişli, who eventually lost his bid but vowed to continue his opposition. A few pro-Sarigül legislators left the party following the congress to join the SHP (see below). By mid-2005, CHP was ridden with internal turmoil, with numerous dissidents (including legislators) resigning from the party and charging Baykal with "single-person authoritarian rule."

CHP's legislative seats were down to 154 by mid-2005.

The CHP spearheaded secularist reaction against the candidacy of Abdullah Gül, which culminated in several large "Republican Demonstrations" in spring 2007. The party was consequently accused of swapping its leftist identity for a nationalist platform and identifying itself with the military establishment.

On the eve of the July 22, 2007, elections, the party struck an alliance with the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*—DSP), and 13 members of that party ran under the CHP ticket. In the elections, the party collected 20.85 percent and 112 seats, which dropped to 99 when the 13 elected DSP MPs withdrew from the CHP parliamentary group. In the aftermath of the elections, while Baykal firmly stated that he did not intend to resign, serious concern was expressed by party ranks and observers about the CHP's future under Baykal's leadership.

*Leaders:* Deniz BAYKAL (President), Önder SAV (Secretary General).

**Party of Liberty and Change** (*Hürriyet ve Değişim Partisi*—HÜRPARTİ). In May 2005 the Democratic Turkey Party (*Demokrat Türkiye Partisi*—DTP) decided to change its name to the Party of Liberty and Change.

The DTP (not to be confused with the Democratic Society Party [DTP], below) was launched in January 1997 by a group of prominent members of the DYP who opposed the leadership of Tansu Çiller. They included former interior minister İsmet SEZGIN, who had been a close supporter of former DYP leader Suleyman Demirel. The DTP entered the ANAP-led coalition government on June 30, 1998, having secured representation in the assembly in 1997 through defections from the DYP. The DTP assumed an opposition party role after the Yılmaz-led ANAP-DSP-DTP government collapsed in November 1998. The party fared poorly in the April 18, 1999, elections, securing less than 1 percent of the votes. In June 2002 a former diplomat, Mehmet Ali BAYAR, was elected

to the presidency of the DTP. In June 2005 Yaşar Okuyan was elected the president of HÜRPARTİ. On June 8, 2007, the party decided to merge into the CHP, and its leader declared that Okuyan would not be a CHP candidate.

*Leaders:* Yaşar OKUYAN (President), Ferhan KAPTAN (Secretary General).

**Democratic Left Party** (*Demokratik Sol Parti*—DSP). Formation of the DSP, a center-left populist formation, was announced in March 1984 by Raşan Ecevit, the wife of former prime minister Bülent Ecevit, who was barred from political activity prior to the constitutional referendum of September 1987. At the October 1991 election, the party attracted sufficient social democratic support to weaken the SHP (see below), although it won only seven seats. It recovered in the December 1995 balloting, winning 76 legislative seats with 14.6 percent of the vote. The DSP became a junior partner in a Mesut Yılmaz-led coalition government, which also included the DTP (below), on June 30, 1998. After the Yılmaz-led coalition government collapsed in November 1998, Ecevit formed on January 12, 1999, a minority government, that ruled the country until the early elections of April 18. The DSP became the largest party at that balloting with 22 percent of the votes and 136 seats, and Ecevit subsequently formed a DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition cabinet.

In 2002 the DSP reportedly was riddled with internal dissent, and some prominent members resigned to form the TDP in January and the YTP in July. The DSP suffered a major electoral defeat in November 2002, receiving only 1.2 percent of the vote and no legislative seats. Bülent Ecevit resigned as leader of the party and nominated Zeki Sezer, a former cabinet minister, to replace him. Sezer was elected to the position at the party's congress in July 2004.

The DSP struck an electoral alliance with the CHP on May 18, 2005. Thirteen DSP MPs, including President SEZER, were elected through the CHP ticket during the July 2007 parliamentary balloting. These MPs withdrew from the CHP

during the first parliamentary session to form an independent DSP parliamentary group.

*Leaders:* Zeki SEZER (President), Masum TÜRKER (Secretary General).

**Nationalist Action Party** (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—MHP). Until 1969 the ultranationalist MHP was known as the Republican Peasant Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*—CKMP), formed in 1948 by conservative dissidents from the old Democratic Party. Dissolved in 1953, the grouping reformed in 1954, merging with the Turkish Villager Party in 1961 and sustaining the secession of the Nation Party in 1962.

The MHP dissolved following the 1980 military coup; in 1983 its sympathizers regrouped as the Conservative Party (*Muhafazakar Parti*—MP), which then was renamed the Nationalist Labor Party (*Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi*—MCP) in 1985. (The MHP rubric was reassumed in 1992.) The MHP's extremist youth wing, members of which were known as the Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*), remained proscribed, although similar activities were reportedly carried out under semi-official youth clubs. Holding 17 legislative seats as of September 1995, the MHP's 8.18 percent vote share on December 24 was short of the 10 percent required for continued representation. However, it subsequently acquired 2 seats from defections.

Historic MHP leader Alparslan TÜRKES died in 1999. Following the election of Devlet Bahçeli as the new MHP president, members close to Türkeş's son and wife left the party to form the ATP and UBP.

The MHP won surprising support in the election of April 1999, gathering 18 percent of the votes and gaining 129 assembly seats. Some analysts noted that the party's popular support faded during its years in the coalition government from 1999–2002. Indeed, the MHP suffered a major electoral blow in November 2002, when it received only 8.3 percent of the vote and no legislative seats. Although Devlet Bahçeli initially announced he would step down from his leadership position after the election, he ran for and won the party's presidency again in October 2003.

The party benefited from the rising nationalist sentiment in Turkey, bolstered by the Iraq crisis and deteriorating EU-Turkey relations. In the July 22, 2007, elections, the party easily crossed the 10 percent electoral threshold, collecting 14.29 percent of the vote and 71 parliamentary seats.

*Leaders:* Devlet BAHÇELI (President), M. Cihan PAÇACI (Secretary General).

**Great Unity Party** (*Büyük Birlik Partisi*—BBP). A nationalist Islamic grouping, the BBP was launched in 1993 by a member of dissident MCP parliamentarians prior to the reactivation of the MHP in 1992. The party, whose members are known as “Turkish-Islamic Idealists” (*Türk-Islam ülkücüleri*), returned 13 deputies on the ANAP ticket in the 1995 election but subsequently opted for separate parliamentary status. The BBP won only 1.5 percent of the votes in the general election of April 1999. In November 2002 the party received 1.1 percent of the vote and no legislative seats.

While the party did not present candidates in the July 22, 2007, elections, its leader, Muhsin YAZICIOĞLU ran as an independent candidate at the district of Sivas and was elected to the National Assembly.

*Leader:* Muhsin YAZICIOĞLU (President).

**Democratic Society Party** (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*—DTP). Formerly known as the Democratic People's Party (*Demokratik Halk Partisi*—DEHAP), which was launched in January 1999 by former members of the People's Democracy Party (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*—HADEP), the pro-Kurdish DTP (not to be confused with the Democratic Turkey Party [DTP], above) was initiated by former legislators Leyla ZANA, Orhan DOĞAN, Hatip DİCLE, and Selim SADAK, who had joined the Democracy Party (*Demokrasi Partisi*—DEP) in 1994. The Turkish Grand National Assembly lifted the parliamentary immunity of these four Kurdish politicians, and they were arrested and jailed from 1994–2005. Based on concerns that the DEHAP would be banned by the Constitutional Court, the DTP was launched reportedly as a preemptive

“successor” on November 9, 2005. Since the DTP launch, all DEHAP mayors, members, and leaders have entered the DTP. While the DEHAP decided to dissolve itself in December 2005, the Constitutional Court continued to consider banning the party and started to address the case on July 13, 2006.

In an attempt to circumvent the 10 percent electoral threshold, which had prevented it from securing legislative representation in the past, the DTP decided to abstain from the July 22, 2007, elections and support party members who would formally resign their party membership to run as independent candidates. Twenty-two of these candidates were elected at the July 22, 2007, elections, and twenty of them formed the DTP parliamentary group in the first parliamentary session. The presence of DTP parliamentarians in the General Assembly presented an opportunity to reconsider Turkey’s Kurdish question.

*Leaders:* Ahmet TÜRK, Aysel TUĞLUK (Co-presidents).

**Liberty and Solidarity Party** (*Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi*—ÖDP). Backed by many leftist intellectuals, feminists, and human rights activists, the ÖDP was launched after the December 1995 election as a broad alliance of various socialist factions together with elements of the once powerful Dev-Yol movement (see Extremist Groups, below). Some of the socialist groups, notably the United Socialist Party (*Birleşik Sosyalist Parti*—BSP), had contested the balloting as part of the HADEP bloc. The BSP had been formed as a merger of various socialist factions, including the Socialist Unity Party (*Sosyalist Birlik Partisi*—SBP), itself founded in February 1991 (and represented in the 1991–1995 assembly) as in large part successor to the United Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi*—TBKP), led by Haydar KUTLU and Nihat SARGIN.

The TBKP had been formed in 1988 by a merger of the Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*—TKP) and the Turkish Workers Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*—TİP). Proscribed since 1925, the pro-Soviet TKP had long maintained its

headquarters in Eastern Europe, staffed largely by exiles and refugees who left Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s. Although remaining illegal, its activities within Turkey revived in 1983, including the reported convening of its first congress in more than 50 years. The TİP, whose longtime leader, Behice BORAN, died in October 1987, had been formally dissolved in 1971 and again in 1980, but had endorsed the merger with TKP at a congress held on the first anniversary of Boran’s death. Prior to the November 1987 election, the TKP and TİP general secretaries, Kutlu and Sargin, respectively, had returned to Turkey for the prospective merger but had been promptly arrested and imprisoned.

With the Constitutional Court subsequently confirming a ban on the TBKP in early 1990, former TBKP elements were prominent in the new ÖDP. The ÖDP fared poorly in the April 1999 elections, gaining less than 1 percent of the votes. Several constituent groups reportedly left the ÖDP in 2002. In November 2002 the party won 0.34 percent of the vote and no legislative seats.

In the July 22, 2007, elections, the party only collected 0.15 percent of the vote. However, ÖDP leader Ufuk URAS, in order to avoid the electoral threshold requirement, had resigned from the party presidency in order to run as an independent. He was elected a representative for Istanbul and was then reinstated in the party presidency.

*Leader:* Ufuk URAS (President).

### *Other Parties Competing in the 2007 Elections*

**True Path Party** (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP). The center-right DYP was organized as a successor to the Grand Turkey Party (*Büyük Türkiye Partisi*—BTP), which was banned shortly after its formation in May 1983 because of links to the former Justice Party of Süleyman Demirel. The new group was permitted to participate in the local elections of March 1984 but won control in none of the provincial capitals. By early 1987, augmented by assemblymen of the recently dissolved Citizen Party (*Vatandaş Partisi*—VP), it had become the third-ranked party in the Grand National Assembly. The

DYP remained in third place by winning 59 seats at the November 1987 balloting and became the plurality party, with 178 seats, in October 1991. In November it formed a coalition government under Demirel with the SHP (see below). A second DYP-SHP government was formed by the new DYP leader, Tansu Çiller, following Demirel's assumption of the presidency in May 1993. A new coalition was formed with the CHP in March 1995, following the latter's temporary absorption of the SHP. However, a CHP leadership change in September led to the party's withdrawal and the collapse of the Çiller government.

The DYP placed second in the December 1995 election (with 19.2 percent of the vote), eventually forming a coalition government with ANAP on March 12, 1996, that featured a "rotating" leadership under which the ANAP's Mesut Yılmaz became prime minister and Çiller was to return to the top post in January 1997. However, animosity between the DYP and ANAP leaders quickly resurfaced, with Çiller calling the prime minister a "sleazeball" (for allegedly expediting press exposés of her questionable use of official funds as prime minister) and withdrawing the DYP's support for the coalition in late May. Overcoming its previous antipathy toward the RP, the DYP the following month entered a new coalition as junior partner of the Islamist party, with Çiller becoming deputy premier and foreign minister, pending a scheduled resumption of the premiership at the beginning of 1998. By mid-January 1997 a parliamentary inquiry had cleared the DYP leader of all corruption charges relating to her tenure as premier. After the DYP-RP coalition collapsed under emphatic pressure from the military and the secular political establishment in June 1997, the DYP remained in the opposition during the Yılmaz-led ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition. By backing CHP leader Deniz Baykal's proposal for a vote of no-confidence against the Yılmaz government, the DYP facilitated its collapse in November 1998. The DYP then gave outside support to Bülent Ecevit's minority government. DYP influence waned in the April 1999 elections, as it secured only 12 percent of the votes and 85 seats.

The DYP experienced a major electoral defeat in November 2002, receiving 9.5 percent of the vote and no legislative seats. This defeat prompted Tansu Çiller to resign following the election. Independent legislator and a former hard-line and controversial director of security (national police) Mehmet AĞAR was elected president of the party in December 2004. With defections from other parties, the party had, by mid-2005, four legislative seats. Ağar attempted to manage his image by proposing innovative policy solutions, including possible amnesty for former PKK insurgents. On the eve of the July 22, 2007 elections, on May 5, 2007, he announced an electoral alliance with the ANAP. Ağar and ANAP president Erkan Mumcu named their joint party the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP). However, the ANAP withdrew from the alliance after barely a month, and the DP ran in the elections on its own. During the July 22, 2007, elections, the DYP received 5.41 percent of the vote, 4.13 percent less than in the 2002 elections. This disastrous electoral result led AĞAR to declare his resignation from the presidency of the party and call for an extraordinary congress to elect a new leader.

*Leaders:* Mehmet AĞAR (Acting President), Kamil TURAN (Secretary General).

**Party of the People's Rise** (*Halkın Yükselişi Partisi*—HYP). The centrist HYP was established in February 2005 by Yaşar NURI ÖZTÜ-RK, a former scholar of Islamic theology who became popular because of his "reformist" and modernist interpretations of religion. Nuri is a former CHP legislator who left his party in April 2004 to protest Deniz Baykal's leadership style. In the July 22, 2007, elections, the HYP collected 0.5 percent of the vote and failed to elect any representative.

*Leaders:* Yaşar Nuri ÖZTÜRK (President), Yücel AKSOY (Secretary General).

**Communist Party of Turkey** (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*—TKP). The TKP was launched in November 2001 as a merger of the Party for Socialist Power (*Sosyalist İktidar Partisi*—SIP) and the Communist Party (*Komünist Partisi*—KP). The SIP was a continuation of the banned Party of

Socialist Turkey (*Sosyalist Türkiye Partisi*—STP). The hard-line Marxist-Leninist SIP contested the 1995 election under the HADEP rubric. It secured less than 1 percent of the vote in 1999. The TKP was formed in July 2000 by former SIP members. In November 2002 the party won 0.2 percent of the vote and no legislative seats.

During 2007 legislative balloting, the party collected 0.22 percent of the vote and secured no seats.

*Leaders:* Aydemir GÜLER (President), Kemal OKUYAN (Vice President).

**Felicity Party** (*Saadet Partisi*—SP). The SP was formed in July 2001 by the traditionalist core of the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*—FP), which had been shut down by the constitutional court in June. The Virtue Party had been launched in February 1998, days before a constitutional court decision banned the Islamic-oriented Welfare Party, which was in the coalition government until June 18, 1997, on charges of undermining the secular foundations of the Turkish Republic.

The Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*—RP) had been organized in 1983 by former members of the Islamic fundamentalist MSP. It participated in the 1984 local elections, winning one provincial capital. It failed to secure assembly representation in 1987.

Having absorbed Aydın MENDERES' faction of the Democrat Party (DP), the RP attained a plurality in the December 1995 election with 21.4 percent of the vote, but at that stage was unable to recruit allies for a government. However, the speedy collapse of an alternative administration brought the RP to office for the first time in June 1996, heading a coalition with the DYP. Under intense pressure from the military and secular political establishment, Prime Minister Necmettin ERBAKAN resigned on June 18, 1997, and the RP-DYP coalition failed. On February 22, 1998, the Constitutional Court banned the RP and barred some of its founders, including Erbakan, from political activity for five years.

Some 135 parliamentarians of the proscribed Welfare Party joined the FP, making it the main opposition party in the parliament. Although FP

leaders denied their party was a successor to the RP, Turkey's secularists did not find the denial credible. The FP assumed the role of the main opposition party to both the Yılmaz-led ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition government that ended in November 1998 and to the Ecevit-led minority DSP government that was installed in January 1999. Although some analysts initially saw the FP as a likely winner of the general elections in April, the party secured only 15 percent of the votes and 111 seats. Recai Kutan was narrowly reelected as FP chair at the party congress in May 2000, fending off a challenge from a "reformist" wing led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (former mayor of Istanbul) and Abdullah Gül, which then broke away to launch its own formation, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP) in August 2001, following the banning of the FP in June.

Further weakened by legislative defections and a marked shift of popular support to the AKP (see above), FP received an electoral setback in November 2002, winning only 2.5 percent of the vote and no legislative seats.

In 2007 the party failed to provide a credible Islamist alternative to the ruling AKP and thus garnered a small 2.34 percent vote share, failing to cross the electoral threshold.

*Leaders:* Recai KUTAN (President), Suat PAMUKÇU (Secretary General).

**Young Party** (*Genç Parti*—GP). A populist, nationalist party, the GP was founded in 2002 by the controversial magnate Cem UZAN, who took control of the tiny Rebirth Party (*Yeniden Doğuş Partisi*—YDP), renaming it about two months before the November 2002 elections. His family controlled the substantial Uzan Holding, which counted a bank (İmar Bankası), a media group (Star), and Telsim, Turkey's second biggest mobile phone operator, among its assets. In the November 4, 2002, elections, the GP won 7.25 percent of the vote but secured no seats due to the 10 percent electoral threshold. Meanwhile, corruption and fraud charges against the Uzan family culminated in a lawsuit against Uzan by Motorola and Nokia, which accused him of defaulting on

more than \$2.5 billion worth of loans they had provided to Telsim. İmar Bankası was taken over by Turkish banking regulatory authorities, amid family complaints that the government was persecuting their businesses to neutralize Cem Uzan's political popularity. While Uzan's father, Kemal Uzan, and brother, Hakan Uzan, escaped abroad to avoid arrest, Cem Uzan remained in Turkey because he had no apparent personal involvement in corruption and fraud activities. The GP maintained its overtly populist and nationalist stance in the 2007 election campaign.

The party collected 3.03 percent votes in the 2007 balloting, a 4.22 percent decrease from its 2002 vote share.

*Leaders:* Cem UZAN (President), Mehmet Ali AKGÜL (Secretary General).

**Independent Turkey Party** (*Bağımsız Türkiye Partisi*—BTP). An Islamist nationalist party ideologically similar to the SP, the BTP emphasizes the threat that globalization, Europeanization, and Westernization pose to Turkey's sovereignty and culture. The party platform calls for Turkey's "real independence" from foreign domination in various contexts. In the elections of November 4, 2002, the party won 0.48 percent of the vote and no legislative seats.

The BTP managed only to improve its electoral performance marginally in the elections of July 22, 2007, taking 0.51 percent of votes.

*Leader:* Haydar BAŞ (President).

**Workers' Party** (*İşçi Partisi*—IP). The Maoist-inspired IP, founded in 1992, is the successor of the Socialist Party (*Sosyalist Parti*—SP), which was launched in February 1988 as the first overtly socialist formation since the 1980 coup. The party called for Turkey's withdrawal from NATO and nationalization of the economy. The SP was deregistered by order of the Constitutional Court in June 1992, the IP securing less than 0.5 percent of the vote in 1995. Since 2000 the IP, self-described as "national leftist," has garnered public attention due to its staunchly nationalist and anti-EU stance.

In November 2002 the party received 0.5 percent of the vote and no legislative seats. In 2007 it earned 0.36 percent of the vote share and, again, no legislative representation.

*Leader:* Doğu PERİNÇEK (President).

### *Other Parties*

**Motherland Party** (*Anavatan Partisi*—ANAP). The right-of-center ANAP supports the growth of private enterprise and closer links to the Islamic world as well as the EU. It won an absolute majority of assembly seats in 1983 and obtained control of municipal councils in 55 of the country's 67 provincial capitals during the local elections of March 1984. Its ranks having been augmented by most former deputies of the Free Democratic Party (*Hür Demokrat Parti*—HDP), which was formed by a number of independents in May 1986 but dissolved the following December, ANAP won a commanding majority of 292 seats at the election of November 1987. Following the poll, Prime Minister Özal announced that he would seek a merger of ANAP and the DYP to ensure a right-wing majority of sufficient magnitude to secure constitutional amendments without resort to referendums. However, the overture was rebuffed, with DYP leader Demirel describing Özal in September 1988 as an "incompetent man" who represented "a calamity for the nation."

Following Özal's inauguration to the technically nonpartisan post of president of the Republic in November 1989, Yıldırım AKBULUT was named prime minister and party president. Upon his ouster in June 1991 he was succeeded by former foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz. At the early legislative balloting of October 20 ANAP trailed the DYP by only 3 percentage points (24 to 27), but its representation plummeted to 115, leading to the collapse of the Yılmaz administration.

ANAP was runner-up to the RP with a 19.7 vote share at the legislative poll of December 24, 1995, although placing third in representation with a seat total of 132. After considerable delay, it entered into a coalition with the DYP whereby Yılmaz would serve as prime minister for the remainder of 1996,

with former prime minister Çiller slated to succeed him for a two-year period on January 1, 1997, Yılmaz had less than three months as head of government, being forced to resign in early June after the DYP had withdrawn from the coalition. ANAP then went into opposition to an RP-DYP coalition, amid much acrimony with its erstwhile government partner. Yılmaz was appointed to form a new cabinet on June 20, 1997, following RP Prime Minister Erbakan's resignation under military pressure two days earlier. Yılmaz's ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition government lasted only five months, however, after which ANAP gave parliamentary support to the Ecevit-led DSP government.

At the elections of April 18, 1999, ANAP fared poorly, securing only 13 percent of the votes and 86 seats. Although the party became a junior partner in the subsequent Ecevit-led government, ANAP's image was subsequently tarnished by press allegations of corruption among some of its members.

ANAP suffered a major electoral defeat in November 2002 and received 5.1 percent of the vote and no legislative seats. Mesut Yılmaz resigned on November 4, 2002, and the party underwent a prolonged and deep crisis. Following the short-lived presidencies of Ali Talip Özdemir and Nesrin Nas, former AKP legislator and minister of Culture and Tourism, Erkan Mumcu became the party's president in April 2005. After being joined by legislators defecting from the AKP and the CHP, the party had, by mid-2005, 21 legislative seats.

On the eve of the July 22, 2007, elections the party attempted to forge an electoral alliance with the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP). The leaders of both parties, Erkan Mumcu and Mehmet Ağar, announced their electoral alliance on May 5, 2007, under the umbrella of the DYP, which was renamed the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP), the name of the party that ruled Turkey in the 1950s.

However, serious disagreements over the possible candidacy of former ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz resulted in the liquidation of the alliance in early June 2007. Mumcu then announced that his party would not participate in the elections, which

resulted in several defections from party ranks. The second consecutive failure of the party to win parliamentary representation challenged Mumcu's leadership and the future of the party

*Leaders:* Erkan MUMCU (President), Muharrem DOĞAN (Secretary General).

**Social-Democrat People's Party** (*Sosyaldemokrat Halk Partisi*—SHP). Launched by former Deputy Prime Minister Murat Karayalçın in hopes of reclaiming the historical legacy of an earlier formation with a similar name, the SHP did not contest the November 2002 elections. The SHP was later joined by former CHP legislators who had left the party in protest of Deniz Baykal's reelection as the president over challenger Mustafa Sarigül (see above, under CHP). With these additions, by mid-2005, SHP had four legislative seats.

After the failure of negotiations with the CHP and the DSP on forging of a unified leftist electoral alliance for the July 22, 2007, elections, the leader of the party Murat KARAYALÇIN announced that the SHP would abstain from the elections.

*Leaders:* Murat KARAYALÇIN (President), Ahmet Guryüz KETENCİ (Secretary General).

Other nonparliamentary centrist and rightist groups include the **Liberal Democrat Party** (*Liberal Demokrat Parti*—LDP), a free-market grouping led by Cem TOKER; and the **Justice Party** (*Adalet Partisi*—AP), which claims to be the legitimate heir of the historic AP. The extreme-right-wing **Party of Luminous Turkey** (*Aydınlık Türkiye Partisi*—ATP), led by Tuğrul TÜRKES, reportedly competes to attract former MHP dissidents. Among other parties are **My Turkey Party** (*Türkiyem Partisi*), led by Durmuş Ali EKER; and the **Party of Land** (*Yurt Partisi*—YP), an ANAP breakaway formation led by former minister Sadettin TANTAN.

Minor Marxist formations include the **Labor Party** (*Emek Partisi*), led by Abdullah Levant TÜZEL; **Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party** (*Devrimci Sosyalist İşçi Partisi*—DSİP), led by Doğan TARKAN and Ahmet YILDIRIM; the **Turkish Socialist Workers' Party** (*Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi*—TSİP), led by Mehmet



SÜMBÜL; and the **Socialist Democracy Party** (*Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi*—SDP), a breakaway formation from ÖDP (above), led by Filiz Koçali. In late 2001 another pro-Kurdish formation, the **Party of Rights and Liberties** (*Hakve Özgürlükler Partisi*—HAK-PAR) was launched by Abdülmerik FIRAT. Other minor center-left formations include the **Equality Party** (*Eşitlik Partisi*); the **Party for Independent Republic** (*Bağımsız Cumhuriyet Partisi*), led by former Foreign Minister Mümtaz SOYSAL; the **Social Democrat Party** (*Sosyal Demokrat Parti*); and the **Republican Democracy Party** (*Cumhuriyetçi Demokrasi Partisi*—CDP), led by Yekta Güngör ÖZDEN.

### *Extremist Groups*

Pre-1980 extremist and terrorist groups included the leftist **Revolutionary Path** (*Devrimci Yol*—Dev-Yol) and its more radical offshoot, the **Revolutionary Left** (Dev-Sol, below), both derived from the **Revolutionary Youth** (*Dev Genç*), which operated in the late 1960s and early 1970s; some of its members also joined the far leftist **Turkish People's Salvation Army** (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*—THKO). The **Turkish People's Liberation Party Front** (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*—THKP-C), the **Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army** (*Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*—TİKKO, below), and the **Kurdistan Workers' Party** (PKK, below) all experienced numerous arrests—often leading to executions—of members. In addition, Armenian guerrilla units, composed almost entirely of non-nationals, variously operated as the Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), including a so-called Orly Group; the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide; the Pierre Gulmian Commando; the Levon Ekmekçiyen Suicide Commando; and the Armenian Revolutionary Army. The activities of many of these groups have subsided, notable exceptions being Dev-Sol and the PKK.

**Revolutionary Left** (*Devrimci Sol*—Dev-Sol). Organized in 1978, Dev-Sol appeared to have retained its organizational vitality after the 1980 crackdown, although many of its subsequent ac-

tivities took the form of interfactional struggle. Its founder, Dursun KARATAŞ, who had been given a death sentence in absentia that was later commuted to life imprisonment, was arrested by French authorities on September 9, 1994; subsequently, the group claimed responsibility for the murder on September 29 of a hard-line former justice minister, Mehmet TOPAÇ.

In 1993 or earlier Dev-Sol apparently split into two factions, the “Karataş” and the “Yağan” wings, with the former emerging in March 1994 as the **Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front** (*Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*—DHKP-C). Violent clashes between the two factions have been reported in a number of European countries, and in August 1998 Germany banned both. DHKP-C militants were active in organizing the hunger strikes and prison riots since December 2000.

Other extreme left groupings include the **Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist Leninist** (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist-Leninist*—TKP-ML) and its armed wing, the **Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army** (*Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*—TİKKO), which claimed responsibility for an attack on a police bus in İstanbul in December 2000 in retaliation for government action to break the prison hunger strikes; and the **Communist Labor Party of Turkey-Leninist** (*Türkiye Komünist Emek Partisi-Leninist*—TKEP-L).

**Kurdistan Workers' Party** (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*—PKK). Founded in 1978, the PKK, under the leadership of Abdullah (Apo) Öcalan, was for a long time based principally in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and northern Iraq. In southeast Anatolia, where it continues to maintain a presence, the party's 1992 call for a general uprising on March 21, the Kurdish New Year (Nevruz), was generally unheeded. Subsequently, a unilateral ceasefire declared by Öcalan under pressure from northern Iraq Kurdish leaders proved short-lived, and PKK terrorism re-escalated. In late July 1994 Turkish warplanes reportedly completely destroyed a PKK base in northern Iraq, and in mid-August a London court convicted three separatists of a

number of attacks on Turkish property in the United Kingdom. Öcalan thereupon reiterated his call for a cease-fire as a prelude to the adoption of constitutional reforms that would acknowledge the “Kurdish identity.” The government again failed to respond and in September charged the PKK with responsibility for the killing of a number of Turkish teachers in the southeastern province of Tunceli. Government military offensives against the Kurdish insurgents in 1995–1996 were combined with efforts to eradicate the PKK party organization.

Through 1997 and 1998 extensive Turkish military operations seriously undermined the PKK’s ground forces. On April 13, 1998, the PKK’s second-highest ranking commander, Şemdin SAKIK, who had left the organization a month earlier, was captured in northern Iraq by Turkish security forces. A more significant blow to the organization came with the arrest of party chair Öcalan by Turkish commandos in Nairobi, Kenya (see Foreign relations, above), in February 1999. The commander of the PKK’s armed wing, the People’s Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK), Cemil BAYIK, had reportedly threatened Turkish authorities and foreign tourists on March 15, claiming that the whole of Anatolia “is now a battlefield.” Some sources also reported a leadership struggle between Bayik and Abdullah Öcalan’s brother, Osman ÖCALAN.

From February to July 1999 Kurdish militants engaged in various attacks, including suicide bombings, in response to their leader’s arrest. A State Security Court accused Öcalan of being responsible for 30,000 deaths between 1984–1999. He was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death on June 29. During his defense, Öcalan argued that he could “stop the war” if the Turkish state would let him “work for peace” and spare his life. He apologized for the “sufferings PKK’s actions may have caused,” claiming that the “armed struggle had fulfilled its aims” and that the PKK would now “work for a democratic Turkey, where Kurds will enjoy cultural and linguistic rights.” On August 2, Öcalan called on his organization to stop fighting and leave Turkish territory starting September 1. The PKK’s “Presidential Council” quickly

announced that it would follow its leader’s commands, and during the PKK’s congress in February 2000, it was announced that the party’s political and armed wings would merge into a front organization called the People’s Democratic Union of Kurdistan. Some analysts argued that the decision was in line with the PKK’s decision to stop its armed struggle and seek Kurdish political and cultural rights within the framework of Turkey’s integration with the European Union.

In 2001 a small group of renegade PKK members launched the Kurdistan Workers’ Party-Revolutionary Line Fighters (*Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan-Devrimci Çizgi Savaşçıları*—PKK-DÇS) with the expressed aim to continue the armed struggle. In April 2002 the PKK decided to dissolve itself (announcing it had fulfilled its “historical mission”) to launch a new organization called the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (*Kongreya Azadî û Demokrasiya Kurdistan*—KADEK). The KADEK claimed to be against armed struggle, to have rejected fighting for an independent Kurdish homeland, and to have espoused a “political” line to press for cultural and linguistic rights for Turkey’s Kurds as “full and equal members under a democratic and united Turkey.” However, in May the EU announced it still considered the PKK a “terrorist organization.” The Turkish government continued to claim that the PKK’s transformation into KADEK was a “tactical ploy.”

In September 2003, KADEK was restyled as the Peoples’ Congress of Kurdistan (*Kongra Gelê Kurdistan*—Kongra-Gel). Several high-level defections occurred in the ranks, including that of Osman ÖCALAN, who reportedly joined a splinter group, the Democratic Solution Party of Kurdistan (*Partiya Welatparêzên Demokratên Kurdistan*—PWDK) that was established in April 2004. In June 2004, Kongra-Gel announced that the cease-fire declared by Abdullah Öcalan in September 1999 was not respected by the Republic of Turkey and that they would return to “legitimate armed defense” to counter military operations against their “units.” In April 2005 it was announced that PKK was reconstituted and the new formation was styled as the PKK–Kongra-Gel. Since the

announcement, numerous sporadic clashes have been reported between the Turkish security forces and PKK–Kongra-Gel’s armed wing, People’s Defense Forces (*Hezen Parastina Gel*—HPG).

Since March 2005, a hitherto unknown group called “Kurdistan Freedom Falcons” (*Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan*—TAK) has taken responsibility for numerous car bomb explosions and other urban terrorist acts. Although some press reports argued TAK was one among many out-of-control wings of PKK–Kongra-Gel, the organization quickly denounced any links with the group.

In 2007 there was a considerable rise in PKK activity, with numerous Turkish security staff and PKK members killed. The situation created significant tension in relations with the United States; many in Turkey believed that the United States had not exerted any pressure on Iraqi-based PKK–Kongra-Gel. The possibility of a Turkish invasion of northern Iraq remained among the most debated topics in the media.

*Leaders:* Abdullah ÖCALAN (Honorary President), Zübeyir AYDAR (President), Murat KARAYILAN (Chair of the Executive Council).

On January 17, 2000, Hüseyin VELİOĞLU, reportedly a leader of the **Party of God** (*Hizbullah*, a militant Islamist Sunni group unrelated to the Lebanon-based Shiite *Hezbollah*) was killed and two of his associates were arrested in a shoot-out with police in İstanbul. The event brought attention to the group, which was believed to have been particularly active in southeast Anatolia in the early 1990s, when *Hizbullah* had reportedly launched a campaign of violence against PKK militants and pro-Kurdish lawyers, intellectuals, and human rights activists. Some unconfirmed press reports claimed that the group members were tolerated if not encouraged by the state security forces, which allegedly explained the fact that none of its members were caught until the shoot-out. During the months of January and February 2000, police arrested over 400 alleged members of *Hizbullah*, some reportedly civil servants. State security forces also found several safe-houses of the group,

where they reportedly recovered mutilated bodies of dozens of victims, including famous moderate Islamic feminist Gonca KURİŞ, who was kidnapped in July 1998.

On February 10, 2000, the **Great Eastern Islamic Raiders-Front** (*İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncıları-Cephesi*—BDA-C) claimed responsibility for four bomb attacks in İstanbul. The militant Islamist group had previously been accused of masterminding the mob attack on a hotel that left 36 people dead, including many famous leftist and secularist intellectuals and musicians, during a cultural festival in the central Anatolian town of Sivas, on July 2, 1992.

On May 7, 2000, Turkish authorities announced that they had apprehended those responsible for the murder of the former foreign minister and secularist professor, Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, killed on October 21, 1999. Turkish police claimed that those arrested were members of a hitherto unknown militant Islamist group, **Unity** (*Tevhid*), and were also responsible for the murders several years ago of famous leftist newspaper columnist Uğur Mumcu and academician Bahriye Üçok.

Following the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999, a shadowy far-right group, **Turkish Avenger Brigade** (*Türk İntikam Tugayı*—TİT), issued death threats against pro-Kurdish activists and politicians, and claimed responsibility for attacks on various HADEP buildings. Some unconfirmed reports suggest that the group is merely a facade for occasional “agent-provocateur” activities allegedly linked to factions within the Turkish security forces. Similar activities resurfaced with the rise of nationalist sentiment after 2004. On June 13, 2007, in a shanty house in the İstanbul neighborhood of Ümraniye, police discovered large quantities of explosives, hand grenades, and other ammunition, which were allegedly intended for use in terrorist attacks against minorities and liberal Turks.

## Legislature

The 1982 constitution replaced the former bicameral legislature with a unicameral 550-member

## Cabinet

As of September 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Deputy Prime Minister and State Ministers	Cemil Çiçek
	Hayati Yazıcı
	Nazım Ekren
<i>State Ministers</i>	Mehmet Aydın
	Murat Başesgioğlu
	Nimet Çubukçu [f]
	Mehmet Şimşek
	Kürşad Tüzmen
	Sait Yazıcıoğlu
<i>Ministers</i>	
Foreign Affairs	Ali Babacan
Agriculture and Village Affairs	Mehmet Mehdi Eker
Culture and Tourism	Ertuğrul Günay
Energy and Natural Resources	Mehmet Hilmi Güler
Environment and Forestry	Veysel Eroğlu
Finance	Kemal Unakıtan
Health	Recep Akdağ
Industry and Trade	Zafer Çağlayan
Interior	Beşir Atalay
Justice	Mehmet Ali Şahin
Labor and Social Security	Faruk Çelik
National Defense	Mehmet Vecdi Gönül
National Education	Hüseyin Çelik
Public Works and Housing	Faruk Nafiz Özak
Transport	Binali Yıldırım
[f] = female	

**Note:** All ministers are members of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

**Turkish Grand National Assembly** (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*) elected for a five-year term on a proportional basis (10 percent threshold).

After the general election of July 22, 2007, the seat distribution was Justice and Development Party (AKP), 341; Republican People's Party (CHP), 112; Nationalist Action Party (MHP), 71; and independents, 26. Two vacancies opened due to the death of an MHP MP in a traffic accident and the election of former AKP MP Abdullah Gül to the presidency. Members of the Democratic Society

Party (DTP), Democratic Left Party (DSP), Liberty and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), and Great Unity Party (BBP) technically ran as independents or on the tickets of other parties during the elections but reasserted their party affiliations following the assembly's first session.

Following the first parliamentary session, the seat distribution on August 10, 2007, was as follows: AKP, 340; CHP, 98; MHP, 70; DTP, 20; DSP, 13; ÖDP, 1; BBP, 1; Independents, 5; Vacant, 2.

*Speaker:* Köksal TOPTAN (AKP).

## Communications

Formal censorship of the media in regard to security matters was imposed in late 1979 and was expanded under the military regime installed in September 1980. A new press law promulgated in November 1982 gave public prosecutors the right to confiscate any publication prior to sale, permitted the government to ban foreign publications deemed to be “a danger to the unity of the country,” and made journalists and publishers liable for the issuance of “subversive” material. However, freedom of the press was largely restored in the first half of the 1990s. On July 21, 1997, the Council of Ministers accepted a draft granting amnesty to imprisoned journalists. Under current law, however, journalists still face prosecution and imprisonment for reporting on issues deemed sensitive by the government. Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which punishes those who “publicly denigrate Turkishness or the Republic of Turkey,” has been repeatedly invoked to allow persecution of journalists and intellectuals who express opinions contrary to official Turkish views on a number of political issues, such as the Armenian question. Hrant Dink and Orhan Pamuk were targeted based on the code.

### Press

The following are dailies published in İstanbul: *Posta* (Post, 665,460), populist; *Hürriyet* (Freedom, 602,944), nationalist centrist; *Zaman* (Time, 551,417), conservative; *Sabah* (Morning, 465,000), centrist; *Fanatik* (Fanatic, 292,138), sports; *Pas Fotomaç* (Pass Photomatch, 290,548), sports; *Takvim* (Calendar, 257,417), populist; *Milliyet* (Nation, 220,250), centrist; *Vatan* (Homeland, 203,889), centrist; *Akşam* (Evening, 197,341), conservative; *Güneş* (Sun, 161,189), populist; Turkey (*Türkiye*, 151,970), conservative; *Yeni Şafak* (New Dawn, 114,908), moderate religious, pro-AKP; *Star* (110,761), populist; *Bugün* (Today, 100,795), conservative; *Efsane Fotospor* (Legend Photosport, 79,054), sports; *Cumhuriyet* (Republic, 68,974), nationalist secularist; *Anadolu'da Vakit* (Time in Anatolia, 67,898), radical-religious; *Sözcü* (Speaker, 66,844), sensationalist; *Fotogol*

12. *Adam* (Photogol-12th Person, 59,390), sports; *Şok* (Shock, 56,063), sensationalist; *Yeniçağ* (New Era, 54,049), far-right nationalist; *Milli Gazete* (National Newspaper, 50,191), conservative-religious, pro-SP; *Radikal* (Radical, 37,516), liberal; *Halka ve Olaylara Tercüman* (Interpreter to the People and Events, 36,043), conservative; *Bulvar* (Boulevard, 25,266), sensationalist; *Referans* (Reference, 13,358), finance and economics; *Ortadoğu* (Middle East, 10,756), far-right, pro-MHP; *Yeni Asya* (New Asia, 7,106), conservative-religious; *Birgün* (One Day, 6,788), left-wing; *Dünya* (World, 6,277), finance and economics; *Yeni Mesaj* (New Message, 5,203), far-right, pro-MHP; *Günlük Evrensel* (Daily Global, 4,498), far-left, pro-EMEP; *Hürses* (Free Voice, 2,205), finance and economics; *Önce Vatan* (Motherland First, 1,018), nationalist.

Non-Turkish-language publications include *Jamanak* (Times) and *Nor Marmara* (New Marmara), dailies in Armenian; *Agos* (Furrow), weekly in Turkish and Armenian; *Today's Zaman* (3,571), *Turkish Daily News* (2,432), and *The New Anatolian*, dailies in English; *Apogevmatini* (Evening Paper) and *Iho* (Echo), dailies in Greek; *Azadiya Welat* (Free Country), bimonthly, and *Zend* (Commentary), monthly, in Kurdish; and *Şalom* (Peace), Sephardic weekly in Judeo-Espagnol and Turkish.

### News Agencies

The leading news source is the government-owned *Anadolu Ajansı* (Anatolian News Agency—AA) followed by *İhlas Haber Ajansı* (İhlas News Agency—İHA) and *Doğan Haber Ajansı* (Doğan News Agency—DHA). Virtually all of the leading international agencies maintain Ankara bureaus.

### Broadcasting and Computing

The state-controlled Turkish Radio Television Corporation (*Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu*—TRT) currently offers domestic service over several radio networks and television channels. In April 1992 a TRT International Channel (Avrasya) began broadcasting via satellite to an area from

Germany to Central Asia, earning third place in international transmission after CNN International and BBC International. In July 1993 a constitutional amendment formally abolished the state broadcast monopoly. In 1994 a Higher Council of Radio and Television (*Radyo Televizyon üst Kurulu*—RTÜK) was established to oversee all radio and television emissions and programming. The appointed body reports to the prime minister and has the authority to license and shut down radio and television stations for up to a year on the grounds of such offenses as libel and the transmission of “offensive” or “hate-inciting” programs. The council has closed down numerous radio and television stations since its inception and has been widely criticized for using vague criteria that reportedly amount to censorship. Apart from five state television channels (TRT-1, TRT-2, TRT-3, TRT-INT, TRT-AVRASYA), the most pop-

ular private television channels include KANAL D, SHOW TV, ATV, STAR, STV, KANAL7, FOX, NTV and CNN-TÜRK. In 2005, there were approximately 51 personal computers and 153 Internet users per 1,000 Turkish residents. In that same year there were an estimated 596 mobile cellular subscribers for every 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Nabi ŞENSOY

**U.S. Ambassador to Turkey:** Ross WILSON

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Baki İLKIN

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** ADB, BIS, BSEC, CEUR, EBRD, ECO, Eurocontrol, IDB, IEA, Interpol, IOM, NATO, OECD, OIC, OSCE, PCA, WCO, WEU, WTO

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

*al-Imarat al-Arabiyyah al-Muttahidah*

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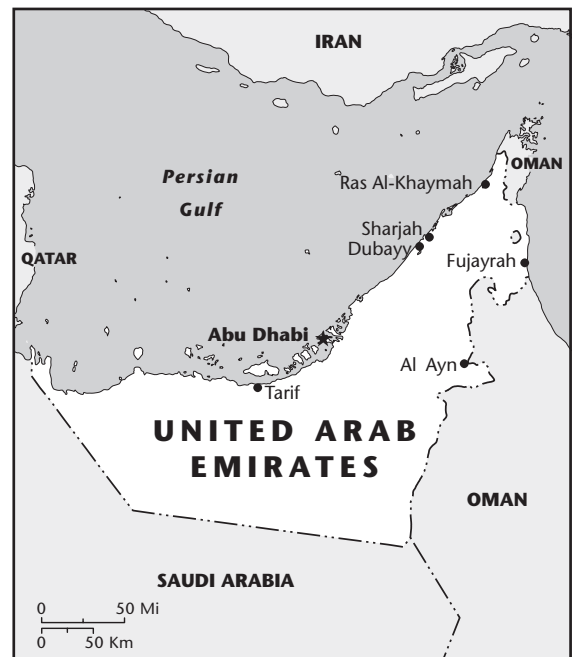
## The Country

Formerly known as the Trucial States because of truces concluded with Britain in the 19th century, the United Arab Emirates extends some 400 miles along the Persian Gulf from the southeastern end of the Qatar peninsula to a point just short of Ras Musandam. It encompasses a barren, relatively flat territory characterized by extreme temperatures and sparse rainfall. The majority of the indigenous population is Arab and adheres to the Sunni sect of Islam; there are also significant numbers of Iranians, Indians, Pakistanis, Baluchis, and descendants of former African slaves among the noncitizen population. The UAE has one of the most open societies in the Gulf region in terms of welcoming its huge foreign population and vast numbers of tourists without strictly enforcing many of its social laws among either group. Also, the UAE encourages women to participate in public life, and women may hold jobs. The UAE Women's Federation, established in 1975, has achieved many legal rights for women as well.

It was estimated in 2003 that non-national workers, numbering about 1.7 million, represented 90 percent of the workforce. Although Arabic is the official language, English is becoming the most common language among the diverse population; Persian, Russian, Urdu, Tagalog, and Hindi are also spoken.

Traditionally, the area was dependent upon trading, fishing, and pearling. However, the discovery in 1958 of major oil reserves in Abu Dhabi and, subsequently, of smaller deposits in Dubai and Sharjah dramatically altered the economy. Oil wealth led to rapid infrastructural modernization, advances in education and health services, and a construction

boom requiring a massive inflow of foreign labor. New industrial cities established at Jebel Ali in Dubai and Ruwais in Abu Dhabi gave rise to shipyards, cement factories, and other manufacturing sites. During the 1980s, on the other hand, the UAE experienced a slowdown in economic growth. At the beginning of the decade it had the world's highest gross national product (GNP) per capita, but by 1988 the GNP had declined significantly because of reduced export revenues. As a result, the government moved to streamline the petroleum industry, which continued to account for 70 percent of government income, and began developing marketing, refining, and petrochemical aspects of the oil trade.



In addition to its vast oil capacity—reserves are estimated at approximately 8 percent of the world's total—the UAE possesses one of the largest reservoirs of natural gas in the world. The government controls 60 percent of the energy sector, although, unlike several of its Gulf neighbors, it has permitted partial foreign ownership, thereby maintaining links with Western companies that have provided important ongoing infrastructure support. Moreover, the nation has firmly established itself as the region's leading trading center, partly on the strength of the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone, where more than 350 companies operate. Dubai, in particular, has been effectively promoted in recent years as the region's trading and financial "hub" and as a major tourist destination. Successful diversification efforts have also contributed to rapid economic growth. On a less positive note, pervasive aspects of Western culture have been criticized by conservatives, who have attempted to "preserve" Islamic traditions through stricter imposition of Islamic law (sharia) and policies designed to reduce dependence on foreign workers.

Annual GDP growth for 2005–2006 averaged 9 percent, bolstered by increasing oil revenues and investments in the building and manufacturing sectors, as well as government progress in public administration reforms, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 2007 the IMF commended the major emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah for carrying out reforms to encourage more private sector development aimed at further diversifying the economy and reducing high unemployment among UAE citizens.

## Government and Politics

### *Political background*

Originally controlling an area known in the West as a refuge for pirates, some sheikhs of the eastern Persian Gulf entered into agreements with the British in the early 19th century. After the failure of the initial treaty agreements of 1820 and 1835, a Perpetual Maritime Truce was signed in 1853. Relations with Britain were further strengthened by an Exclusive Agreement of 1892, whereby the sheikhs

**Political Status:** Federation of six former Trucial States (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujaira, Ajman, and Umm al-Qaiwain) established December 2, 1971; the seventh, Ras al-Khaima, joined in 1972.

**Area:** 32,278 sq. mi. (83,600 sq. km.).

**Population:** 2,377,453 (1995C), embracing Abu Dhabi (928,360), Dubai (674,100), Sharjah (400,400), Ras al-Khaima (164,930), Ajman (89,962), Fujaira (78,716), and Umm al-Qaiwain (41,232); 4,937,000 (2006E). Figures include noncitizens, who in 1995 represented approximately three-quarters of the population.

**Major Urban Center (2005E):** ABU DHABI (606,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** Dirham (official rate November 2, 2007: 3.67 dirhams = \$1US).

**Supreme Council:** Composed of the rulers of the seven emirates (with dates of accession): Sheikh Khalifa ibn Zayed al-NUHAYYAN (Abu Dhabi, 2004), Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-MAKTUM (Dubai, 2006), Sheikh Sultan ibn Muhammad al-QASIMI (Sharjah, 1972), Sheikh Saqr ibn Muhammad al-QASIMI (Ras al-Khaima, 1948), Sheikh Hamad ibn Muhammad al-SHARQI (Fujaira, 1974), Sheikh Humayd ibn Rashid al-NUAYMI (Ajman, 1981), and Sheikh Rashid ibn Ahmad al-MUALLA (Umm al-Qaiwain, 1981).

**President:** Sheikh Khalifa ibn Zayed al-NUHAYYAN (Ruler of Abu Dhabi); elected by the Supreme Council on November 3, 2004, to a five-year term, succeeding his father, Sheikh Zayed ibn Sultan al-NUHAYYAN, who died on November 2.

**Vice President and Prime Minister:** Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-MAKTUM (Ruler of Dubai); named vice president and prime minister by the Supreme Council on January 5, 2006, succeeding his older brother, Sheikh Maktum ibn Rashid al-MAKTUM, who died on January 4.



agreed not to enter into diplomatic or other foreign relations with countries other than Britain. In return, Britain guaranteed defense of the sheikhdoms against aggression by sea.

The treaty arrangements with Britain lasted until 1968, when the British announced their intention to withdraw from the Persian Gulf by 1971. An early attempt at unification, the Federation of Arab Emirates, was initiated in 1968 with British encouragement but collapsed when Bahrain and Qatar declared separate independence in 1971. Subsequently, the leaders of the Trucial States organized a new grouping, the United Arab Emirates, which was formally constituted as an independent state on December 2, 1971, with Sheikh Zayed ibn Sultan al-NUHAYYAN as president; Ras al-Khaima, which initially rejected membership, acceded to the UAE two months later.

Apart from the death of Sheikh Khalid ibn Muhammad al-QASIMI (ruler of Sharjah) following an attempted coup in 1972, few major political developments occurred until the spring of 1979, when a series of disputes, principally between Abu Dhabi and Dubai over the extent of federal powers, led to the April 25 resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Maktum ibn Rashid al-MAKTUM and his replacement five days later by his father, Sheikh Rashid ibn Said al-MAKTUM, ruler of Dubai, who retained his position as vice president. In 1981 the emirs of Ajman, Sheikh Rashid ibn Humayd al-NUAYMI, and of Umm al-Qaiwain, Sheikh Ahmad ibn Rashid al-MUALLA, both of whom had ruled for more than 50 years, died and were succeeded by their sons, Sheikh Humayd ibn Rashid al-NUAYMI and Sheikh Rashid ibn Ahmad al-MUALLA, respectively.

On June 17, 1987, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz al-QASIMI seized power in Sharjah, accusing his brother Sheikh Sultan ibn Muhammad al-QASIMI of fiscal mismanagement. On July 20 Sheikh Muhammad was reinstated by the Supreme Council, which decreed that Sheikh Abd al-Aziz should thenceforth hold the title of crown prince and deputy ruler; however, he was stripped of the title on February 4, 1990.

Following the death of Sheikh Rashid ibn Said al-Maktum on October 7, 1990, his son Sheikh

Maktum ibn Rashid was named vice president and returned to his former position as prime minister.

In 1991 the UAE suffered a major blow to its international prestige by the collapse at midyear of the Luxembourg-chartered Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), 77 percent of whose shares were owned by President Zayed and a group of financial associates. Ultimately, it was revealed that Sheikh Zayed had provided at least \$1 billion to shore up the troubled institution since 1989. A plan was approved in December 1995 under which BCCI creditors would be reimbursed \$1.8 billion by the bank's major shareholders, observers estimating the paybacks would cover 20 to 40 percent of most deposits. BCCI was formally liquidated by the UAE Central Bank in February 1996. As of 2003 \$5.7 billion had been authorized in paybacks to BCCI creditors, total claims having been estimated at \$9 billion among some 80,000 depositors. The case, unprecedented in scope in British courts, went to trial in 2004, but liquidators dropped their case in 2005 in a move that shocked financial observers.

The UAE cabinet submitted its resignation on March 17, 1997, and Sheikh Maktum was asked to form a new government, which was announced on March 25. The president and vice president were reelected by the Supreme Council on December 2, 2001. The first cabinet shuffle since 1997 took place on November 1, 2004, as decreed by President Zayed one day before he died. (Among the new cabinet members was the first woman minister, a move in line with a policy to involve more women in decision making.) Sheikh Khalifa ibn Zayed al-NUHAYYAN succeeded his father as president and ruler of Abu Dhabi. In 2005 President Khalifa announced plans to hold limited elections as part of a package of political reforms. He proposed allowing half of the 40 members of the Federal National Council (FNC) to be elected by citizens appointed to electoral councils in each emirate. The remaining 20 members of the FNC would continue to be appointed by the rulers of the 7 emirates (see Constitution and government, below).

Following the death of 62-year-old Sheikh Maktum on January 4, 2006, his younger brother, Defense Minister Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid

al-MAKTUM, was named vice president and prime minister by the Supreme Council on January 5, and he also succeeded his brother as ruler of Dubai. A new cabinet was sworn in on February 11.

### *Constitution and government*

The institutions of the UAE were superimposed upon the existing political structures of the member states, which generally maintain their monarchical character. (Effective power within the federation remains in the hands of senior members of the ruling families of the seven emirates, led by Abu Dhabi, by far the most oil-rich emirate, and, to a lesser extent, Dubai, a major business center.) Under the federal constitution adopted in 1971 (designated an “interim” basic law until 1996), the rulers of the constituent states are members of the Supreme Council, which elects a president and vice president for five-year terms. Supreme Council decrees require the approval of the rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai and at least three other emirates. The president appoints a prime minister and a cabinet. Until December 2006, all 40 delegates of the consultative FNC were appointed by the various rulers. The current council consists of 20 delegates appointed by the rulers and 20 members elected by an electoral college whose members are appointed by the rulers of the constituent states (see Current issues, below).

In July 1976 the FNC, following a failure to reach agreement on a new constitutional draft, voted to extend the life of the existing constitution for another five years beyond December 2. Further extensions were voted at five-year intervals thereafter until 1996, when the Supreme Council (May 20) and the FNC (June 18) approved an amendment removing “interim” from the language in the constitution, thereby effectively making it a permanent document.

Judicial functions have traditionally been performed by local courts applying Islamic law (sharia) and by individual decisions rendered by the ruling families. In June 1978 the president signed a law establishing four Primary Federal Tribunals (in Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Fujaira, and Sharjah) to handle disputes between individuals and the federation,

with appeal to the federal Supreme Court. However, a later decree of February 1994 specified that a variety of crimes (including murder, theft, adultery, and juvenile and drug-related offenses) would be tried in Islamic, rather than civil, courts. The basic administrative divisions are the constituent states, each of which retains local control over mineral rights, taxation, and police protection. Abu Dhabi effectively controls the UAE’s 65,000-member federal army. In 2001 the UAE joined the five other Gulf states in signing a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC, below) defense agreement.

### *Foreign relations*

The United Arab Emirates is a member of the United Nations, the Arab League, OPEC, and various regional groupings. Relations have been cordial with most countries, including the United States, although there have been territorial disputes with Iran, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

In 1971 Iran occupied Abu Musa, a small island in the Persian Gulf, and laid claim to the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, two uninhabited but potentially strategically important islands. Soon after, an agreement was reached between Tehran and the emir of Sharjah that provided for joint administration of Abu Musa and the sharing of revenue from offshore oil wells. However, no accord was reached regarding the Tunbs (claimed by Ras al-Khaima). Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and the UAE in 1972, the issue remained relatively dormant with an occasional flare up.

A dispute with Saudi Arabia and Oman concerned portions of Abu Dhabi, including the potentially oil-rich Buraimi Oasis, located at the juncture of the three states. Under the terms of an agreement reached in 1974, six villages of the oasis were awarded to Abu Dhabi and two to Oman; Saudi Arabia, in return for renouncing its claim, was granted a land corridor coterminous with the existing Abu Dhabi–Qatar border to the Persian Gulf port of Khor al-Adad. The border demarcation issue resurfaced in September 1992 in the form of a clash between Saudi Arabian and Qatari forces (see Qatar: Foreign relations). In June 2002 Oman

and the UAE implemented an agreement to demarcate their border.

In early 1981 the UAE joined with five neighbors—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia—in establishing the Cooperative Council of the Arab Gulf States (more commonly known as the Gulf Cooperation Council—GCC) to coordinate members’ policies on security and stability in the area. Concern over the Iran-Iraq war led the UAE to participate in the GCC’s annual Peninsula Shield joint military maneuvers. Although the hazards of the regional conflict did not preclude an increase in trade with Tehran, the UAE and the other GCC states became increasingly aware of their vulnerability to possible Iranian aggression and to the potentially destabilizing effects of an Iranian-inspired Islamic revolution. Thus, during a December 1987 GCC summit in Saudi Arabia, discussion centered on negotiations with Egypt for military aid and support. Meanwhile, in the wake of oilfield bombings by the Gulf combatants, including one by unidentified aircraft that killed eight people and destroyed two of five platforms in Abu Dhabi, the UAE took steps to purchase advance-warning systems from Britain, France, and the United States.

The UAE reacted nervously to Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, because it, like Kuwait, had been charged by Baghdad with overproduction of oil. On August 19, having joined with other GCC governments in calling for Iraq’s withdrawal, the UAE agreed to the deployment of foreign military units on its soil. It also cooperated with coalition forces during the confrontation that concluded with Iraq’s defeat in February 1991. In April it was reported that the UAE had contributed nearly \$3 billion to U.S. Gulf War costs.

With Iraqi belligerence still appearing to present a challenge to regional security, the Gulf states attempted to improve relations with Iran, the UAE in July 1991 naming its first ambassador to Tehran since the latter’s 1979 revolution. However, in early 1992 Iran reignited the long-dormant Gulf dispute between the two nations by expelling some 700 UAE nationals from Abu Musa and seizing complete control of the island. After the GCC demanded in September that Iran repudiate its “annexation” of Abu Musa, Tehran reasserted its claim

of sovereignty over the island as well as over the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, vowing that UAE forces would have to cross a “sea of blood” to retake the territory. Although the UAE subsequently sought international mediation of the dispute, Iran rejected the proposal, and tension between the countries continued. The UAE at the same time continued to lead efforts to “rehabilitate” the regime of Saddam Hussein, in part with an eye on future economic ties with Baghdad, and in April 2000 the UAE’s embassy in Baghdad was reopened. In March 2003, the president offered a vague plan for Hussein’s permanent exile, defying the Arab League stance on noninterference in the internal affairs of a neighboring country. After the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, the UAE was among the first countries to send relief shipments. It has continued to provide humanitarian aid, as well as build a desalination plant and equip Iraqi hospitals.

In July 1994 the UAE became the fourth GCC country to conclude a military cooperation pact with the United States. The agreement, which provides for joint military exercises and the stationing of a U.S. naval task force on UAE territory, was reportedly signed because of the Emirates’ vulnerability to attack by Iran and Iraq. In November 2004 the commander of U.S. Central Command called U.S.-UAE military cooperation among the strongest in the region. France’s defense minister expressed similar sentiments in April 2004. The United Kingdom in 2005 announced its commitment to developing military and industrial cooperation with the Emirates.

As did its GCC neighbors, the UAE expressed concern in the 1990s over the security implications of growing Islamist militancy in North Africa and the Middle East. Following the attacks on the United States in September 2001, the UAE agreed to cooperate closely with the George W. Bush administration’s “war on terrorism.” Among other measures, the UAE severed diplomatic relations with the Taliban administration in Afghanistan after it refused to hand over Osama bin Laden. (The UAE had been one of the three countries that recognized the Taliban government.) At least two senior al-Qaida operatives have been arrested there since 2002.

Following years of political violence in the region, the cabinet decided in June 2005 to fight against terrorism by punishing people who organize, commit, finance, or contribute to terrorist acts. Money laundering and smuggling have long been troublesome issues in the UAE (see Current issues, below) and were among the topics addressed by GCC members in June 2005.

The UAE historically has objected to the slow pace of progress in the Middle East peace process, joining a number of other Arab countries in boycotting a regional economic development conference in 1997 to protest what it perceived as an inappropriate U.S. tilt toward Israel at the expense of the Palestinian cause. The UAE has also adopted a strongly pro-Palestinian, pro-Arab stance regarding the future status of Jerusalem, a major sticking point in the Israeli-Palestinian impasse. The late President Zayed was a major supporter of the Palestinian people and contributed heavily to housing projects in Gaza. In May 2005 reports surfaced from Jerusalem that Israel planned to open an “economic interest section” in Dubai, but UAE officials denied any such possibility. The two countries have never had an official relationship.

In 2006 the U.S. State Department set up offices in Dubai to enhance its ability to monitor Iran. Other countries have made similar efforts, given Dubai’s proximity to Iran and its popularity with Iranian businesspeople and tourists.

### *Current issues*

Attention in the late 1990s focused on the allocation of what was expected to be up to \$10 billion in new weapons and military supplies. The United States, France, and the United Kingdom—all of whom had negotiated defense pacts with the UAE (as required by the UAE government for countries to be considered as potential arms suppliers)—were particularly anxious about the upcoming deals. In March 2000 the UAE, as part of its ambitious defense program, signed a contract with the U.S.-based Lockheed Martin Corporation worth \$6.4 billion for 80 F-16 fighters, having previously concluded a deal in 1998 for \$3.5 billion of French planes. Washington had initially

objected to the inclusion of certain components that had previously been shared only with members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The first delivery of the U.S. planes was in 2005, with the remainder to be delivered within three years.

In March 2000 the UAE announced plans to spearhead an \$8 billion regional gas network in conjunction with other GCC members as well as Western energy companies, including U.S.-based Enron. As a first stage of the 25-year project, Abu Dhabi negotiated a \$3.5 billion agreement to develop gas fields in Qatar and ship gas from there initially to the other emirates and Gulf states, such as Oman, and eventually to India and Pakistan. The project, the first such cross-border arrangement in GCC history, was considered an important element in establishing the UAE as the hub of a regional “energy security” network. At the same time, however, it brought increasing pressure from the international community on the UAE to establish procedures to ensure greater transparency and accountability in its financial sector. Critics have charged that long-standing secrecy has contributed to UAE banks being used for money laundering, while lack of oversight of business dealings has permitted unnoticed transshipment of drugs and illegal weapons through UAE ports. The UAE’s banking system and financial practices were further criticized after the September 2001 attacks in the United States when it became evident that close associates of Osama bin Laden had used the country’s banks to transfer and receive money from several of the hijackers. Promising reform, the UAE in January 2002 adopted a series of policy changes to monitor banking practices and financial transactions and instituted new penalties to combat money laundering. As of April 1, 2003, the UAE Central Bank has required *hawalah* (informal money transfer) operators to register and provide details of transactions. In June 2005 the UAE joined the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. The IMF has since commended the UAE for the extensive set of laws it has enacted to regulate international banking practices.

In 2006, in one of the most politically charged events of recent years, DP World, a state-owned

## Cabinet

As of July 1, 2007

Prime Minister and Vice-President	Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-Maktum
Deputy Prime Minister	Sultan ibn Zayed al-Nuhayyan
Deputy Prime Minister	Sheikh Hamdan ibn Zayed al-Nuhayyan

### *Ministers*

Culture, Youth, and Community Development	Abdul Rahman Muhammad al-Owais
Defense	Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid al-Maktum
Economy and Planning	Shaikha Lubna al-Qasimi [f]
Education	Hanif Hassan Ali
Energy	Muhammad ibn Zaen al-Hamili
Environment and Water	Muhammad Said al-Kindi
Finance and Industry	Sheikh Hamdan ibn Rashid al-Maktum
Foreign Affairs	Sheikh Abdallah ibn Zayed al-Nuhayyan
Government Sector Development	Sultan ibn Said al-Mansour
Health	Hamad Muhammad Obeid al-Qattami
Higher Education and Scientific Research	Sheikh Nuhayyan ibn Mubarak al-Nuhayyan
Interior	Lt. Gen. Sheikh Saif ibn Zayed al-Nuhayyan
Justice	Muhammad Nakhira al-Dhahiri
Labor	Ali ibn Abdallah al-Kaabi
Presidential Affairs	Sheikh Mansur ibn Zayed al-Nuhayyan
Public Works	Sheikh Hamdan ibn Mubarak al-Nuhayyan
Social Affairs	Mariam Muhammad Khalfan al-Roumi [f]

### *Ministers of State*

Cabinet Affairs	Muhammad Abdallah al-Gargawi
Federal National Council Affairs	Anwar Muhammad Gargash
Financial and Industrial Affairs	Muhammad Kalfan ibn Kharbash
Foreign Affairs	Muhammad Hussein al-Shaali

[f] = female

Dubai company, sought to manage terminal operations at six U.S. ports. The company sold its interests after “an unrelenting bipartisan attack” in the U.S. Congress over security concerns, according to *The New York Times*. Ironically, observers pointed out, the Dubai company’s operations originated in Jebel Ali, the port outside the United States most often visited by the U.S. Navy and known for its state-of-the-art security. Soon after the DP World controversy, the Bush administration expressed security concerns over reported shipments of sensitive military technology from Dubai ports to Iran and Syria.

On the domestic front, attention in 2006 focused on the limited elections December 16–20 for 20 members of the legislature. The rulers of the seven emirates chose those who could vote as members of an electoral college. The actual number of eligible voters was 6,689, or 0.8 percent of UAE citizens. Nevertheless, the election was seen as a first step toward political reform. The UAE, under pressure from its neighbors and from Washington, was the last of the Gulf states to initiate such changes.

The continued surge in world oil prices has contributed to a real-estate boom in Dubai, as well as a boom in commerce. Dubai, which attracts some 5

million tourists a year, has plans under way for the world's tallest building, the world's largest shopping mall, and a Disneyland-like park. Along with the construction boom, however, came reports of public protests and strikes by migrant workers. In 2006 the government drafted a new labor law that would grant more rights to workers, the Emirates' alleged abusive treatment of migrant workers having drawn criticism from international human rights groups. The proposed law was still under consideration in mid-2007.

## Political Parties

There are no political parties in the United Arab Emirates.

## Legislature

**Federal National Council** (*Majlis al-Watani al-Itihadi*). The UAE's consultative body consists of 40 delegates, 20 appointed by the rulers of the constituent states and 20 elected by an electoral college whose members are appointed by the rulers. All serve two-year terms. The first elections were held in three rounds from December 16 through December 20, 2006, for 20 seats: 4 delegates each from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, 3 each from Sharjah and Ras al-Khaima, and 2 each from the 3 other emirates. The 20 elected and 20 appointed delegates were sworn in on February 12, 2007.

*Speaker:* Abdul-Aziz Abdallah al-GHURAIR.

## Communications

While the constitution of the UAE guarantees freedom of the press, the government closely monitors Arabic-language media, but English-language media receive less scrutiny, according to Reporters Without Borders. The country's heavy regulation and monitoring of political content reportedly does not apply to Dubai Media City, a global media hub where the government guarantees freedom of the press, or to Dubai Internet City.

## Press

The following are published daily in Arabic, unless otherwise noted: *Khalij Times* (Dubai and Abu Dhabi, 72,000), English daily; *al-Ittihad* (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, 58,000), designated as the official daily of the UAE; *Gulf News* (Dubai and Abu Dhabi, 91,000), English daily; *al-Khalij* (Sharjah, 85,000), independent daily; *Emirates News* (Abu Dhabi, 2,000), English daily; *al-Wahdah* (Abu Dhabi, 20,000), independent daily; *al-Bayan*, (32,000); *al-Fajr* (Abu Dhabi and Dubai, 28,000); Mathrubhumi (Malayalam).

## News agencies

The official Emirates News Agency (*Wikalat al-Anba al-Imarat*—WAM) was founded in 1977. Reuters maintains an office in Dubai.

## Broadcasting and computing

The United Arab Emirates Broadcasting Service (*Idhaat al-Imarat al-Arabiyyah al-Muttahidah*) operates radio stations in five of the seven emirates. In addition, most of the individual emirates engage in radio or television programming. CNN, BBC World, Voice of America, and Bloomberg L.P. are among the major broadcasters based in Dubai Media City. There were approximately 198 personal computers and 311 Internet users for every 1,000 residents in 2005. In that same year there were an estimated 1,009 mobile cellular subscribers per 1,000 people.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Saqr Ghobash Saeed GHOBASH

**U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates:** Michele J. SISON

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Ahmed Abdulrahman AL-JARMAN

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, BADEA, GCC, IDB, Interpol, IOR-ARC, LAS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPEC, WCO, WTO

# YEMEN

## REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

*al-Jumhuriyah al-Yamaniyah*

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### The Country

Located at the southern corner of the Arabian peninsula, where the Red Sea meets the Gulf of Aden, the Republic of Yemen shares a lengthy but (until recently) largely undefined northern border with Saudi Arabia and a narrow eastern border with Oman (formally demarcated in 1992). Hot, semidesert terrain separates both the Red Sea and Gulf coasts from a mountainous interior. The people are predominantly Arab and are divided into two Muslim religious communities: the Zaidi of the Shia sect in the north and east, and the Shafii community of the Sunni sect in the south and southwest. Tribal influences remain strong, often taking priority over formal governmental activity outside of urban areas. The population growth rate has been estimated recently at about 3.7 percent per year, among the highest rates in the world.

At the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, more than a million Yemeni men were employed outside the country, primarily in Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Arab states. Their exodus (partially reversed by Saudi action following the onset of the Gulf crisis) had created an internal labor shortage and increased women's responsibility for most subsistence agricultural production. In the former Yemen Arab Republic the requirements of purdah precluded any substantial participation by women outside the household; by contrast, the Marxist government of the former People's Democratic Republic emphasized women's rights. Unification brought mixed results: Women were granted suffrage in the new republic's constitution, but observers cited a "turn to the Islamic right" in Yemeni

society, which led, inter alia, to the legalization of polygamy and the adoption of conservative Muslim dress (already widespread in the north) by many women in the south.

As a result of topographical extremes, Yemeni farmers produce a variety of crops, including cotton (the leading export), grains, fruits, coffee, tobacco, and *qat* (a mild narcotic leaf, which is chewed daily by an estimated 90 percent of the northern population and is estimated to account for nearly 50 percent of GDP). There have been significant discoveries of water in connection with oil



exploration, raising the possibility of major agricultural expansion in the future.

Although Yemen is one of the poorest Arab countries and among the poorest nations in the world, significant (and potentially dramatic) economic improvement was expected with the exploitation of extensive oil reserves, first discovered in 1984. Yemen produces nearly 450,000 barrels of oil per day and has reserves of at least 4 billion barrels. Oil revenue accounts for an estimated 70 percent of government income. Significant gas reserves have also been discovered; the Yemen Liquid Natural Gas Company signed a contract in 2005 to supply French, Swiss, and South Korean energy firms. In addition, the port of Aden, one of the world's leading oil bunkering entrepôts prior to the 1967–1975 closure of the Suez Canal, was rehabilitated and became part of the Aden Free Trade Zone.

In 1995 the government adopted a structural adjustment program recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF); priorities included promotion of the private sector, trade liberalization, civil service and judicial reform, subsidy reductions, support for the non-oil sector, and tax changes. In view of encouraging developments, the Paris Club of creditor nations rescheduled repayments of much of Yemen's external debt in 1997.

Annual GDP growth, bolstered by high oil prices, averaged 2.9 percent in 2005–2006. Progress in construction, transportation, and trade accounted for similar growth in the non-oil sector, but a high unemployment rate, reported to be around 20 percent, continued to be of concern, particularly as thousands of Somali refugees fled to Yemen looking for work. Privatization laws and a bank reform plan were put in place, and an anticorruption authority was established by parliament in 2006. However, because of Yemen's lack of progress in curbing corruption, millions of dollars in international aid have been withheld in the past five years. With the prospect of declining oil production in years to come, the IMF urged Yemeni authorities to diversify, to elicit public support for reforms, and to impose a general sales tax.

**Political Status:** Independent Islamic Arab republic established by merger of former Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen on May 22, 1990.

**Area:** 205,355 sq. mi. (531,869 sq. km.), encompassing 75,290 sq. mi. (130,065 sq. km.) of the former Yemen Arab Republic and 195,000 sq. mi. (336,869 sq. km.) of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

**Population:** 14,587,807 (1994C); 22,215,000 (2006E).

**Major Urban Center (including suburbs, 2005E):** SANA (1,625,000).

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Monetary Unit:** YAR Rial (market rate November 2, 2007: 198.95 rials = \$1US).

**President:** Fld. Mar. Ali Abdallah SALIH (General People's Congress); former president of the Yemen Arab Republic; assumed office upon merger of North and South Yemen on May 22, 1990; elected for an anticipated five-year term by the Presidential Council on October 16, 1993; elected for a new five-year term by the House of Representatives on October 1, 1994, in accordance with constitutional amendments approved September 28; directly elected for an anticipated five-year term on September 23, 1999; current term extended from five to seven years by national referendum of February 20, 2001; reelected on September 20, 2006, and inaugurated for a seven-year term on September 27.

**Vice President:** Gen. Abdurabu Mansur HADI (General People's Congress); appointed by the president on October 2, 1994; reappointed by the president following elections of September 20, 2006.

**Prime Minister:** Ali Muhammad MAJUR (General People's Congress); appointed by the president on March 31, 2007, to succeed Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman BAJAMMAL (General People's Congress); sworn in with new government on April 7.



Meanwhile, little foreign investment was reported beyond the Aden area. On a more positive note, in 2006 and 2007 the United States and Britain pledged increased financial assistance to Yemen through 2009 and 2011, respectively, continuing to exert pressure on the Yemeni government to implement significant economic reforms.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background Yemen Arab Republic (YAR)*

Former site of the Kingdom of Sheba and an early center of Near Eastern civilization, the territory subsequently known as North Yemen fell under the rule of the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century. The withdrawal of Turkish forces in 1918 made it possible for Imam YAHYA Muhammad Hamid al-Din, the traditional ruler of the Zaidi religious community, to gain political supremacy. Yahya remained as theocratic ruler until 1948, when he was murdered in an attempted coup and was succeeded by his son, Saif al-ISLAM Ahmad. The new leader instituted a more outward-looking policy: Diplomatic relations were established with the Soviet Union in 1956, and in 1958 the monarchy joined with the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) in a federation (the United Arab States), which was dissolved three years later.

A series of unsuccessful uprisings against the absolute and antiquated regime of the imams culminated on September 26, 1962, in the ouster of the newly installed Iman Muhammad al-BADR by a group of army officers under Col. (later Field Marshal) Abdallah al-SALAL, who established a republic with close United Arab Emirates (UAR) ties. Although the new regime was recognized by the United States and many other governments, resistance by followers of the imam precipitated a civil war that continued intermittently until early 1969.

The external forces, including those of Saudi Arabia (which supported the royalists) and Egypt (which supported the republicans), were withdrawn in late 1967 following the UAR's defeat in the June war with Israel and the conclusion of an agreement

with Saudi Arabia at an Arab summit in Khartoum, Sudan. President Salal was subsequently ousted in favor of a three-man Presidential Council headed by Abd al-Rahman al-IRYANI. Internal factional rivalry continued, but in May 1970 an informal compromise was reached whereby royalist elements were assimilated into the regime. The rudiments of modern governmental institutions were established with the adoption of a new constitution in late 1970 and the election of a Consultative Council in early 1971, although political stability continued to depend on the personal success of such leaders as prime ministers Hassan al-AMRI and Muhsin Ahmad al-AYNI. On June 13, 1974, in another, apparently bloodless coup, the Iryani regime was superseded by a seven-man Military Command Council (MCC) led by Lt. Col. Ibrahim Muhammad al-HAMADI. In January 1975, Prime Minister Ayni, who had been appointed only seven months earlier, was replaced by Abd al-Aziz Abd al-GHANI.

On October 11, 1977, Colonel Hamadi was assassinated in Sana by unknown assailants, and the MCC immediately established a Presidential Council headed by Lt. Col. Ahmad Husayn al-GHASHMI, with Prime Minister Ghani and Maj. Abdallah Abd al-ALIM, commander of the paratroop forces, as the other members. Ghashmi was assassinated on June 24, 1978, by a bomb-bearing "special emissary" of the South Yemeni government. A new four-member provisional Presidential Council was thereupon organized, including Prime Minister Ghani, Constituent Assembly Speaker Abd al-Karim al-ARASHI, Armed Forces Commander Ali al-SHIBA, and Maj. Ali Abdallah SALIH. The assembly elected Salih president of the republic on July 17 and three days later named Arashi to the newly created office of vice president. Ghani continued as prime minister.

Attempts to overthrow Salih were reported in July and October 1978. A prolonged delay in reaching agreement on constitutional issues was attributed to continuing conflict between republican and traditionalist groups. The situation was further complicated in early 1979 when South Yemeni forces crossed into North Yemen and were joined

by rebels of the leftist National Democratic Front (NDF), led by Sultan Ahmad UMAR. Following mediation by the Arab League, a cease-fire was implemented on March 16, and the southern troops were withdrawn. On March 30 talks in Kuwait between President Salih and Council Chair Ismail of the People's Democratic Republic concluded with a mutual pledge to reopen discussions on eventual unification of the two Yemens. Toward that end, a number of high-level meetings between Sana and Aden took place during the next 18 months, while on October 15, 1980, in a significant internal reorganization, Prime Minister Ghani was replaced by Abd al-Karim Ali al-IRYANI and named co-vice president. On May 22, 1983, the assembly reelected Salih for a second five-year term, while on November 12 Vice President Ghani was reappointed prime minister, with Iryani being assigned to direct the reconstruction of earthquake-damaged areas.

Balloting for 128 members of a new 159-seat Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) to replace the Constituent Assembly took place on July 5, 1988, the remaining 31 seats being filled by presidential appointment. On July 17 the council reelected Salih to a third five-year term as head of state, with Vice President Arashi being designated council speaker. On July 31 Salih reappointed Major Ghani to head a partially reorganized administration. (See Republic of Yemen, below, for information on negotiations leading to unification with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY] and political developments from 1990 to the present.)

#### ***People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.***

British control of South Yemen began with the occupation of Aden in 1839 and, through treaties with numerous local rulers, was gradually extended north and eastward to include what came to be known as the Western and Eastern Protectorates. Aden was ruled as part of British India until 1937, when it became a separate Crown Colony. In preparation for eventual independence, the British established the Federation of South Arabia, in which the colony of Aden was associated with 16 dependent states that had previously belonged to the protectorates. Plans for a transfer of power to the rulers of

the federation were frustrated, however, by increasing nationalist agitation and terrorist activity on the part of radical elements. By 1967 a power struggle among rival nationalist groups had resulted in the emergence of the left-wing National Liberation Front (NLF) as the area's strongest political organization. Control of the territory was accordingly handed over by Britain to representatives of the NLF (restyled as the National Front—NF) on November 30, 1967.

Qahtan al-SHAABI, the principal NF leader, became president and prime minister of the new People's Republic of Southern Yemen, which, though beset by grave internal problems and revolts, rapidly emerged as a center of left-wing revolutionary nationalist agitation in South Arabia. The position of the comparatively moderate Shaabi became progressively weaker, and, as the result of a continuing power struggle between the moderate and radical wings of the NF, he was forced from office in June 1969, the country's name being changed in December 1970 to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. In August 1971 another change of government brought into power Salim Rubayi ALI and Abd al-Fattah ISMAIL, heads of the NF's pro-Chinese and pro-Soviet factions, respectively; both participated in a three-member Presidential Council, chaired by Ali as head of state.

In the course of a leadership struggle that erupted into street fighting in the capital on June 26, 1978, Ali was removed from office and executed after allegations (largely discounted by foreign observers) that he had been involved in the assassination two days earlier of President Ghashmi of North Yemen. Following Ali's ouster, Prime Minister Ali Nasir MUHAMMAD al-Hasani was designated chair of the Presidential Council, with Ismail and Defense Minister Ali Ahmad Nasir ANTAR al-Bishi as the other members. Although expanded to five members on July 1, the presidential collegium was superseded on December 27 by an 11-member presidium of a recently elected Supreme People's Council (SPC), Ismail serving as chair. Earlier, in mid-October, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) had been organized, in succession to the NF, as the country's controlling political organization.

On March 30, 1979, Council Chair Ismail and President Salih of North Yemen concluded a three-day meeting in Kuwait that had been called in the wake of renewed hostilities between their two countries. Despite obvious ideological differences between the conservative North and the Marxist-Leninist South, the leaders pledged that they would renew efforts first broached in 1972, but suspended in 1975, to unify the two Yemens.

On April 21, 1980, Council Chair Ismail, ostensibly for reasons of ill health, resigned his government and party posts, with Prime Minister Muhammad being named by the YSP Central Committee as his successor in both capacities. Five days later, the SPC confirmed Muhammad (who retained the prime ministership) as head of state. His position was further consolidated at an extraordinary party congress held October 12–14, when a Politburo and a Secretariat dominated by his supporters were named, and at an extraordinary session of the SPC on October 16, when a revamped cabinet was approved.

At the conclusion of an SPC session on February 14, 1985, Muhammad resigned as chair of the Council of Ministers, while retaining his position as head of state. Concurrently, a new cabinet was approved, headed by former construction minister Haydar Abu Bakr al-ATTAS. In October Muhammad was reelected secretary general of the YSP, albeit as part of a political compromise that necessitated enlargement of the Central Committee from 47 to 77 members and the Politburo from 13 to 16. In particular, the reinstatement of former chair Ismail to the Politburo indicated that there would be increased opposition to the policies of the incumbent state and party leader.

On January 13, 1986, SPC Chair Muhammad mounted a “gangland style massacre” of YSP opponents, in the course of which Ismail and a number of others, including Defense Minister Salih Muslim QASIM, were killed. However, the chair’s opponents regrouped and, after more than a week of bitter fighting in the capital, succeeded in defeating “the Ali Nasir clique,” with Muhammad gaining asylum in North Yemen. On January 24 ministerial chair al-Attas, who had been in India at the time of

the attempted purge, was designated interim head of state. On February 6 the YSP Central Committee named Ali Salim al-BEIDH to succeed Muhammad as its secretary general, while the SPC on February 8 confirmed al-Attas as presidium chair and appointed a new government headed by Dr. Yasin Said NUMAN; both were reconfirmed on November 6, 1986, by a new council elected October 28–30.

*Republic of Yemen.* In the fall of 1981 unification talks between North Yemen’s President Ali Abdallah Salih and his South Yemen counterpart, Ali Nasir Muhammad, culminated in an agreement signed in Aden on December 2 to establish a Yemen Council, embracing the two chief executives, and a Joint Ministerial Council to promote integration in the political, economic, and social spheres. On December 30 the Aden News Agency reported that a draft constitution of a unified Yemeni Republic would be submitted to referenda in the two states at an unspecified date. Progress toward unification slowed, however, in the wake of domestic turmoil in the south in early 1986, which resulted in Muhammad’s ouster and flight to the north.

Strongly influenced by the impact of Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of restructuring (perestroika) on the PDRY’s Marxist-oriented leadership, the Yemen and Joint Ministerial councils were revived in May 1988, while on December 1, 1989, a draft joint constitution was published that called for an integrated multiparty state headed by a five-member Presidential Council. The new basic law was implemented on May 22, 1990, after having been ratified the previous day by the constituent states’ respective parliaments. On the same day, as agreed upon earlier by both parliaments, newly promoted General Salih assumed the presidency of the Republic of Yemen for what was initially proclaimed as a 30-month transitional term. The PDRY’s Ali Salim al-Beidh was named vice president for a projected term of the same duration. On May 26 former South Yemen president al-Attas was named prime minister by the transitional House of Representatives, with a joint administration being installed on May 27.

The first general elections were postponed by Salih from the original date of November 1992

(the end of the proposed 30-month transitional period) because of domestic unrest. When the voting for a new House of Representatives was finally conducted on April 27, 1993, Salih's General People's Congress (GPC) outpolled the more than 40 participating parties, followed by the conservative Yemeni Congregation for Reform (*Islah*) and the YSP. On May 30 the three leading parties announced the formation of a coalition government, again led by al-Attas and initially encompassing 15 GPC, 9 YSP, and 4 *Islah* members. However, *Islah* subsequently demanded greater representation on the basis of its electoral showing and was awarded two newly created additional cabinet posts on June 10.

On October 11, 1993, the House of Representatives elected Salih and al-Beidh to a new Presidential Council, along with former YAR prime minister Ghani of the GPC, the YSP's Salim Salih MUHAMMAD, and *Islah*'s Abd al-Maguid al-ZINDANI. Five days later the council elected Salih as its chair and thereby president of the republic, al-Beidh being renamed vice president. However, al-Beidh, who had refused to leave Aden since August because of security concerns, did not attend the induction or take the oath of office.

In February 1994 Salih and al-Beidh signed a Document of Pledge and Agreement, which had been brokered by a multiparty Committee for National Dialogue formed in November 1993 to resolve the political stalemate between the two leaders. The accord provided for many of the so-called "18-points" al-Beidh had recently issued as requirements for continued southern support for the union. They included the withdrawal of army units from the former north/south border, establishment of a new national intelligence organization, investigation into the numerous assassinations of YSP members since unification, decentralization of government authority, and a review of national economic policy.

Despite widespread internal and external relief over the signing of the "peace agreement" in early 1994, it quickly became apparent that no true reconciliation had been achieved, al-Beidh and Muhammad refusing to attend a March Presiden-

tial Council session in Sana. Intense international mediation notwithstanding, sporadic fighting between northern and southern military units (never unified under the 1990 arrangements) broke out in late April 1994.

As hostilities escalated into full-fledged war, Salih declared a state of emergency on May 5, 1994, and dismissed al-Beidh and Muhammad from the Presidential Council and Prime Minister al-Attas and several other YSP members from the government. Industry Minister Muhammad Said al-ATTAR, a member of the GPC, was named acting prime minister.

Heavy fighting over the next two weeks appeared to favor northern forces, which had launched a sustained offensive toward Aden. Consequently, in an apparent attempt to garner international support for his cause, al-Beidh on May 21, 1994, announced the south's secession from the union and the formation of an independent Democratic Republic of Yemen. A Presidential Council, with al-Beidh as its president, was established for the new state along with a provisional National Salvation Council, while al-Attas was named prime minister of a YSP-dominated government announced on June 2. However, no international recognition was forthcoming for the new republic, and the south's military position became increasingly precarious, several cease-fires quickly collapsing. Following a week of heavy shelling, during which most separatist leaders (including al-Beidh) fled the country, northern forces secured control of Aden on July 7, effectively ending the civil war and the short-lived secession.

On September 28, 1994, the House of Representatives approved several constitutional amendments, the most important of which eliminated the Presidential Council, whose unwieldiness had contributed to prewar friction. Three days later, the house, acting as an "electoral college" on a one-time basis as provided for in the basic law revision, elected Salih by a nearly unanimous vote to a new five-year presidential term. On October 2 Salih appointed Maj. Gen. Abdurabu Mansur HADI as vice president, and on October 6 he named former YAR co-vice president al-Ghani to head the first postwar

government. A new cabinet, announced the day of al-Ghani's appointment as prime minister, included 16 ministers from the GPC, 9 from *Islah*, and 1 independent, the rump YSP having gone into opposition.

President Salih subsequently adopted a conciliatory stance, issuing a general amnesty for all southerners except former vice president al-Beidh and 15 other separatist leaders. (However, Salih and al-Beidh reconciled at a May 2003 meeting in Abu Dhabi, and Salih reportedly promised that all exiled socialist officials could return.) Salih also placed the nation's military forces under a unified command and announced similar plans for the police and intelligence organizations. In addition, the government pledged to put restrictions on civilian weapons, some reports suggesting that there were as many as 50 million guns in the country (an average of more than three per person). On the political front, the constitutional changes approved in September 1994 served to consolidate power in the hands of Salih, who was declared eligible for two five-year terms in the newly strengthened presidency.

The first new legislative poll since the civil war was conducted on April 27, 1997, with the GPC securing 187 seats, followed by *Islah* with 53. (The YSP, deemed unlikely to recover from the secessionist debacle for many years, boycotted the balloting, as did several small parties.) On March 14 the president named Faraj Said ibn GHANIM, a nonparty economist from the south who had once been a member of the YSP, as the new prime minister. The cabinet appointed the following day included a relatively even mix of old and new faces but, most notably, no representatives from *Islah*, which moved into a position of formal opposition.

Despite the YSP boycott, the peaceful legislative balloting of April 1997 was broadly viewed as an important step toward cementing Yemen's image as a stable country genuinely committed to democracy. International observers described the balloting as generally free and fair, while the participation of women both as candidates and voters earned Western praise. However, the explosion of several bombs in Aden in late July underscored

the ongoing fragility of the social fabric, while the subsequent arrest of over 100 opposition figures reminded observers of the government's continued penchant for heavy-handed action.

Amid reports of growing friction between him and the president over economic issues, Prime Minister Ghanim offered his resignation in mid-April 1998. Salih formally accepted the resignation on April 29 and asked Deputy Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Ali al-Iryani (former prime minister of the Yemen Arab Republic) to take over the government on a caretaker basis. Salih formally appointed Iryani as prime minister on May 14, and a new (only slightly changed) government was sworn in on May 17. All ministers were affiliated with the GPC except for one independent and one member of the small Truth Party; the latter resigned four months later.

In the country's first direct presidential election on September 23, 1999, Salih was credited with 96.3 percent of the vote. (Only one challenger was sanctioned under controversial electoral regulations [see Current issues, below].) Subsequently, in another development that was strongly criticized by the government's opponents, Salih and the GPC proposed constitutional amendments extending the presidential term from five to seven years and the legislature's term from four to six years and calling for a new, enlarged Shura Council. The amendments received a reported 73 percent "yes" vote in a national referendum on February 20, 2001.

On March 31, 2001, President Salih named Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman BAJAMMAL, theretofore the deputy prime minister, to replace Prime Minister Iryani. (Reports variously said that Iryani had resigned for health reasons or had been dismissed by the president in order to inject "new blood" into the government.) Bajammal on April 4 announced a new cabinet, which was inaugurated on April 7.

In the legislative elections on April 27, 2003, the GPC significantly increased its majority, winning 238 seats, with some 8 million Yemenis reportedly going to the polls. In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March, Yemeni authorities wanted to show the strength of their determined

steps toward democracy. Significantly, the YSP, which had boycotted the 1997 elections, yielded some 100 candidates and negotiated with *Islah* and other constituencies to avoid splitting the antigovernment vote. However, the YSP won only 7 seats, and *Islah*, 46. In a conciliatory move, President Salih appointed a prominent socialist, Salim Saleh MUHAMMAD, as his special adviser. Some accusations of vote fraud surfaced. Three people died and 15 were injured in polling-day violence. A cabinet reshuffle followed the election, with half of the 35 members being replaced. A new ministry of human rights was established a few months later, headed by a woman.

In a major cabinet reshuffle on February 11, 2006, seven months before the scheduled presidential election, President Salih replaced 16 members, resulting in a cabinet in which all ministers were members of the GPC. In the presidential election of September 20, 2006, President Salih was reelected to a third term with 77.2 percent of the vote. Next among the four other candidates was Faisal bin Shamlan, the nominee of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), who was credited with 21.8 percent of the vote. Yasin Abdu SAID, who ran under the banner of the National Council of Opposition Parties (NCOP), and two independent candidates each won less than 1 percent of the vote. Salih was sworn in for a seven-year term on September 27.

On March 31, 2007, President Salih appointed electricity minister Ali Muhammad MAJUR of the GPC to replace Bajammal as prime minister. Majur named a new cabinet on April 4, and he was sworn in along with the new government on April 7.

### *Constitution and Government*

The 1990 constitution of the Republic of Yemen provided for a five-member Presidential Council, chosen by a popularly elected House of Representatives. The council was empowered to select its own chair and vice chair, who served effectively as the republic's president and vice president. The term of office was set at five years for the Presidential Council and four years for the House of Representatives. However, in the aftermath of the

civil war, the house on September 28, 1994, revised the basic law, abolishing the Presidential Council and providing for an elected chief executive with broadened powers, including the right to name the vice president and prime minister. In view of the turmoil remaining from the secessionist conflict, the house empowered itself to select the next president to serve for a five-year term, after which chief executives were to be chosen by direct popular election. In addition, future presidents were limited to two five-year terms. Following the legislative balloting of April 1997, President Salih announced the creation of a new Consultative Council, an advisory body of 59 presidentially appointed members. In the February 20, 2001, constitutional referendum, the presidential term of office was extended to seven years, and a new Shura Council was established with 111 members appointed by the president. Unlike the Consultative Council it replaced, the Shura Council was granted some decision-making responsibilities (see Legislature, below).

In a move with widespread political implications, the transitional government in 1990 appointed a commission to redraw the boundaries of local governorates, some of which had traditionally been ruled as virtual fiefdoms by tribal chiefs.

The 1990 basic law stipulated that the Islamic legal code (sharia) was to be utilized as "one source" of Yemeni law; the wording was changed to "the source" in 1994.

### *Foreign Relations*

North Yemen broke out of its age-long, largely self-imposed isolation in the mid-1950s, when the imam's government accepted economic and military aid from the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the United Arab Republic, and the United States. Diplomatic relations with Washington were broken off in June 1967 during the Arab-Israeli war, but were resumed in July 1972. Subsequent foreign concerns turned primarily on relations with the country's two immediate neighbors, conservative Saudi Arabia and Marxist South Yemen. Despite the former's previous record

of support for Yemen's defeated royalists, Saudi money and arms were instrumental during intermittent border warfare with South Yemen in 1971–1972 and again in February–March 1979. However, subsequent reaffirmation of the two Yemens' intention to merge (originally announced in 1972) was coolly received by Riyadh, which withheld several hundred million dollars in military supplies. In turn, North Yemen renewed its military dealings with the Soviet Union, and in October 1979 the Saudis were reported to have ended their annual budgetary supplement of \$250 million. In May 1988 an unimplemented 1985 accord between the two Yemens to create an 850-square-mile "joint economic zone" straddling the poorly demarcated border between the YAR's Marib region and the PDRY's Shabwa area was reactivated. However, Saudi Arabia had previously entered a claim for much of the disputed territory on the basis of recently published maps that extended its border with North Yemen many miles to the west of the previously assumed location.

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen professed a policy of nonalignment in foreign affairs, but its relations with other Arab countries were mixed because of its long-standing opposition to all conservative regimes and its record of close association with the Soviet Union. It voted against admission of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms to the Arab League. Numerous border clashes resulted from tensions with Saudi Arabia and the Yemen Arab Republic. Elsewhere, as a member of the hard-line Arab "steadfastness front," Aden rejected any partial settlement of the Middle East question, particularly the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Iraq's incursion into Kuwait dominated the Republic of Yemen's foreign policy agenda throughout the second half of 1990 and early 1991. Having initially deplored the invasion, Sana was criticized for maintaining a pro-Iraqi stance by abstaining in early August from a UN Security Council vote for sanctions against Baghdad and an Arab League vote to condemn the occupation. Subsequently, the government withdrew its threat to ignore international sanctions, but its unremitting criticism of the presence of Western troops in

Saudi Arabia led Riyadh on September 19 to withdraw special privileges granted to Yemeni citizens. By late November upward of 700,000 Yemeni nationals had been repatriated, with Sana claiming that Yemen should be compensated \$1.7 billion for losses caused by the crisis. On November 29 Yemen (the sole Arab UN Security Council member) voted against the council's resolution to use "all necessary means to uphold and implement" its earlier resolutions concerning Iraq, calling instead for a peaceful, Arab-negotiated settlement. Consequently, in January 1991 the United States announced it would withhold \$18 million of aid promised to Yemen; the Gulf states also withheld aid. Tension between Yemen and Saudi Arabia was described as being at an all-time high in mid-1992, their border conflict having taken on greater significance in view of recent oil discoveries in the region. Meanwhile, the antipathy generated in the West by Yemen's pro-Iraqi tilt during the Gulf crisis had also largely dissipated, Western attention again focusing on oil exploration licenses being issued by Sana.

The United States endorsed unity and thereby the northern cause during the 1994 civil war. In addition, Washington reportedly pressured Saudi Arabia (which apparently preferred a divided Yemen) and several other Arab countries into forgoing plans to recognize the southern DRY, thereby hastening the secessionist regime's collapse. Riyadh's "quiet" financial and military support for the southern forces exacerbated tension with Sana, and sporadic clashes were reported in late 1994 between Saudi and Yemeni troops in the contested border region. Under heavy international pressure to avoid further hostilities, however, the two countries agreed in February 1995 to negotiate, and the result was a preliminary accord that called for joint committees to demarcate the border and monitor future troop movements in the region. On June 3 Yemen and Oman completed demarcation of their frontier in accordance with the 1992 agreement.

In late 1995 a major foreign relations problem arose when Eritrean forces invaded Greater Hanish, one of nine islands in the archipelago between

the two countries near the mouth of the Red Sea. Although sovereignty over the islands had never been formally established by international convention, Yemeni fisherman had operated from Greater Hanish for many years, and some 200 Yemeni soldiers had been garrisoned there to provide “security” for a new hotel construction site. Eritrea, which based its claim on a 1938 agreement between Britain and Ethiopia, assumed control of Greater Hanish in December after three days of fighting, which took some 12 lives. Yemen, which based its claim on British turnover of two lighthouses on the islands to South Yemen in 1967, subsequently agreed to submit the dispute to binding arbitration by a panel of five judges. Tension remained high in early 1999, however, as Eritrea’s war with Ethiopia complicated regional affairs. However, Eritrea returned control of Greater Hanish (and nearby islands) to Yemen shortly after the international tribunal ruled in the latter’s favor in December. The tribunal also demarcated the maritime border between the two countries, whose relationship was subsequently described as “normalized.” Relations with Saudi Arabia, strained by significant border clashes in 1997, 1998, and early 2000, also improved substantially after a border agreement was announced in June 2000. Finally, in May 2004 both sides accepted the border demarcation plans developed by a German firm. In March 2005 officials from both countries, in a small sign of warming relations, discussed bilateral cooperation. By 2006, they had established a cooperation council, and in June they signed a final border treaty, which included infrastructure, fisheries, and social affairs agreements.

In mid-2004 Yemen was invited to take part in a G-8 Summit in Georgia, which was intended to promote democracy in the Middle East. Observers attributed Yemen’s presence to the country’s support of the U.S.-led war on terror. Yemen claimed to have arrested or jailed a large number of terror suspects linked to al-Qaida, which led the United States to resume arms sales to Yemen in 2004.

In 2006 members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) agreed to provide sufficient aid to help boost Yemen’s economy to the point at which the

country could be considered for membership in the GCC.

### *Current Issues*

Upon its installation in the spring of 1998, the Iryani government quickly enacted a 40 percent increase in the price of oil and basic foods, prompting disturbances in June in which as many as 100 people may have died. Several bombings throughout the rest of the year also contributed to the nation’s image problem, as did sporadic abductions by tribesmen seeking ransom or government concessions. However, the most serious incident was the politically motivated kidnapping in December of 16 Westerners by Islamic militants; four hostages died in the rescue effort by Yemeni security forces, whose tactics were criticized by UK officials, touching off a diplomatic row. (See Aden-Abyan Islamic Army under Political Parties and Groups, below, for further information.)

During his 1999 reelection campaign President Salih urged his countrymen to withdraw from “the culture of drugs and guns,” and the government issued new regulations regarding the use of *qat* by officials and the public display of weapons. However, observers questioned whether such policy directives would be of much influence outside the major cities, effective authority in rural areas still resting for the most part in the hands of tribal leaders.

Yemen became the focus of intense international attention when 17 U.S. sailors died following a suicide bombing attack against the destroyer *USS Cole* while it was refueling in Aden harbor on October 12, 2000. (The refueling arrangement had been implemented in 1999 as part of Washington’s “engagement” policy, which also included mine-clearing assistance by U.S. soldiers in Yemen and a White House audience in the spring of 2000 for President Salih.) Five years later, a Yemeni court commuted the sentence of one of two people and jailed four others for their role in the bombing, now considered by the United States an al-Qaida attack. A year earlier, ten suspects in the *Cole* attack escaped from a Yemeni jail, aided by some two



dozen others during a time of heightened violence in the country by Islamic militants. Many were suspected of being linked to Osama bin Laden, who, the United States warned, might be trying to regroup in his ancestral home.

Relations with Washington improved following the al-Qaida attacks in the United States in September 2001, Salih announcing that Yemen would cooperate with the subsequent U.S.-led global “war on terrorism.” Among other things, the Yemeni government shut down a number of religious and educational institutions suspected of serving as recruiting grounds for Islamic militants. The initiative intensified friction with the opposition *Islah* party, which had established some of the schools. However, terrorist attacks continued to plague Yemen, with high-profile episodes such as the killing of three American missionaries at a Baptist hospital in December 2002. A member of the opposition *Islah* party was sentenced to death in September 2003 for that crime. Earlier in 2003 “scores” of Muslim militants with suspected terror links were arrested, and another *Islah* official, who claimed to be bin Laden’s “spiritual leader,” was captured in Germany. Government forces also attacked the Islamic Army of Aden-Abyan, said to be linked to al-Qaida, and the leader of the army was executed in 2003. In the same year, authorities began experimenting with a “re-education” program in response to complaints about the large number of arrests and detainees being held without trial. The detainees were given religious instruction about “the true meaning of *jihad*,” and those who signed consenting documents were released to their families.

Adding to Yemen’s difficulties was the uprising in 2004 led by popular cleric Husayn al-HUTHI and his Organization of Believing Youth (*al-Shabab al-Mumin*). Hundreds of followers were killed, and more continued to die in violent clashes even after Yemeni army officials announced in September 2004 that al-Huthi himself had been killed. Confrontations in the mountainous northwest province of Saada were sustained through April 2005. Following a period of calm, President Salih announced in September an amnesty for all imprisoned sup-

porters of al-Huthi. About the same time, a Yemeni court canceled trial for and pardoned 36 people accused in the death of al-Huthi.

With several hundred suspected al-Qaida members jailed as of March 2005, the United States praised Yemen’s crackdown on terrorists. (At the same time, analysts suggested that Salih faced a difficult job in balancing cooperation with the United States with growing sentiment within the populace against Israel and the United States.) To enhance its standing, Yemen created a new ministry of human rights, and Salih continued to endorse democracy publicly, although skeptics reportedly viewed his stance as “window dressing” in response to President George W. Bush’s pressure for more democracy in the Middle East. In another setback, 23 prisoners, including 13 al-Qaida members and one of the men responsible for the *USS Cole* attack, escaped from a Yemeni military prison in February 2006. Observers pointed to the escape as an example of the country’s deteriorating security situation, although the government continued its crackdown on terror suspects.

On the political front, in what was described as an unprecedented move in the region, President Salih announced in 2005 that he would not seek reelection in 2006, preferring to turn leadership over to “young blood.” However, he ultimately registered as a candidate in response to what he described as rallies by millions of supporters, and he pledged to pursue democratization. In the days leading up to the election, 51 people were killed and at least 200 were injured in a stampede at a pro-Salih rally in an overcrowded stadium. The campaign focused on curbing government corruption and advancing democracy, with Salih making broad gestures toward democratization by providing government funding for candidates and granting them free access to Yemeni television. Faisal bin Shamlan presented the president with his strongest challenge in 28 years. Shamlan had resigned as oil minister in 1995 in protest over alleged corruption in the government and staged his campaign with the support of Islamic and socialist parties, among other opposition groups in the JMP coalition (see Political Parties and Groups,

below). Salih's victory was bolstered by GPC success in local elections held the same day, further reinforcing his authority (along with the GPC majority already established in parliament). Though the JMP initially rejected the results of the presidential poll, claiming fraud and other irregularities, it ultimately accepted the outcome. The international community appeared to acknowledge the results as sufficiently representative of the popular will. (Five people were killed in election-day clashes, but turnout nevertheless was strong at 65 percent.) Salih, for his part, was intent on pursuing much-needed reforms, observers said. Salih's major cabinet reshuffle in March 2007 (including more technocrats) was seen as a response to international pressure to introduce reforms.

In 2006–2007 Yemen continued its antiterrorism efforts with a series of arrests, including two alleged suicide bombers plotting attacks on oil installations. Government forces killed at least two al-Qaida members who had escaped from prison following their conviction in a 2002 plan to attack a French oil tanker. Clashes with members of the Organization of Believing Youth escalated in 2007, resulting in numerous deaths of Yemeni security forces. President Salih called on al-Huthi's followers to disarm, but the group reportedly threatened to broaden its insurgency outside of Sadaah province in the north and, according to a foreign website, allegedly threatened Jewish families in Yemen.

In July 2007 it was reported that the government was allowing known al-Qaida members or other Islamic extremists to stay out of prison in exchange for signing an agreement with the government to obey the law. Government officials said it was a practical solution in Yemen, the ancestral homeland of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. Meanwhile, observers said unemployment and poverty in Yemen have contributed to a growing number of insurgents recruited from Yemen by terrorist groups and paid to go to Iraq.

## Political Parties and Groups

Under the imams, parties in North Yemen were banned, political alignments being deter-

mined largely by tribal and religious loyalties. Prior to independence, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) fought for control of South Yemen; adherents of the latter subsequently went into exile. In October 1975 the NLF's successor, the National Front (NF), joined with the Popular Vanguard Party (a *Baath* group) and a Marxist formation, the Popular Democratic Union (PDU), to form the United Political Organization of the National Front (UPONF). In 1978 the UPONF was supplanted by the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP, below).

Under the liberalized constitutional provisions of the successor Republic of Yemen, some 70 groups were reportedly legalized, with about 40 presenting candidates in the April 1993 legislative balloting. In February 1995 a Democratic Opposition Coalition (DOC) was formed by 13 groups, including the YSP, the Arab Socialist *Baath* Party, the League of the Sons of Yemen, the National Democratic Front, and a number of small parties. Coordination within the DOC appeared to collapse, however, with some members choosing to participate in the April 1997 legislative elections and others supporting a boycott. Ongoing involvement of a YSP-led Opposition Coordination Council, also referenced as the National Council of Opposition Parties (NCOP), was subsequently reported, the council unsuccessfully attempting to present a candidate in the 1999 presidential balloting and opposing the constitutional amendments ratified in early 2001.

In 2006, in advance of presidential elections scheduled for September, six opposition groups formed a coalition variously styled as the Joint Gathering or the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). The six groups were the YSP, *Islah*, *Baath*, NUPP, UFP, and *al-Haqq*. (The *Baath* later withdrew from the JMP following disputes on a number of policies.) The JMP's nominee for president was former oil minister Faisal bin Shamlan, the main challenger to Salih. The NCOP, an alliance of the Democratic Nasserite Party, the Liberation Front Party, the National Social Party, the Popular Liberation Unity Party, the Popular Unity Party, the UPF, and the

NDF, fielded a candidate in the 2006 presidential election who won less than 1 percent of the vote (see Political Background, above).

### *Government Party*

**General People's Congress**—GPC (*Mutamar al-Shabi al-Am*). Encompassing 700 elected and 300 appointed members, the GPC was founded in 1982 in the YAR with the widespread expectation that it would assume the quasi-legislative duties of the nonelected Constituent People's Assembly. However, the latter body continued to function until replaced in 1988 by a predominately elected Consultative Assembly, the GPC essentially taking on the role of an unofficial ruling party, with delegates to its biennial sessions being selected by local congresses. Longtime YAR president Ali Abdallah Salih relinquished his position as secretary general of the GPC upon assuming the presidency of the Republic of Yemen in May 1990; however, the group continued as one of the parties (along with the YSP, below) responsible for guiding the new republic through the transitional period culminating in the 1993 legislative election.

The GPC won a plurality (123 seats) in the April 1993 House of Representatives balloting, its support coming primarily from northern tribal areas. Although a coalition government with the YSP was announced on May 30, the two leading parties grew increasingly estranged prior to the onset of the 1994 civil war. Following that conflict, the GPC announced the formation of a new government in coalition with *Islah* (below). At its fifth congress, held June 25, 1995, the GPC reelected all incumbent party leaders, including Salih as chair.

The GPC, aided by a YSP boycott, won a majority of 187 seats in the April 1997 house balloting and, following *Islah's* decision to join the opposition, GPC members filled all but three posts in the new government named the following month. GPC Secretary General Abd al-Karim Ali al-Iryani was named prime minister in May 1998 following the resignation of Faraj Said ibn Ghanim, who was not a GPC member. Salih was reelected to another term

as president of the republic in September 1999 in the nation's first direct balloting for that post.

In the balloting of April 27, 2003, the GPC won 238 seats. The opposition *Islah* negotiated, though ultimately unsuccessfully, to avoid splitting the antigovernment vote.

President Salih was reelected party president in 2005 and nominated as the party's 2006 presidential candidate. Following Salih's reelection in September coupled with the party's success in concurrent local elections, the GPC solidified its dominant position.

*Leaders:* Ali Abdallah SALIH (President of the Republic and Chair of the Party), Abdurabu Mansur HADI (Vice President of the Republic), Abd al-Aziz Abd al-GHANI (Former Prime Minister and Speaker of the Shura Council), Abd al-Karim Ali al-IRYANI (Former Prime Minister and Vice Chair of the Party), Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman BAJAMMAL (Former Prime Minister and Secretary General of the Party).

### *Other Legislative Parties*

**Yemeni Congregation for Reform** (*al-Tajammu al-Yamani lil-Islah*). Also referenced as the Yemeni *Islah* Party (YIP), *Islah* was launched in September 1990 under the leadership of influential northern tribal leader Sheikh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar, formerly a consistent opponent of unification. The party subsequently campaigned against the 1990 constitution in alliance with several other groups advocating strict adherence to sharia.

Somewhat surprisingly, *Islah* finished second in the April 1993 house balloting by winning 62 seats, its success due primarily to strong support from the conservative pro-Saudi population in northern tribal areas. Its principal leader, Sheikh al-Ahmar, was elected speaker of the new house, while its initial allocation of four cabinet posts in May was increased to six in June, with one *Islah* representative being named to the five-member Presidential Council in October. The party's influence grew further during the 1994 civil war because of its strong support for President Salih and the northern unity forces. It was given nine portfolios in the

postwar coalition government with the GPC. Four of the ministerial posts were filled by members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the influential charitable and quasi-political organization with branches in many Arab nations. Observers suggested that the appointments reflected the growing strength of the Islamist tendency within the YIP at the possible expense of conservative, tribal-based elements. For the moment, a balance was seemingly maintained during *Islah's* September 1994 congress in Sana, with Sheikh al-Ahmar being reelected party leader and “fundamentalist ideologue” Abd al-Maguid al-Zindani being elected chair of the party’s 100-member governing council.

*Islah's* subsequent relationship with the GPC remained tenuous, the minority government partner continuing to question the GPC’s handling of economic and administrative reform. At one point prior to the 1997 legislative balloting *Islah* was reportedly considering not participating in the elections. However, an arrangement was apparently concluded under which the GPC agreed not to challenge *Islah* candidates in a number of constituencies. After securing 53 seats in the new house, *Islah* declined to join the new cabinet, although Sheikh al-Ahmar was reelected house speaker. By exiting the cabinet *Islah* lost control of the education portfolio, which had accorded it authority over religion in the nation’s schools. Despite remaining outside the government, *Islah* continued to support some major proposals of the Salih administration, including the constitutional amendments approved in early 2001. However, the relations between *Islah* and the government soured later in 2001 due to the government’s continued efforts to take over religious schools organized by *Islah*. The party also criticized the government for its close cooperation with the United States following September 2001. In the elections of April 27, 2003, *Islah* garnered 46 seats, and al-Ahmar was subsequently reelected as speaker of the House of Representatives. In 2005 some in the party reportedly agreed to allow women to participate in elections, though there was no official pronouncement on the subject.

In 2005 Yemen asked the United States to remove al-Zindani, who had been accused of working

with Osama bin Laden, from its list of suspected terrorists.

Party leader Sheikh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-Ahmar, who heads the tribe of which President Salih is a member, said he personally supported Salih’s reelection bid, though his preference was “not binding” on the party. “Better the devil you know than the angel you don’t,” al-Ahmar was quoted as saying. The party, as part of the JMP coalition (above), officially supported Faisal bin Shamlan in the 2006 presidential election.

In February 2007 the party replaced al-Zindani as its spiritual leader but urged the government to continue to press Washington to remove al-Zindani’s name from its list of suspected financiers of terrorism. In March al-Ahmar was reelected party president, and al-Zindani was named to the party’s supreme panel.

*Leaders:* Sheikh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-AHMAR (Party Chair and Speaker of the House of Representatives), Muhammad Ali AJILAN (Chair of *Islah* Governing Council), Muhammad Ali al-YADUMI (Vice Chair), Sheikh Abd al-Wahab Ali al-UNSI (Secretary General).

**Yemeni Socialist Party**—YSP (*al-Hizb al-Ishtiraki al-Yamani*). Modeled after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the YSP was formed in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist “vanguard party” for the PDRY and subsequently maintained strict one-party control of South Yemen’s political affairs despite several serious leadership battles (see Political background, above). In February 1990 the YSP Central Committee announced the separation of state and party functions under a multiparty system as a means of promoting Yemeni unity. Upon unification, YSP secretary general Ali Salim al-Beidh was named vice president of the new republic.

The YSP won 56 seats in the April 1993 House of Representatives election, and party leaders announced a potential merger with the GPC. However, with substantial opposition to the plan having reportedly been voiced within the YSP’s 33-member Politburo, no progress toward the union ensued, and the YSP on its own was allocated 9 cabinet seats in the government formed in May.

Personal animosity between al-Beidh and Yemeni President Salih was considered an important element in the subsequent north/south confrontation, which culminated in the 1994 civil war. However, al-Beidh and his supporters attributed the friction to the inability (or, possibly, the disinclination) of security forces to protect YSP members. (An estimated 150 YSP members were assassinated between May 1990 and early 1994.)

Following the collapse of the YSP-led Democratic Republic of Yemen in July 1994, the party appeared to be in disarray. Al-Beidh announced from exile that he was “retiring from politics,” although some of the other secessionist leaders who had fled the country pledged to pursue their goal of an independent south. Meanwhile, in September the YSP rump in Yemen elected a new Politburo comprising 13 southerners and 10 northerners. Aware that a significant portion of the YSP had opposed the ill-fated independence movement, President Salih announced that the reorganized party would be allowed to keep its legal status. However, he declared al-Beidh and 15 other separatist leaders to be beyond reconciliation and subject to arrest for treason should they return to Yemen. Subsequently, when the GPC/YIP coalition government was formed in October, the YSP announced it was assuming the role of “leading opposition party.” A bitter dispute was reported within the party in 1997 concerning the decision not to participate in the April house balloting, boycott supporters claiming government fraud during voter registration. Meanwhile, al-Beidh, former PDRY prime minister Haydar Abu Bakr al-Attas, and three others were sentenced to death in absentia at the conclusion of a trial in March 1998.

YSP Secretary General Ali Saleh OBAD attempted to run for president of the republic in 1999 but, as was the case with nearly all of the other potential challengers, failed to achieve the required support in the legislature. The party subsequently continued to challenge the GPC’s stranglehold on power, and, in what was described as a “provocative” decision, al-Beidh and al-Attas were included in the next Central Committee elected at the YSP General Congress in August 2000 in Sana. Not

surprisingly, the YSP strongly opposed the 2001 constitutional amendments, which extended the presidential and legislative terms of office.

In late 2002 the Secretary General of the YSP, Jarallah UMAR, was assassinated by an Islamic extremist. His assassin was believed to be an associate of the man who killed the American missionaries days later (see Current issues, above).

In 2003 Salih reconciled with al-Beidh and pardoned the YSP members who had been sentenced to death. The party secured seven seats in the 2003 elections. In a move toward further cooperation, YSP leaders began talks with the GPC in 2005 to “bridge the gap between them.”

*Leaders:* Yassin Said NUMAN (Former Speaker of the House of Representatives), Ali SARARI, Ali Salih MUQBIL (Secretary General).

**Arab Socialist Baath Party.** Seven *Baath* Party candidates were successful in the April 1993 legislative election, and party member Mujahid ABU SHAWARIB was subsequently named a deputy prime minister in the cabinet announced in May. However, *Baath* leaders announced that the party would sit in opposition, with Abu Shawarib serving essentially as an independent rather than a *Baath* representative. The grouping secured two seats in the 1997 house elections and two seats in the 2003 elections. In 2006 the party announced its support for President Salih in the upcoming presidential election.

*Leader:* Dr. Qasim SALAM (Secretary General).

**Nasserite Unionist People’s Party**—NUPP (*al-Tanthim al-Wahdawi al-Shabi al-Nasri*). Formed in 1989 and reportedly the largest of the nation’s Nasserite groupings, the NUPP won one seat in the 1993 legislative balloting, three in 1997, and three in 2003.

*Leader:* Abdul Malik al-MAKHLAFI.

### *Other Parties and Groups*

**Truth Party** (*al-Haqq*). Founded by Islamic religious scholars in late 1991, *al-Haqq* won two seats in the 1993 parliamentary balloting. Although *al-Haqq* had no successful candidates in the 1997

elections, party leader Ibrahim al-Wazir was named minister of justice in the new GPC-led cabinet formed in May. He was replaced after the 2003 reshuffle. Sheikh Ahmad ibn Ali Shami, the secretary general of *al-Haqq*, was named minister of religious guidance in the May 1998 reshuffle, although he left the post in September because of what he described as “interference” from other officials in carrying out his duties. In October 2004 a party official was beaten in what could well have been a politically motivated attack. The government has accused the group of backing the rebellion of cleric and former Truth leader Husayn al-Huthi (see Current issues, above). Police attacks on followers of al-Huthi reportedly continued in 2005.

*Leaders:* Ibrahim al-WAZIR, Sheikh Ahmad ibn Ali SHAMI (Secretary General).

**Yemeni Unionist Alliance** (*Tajammu*). *Tajammu* was formed in 1990 by human rights proponents from both north and south, party leaders subsequently criticizing the national government for its pro-Iraqi stance during the Gulf crisis. In late 1991 a mainstream Islamic party, *al-Nahdah* (Renaissance), reportedly merged with *Tajammu*, partly in response to government efforts to get smaller parties to coalesce. However, in 1995 *al-Nahdah* was reported to have entered the DOC as a discrete entity.

*Leaders:* Omar al-JAWI, Muhammed Abd al-RAHMAN.

**League of the Sons of Yemen** (*Rabibat Abna al-Yaman*). Founded in 1990 to represent tribal interests in the south, the league campaigned against the proposed constitution for the new republic because it did not stipulate sharia as the only source of Yemeni law. The party offered 92 candidates in the 1993 general elections, none of whom were successful. League leader Abd al-Rahman al-Jifri, born in Yemen but a citizen of Saudi Arabia, was named vice president of the breakaway Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1994. Following the separatists’ defeat, al-Jifri moved to London, where he served as chair of the Yemeni National Opposition Front (normally referenced as MOWJ, an abbreviation derived from the transliteration of its Arabic

name). Al-Jifri maintained that he was also still the leader of the League of the Sons of Yemen, but reportedly league members remaining in Yemen had voted to dismiss him from his post. A small league rump participated in the 1997 elections without success.

In March 1998 al-Jifri was sentenced in absentia to ten years in prison for his role in the 1994 conflict. However, the sentence was immediately suspended, separating the MOWJ leader from the YSP separatists who had been tried at the same time. Although critical of government policies that had contributed to the “deterioration in living conditions,” the MOWJ Executive Committee in March 2000 called for national reconciliation through “dialogue with the Salih administration,” and, following the accord between Saudi Arabia and Yemen at midyear, the MOWJ announced that it was suspending its antigovernment activities. Al-Jifri announced in 2006 that he would return to Yemen and support Salih’s reelection bid despite his political differences with the president. He said his decision was based on discussions he had with Salih about the need for political and economic reforms.

*Leader:* Abd al-Rahman al-JIFRI.

**National Democratic Front**—NDF. Formed in 1976 by an assortment of *Baathists*, Marxists, Nasserites, and disaffected Yemenis, the leftist NDF subsequently conducted a sporadic guerrilla campaign against the government of North Yemen and supported the South Yemen army in the 1979 invasion. However, although the Front remained an opponent of the YAR regime, its antigovernment activities were relatively unimportant during the 1980s. Four of the new members appointed to the House of Representatives upon the creation of the Republic of Yemen were identified as NDF members. No NDF candidates were successful in the 1997 legislative balloting. There was no record of this party in the 2003 elections.

The **Liberation Party** (*Hizb al-Tahrir*). Organized in 2003 with the aim of creating an orthodox Islamic state, this group did not participate in the elections. In 2004 security forces arrested a number

## Cabinet

As of August 1, 2007

Prime Minister	Ali Muhammad Majur
Deputy Prime Minister	Rashad Muhammad al-Alimi
Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs	Affairs Abd al-Karim al-Arhabi

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Irrigation	Mansour al-Houshabi
Communications and Information Technology	Kamal al-Jabri
Culture	Muhammad al-Maflahi
Defense	Muhammad Nasir Ahmad Ali
Education	Abd al-Salam al Jawfi
Electricity	Mustafa Buhran
Expatriate Affairs	Saleh Sumayie
Finance	Numan Salih al-Suhaybi
Fisheries	Mahmud Ibrahim Saghiri
Foreign Affairs	Abu-Bakr Abdallah al-Qirbi
Higher Education and Scientific Research	Salih Ali Ba Surah
Human Rights	Huda Adul-Latif al-Ban [f]
Industry and Trade	Yahya al-Mutawakel
Information	Hassan Ahmad al-Awzi
Interior	Rashad Muhammad al-Alimi
Justice	Ghazi Shaif al-Aghbari
Labor and Social Affairs	Amat al-Rassaq Ali Hamad [f]
Legal Affairs	Rashad al-Rassas
Local Administration	Abdul-Qadir Ali Hilal
Oil and Mineral Resources	Khalid Mahfuz Ba Hah
Planning and International Cooperation	Abd al-Karim al-Arhabi
Public Health and Population	Abd al-Karim Rasi
Public Works and Urban Development	Umar Abdullah al-Qurshumi
Religious Guidance	Hamoud al-Hitar
Social Security and Civil Service	Hamud Khalid al-Sufi
Technical Education and Vocational Training	Ibrahim Hajri
Tourism	Nabil Hasan al-Faqih
Transportation	Khalid al-Wazir
Water and Environment	Abd al-Rahman Fadi al-Iryani
Youth and Sport	Hamud Ubad

### *Ministers of State*

Consultative Council and Parliamentary Affairs	Adnan al-Jafri
Mayor of Sana	Yahya Muhammad al-Shuaybi

[f] = female

of party members after they staged a public demonstration.

*Leader:* Nasir Abdu ALLAHBI (Spokesperson).

**Union of Popular Forces**—UPF. Little is known about this group, whose newsletter editor was sentenced to a year in prison in 2004 after being accused of aiding the rebellion of former Truth leader Husayn al-Huthi. *Leader:* Muhammad al-RABOEI (Secretary General).

Other parties include the **Democratic Nasserite Party**, led by 2006 presidential candidate Yasin Abdu Said; the **Liberation Front Party**, established in South Yemen in the 1970s by Abdul Fattah ISMAIL; the **National Social Party**, led by Abd al-Azziz al-BUKIR; the **Popular Liberation Unity Party**; and the **Popular Unity Party**.

A previously unknown group, the **Aden-Abyan Islamic Army**, claimed responsibility for the December 1998 kidnapping of 16 Westerners in southern Yemen. Zein al-Abidine al-MIHDAR, described as one of the leaders of the group, reportedly called for strikes against U.S. installations and an end to U.S. “aggression” against Iraq. Mihdar and several others went on trial in April 1999. Meanwhile, U.S. and UK officials were reportedly investigating possible links between the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (which reportedly comprised so-called “Arab Afghans” who moved to Yemen in the early 1990s after fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan) and the terrorist network of Osama bin Laden. (Several of those accused in the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in mid-1998 had carried Yemeni passports.) Mihdar was executed in October 1999 after being found guilty of terrorism in August. The reported new head of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, Hatim Muhsin ibn FARID, formerly of the League of the Sons of Yemen, was sentenced to seven years in prison in October 2000. In October 2002 the group claimed responsibility for an explosion in a French tanker off the Yemeni coast, and Yemeni officials subsequently arrested others in the attack who were suspected of having ties to al-Qaida.

The government continued its attacks on the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, by then widely believed to be linked to al-Qaida. In 2005 Yemeni authorities asked the UK to extradite Abu Hamza al-MASRI so they could try him for his alleged support of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army and for his alleged involvement in terrorist activities in Yemen. However, British authorities said if al-Masri was ever released, he would be extradited to the United States on numerous terrorist charges.

In 2006 the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army claimed there had been an assassination attempt against its leader, Sheikh Khalid Abd al-NABI, by government security forces. The government denied the charge and said President Salih had pardoned Abd al-Nabi on unspecified charges. In 2007 the government released from jail 100 men described as Muslim extremists, including some members of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, who were each given \$1,000 to help them start a new life.

## Legislature

**Shura Council** (*Majlis al-Shura*). The largely advisory Shura Council was established in accordance with constitutional amendments approved in a national referendum on February 20, 2001. The president appointed all 111 members of the advisory body, including some from the opposition, on April 28. The Shura Council, which has some legislative authority, replaced the 59-member Consultative Council formed in 1997.

*Speaker:* Abd al-Aziz Abd al-GHANI.

The transitional **House of Representatives** (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*) installed in 1990 was a 301-member body encompassing the 159 members of the former YAR Consultative Assembly, the 111 members of the former PDRY Supreme People’s Council, and 31 people named by the government (in part to represent opposition groups). A national referendum on February 20, 2001, approved a constitutional amendment increasing the legislative term of office from four to six years.

A new 301-member house was directly elected by universal suffrage on April 17, 1993. Following



the most recent elections on April 27, 2003, the seats were distributed as follows: the General People's Congress, 238; the Yemeni *Islah* Party, 46; the Yemeni Socialist Party, 8; the Nasserite Unionist People's Party, 3; the Arab Socialist *Baath* Party, 2; independents, 4.

The next election was scheduled for 2009.

*Speaker:* Sheikh Abdallah ibn Husayn al-AHMAR.

## Communications

Although government control of the press was strict in both North and South Yemen, unification yielded considerable liberalization. By late 1991 Yemen boasted over 100 newspapers and other periodicals, many of them critical of the government. However, extensive censorship was reimposed at the outbreak of the 1994 civil war, ongoing restrictions prompting a demonstration in support of freedom of expression in Sana in February 1995, which was broken up by government forces. Harassment (including prosecution) of journalists by the government has subsequently been reported on a regular basis. In April 2005 the Ministry of Information drafted amendments to expand freedom of the press and free speech, and the following month President Salih asked for legislation that would not include prison or detention for journalists. However, press freedoms remained uneven, with some 11 journalists sentenced to prison for two years in early 2005 for "criminal acts" in Yemen and abroad. Though the government denies it monitors use of the Internet, the U.S. State Department says the government sometimes blocks certain websites.

### *Press*

Except as noted, the following are published in Sana in Arabic: *al-Thawrah* (The Revolution, 110,000), government-owned daily; *al-Jumhuriyah* (100,000), government-controlled daily published in Taiz; *Yemen Times* (30,000), independent

weekly in English; *26th September* (25,000), armed forces weekly; *al-Rabi Ashar Min Uktubar* (14th October, 20,000), government-controlled daily published in Aden; *al-Shura* (15,000), weekly; *al-Shararah* (The Spark, 6,000), government-controlled daily published in Aden; *al-Sahwah* (Awakening), Islamic fundamentalist weekly; *al-Mithaq* (The Charter), GPC weekly; *al-Wahdawi*, NUPP weekly; *Yemen Observer*, independent weekly in English; *al-Bilad* (The Country), rightist weekly; *Sana*, leftist monthly. In recent reports *al-Ayyam*, published in Aden, has been described as the best-selling independent newspaper.

### *News Agency*

The Saba News Agency is located in the capital. There is also an Aden News Agency.

### *Broadcasting and Computing*

At unification the northern and southern state broadcast organizations were combined to form the Broadcasting Service of the Republic of Yemen (*Idhaat al-Jumhuriyat al-Yamaniyah*), which operates radio stations in Sana, Taiz, Hodeida, and Aden as well as television services in Sana and Aden. As of 2005, there were approximately 15 personal computers and 9 Internet users per 1,000 people. In that same year there were about 95 mobile cellular subscribers for every 1,000 inhabitants.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the U.S.:** Abdulwahab A. al-HAJJRI

**U.S. Ambassador to Yemen:** Stephen A. SECHE

**Permanent Representative to the UN:** Abdallah M. al-SAIDI

**IGO Memberships (Non-UN):** AFESD, AMF, CAEU, IDB, Interpol, IOM, IOR-ARC, LAS, NAM, OIC, WCO

# PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY/ PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

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**Note: In response to Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, aimed at weakening its Hamas-led government, the wall on Gaza's border with Egypt was breached January 23, 2008, resulting in a mass influx of Palestinians in search of basic supplies. As staples ran low in border towns and Palestinians increasingly attempted to stay in Egypt, officials moved to seal the border. Motions for a border jointly administered by the Egyptian government and the West Bank's ruling Palestinian Authority were rebuffed by Hamas.**

## Geography

### *Gaza Strip*

The Gaza Strip consists of that part of former Palestine contiguous with Sinai that was still held by Egyptian forces at the time of the February 1949 armistice with Israel. Encompassing some 140 square miles (363 sq. km.), the territory was never annexed by Egypt and since 1948 has never been legally recognized as part of any state. In the wake of the 1967 war, nearly half of its population of 356,100 (1971E) was living in refugee camps, according to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The population was estimated by Palestinian officials to be 934,000, prior to a census conducted in late 1997, the results of which indicated an increase to about 1,022,000.

Most of Gaza was turned over to Palestinian administration under the Israeli-Palestinian accord of May 4, 1994, with Israel retaining authority over Jewish settlements and responsibility for external defense of the territory. On February 20, 2005, the Israeli cabinet voted, by a vote of 17 to 5, to endorse Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for uni-

lateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip to begin on August 15 of that year. The decision to unilaterally disengage from Gaza was bitterly opposed



by many members of Sharon's own *Likud* Party, as well as by members of religious-Zionist parties in his ruling coalition. Nevertheless, Sharon was able to implement the plan upon leaving *Likud* and forming *Kadima*. The plan required the dismantling of all Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip, the evacuation of 8,000 settlers, and the closure of military bases. The withdrawal was finally completed on September 12, 2005, marking the end of 38 years of Israeli rule over that territory. Israel, however, retained offshore maritime control as well as control of airspace over Gaza.

### *West Bank*

Surrounded on three sides by Israel and bounded on the east by the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, the West Bank territory encompasses what was the Jordanian portion of former Palestine between 1948 and 1967. It has an area of 2,270 sq. mi. and, according to results of the Palestinian census of late 1997, a Palestinian population of 1,873,000 (including East Jerusalem); earlier figures had also reported over 130,000 Jewish settlers. The West Bank was occupied by Israel following the 1967 war. In July 1988 King Hussein of Jordan announced that his government would abandon its claims to the West Bank and would respect the wishes of Palestinians to establish their own independent state in the territory.

Under the Israeli-Palestinian accord of May 4, 1994 (an extension of the September 13, 1993, Oslo Agreement [see Political background, below]), the West Bank enclave of Jericho was turned over to Palestinian administration on May 13. Palestinian control was extended to six more West Bank towns (Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm) in late 1995 as the result of the second major "self-rule" accord, signed on September 28, 1995. Concurrently, civic authority in more than 450 villages in the West Bank was also turned over to the Palestinians, although Israeli forces remained responsible for security in those areas. In January 1997 Israeli troops withdrew from all but about 20 percent of the West Bank town of Hebron. In addition, an agreement was announced

for additional redeployment of Israeli troops from other West Bank areas in three stages over the next 18 months.

It was generally expected that the withdrawals would occur relatively quickly from most of the villages already under Palestinian civic authority, with as yet ill-defined redeployment from the rural areas in the West Bank to follow. However, none of the withdrawals had occurred by March 1998, as negotiations between Palestinian representatives and the Israeli government collapsed. A new series of withdrawals was authorized by the Wye agreement of October 1998, but only the first of those stages was implemented. An ambitious timetable for further withdrawals was endorsed by the Sharm al-Shaikh agreement of September 1999, but implementation was never achieved. The subsequent "effective state of war" between the Palestinians and Israelis precluded further resolution as Israeli forces occupied many of the areas previously turned over to Palestinian control.

In June 2002 Israel began constructing a barrier to separate the West Bank from Israel; the Israeli government stated that the construction of the barrier was necessary to prevent the flow of Palestinian suicide bombers from the West Bank. The route of the barrier has been mired in controversy given that it did not completely follow the 1949 Israeli-Jordanian armistice line, also known as the Green Line, and that it encircled Palestinian communities close to the Israel-West Bank border. Although the barrier generally runs along this line, it diverges in some places to incorporate large Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and has left some Palestinian population centers on the Israeli side of the barrier. In February 2005 the Israeli government approved a new route for the barrier that would make it 681 kilometers in length. The government approved the new route after the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the previous route was disruptive to the lives of Palestinians who would have been put on the Israeli side of the barrier. As a result, the new route runs closer to Israel's boundary with the West Bank, although it still includes between 6 to 8 percent of West Bank land on the Israeli side of the barrier. Concomitant

**Political Status:** Independent Palestinian state (largely symbolic) encompassing the Gaza Strip and the West Bank decreed by Yasir Arafat, chair of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on November 15, 1988; Declaration of Principles establishing a “Palestinian authority” to assume partial governmental responsibility in Gaza and portions of the West Bank signed by Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on September 13, 1993; agreement reached on May 4, 1994, between Arafat and Rabin for formal launching of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from certain occupied territories and inauguration of the first Palestinian Authority (PA, or Palestinian National Authority [PNA]) on July 5; extension of limited Palestinian self-rule to additional territory approved in Israeli-Palestinian accord on September 24, 1995; elected civilian government inaugurated February–May 1996 to govern most of Gaza and portions of the West Bank; mixed presidential-prime ministerial system adopted for Palestinian self-rule areas on March 10, 2003; Israeli settlements in Gaza dismantled and all Israeli forces withdrawn unilaterally from Gaza in August–September 2005; control of Gaza taken over in June 2007 by the Islamic Resistance Movement (*Hamas*), with the PNA retaining control of Palestinian self-rule territory in the West Bank.

**President:** Mahmoud ABBAS (*Fatah*/Palestine Liberation Organization); directly elected on January 9, 2005, and inaugurated on January 15 to succeed Yasir ARAFAT (*Fatah*/Palestine Liberation Organization), who had died on November 11, 2004.

**Prime Minister:** Salam Khaled Abdallah FAYYAD; appointed by the president on June 14, 2007, to succeed Ismail HANIYAH (Islamic Resistance Movement [*Hamas*]), who was dismissed (along with his entire cabinet) by the president the same day in conjunction with the president’s declaration of a state of emergency, following the takeover of Gaza by *Hamas*.

with Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip in August–September 2005, Israeli forces were also redeployed from some areas in the northern West Bank. This redeployment included the evacuation of the northern West Bank settlements of Ganim, Kadim, Sa-Nur, and Homesh.

## Government and Politics

### *Political Background*

(For information on developments prior to November 1988, see the section on the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], below.) Upon convocation of the 19th session of the PLO’s Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers in mid-November 1988, it appeared that a majority within the PLO and among Palestinians in the occupied territories favored “land for peace” negotiations with Israel. On November 15 PLO Chair Yasir ARAFAT, with the endorsement of the PNC, declared the establishment of an independent Palestinian state encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip with the Arab sector of Jerusalem as its capital, based on the UN “two-state” proposal that had been rejected by the Arab world in 1947. The PLO Executive Committee was authorized to direct the affairs of the new state pending the establishment of a provisional government.

In conjunction with the 1988 independence declaration, the PNC adopted a new political program that included endorsement of the UN resolutions that implicitly acknowledged Israel’s right to exist. The PNC also called for UN supervision of the occupied territories pending final resolution of the conflict through a UN-sponsored international conference. Although Israel had rejected the statehood declaration and the new PLO peace initiative in advance, many countries (over 110 as of April 1989) subsequently recognized the newly proclaimed entity. The onrush of diplomatic activity following the PNC session included a speech by Arafat in December to the UN General Assembly, which convened in Geneva for the occasion because of U.S. refusal to grant the PLO chair a visa to speak in New York. A short time later, after a 13-year lapse, the

United States agreed to direct talks with the PLO, Washington announcing it was satisfied that Arafat had “without ambiguity” renounced terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist.

On April 2, 1989, the PLO’s Central Council unanimously elected Arafat president of the self-proclaimed Palestinian state and designated Faruk QADDUMI as foreign minister of the still essentially symbolic government. Israel remained adamantly opposed to direct contact with the PLO, however, proposing instead that Palestinians end the *intifada* in return for the opportunity to elect non-PLO representatives to peace talks.

During the rest of 1989 and early 1990, the PLO appeared to make several significant concessions, despite growing frustration among Palestinians and the Arab world in general over a perceived lack of Israeli reciprocity. Of particular note was Arafat’s “conditional” acceptance in February 1990 of a U.S. plan for direct Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, theretofore opposed by the PLO in favor of the long-discussed international peace conference. However, the Israeli government, unwilling to accept even indirect PLO involvement, rejected the U.S. proposal, thus further undercutting the PLO moderates. By June the impasse had worsened, in part because of PLO protests over the growing immigration to Israel of Soviet Jews. Moreover, Washington decided to discontinue its talks with the PLO because of a lack of disciplinary action against those claiming responsibility for an attempted commando attack in Tel Aviv (see PLF, below).

Subsequently, the PLO leadership and a growing proportion of its constituency gravitated to the hard-line, anti-Western position being advocated by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, a stance that created serious problems for the PLO following Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait in August 1990. Despite anti-Iraq resolutions approved by the majority of Arab League members, Arafat and other prominent PLO leaders openly supported President Hussein throughout the Gulf crisis. As a result, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states suspended their financial aid to the PLO (estimated at about \$100 million annually), while Western

sympathy for the Palestinian cause eroded. Following the defeat of Iraqi forces by the U.S.-led coalition in March 1991, the PLO was left, in the words of a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent, “hamstrung by political isolation and empty coffers.” Consequently, the PLO’s leverage in Middle East negotiations initiated by the United States at midyear was reduced, and the 20th PNC session in Algiers in late September agreed to a joint Palestinian-Jordanian negotiating team with no official link to the PLO for the multilateral peace talks inaugurated in Madrid, Spain, in October. However, it was generally conceded that the Palestinian negotiators were handpicked by Arafat and represented a direct extension of PLO strategy.

As the peace talks moved into early 1992, Arafat and *Fatah* faced growing criticism that concessions had yielded little in return, fundamentalist groups such as the Islamic Resistance Movement (*Hamas*) in particular benefiting from mainstream PLO defections in the West Bank and Gaza. Consequently, it was widely believed that Arafat would face yet another strong challenge at the Central Council meeting scheduled for April. However, circumstances changed after the PLO leader’s plane crashed in a sandstorm in the Libyan desert on April 7, with Arafat being unaccounted for, and widely presumed dead, for 15 hours. Panic reportedly overcame many of his associates as they faced the possible disintegration of a leaderless organization. Thus, when Arafat was found to be alive, a tumultuous celebration spread throughout the Palestinian population, reconfirming his preeminence. As a result, even though the succession issue remained a deep concern, Arafat’s policies, including continued participation in the peace talks, were endorsed with little opposition when the Central Council finally convened in May. Negotiations were put on hold, however, until the Israeli election in June, after which PLO leaders cautiously welcomed the victory of the Israel Labor Party as enhancing the peace process.

Although peace talks resumed in August 1992, they failed to generate any immediate progress, and criticism of Arafat’s approach again intensified. In September the Democratic Front for the Liberation

of Palestine (DFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), *Hamas*, and a number of other non-PLO groups established a coalition in Damascus to oppose any further negotiations with Israel. In addition, it was subsequently reported that Arafat's support had dwindled at the October session of the PLO's Central Council.

Israel's expulsion of some 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories to Lebanon in late December 1992 further clouded the situation, the PLO condemning the deportations and ordering the Palestinian representatives to suspend their participation in the peace negotiations. Even after the talks resumed in mid-1993, they quickly appeared deadlocked, and rancorous debate was reported within the PLO leadership on how to proceed. By that time, with *Hamas's* influence in the occupied territories continuing to grow, some onlookers were describing the PLO and its aging chair as "fading into oblivion" and "collapsing." However, those writing off Arafat were unaware that PLO and Israeli representatives had been meeting secretly for nearly eight months in Oslo, Norway, and other European capitals to discuss mutual recognition and the beginning of Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories. Although initial reports of the discussions in late August were met with widespread incredulity, an exchange of letters on September 9 between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin confirmed that the peace process had indeed taken a hopeful turn. For his part, Arafat wrote that the PLO recognized "the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security" and described PLO Charter statements to the contrary to be "inoperative and no longer valid." The chair also declared that the PLO "renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence." In return, Rabin's short letter confirmed that Israel had "decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process."

For all practical purposes the initial round of direct PLO-Israeli negotiations had already been completed, and the mutual recognition letters were quickly followed by unofficial but extensive re-

ports of a draft Declaration of Principles regarding Palestinian autonomy. The PLO Executive Committee endorsed the draft document on September 10, 1993, although several members resigned in protest over Arafat's "sell-out," and the stage was set for a dramatic ceremony on September 13 in Washington, D.C., that concluded with the signing of the declaration by Arafat and Rabin. The Declaration of Principles authorized a "Palestinian authority" to assume governmental responsibility in what was projected to be a gradually expanding area of the occupied territories from which Israeli troops were to withdraw.

The 1993 peace accord proposed the establishment of an interim Palestinian government in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho and committed Israel and the PLO to negotiating a permanent settlement on all of the occupied territories within five years. However, mention of the agreement was rarely made without immediate reference to the many obstacles in its path, including strong opposition from Israel's *Likud* Party and, on the Palestinian side, from *Hamas*, the DFLP, and the PFLP. There was also widespread concern that militant activity could sabotage the peace agreement. In addition, many details remained to be resolved before the Declaration of Principles could be transformed into a genuine self-rule agreement. Finally, there still appeared to be a wide, and possibly unbridgeable, gulf between the Israeli and PLO positions on several issues, such as the future of Jerusalem and whether a completely independent Palestinian state would ultimately be created. Nevertheless, the remarkable image, flashed via television to a transfixed world, of Arafat and Rabin shaking hands at the Washington ceremony seemed to persuade even the most skeptical observers that a historic corner had been turned. For the PLO chair, the agreement represented an extraordinary personal triumph, his enhanced status being reflected by a private session with U.S. President Bill Clinton after the signing ceremony and by a meeting the next day with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

International donors quickly expressed their enthusiasm for the September 1993 agreement by

pledging \$2.4 billion to promote economic development in Gaza/Jericho over the next five years. Shortly thereafter, the PLO's Central Committee approved the accord by a reported vote of 63–8. However, the declaration's projection that Israeli troops would begin their withdrawal by mid-December 1993 proved unrealistic, and extended negotiations were required on issues such as the size of the Jericho enclave and the control of border crossings.

Amid growing international concern that the peace plan could unravel, negotiations resumed in April 1994, and at a May 4 ceremony in Cairo, Arafat and Rabin signed a final agreement formally launching Israeli troop withdrawal and limited Palestinian self-rule. The Israeli pullout, and concurrent assumption of police authority by PLO forces, was completed in Jericho on May 13 and in most of Gaza on May 18. (Israeli troops remained stationed in buffer zones around 19 Jewish settlements in Gaza.)

The 1994 accord provided for all government responsibilities in Gaza/Jericho (except, significantly, for external security and foreign affairs) to be turned over to the "Palestinian authority" for a five-year interim period. Negotiations were to begin immediately on the second stage of Israeli redeployment, under which additional West Bank territory was to be turned over to Palestinian control, while a final accord on the permanent status of the occupied territories was to be completed no later than May 1999.

On May 28, 1994, Arafat announced the first appointments to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), with himself as chair of the cabinet-like body. (The PLO leader subsequently routinely referred to himself as "president" of the PNA. However, the title, and indeed the Palestinian insistence on including "National" in the PNA's name, was not sanctioned by the Israeli government, which remained officially opposed to the eventual creation of a Palestinian state. Meanwhile, the media was split on the matter, with some referencing the PNA and others the Palestinian Authority [PA].) With most PLO offices in Tunis having been closed, Arafat entered Gaza on July 1, setting foot

on "Palestinian soil" for the first time in 25 years. It was initially assumed that the PNA's headquarters would be in Jericho, where the PNA, which had already held several preliminary sessions, was formally sworn in before Arafat on July 5. However, Arafat and most government officials subsequently settled in Gaza City.

Internal security initially proved to be less of a concern than anticipated within the autonomous areas, and the PNA focused primarily on efforts to revive the region's severe economic distress. The World Bank, designated to manage the disbursement of the aid pledged by international donors the previous fall, announced plans to distribute about \$1.2 billion over the next three years, primarily for infrastructure projects. On the Palestinian side, coordination of such assistance fell to a recently established Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).

In late August 1994, Israeli officials announced they were turning educational responsibilities for Palestinian areas in the West Bank over to the PNA as the beginning of an "early empowerment" program. The PNA was scheduled to assume authority throughout the West Bank soon in four additional areas—health, social welfare, taxation, and tourism. On the political front, the PNA proposed that elections to a Palestinian Council be held in December. However, no consensus had been reached by September either between the PLO and Israel or among Palestinians themselves on the type, size, constituency, or mandate of the new body.

Pessimism over the future of the self-rule plan deepened in ensuing months as security matters distracted attention from political and economic discussions. Under heavy pressure from Israel, the PNA authorized the detention of several hundred members of *Hamas* after that grouping had claimed responsibility for a gun and grenade attack in Jerusalem on October 9. Ten days later a *Hamas* suicide bomber blew up a bus in Tel Aviv, killing 22 people and prompting Israel to close its borders with the West Bank and Gaza and implement other new security measures. In addition, Palestinian police arrested nearly 200 members of the

militant group Islamic Jihad (*al-Jihad al-Islami*) after it claimed responsibility for a bombing in Gaza in early November that left three Israeli soldiers dead. The tension culminated on November 18 in the killing of 13 people as Palestinian police exchanged gunfire with *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad demonstrators in Gaza, some observers suggesting that the Palestinians were on the brink of a civil war. Further complicating matters for the PLO/PNA, a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee called by Arafat in November failed to achieve a quorum when dissidents refused to attend. Among other things, the PLO chair had hoped that the committee would formally rescind the sections in the organization's National Covenant that called for the destruction of Israel.

Another Islamic Jihad suicide bombing on January 22, 1995, killed more than 20 people in the Israeli town of Netanya; Israel responding by suspending negotiations with the PNA until stronger measures were taken to prevent such attacks from the West Bank and Gaza. Consequently, Arafat authorized the creation of special military courts in February to deal with issues of "state security" and thereby permit a crackdown on militants. While the action appeared to appease Israel, it was criticized by human rights activists and non-PLO Palestinian organizations. As a result, facing what was described as yet another test of his leadership, Arafat called for a PLO Executive Committee meeting, the absence of the proposed covenant change from the agenda apparently facilitating the achievement of a quorum.

Although reportedly facing intense scrutiny from the Executive Committee, which was seen as attempting to recover some of the influence it had lost to the PNA, the PLO chair nevertheless emerged with a mandate to pursue negotiations with Israel. Following a further intensification in April of the PNA campaign against "terrorists," peace talks regained momentum, 100-member negotiating teams from each side sequestering themselves in the Egyptian resort of Taba for several months. Finally, after six consecutive days of direct negotiations between Arafat and Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister Shimon Peres, agreement was

reached on September 24, 1995, on the next phase of Israeli troop redeployment and the extension of Palestinian self-rule to much of the West Bank. Israeli troops were to start withdrawing immediately from certain towns and villages in the West Bank, with the PNA assuming control therein. Temporary joint responsibility was arranged for rural areas, while Israeli troops were to continue to guard the numerous Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Upon completion of the Israeli redeployment, elections were to be held, under international supervision, to a new Palestinian Council. Provision was also made for a 25-member "executive authority," whose head would be elected in separate balloting. It was estimated that self-rule would initially be extended to about 30 percent of the West Bank, with additional territory (up to a 70 percent total) to be ceded following the proposed Palestinian elections. In support of the accord, Israel pledged a three-stage release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners, while the PLO agreed to revoke the anti-Israeli articles in its covenant within two years.

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza (informally referred to as "Oslo II") was signed by Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin at another White House ceremony on September 28, 1995, the attendees including King Hussein of Jordan and President Mubarak of Egypt. Israel and the PLO agreed that Israeli troops would begin immediately to withdraw from six more West Bank towns while negotiations continued on the contentious issue of the town of Hebron, home to a small but highly vocal group of ultra-religious Jewish settlers. The agreement also envisioned the turning over of authority to Palestinians in more than 450 additional villages in the West Bank, followed by Israeli withdrawal from most other rural areas. Although most details of the latter withdrawal were left unspecified, it was agreed that it would be conducted in three stages—6 months, 12 months, and 18 months after the election of the Palestinian Council, which was designated to succeed the PNA as the primary Palestinian governmental body. It was estimated that the council would be responsible for more than 70 percent



of the West Bank following the proposed Israeli withdrawal, with Israel maintaining control of the Jewish settlements there and its numerous military installations.

Although “less mesmerizing” than its 1993 predecessor, the 1995 signing was considered no less consequential since the 400-page accord delineated “in intricate detail” most of the substantive aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian “divorce.” On the other hand, very contentious issues remained to be resolved, including the rights of several million Palestinian refugees in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, many of whom hoped to return “home” to the West Bank and Israel. Talks were scheduled to begin in May 1996 on that question as well as the future status of Jerusalem, the eastern portion of which Palestinians claimed as their “capital.” Difficult negotiations were also forecast regarding the estimated 140,000 Jewish settlers in Gaza and the West Bank, who vowed never to leave the region to which, in their opinion, “Greater Israel” had a biblically ordained right. A final agreement on these and all other outstanding issues was due no later than May 1999, at which point the Palestinian Council was scheduled to turn over authority to whatever new governmental organs had been established. It was by no means clear what the final borders of the Palestinian “entity” would be or, for that matter, what official form of government it would assume. Although Israeli officials maintained their formal opposition to an independent Palestine, Arafat described the 1995 agreement as leading to “an era in which the Palestinian people will live free and sovereign in their country.” However, in a decision that was to have major repercussions, the Israeli and PLO negotiators postponed further discussions of the contentious issue of the proposed withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank town of Hebron, home to a militant group of ultraconservative Jewish settlers.

Despite concerns that the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 would interfere with the implementation of the recent agreement, Israeli withdrawals from the six additional towns proceeded even more quickly than

expected and were completed by December 30, 1995. Consequently, with the formal encouragement of the PLO Executive Committee (which had met in Cairo on November 12–13, 1995, to discuss the matter), Arafat subsequently attempted to convince *Hamas* and theretofore “rejectionist” PLO factions to participate in the upcoming Palestinian elections. Although those discussions initially appeared promising, *Hamas* and a number of major PLO components (most notably the DFLP and the PFLP) ultimately urged their supporters to boycott the balloting on the grounds that electoral regulations were skewed in favor of Arafat’s *Fatah* at the expense of smaller formations. Nevertheless, the elections on January 20, 1996, for the Palestinian Council and separate balloting for the head (or “president”) of the council’s “executive authority” were still viewed as a major milestone in the self-rule process. Only one person (Samihah Yusuf al-Qubbaj KHALIL, an opponent of the Oslo peace agreements) challenged Arafat for the latter post. The PLO chair garnered 87.1 percent of the votes in balloting that was widely construed (in conjunction with *Fatah*’s success in the legislative poll) as confirming strong support for him personally and majority endorsement of his peace policies. Arafat was inaugurated in his new position in ceremonies in Gaza City on February 12, 1996, and on May 9 he announced the formation of a new cabinet, technically the “executive authority” of the Palestinian Council but widely referenced as the “new” PNA, which continued the semantic PNA/PA controversy. The government won a vote of confidence in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC, as the new body had widely become known) by 50–24 on July 27.

Militant opposition to the Oslo accords moved even further to the forefront of concerns in late February and early March 1996 when bomb attacks left some 60 Israelis dead in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Temporary closure of the borders of the self-rule areas by Israeli forces created pressure upon Arafat from within the Palestinian population, while added concerns about security were seen as a substantial political problem for Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, facing an early election

in May. For his part, Arafat implemented several measures apparently designed to help Peres, including the arrest of a number of militants from *Hamas* and other groups and the banning of some six Palestinian "militias." In addition, the PLO chair convened the 21st session of the PNC (now reported as comprising 669 members) in Gaza City on April 22–24 to consider formal revision of the National Covenant to reflect recent understanding of the issue. The PNC session, the first to be held on "Palestinian" soil since 1966, agreed by a vote of 504–54 that all clauses in the covenant that contradicted recent PLO pledges were to be annulled. In general, the changes would recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce "terrorism and other acts of violence" on the part of the PLO. Final language on the revisions was to be included in a new charter, which the PNC directed the Central Council to draft.

The "final talks" on Palestinian autonomy officially opened on May 5, 1996, but substantive negotiations were postponed until the Israeli election of May 29. Following the surprising *Likud* victory in that balloting, resulting to some extent from security concerns within the Israeli populace arising from the recent bomb attacks, progress slowed on the Palestinian front. No agreement was quickly forthcoming regarding Hebron, which became the focus of Israeli right-wing attention, and the planned three-stage withdrawal of Israeli troops from rural areas in the West Bank was not implemented. Israeli-PLO talks resumed in late July, but no progress ensued, even after the much sought after "face-to-face" discussions between Arafat and new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in early September. International concern that the autonomy plan was deteriorating and growing criticism from moderate Arab states also seemingly failed to move the Netanyahu government (a tenuous coalition that included several ultraconservative groupings). Rising pressure finally erupted in fighting between Palestinians and Israelis in late September. U.S. President Bill Clinton quickly summoned Arafat, Netanyahu, and Jordan's King Hussein to a "crisis summit" in Washington, which appeared to reduce tensions, albeit without any

apparent resolution of the underlying issues, particularly the status of Hebron, described as a "powder keg" that seemingly had assumed a psychological importance well out of proportion to its intrinsic significance.

As Netanyahu continued to resist redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron throughout the rest of the year, Arafat warned of the risk of the spontaneous resumption of the *intifada*. Finally, under apparent heavy U.S. pressure, Netanyahu accepted an agreement in early January 1997 that essentially reaffirmed the provisions of Oslo II. Among other things, the new accord (approved by the PLO Executive Committee on January 15) provided for Palestinian control to be extended to about 80 percent of Hebron, with Israeli withdrawal from additional rural West Bank areas to occur in stages from March 1997 through mid-1998. Assuming satisfactory progress on that front (not a certainty considering differing Israeli and Palestinian views on how much territory would ultimately be ceded to Palestinian rule), final talks were to be conducted on the still highly charged issues of the status of Palestinian refugees throughout the region, the nature of permanent governmental structures for the Palestinian "entity," and disposition of sovereignty claims to East Jerusalem.

Chair Arafat convened a "national dialogue" meeting in February 1997 in an effort to involve the formerly dissident PLO factions as well as non-PLO Palestinian groups in adopting a consensus on Palestinian proposals should final status talks be launched with Israel. However, with Israeli-Palestinian negotiations having collapsed, Arafat's "national unity" conference in August appeared primarily aimed not at negotiations but rather at portraying solidarity in the face of perceived Israeli intransigence, the presence of *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad at the session lending weight to his assertions that military resistance (including resumption of the *intifada*) was becoming a growing possibility.

In February 1998 the PLO Executive Committee deferred a final decision on the proposed new PLO charter, eliciting Israeli concern that the 1996 action by the PNC remained insufficient as far as guaranteeing Israel's security was concerned.

Meanwhile, a degree of attention within the PLO focused on the question of a successor to Arafat, whose health was believed to be in decline. No dominant candidate had emerged, once again spotlighting the difficulties that would be faced if Arafat were unable to continue as the champion of the Palestinian cause. When agreement could not be reached on the extent of Israeli withdrawal, the Israeli government approved highly controversial Jewish settlement construction in East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, the PNA itself had come under heavy domestic and international criticism, one corruption commission suggesting that more than \$300 million in aid had been mishandled. The PLC demanded in late 1997 that President Arafat replace the cabinet with a new government comprising experts in their various fields rather than political appointees. It also called upon him to address allegations that Palestinian police and security forces had been responsible for widespread human rights abuses. The council threatened a no-confidence motion against the PNA in June 1998, which Arafat forestalled by indicating a major reshuffle was imminent. However, to the disappointment of the reformists, the new cabinet announced on August 5 contained many incumbents, changes focusing primarily on the addition of new ministers of state. Several incumbent ministers declined reappointment on the grounds that the reorganization failed to address Palestinian problems sufficiently, but the cabinet was approved by a vote of 55–29 in the Legislative Council on August 10.

In July 1998 Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met for the first time in over a year, and in October Netanyahu traveled to the United States to meet with Arafat and Clinton at the Wye Plantation in Maryland. After ten days of reportedly “tortuous” negotiations (capped off by a surprise visit from ailing King Hussein of Jordan), Netanyahu and Arafat signed an agreement on October 23 that proposed a three-month timetable for the next withdrawals of Israeli forces from the West Bank. Completion of the new redeployments would have left about 17 percent of the West Bank under full Palestinian control and 23 percent under joint Israeli/Palestinian

authority. It was envisaged that negotiations would then begin regarding the third (and last) withdrawal phase and the other outstanding issues.

In addition to the geographic expansion of Palestinian autonomy, Israel also agreed in the 1998 Wye accords to release a number of Palestinian prisoners, permit the opening of the Gaza airport, and proceed with the establishment of a transit corridor for Palestinians from the West Bank to Gaza. For their part, Palestinian leaders pledged expanded security measures and additional repudiation of the anti-Israeli sections of the PLO Covenant. The first redeployment (centered around the northern West Bank town of Jenin) occurred on November 20, and later in the month international donors, signaling support for the resumption of progress, pledged some \$3 billion in additional aid for development in the autonomous areas. However, Netanyahu faced significant opposition within his cabinet over the accord and appeared to place numerous barriers in the way of further implementation by, among other things, authorizing the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and demanding that Palestinian officials adopt a comprehensive weapons collection program, refrain from anti-Israeli “incitement,” and drop their plans to unilaterally declare statehood on May 4, 1999. Clinton visited Israel and the self-rule territories on December 12–15 in an effort to reinvigorate the Wye plan, attending the session of the PNC in Gaza that endorsed the requested Covenant changes. However, the Netanyahu coalition finally collapsed in the ensuing days, and the cabinet on December 20 voted to suspend further implementation of the Wye provisions pending new Israeli national elections (later scheduled for May 1999). (Arafat subsequently defused a potentially explosive situation in late April 1999 by announcing that Palestinians would defer their unilateral declaration of statehood.)

Reacting to reformist pressure from the PLC, the PNA in January 1999 released a number of political detainees. However, a group of council members in November distributed a leaflet that charged the PNA with continued “systematic corruption” and other “abuse of power.”

Following his inauguration in July 1999, new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak called for a comprehensive peace settlement with the Palestinians, Syria, and Lebanon within 15 months. On September 4, he and Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat signed an agreement at Sharm al-Shaikh in Egypt that provided for the “reactivation” of the 1998 Wye accord via the immediate transfer to Palestinian control of additional territory in the West Bank and the release of some Palestinians under Israeli arrest in return for the Palestinian leadership’s “zero tolerance” of terrorism. So-called “final status” negotiations were subsequently launched on the very difficult issues of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, the eventual status of Jerusalem (which both sides envisioned as their capital), and the future of some 3.6 million Palestinian refugees seeking a return to Israel. Little progress was achieved by the spring of 2000, however, except for some redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank (bringing about 43 percent of the West Bank under complete or partial Palestinian control). In April Barak appeared to accept the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian “entity” (he avoided using the word “state”) comprising Gaza and 60–70 percent of the West Bank. However, he indicated a “majority” of the Jewish settlers in the disputed areas would remain under Israeli sovereignty. Hopes for a resolution declined further in May when sporadic violence broke out in Gaza and the West Bank, fueled by Palestinian disenchantment with the lack of progress in negotiations.

Faced with a collapsing coalition in Israel, Barak attended a “make-or-break” summit with Arafat and U.S. President Clinton at Camp David in July 2000. Although agreement appeared close on several issues, the summit ended unsuccessfully when common ground could not be found regarding the status of Jerusalem and sovereignty over holy sites there, notably Temple Mount (*Haram al-Sharif*), a sacred location for both Jews and Muslims. (Clinton criticized Arafat for being unwilling to make the “difficult decisions” required to conclude a pact.)

Serious rioting on the part of Palestinians erupted in late September 2000 following a visit

by hard-line *Likud* leader Ariel Sharon to Temple Mount that was viewed as unnecessarily “provocative” by many observers. Although Barak subsequently indicated a willingness to endorse the establishment of two “separate entities” in Jerusalem, negotiations collapsed in October in the face of the “second *intifada*” and heavy reprisals by the Israeli military that included the use of assault helicopter and rocket attacks. By the end of December more than 350 people had been killed and 10,000 injured in the violence. In addition, Israel had banned Palestinian workers from entering Israel and imposed other economic sanctions such as the withholding of tax payments to the PNA.

At the end of 2000, President Clinton, attempting to cap his eight-year tenure with a “last hurrah” Middle East breakthrough, proposed a settlement under which all of Gaza and some 95 percent of the West Bank would be placed under Palestinian control, although some West Bank settlements would remain Israeli. The proposed accord also reportedly called for Palestinian sovereignty over certain areas of East Jerusalem, the return of a “small number” of Palestinian refugees, and a mutual “accommodation” regarding Temple Mount. Barak reportedly approved the compromise, but Arafat in early 2001 raised a number of objections, particularly in regard to the refugee issue. (The Palestinian position—that all refugees and their descendants be permitted to return to Israel—had been rejected as an impossibility by most Western capitals and, of course, Israel, on the grounds that the Jewish Israeli electorate would be overwhelmed politically by the returnees.)

Barak’s defeat by hard-liner Sharon in the February 2001 special prime ministerial balloting in Israel appeared to doom prospects for any settlement soon of the Palestinian questions, particularly in view of the fact that George W. Bush’s new administration in Washington had announced it did not consider itself in any way bound by the “parameters” endorsed by Clinton. Sharon pledged that Jerusalem would remain “whole and unified” under Israeli sovereignty and that no Jewish settlements would be dismantled. Consequently, the rest of the year was marked by escalating violence

that included numerous suicide bombings by Palestinian militants and massive retaliation by Israel in the form of missile attacks and tank incursions. Late in the year President Bush expressed his support for the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state and called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the areas previously under Palestinian control. Peace advocates also saw a glimmer of hope when Arafat, whose compound was besieged by Israeli troops, subsequently called upon all Palestinian groups to honor a cease-fire and indicated “flexibility” on the refugee question. However, suicide bombings continued unabated in early 2002, and Israel in April launched an offensive of unprecedented scale that left it in control of most West Bank towns. When that initiative failed to restrain the suicide bombers, the Sharon government announced at midyear that it would begin to construct a “security fence” around the West Bank. Positions subsequently remained hardened as Sharon called Arafat an “enemy” and demanded a change in the Palestinian leadership.

Meanwhile, criticism in Palestinian circles of Arafat’s government had continued in 2000–2001, although it was muted somewhat by an apparent desire within the Palestinian community to present a unified front in the face of renewed Palestinian/Israeli violence. In mid-2002 Arafat pledged to conduct new presidential and legislative elections when Israeli forces were withdrawn from areas previously under Palestinian control. In the spring of 2002 Arafat, whose compound in Ramallah had been under siege by Israeli forces for months as part of a broad Israeli incursion into areas previously under Palestinian control, reportedly admitted “errors” in peace negotiations as well as in the administration of the PNA, and he promised significant reform efforts. However, concerned over the number of suicide bombings and other attacks on Israeli citizens, President Bush called for the “removal” of Arafat, portraying the Palestinian leader as unable or unwilling to combat terrorism. (Many analysts had concluded by that time that Arafat had little control over the attacks being claimed by *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad.)

Arafat trimmed his cabinet on June 9, 2002, although he was unable to convince the so-called rejectionist groups (notably *Hamas*, Islamic Jihad, the PFLP, and the DFLP) to participate in the new government. Facing a possible nonconfidence vote in the PLC, Arafat again reorganized his cabinet on October 29 in preparation for proposed new elections. Arafat also promised reform in social sectors and indicated support for the eventual establishment of the post of prime minister, who would theoretically assume some of the authority heretofore exercised by Arafat.

In late 2002 Arafat declared that new elections would be postponed indefinitely due to Israel’s occupation of territory formerly under Palestinian control. However, under heavy international pressure, Arafat in early 2003 formally endorsed the proposed installation of a Palestinian prime minister. The PLC on March 10 established the new position, although power-sharing arrangements vis-à-vis the president were left vague. (Among other things, Arafat retained control over peace negotiations with Israel.) Mahmoud ABBAS was nominated to the premiership, and his new cabinet was installed on April 29. Abbas promised to combat corruption, disarm militants, and pursue additional reform in Palestinian institutions. However, it quickly became clear that Abbas and Arafat remained locked in a power struggle, and Abbas resigned on September 6. He was succeeded on September 10 by Ahmad QURAY, the speaker of the PLC.

At the end of April 2003, the Middle East Quartet (the EU, Russia, the UN, and the United States) presented its “road map,” calling for the eventual establishment of an “independent, democratic, and viable” Palestinian state. The first steps would be an immediate “unconditional” cease-fire and a freeze on new Israeli settlements. The plan also envisioned completion of a new Palestinian constitution, in the hope that Palestinian elections could be held by the end of the year. The major component of the second phase of the road map would be the convening of an international conference that would, among other things, help determine provisional

borders for the new state. Final negotiations were slated for completion by the end of 2005, assuming Palestinian institutions had been “stabilized” and Palestinian security forces had proven adequate in combating attacks against Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon offered “qualified” support for the road map, as did the Israeli *Knesset*, although the latter insisted that it be made clear that Palestinian refugees would not be guaranteed the right to return to their former homes in Israel. Meanwhile, Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas called for an end to the “armed *intifada*” while also demanding, unsuccessfully, that construction of the Israeli security wall be stopped.

In the wake of renewed heavy violence, the *Knesset* in September 2003 endorsed the potential expulsion from Israel of Arafat, whom Sharon and Bush blamed for the ongoing stalemate. In February 2004 Sharon announced that he intended to order the unilateral disengagement of Israel from the Gaza Strip in light of the lack of progress regarding the road map.

Apparently in response to the growing reform tide, Arafat in mid-2004 once again acknowledged that he had “made mistakes,” indicating that he was prepared to lead a renewed negotiation initiative. However, by that time it was clear that his health had failed to a point of unlikely recovery, and attention mostly focused on ensuring a smooth transition to the new PNA and PLO leaderships.

In July 2004 Prime Minister Quray threatened to resign unless the PLC granted him greater authority, particularly in regard to security. His request was partially granted, and the issue became mostly moot when Arafat died of an unknown illness at a hospital near Paris on November 11. Abbas was quickly named to replace Arafat as chair of the PLO executive committee, while PLC speaker Ruhi FATTUH assumed presidential authority on an acting basis. However, violence raged throughout the rest of the year, and the construction of the barrier between Israel and the West Bank attracted international controversy, largely because the route did not exactly follow the Israeli-Jordanian armistice line of 1949, the so-called Green Line.

*Hamas* and Islamic Jihad boycotted the presidential balloting on January 9, 2005, on the grounds that their involvement would have implied acceptance of the 1993 Oslo accords. Abbas won the presidency with 62 percent of the vote. His nearest rival (20 percent of the vote) was Moustafa BARGHOUTI, a secular independent associated with neither the PLO nor *Hamas*. Abbas was sworn in on January 15, and he invited Quray to form a new government. The international community welcomed the installation of a new Palestinian regime, and President Bush called Abbas “a man of courage.”

Although *Hamas* boycotted the presidential elections in January 2005, the Islamist organization competed in the successive rounds of municipal elections held in the Palestinian territories in December 2004–January 2005 and in May and September 2005. *Hamas* performed strongly in all of those polls, underscoring the growing disenchantment among Palestinians with *Fatah*’s governance.

In February 2005 President Abbas appointed a new cabinet consisting mainly of technocrats. The appointments were seen as an effort to reduce the influence of the *Fatah* “Old Guard” that had been closely aligned with Yasir Arafat. Meanwhile, Ariel Sharon pushed ahead with his plan to evacuate the Gaza settlements and to disengage militarily from the Gaza Strip, overcoming opposition from within his own governing coalition. The disengagement was achieved in August–September. Although Sharon and Abbas subsequently agreed on a cease-fire, and *Hamas* itself declared a period of “calm,” violence continued throughout 2005 as little progress was made in negotiations. Sporadic conflict also broke out between Palestinian security forces and Islamist militants. President Abbas visited Bush twice in 2005, but Abbas’s international stature did not have much impact on Palestinian dissatisfaction with political and economic conditions.

*Hamas* scored a stunning victory in balloting for the PLC on January 25, 2006, securing 74 of 132 seats, compared to 45 seats for *Fatah*. Ismail

HANIYAH of *Hamas* was inaugurated on March 29 to lead a new government that included only *Hamas* members and several independents, *Fatah* having declined to join the cabinet.

In light of ongoing violence between *Hamas* and *Fatah* supporters as well as the suspension of economic aid to the PNA by Western donors opposed to *Hamas*, (see Current issues, below), President Abbas on February 8, 2006, signed an agreement with the *Hamas* leadership for a new “national unity” government. Among other things, the new coalition pledged to pursue a settlement with Israel based on the 2002 “land-for-peace” proposal from King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia that had recently been reendorsed by the Arab League. Consequently, Haniyah and his cabinet resigned on February 15, although Abbas immediately reappointed Haniyah to form a new government. On March 17 the PLC approved the new cabinet (which included ten ministers from *Hamas*, six from *Fatah*, three from recently formed smaller groups, one from the DFLP, and five independents) by a vote of 83–3. However, Israel, still vehemently opposed to any negotiations with *Hamas*, called the new PNA a “step backwards” and continued its hard-line approach by arresting *Hamas* leaders and supporters in the West Bank.

Severe factional infighting broke out between *Fatah* and *Hamas* in May 2007 in Gaza, and in June *Hamas* took over complete control of Gaza. President Abbas on June 14 dissolved the PNA in light of what he called a “military coup” in Gaza and declared a one-month state of emergency. On June 17 Abbas appointed a new “emergency” government headed by Salim FAYYAD, theretofore the PNA’s finance minister. The emergency cabinet resigned on July 13, but most of its members were included in the “caretaker” or “transitional” government appointed the following day.

### *Current Issues*

The United States and European states greeted the formation of the *Hamas*-led cabinet in March 2006 by suspending financial aid to the PNA and demanding that *Hamas* pledge to cease violence and recognize the state of Israel. Israel also stopped

the transfer of customs tax revenues to the PNA, causing severe economic distress for a large part of the Palestinian population, especially those employed by the PNA. However, *Hamas* subsequently gave no indication that it would accept Israeli and Western demands (although *Hamas* had declared a conditional cease-fire, in March 2005).

In May 2006 three people were killed when armed supporters of *Hamas* clashed with Abbas loyalists in Gaza. The fighting escalated over the next few weeks as *Hamas* deployed a militia of some 3,000 to Gaza. However, *Hamas* subsequently withdrew its “implementation force” from Gaza to calm tensions. Shortly thereafter, Abbas called on *Hamas* to endorse a national accord document that had been drawn up by prisoners detained in Israel, including *Fatah* leader Marwan Barghouti, that called for acceptance of the pre-1967 boundaries for a Palestinian state (with Jerusalem as its capital), the establishment of a national unity government to include *Hamas* and *Fatah*, and PLO negotiations with Israel for a two-state solution. Furthermore, Abbas issued an ultimatum to *Hamas* to recognize Israel or else he would call for a referendum on the proposed accord. *Hamas* consented to many of the articles of the document, with the notable exception of negotiations that would lead to the recognition of Israel. However, any potential for a peace initiative was squashed after two Israeli soldiers were killed and another kidnapped by Palestinian militants who tunneled under the border at Gaza. While rival Palestinian factions still called for a government of national unity, Abbas tabled further negotiations on the subject because of the “sensitivity” of the most recent event. Subsequently, attention was diverted to yet another momentous event after *Hezbollah* forces in southern Lebanon crossed into Israel, killing three soldiers and capturing two others. *Hamas* demanded that Israel fully withdraw from the occupied territories, turn over tax revenues owed to the Palestinians, and immediately release all Palestinian ministers and lawmakers (including the speaker of the PLC) captured in the months following the June abduction of the Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants.

Some analysts perceived a softening of *Hamas's* stance regarding potential recognition, or at least "acceptance," of the Israeli state during national unity negotiations between *Fatah* and *Hamas* in September 2006. *Hamas* also implied it might consider a "long term truce" with Israel. However, Ehud Olmert (who had become prime minister of Israel in the wake of Ariel Sharon's stroke in January) authorized additional construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Israel also maintained its economic "blockade" of Gaza and initiated several military offensives into Gaza in response to rocket attacks into Israel. Meanwhile, Palestinian workers went on strike in September to demand back wages, the *Hamas*-led government responding that it was being crippled by Israel's refusal to release tax revenues. *Hamas* also charged *Fatah* with promoting the demonstrations.

Israel withdrew its forces from Gaza in early November 2006, and a ceasefire was announced at the end of the month between Israeli and most of the militant Palestinian groups. (Significantly, Islamic Jihad did not accept the agreement.) Olmert also urged "dialogue" that would lead to "an independent and viable Palestinian State," while Arab nations and Iran agreed to contribute financially to the PNA.

Factional *Hamas-Fatah* fighting intensified in December 2006, and President Abbas threatened to call early elections unless a national unity government could be established. Nevertheless, violence continued into January 2007, spreading from Gaza into several major cities in the West Bank. The *Hamas-Fatah* national unity government installed in March proved unable to achieve progress, and Israeli forces arrested a number of Palestinian militants in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Nablus in April, prompting rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. The conflict between *Hamas* and *Fatah* deteriorated in May into what many analysts described as a civil war, and by June *Fatah* forces had been defeated in Gaza. Consequently, Palestinian self-rule now meant separate administration of Gaza by *Hamas* and of the West Bank territories by *Fatah*. Concurrently, Palestinian security forces in the West Bank detained a number of *Hamas* leaders.

Western donors immediately resumed aid to Abbas's PNA following the installation of the emergency government in the West Bank in June 2007. Also with the goal of supporting Abbas in his conflict with *Hamas*, Israel subsequently released tax revenues to the PNA and called for renewed peace talks. At the same time, Israel continued its daily attacks on what it called rocket-launching sites in Gaza.

In October 2007, as part of ongoing talks on the "fundamental issues," Israeli Prime Minister Olmert indicated that Israel might consider a division of Jerusalem as part of a potential final peace settlement. That and other initiatives were discussed at a US-led peace conference in Annapolis, Maryland, at which Olmert and Abbas agreed to resume formal negotiations with the goal of reaching agreement within a year. However, *Hamas* called Abbas a "traitor" for participating in the conference, while Olmert faced significant opposition in Israel for his perceived concessions to the Palestinians.

## Political Parties and Groups

### *Palestine Liberation Organization*

Establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was authorized on January 17, 1964, during an Arab summit held in Cairo, Egypt. Largely through the efforts of Ahmad SHUQAIRI, the Palestinian representative to the Arab League, an assembly of Palestinians met in (East) Jerusalem the following May 28–June 2 to draft a National Covenant and General Principles of a Fundamental Law, the latter subsequently serving as the constitutional basis of a government-in-exile. Under the Fundamental Law, the assembly became a 315-member Palestinian National Council (PNC) comprised primarily of representatives of the leading *fedayeen* (guerrilla) groups, various Palestinian mass movements and trade unions, and Palestinian communities throughout the Arab world. An Executive Committee was established as the PLO's administrative organ, while an intermediate Central Council (initially of 21 but eventually of



100 members) was created in 1973 to exercise legislative-executive responsibilities on behalf of the PNC between PNC sessions.

In its original form, the PLO was a quasi-governmental entity designed to act independently of the various Arab states in support of Palestinian interests. Its subordinate organs encompassed a variety of political, cultural, and fiscal activities as well as a Military Department, under which a Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) was established as a conventional military force of recruits stationed in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria.

In the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the direction of the PLO underwent a significant transformation. Shuqairi resigned as chair of the Executive Committee and was replaced in December 1967 by Yahia HAMMUDA, who was in turn succeeded in February 1969 by Yasir Arafat, leader of *Fatah* (below). At that time the PNC adopted a posture more favorable to guerrilla activities against Israel, insisted upon greater independence from Arab governments, and for the first time called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in which Muslims, Christians, and Jews would have equal rights. In effect, the PLO thus tacitly accepted a Jewish presence in Palestine, although it remained committed to the eradication of any Zionist state in the area.

In 1970–1971 the PLO and the *fedayeen* groups were expelled from Jordan, and Lebanon became their principal base of operations. The Israeli victory in the October 1973 war, and the fear that Jordan might negotiate on behalf of Palestinians from the occupied territories, resulted in another change in the PLO's strategy: in June 1974 it formally adopted a proposal that called for the creation of a "national authority" in the West Bank and Gaza as a first step toward the "liberation" of historical Palestine. This tacit recognition of Israel precipitated a major split among the PLO's already ideologically diverse components, and on July 29 a leftist "rejection front" was formed in opposition to any partial settlement in the Middle East. In December 1976 the PLO Central Council voiced support for establishment of an "independent state" in the West Bank and Gaza, which was widely interpreted as implying acceptance of Israel's

permanent existence. Shortly thereafter, contacts were established between the PLO and the Israeli left.

On September 1, 1982, immediately after the PLO withdrawal from West Beirut (see article on Lebanon), U.S. President Ronald Reagan proposed the creation of a Palestinian "entity" in the West Bank and Gaza, to be linked with Jordan under King Hussein. The idea was bitterly attacked by pro-Syrian radicals during a PNC meeting in Algiers in February 1983, with the council ultimately calling for a "confederation" between Jordan and an independent Palestinian state, thus endorsing an Arab League resolution of five months earlier that implicitly entailed recognition of Israel. Over radical objections, the Algiers meeting also sanctioned a dialogue with "progressive and democratic" elements within Israel, i.e., those favoring peace with the PLO. This position, however, was also unacceptable to the group's best-known moderate, Dr. Issam SARTAWI, who resigned from the council after being denied an opportunity to deliver a speech calling for formal discussions with Israeli leaders on the possibility of a clear-cut "two-state" solution. Subsequently, in an apparent trial balloon, *Fatah's* deputy chair, Salah KHALAF, declared that the group would support the Reagan peace initiative if the United States were to endorse the principle of Palestinian self-determination. The meeting's final communiqué, on the other hand, dismissed the Reagan proposal as not providing "a sound basis for a just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian problem."

PLO chair Arafat met for three days in early April 1983 with King Hussein without reaching agreement on a number of key issues, including the structure of a possible confederation, representation of Palestinians in peace negotiations with Israel, and the proposed removal of PLO headquarters to Amman. As the discussions concluded, Dr. Sartawi was assassinated in Albufeira, Portugal, by a member of an extremist *Fatah* splinter, headed by the Damascus-based Sabry Khalil al-BANNA (also known as Abu NIDAL). A week later, amid evidence of growing restiveness among Palestinian guerrillas in eastern Lebanon, the PLO

Executive Committee met in Tunis to consider means of “surmounting the obstacles” that had emerged in the discussions with Hussein.

In mid-May 1983 Arafat returned to Lebanon for the first time since the Beirut exodus to counter what had escalated into a dissident rebellion led by Musa AWAD (also known as Abu AKRAM) of the Libyan-backed Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP-GC), a splinter of the larger PFLP. In late June Arafat convened a *Fatah* meeting in Damascus to deal with the mutineers’ insistence that he abandon his flirtation with the Reagan peace plan and give greater priority to military confrontation with Israel.

On June 24, 1983, Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad ordered Arafat’s expulsion from Syria after the PLO leader had accused him of fomenting the PFLP-GC rebellion, and a month later Arafat ousted two senior commanders whose promotions had precipitated tension within the ranks of the guerrillas in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. The fighting nonetheless continued, and in early November one of Arafat’s two remaining Lebanese strongholds north of Tripoli fell to the insurgents. Late in the month the PLO leader agreed to withdraw from an increasingly untenable position within the city itself, exiting from Lebanon (for the second time) on December 20 in a Greek ferry escorted by French naval vessels.

In early 1985 Arafat strengthened and formalized his ties with Jordan’s King Hussein in an accord signed by both leaders on February 11. The agreement, described as “a framework for common action towards reaching a peaceful and just settlement to the Palestine question,” called for total withdrawal by Israel from the territories it had occupied in 1967 in exchange for comprehensive peace; the right of self-determination for the Palestinians within the context of a West Bank-Gaza-Jordan confederation; resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with UN resolutions; and peace negotiations under the auspices of an international conference that would include the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and representatives of the PLO, the latter being part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Arafat’s peace overtures deepened divisions within the ranks of the Palestinian national movement. In reaction to the February 1985 pact with Jordan, six PLO-affiliated organizations formed a Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) in Damascus to oppose Arafat’s policies. Differences over peace initiatives also erupted during a November meeting in Baghdad of the PNC’s Central Council. Disagreement turned mainly on whether to accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and peaceful settlement of the Palestine dispute in a manner that would imply recognition of Israel. Shortly thereafter, Arafat attempted to reinforce his image as “peacemaker” with a declaration denouncing terrorism. The “Cairo Declaration” was issued after lengthy discussions with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on ways to speed up peace negotiations. Arafat cited a 1974 PLO decision “to condemn all outside operations and all forms of terrorism.” He promised to take “all punitive measures against violators” and stated that “the PLO denounces and condemns all terrorist acts, whether those involving countries or by persons or groups, against unarmed innocent civilians in any place.”

Meanwhile, relations between Arafat and Hussein had again been strained by a number of incidents that displeased the king. In October 1985 guerrillas allegedly linked to the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) hijacked the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, which resulted in the killing of an American tourist, while talks were broken off between the British government and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation because of PLO refusal to sign a statement recognizing Israel and renouncing the use of terrorism.

The PLO sustained a major setback at the hands of Shiite *al-Amal* forces that besieged two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon during May and June 1985. From Tunis an extraordinary session of the Arab League Council called for an end to the siege, which was accomplished by Syrian mediation in mid-June. One effect of the action was to temporarily heal the rift between pro- and anti-Arafat Palestinian factions.

By early 1986 it had become apparent that the Jordanian-PLO accord had stalled over Arafat's refusal, despite strong pressure from King Hussein and other Arab moderates, to endorse UN Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis of a solution to the Palestinian issue. Among the PLO's objections were references to Palestinians as refugees and a failure to grant them the right of self-determination. On the latter ground, Arafat rejected a secret U.S. tender of seats for the PLO at a proposed international Middle East peace conference. In February Hussein announced that the peace effort had collapsed and encouraged West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians to select new leaders. He underscored the attack on Arafat during ensuing months by proposing an internationally financed, \$1.3 billion development plan for the West Bank, which he hoped would win the approval of its "silent majority." The PLO denounced the plan, while describing Israeli efforts to appoint Arab mayors in the West Bank as attempts to perpetuate Israeli occupation. The rupture culminated in Hussein's ordering the closure of *Fatah's* Jordanian offices in July.

King Hussein's overture elicited little support from the West Bank Palestinians, and by late 1986 it was evident that Arafat still commanded the support of his most important constituency. Rather than undercutting Arafat's position, Hussein's challenge paved the way for unification talks between *Fatah* and other PLO factions that had opposed the accord from the outset. Following initial opposition from the PNSF in August, the reunification drive gained momentum in early 1987 with indications that Georges HABASH of the PFLP (the PNSF's largest component) might join leaders of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and other groups in trying to rescue the PLO from its debilitating fractionalization. Support was also received from PLO factions in Lebanon that had recently coalesced under *Fatah* leadership to withstand renewed attacks by *al-Amal* forces. Indeed, Syria's inability to stem the mass return of heavily armed *Fatah* guerrillas to Lebanon was viewed as a major contribution to Arafat's resurgence within the PLO. Meanwhile, King Hussein also attempted to mend relations with the PLO

by announcing that the Jordanian-PLO fund for West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians, suspended at the time of the February 1986 breach, would be reactivated. Subsequently, the fund was bolstered by new pledges totaling \$14.5 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Although hard-line factions continued to call for Arafat's ouster, the PLO leader's more militant posture opened the way for convening the long-delayed 18th session of the PNC (its membership reportedly having been expanded to 426) in Algiers on April 20–26, 1987. Confounding critics who had long predicted his political demise, Arafat emerged from the meeting with his PLO chairmanship intact, thanks in part to a declared willingness to share the leadership with representatives of non-*Fatah* factions. Thus, although several Syrian-based formations boycotted the Algiers meeting, Arafat's appearance at its conclusion arm-in-arm with former rivals Habash of the PFLP and Nayif HAWATMEH of the DFLP symbolized the success of the unity campaign.

During the last half of 1987 there were reports of secret meetings between the PLO and left-wing Israeli politicians to forge an agreement based on a cessation of hostilities, a halt to Israeli settlement in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and mutual recognition by the PLO and Israel. However, nothing of substance was achieved, and by November it appeared that interest in the issue had waned, as evidenced by the far greater attention given to the Iran-Iraq war at an Arab League summit in November.

The Palestinian question returned to the forefront of Arab concern in December 1987 with the outbreak of violence in the occupied territories. Although the disturbances were believed to have started spontaneously, the PLO, by mobilizing grassroots structures it had nurtured throughout the 1980s, helped to fuel their transformation into an ongoing *intifada* (uprising).

In an apparent effort to heighten PLO visibility, Arafat demanded in March 1988 that the organization be accorded full representation (rather than participation in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation) at any Middle Eastern

peace conference. However, the prospects for such a conference dimmed in April when the PLO's military leader, Khalil al-WAZIR (also known as Abu JIHAD), was killed, apparently by an Israeli assassination team. Whatever the motive for the killing, its most immediate impact was to enhance PLO solidarity and provide the impetus for a dramatic "reconciliation" between Arafat and Syrian President Assad. However, that rapprochement soon disintegrated, as bloody clashes broke out between *Fatah* and Syrian-backed *Fatah* dissidents (see *Fatah* Uprising, below) for control of the Beirut refugee camps in May. Elsewhere in the Arab world, the position of the PLO continued to improve. A special Arab League summit in June 1988 strongly endorsed the *intifada* and reaffirmed the PLO's role as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In addition, a number of countries at the summit reportedly pledged financial aid to the PLO to support continuance of the uprising.

On July 31, 1988, in a move that surprised PLO leaders, King Hussein announced that Jordan would discontinue its administrative functions in the West Bank on the presumption that Palestinians in the occupied territories wished to proceed toward independence under PLO stewardship. Although Jordan subsequently agreed to partial interim provision of municipal services, the announcement triggered extensive debate within the PLO on appropriate policies for promoting a peace settlement that would yield creation of a true Palestinian government.

The peace process appeared to have been relaunched by the Wye accords of October 1998. (For information on developments from 1988 to 1998, see Political background, above). As part of the Wye agreements, the PLO Central Council met on December 10 to consider Israeli requests regarding the PLO covenant. Arafat and other Palestinian representatives had argued that no further action was required, claiming that the PLO chair's earlier letter to President Clinton had made it clear that articles in the covenant had been voided by the PNC in 1996. However, the Central Council endorsed the particulars in Arafat's letter, and on December 14 the PNC reaffirmed the covenant changes by a

nearly unanimous show of hands. In addition, under heavy international pressure, the Central Council in late April 1999 endorsed Arafat's recent decision to postpone the unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood, which had been planned for May 4, 1999. Following the Sharm al-Shaikh agreement of September 1999, the PLO Central Council extended the deadline for statehood declaration until September 2000. Meanwhile, by early 2000 the PFLP and the DFLP had resumed participation in the council's deliberations. For Palestinians, at least, another positive development was a meeting in February 2000 between Arafat and Pope John Paul II at which the Vatican reportedly recognized the PLO as the legitimate voice of Palestinian sentiment and endorsed eventual "international status" for Jerusalem.

Prior to the "make or break" summit between Arafat and Barak (who faced growing opposition to his peace efforts within Israel) in the United States in July 2000, the PLO Central Council indicated its solid support for Arafat and authorized him to declare statehood on September 13. However, when the summit collapsed, the Central Council, under intense international pressure, agreed at a meeting on September 9–10 to postpone the declaration once again. (Arafat had traveled to some 40 countries to solicit support for the declaration. The United States, EU, and many others resisted the idea, however, in part because of the prevailing sentiment in many capitals that Arafat had missed a significant opportunity at the U.S. summit. The PLO chair had reportedly been offered substantial concessions by Barak but had ultimately rejected terms regarding the status of holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as the return of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to Israel.)

Although the PLO was not one of the groups demanding the creation of the post of prime minister to share PNA responsibilities with Arafat, *Fatah* dutifully approved the cabinet installed under new Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (the secretary general of the PLO executive committee) in April 2003. Subsequently, differences within *Fatah* and the PLO seemed to mirror those in the PLC and PNA over the power struggles between Arafat and

Abbas and between Arafat and Abbas's successor, Ahmad Quray. PLO reformists pressed for significant power-sharing and implementation of genuine anticorruption measures, while Arafat's long-standing backers in the organization supported his demand for retention of the responsibility for peace negotiation and control of Palestinian security forces.

Abbas was elevated to the chairmanship of the PLO executive committee only hours after Arafat's death on November 11, 2004. In addition, Faruk Qaddumi was named chair of the *Fatah* Central Council with no apparent tumult.

Following a funeral in Cairo (his birthplace), Arafat was buried in Ramallah, where he had lived under virtual Israeli siege for three years. (Israel refused Arafat's request to be buried in Jerusalem.) The Cairo ceremony was attended by many Arab leaders and dignitaries from around the world, while public demonstrations in Ramallah and elsewhere clearly illustrated the deep grief felt by the Palestinian population at the loss of the only leader the PLO had known for 35 years. At the same time, the occasion appeared even sadder to many observers because of their belief that Arafat had missed several opportunities in the past decade to see much of his Palestinian dream accomplished prior to his death. For their part, the United States and Israel focused on the transition to new Palestinian leaders as an opportunity to revive the peace process.

Following Abbas's election as president in January 2005 and Prime Minister Quray's formation of a new cabinet, the two leaders indicated a desire to establish a clear "separation" between the "political" PLO and the "governmental" PNA. Plans were also announced to expand, restructure, and revitalize the PNC. In addition, at midyear Abbas called for negotiations with *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad toward their possible membership in the PLO. Moreover, Abbas launched talks with the hitherto "rejectionist" PLO factions with the goal of having them participate in a new PNA following the anticipated unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza in August.

Following *Hamas's* resounding victory in the January 2006 legislative elections, tensions increased within the PLO as *Fatah* lost its majority in parliament and thus its power base. Among other things, newly elected *Fatah* members of parliament walked out after *Hamas* canceled all decisions made by the outgoing PLC. Abbas, though still holding executive authority, was now part of what was described as a "two-headed administration" in a power struggle with the ruling *Hamas* government.

*Executive Committee:* Mahmoud ABBAS (Chair), Zakaria al-AGHA, Yasir AMR, Samir GHOSHEH, Abdallah al-HURANI, Ali ISHAQ, Mahmud ISMAIL, Emile JARJOU, Taysir KHALID, Mahmud ODEH, Riyad al-KHUDARY, Abd al-Rahim MALLOUGH, Muhammad Zudi al-NASHASHIBI, Yasir Abed RABBO, Dr. Assad Abd al-RAHMAN, Ghassen al-SHAKAA, Faruk QADDUMI (Secretary General).

***Fatah.*** The term *Fatah* (Arabic for "opening") is a reverse acronym of *harakat al-tahrir al-watani al-filastini* (Palestine Liberation Movement). It was established mainly by Gulf-based Palestinian exiles in the late 1950s. The group initially adopted a strongly nationalist but ideologically neutral posture, although violent disputes subsequently occurred between traditional (rightist) and leftist factions. While launching its first commando operations against Israel in January 1965, *Fatah* remained aloof from the PLO until the late 1960s, when divisiveness within the PLO, plus *Fatah's* staunch (though unsuccessful) defense in March 1968 of the refugee camp in Karameh, Jordan, contributed to the emergence of Yasir Arafat as a leading Palestinian spokesman. Following Arafat's election as PLO chair in 1969, *Fatah* became the PLO's core component.

Commando operations in the early 1970s were a primary responsibility of *al-Asifa*, then the formation's military wing. Following expulsion of the *fedayeen* from Jordan, a wave of "external" (i.e., non-Middle Eastern) operations were conducted by "Black September"

terrorists, although *Fatah* never acknowledged any association with such extremist acts as the September 1972 attack against Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. By early 1973 the number of “external” incidents had begun to diminish, and during the Lebanese civil war of 1975–1976, *Fatah*, unlike most other Palestinian organizations, attempted to play a mediatory role.

As the result of a *Fatah* leadership decision in October 1973 to support the formation of a “national authority” in any part of the West Bank it managed to “liberate,” a hard-line faction supported by Syria broke from *Fatah* under the leadership of Sabry Khalil al-Banna (see Revolutionary Council of *Fatah*, below). Smaller groups defected after the defeat in Beirut in 1982.

Internal debate in 1985–1986 as to the value of diplomatic compromise was resolved in early 1987 by the adoption of an essentially hard-line posture, a decision apparently considered necessary to ensure continuance of *Fatah*’s pre-eminence within the PLO. However, *Fatah*’s negotiating posture softened progressively in 1988 as Arafat attempted to implement the PNC’s new political program. Thus, *Fatah*’s Fifth Congress, held August 3–9, 1989, in Tunis, Tunisia, strongly supported Arafat’s peace efforts, despite growing disappointment over the lack of success in that regard to date. The congress, the first since 1980, also reelected 9 of 10 previous members to an expanded 18-member Central Committee and elected Arafat to the new post of Central Committee Chair.

Salah Khalaf (alias Abu IYAD), generally considered the “number two” leader within *Fatah*, was assassinated in Tunis in January 1991, the motivation for the attack subsequently remaining unclear. Several other prominent *Fatah* leaders were also assassinated in 1992, some of the killing being attributed to *Fatah*’s continuing confrontation with hard-line PLO splinters as well as with the Islamic fundamentalist movement.

It was reported that prior to the September 1993 signing of the PLO-Israel peace

settlement, the *Fatah* Central Committee had endorsed its content by a vote of 12–6. As implementation of the accord proceeded in 1994, some friction was reported between formerly exiled leaders returning to Gaza/Jericho and *Fatah* representatives who had remained in those regions during Israeli occupation. In part to resolve such conflict, new by-laws were proposed under which *Fatah* “would operate more like a normal party” with numerous local branches and national committees led by elected chairs. Meanwhile, as would be expected, many of those named to the new Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and other governmental bodies were staunch *Fatah* supporters. Some discord was reported within *Fatah* during late 1994 and the first half of 1995 as progress in the gradual self-rule accord for Gaza/Jericho stalled. However, several public opinion polls showed *Fatah*’s support within the occupied territories to be about 50 percent of the population, a figure that was significantly higher than some observers had estimated.

*Fatah* presented 70 candidates (reportedly handpicked by Arafat) in the January 1996 Palestinian legislative elections; about 50 of these “official” *Fatah* candidates were successful. However, a number of *Fatah* dissidents ran as independents and secured seats. In concurrent balloting for president of the Palestinian National Authority, Arafat was elected with 87.1 percent of the vote, further underpinning *Fatah*’s dominance regarding Palestinian affairs. However, Arafat and *Fatah* were subsequently subjected to intense legislative scrutiny (surprisingly rigorous in the opinion of many observers) over perceived governmental inefficiency, or worse.

Following the outbreak of the “second *intifada*” (or the *al-Aqsa intifida*, a reference to a mosque on Temple Mount in Jerusalem) in 2000 and the collapse of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, “deep dialogue” was reported within *Fatah* regarding the military and political future for Palestinians. A new guerrilla formation, the *al-Aqsa* Martyrs’ Brigade, was reportedly

organized as an offshoot of *Tanzim*, the grassroots *Fatah* “militia” in the West Bank. *Al-Aqsa* claimed responsibility for a number of attacks against targets within Israel in the first few months of 2002, and the United States placed the group on its list of terrorist organizations. Marwan Barghouti, the reported leader of *Tanzim* and generally considered the second most popular Palestinian leader after Arafat, was arrested by Israeli security forces in April 2002 and charged with terrorism. At about the same time, *al-Aqsa* announced it would not carry out any attacks on civilians in Israel but reserved the right to attack military targets and Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank.

On the political front, a number of *Fatah* members were among reformists who pressured Arafat in 2002 to combat perceived corruption and mismanagement within the PNA and to appoint a prime minister to share executive authority. *Fatah* subsequently endorsed the appointments of Mahmoud Abbas and Ahmad Quray to the new prime ministership in March 2003 and September 2003, respectively. Meanwhile *al-Aqsa* claimed responsibility for a number of attacks on Israeli soldiers and suicide bombings in 2002–2004. (To some observers *Fatah* appeared at best dysfunctional at that point because some of its members were regularly perpetrating attacks, while others in the government and police forces were attempting to establish “security.”) Following Arafat’s death in November 2004, Faruk Qaddumi was named to succeed Arafat as chair of *Fatah*’s Central Council. Subsequently, *Fatah* successfully presented Abbas as its presidential candidate in the January 2005 balloting. (Barghouti, sentenced to life in prison in mid-2004 on the terrorism charges, had initially expressed an interest in running for president from jail, observers suggesting he would have had a good chance of success. However, his supporters apparently chose unity over confrontation, and Barghouti withdrew from contention.)

In February 2005 reformist elements in *Fatah* reportedly blocked efforts by *Fatah*’s old guard to retain dominance in the new Palestinian cab-

inet. Among other things, the reformists argued that *Fatah* was losing popular support to *Hamas* because of perceived ties of many Arafat loyalists to long-standing corruption.

Following what was described as *Fatah*’s “stunning” defeat to *Hamas* in the January 2006 legislative elections, violent demonstrations in Gaza by hundreds of *Fatah* supporters demanded the resignation of the *Fatah* leadership, prompting a trip to the area by President Abbas, who called on *Hamas* to form a national unity government. However, *Fatah* continued to be at odds with the *Hamas*-led government, seeking to unify the leadership to include PLO members and pressuring the PNA to endorse the national accord document proposed by Marwan Barghouti and other Palestinians prisoners in Israel. Without success in either effort by August, some in *Fatah* were calling for the PNA to be dissolved.

*Leaders:* Faruk QADDUMI (Chair), Mahmoud ABBAS, Ahmed QURAY (Former Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority), Marwan BARGHOUTI (imprisoned in Israel), Mohammad DAHLAN, Ahmad HILLIS (Secretary General), Nabil SHAATH.

**Palestine People’s Party—PPP.** A Soviet-backed Palestine Communist Party (PCP) was formed in 1982 to encompass Palestinian Communists in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Jordan with the approval of parent communist organizations in those areas. Although it had no formal PLO affiliation, the PCP in 1984 joined the Democratic Alliance’s campaign to negotiate a settlement among sparring PLO factions. As part of the reunification program approved in April 1987, the PNC officially embraced the PCP, granting it representation on PLO leadership bodies. The PCP, which was technically illegal but generally tolerated in the occupied territories, endorsed the creation of a Palestinian state adjacent to Israel following withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied territories. In late 1991 the PCP changed its name to the PPP.

In September 1993 the PPP endorsed the PLO-Israeli accord on the condition that substantial “democratic reform” be implemented within the PLO. Although it was subsequently not represented in the PNA formed in 1994, the PPP was described as an “effective ally” of *Fatah* and PLO chair Arafat in the fledgling Palestinian self-rule process.

The PPP contested the January 1996 Palestinian legislative elections, albeit without success. However, PPP General Secretary Bashir al-Barghuthi was named minister of industry in the Palestinian cabinet named in May. The PPP’s presidential candidate, Bassam al-Salhi, secured 2.7 percent of the vote in the January 2005 presidential balloting. In 2006 the PPP urged a government of national unity and, along with *Fatah* and the PFLP, sought to have the PLO recognized as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

*Leaders:* Bashir al-BARGHUTHI, Bassam al-SALHI (Secretary General).

**Arab Liberation Front**—ALF. The ALF has long been closely associated with the Iraqi branch of the *Baath* party. Its history of terrorist activity included an April 1980 attack on an Israeli kibbutz. Subsequently, there were reports of fighting in Beirut between the ALF and pro-Iranian Shiites. ALF leader Ahmed ABDER-RAHIM died in June 1991, and the status of the front’s leadership subsequently remained unclear. Although the ALF was reported to have considered withdrawing from the PLO following the September 1993 agreement with Israel, it was apparently persuaded to remain as part of the “loyal opposition.” In 1995, however, the front was reported to have split into two factions over the question. In the early 2000s, the ALF reportedly distributed Iraqi money to relatives of suicide bombers.

In 2006 the group refused to participate in legislative elections, saying there could be no democracy under occupation.

*Leaders:* Mahmoud ISMAEL, Rakad SALIM (Secretary General, jailed in Israel).

**Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine**—DFLP. Established in February 1969 as a splinter from the PFLP (below), the DFLP was known as the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) until adopting its present name in 1974. A year earlier the front had become the first Palestinian group to call for the establishment of a democratic state—one encompassing both banks of the Jordan—as an intermediate step toward founding a national entity that would include all of historic Palestine. Its ultimate goal, therefore, was the elimination of Hashemite Jordan, as well as Zionist Israel. The DFLP advocated a form of secular nationalism rooted in Marxist-Leninist doctrine, whereas *Fatah* initially envisaged a state organized on the basis of coexistent religious communities. Despite their political differences, the DFLP and *Fatah* tended to agree on most issues after their expulsion from Jordan in 1971. However, unlike *Fatah*, the DFLP supported the Islamic left in the Lebanese civil war of 1975–1976.

The DFLP, which since 1984 had taken a middle position between pro- and anti-Arafat factions, played a major role in the 1987 PLO reunification. In addition, its close ties with the PFLP, reduced in 1985 when the DFLP opted not to join the PFLP-led Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF), were reestablished during the unity campaign. The DFLP endorsed the declaration of an independent Palestinian state by the PNC in November 1988, although its leaders interpreted the new PLO political position with less moderation than PLO chair Arafat, declaring they had no intention of halting “armed struggle against the enemy.” Subsequently, differences were reported between supporters of longtime DPLF leader Nayif Hawatmeh, who opposed granting any “concessions” to facilitate peace negotiations, and supporters of Yasir Abed Rabbo, a DFLP representative on the PLO Executive Committee, who called for a more “realistic” approach and became one of the leading PLO negotiators attempting to implement the PNC’s proposed “two-state” settlement. In



early 1990 the DFLP Political Bureau reported it was unable to resolve the internal dispute, which was symptomatic of disagreement among Palestinians as a whole. After his supporters had failed to unseat Hawatmeh at a party congress late in the year, Rabbo formed a breakaway faction in early 1991. Both factions were represented on the new PLO executive committee late in the year, although Hawatmeh continued to criticize Arafat's endorsement of the U.S.-led Middle East peace talks. He also called for formation of a "collective" PLO leadership to reduce dependence on Arafat.

Rabbo's wing subsequently continued to support Arafat, but the main DFLP faction remained dedicated to a "no negotiations" stance. Not surprisingly, Hawatmeh and his followers rejected the September 1993 peace accord with Israel, and the DFLP leader described the May 1994 Cairo Agreement as "not binding on the people of Palestine." Meanwhile, Rabbo was given the culture and arts portfolio in the new PNA, and he was subsequently described as a leader of the recently formed PDU (see below).

In January 1994 the DFLP joined with five PLO groupings (the PFLP, the PLF, the PPSF, the RPCP, and the PNSF), plus *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad to form a loosely knit coalition known as the Alliance of Palestinian Forces. Earlier, in October 1993, the same groups had reportedly formed a National Islamic Front, the subsequent name change appearing to reflect concern among secularist PLO factions over participation in an "Islamic" organization. In any event, the Alliance of Palestinian Forces was based on the opposition of its constituent groups to the accord negotiated by PLO Chair Arafat with Israel in September 1993. The alliance pledged to "confront and resist" the Gaza/Jericho agreement and to pursue an independent Palestinian state and the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. A 10-member Executive Committee was announced and 20 members of what was expected eventually to be a larger Central Council were appointed. Although policy coordination

was envisioned, it was reportedly agreed that each component of the alliance would determine how to proceed with its own "resistance" activities. However, the alliance subsequently collapsed, apparently due to the "incompatibility" of its leftist and Islamic elements.

Several DFLP "lieutenants" were reported in mid-1995 to have relocated from Damascus to Gaza, prompting speculation that the grouping might participate in the proposed election of a Palestinian Council. Although the DFLP ultimately boycotted that balloting, it encouraged its supporters to register as voters in anticipation of municipal elections that were expected to be held following the completion of the proposed Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. The DFLP attended Palestinian conferences chaired by Arafat in February and August 1997, indicating that it was hoping to have a say in the proposed negotiations with Israel concerning the final status of Palestinian autonomy. However, in early 1998 it was reported that a plenary session of the DFLP in Damascus had agreed to draw up new strategies, apparently out of conviction that the current peace process was moribund.

In August 1999 DFLP leaders met with Arafat for the first time since 1993, and the DFLP resumed participation in the PLO's Central Council later in the year. In October the United States dropped the DFLP from the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. However, the DFLP claimed responsibility for an attack in mid-2001 in Gaza that left three Israeli soldiers dead. The DFLP later blamed Israel for a car bombing in Gaza in February 2002 that killed several DFLP members.

The DFLP joined the PFLP in mid-2004 in denouncing the fledgling unilateral disengagement plan being considered by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, and the groups announced that the "armed struggle" would continue. The DFLP participated in the January 2005 presidential elections (its candidate, Taysir Khalid, won 3.4 percent of the vote), but in 2006 the DFLP declined to participate in the PNA

following the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

*Leaders:* Nayif HAWATMEH (Secretary General), Taysir KHALID (2005 presidential candidate).

**Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine**—PFLP. The leftist PFLP was established in 1967 by merger of three main groups: an early Palestine Liberation Front, led by Ahmad Jabril; and two small offshoots of the Arab Nationalist Movement—the Youth for Revenge and Georges Habash’s Heroes of the Return. However, Jabril and some of his followers quickly split from the PFLP (see PFLP-GC, below). The PFLP favored a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East and resisted the establishment of a West Bank state as an intermediate strategy. Its ultimate goal was the formation of a Palestinian nation founded on scientific socialism, accompanied by its own evolution into a revolutionary proletarian party.

After the failure of efforts to achieve PLO unity in 1984, the PFLP played a key role in formation of the anti-Arafat PNSF. It endorsed the 1987 reunification in light of *Fatah*’s increased militancy, but PFLP delegates to the 1988 PNC session voted against the new PLO political program. Habash subsequently announced that his group, the second largest PLO faction, would accept the will of the majority “for the sake of unity.” However, he added that he expected the peace initiatives to fail and vowed continued attacks by PFLP fighters against Israeli targets. In early 1990 Habash was described as in “open opposition” to Arafat’s acceptance of a U.S. plan for direct talks between Palestinian representatives and Israel, calling instead for increased military confrontation. Habash subsequently continued to criticize Arafat’s policies, particularly the PLO leader’s concessions in the new Middle East peace talks. The PFLP reportedly suspended its membership in the PLO executive committee in late 1991 to protest the negotiations and was apparently considering the possible establishment of an anti-Arafat coal-

ition with other hard-line groups. On the other hand, as of mid-1992 the PFLP continued to be viewed as part of the “loyal opposition” within the PLO, a clear break with Arafat seeming unlikely because, in part, of Habash’s poor health. (The PFLP leader had been the center of an international furor earlier in the year when he went to France for emergency medical treatment, French police detaining him because of alleged PFLP terrorist involvement in the late 1970s, then permitting him to leave the country in the wake of widespread outcries from Arab leaders.)

During its Fifth Congress, held December 12–14, 1992, in Damascus, Syria, the PFLP vowed to return to “radical action” in order to “regain credibility” among Palestinians. Consequently, Habash condemned the peace accord of September 1993, urging an “intensification” of the struggle for “an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.” However, the PFLP remained represented in the new PLO executive committee named in April 1996, although several subsequent shootings of Israeli settlers (which prompted the arrest by Palestinian police of some 30 PFLP members) apparently indicated continued resistance to the current peace process on the part of at least some of the PFLP faithful. By 1997 the PFLP was described in general as interested in participating with Arafat’s *Fatah* and other PLO factions in establishing a consensus position to present in proposed “final status talks” with Israel should the peace process develop that far. Meanwhile, in November 1997 a breakaway group reportedly formed as the Palestinian Popular Forces Party (PPFP) under the leadership of Adnan Abu NAJILAH.

The PFLP subsequently suspended its activity in the PLO’s Central Council to protest the lack of progress in negotiations with Israel, although it resumed its role in that body in February 2000. In late April 2000 Habash announced his retirement; he was succeeded by his longtime deputy, Mustafa al-ZIBRI (Abu Ali Mustafa), who had returned to the West Bank in

1999 after 32 years in exile. Al-Zibri was killed by rockets fired at his Ramallah office by an Israeli helicopter in August 2001, thereby becoming the highest-ranking Palestinian leader to die in such an attack. The PFLP subsequently claimed responsibility for four bomb explosions in Jerusalem in September 2001 and the assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rechavam Zeevi in October. A number of PFLP adherents, including Secretary General Ahmed Saadat, were subsequently arrested by Palestinian security forces, and the PFLP military wing was reportedly “banned” from Palestinian self-rule areas.

The PFLP claimed joint responsibility with *Fatah* for an attack on Israeli soldiers in February 2003. Several PFLP members were killed in subsequent Israeli reprisals. Although PFLP leaders joined other dissident PLO factions in meeting with Palestinian President Abbas in mid-2005, they reported that “no real coalition” had been formed and complained of ongoing *Fatah* domination of PLO affairs. By October, PFLP was holding alliance talks with groups that included the DFLP, PPP, PDU, and the PPSF to register candidates, including eight women, under a so-called “alternative list.”

In 2006 the group’s secretary general, Ahmed Saadat, was arrested by Israeli forces after they stormed a prison in Jericho where he and other Palestinian activists were being held. Saadat faced 19 charges in Israel, including arms dealing and inciting violence.

*Leaders:* Ahmed SAADAT (Secretary General, jailed in Israel), Jamil MAJDALAWI, Nasser IZZAT, Mahir al-TAHER, Abdel Rahim MALOUH.

**Palestine Liberation Front**—PLF. The PLF emerged in 1976 as an Iraqi-backed splinter from the PFLP-GC. In the early 1980s the group itself split into two factions—a Damascus-based group led by Talaat YACOUB, which opposed PLO Chair Yasir Arafat, and a Baghdad- and Tunis-based group led by Muhammad ABBAS (Abdul ABBAS), who was sentenced in absen-

tia to life imprisonment by Italian courts for his alleged role in masterminding the hijacking of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in 1985. Although Arafat had vowed that Abbas would be removed from his seat on the PLO Executive Committee because of the conviction, Abbas was granted “provisional” retention of the position at the 1987 PNC unity meeting, which was supported by both PLF factions. Reconciliation within the PLF was subsequently achieved, at least nominally: Yacoub was named secretary general, while Abbas accepted a position as his deputy. However, Yacoub died in 1988, leaving control largely in Abbas’s hands. In May 1990 the PLF accepted responsibility for a failed attack on Tel Aviv beaches by Palestinian commandos in speedboats, an event that precipitated a breakdown in the U.S.-PLO dialogue because of a lack of subsequent disciplinary action against Abbas. Apparently by mutual agreement, Abbas was not included in the new PLO Executive Committee selected in September 1991.

In March 2004 it was reported that Abbas had died of “natural causes” while in “unexplained U.S. custody in Iraq.” New PLF Secretary General Umar Shibli said he hoped to reintegrate the PLF into PNA activity. In 2006, the PLF was one of several factions that blamed *Fatah* and *Hamas* for increasing conflict in Gaza.

*Leader:* Umar SHIBLI (Secretary General).

**Palestinian Democratic Union**—PDU. The PDU (also referenced as FIDA [“sacrifice” in Arabic], which is also a reverse acronym for the group’s Arabic name, *al-ittihad al-dimuqrati al-filastini*) was launched in early 1993, not as a challenge to the PLO (then headquartered in Tunis, Tunisia) but, in the words of a spokesman, as a means of “moving the center of gravity” of the Palestinian opposition to “the occupied territories.” Although some of the group’s organizers were described as members of the DFLP, the PDU identified itself as nonideological and committed to the Middle East peace process. Operating under the reported leadership of Yasir

Abed Rabbo (a longstanding Arafat loyalist), the PDU was one of the few non-*Fatah* groupings to contest the January 1996 elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, securing one seat. In 2004 the group called on *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad to join the Palestinian leadership.

*Leaders:* Siham al-BARGHUTHI, Yasir Abed RABBO, Zuheira KAMAL, Jamil SALHUT, Saleh RAFAT (Secretary General).

**Palestine Popular Struggle Front**—PPSF. The PPSF broke from the PFLP while participating in the Lebanese civil war on behalf of the Islamic left. Although the PPSF was represented at the 1988 and 1991 PNC sessions, it denounced the council's political initiatives on both occasions and was not subsequently represented on the PLO Executive Committee. In 1995 it was reported that the PPSF had split into several factions, one of which had expressed support for PLO Chair Arafat and the Palestinian National Authority.

*Leaders:* Anwar Abu MAWAR, Khalid Abd al-MAJID (Secretary General), Samir GHOSHEH.

**Islamic Resistance Movement** (*Hamas*). *Hamas* rose to prominence in 1989 as a voice for the Islamic fundamentalist movement in the occupied territories and as a proponent of heightened conflict with Israeli authorities. It subsequently confronted mainstream PLO elements, particularly *Fatah*, over leadership of the *intifada* as well as Palestinian participation in Middle East peace negotiations. Capitalizing on the initial lack of progress in those talks, *Hamas* scored significant victories in various municipal and professional organization elections in the occupied territories in the first half of 1992. In addition, the movement's military wing, *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades, was believed to be involved in fighting with *Fatah* supporters and to be responsible for the execution of Palestinians suspected of cooperating with the Israeli authorities. *Hamas* founder Sheikh Ahmed YASSIN, arrested in 1989, was sentenced to life imprisonment by an Israeli court in October 1991 for ordering several such killings of alleged Palestinian "collaborators."

Breaking with a long-standing insistence on the annihilation of Israel, Mousa Abu MARZOUK, one of the group's leaders (then based in Syria), stated in April 1994 that peace was possible if Israel withdrew from the occupied territories.

On May 14, 1995, Sayid Abu MUSAMEH, a high-ranking *Hamas* official, was sentenced by an Israeli court to two years' imprisonment for publishing "seditious" articles in a *Hamas* newspaper, *Al-Watan*. On June 5, Israeli authorities arrested 45 *Hamas* militants on suspicion of plotting attacks on civilian targets, and on August 1 it took steps to secure the extradition of Marzouk, who had been detained as a suspected terrorist upon entering the United States a week earlier. (The United States in 1997 "expelled" Marzouk to Jordan, from which he again relocated to Syria after the Jordanian government ordered the closure of all *Hamas* offices in Jordan in late 1999.)

In 1995 and 1996 *Hamas* was described as deeply divided between those favoring continued violence against Israel and those believing it was time to join the peaceful political process unfolding in the Palestinian self-rule areas. Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat met with *Hamas* leaders in late 1995 in what was described as a determined effort to win the movement's participation in upcoming Palestinian elections. After apparently wavering on the proposal, however, *Hamas* announced it would boycott the balloting.

In January 1996 Yahya AYYASH, a *Hamas* militant known as "The Engineer" who had been blamed by Israeli officials for a number of bomb attacks, was assassinated in the Gaza Strip by a bomb that was widely attributed to Israeli security forces. Subsequently, *Hamas* militants calling themselves the "Yahya Ayyash Units" claimed responsibility for several suicide bombings in Israel in February and March. Following the blasts, Marzouk (in a interview from his U.S. jail) said that the *Hamas* political wing had little direct control over the "militias" in the occupied and previously occupied territories. Meanwhile, Arafat outlawed the *al-Qassam* Brigades but continued his political dialogue with *Hamas* moderates, mindful that the grouping retained significant popular support

among Palestinians, built, in part, upon its network of schools, health services, and other social programs.

Sheikh Yassin was released from prison on October 1, 1997, apparently as part of the “price” Israel agreed to pay after the bungled assassination attempt of *Hamas* militant Khaled Meshal in Jordan the previous month. Yassin went to Jordan for medical treatment and then to his home at Gaza, where he was welcomed as a hero by ecstatic crowds. He subsequently maintained an apparently deliberately vague position on developments regarding Palestinian autonomy, at times reverting to previous fiery rhetoric exhorting holy war against Israeli forces while at other times appearing conciliatory toward Arafat and the PNA, despite the fact that an estimated 80 influential *Hamas* leaders remained in PNA detention.

According to some reports, *Hamas* was approached by Arafat about joining the Palestinian cabinet in mid-1998. Although that overture was rejected, Yassin in April 1999 attended a PLO Central Council meeting as an observer, suggesting a growing degree of “accommodation” between the two groups. On the other hand, Palestinian security forces arrested some 90 *Hamas* activists in Gaza in August.

In December 2000 *Hamas* warned of a return of a campaign of suicide bombings in view of renewed Palestinian-Israeli violence, and the group subsequently claimed responsibility for a number of car bomb and suicide bomb attacks in Israel, Palestinian leader Arafat criticizing *Hamas*’s “aggression.” In July 2002 a *Hamas* political leader in Nablus, Jamal MANSUR, was killed in an explosion attributed by *Hamas* to Israeli agents, while an *al-Qassam* leader was also assassinated during that month in Gaza. Yassin promised Israel would “pay a price,” and *Hamas* claimed responsibility for several subsequent suicide bombings.

In February 2003 Yassin urged Muslims around the world to attack “Western interests” in the event of a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Yassin also rejected the “road map” peace proposal offered by the so-called Middle East Quartet in April and vowed that attacks on Israeli targets would continue.

Abd al-Aziz RANTISI, a prominent *Hamas* figure, was wounded by an Israeli missile attack in June 2003, but *Hamas* pledged to pursue its “Holy War.” International attention focused even more intently on *Hamas* when Yassin was killed by Israeli missiles in March 2004. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon dismissed Yassin as an “arch-terrorist,” although the assassination of the blind, wheelchair-bound *Hamas* leader was viewed with dismay in many areas of the world. Such consternation had little effect on Israeli policy, however, and Rantisi, who had succeeded Yassin as the leader of *Hamas*, was himself killed in an Israeli attack in April.

Throughout 2005 *Hamas* slowly grew in popularity to become a formidable rival to *Fatah*. In successive municipal elections *Hamas* won the majority of seats in several local councils, including West Bank towns, such as Nablus, that had been *Fatah* strongholds. Meanwhile *Hamas* claimed that Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was the result of its armed struggle against Israeli occupation. A watershed moment for *Hamas* came in January 2006 when it won a clear majority of seats in the legislative elections (74 out of 132), capitalizing on Palestinian disenchantment with corruption and poor delivery of services as well as public disillusionment with the overall process of negotiations with Israel (the withdrawal from Gaza notwithstanding). Subsequent to the election and the formation of a *Hamas*-dominated cabinet, the group faced immense Western pressure to commit itself to a two-state solution and to renounce violence.

*Leaders:* Khalil MISHAL (in Damascus), Ismail HANIYA (Former Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority), Mahmud al-ZAHAR (Former Foreign Affairs Minister for the Palestinian Authority).

**Palestinian National Initiative**—PNI. The PNI is a movement founded by Moustafa BARGHOUTI in 2002 as a democratic “third force” alternative to both the PLO and *Hamas*. The base of the PNI included secular, left-leaning intellectuals, many of whom, such as Barghouti, had been prominent in the Palestinian nongovernmental organization

community. Barghouti finished second in the January 2005 presidential elections, winning 19 percent of the vote. In the January 2006 legislative elections, the PNI won three seats with 2.7 percent of the vote.

**Islamic Jihad** (*al-Jihad al-Islami*). Islamic Jihad is presumably a Palestinian extension of Egypt's Islamic Jihad, which was originally launched as a splinter of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (see entry on Egypt). Islamic Jihad has been linked to a number of bomb attacks against Israeli soldiers both in the occupied territories and within Israel. Fathi SHAQAQI, described as the leader of Islamic Jihad was assassinated in Malta in October 1995, reportedly by Israeli secret agents. It was subsequently reported that Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, a "Gaza-born militant" who had helped form Islamic Jihad, had assumed leadership of the grouping. Like *Hamas*, the other leading "rejectionist" grouping in the occupied and previously occupied territories, Islamic Jihad boycotted the 1996 Palestinian elections. Following the bomb attacks in Israel in early 1996, the Islamic Jihad military wing was one of the groups formally outlawed by Palestinian leader Arafat.

Islamic Jihad boycotted the February 1997 "national dialogue" meeting convened by Arafat but, in what was seen as a potentially significant shift, attended the August unity conference, which was also chaired by the Palestinian president. Nevertheless, leaders of the group were careful to point out that Islamic Jihad had not renounced the use of violence against Israel, and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for some of the attacks on Israeli civilians in 2001–2005. Islamic Jihad did not participate in the January 2005 Palestinian presidential elections or the January 2006 legislative elections.

*Leaders:* Ramadan Abdullah SHALLAH (in Damascus), Abdallah al-SHAMI (Spokesperson), Muhammad al-HINDI, Sheikh Bassam SADI.

**Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command**—PFLP-GC. Although the General Command broke from the parent front in late 1967, both organizations fought on the side of the Islamic left in the Lebanese civil war. The

PFLP-GC was one of the founding members (along with the PFLP, PLF, PPSF, *al-Saiqa*, and *Fatah Uprising*) of the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF), launched in February 1985 in Damascus in opposition to the policies of PLO chair Arafat. Following the reconciliation of the PFLP and the PLF with other major PLO factions at the 1987 PNC meeting, PFLP leader Georges Habash declared that the PNSF had been dissolved; the remaining "rejectionist" groups continued to allude to the PNSF umbrella, however. The PFLP-GC, headquartered in Damascus, was reported to have influenced the uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in late 1987 and 1988, having established a clandestine radio station, the Voice of Jerusalem, that attracted numerous listeners throughout the occupied territories. In addition to refusing to participate in the 1988 PNC session, the PFLP-GC pledged to step up its guerrilla attacks against Israel. U.S. and other Western officials reportedly suspected the PFLP-GC of complicity in the December 1988 bombing of a Pan American airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, although PFLP-GC officials vehemently denied that the group was involved. In early 1990 PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jabril called upon Arafat to step down as PLO chair on the grounds that "concessions to Israel have achieved nothing."

In May 1991 the PNSF, by then representing only the PFLP-GC, *al-Saiqa*, and *Fatah Uprising* (the PPSF having attended the 1988 PNC meeting), negotiated a preliminary "unity" agreement of its own with the mainstream PLO under which each PNSF component was to be given representation in the PNC. The proposed settlement was generally perceived as an outgrowth of a desire by Syria, the primary source of support for the PNSF, to normalize relations with the PLO and thereby enhance its influence in projected Middle East peace talks. However, negotiations with *Fatah* ultimately proved unproductive, yielding a PNSF boycott of the 1991 PNC session.

In September 1993 PFLP-GC leader Jabril warned that Arafat had become an appropriate target for assassination because of the peace settlement with Israel. In mid-1996 the PFLP-GC was

described as the primary conduit for the transfer of Syrian weapons to *Hezbollah* guerrillas in southern Lebanon, where Jabril's son, Jihad JABRIL, was reportedly in charge of a PFLP-GC "training center."

The PFLP-GC declined to join the PFLP in resuming activity in the PLO's Central Council in early 2000. In April 2002 the PFLP-GC claimed responsibility for rocket attacks from Lebanon into the Golan Heights and Israel, and Jihad Jabril was killed in a car bomb attack in Beirut the following month. (His father attributed the attack to Israeli agents.) In mid-2005 Ahmad Jabril announced that the PFLP-GC was not yet ready to commit to participation in the Palestinian government following the planned withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, although he agreed to join negotiations on the matter. In 2006, following *Hezbollah's* cross-border attack from Lebanon on Israeli soldiers, Israel reportedly targeted a PFLP-GC stronghold in eastern Lebanon.

*Leaders:* Talal NAJI, Musa AWAD, Ahmad JABRIL (Secretary General).

**Al-Saiqa.** Established in 1968 under the influence of the Syrian *Baath* Party, *al-Saiqa* ("Thunderbolt") came into conflict with *Fatah* as a result of its active support for Syrian intervention during the Lebanese civil war. The group's longtime leader, Zuheir MOHSEN, who served as the PLO's chief of military operations, was assassinated in Paris in July 1979, his successor being a former Syrian air force general. Denouncing the decisions of the November 1988 PNC session, *al-Saiqa* leaders said they would attempt to get the PLO "back on its original revolutionary course of struggle."

In 2006 the group opposed President Abbas's proposed national accord referendum.

*Leaders:* Issam al-KADE, Mohamed KHALIFAH.

**Revolutionary Palestinian Communist Party—RPCP.** The existence of the RPCP was first reported in 1988, the party having apparently been formed by former PCP members who wished to support the *intifada* in the occupied territories but objected to the PCP's endorsement of the

"two-state" peace proposal being pursued by the PNC. There has been no recent reference to the RPCP.

*Leader:* Abdullah AWWAD (General Secretary).

**Fatah Uprising.** An outgrowth of the 1983 internal PLO fighting in Lebanon, the Uprising is a *Fatah* splinter group that draws its membership from PLO dissidents who remained in Beirut following the departure of Yasir Arafat. One of the most steadfast of the anti-Arafat formations, it waged a bitter (and largely successful) struggle with mainstream adherents for control of Beirut's refugee camps in May–July 1988. It condemned the PNC declaration of November 1988 as a "catastrophe," and in early 1990 called for attacks on U.S. interests worldwide "because America is completely biased towards the Zionist enemy." The group also called for the assassination of Arafat in the wake of the PLO's September 1993 agreement with Israel.

In 2006 the group reportedly was smuggling arms into Lebanon and was reinforced by forces from Damascus in its clashes with the Lebanese army near the border with Syria.

*Leaders:* Saed MUSA (Abu MUSA), Muraghah Abu-Fadi HAMMAD (Secretary General).

**Revolutionary Council of Fatah.** The Revolutionary Council (also known as the Abu Nidal Group) was held responsible for more than 100 terrorist incidents in over 20 countries after it broke away from its parent group in 1974. Targets included Palestinian moderates as well as Israelis and other Jews, and the group's predilection for attacks in public places in Europe and Asia led to allegations of its involvement in the assaults on the Vienna and Rome airports in December 1985. The shadowy organization, which operated under numerous names, was formed by Sabry Khalil al-BANNA, better known as Abu Nidal, one of the first PLO guerrillas to challenge the leadership of Yasir Arafat. Nidal reportedly plotted to have Arafat killed soon after their split, prompting his trial in absentia by the PLO, which issued a death sentence. Somewhat surprisingly, the

## Cabinet

As of December 1, 2007

Prime Minister Salim Fayyad

### *Ministers*

Agriculture and Social Affairs	Mahmoud Habbash
Culture	Ibrahim Abrash
Education and Higher Education	Lamis al-Alami [f]
Finance	Salim Fayyad
Foreign Affairs	Salim Fayyad
Health	Dr. Fathi Abu Maghli
Information	Riyad al-Malki
Interior and Civil Affairs	Gen. Abd al-Razzaq al-Yahia
Justice	Ali Khashaan
Labor	Samir Abdullah
Local Government	Ziad Abdullah al-Bandak
Prisoner Affairs	Ashraf Eid al-Ajrami
Public Works, Telecommunications, and Economy	Kamal Hasouneh
Religious Affairs and <i>Waqf</i>	Sheikh Jamal Mohammad Bawatneh
Tourism and Women's Affairs	Khoulood Khalil Deibes [f]
Transport	Mashhour Abu Daqqa
Youth and Sports	Tahani Abu Daqqa [f]

[f] = female

Revolutionary Council of *Fatah* sent representatives to the preparatory meeting for the April 1987 PNC session, although they walked out during the first day of the regular session. After its Syrian offices were closed by President Assad in 1987, the council transferred the bulk of its military operations to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and Muslim West Beirut, with Abu Nidal and other leaders reportedly moving to Libya. Fierce personal rivalries and disagreements over policy were subsequently reported within the group, apparently prompting Abu Nidal to order the killing of about 150 dissidents in Libya in October 1989. Consequently, several former senior commanders of the organization fled to Algiers and Tunis, where they established an "emergency leadership" faction opposed to the "blind terrorism" still espoused by Abu Nidal's supporters. The internecine fighting subsequently spread

to Lebanon, where in June 1990 the dissidents were reported to have routed Nidal's supporters with the aid of fighters from Arafat's *Fatah*.

In July 1992 Walid KHALID, described as Abu Nidal's top aide, was assassinated in Lebanon, apparently as part of a series of "score settling" killings by rival guerrilla groups. In November 1995 Palestinian police arrested a group of reported council members in connection with an alleged plot against Arafat's life.

In mid-1998 it was reported that an ailing Abu Nidal was being detained in Egypt after having crossed the border from Libya, possibly as the result of a falling out with Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi. However, Egyptian officials denied that report, and U.S. officials subsequently suggested Abu Nidal may have relocated to Iraq. In August 2002 the Iraqi security forces reported that Abu



Nidal had committed suicide during their attempt to arrest him in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein. Although uncertain of the circumstances, Western analysts accepted the fact of Abu Nidal's death, noting that it presumably meant the formal end of the Revolutionary Council, for which no activity had been reported since 1996.

## Legislature

### *Palestinian Legislative Council*

The September 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (the second of the Palestinian "self-rule" accords between Israel and the PLO) provided for the election of a Palestinian Council to exercise legislative and executive authority in those areas of the previously occupied territories to which Palestinian autonomy had been or was about to be extended. The agreement initially established the size of the council at 82 members, but that was increased to 88 late in the year by mutual consent of Israeli and Palestinian representatives. Sixteen electoral districts were established in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem, and all Palestinians who were at least 18 years of age and had lived in those districts for at least three years were declared eligible to vote.

Nearly 700 candidates, including over 400 independents and some 200 representatives of small parties and political factions, reportedly contested the initial council elections conducted on January 20, 1996. However, balloting was dominated by Yasir Arafat's *Fatah* faction of the PLO, most other major groupings (including *Hamas*, Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and other PLO factions opposed to the current peace negotiations) having boycotted the election. According to *Middle East International*, Palestinian officials reported that the successful candidates included 50 of the 70 "official" *Fatah* nominees, 37 independents (including 16 *Fatah* dissidents), and 1 member of the Palestinian Democratic Union.

The council (by then routinely referenced as the Palestinian Legislative Council, or PLC) convened for the first time on March 7, 1996, at Gaza City. Ahmad Quray was elected speaker by a vote of 57–31 over Haidar Abd al-SHAFI, a critic of Arafat and the recent accords with Israel. In addition to serving as leader of the new council, the speaker was also envisioned as the person who would assume the position of head of the council's executive authority in the event of the incapacitation or death of the person in that position. Regarding such matters, the council proposed a Basic Law of Palestine, which would serve as a "constitution" until the completion of the "final talks" with Israel. The council fell into conflict with Arafat in 1997 over his failure to sign the Basic Law or to pursue other reforms the council had recommended, including the replacement of the current cabinet with a technocrat government better able to deal with the myriad Palestinian economic and development needs. Late in the year the council suspended its sessions to put pressure on the Palestinian leader, who agreed to reorganize the government.

Following the death of Arafat in November 2004 and installation of new Palestinian leadership in early 2005, new PLC elections were scheduled for July 2005. However, they were later postponed as deliberations continued on, among other things, whether a proportional representation system should be established. In preparation for the upcoming elections, the legislative council was expanded from 88 members to 132. Half the seats, or 66, would be elected through proportional representation, while the remaining 66 would be elected from 16 constituencies, whose number of seats would be determined by population. Six seats in the council were also reserved for Christians.

*Hamas*, running as "Change and Reform," won 74 seats in the January 25, 2006, balloting for the PLC. *Fatah* finished second with 45 seats. (Although *Hamas* scored only 3 percentage points higher than *Fatah* overall, it won 45 of the 66 seats elected on a constituency basis. Meanwhile, *Fatah* won 28 seats elected by proportional representation and 17 on a constituency basis.)

Of the 13 remaining seats, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—running as the Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa List—won 3 seats; The Alternative—a coalition of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian People’s Party, and the Palestine Democratic Union—won 2; the Palestinian National Initiative won 2; and Third Way—founded by Hanan Ashrawi

and former Palestinian Finance Minister Salam Fayyad—won 2. Independents won 4 seats.

*Speaker:* Abdel Aziz DUWAIK.

## Intergovernmental Representation

**Ambassador to the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN:** Riyad MANSOUR



**PART THREE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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# ARAB LEAGUE

*al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyah*

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**Official Name:** League of Arab States.

**Established:** By treaty signed March 22, 1945, in Cairo, Egypt.

**Purpose:** To strengthen relations among member states by coordinating policies in political, cultural, economic, social, and related affairs; to mediate disputes between members or between members and third parties.

**Headquarters:** Cairo, Egypt. (In 1979 the league transferred its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis, Tunisia, because of Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. In early 1990 members agreed unanimously to return the headquarters to Cairo, although some offices were scheduled to remain in Tunis. Extensive debate on the issue was reported later in the year as an outgrowth of the schism arising from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but the relocation was formally completed January 1, 1991.)

**Principal Organs:** Council of the League of Arab States (all members), Economic and Social Council (all adherents to the 1950 Collective Security Treaty), Joint Defense Council (all adherents to the 1950 Collective Security Treaty), Permanent Committees (all members), Arab Summit Conferences, General Secretariat.

**Web site:** <http://www.arableagueonline.org> (This site is in Arabic; English content site under construction.)

**Secretary General:** Amr Mahmoud Moussa (Egypt).

**Membership (22):** Algeria, Bahrain, Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** A long-standing project that reached fruition late in World War II, the league was founded primarily on Egyptian initiative following a promise of British support for any Arab organization that commanded general endorsement. In its earlier years the organization focused mainly on economic, cultural, and social cooperation, but in 1950 a Convention on Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation was concluded that obligated the members in case of attack "immediately to take, individually and collectively, all steps available, including the use of armed force, to repel the aggression and restore security and peace." In 1976 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had participated as an observer at all league conferences since September 1964, was admitted to full membership. Egypt's participation was suspended from April 1979 to May 1989 because of its peace agreement with Israel.

**Structure.** The principal political organ of the league is the Council of the League of Arab States, which meets in regular session twice a year, normally at the foreign ministers level. Each member has one vote in the council; decisions usually bind only those states that accept them, although a two-thirds majority vote on financial and administrative matters binds all members. The council's main functions are to supervise the execution of agreements between members, to mediate disputes,

and to coordinate defense in the event of attack. There are numerous committees and other bodies attached to the council, including permanent committees dealing with finance and administration, legal affairs, and information.

The council has also established an Administrative Court, an Investment Arbitration Board, and a Higher Auditing Board. Additional ministerial councils, attended by relevant ministers or their representatives, are held in a dozen areas including transport, justice, health, telecommunications, and environmental affairs.

Three additional bodies were established by the 1950 convention: a Joint Defense Council to function in matters of collective security and to coordinate military resources; a Permanent Military Commission, comprised of representatives of the general staffs, to draw up plans for joint defense; and an Economic Council, comprised of the ministers of economic affairs, to coordinate Arab economic development. The last was restructured as an Economic and Social Council in 1977. An Arab Unified Military Command, charged with the integration of strategy for the liberation of Palestine, was formed in 1964.

The General Secretariat is responsible for internal administration and the execution of council decisions. It also administers several agencies, including the Bureau for Boycotting Israel (headquartered in Damascus, Syria).

Membership in the league generally carries with it membership in an array of specialized agencies, including the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), as well as a variety of other bodies dealing with economic, social, and technical matters.

Nearly three dozen ordinary and extraordinary Arab Summit Conferences have been held since the first one met in 1964. Summit resolutions give direction to the work of the council and other league organs, although the organization's charter did not provide a framework for convening summits.

**Activities.** After many years of preoccupation with Arab-Israeli issues, the league's attention in

1987 turned to the Iraq-Iran conflict as Arab moderates sought a united front against Iran and the potential spread of militant Islamic fundamentalism. An extraordinary summit conference held November 8–11 in Amman, Jordan, condemned "the Iranian regime's intransigence, provocations, and threats to the Arab Gulf States" and called for international "pressure" to encourage Iran to accept a UN-sponsored cease-fire. Although Syrian and Libyan opposition blocked a proposed restoration of membership privileges to Egypt, the summit declared that members could establish relations with Cairo individually. A number of countries, including the Persian Gulf states, quickly did so.

Palestinian issues quickly returned to the forefront of the league's agenda in early 1988 because of the uprising (*intifada*) in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. A June summit affirmed "moral, political, and diplomatic" support for the *intifada* while most of the members made individual financial pledges to the PLO. The major development at the May summit in Casablanca, Morocco, was the readmission of Egypt, whose president Husni Mubarak urged the other attendees to stop "wasting time and opportunities" for formulating a "vision" for peace in the Middle East.

A special summit in late May 1990 in Baghdad, Iraq, although convened at the PLO's urging to discuss the mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel, focused primarily on U.S. policy. In condemning Washington as bearing a "fundamental responsibility" for Israel's "aggression, terrorism, and expansionism," the league reflected growing frustration among Arabs over the lack of progress in peace negotiations. In an apparent effort to reinforce Arab political unity, the leaders agreed to hold regular annual summits in Cairo, beginning in November.

The prospect for effective cooperation was severely compromised by Iraq's takeover of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, which split the league into two deeply divided blocs. On August 10, the majority (comprising Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) voted to send a pan-Arab force to guard Saudi Arabia

against possible Iraqi attack; several members (most notably Egypt and Syria) ultimately contributed troops to the U.S.-led liberation of Kuwait in early 1991. The minority included members overtly sympathetic to Baghdad (such as Jordan, the PLO, and Sudan) and those that, while critical of the Iraqi invasion, were adamantly opposed to U.S. military involvement.

Although both sides continued to promote an “Arab solution” throughout the Persian Gulf crisis, the schism precluded the league from playing any meaningful negotiating role. Symptomatic of the disarray in the Arab world, long-time league Secretary General Chedli Klibi of Tunisia resigned in September 1990 after a blistering personal attack by Saudi Arabian officials. The league observer at the United Nations (UN) also resigned soon after, citing his inability to cope with Arab fragmentation.

Following the coalition victory over Iraqi forces and the restoration of the Kuwaiti government in early 1991, it appeared that Egypt, the leading Arab coalition member, had regained league dominance, although “intense animosities” reportedly remained from the Persian Gulf crisis. Evidence of Cairo’s standing included the May appointment by the Arab League Council of Egypt’s retiring foreign minister, Ahmad Ismat Abd al-Magid, as the next secretary general.

In September 1993 the Arab League’s foreign ministers gave quick approval to the recently negotiated peace accord between Israel and the PLO. However, the league subsequently announced it would not lift the Arab economic boycott against Israel until Israeli troops withdrew from all the occupied territories. The ban, adopted at the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, precluded any direct commercial contact between Arab countries and Israel. In 1951 a secondary boycott was declared against any companies in the world that conducted business with Israel, followed by a tertiary boycott against any companies dealing with those companies already blacklisted. However, the secondary and tertiary boycotts have been widely ignored recently, and in September 1994 the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait,

Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) announced their formal abandonment.

Nevertheless, for the Arab League as a whole the boycotts remained formally in place. In addition, league officials remained skeptical of the proposed formation of a regional economic cooperation union that would include Israel, as had been proposed by the Middle East and North Africa Summit, held October 30–November 1, 1994, in Casablanca, Morocco. The league argued that its members should establish an Arab Free Trade Association that would exclude Israel.

In the wake of the victory of the right-wing Likud party of Benjamin Netanyahu in the May 1996 Israeli elections, the league held its first full summit since 1990 on June 21–23 in Cairo to address, among other things, Netanyahu’s perceived retreat from previous Israeli positions regarding the Palestinian self-rule process. The summit reaffirmed its positions supporting full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, Palestinian self-determination, and an end to settlement building in the West Bank. However, divisions among members on the issue were readily apparent, with moderate states such as Jordan and Egypt leading successful efforts to dilute stronger language proposed by Syria. In other activity, the summit again criticized Iraq, which was not invited to the session, for its lack of cooperation with the UN and issued a statement of support for Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in their disputes with Iran.

The summit’s final communiqué also called for greater Arab solidarity and a strengthening of the organization’s institutions, although skeptics noted a “hollow ring” to the language. The prospects for institutional reform were also constrained by financial difficulties: only four members (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria) had paid their full dues, while the remaining members were a combined \$80 million in arrears. As a consequence, the league was forced to close several foreign offices and reportedly had difficulty meeting its payroll at times.

In November 1997, despite the league’s financial troubles, 17 members agreed to proceed with the establishment of the Arab Free Trade Zone in 1998, with the goal of cutting customs duties



by 10 percent a year until their elimination at the end of 2007. In other activity during the year, the Arab League foreign ministers, meeting in March in Cairo, recommended that members reactivate the economic boycott against Israel and cease all activity geared toward normalizing relations with that country, given the stalled peace process. For the same reason, the league also urged a boycott of the fourth Middle East and North Africa economic conference held in November in Qatar.

In late 1997 and early 1998 the league expressed concern over rising tension between Iraq and Western capitals. It reportedly encouraged Baghdad to adopt a more conciliatory posture while at the same time warning against “unilateral” U.S. action. An emergency summit convened in early January 1999 to address Iraq’s request that the league condemn the recent U.S.-UK air assaults. However, the final statement from the summit was mild in tone, expressing “uneasiness and concern” over the attacks while at the same time criticizing Baghdad for its “provocative” rhetoric. Similarly, an Arab League Council session in March declined to label (as Baghdad had demanded) the “no-fly zones” patrolled by the U.S and the UK in Iraq as illegal.

Another recent focus of attention is antiterrorism. An accord was signed in April 1998 by the interior and justice ministers of the league’s members, who pledged to exchange evidence in terrorist investigations and extradite suspects. The Arab states also agreed not to harbor or assist groups responsible for terrorist acts against Arab nations, although an exemption was granted regarding “national liberation” groups.

In March 2000 the council addressed Israel’s announcement of a pending pullout from its “security zone” in southern Lebanon by warning that renewed Palestinian attacks could result unless Israel provided for the repatriation of Palestinians from refugee camps in the region. The league basically adopted what had been the Syrian position on the matter, rejecting the pullout in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement—clearly, an effort by Syria to interweave the issue of an Israeli pullout from the occupied Golan Heights.

Although the league subsequently cosponsored peace talks in Djibouti on the Somali conflict, from late September 2000 league concerns were largely dominated by the renewal of the Palestinian *intifada*, which quickly led to the first emergency summit in four years on October 20–21 in Cairo. As in the past, however, league reaction was far from unified. Libya’s Colonel Qadhafi pointedly avoided the session altogether, anticipating, from his hard-line perspective, an inadequate response to the renewed hostilities. Iraq’s representative called for holy war (*jihad*), while the majority endorsed a halt to further diplomatic normalization with Israel. (At the time, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Tunisia had representative offices in Israel.) The summit communiqué continued to call for a renewal of the peace process, while the participants agreed to set up a \$1 billion fund to aid Palestinians affected by the uprising and Israeli counteractions.

The Amman summit of March 27–28, 2001, marked the first regular summit since 1990, with Iraq in attendance as a full participant. The *intifada* remained a principal subject, although no significant new initiatives resulted. Presummit speculation centered largely on efforts to repair the rift between Iraq and Kuwait, but only marginal progress toward that end occurred. The league ended up calling once again for an end to the sanctions against Iraq but also for Baghdad to work out its differences with the UN over inspections and related issues. In other matters, the summit advocated accelerating the movement toward free trade as well as forming a customs union and promoting cooperative development in areas such as transport, telecommunications, and information technology. Two months later on May 16, Amr Mahmoud Moussa, theretofore Egypt’s foreign minister, began his tenure as the league’s new secretary general.

At the 14th Arab League summit, held March 27–28, 2002, in Beirut, Lebanon, attention focused on Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations and on a “land-for-peace” plan offered by Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Abdullah to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although Iraq and Kuwait appeared ready to resolve their differences, with Baghdad saying it would henceforth respect Kuwait’s territorial

integrity and sovereignty, positive international expectations for the Saudi plan were undercut even before the summit got under way. In the context of continuing Israeli-Palestinian violence, PLO leader Yasir Arafat initially rejected Israeli conditions for his departure from Ramallah and ultimately decided not to attend the summit for fear the government of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon would not permit his return. Egypt's President Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah also chose not to attend, while several of the smaller Persian Gulf states sent less senior delegations. In addition, on the summit's opening day the Palestinian delegation withdrew over Lebanon's refusal to permit a satellite address by Arafat. As a consequence of these developments, Crown Prince Abdullah's plan failed to register as great an impact as had been anticipated, although it was endorsed by the attendees.

The Saudi plan called for normalization of relations with Israel and affirmed that state's right to security. In return, Israel was expected to withdraw from all occupied territories and recognize a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The summit's concluding Beirut Declaration both called for a "just solution" to the Palestinian refugee problem and rejected "all forms of Palestinian repatriation which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries."

In October 2002, Libya's Qadhafi announced he would pull his country from the organization because of its demonstrated inability to deal effectively not only with the Palestinian situation, but also the looming crisis involving Iraq and the United States. A March 1, 2003, summit in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, to discuss the Iraq crisis left the league divided after a heated exchange between Qadhafi, who attacked Saudi Arabia for permitting U.S. forces on its soil, and Crown Prince Abdullah. The summit concluded with condemnation of any "aggression" against Iraq but also called for Baghdad's compliance with UN weapons inspections. As late as April 2003, Libya maintained its intention to withdraw from the league, but in May, apparently at the urging of the Egyptian president, Qadhafi reversed himself.

With regard to the "road map" for peace in the Middle East that was formally introduced April 30, 2003, by the European Union, the UN, Russia, and the United States, the Arab League expressed its cautious support. The league welcomed the June decision of militant Palestinian groups to introduce a three-month cease-fire, but a league spokesman cautioned that Israel had yet to "implement its obligations" and cease assassinations, incursions, demolitions, and seizures. He further urged the United States in particular to ensure Israeli compliance with the terms of the peace initiative. On February 25, 2004, in the course of oral presentations before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the league argued that the separation barrier being erected on Palestinian land by Israel was illegal and "an affront to international law."

In December 2003, the league sent its first official delegation to Iraq, signaling a change in attitude from its earlier criticism of the U.S. invasion in March.

A league summit scheduled for March 29, 2004, in Tunis was abruptly called off two days in advance of the opening because of divisions over peace overtures to Israel, with tensions heightened following Israel's assassination of the leader of the radical Palestinian group *Hamas* just days prior to the summit. The resulting outrage in the Arab world inflamed league ministers and complicated plans to relaunch the Saudi-backed peace initiative adopted at the 2002 Beirut summit. The collapse of the Tunis summit was widely reported as reflective of the turmoil in Arab ranks.

The rescheduled Tunis summit of May 22, 2004, was marred the first day by the walkout of Libya's Qadhafi, who again threatened to withdraw from the league. Qadhafi said he was "disgusted" by the treatment of Saddam Hussein and Yasir Arafat and wholly dissatisfied with the summit agenda. Furthermore, 10 of the 22 league members did not attend the two-day summit, which ultimately issued a strongly worded denunciation of abuse inflicted on Iraqi prisoners by U.S. forces, pledged further reforms to be launched in league countries, and called for an international security force for the

Palestinians. The league also called for an extensive UN role in rebuilding Iraq.

An emergency session of the league was called August 8, 2004, to address ways to help Sudan resolve the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, but little was reported from that event. The issue was again addressed at a meeting specific to that purpose on May 16, 2005, producing a resolution promoting resumption of negotiations between the Sudan government in Khartoum and the Darfur rebels.

On March 22–23, 2005, only 13 of 22 leaders attended the league summit in Algiers, and the resolutions adopted “were of comparatively little significance,” according to the *New York Times*. However, plans were unveiled for an Arab common market by 2015 and a regional security system. The participants also approved establishment of an interim Arab Parliament, which met for the first time on December 27, 2005, in Cairo. The Parliament has 88 representatives, 4 from each Arab League member, but has no legislative authority, leaving its responsibilities and importance unclear apart from serving as a forum on Arab issues. It was decided that this interim legislature would move to Syria, meeting twice a year with the aim of creating a permanent Arab legislature by 2011. Mohammad Jassim al-Saqr, a Kuwaiti described as a liberal, was elected its speaker.

The Arab League’s response to the landslide victory of the militant group *Hamas* in the January 2006 Palestinian Authority elections has been mixed. Secretary General Moussa said *Hamas* should renounce violence against Israel and

recognize its right to exist if it expects to function as a legitimate government. On the other hand, at its March 28–29, 2006, summit in Khartoum, the league pledged to contribute \$55 million a month toward the operation of the Palestinian Authority, at a time when some foreign funding appeared likely to be withdrawn because of *Hamas*’s intransigence.

The 2006 summit, like its predecessor, was not attended by the heads of several member states, for reasons including poor security and Sudan’s position on the Darfur crisis. In addition to its commitment to the Palestinian Authority, the league pledged \$150 million to support the mission of African Union peacekeepers in Darfur. The years 2006 and 2007 saw continuing Arab League involvement in efforts to broker peace between the *Hamas* and *Fatah* factions of the Palestinian Authority. When *Hamas* seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, however, the Arab League joined in the policy of the U.S. and Israel of supporting the rump Palestinian Authority government of the *Fatah*-led faction in the West Bank.

The 2007 summit, held March 28–29 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, produced a renewed call for Israel to negotiate on the basis of the 2002 “land for peace” proposal. In April 2007 the league set up a contact group, consisting of Jordan and Egypt (countries having diplomatic relations with Israel), to deal directly with Israel on the proposal. On July 25, 2007, the foreign ministers of those countries went to Israel and met Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. They described their visit as “extend(ing) the hand of peace” on behalf of the Arab League. Contacts continue.

# ARAB MAGHREB UNION (AMU)

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**Established:** By the Arab Maghreb Treaty, signed by the heads of state of the member countries on February 17, 1989, in Marrakesh, Morocco, effective July 1, 1989.

**Purpose:** “To strengthen the bonds of brotherhood which bind the member states and their peoples to each other . . . to work gradually towards the realization of the freedom of movement of [the member states’] people, goods, services, and capital . . . to safeguard the independence of every member state . . . to realize the industrial, agricultural, commercial, and social development of the member states . . . by setting up joint ventures and preparing general and specialized programs . . . to initiate cooperation with a view to developing education at various levels, to preserving the spiritual and moral values derived from the tolerant teachings of Islam, to safeguarding the Arab national identity.”

**Headquarters:** Casablanca, Morocco.

**Principal Organs:** Presidential Council (heads of member states), Council of Prime Ministers, Council of Foreign Ministers, Consultative Council, Judicial Body, Follow-up Committee, Specialized Ministerial Commissions, General Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.maghrebarabe.org](http://www.maghrebarabe.org)

**Secretary General:** Mohamed Habib Benyahya (Tunisia).

**Membership** (5): Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia.

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** The idea of a unified northern Africa was first voiced by Arab nationalists in the 1920s and subsequently received widespread support throughout World War II and the movements in African countries in the 1950s and early 1960s for independence from the European colonial powers. By contrast, the postindependence era yielded a variety of territorial disputes, political rivalries, and ideological differences that hindered meaningful integration efforts. However, the Maghrebian movement regained momentum following the 1987 rapprochement between Algeria and Morocco (see articles on those countries). Meeting together for the first time in June 1988 in Algiers, Algeria, the leaders of the five Maghrebian countries appointed a commission and five subcommittees to draft a treaty that would encompass the “Greater Arab Maghreb.” After intensive negotiations, the treaty was signed February 17, 1989, following a two-day summit in Marrakesh, Morocco, with formal ratification following shortly thereafter.

Although the five heads of state appeared unified after the summit, reports indicated that volatile Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi, upset at the rejection of his proposal that Chad, Mali, Niger, and Sudan be brought into the union, had attended only at the last minute. After the summit Qadhafi continued to push for “one invincible Arab nation” from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf, and, apparently at his insistence, the Arab Maghreb Treaty left AMU membership open to other countries “belonging to the Arab nation or the African group.”

**Structure.** The supreme political organ of the AMU is the Presidential Council, which is comprised of the heads of state of the member nations.

The chair of the council rotates among the heads of state, who are assisted by a Council of Prime Ministers. The Council of Foreign Ministers is empowered to attend sessions of the Presidential Council and is responsible for preparing summit agendas. Reporting to the Council of Foreign Ministers is a Follow-up Committee, comprised of the members' secretaries of state for Maghreb affairs, which is mandated to oversee the implementation of integrationist measures. In addition, Specialized Ministerial Commissions have been established in five areas: interior, human resources, infrastructure, economy and finance, and food security.

The original treaty provided for a Consultative Council of 10 representatives from each member state; in 1994 the size of each delegation was increased to 30. The Consultative Council meets in ordinary session once a year and in emergency session at the request of the Presidential Council, to which it submits recommendations and draft resolutions. The treaty also calls for a "judicial body," consisting of two judges appointed by each member state, to "deal with disputes concerning the implementation of the treaty and the accords concluded within the framework of the Union." A small General Secretariat operates from Morocco, the participants having pledged to keep the union's bureaucracy to a bare minimum.

**Activities.** Despite economic and political differences among its members, the AMU was perceived at its formation as having the capacity to provide a significant regional response to the single internal market being planned then by the European Community (EC, later the European Union—EU). In subsequent months preliminary agreement was reported on the establishment of a regional airline and unification of postal and telecommunications services. In addition several joint industrial projects were approved, and a campaign was launched to vaccinate children against an array of diseases. However, by early 1990, AMU proponents acknowledged that progress at integrating economic and social services had been slower than anticipated. Consequently, the AMU heads of state, during a January summit in Tunis, Tunisia, agreed

to appoint a secretary general, establish a permanent headquarters, and implement other changes to strengthen AMU authority and effectiveness. It was also announced that the AMU defense and foreign ministers were asked to study ways of achieving "cooperation and coordination" in security matters. Nevertheless, several difficult political issues continued to work against regional unity, including Mauritania's displeasure over lack of support from Morocco in its border dispute with Senegal (see articles on Mauritania and Senegal), irritation among several members over positions taken by Libya's Colonel Qadhafi, and failure to resolve the Western Sahara dispute (see Morocco article).

During a July 1990 summit in Algiers, the heads of state were unable to agree on a location for the permanent AMU headquarters or to select a secretary general. Activity within the AMU was subsequently constrained by events associated with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August. Although Morocco adopted a solidly anti-Iraq stance and contributed troops to the U.S.-led Desert Shield operation, the other AMU members opposed the presence of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf. In addition, strong pro-Iraq sentiment surfaced within all of the AMU states, creating concern among some officials over a possible backlash against those North African countries perceived by the EC and other Western nations to have been on the "wrong side" of the Persian Gulf crisis. As a result the AMU summit in Ras Lanuf, Libya, in March 1991 called on the Arab League to work quickly to heal divisions created by the war so a pan-Arab consensus could be reached on economic, political, and security issues.

During the 1991 summit the AMU heads of state (with the exception of Libya's Colonel Qadhafi, whose absence was unexplained) agreed to establish the organization's General Secretariat in Casablanca, the Maghreb Consultative Council in Algeria, the Maghreb University and Science Academy in Libya, the Maghreb Court in Mauritania, and a Maghreb Bank for Investment and External Trade (*Banque Maghrébine d'Investissement et de Commerce Extérieur*—BMICE) in Tunisia. In October Mohammed Amamou of Tunisia was

selected as the AMU's first secretary general. However, most of the AMU's planned initiatives remained unimplemented as conflict among the members left the impression, in the words of the *Middle East International*, that the union was "dead, if not quite buried."

One major stumbling block to effective regional action was the imposition of limited sanctions by the United Nations (UN) against Libya in the spring of 1992. The sanctions were levied because of Tripoli's refusal to turn over two suspects in the bombing of an airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in the late 1980s. Despite strong protests from Colonel Qadhafi, Libya's AMU partners honored the sanctions, although the AMU summit held November 10–11 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, urged the UN to reconsider its position. The summit also issued a declaration condemning the "terrorism" stemming from militant Islamic fundamentalism in the region and called for "concerted effort" to keep it in check.

Some rhetorical commitment to union aims returned at the sixth AMU summit, held after several postponements April 2–3, 1994, in Tunis. In addition to urging faster implementation of previous agreements, the AMU leaders called for intensified trade and security negotiations with the EU. However, the Libyan regime, which prior to the summit had bluntly labeled the AMU a "failure," reportedly remained "bitter" that the AMU members were still upholding the UN sanctions. For their part, the AMU leaders expressed "concern" over the effects of the sanctions on the Libyan people and called for a "just, honorable, and swift settlement" based on "international laws, resolutions, and charters."

The next AMU summit was postponed indefinitely after Libya announced it would not assume its scheduled chair tenure because of the Lockerbie impasse. Following the apparent resolution of the sanctions issue in early 1999, observers suggested that a revival of AMU progress was at hand, but the AMU remained essentially moribund because of differences between Morocco and Algeria over the latter's support for the Polisario insurgents in the Western Sahara. The 35th session of the Follow-up

Committee convened in Algiers in mid-May, ostensibly to launch the union again, but little came of the meeting. In August newly crowned King Mohamed of Morocco proposed to Algerian President Bouteflika that the AMU be reinvigorated, and a month later a Moroccan spokesman described the union as "still a fundamental project in our view." Nevertheless, a summit anticipated for November never occurred, and in February 2000 Tunisian President Ben Ali, marking the union's 11th anniversary, once again urged that the AMU be revived, calling it "a strategic choice and an historical aspiration."

A March 2001 meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Algiers was partly undercut by Morocco's unenthusiastic participation. Later in the year, however, it appeared that the Moroccan and Algerian leaders attempted to work around the Western Sahara issue. The fourth session of the Consultative Council met in September in Rabat, Morocco, after a lapse of nine years. In October 2001 the AMU trade ministers announced agreement on a draft free trade area and customs union, while a meeting of foreign ministers in January 2002 was viewed as a prelude to a seventh summit in mid-2002. At the January session the ministers appointed Habib Boularès of Tunisia as successor to Secretary General Amamou.

An anticipated June 2002 summit ultimately fell victim to continuing differences over the Western Sahara. Earlier, Colonel Qadhafi had offered to mediate the dispute between Algiers and Rabat, with the Polisario Front expressing conditional support for the proposal. Morocco, however, termed the offer unrealistic, and in early June King Mohamed indicated he would not attend the summit. As a consequence, the meeting was postponed indefinitely.

The Council of Foreign Ministers convened January 3–4, 2003, in Algiers, where one of the concerns was the need for the AMU to adapt to the challenges posed by increasing globalization. The concluding communiqué again denounced Israeli aggression against Palestinians, called for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq as well as those remaining against Libya, and condemned terrorism

(while noting the right of resistance against foreign occupation). The foreign ministers also supported continuation of the “5 + 5 dialog” on Mediterranean issues begun in 1991 with France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Malta.

On December 22, 2003, a day before a much-discussed AMU summit was to have been held, the AMU foreign ministers, meeting in Algiers, indefinitely postponed the meeting. The cancellation followed announcements that the king of Morocco, the president of Mauritania, and the Libyan leader had all declined to attend. Shortly before, Mauritania had accused Libya of financing a plot to overthrow Mauritania’s government. After the cancellation Colonel Qadhafi indicated the summit might be rescheduled following Algeria’s 2004 presidential election. A subsequent attempt to hold a summit in Tripoli in May 2005 was also canceled at the last minute as the king of Morocco declined

to attend because of the ongoing dispute with Algeria over Western Sahara.

The years 2006 and 2007 have been marked by continued efforts to revitalize the union, particularly in light of a resurgence of terror attacks, especially in Algeria, and a sense that radical Islamist groups might be gaining a foothold in the region. Union foreign ministers met in June 2006 to this end, but the dispute between Algeria and Morocco remained intractable.

On a more positive note, the July 2006 African Union summit, while deciding to recognize no new Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, agreed to continue recognition of several existing RECs, including the AMU. Also, in May 2007, a conference of AMU security officials reportedly agreed on a plan to improve security cooperation among member states, sharing information about militant Islamist groups in North Africa.

# ARAB MONETARY FUND (AMF)

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**Established:** By Articles of Agreement signed April 27, 1976, in Rabat, Morocco, effective as of February 2, 1977.

**Purpose:** To correct disequilibria in the balance of payments of member states; to promote the stability of exchange rates among Arab currencies, rendering them mutually convertible; to promote Arab economic integration and development; to encourage the creation of a unified Arab currency; and to coordinate policies in other international monetary and economic forums.

**Headquarters:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

**Principal Organs:** Board of Governors (all members), Board of Executive Directors (nine members), Loan and Investments Committees.

**Web site:** <http://www.amf.org.ae/vEnglish>

**Director General:** Jassim al-Mannai (Bahrain).

**Membership** (22): Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen. (The memberships of Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan were suspended in February 1993 because of payments arrears. Sudan reached a repayment agreement, and its membership was reactivated in April 2000.)

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** Although a proposal to form an Arab Payments Union was made by the Arab Economic Council in the 1960s and

a meeting was subsequently held for that purpose, the idea was discarded as attention was drawn to more pressing political issues. With the quadrupling of oil prices in 1974, however, concern once again focused on the issue of monetary problems. The objective was now more ambitious: an organization to deal with recycling, or investing, Arab “petrodollars” to decrease dependence on foreign handling of surplus funds. This goal is clearly implicit in the Articles of Agreement signed in April 1976. Since then the AMF has gradually expanded its mission to promote economic integration and development, aid Arab financial institutions, encourage intra-Arab trade, and assist member countries in structural financial reforms.

**Structure.** The Board of Governors, comprising one governor and one alternate governor from each member state, serves as the fund’s general assembly and holds all administrative powers. Meeting at least once a year, it is responsible for capitalization, income distribution, the admission and suspension of members, and the appointment of the fund’s director general. The Board of Executive Directors, consisting of the director general and eight experts elected from the member states for three-year terms, performs tasks assigned it by the Board of Governors. Subsidiary departments include the Economic and Technical Department, the Economic Policy Institute, and the Treasury and Investments Department.

One of the AMF’s principal aims is to foster the economic integration of member states. Thus the fund has guaranteed loans to Arab countries to correct payment imbalances resulting from unilateral or pan-Arab development projects. It has also used its capital as a catalyst to advance Arab financial



instruments and has promoted the creation of a unified Arab currency. It provides technical assistance to the monetary and banking agencies of member countries, largely through training seminars in such areas as branch banking and accounting, bank supervision and internal auditing, and documentary credit. It also cooperates with other Arab and international organizations to discuss and promote areas of common interest.

In late 1987 the AMF launched a restructuring program believed to have widespread support from Arab bankers; its “fresh priorities” included the creation of a regional securities market and the strengthening of securities markets in member states to provide long-term financing for development. In September 1988 the fund endorsed further changes, such as an emphasis on “productive projects” leading directly to economic growth, rather than on the infrastructural programs of earlier years. Although not yet willing to say it would attach conditions to AMF loans, the Board of Executive Directors announced its intention to take a more active interest in how loans were used. The board also approved the creation of an Economic Policy Institute to assist member states in formulating national policies and to promote the development of financial strategies for the Arab countries as a group.

Attention subsequently shifted to the Arab Trade Financing Program (ATFP), established by the AMF and other pan-Arab financial institutions to promote trade among Arab countries. The AMF agreed to provide \$250 million of the initial \$500 million of authorized capital for the program and was accorded control of five of the nine seats on its board of directors. Approved in 1989, the ATFP was scheduled to become operational in 1990, but its launching was delayed by the Persian Gulf crisis. The first ATFP loan agreement was signed in January 1992 with Morocco.

As was the case with most Arab financial institutions, AMF activity was severely curtailed by the 1990–1991 Gulf War, although it began to rebound in the mid-1990s. Cumulative approvals reached 718.8 million Arab Accounting Dinars (AAD) (\$2.9 billion) for 103 projects as of January 1, 1998. Since then, most loans have involved

a new Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF), which was set up to support reforms in the financial sector.

In March 2003 the AMF changed its general lending policy, replacing its traditional fixed-interest loans with two types of market-related variable rates on new loans, and allowing member countries to choose between the two. Following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, the fund played a role in attempts to rebuild Iraqi national life. In March 2004 the AMF, in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), organized a course on “Macroeconomic Management and Policies” for Iraqi officials from the Central Bank of Iraq and the Iraqi ministries of finance and planning. This course was held at the AMF’s headquarters in Abu Dhabi. The fund declined, however, to write off Iraq’s debts, but declared it would not seek repayment until the country’s situation improved. At this time the fund also approved the reinstatement of Sudan, having approved an agreement to settle its arrears, estimated at nearly \$93 million.

The year 2005 was characterized by the beginning of a run-up in oil prices combined with the sinking value of the U.S. dollar against other major currencies. As a result the fund’s conservative management made adequate progress. Also during this period, the AMF’s educational arm held several conferences and seminars for its member banks on national and international money management.

The year 2006 saw the unexpected victory of Hamas in Palestinian Authority elections. The fund announced that it would allocate 10 percent of 2005’s net profits, approximately \$50 million, to aid Palestinians, but none of it would go to the Hamas-led government. 2006 and 2007 were also marked by the effects of the Iraq war on the finances of the Arab countries. In December 2006 Dubai Ports World, owned by the Dubai government, was forced to sell six U.S. ports, and this was widely seen as the result of an unreasonable fear by the United States of all things Arab. As the U.S. dollar continued its decline in value against the Euro, the dollar’s place in the fund’s foreign exchange reserves came under discussion. Diversification in favor of the Euro, though ultimately denied, was widely discussed.

# COUNCIL OF ARAB ECONOMIC UNITY (CAEU)

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**Established:** By resolution of the Arab Economic Council of the League of Arab States on June 3, 1957, in Cairo, Egypt, effective at its first meeting May 30, 1964.

**Purpose:** To provide a flexible framework for achieving economic integration of Arab states.

**Headquarters:** Cairo, Egypt.

**Principal Organs:** Council, General Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.caeu.org.eg/English/Intro](http://www.caeu.org.eg/English/Intro)

**Secretary General:** Ahmed Guweili (Egypt).

**Membership** (11): Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen. (Egypt's membership was suspended from 1979 to 1988. Although not a de jure state, Palestine succeeded the Palestine Liberation Organization as a member following formation of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.)

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** In January 1956 the Arab League agreed on the necessity for an organization that would deal specifically with the economic problems of Arab countries. As a result, on June 3, 1957, a resolution was passed creating the Council of Arab Economic Unity. The organization officially came into existence May 30, 1964.

In December 1988 the CAEU announced it was lifting a nine-year suspension of Egypt's member-

ship that had been occasioned by Cairo's conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel.

In March 1990, Kuwait threatened to withdraw over the council's "poor performance" and the belief that CAEU objectives overlapped those of other Arab organizations. Continuing disputes over budget assessments and shortfalls, including Kuwait's back dues, also played a part in the decision. The CAEU lost its only other Gulf member when the United Arab Emirates withdrew in late November 1999, immediately after a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

**Structure.** The Council, consisting of the economic, finance, and trade ministers of member states, meets twice a year to discuss and vote on the organization's agenda. The General Secretariat oversees implementation; it also has responsibility for drawing up work plans, which are presented to the council.

**Activities.** Since its inception, activities have focused on furthering economic development and encouraging economic cooperation among Arab countries. To promote these ends, the council established an Arab Common Market in 1964. Seven years later the market achieved its initial aim of abolishing all taxes and other duties levied on items of trade between Arab countries. The second part of the plan, a customs union of all members, has not yet been fully implemented. Emphasis has also been given to forming joint Arab companies and federations, to coordinating agricultural and industrial programs, and to improving road and railway networks. Industries in which joint ventures and federations or unions have been formed include textiles, processed foods, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, building materials, iron and steel, shipping,

petrochemicals, and information technology. The CAEU has also promoted harmonization of statistics and data collection.

The CAEU was thrown into disarray by the Persian Gulf crisis in August 1990. Several prominent CAEU members participated in the U.S.-led coalition that succeeded in driving Iraqi forces from Kuwait in early 1991. Subsequently, in part to restore a sense of normality to Arab affairs, as well as for humanitarian reasons, the CAEU repeatedly called on the United Nations (UN) Security Council to discontinue its sanctions against Iraq.

The CAEU continues to encounter considerable difficulty in achieving its economic goals. The planned introduction in 1998 of an Arab Free Trade Zone, which had the support of most Arab League members as well as the overlapping CAEU membership, was undermined by requests for exceptions involving nearly 3,000 commodities.

The CAEU Council session held June 6–7, 2001, was notable primarily because it constituted the first such meeting in Baghdad, Iraq, since the 1991 Gulf war. At the session Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Syria announced they were establishing their own free trade zone, which once again called into question the CAEU's long-term prospects.

The December 2002 CAEU Council session heard Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa warn of the political, economic, and social consequences posed by threats to the Arab world, principally U.S. antagonism toward the Iraqi government as well as the ongoing Israeli confrontation with Palestinian militants. Also in 2002 the CAEU established a committee to encourage inter-Arab investment by redirecting some of the estimated \$1 trillion in Arab funds that are invested elsewhere. More recently, a CAEU-sponsored economic conference in Cairo also called for the repatriation of investment capital, particularly in view

of rapid Arab population growth and an unemployment rate that was already approaching 20 percent.

In 2004 the CAEU acceded to the 2001 Agadir (Morocco) Declaration, which was seen as a step toward creating a pan-Arab free trade zone. Initial signatories were Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia, and Egypt. The declaration also proposed launching a Mediterranean Arab Free Trade Association, bringing together various Arab countries with bilateral partnerships with the European Union (EU) and other foreign entities. Its Council session that year produced a strongly negative report concerning unemployment in Arab countries. The Council stated it was finalizing details of an Arab Investment Map (AIM), a means of connecting Arab investors with Arab prospective investment recipients. The intent was to make it as easy for Arabs to invest inside the Arab world as it is elsewhere. The CAEU is now concentrating on the AIM. It continues to push for Arab economic self-sufficiency and to warn against domination of key economic sectors by outside entities.

In December 2006 the CAEU organized a meeting attended by Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa to look at ways in which Arab countries could help with Iraq's economic reconstruction. The CAEU held a similar meeting in Egypt with an Iraqi commission in March 2007. In May 2007 CAEU Secretary General Ahmed Guweili, addressing a committee of the Egyptian parliament, urged that the Arab Common Market, theoretically created in 1964, be made a reality. In statements made in August 2007, Guweili said that the independent economies of the Arab countries needed to be connected by unified customs, banking, financial and monetary policies before a common Arab currency could become a reality. For these reasons, he did not anticipate a common Arab currency earlier than 2020.

# ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)

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**Established:** As Regional Cooperation for Development in 1964 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey; reactivated under present name in 1985; formally launched in 1990, following amendment of the (1977) Treaty of İzmir; membership expansion approved by heads of state summit on February 16–17, 1992; Treaty of İzmir further amended on September 14, 1996.

**Purpose:** To promote regional cooperation in trade, transportation, communications, tourism, cultural affairs, and economic development.

**Headquarters:** Tehran, Iran.

**Principal Organs:** Summit, Council of Ministers, Regional Planning Council, Council of Permanent Representatives, Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.ecosecretariat.org](http://www.ecosecretariat.org)

**Secretary General:** Khurshid Anwar (Pakistan).

**Membership (10):** Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

*Guest:* Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

**Origin and development.** The Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), established in 1965 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, achieved little progress and was moribund after 1979 until revived and renamed the Economic Cooperation Organization in 1985. For the rest of the decade the ECO remained of minor influence, although it established the South and West Asia Postal Union in 1988 and a joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1990.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ECO assumed greater significance as a potential vehicle for regional economic cooperation that would include the new Central Asian republics. The ECO Heads of State Summit on February 16–17, 1992, in Tehran, Iran, approved membership requests from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan and Kazakhstan joined those nations (minus Tajikistan, whose foreign minister was unable to attend because of that nation's domestic turmoil) in formally signing the ECO charter on November 27. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participates in certain economic and technical activities of the ECO but is not a full voting member.

The expanded ECO faced significant political problems, particularly internal crises in various member states and a perceived contest between Iran and Turkey for leadership. Stressing the Islamic identity of the members, Tehran appeared to view the ECO as a means for establishing a future Islamic common market that would promote Muslim solidarity and values; Ankara, while supportive of trade negotiations, was just as insistent that the ECO remain a secular body devoted entirely to reducing trade barriers, establishing a free market system, and developing the region's infrastructure.

**Structure.** Policy decisions at the highest level are made by summits of the members' heads of state or government, who convene, at a minimum, biennially. The Council of Ministers, comprising the foreign ministers of the member countries, is the ECO's principal decision-making body. Council meetings, which are held at least once a year, rotate annually from country to country.

The Regional Planning Council (RPC), which also convenes annually, formulates plans and policies in line with ECO objectives and direct instructions from the council. It also reviews the work of the Secretariat and progress on the various ECO programs, and it may propose the formation of ad hoc committees. Assisting the RPC is an ambassadorial-level Council of Permanent Representatives. Under the Secretariat are seven sectoral or service directorates: Agriculture, Industry, and Health; Energy, Minerals, and Environment; Trade and Investment; Transport and Communications; Economic Research and Statistics; Project Research; and Coordination and International Relations.

The oldest of the ECO's three specialized agencies is the Tehran-based Cultural Institute, which began as an RCD organ and was revived by the March 1995 Third ECO Summit. A Science Foundation, authorized at the same summit, is to be based in Islamabad, Pakistan. In September 2007 its charter was being finalized. At the Fifth Summit, in 1998, the ECO leaders signed a charter for an ECO Educational Institute, to be located in Ankara, Turkey, but the charter has not been ratified. Functioning regional institutions are the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the ECO Shipping Company, the Consultancy and Engineering Company, an ECO Supreme Audit Institution, and the College of Insurance. In various stages of development are the ECO Reinsurance Company, and the ECO News Agency. Plans to establish a regional airline, ECO Air, were scrapped in 2001. A Trade and Development Bank, to be known as Ecobank, is scheduled to begin operation in December 2007.

**Activities.** Discord was reported at the Fourth ECO Summit, held on May 14–16, 1996, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, as a number of members objected to efforts by Iran to “politicize” the grouping by criticizing Israel and the United States. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan were described as the most irritated by Tehran’s actions; Uzbek President Islam Karimov reportedly accused Iran of trying to transform the ECO into a “military-political unit.” However, the summit leaders did manage to endorse a 22-point declaration pledging expanded

cooperation in a number of fields, including energy, trade, transportation, and communications. A year earlier summit participants had signed transit trade and visa agreements, as well as an agreement with the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) designed to coordinate regional efforts to combat the production of opium and other narcotic substances.

The need for oil and gas pipelines dominated the 1997 extraordinary summit, held on May 13–14 in Ashgabat. One area of particular interest was how to get oil from Azerbaijan to international markets, a principal stumbling block being the resistance of the United States to the idea of shipping Azeri oil through Iran, a route many experts consider the best. In contrast, the heads of state of Turkmenistan and Pakistan reached an agreement with U.S. and Saudi oil companies to construct a pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan. Turkmenistan also came to an agreement to ship gas to Europe through Iran and Turkey. In other business, the Taliban government in Afghanistan objected to its exclusion from the summit, arguing that there was no “true and lawful” Afghan representative present. (The Afghanistan delegation seated at the summit was from the government that had fled Kabul in 1996.)

At the Fifth Summit, held on May 10, 1998, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, ECO leaders called for the establishment of several ECO institutions (see Structure, above) and urged greater cooperation in agriculture and industry. Meeting just before the summit, Iran and Kazakhstan agreed to continue negotiations over the legal status of the Caspian Sea, the two having adopted different positions on access to the sea’s resources.

A leading topic at the Sixth Summit, held June 10–11, 2000, in Tehran, was prospects for accelerating sustained regional socio-economic development. The summit also called for greater cooperation in agriculture, industry, and human development; welcomed a proposal for cooperation in tourism; called attention to the growing importance of environmental issues; and praised the continuing effort to stop illegal drug production and trafficking. The ECO-UNDCP Project on Drug

Control Coordination Unit in the ECO Secretariat had opened in July 1999.

Held in the Turkish capital on October 14, 2002, the Seventh Summit reviewed the ECO's accomplishments during its first decade of expanded membership and envisioned increased cooperation, integration, and development. Since 2000 the ECO has inaugurated ministerial-level meetings in such sectors as agriculture, commerce and foreign trade, energy, the environment, industry, information technology, and transport and communications. The 2002 summit participants called for early conclusion of an ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), which would remove nontariff barriers to trade and reduce intraregional tariffs. They also agreed to pursue a unified front on international trade issues "to ensure a rule-based nondiscriminatory and equitable international economic system responsive to the legitimate interests of the developing world." The closing summit declaration also called attention to a growing cooperation with regional and international organizations, including many of UN agencies and the World Trade Organization.

Meeting in July 2003, ECO ministers signed the ECOTA, one provision of which is the stepped reduction of internal tariffs to 15 percent within eight years. A month earlier the ECO had established a fund for economic aid to Afghanistan as part of its efforts to help the social and economic rebuild-

ing of that member state. Also at the June meeting, the Council of Ministers approved the appointment of Kazakh diplomat Bekzhasar Narbayev as secretary general. However, Narbayev resigned for health reasons in December; he was succeeded by Askhat Orazbay, also of Kazakhstan.

The Eighth Summit was held in September 2004 in Tajikistan. Other activity in 2004–2005 included agreement finally to establish the ECO Trade and Development Bank and otherwise expand cooperation in financial affairs. Several prominent ECO members also called for the "revitalization" of the organization to, among other things, combat terrorism and drug smuggling. The Ninth Summit, held on May 5, 2006, in Baku, Azerbaijan, concluded that to continue the organization needed to reform and modernize its structure. Later in May 2006, ECO announced that Iran would become the hub of an electricity grid for member states.

In November 2006 members agreed to hold annual meetings on the ministerial level to pave the way for further cooperation on border security, drug, the training of police and security staffs, and exchange of criminals. In April 2007 the organization held a conference on privatization among its members. However, at a June 2007 meeting with ECO Secretary General Khurshid Anwar, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev of Kyrgyzstan criticized the organization for not doing more to put its good intentions into practice.

# GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

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**Formal Name:** Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

**Established:** Initial agreement endorsed February 4–5, 1981, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; constitution formally adopted May 25–26, 1981, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

**Purpose:** “(i) To achieve coordination, integration, and cooperation among the member states in all fields in order to bring about their unity; (ii) to deepen and strengthen the bonds of cooperation existing among their peoples in all fields; (iii) to draw up similar systems in all fields . . . and (iv) to promote scientific and technical progress in the fields of industry, minerals, agriculture, sea wealth, and animal wealth . . . for the good of the peoples of the member states.”

**Headquarters:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**Principal Organs:** Supreme Council; Ministerial Council; General Secretariat; various economic, social, industrial and trade, and political committees.

**Web site:** [www.gcc-sg.org](http://www.gcc-sg.org)

**Secretary General:** Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiya (Qatar).

**Membership (6):** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** The formal proposal for an organization designed to link the six

Arabian Gulf states on the basis of their cultural and historical ties emerged from a set of plans formulated by the Kuwaiti government. At a meeting February 4–5, 1981, the Gulf foreign ministers codified the Kuwaiti proposals and issued the Riyadh Agreement, which proposed cooperative efforts in cultural, social, economic, and financial affairs. On March 10, after settling on legal and administrative provisions, the ministers initialed a constitution for the GCC in Muscat, Oman; the council came into formal existence with the signing of the constitution by the Gulf heads of state during the first Supreme Council meeting on May 25–26, 1981, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Two years later the Gulf Investment Corporation was established to finance joint venture projects.

Although members earlier denied that the GCC was intended as a military grouping, events in the Middle East prompted Gulf leaders to consider unified security measures, leading to the first GCC joint military exercises in late 1983 and the formation of a defense force called the Peninsula Shield. However, the GCC’s failure to mount a coordinated diplomatic or military response to Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, threatened to erode the alliance’s credibility. The organization was described as slow in condemning the invasion and then proved unable to deploy its defense force for three weeks (its troops then being absorbed into the U.S.-led international force assembled in Saudi Arabia).

Shortly after the initiation of military action to liberate Kuwait in early 1991, the GCC began to discuss the creation of a new regional defense organization with Egypt and Syria, the two other major Arab members of the anti-Iraq coali-

tion. The so-called six plus two defense arrangement was further delineated by a declaration signed in early March in Damascus, Syria, in the wake of the successful conclusion of Operation Desert Storm, but initial enthusiasm for reliance on an Arab force to preserve Gulf security subsequently waned. An exclusively GCC military committee was established in 1994, and another step toward military coordination was taken in December 2001, when the Supreme Council authorized formation of a Supreme Defense Council of defense ministers to oversee a previously adopted joint defense pact.

**Structure.** The Supreme Council, comprised of the six members' heads of state, convenes annually and is the highest authority of the GCC, directing the general course and policies of the organization. Since 1998 a consultative session has been held between these summits. Extraordinary council sessions can also be convened when requested by two member states. Substantive decisions require consensus. On an ad hoc basis, the Supreme Council may establish a Commission for the Settlement of Disputes. Advising the Supreme Council is a 30-member, citizen's Consultative Commission, formation of which was authorized December 1997.

The foreign ministers of the member states, or other ministers representing them, comprise the Ministerial Council, which meets in regular session four times per year to formulate policy, make recommendations to the Supreme Council, initiate studies, and authorize projects. The General Secretariat, headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, is the GCC's principal administrative body. The secretary general, who is chosen by the Supreme Council, serves a once-renewable, three-year term and is assisted by three assistant secretaries for economic, military, and political affairs. Following a dispute over election of a new secretary general in December 1995, the Ministerial Council agreed that the office would be rotated among the member countries in the future.

In addition to the Office of the Secretary General, divisions within the secretariat include the following: economic affairs, finance and administrative affairs, human and environment affairs,

legal affairs, military affairs, and political affairs. Each is headed by a director general. The secretariat also encompasses administrative development and internal auditing units, a patent bureau, an information center, and a telecommunications bureau, the last located in Bahrain. The GCC Delegation in Brussels, Belgium, also is included in the secretariat.

**Activities.** In its early years the GCC emphasized economic integration, signing, for example, a Unified Economic Agreement in 1981 to provide coordination in commerce, industry, and finance and to prepare the way for an eventual common market. Further harmonization of investment and trade regulations was reached later the same year, while in 1983 the Gulf Investment Corporation opened.

During much of the 1980s, however, the protracted Iran-Iraq war generated concern over the resultant disruption of oil transport through the Gulf. With a cease-fire concluding in mid-1988, the December Supreme Council session called on GCC members for a renewed focus on regional economic integration and industrial diversification. The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its destructive consequences once again diverted attention from the GCC's economic mission.

At the conclusion of their 15th summit, held December 19–21, 1994, in Manama, Bahrain, the GCC heads of state called for a "redoubling" of efforts to resolve border disputes between members. (A dispute involving Qatar and Saudi Arabia had nearly sidetracked the December 1992 summit.) The summit's final declaration also noted concern over "extremism and excesses" associated with the Islamic fundamentalist movement in the region. Earlier in the year, a slump in oil prices put most members in the unfamiliar position of adopting austerity budgets, which might have influenced a subsequent decision by the GCC to end its boycott of foreign companies trading with Israel.

Despite the call for greater cohesion at the 1994 summit, tensions among members continued throughout 1995. At the 16th summit, held December 4–6, 1995, in Muscat, the Qatari delegation boycotted the closing ceremonies to protest the



appointment of new GCC Secretary General Jamil al-Hujaylan of Saudi Arabia. Qatar presented its own candidate and objected to what it perceived as Saudi maneuvering that led to the violation of the long-standing “rule of unanimity” on such matters. A reported coup attempt February 20, 1996, in Qatar further exacerbated the tension. Qatar’s new emir, Sheikh Hamad (who deposed his father in June), suggested possible involvement in the coup plot on the part of the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

At the ministerial meeting March 17, 1996, Oman crafted an initiative designed to mend relations among the GCC partners. Among other things, Qatar agreed to recognize the new secretary general in return for structural changes in regard to future selections (see above). However, other issues continued to separate the GCC members; Bahrain, for instance, accusing Qatar (and by extension, Iran, with whom Qatar’s Sheikh Hamad had sought expanded relations) of meddling in its internal affairs. As a consequence of these claims and its territorial dispute with Qatar, Bahrain boycotted the 17th GCC summit held December 1, 1996, in Doha, Qatar. Although the summit’s official communiqué attempted to downplay the rift, observers suggested that “serious cracks” were apparent in the GCC structure.

In January 1997 the GCC initiated talks to try to mediate the Qatar-Bahrain dispute. Later in the year, the council took steps to improve relations with Iran. In contrast, Iraq was severely criticized at the GCC summit for its failure to comply with all United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions. The council also declared the European Parliament’s disapproval of the judicial systems in the Gulf to be unwanted “interference in internal affairs.”

The November 27–29, 1999, Supreme Council session in Riyadh was highlighted by an agreement to establish a GCC customs union in March 2005 (four years later than initially proposed). The accord was achieved despite continuing political differences among members, particularly between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. A recent warming of relations between the Saudi and

Iranian governments was greeted with consternation by the UAE because of its long-standing insular dispute with Tehran over Persian Gulf islands (see separate article on the UAE).

The concluding communiqué of the 21st Supreme Council summit, held December 30–31, 2000, in Manama, included what had become routine criticism of Iraqi and Israeli policies. A more substantive development was the signing of a Joint Defense Treaty pledging mutual aid in the event of attack. Talks on economic and trade issues also moved forward. The heads of state urged continued work toward the anticipated customs union and toward coordinating financial, fiscal, and banking policies. Except for a few “reserved” areas, the summit participants also concurred that the nationals of all member states should be permitted to “engage in all economic activities and occupations” in any of the six GCC countries.

Meeting December 30–31, 2001, in Muscat, the Supreme Council called for an international summit on counterterrorism. Three months earlier, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the GCC foreign ministers voiced support for U.S. efforts to form a coalition that would undertake a “war on terror,” but at the same time they had reiterated their call for an end to Israeli actions against Palestinians. On the economic front, the December summit advanced the date for introducing the GCC customs union to January 2003 and also indicated that the GCC would seek a uniform currency by January 2010. Although the leaders had rejected council membership for Yemen in the mid-1990s, they now agreed to permit its ministerial-level participation in matters of health, education, and labor and social affairs. Also at the summit, Qatar saw its minister of energy, minerals, water, and electricity, Abdul Rahman al-Attiya, named as successor to Secretary General Jamil al-Hujaylan.

As scheduled, the customs union was introduced January 1, 2003. The union established a uniform 5 percent external tariff while permitting duty-free trade within the six GCC members. Introduction of the union had the added benefit of meeting a principal condition for achieving an

anticipated free trade agreement with the European Union (EU).

In March 2003, responding to the U.S./UK-led invasion of Iraq, the GCC urged a return to negotiation but also noted Saddam Hussein's failure to meet all the terms of UN Security Council resolutions. At the 24th summit, held December 21–22, 2003, in Kuwait City, the participants voiced support for efforts to return power to the Iraqi people by mid-2004 and reaffirmed their own noninterference in Iraqi affairs—a somewhat disingenuous statement given that the land assault against Iraq was initiated and directed from GCC territory. They also broached the possibility of eventually allowing a new Iraqi government to join Yemen as an external participant in certain GCC functions. In other business, the summit passed resolutions on education, economic reform, and social affairs; agreed to take a joint stand on debt forgiveness for Iraq; and announced plans to draft an antiterrorism pact. On December 29, meeting in emergency session, the GCC finance and economy ministers authorized \$400 million in aid to assist Iran in recovering from its recent devastating earthquake.

A rift surfaced in December 2004 after Bahrain signed a free trade agreement with the United States. Saudi leaders said the unilateral pact violated the GCC rules, but perhaps more significantly, it was seen as undermining the economic power of Saudi Arabia in the region. The Saudi crown prince refused to attend a GCC meeting in December in Manama because of the breach and was replaced by the second deputy premier. Simmering below the surface was the reported “competition” between

Saudi Arabia and the United States for greater control in the region.

Economic issues took a back seat to political and security issues, however, during the May 28, 2005, GCC summit in Riyadh. Council leaders focused on stability and security in Lebanon, calling for a united Lebanese front and the promotion of peace efforts in the Middle East in nonspecific ways. The scope of the leaders' conference covered environmental, humanitarian, and military matters as well.

The May 6, 2006, GCC summit, also in Riyadh, was dominated by concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions. The group called for guarantees from Iran that its intentions were peaceful, citing environmental hazards for the region. The GCC members, all predominantly Sunni Muslim countries, also expressed concern about the prospect of a Shiite-dominated government in Iraq next to Shiite Iran, with its threat of increased Iranian influence in the region. In other business, the summit discussed ways of getting money to the newly elected *Hamas* government of Palestine, because the United States and the EU withdrew funding after the group's victory. The years 2006 and 2007 continued to be dominated by concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions. Plans for the GCC's own peaceful nuclear program were circulated, and after the May 15, 2007, Riyadh summit the GCC made official contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure that the project met that organization's standards.

In other economic matters, China, India, New Zealand, and the EU entered into free trade talks with the GCC during 2006 and 2007.

# ORGANIZATION OF ARAB PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OAPEC)

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**Established:** By agreement concluded on January 9, 1968, in Beirut, Lebanon.

**Purpose:** To help coordinate members' petroleum policies, to adopt measures for harmonizing their legal systems to the extent needed for the group to fulfill its mission, to assist in the exchange of information and expertise, to provide training and employment opportunities for their citizens, and to utilize members' "resources and common potentialities" in establishing joint projects in the petroleum and petroleum-related industries.

**Headquarters:** Kuwait City, Kuwait.

**Principal Organs:** Ministerial Council, Executive Bureau, Judicial Tribunal, General Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.oapecorg.org](http://www.oapecorg.org)

**Secretary General:** Abdul Aziz A. Al-Turki (Saudi Arabia).

**Membership** (10): Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates.

**Official Language:** Arabic.

**Origin and development.** Established by Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia in early 1968 in recognition of the need for further cooperation among Arab countries that relied on oil as their principal source of income, OAPEC was expanded in May 1970 by the accession of Algeria, Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. In May

1972 the last two combined their membership as part of the United Arab Emirates. In December 1971 the founding agreement was liberalized to permit membership by any Arab country having oil as a significant—but not necessarily the major—source of income, with the result that Syria and Egypt joined in 1972 and 1973, respectively. Also in 1972, Iraq became a member. A Tunisian bid for membership failed at the December 1981 ministerial meeting because of Libyan opposition stemming from a dispute with Tunis over conflicting claims to offshore oil deposits. Tunisia was admitted in 1982 but four years later withdrew from active membership because it had become a net importer of energy and could not make its OAPEC contributions.

OAPEC joint ventures and projects include the Arab Maritime Petroleum Transport Company (AMPTC), founded in 1973 with headquarters in Kuwait; the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard Company (ASRY), established in Bahrain in 1974; the Arab Petroleum Investments Corporation (API-CORP), set up in 1975 in Damman, Saudi Arabia; and the Arab Petroleum Services Company (APSC), founded in 1977 and operating from Tripoli, Libya. The Arab Engineering Company (AREC), established in 1981 in Abu Dhabi, was dissolved in 1989. Shareholders in these ventures are typically either the member governments themselves or state-owned petroleum enterprises.

Subsidiary companies are the Arab Drilling and Workover Company (ADWOC), based in Tripoli since its formation in 1980; the Arab Well Logging Company (AWLCO), established in 1983 in

Baghdad; and the Arab Geophysical Exploration Services Company (AGESCO), formed in 1984 in Tripoli. The APSC is the sole shareholder in AWLCO and the principal shareholder in the other two. The Arab Company for Detergent Chemicals (ARADET), founded in 1981 in Baghdad, is an APICORP subsidiary.

**Structure.** The Ministerial Council, OAPEC's supreme authority, is composed of the members' petroleum ministers, who convene at least twice a year to draw up policy guidelines and direct ongoing activities. An Executive Bureau, which meets at least three times a year, assists the council in management of the organization. A Judicial Tribunal, established in 1980, serves as an arbitration council between OAPEC members or between a member and a petroleum company operating in that country, with all decisions final and binding. The General Secretariat, headed by a secretary general and no more than three assistant secretaries general, encompasses the secretary's office and four departments: Finance and Administrative Affairs, Information and Library, Economics, and Technical Affairs. The last two comprise the Arab Center for Energy Studies. A largely ceremonial national presidency of the organization rotates annually among the member states.

**Activities.** Although OAPEC's activities are directly affected by the world oil market, it plays no institutional role in determining either output quotas or prices, deferring in both cases to the more encompassing Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Instead, OAPEC focuses on coordinating related policies within the Arab community. Over the years, it has also invested billions of dollars in its associated ventures and affiliates. APICORP, for example, has helped finance petroleum and petrochemical projects around the world, including gas liquefaction plants, refineries, pipelines and other means of transport, and facilities for making fertilizers and detergents. In addition to its administrative tasks, the OAPEC secretariat has compiled and continually updates a comprehensive database of information on oil and energy markets, reserves, production, refining, consumption, and downstream industries such as

petrochemicals. OAPEC also conducts related research projects, sponsors seminars, and produces technical papers and studies.

The December 1990 Ministerial Council meeting was held in Cairo, Egypt, that city having been chosen as OAPEC's temporary headquarters following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the previous August. In mid-1992 a report co-authored by OAPEC estimated that the Gulf crisis had cost Arab countries as much as \$620 billion and had contributed to rising inflation and a decline of 7 percent in the GNP of 21 Arab nations in 1991. The destruction of oil wells, pipelines, and other infrastructure alone cost Iraq an estimated \$190 billion and Kuwait \$160 billion, the report said.

Arab oil affairs remained turbulent into 1994 as several OAPEC members continued to quarrel over OPEC production quotas. There was ongoing disagreement over how and when Iraq would resume oil exports, while OAPEC officials described recent wide fluctuations in oil prices as making it difficult for member states to plan development programs effectively. The organization hoped, however, to return to a degree of normal activity following return to its permanent headquarters in Kuwait at midyear.

Low oil prices remained a major OAPEC concern throughout 1998, a December session of the Ministerial Council urging all oil-producing countries to exercise restraint regarding production levels. In 1999 OAPEC officials also suggested that some members might be well served to encourage private investment in their oil sectors as a means of accelerating economic advancement.

Oil output and the condition of world oil markets, which experienced a dramatic increase in prices in 2000, remained a major focus of the four Ministerial Council sessions held in 2000–2001 in Cairo. In mid-2000 an OAPEC report indicated that Arab countries were contributing about 26 percent of world oil production and that, as of 1999, Arab reserves amounted to 63 percent of the world total.

In recent years OAPEC has also been giving increasing attention to environmental concerns, in part to ensure that the economic standing of its members is not adversely affected by international initiatives intended to reduce greenhouse gases and

other pollutants. The Eighth Coordinating Meeting of Environmental Experts was held in Cairo on September 29–30, 2001, its principal focus being coordination of member countries' positions regarding, for example, the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change and the associated Kyoto Protocol. At the same time, OAPEC was preparing for the Seventh Arab Energy Conference, held May 11–12, 2002, in Cairo, where again the focus was on "Energy and Arab Cooperation." Other organizations sponsoring the conference were the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), the Arab League, and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO).

During 2001–2003 oil prices and resultant income remained somewhat volatile despite improving communication between oil suppliers and consuming nations. At the same time OAPEC reported Arab petroleum-refining capacity was increasing, as was regional consumption of natural gas. Known Arab reserves of the latter commodity, about one-fourth of the world total, nevertheless continued to increase as new discoveries outpaced consumption. OAPEC also projected that global oil consumption would rise by about 1.6 percent annually, from 76 billion barrels per day in 2000 to nearly 90 billion barrels per day in 2010.

In March–May 2003 the invasion of Iraq by U.S.-led forces had a minimal impact on oil

supplies. It was unclear, however, given the dilapidated state of Iraq's petroleum infrastructure, when or if Iraqi oil production would regain the levels that predated the 1991 Gulf War. A representative of the U.S.-sponsored interim Iraqi Governing Council was expected to attend the Ministerial Council session held in Cairo on December 13, 2003, but he withdrew because of an unspecified "emergency." In December 2005 the Ministerial Council canceled 70 percent of the debt owed the organization by Iraq.

A July 2005 report from OAPEC said that member countries planned to increase their share of world oil production from the (then) 32.2 percent to between 38 and 40 percent by 2010. The report noted that the increase would require substantial new investment by all member countries, but particularly by Egypt, Algeria, and Libya. In December 2005 OAPEC announced that the organization's presidency would go to Qatar in 2006, not, as in the normal rotation, to Iraq. OAPEC benefited from the worldwide rise in demand for and price of oil in 2006 and 2007. In May 2006 a meeting of OAPEC energy ministers called for increased reinvestment of oil revenues in exploration and research, but in the group's October bulletin it warned that rising construction costs were hampering this effort. Its July 2007 annual report estimated the world's oil reserves at the end of 2006 to be roughly the same as in the previous year.

# ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)

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**Established:** By agreement of participants at the Conference of the Kings and Heads of State and Government held September 22–25, 1969, in Rabat, Morocco; charter signed at the Third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held February 29–March 4, 1972, in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

**Purpose:** To promote Islamic solidarity and further cooperation among member states in the economic, social, cultural, scientific, and political fields.

**Headquarters:** Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

**Principal Organs:** Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government (Summit Conference), Conference of Foreign Ministers, General Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.oic-oci.org](http://www.oic-oci.org)

**Secretary General:** Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (Turkey).

**Membership (57):** Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoro Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen. Afghanistan's membership was sus-

pending in January 1980, following the Soviet invasion, but in March 1989 the seat was given to the government-in-exile announced by Afghan guerrillas and subsequently to the Afghan government formed after the guerrilla victory. The advent of the Taliban regime in September 1996 in Kabul yielded competition for OIC recognition between it and the overthrown government, with both being refused formal admittance to the OIC foreign ministers' conference in December in Jakarta, although Afghanistan as such continued to be regarded as a member. Egypt's membership, suspended in May 1979, was restored in April 1984. Nigeria's government approved that nation's admission into the OIC in 1986, but the membership was formally repudiated in 1991 in the wake of intense Christian opposition; the OIC has not recognized the latter decision. Uncertainty also surrounds the status of Zanzibar, whose membership request had been approved in December 1992; eight months later it was announced that Zanzibar's application, which precipitated contentious legislative debate in Tanzania, was withdrawn pending the possible forwarding of a Tanzanian membership request.

**Observers (10):** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Economic Cooperation Organization, League of Arab States, Moro National Liberation Front, Nonaligned Movement, Organization of African Unity, Thailand, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, United Nations.

**Official Languages:** Arabic, English, French.

**Origin and development.** Although the idea of an organization for coordinating and consolidating the interests of Islamic states originated in 1969

and meetings of the conference were held throughout the 1970s, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) only began to achieve worldwide attention in the early 1980s. From a base of 30 members in 1969, the grouping has doubled in size, with the most recent member, Côte d'Ivoire, being admitted in 2001.

**Structure.** The body's main institution is the Conference of Foreign Ministers, although a summit of members' heads of state and government is held every three years. Sectoral ministerial conferences have also convened in such areas as information, tourism, health, and youth and sports.

Over the years many committees and departments have evolved to provide input for policy decisions and to carry out the OIC's executive and administrative functions. The organization's secretary general, who serves a four-year, once-renewable term, heads the General Secretariat and is aided by four assistant secretaries general—four for science and technology; cultural, social, and information affairs; political affairs; and economic affairs—and a director of the cabinet, who helps administer various departments. The secretariat also maintains permanent observer missions to the United Nations (UN) in New York, United States, and Geneva, Switzerland, and an Office for Afghanistan was recently established in Islamabad, Pakistan. Other OIC organs include the al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee, the Six-Member Committee on Palestine, the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), the Standing Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation (COMCEC), the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), and various additional permanent and specialized committees. Recent ad hoc committees and groups have included an Ad Hoc Committee on Afghanistan and Contact Groups for Jammu and Kashmir, Sierra Leone, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

To date, the OIC has established four "specialized institutions and organs," including the International Islamic News Agency (IINA, founded in 1972); the Islamic Development Bank (IDB, 1974); the Islamic States Broadcasting Organiza-

tion (ISBO, 1975); and the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO, 1982). Of the organization's eight "subsidiary organs," one of the more prominent is the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF, 1977). The founding conference of a Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States was held in June 1999.

**Activities.** During the 1980s three lengthy conflicts dominated the OIC's agenda: the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which began in December 1979 and concluded with the final withdrawal of Soviet troops in February 1989; the Iran-Iraq war, which began in September 1980 and ended with the cease-fire of August 1988; and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. At their August 1990 meeting, the foreign ministers described the Palestinian problem as the primary concern for the Islamic world. However, much of the planned agenda was disrupted by emergency private sessions concerning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2. Most attending the meeting approved a resolution condemning the incursion and demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi troops. In addition to other ongoing conflicts among conference members, the Gulf crisis contributed to the postponement of the heads of state summit that normally would have been held in 1990.

When the sixth summit was finally held December 9–11, 1991, in Dakar, Senegal, more than half of members' heads of state failed to attend. Substantial lingering rancor concerning the Gulf crisis was reported at the meeting, while black African representatives asserted that Arab nations were giving insufficient attention to the problems of sub-Saharan Muslims. On the whole, the summit was perceived as unproductive, with *Middle East International* going so far as to wonder if the conference would "fade from the international political scene" because of its failure to generate genuine "Islamic solidarity."

In the following three years much of the conference's attention focused on the plight of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The group's foreign ministers repeatedly called on the UN to use force, if necessary, to stop Serbian attacks against Bosnian Muslims, but the conference

stopped well short of approving creation of an Islamic force to intervene on its own in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as reportedly proposed by Iran and several other members.

The seventh OIC summit, held December 13–15, 1994, in Casablanca, Morocco, reached consensus on a code of conduct regarding terrorism and religious extremism in the hope of improving the “global image” of Islam. Among other things, the OIC nations agreed that their territories would not be used for terrorist activities, nor would any of them support, “morally or financially,” any Muslim “terrorists” opposed to member governments. However, with states such as Iran and Sudan (both charged with supporting extremist fundamentalists in other nations) signing the OIC statement, some observers described the document as a “face-saving” measure that masked ongoing deep divisions on the issue.

OIC efforts to improve the international image of Islam continued in 1995, in conjunction with ceremonies marking the organization’s 25th anniversary. U.S. Vice President Al Gore held talks with OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid in March in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, receiving assurances of the OIC’s “unwavering” support for international stability and offering in return a U.S. commitment to dialogue with the Islamic world in the interests of peace and mutual understanding. The desire for a greater Islamic role in resolving international disputes, expressed in an anniversary declaration issued in September, was also apparent in enhanced OIC participation in UN and other mediatory frameworks.

The 24th OIC foreign ministers’ conference, held December 9–13, 1996, in Jakarta, Indonesia, reiterated familiar positions, including the demand for an independent Palestinian state and Israel’s withdrawal from all territory “captured in war.” With regard to Afghanistan, neither the new Taliban regime nor the government ousted in September was accorded official status, it being resolved that Afghanistan’s OIC seat should remain vacant pro tem “without prejudice to the question of recognition of the government of Afghanistan.” A Taliban delegation was also sent to an extraordinary sum-

mit of heads of government held March 23, 1997, in Islamabad to celebrate 50 years of Pakistani independence. While it was again denied official recognition, the delegation was allowed to attend.

The renewed Palestinian *intifada* and the Israeli response to it provided a principal focus for OIC meetings in 2000. These included the June 27–30 Conference of Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and the ninth summit November 12–13 in Doha, Qatar, which devoted its first day to discussing “the serious situation prevailing in the Palestinian occupied territories following the savage actions perpetrated by the Israeli forces.” Representatives of Iraq, Sudan, and Syria insisted that waging *jihād* against Israel was required, while others urged political and economic retaliation.

An eighth extraordinary session of the foreign ministers met May 26, 2001, in the context of the continuing hostilities. Meeting June 25–29 in Bamako, Mali, the regular 28th Conference of Foreign Ministers reiterated a call for member countries to halt political contacts with the Israeli government, sever economic relations, and end “all forms of normalization.” The concluding declaration of the session also urged resolution of a familiar list of other conflicts involving, among others, Afghanistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Jammu and Kashmir, Iraq, Kosovo, and Somalia. In other areas, the conference urged member states to ratify the Statute of the International Islamic Court of Justice, called for formation of an expert group that would begin drafting an Islamic Convention on Human Rights, condemned international terrorism, noted the progress made toward instituting an Islamic Program for the Development of Information and Communication (PIDIC), and cautioned that care must be taken to ensure that the economic benefits of globalization were shared and the adverse effects minimized.

Immediately after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States, the OIC secretary general, Abdelouahed Belkeziz, condemned the terrorist acts, as did an extraordinary Conference of Foreign Ministers session in Doha. The Doha session did not directly oppose the ongoing U.S.-led military campaign against al-Qaida



and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, although it did argue that no state should be targeted under the pretext of attacking terrorism. The session also rejected as counter to Islamic teachings and values any attempt to justify terrorism on religious grounds. Four months later, as part of an effort to foster intercultural dialogue, the OIC foreign ministers met in Istanbul with counterparts from the European Union (EU).

On April 1–3, 2002, a special OIC session on terrorism convened in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur. In addition to establishing a 13-member committee to implement a plan of action against terrorism, the session issued a declaration that, among other things, condemned efforts to link terrorism and Islam and called for a global conference to define terrorism and establish internationally accepted procedures for combating it. Notably, however, the conference did not voice consensual support for a speech by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad in which he described all attacks on civilians, including those by Palestinians and Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers, as terrorist acts. The call for a UN-sponsored conference on terrorism was repeated by the Council of Foreign Ministers at their June session in Khartoum.

The impending U.S.-led war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq generated a second extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit Conference on March 5, 2003, in Doha. The meeting included an exchange of personal insults by the Iraqi and Kuwaiti representatives and a warning from the secretary general that a U.S. military campaign would lead to occupation and foreign rule. Concern was also expressed that the Israeli government was taking advantage of the world's preoccupation with the Iraqi crisis to intensify its campaign against Palestinians. The session concluded with a call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) from the Middle East.

The tenth OIC Summit Conference, which met October 16–18, 2003, in Putrajaya, Malaysia, featured an address by Prime Minister Mahathir that many Western countries condemned as anti-Semitic because of its stereotypical description of Jewish and Israeli intentions and tactics. The

comments came in the context of Mahathir's argument that the Islamic world should focus on winning "hearts and minds" by abjuring violence and adopting new political and economic strategies. The summit concluded with issuance of the Putrajaya Declaration, which noted the "need to restructure and strengthen the Organisation on the basis of an objective review and evaluation of its role, structure, methodology, and decision-making processes, as well as its global partnerships." Included in the closing declaration's plan of action were provisions that called for drafting strategies to strengthen unity, especially at international forums; engaging in further dialogue with the West and international organizations; completing a review of the structure, methods, and needs of the secretariat; promoting the advancement of science and technology (particularly information and communication technology) among member states; and taking steps to encourage the expansion of trade and investment.

In response to subsequent international developments, the secretary general praised improved cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency; condemned the November 2003 terrorist attacks against synagogues in Istanbul as well as those against a housing complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and welcomed Libya's decision to end the development of WMDs. On February 25, 2004, the OIC argued before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, that the security wall being constructed by Israel on Palestinian land was illegal.

The OIC subsequently continued to condemn acts of terrorism around the world, including the March 2004 bombings in Madrid, Spain; the attacks against London's transit system in July 2005; and the explosions at the Egyptian resorts of Sharm El-Shiekh and Naama Bay later the same month. With regard to developments in Iraq, in August 2005 the OIC urged "prudence and consensus" during deliberations on the draft Iraqi constitution. In particular, the OIC advocated a policy of inclusion, cautioning that the "exclusion of any component of the population" (implicitly, the Sunni minority) would ill serve "the creation of

commonly desired conditions of democracy, stability, peace, and welfare in this important member of the OIC.”

A third extraordinary session took place December 7–8, 2005, in Jiddah to address the violent worldwide Islamic outrage following publication in a Danish newspaper of cartoons critical of the Prophet Mohammad. The conference condemned violence, saying that Islam was in a crisis, and offered an ambitious ten-year plan to “revamp Islamic mindsets.” Symbolic of this decision was the intention to reorganize the OIC itself, and to build it a new headquarters in Saudi Arabia. By mid-2006 a design competition for the new facility was under way. Subsequent statements by the secretary general reinforced a nonviolent message.

The 33rd meeting of OIC foreign ministers, held June 19–22, 2006, in Baku, Azerbaijan, reinforced the message of moderation in the Islamic world. Specifically, it warned the two rival factions in Palestine from dragging that territory into civil war. Later events may have pushed the OIC some distance away from its traditionally moderate stance. In early August 2006 the OIC held a

crisis meeting in Kuala Lumpur on the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel. It condemned Israel’s attacks on civilians in Lebanon, calling for an immediate cease-fire, to be supervised by a UN force. Malaysia promised troops.

In 2007 the OIC was one of several bodies involved with the UN in efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis, but it was noted that the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), since its opening session in June 2006, had been thwarted by the OIC and by some African countries from passing any resolution against Sudan on the matter. In May 2007 UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon praised the relationship between the OIC and the UN, and promised closer cooperation in the future. In March 2007 Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general of the OIC, suggested its name and charter might be changed, possibly removing the word “conference” in favor of a term that did not suggest a one-time meeting. In June 2007 U.S. President George W. Bush announced that he would appoint an envoy to the OIC, as a gesture of the United States’ wish for a peaceful and constructive involvement with the Islamic world.

# ORGANIZATION OF THE PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC)

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**Established:** By resolutions adopted September 14, 1960, in Baghdad, Iraq, and codified in a statute approved by the Eighth (Extraordinary) OPEC Conference, held April 5–10, 1965, in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Purpose:** To coordinate and unify petroleum policies of member countries; to devise ways to ensure stabilization of international oil prices to eliminate “harmful and unnecessary” price and supply fluctuations.

**Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.

**Principal Organs:** Conference, Board of Governors, Economic Commission, Secretariat.

**Web site:** [www.opec.org/home](http://www.opec.org/home)

**Secretary General:** Abdalla Salem El-Badri (Libya).

**Membership** (12, with years of entry): Algeria (1969), Angola (2007), Indonesia (1962), Iran (1960), Iraq (1960), Kuwait (1960), Libya (1962), Nigeria (1971), Qatar (1961), Saudi Arabia (1960), United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi in 1967, with the membership being transferred to the UAE in 1974), Venezuela (1960). Ecuador and Gabon, who joined OPEC in 1973, withdrew January 1, 1993, and January 1, 1997, respectively. Iraq currently does not participate in OPEC production quotas.

**Official Language:** English.

**Origin and development.** A need for concerted action by petroleum exporters was first broached in 1946 by Dr. Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonso of Venezuela. His initiative led to a series of contacts in the late 1940s between oil-producing countries, but it was not until 1959 that the first Arab Petroleum Conference was held. At that meeting Dr. Pérez Alfonso convinced the Arabs, in addition to Iranian and Venezuelan observers, to form a union of producing states, with OPEC being formally created by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela on September 14, 1960, during a conference in Baghdad, Iraq.

The rapid growth of energy needs in the advanced industrialized states throughout the 1960s and early 1970s provided OPEC with the basis for extracting ever-increasing oil prices. However, OPEC demands were not limited to favorable prices; members also sought the establishment of an infrastructure for future industrialization including petrochemical plants, steel mills, aluminum plants, and other high-energy industries as a hedge against the anticipated exhaustion of their oil reserves in the 21st century.

The addition of new members and negotiations with petroleum companies on prices, production levels, and tax revenues dominated OPEC's early years, with prices remaining low and relatively stable. On the other hand, largely because of OPEC-mandated increases, prices soared dramatically from approximately \$3 for a 42-gallon barrel in the early 1970s to a peak of nearly \$40 per barrel by the end of the decade. Thereafter, a world glut of petroleum, brought on by overproduction, global

recession, and the implementation of at least rudimentary energy conservation programs by many industrialized nations, subsequently reversed that trend. The influence of formal OPEC price setting waned as the organization began to increasingly depend on negotiated production quotas to stabilize prices (see Activities, below).

**Structure.** The OPEC Conference, which normally meets twice per year, is the supreme authority of the organization. Comprising the oil ministers of the member states, the Conference formulates policy, considers recommendations from the Board of Governors, and approves the budget. The board consists of governors nominated by the various member states and approved by the Conference for two-year terms. In addition to submitting the annual budget, various reports, and recommendations to the Conference, the board directs the organization's management, while the Secretariat performs executive functions. Operating within the Secretariat are a research division and departments for administration and human resources, data services, energy studies, petroleum market analysis, and public relations and information. In addition, an Economic Commission, established as a specialized body in 1964, works within the Secretariat framework to promote equitable and stable international oil prices. A Ministerial Monitoring Committee was established in 1982 to evaluate oil market conditions and to make recommendations to the Conference.

The OPEC Fund for International Development has made significant contributions to developing countries, mostly Arabian and African, in the form of balance-of-payments support; direct financing of imports; and project loans in such areas as energy, transportation, and food production. All current OPEC members plus Gabon are members of the fund. As of 2002 more than \$5 billion in loans were approved for nearly 1,000 operations in the public sector and about \$200 million for private sector operations. In addition, grants totaling \$300 million were approved for more than 600 operations.

**Activities.** In December 1985, as spot market prices dropped to \$24 a barrel and production

dipped to as low as 16 million barrels per day, OPEC abandoned its formal price structure to secure a larger share of the world's oil market. By mid-1986, however, oil prices had dropped by 50 percent or more to their lowest levels since 1978, generating intense concern among OPEC members with limited oil reserves, large populations, extensive international debts, and severe shortages of foreign exchange. As a result, Saudi Arabia increased its output by 2 million barrels per day in January 1986 to force non-OPEC producers to cooperate with the cartel in stabilizing the world oil market.

The acceptance of production ceilings in June 1986 appeared to signify a reduction of conflict within OPEC. Iran, which previously insisted that any increase in Iraq's quota be matched by an increase in its own allocation, reversed its position. Saudi Arabia, while maintaining that the ceilings did not preclude OPEC's attainment of a fair market share, relaxed its insistence that quotas be completely overhauled and appeared to have realigned itself with Algeria, Iran, and Libya, all of whom had long supported an end to the price war. In response to the renewed cohesiveness of the organization, oil prices increased slightly.

Relative calm prevailed within the organization during the first half of 1987, with prices ranging from \$18 to \$21 per barrel. By midyear, however, overproduction by most members and a weakening of world oil demand began to push prices downward. At the end of June, OPEC had adjusted its quota down to 16.6 million barrels per day, but individual quotas were largely ignored. Production subsequently approached 20 million barrels per day later in the year. Consequently, Saudi Arabia warned its partners that if the "cheating" continued, it would no longer serve as the oil market's stabilizer by reducing its own production to support higher prices.

During their December meeting in Vienna, OPEC oil ministers attempted to reimpose discipline, but the talks became embroiled in political considerations stemming from the Iran-Iraq war. Iraq again refused to accept quotas lower than those of Iran, while Tehran accused Gulf Arab states of

conspiring with Baghdad against Iranian interests. For their part, non-Arab states protested that war issues were inhibiting the adoption of sound economic policies. The meeting concluded with 12 members endorsing the \$18-per-barrel fixed-price concept and agreeing to a 15-million-barrel-per-day production quota, Iraq's nonparticipation leaving it free to produce at will. However, widespread discounting quickly forced prices down to about \$15 per barrel. Subsequently, in the wake of a report that OPEC's share of the oil market (66 percent in 1979) had fallen below 30 percent, an appeal was issued to nonmember states to assume a greater role in stabilizing prices and production.

A sharp drop in oil prices to between \$13 and \$14 per barrel in early 1988 prompted OPEC to meet with non-OPEC oil-exporting countries for the first time to formulate joint strategies for control of the oil market. Although six non-OPEC countries agreed to a 5 percent cut in exports, OPEC was unable to reach consensus on a reciprocal 5 percent decrease; as a result, the agreement collapsed.

Disarray continued at the June 1988 OPEC meeting at which ministers, unable to reach a new accord, formally extended the December 1987 agreement despite the widespread assessment that it had become virtually meaningless. Led by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), quota-breaking countries subsequently pushed members' production to an estimated high of 22–23 million barrels per day, with prices dropping below \$12 per barrel. In the wake of the Gulf cease-fire, however, OPEC cohesion seemed to return. In their first unanimous action in two years, the members agreed in late November to limit production to 18.5 million barrels per day as of January 1, 1989, while maintaining a "target price" of \$18 per barrel. Responding to the organization's apparent renewal of self-control, oil prices rose to nearly \$20 per barrel by March 1989. However, contention broke out again at the June OPEC session, with Saudi Arabia resisting demands for sizable quota increases. Although a compromise agreement was concluded, Kuwait and the UAE immediately declared they would continue to exceed their quotas.

In November 1989 OPEC raised its official production ceiling from 20.5 to 22 million barrels per day, allowing Kuwait a quota increase from 1.2 to 1.5 million barrels per day. However, the UAE, whose official quota remained at 1.1 million barrels per day, did not participate in the accord and continued, as did Kuwait, to produce close to 2 million barrels per day. Pledges for restraint were again issued at an emergency meeting in May 1990, but adherence proved negligible. Consequently, in July Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, in what was perceived as a challenge to Saudi leadership within OPEC as well as part of a campaign to achieve dominance in the Arab world, threatened to use military intervention to enforce the national quotas. While the pronouncement drew criticism from the West, several OPEC leaders quietly voiced support for Hussein's "enforcer" stance and, mollified by the Iraqi leader's promise not to use military force to settle a border dispute with Kuwait, OPEC agreed on July 27 to Iraqi-led demands for new quotas. However, on August 29, in a dramatic reversal prompted by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2 and the ensuing embargo on oil exports from the two countries, the organization authorized producers to disregard quotas to avert possible shortages. OPEC's action legitimized a 2-million-barrels-per-day increase already implemented by Saudi Arabia and dampened Iraq's hope that oil shortages and skyrocketing prices would weaken the resolve of the coalition embargo. In December production reached its highest level in a decade, while prices fluctuated between \$25 and \$40 in response to the continuing crisis.

In early March 1991, following Iraq's defeat, OPEC agreed to cut production from 23.4 to 22.3 million barrels per day for the second quarter of the year. The decision to maintain production at a level that would keep prices below the July 1990 goal was opposed by Algeria and Iran, who called for larger cuts. Observers attributed the agreement to Saudi Arabia's desire to assert its postwar "muscle" and to continue producing 2.5 million barrels per day over its prewar quota. In June OPEC rejected Iraq's request to intercede with the United Nations (UN) to lift the Iraqi oil embargo.

In September 1991 OPEC agreed to raise its collective production ceiling to 23.6 million barrels per day in preparation for normal seasonal increases in demand. However, Iran and Saudi Arabia remained in what analysts described as a “trial of strength” for OPEC dominance, the former lobbying for lowered production ceilings and higher prices and the latter resisting production curbs or any challenge to its market share. Thereafter, between October and January 1992 prices fell to \$16.50 per barrel, \$4.50 below the new OPEC target, as production rose to more than 24 million barrels per day and projected demand levels failed to materialize. Consequently, on February 15, 1992, OPEC members agreed to their first individual production quotas since August 1990, with the Saudis grudgingly accepting a 7.8-million-barrels-per-day quota. In April and May the organization extended the February quotas despite reports of overproduction, citing the firm, albeit lower than desired, price of \$17 per barrel.

Prices remained low for the rest of 1992 as the global recession undercut demand and overproduction continued to plague OPEC; meanwhile, Kuwait attempted to recover from the economic catastrophe inflicted by the Gulf crisis by pumping oil “at will.” With a relatively mild winter in the northern hemisphere having further reduced demand, a February 1993 emergency OPEC meeting sought to reestablish some sense of constraint by endorsing a 23.5 million barrels per day limit on its members.

Actual levels continued at more than 25 million barrels per day, however, and a more realistic quota of 24.5 million barrels per day was negotiated in September 1993. The new arrangement permitted Kuwait’s quota to rise from 1.6 million to 2.0 million barrels per day while Iran’s quota grew from 3.3 million to 3.6 million. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia agreed to keep its production at 8 million.

With prices still depressed, some OPEC members, particularly Iran, argued for substantial quota cuts in 1994, but once again resistance from Saudi Arabia precluded such action. Those favoring current levels appeared to expect that increased demand, and therefore higher prices, would result

soon from economic recovery in much of the industrialized world.

The term of office of the OPEC Director General, Dr. Subroto of Indonesia, expired June 30, 1994, but agreement was not reached immediately on a successor. It was reported that many members supported Alirio Parra of Venezuela for the position, but Iran held out for its own candidate. Since unanimity was required, Libyan Energy Minister Abdullah Salem al-Badri, at that time the president of the OPEC conference, was named acting secretary general. Subsequently, at their November session, the OPEC oil ministers appointed Rilwanu Lukman, the oil minister from Nigeria, as the permanent secretary general. Although OPEC announced that the selection was “unanimous,” it was reported that Iran remained critical of the decision.

The November 1994 conference also agreed to maintain the current quota of 24.5 million barrels per day for at least one more year. However, pressure for change grew in 1995, particularly as non-OPEC production continued to expand. Secretary General Lukman and oil ministers from several OPEC countries argued that non-OPEC nations’ failure to curb production could lead to serious problems for all oil producers. One of the options that at least some OPEC members were expected to pursue was the temporary lifting of quotas, which would permit the organization to use its vast oil reserves to “recapture” a greater market share. (It was estimated that OPEC countries controlled more than 75 percent of the world’s reserves while being responsible for only 40 percent of total oil production at that time.)

The announcement of Gabon’s impending withdrawal from OPEC was made at the ministerial meeting June 5–7, 1996. Among the reasons cited for the decision were the high membership fee and constraints imposed by OPEC production quotas. Meanwhile, OPEC ministers agreed to raise the production ceiling to 25 million barrels per day, despite the anticipated return of Iraqi crude into the market soon. The Iraqi pipelines were partially reopened in December 1996 under the UN’s “oil for food” plan (see separate article on Iraq).

In late 1997 OPEC decided to increase production by 10 percent to 27.5 million barrels per day for the first half of 1998. However, the organization reversed course sharply when the price fell to \$12.80 per barrel, a nine-year low, in March 1998. Saudi Arabia and Venezuela (joined by nonmember Mexico) immediately announced a reduction of 2 million barrels per day in their output. When prices failed to rebound, OPEC announced a further reduction of 1.3 million barrels per day in July. Additional cuts were considered in November, but consensus on the question could not be reached. Overall, OPEC's revenues in 1998 fell some 35 percent from the previous year, raising questions about the organization's ability to control prices on its own. Among other things, Saudi Arabia proposed creating a larger, albeit less formal, group of oil-producing countries (comprising OPEC and non-OPEC members) to address price stability.

Oil prices fell to under \$10 per barrel in February 1999, prompting an agreement in March under which OPEC cut production by 1.7 million barrels per day while Mexico, Norway, Oman, and Russia accepted a collective reduction of 400,000 barrels per day. Prices subsequently rebounded to more than \$26 per barrel late in the year and more than \$30 per barrel in early 2000. Consequently, from March to October 2000 OPEC increased production four times by a total of 3.4 million barrels per day before prices, which reached a high of \$37.80 per barrel in September, fell in December to \$26 per barrel, safely within the OPEC target range of \$25–\$28 per barrel.

The heads of state of the OPEC countries met for only their second summit in history (the first was in 1975) in Venezuela in September 2000 amid intensified concern over the impact of high oil prices on the global economy. Among other things, OPEC leaders criticized several European countries for imposing high taxes on oil products, thereby driving up consumer energy costs. The summit also reportedly agreed to extend OPEC's political profile, and in November Ali Rodríguez Araque, the energy and mines minister from Venezuela (considered one of the more "activist" OPEC members),

was elected to succeed Secretary General Lukman effective January 2001.

Declining economic conditions in the first eight months of 2001 sharply reduced the demand for oil, and OPEC responded with production cuts in February, April, and September totaling 3.5 million barrels per day. Prices for the most part remained within the target range for that period. However, the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States severely undercut demand, in part because of plummeting air travel, and prices fell below \$17 per barrel by November. OPEC demanded that non-OPEC producers again assist in reducing production, and Russia reluctantly agreed to cut its production by 150,000 barrels per day beginning in January 2002 in conjunction with an additional OPEC cut of 1.5 million barrels per day.

Prices rose to nearly \$30 per barrel in fall 2002, despite evidence that many OPEC countries were producing above the quotas established in late 2001. Among other things, OPEC leaders argued that prices were artificially inflated because of fears over a possible U.S. invasion of Iraq and concern emanating from other Mideast tensions. In December OPEC established a quota of 23 million barrels per day, formally an increase over 2001 levels but in reality a decrease considering the year-long "cheating" by some members.

In other activity in 2002, Alvaro Silva Calderón of Venezuela was elected to serve out the remainder of the term of OPEC Secretary General Rodríguez Araque, who was recalled to Venezuela in April during the coup attempt against the government of President Hugo Chavez. OPEC also during the year opposed a proposal from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that the oil "spigot" be manipulated to pressure the West and Israel regarding Palestinian affairs.

To address the potential for disturbances in the global oil market from the strikes by oil workers in Venezuela, OPEC agreed in January 2003 to raise quotas to 24.5 million barrels per day. However, by April discussion turned to what was viewed as an "unavoidable" production cut. Complicating factors included the potential for the full return of

Iraqi oil to world markets following the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime. In that regard, Iraq sent a delegation to OPEC's September session, at which quotas were cut by 900,000 barrels per day.

Despite rising prices, OPEC declined to increase production in January 2004 and, citing the upcoming seasonal dip in demand, reduced quotas again in February. Consequently, the United States warned OPEC that the cuts might harm an already fragile global economy. By March oil prices peaked at \$37.45 per barrel, and some non-OPEC countries (such as Mexico) snubbed OPEC's request for production constraint.

Terror attacks on the oil infrastructures in Iraq and Saudi Arabia contributed to continued price increases in mid-2004, finally prompting OPEC to expand its production quotas. Nevertheless, "spare" oil capacity remained at its thinnest in decades. The Group of Eight issued a stern warning about the effects of rising oil prices, which reached a 21-year high in July of more than \$43 per barrel. By October the price topped out at more than \$55 per barrel; it then declined by 23 percent by the end of the year.

In December 2004 OPEC announced a production cut to stem the slide in oil prices. Meanwhile, it was estimated that OPEC members were enjoying their highest oil revenue ever in nominal terms. OPEC informally relaxed quota compliance in March 2005, and prices hovered at about \$50 per barrel. However, the International Monetary Fund and the United States called for significant additional OPEC production increases to, among other things, provide a more substantial cushion against unforeseen oil shocks. OPEC agreed to that request in June, but the per-barrel price subsequently grew to almost \$60.

In 2005 and 2006 the world's demand for oil seemed finally to be straining the producing countries' ability to supply, with some saying this was the long-predicted first sign that the world was running out of oil. Rapid economic growth in China, and to a lesser extent in India, was also said to be

a factor. Tensions between the United States and Iran pushed prices over \$75 per barrel for periods in May and June of 2006. In this environment Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez was able to call for the use of oil as a political lever against the developed world, and to ask for Ecuador and Bolivia (both of which hold strong reserves) to be invited into the cartel. In December 2005 an OPEC delegation visited China, hoping to gain a better understanding of that country's energy needs.

In a meeting ending June 1, 2006, in Caracas, OPEC voted to keep its production levels constant at 28 million barrels per day. Venezuela argued for a cut, while Saudi Arabia said high prices had begun to reduce demand, leaving oil markets "oversupplied and overpriced." Financial and political conditions remained disturbed through 2006 and 2007. The U.S. dollar, the currency in which OPEC trades, remained weak, with little sign of recovery, and China and India's appetite for oil and bilateral purchase arrangements increased. In March 2007 Angola joined OPEC—a move calculated to boost that country's international standing, but a disappointment to Western countries which had hoped to keep its oil reserves outside the OPEC cartel. The phenomenon sometimes called resource nationalism—the use by poor countries of their natural resources to enhance their political standing in the world—increased, with Venezuela and Iran leading the way. Ecuador indicated that it wanted to rejoin OPEC, a request that seemed likely to soon be granted as of mid-2007. In May 2007 Ecuador and Venezuela agreed to an exchange of Ecuadorian crude oil for Venezuelan refined product. As oil prices continued to rise, and the use of biofuels and other alternative sources of energy became more economically feasible, OPEC's Secretary General Abdalla Salem El-Badri warned in June 2007 that serious investment in biofuels could "push oil prices through the roof." Such a development would cause OPEC members to consider cutting investment in new oil production, he said. At a meeting on September 11, 2007, OPEC agreed to raise production by 500,000 barrels a day.



# REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

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Regional development banks are intended to accelerate economic and social development of member states by promoting public and private investment. The banks are not meant, however, to be mere financial institutions in the narrow sense of the term. Required by their charters to take an active interest in improving their members' capacities to make profitable use of local and external capital, they engage in such technical assistance activities as feasibility studies, evaluation and design of projects, and preparation of development programs. The banks also seek to coordinate their activities with the work of other national and international agencies engaged in financing international economic development. Subregional banks have historically concentrated more on integration projects than have regional development banks.

## Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa

*Banque Arabe de Développement  
Economique en Afrique* (BADEA)

**Web site:** [www.badea.org](http://www.badea.org)

The idea of an Arab bank to assist in the economic and social development of all non-Arab African states was first discussed by the Arab heads of state during the Sixth Arab Summit in Algiers, Algeria, in November 1973. BADEA, with headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan, began operations in

March 1975. Its main functions include financing development projects, promoting and stimulating private Arab investment in Africa, and supplying technical assistance. BADEA financing, which cannot exceed \$15 million, is limited to 80 percent of projects with total costs up to \$12 million and 50 percent of those above that level. Technical assistance is provided in grant form. All member states of the Organization of African Unity, except Arab League participants, are eligible for funding. To date, the preponderance of aid has been devoted to infrastructural improvements, although the Board of Directors has also accorded additional priority to projects promoting increased food production. The bank has traditionally favored the least-developed countries in its disbursements.

The bank's highest authority is the Board of Governors (one governor for each member), with day-to-day administration assigned to a Board of Directors, one of whose 11 members serves as board chair. The Board of Governors appoints the bank's director general from among the countries not represented on the Board of Directors. The subscribing members of the bank are Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates. Egypt's membership was suspended from 1979 to 1988.

In a review of its first 25 years of activity, BADEA reported that infrastructure received more than 50 percent of total commitments, followed by

agriculture (30 percent), energy (8 percent), banking (4 percent), and industry (2 percent). In addition to maintaining support for “traditional fields of intervention,” beginning with its 1990–1994 five-year plan, the bank has placed greater emphasis on projects with a “direct impact on the life of African citizens,” such as water supply and food security projects.

In 2000 BADEA approved \$119 million (for 16 projects) in new loans and \$5.0 million in technical assistance (for 21 projects), for a total of \$124 million. This marked a significant increase over the 1996 total of \$90 million. Lending concentrated on potable water supplies, irrigation, and transportation (roads and rail), but also included projects involving fisheries development, a shipyard, an industrial training center, and a hospital.

In 2000 cumulative commitments reached \$2.08 billion for 284 development projects, 15 lines of credit, 14 special emergency aid operations, and 239 technical assistance operations. Cumulative disbursements reached \$1.17 billion, while cancellations reached \$444 million. BADEA has also administered 37 soft loans totaling \$214 million that were extended through the Special Arab Fund for Africa (SAFA) from its commencement of operations in 1974 until 1977, at which time the SAFA capital was incorporated into that of BADEA. The bank’s subscribed capital is currently \$1.5 billion.

BADEA approved \$129 million in new loans in 2001, \$134 million in 2002, \$140 million in 2003, and \$139 million (for 21 projects) and \$5.7 million in technical assistance (for 24 projects) in 2004. Cumulative disbursements reached \$1.68 billion at the end of 2006. In December 2004 the Board of Directors approved the fifth five-year plan, which projected new lending of \$900 million in 2005–2009.

## Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)

**Web site:** [www.arabfund.org](http://www.arabfund.org)

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, which originated in an accord reached

May 16, 1968, and began functioning in December 1971, is headquartered in Safat, Kuwait. Its aim is to assist in the financing of economic and social development projects in Arab states by offering loans on concessional terms to governments, particularly for joint ventures, and by providing technical expertise. The chief policymaking organ of the fund is the Board of Governors (one representative from each participating country), which elects an eight-member Board of Directors chaired by a director general. Members are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt (suspended from 1979 to 1988), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. (The memberships of Iraq and Somalia have been suspended since 1993 because of their failure to make loan repayments.)

The AFESD serves as the secretariat for the Coordination Group of the Arab and Regional Development Institutions, which also includes the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the OPEC Fund for International Development, and the Saudi Fund for Development. The annual *Unified Arab Economic Report*, covering current economic issues and prospects, is prepared by the fund in cooperation with the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the Arab League, and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

The AFESD has been at the forefront of efforts to boost inter-Arab trade, which culminated in an early 1990 agreement to establish the \$500 million Arab Trade Financing Program (see separate article on the AMF). The AFESD agreed to provide \$100 million, making it the new program’s second leading contributor after the AMF.

In 1990 the fund approved 15 loans for a total of \$656 million, up from \$540 million in 1989 and \$396 million in 1988. However, disbursements during the second half of 1990 and much of 1991 were inhibited by the Persian Gulf crisis, which also forced the temporary relocation of the AFESD’s headquarters to Bahrain. In early 1992 it was

reported that disbursements of previous commitments had, for the most part, resumed on a normal schedule. Approvals for 1993 totaled approximately \$618 million for 12 projects in six countries.

AFESD-backed projects continue to emphasize infrastructure, while technical assistance grants concentrate on improving government efficiency and manpower skills. Lending approvals in 2005 (the latest year for which figures are available) totaled 335 million Kuwaiti Dinars (KD) (\$1.1 billion) for 19 projects. Infrastructure projects accounted for 80 percent of that amount. Cumulative loan disbursements since 1974 reached 5.1 billion Kuwaiti Dinars (\$16.8 billion).

The AFESD authorized capital remains at KD 800 million (80,000 shares). At the end of 2005, paid-up capital stood at KD 663 million, unchanged since 1989, although reserves have grown over the same period from KD 513 million to KD 1.69 billion (\$56 billion), for a total of KD 2.3 billion (\$7.8 billion) in resources.

## Islamic Development Bank (IDB)

**Web site:** [www.isdb.org](http://www.isdb.org)

The IDB originated in a Declaration of Intent issued by the Conference of Finance Ministers of Islamic Countries during their December 15, 1973, meeting in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia. The bank's Articles of Agreement were approved and adopted by the Second Conference of Finance Ministers on August 10, 1974, with the bank commencing activities in October 1975.

The purpose of the IDB, which is headquartered in Jiddah, is to "foster the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities individually as well as jointly," guided by the tenets of *sharia* (Islamic law). In addition to providing assistance for feasibility studies, infrastructural projects, development of industry and agriculture, import financing, and technology transfers, the IDB operates several special funds, including one to aid Muslim populations in non-member countries. Because *sharia* proscriptions include the collection of interest, various alternative financing methods such as leasing and profit-

sharing are pursued, with service charges for loans being based on the expected administrative costs of the loan operations. The IDB also attempts to promote cooperation with Islamic banks as well as with national development institutions and other international agencies.

The bank uses as its unit of account the Islamic Dinar (ID), which is on par with the special drawing rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund. In July 1992 the Board of Governors, acting on a recommendation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), agreed to raise the authorized capital from ID 2 billion to ID 6 billion (about \$8.5 billion) and subscribed capital to ID 4 billion (about \$5.7 billion).

The bank's primary decision-making and administrative organs are a Board of Governors and a Board of Executive Directors, the former comprised of the member countries' ministers of finance or their designees. Of the 14 executive directors, 7 are appointed by the 7 largest subscribers to the bank's capital (Saudi Arabia, 24 percent; Kuwait, 12 percent; Libya, 10 percent; Iran, 9 percent; Egypt, 9 percent; Turkey, 8 percent; and the United Arab Emirates, 7 percent), while 7 are elected by the governors of the other member states.

A prerequisite to joining the bank is membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), 55 of whose members now belong to the IDB. The bank governors voted to suspend Afghanistan's membership at their 1981 annual meeting in conjunction with a similar suspension by the OIC. In early 1989 the OIC gave the vacant IDB seat to the government-in-exile announced by Afghan guerrilla groups, with the membership returning to normal status after the fall of the Najibullah government in April 1992.

In 1986 the Board of Governors approved the establishment of a Longer-term Trade Financing Scheme (LTTFS, subsequently renamed the Export Financing Scheme—EFS) as a strategy to increase member countries' exports; contributions for the scheme, in operation since 1988, are made to a trust fund within the IDB. An Import Trade Financing Operation (ITFO) also exists to help fund the import of capital, rather than consumer, goods.

The bank launched a \$100 million IDB Unit Investment Fund (UIF) in 1990 to serve as a secondary market for mobilizing additional financial resources by pooling investors' savings and directing them to projects that would achieve a "reasonable level of investment return" while accelerating social and economic development. The fund's authorized resources were later increased to \$500 million, although the full amount is not yet achieved.

In March 1987 the IDB was selected to manage the new Islamic Banks' Portfolio (IBP), a fund established by 21 Islamic banks primarily to finance private sector trade and investment between Islamic countries. The portfolio currently boasts paid-up capital equivalent to \$3.2 billion. The IDB also launched an Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) in mid-1995 to support trade and investment between Muslim states.

The UIF, the IBP, the ICIEC, and the IDB itself are core components of the IDB Group. Other participating institutions include the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), which began operations in 1983; the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), which the IDB, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD, above), the OPEC Fund for International Development, and the United Arab Emirates founded in 1996 as a research and development facility; the \$1.5 billion IDB Infrastructure Fund, which was formed in October 1998 to finance infrastructural projects; and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector, which was created by the Board of Governors in September 1999.

Recently the bank has given lending priority to projects designed to promote food security (particularly through increased agricultural productivity), improve health and educational services, alleviate

poverty in rural areas, and modernize members' infrastructures. Special consideration has also been given to Muslim communities in the states that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia.

Activity in 1994–1995 included the dedication of the bank's new headquarters building in Jiddah and the opening of regional offices in Rabat, Morocco, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The IDB subsequently emphasized cooperation with the OIC designed to enhance foreign trade among members, although the bank acknowledged that tariffs and nontariff barriers continued to hamper effectiveness. One remedy proposed by the IDB was greater private sector development in member states. In September 1998 bank Chair Ahmad Mohammad Ali asserted that one of the IDB's goals was a 13 percent increase in trade among its members.

In October 2002 the IDB pledged \$2 billion in loans to poor African countries. The aid was earmarked for, among other things, education, health services, and provision of safe drinking water. In 2004 the bank approved \$500 million for reconstruction in Iraq. Other loans were approved for earthquake relief in Algeria and Iran and for reconstruction in southern Lebanon. At its annual meeting in March 2006, the bank announced an initiative to build the economic clout of Muslim nations by the year 2020.

Lending approvals for 2006 totaled \$1.7 billion as against \$1.37 billion for 2005. In February 2007 a new member of the IDB Group was created—the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation. This group was conceived to promote development and decrease economic burdens in the least-developed countries. In September 2007 the IDB began work on an internal reform, aligning its efforts more closely with the work of the OIC (see separate article on the OIC).

# UNITED NATIONS

## UNITED NATIONS (UN)

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**Established:** By charter signed June 26, 1945, in San Francisco, United States, effective October 24, 1945.

**Purpose:** To maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among states based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; to achieve international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character; and to harmonize the actions of states in the attainment of these common ends.

**Headquarters:** New York, United States.

**Principal Organs:** General Assembly (all members), Security Council (15 members), Economic and Social Council (54 members), Trusteeship Council (5 members), International Court of Justice (15 judges), Secretariat.

**Web site:** <http://www.un.org>

**Secretary General:** Ban Ki Moon (South Korea).

**Membership:** 192.

**Official Languages:** Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish. All are also working languages.

**Origin and development.** The idea of creating a new intergovernmental organization to replace the League of Nations was born early in World War II and first found public expression in an Inter-Allied Declaration signed on June 12, 1941, in London, England, by representatives of five Commonwealth states and eight Euro-

pean governments-in-exile. Formal use of the term United Nations first occurred in the Declaration by United Nations, signed on January 1, 1942, in Washington, D.C., on behalf of 26 states that subscribed to the principles of the Atlantic Charter (August 14, 1941) and pledged their full cooperation for the defeat of the Axis powers. At the Moscow Conference on October 30, 1943, representatives of China, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the United Kingdom, and the United States proclaimed that they “recognized the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.” In meetings in Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., between August 21 and October 7, 1944, the four powers reached agreement on preliminary proposals and determined to prepare more complete suggestions for discussion at a subsequent conference of all involved nations.

Meeting from April 25 to June 25, 1945, in San Francisco, California, representatives of 50 states participated in drafting the United Nations Charter, which was formally signed June 26. Poland was not represented at the San Francisco Conference but later signed the charter and is counted among the 51 “original” UN members. Following ratification by the five permanent members of the Security Council and most other signatories, the charter entered into force October 24, 1945. The General Assembly, which convened in its first regular session January 10, 1946, accepted an invitation to establish the permanent home of the organization

in the United States; privileges and immunities of the UN headquarters were defined in a Headquarters Agreement with the U.S. government signed June 26, 1947.

The membership of the UN, which increased from 51 to 60 during the period 1945–1950, remained frozen at that level for the next five years as a result of U.S.-Soviet disagreements over admission. The deadlock was broken in 1955 when the superpowers agreed on a “package” of 16 new members: four Soviet-bloc states, 4 Western states, and 8 “uncommitted” states. Since then, states have normally been admitted with little delay. The exceptions are worth noting. The admission of the two Germanys in 1973 led to proposals for admission of the two Koreas and of the two Vietnams. Neither occurred prior to the formal unification of Vietnam in 1976, and action in regard to the two Koreas was delayed for another 15 years. On November 16, 1976, the United States used its 18th veto in the Security Council to prevent the admission of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, having earlier in the same session, on June 23, 1976, employed its 15th veto to prevent Angola from joining. Later in the session, however, the United States relented, and Angola gained admission. In July 1977 Washington dropped its objection to Vietnam’s membership as well.

With the admission of Brunei, the total membership during the 39th session of the General Assembly in 1984 stood at 159. The figure rose to 160 with the admission of Namibia in April 1990, fell back to 159 after the merger of North and South Yemen in May, advanced again to 160 via the September admission of Liechtenstein, and returned to 159 when East and West Germany merged in October. Seven new members (Estonia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia) were admitted September 17, 1991, at the opening of the 46th General Assembly. Eight of the new states resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) were admitted March 2, 1992, along with San Marino. Russia announced the pre-

vious December that it was assuming the former USSR seat. Three of the breakaway Yugoslavian republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia) were admitted May 22. Capping an unprecedented period of expansion, Georgia became the 179th member on July 31.

The total dropped back to 178 with the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on January 1, 1993, then moved up to 180 when the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined separately on January 19. On April 8 the General Assembly approved the admission of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” the name being carefully fashioned because of the terminological dispute between the new nation and Greece (see separate article on Macedonia). Monaco and newly independent Eritrea were admitted May 28, followed by Andorra on July 28. Palau, which achieved independence following protracted difficulty in concluding its U.S. trusteeship status (see section on Trusteeship Council), became the 185th member December 15, 1994. Kiribati, Nauru, and Tonga were admitted September 14, 1999, and Tuvalu joined September 5, 2000.

A change of government in October 2000 led to the November 1, 2000, admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). On September 22, 1992, the General Assembly, acting on the recommendation of the Security Council, decided the FRY could not automatically assume the UN membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The assembly informed the FRY that it would have to apply on its own for UN membership, and such an application was submitted the following day. However, no action on the request was taken by the assembly because of concern over the Federal Republic’s role in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, later, its actions regarding the ethnic Albanian population in the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo. As a consequence, the FRY was excluded from participation in the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. Throughout this period, however, the UN membership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia technically remained in effect. A certain ambiguity, apparently deliberate, surrounded the issue, permitting the FRY and others to claim

that it was still a member, albeit excluded from active participation, while some nations argued that the membership referred only to the antecedent Yugoslavian state. In any event, the flag of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was also the flag of the FRY, continued to fly outside UN headquarters with the flags of all other UN members, and the old nameplate remained positioned in front of an empty chair during assembly proceedings. In October 2000 the Security Council, in a resolution recommending admission of the FRY, acknowledged “that the State formerly known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has ceased to exist.” A representative of the FRY took up the empty seat, and a new FRY flag replaced that of the former Yugoslavia.

On September 10, 2002, the UN admitted Switzerland, which had long maintained a permanent observer mission at UN headquarters and had actively participated as a full member of the various UN specialized and related agencies. The Swiss government, having concluded that UN membership in the post–Cold War era would not jeopardize its long-standing international neutrality, sought admission after winning majority support from Swiss voters at a March 2002 referendum. Timor-Leste became the 191st member on September 27.

In 2003 the FRY became the “state union” of Serbia and Montenegro, which dissolved in June 2006, following a successful independence referendum in Montenegro. Accordingly, on June 28 the world’s newest independent state, Montenegro, was admitted as the UN’s 192nd member. Serbia, as the successor state to the state union, retained the UN seat held to that point by the FRY.

The Holy See (Vatican City State) has formal observer status in the General Assembly and maintains a permanent observer mission at UN headquarters. In July 2004 the UN granted the Holy See the full range of membership privileges, with the exception of voting.

In July 2007 Taiwan formally applied for membership in the UN. The application marked the first effort by the island nation to gain membership as Taiwan and not the Republic of China. The bid was rejected by the UN legal affairs office on the

grounds that General Assembly Resolution 2758 granted sole representation for China to the People’s Republic of China. The General Assembly subsequently approved by consensus the recommendation of the legal affairs office in September.

**Structure.** The UN system can be viewed as comprising (1) the principal organs, (2) subsidiary organs established to deal with particular aspects of the organization’s responsibilities, (3) a number of specialized and related agencies, and (4) a series of ad hoc global conferences to examine particularly pressing issues.

The institutional structure of the principal organs resulted from complex negotiations that attempted to balance both the conflicting claims of national sovereignty and international responsibility, and the rights of large and small states. The principle of sovereign equality of all member states is exemplified in the General Assembly; that of the special responsibility of the major powers, in the composition and procedure of the Security Council. The other principal organs included in the charter are the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council (whose activity was suspended in 1994), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Secretariat.

UN-related intergovernmental bodies constitute a network of Specialized Agencies established by intergovernmental agreement as legal and autonomous international entities with their own memberships and organs and which, for the purpose of “coordination,” are brought “into relationship” with the UN. While sharing many of their characteristics, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remains legally distinct from the Specialized Agencies; the World Trade Organization, which emerged from the UN-sponsored General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), has no formal association with the UN.

The proliferation of subsidiary organs can be attributed to many complex factors, including new demands and needs as more states attained independence; the effects of the Cold War; a subsequent diminution of East-West bipolarity; a greater concern with promoting economic and social

development through technical assistance programs (almost entirely financed by voluntary contributions); and a resistance to any radical change in international trade patterns. For many years, the largest and most politically significant of the subordinate organs were the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which were initial venues for debates, for conducting studies and presenting reports, for convening conferences and specialized meetings, and for mobilizing the opinions of non-governmental organizations. They also provided a way for less developed states to formulate positions in relation to the industrialized states. During the 1970s both became intimately involved in activities related to program implementation, and on January 1, 1986, UNIDO became the UN's 16th Specialized Agency.

One of the most important developments in the UN system has been the use of ad hoc conferences to deal with major international problems. Some conferences are also discussed under General Assembly: Origin and Development, below, or within entries for various General Assembly Special Bodies or UN Specialized Agencies.)

## General Assembly: Special Bodies

Over the years, the General Assembly has created a number of semiautonomous Special Bodies, two of which (UNCTAD, UNDP) deal with development problems, three (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA) with relief and welfare problems, and two (UNEP, UNFPA) with demographic and environmental problems.

In addition to the United Nations University (UNU), which alone sponsors or cosponsors some dozen Research and Training Centers and Programs, a number of other specialized bodies for conducting research and providing training have been established. These include the UNITAR and the UNRISD (both discussed below); the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), located in Geneva; the UN International Research and

Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), based in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), based in Turin, Italy.

A former Special Body, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), became a Specialized Agency on January 1, 1986. In 1992 the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator's Office (UNDRO), a Special Body since 1971, was incorporated into a new UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In May 1996 the World Food Council, a Special Body since 1974, was formally disbanded, its responsibilities being transferred to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP).

## United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

**Established:** By General Assembly resolution of December 8, 1949; mandate most recently extended through June 30, 2008.

**Purpose:** To provide relief, education, and health and social services to Palestinian refugees (i.e., people [and later the descendants of people] who resided in Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 and who, as a result of that conflict, lost both their homes and their means of livelihood).

**Headquarters:** Gaza and Amman, Jordan. (Most of the operations, previously in Vienna, Austria, were moved to Gaza in July 1996. The remainder were relocated to the agency's other longstanding headquarters in Amman.)

**Web site:** <http://www.un.org/unrwa/>

**Commissioner General:** Karen Koning Abu Zayd (United States).



**Advisory Commission:** Comprised of representatives of the governments of Belgium, Egypt, France, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is an observer.

**Recent activities.** As of March 2007, approximately 4.45 million people who met the established definition of Palestinian refugee were registered with the UNRWA. About 1.31 million of that number lived in 59 refugee camps, many of which had in effect become permanent towns; the remainder lived in previously established towns and villages in the areas served by UNRWA—Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza. The UNRWA's original priority was to provide direct humanitarian relief to refugees uprooted by the fighting that followed the creation of Israel. In the absence of a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian question, the UNRWA's attention shifted to education (it runs about 660 schools attended by approximately 485,000 students) and the provision of public health services (it operates 127 health centers) to a basically self-supporting population. The UNRWA employs some 27,000 people, including 19,600 educators and 4,100 medical personnel.

In the late 1980s the UNRWA's budget came under severe pressure. The number of people who qualified as refugees in need of "special hardship" assistance increased because of economic decline in the Middle East and the effects on the population of the first *intifada* (uprising) in the occupied territories. A separate Project Fund for specific projects and a Capital Construction Fund for UNRWA facilities were constricted.

In 1988 the UNRWA found itself "back in the relief business" in three of the five geographic areas it served. In Lebanon, where 33 UNRWA employees had been killed since 1982, deteriorating conditions in and around Beirut prompted the agency to offer its services to the non-Palestinian population. In the West Bank and Gaza, the UNRWA was forced to divert some of its resources to emergency medical treatment, food relief, and physical rehabilitation services; many schools were closed for much of the year because of the *intifada*. Several

special emergency funds were established for the occupied territories, where an estimated 55 percent of the population consisted of Palestinian refugees.

In mid-1990 UNRWA officials reported that Palestinian "frustration" was increasing as peace prospects appeared to recede and emergency conditions persisted in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza. The agency's difficulties intensified still further during the subsequent Gulf crisis as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled the conflict (many returning to UNRWA camps) or lost their sources of income and thereby their ability to remit funds to family members in UNRWA's service area.

After the war, several hundred thousand Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait. In early 1992 improved security in Lebanon permitted some stabilization of UNRWA activity.

Shortly after the September 1993 accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the UNRWA established an internal task force to determine how best to support the peace process. Its first action was to develop a Peace Implementation Program (PIP) designed to rehabilitate long-neglected infrastructure and create jobs for Palestinians. Donors pledged more than \$100 million for the first phase of the operation (PIP 1); most of the projects were located in Gaza and the West Bank in cities and towns that were the first to fall under Palestinian self-rule. PIP 2 envisioned additional projects worth \$250 million throughout the area served by the UNRWA; the largest proposed project was the construction of a hospital in Gaza, which the European Union planned to finance. As negotiations between Israel and the PLO proceeded, Commissioner General Türkmen called upon donors to underwrite a five-year plan for the agency to lead to a possible reduction of refugee services if there was a final peace accord. However, Türkmen cautioned that refugees, particularly those outside the West Bank and Gaza, felt "a great sense of concern and apprehension about their future."

In December 1995 the General Assembly extended the UNRWA's mandate to June 30, 1999, the hope being that Palestinians would, at that point, be fully responsible for their own affairs under a

final agreement with Israel. The following month Türkmen retired from the post of UNRWA commissioner general and was succeeded by Peter Hansen of Denmark, theretofore UN undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs.

The outlook for the agency was relatively bright as 1996 began; the September 1995 Interim Agreement between Israel and the PLO had prompted a further withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank. In addition, the UNRWA welcomed the January 1996 Palestinian elections as an important step toward permanent Israeli-Palestinian peace. However, it lamented the lack of further Israeli withdrawals and Israel's failure to extend responsibility to the new Palestinian (National) Authority, with which, as directed by the General Assembly, the UNRWA had recently established a full working relationship. Commissioner General Hansen also reported that the agency was in the midst of a financial crisis that threatened its ability to fulfill its mandate. In the face of an \$8.4 million deficit for 1995, the UNRWA imposed austerity measures and called for a special meeting of the agency's donors to resolve ongoing financial difficulties.

Continuing financial straits brought the agency to near breakdown in 1998, and the Palestinian staff held a one-day strike on September 15 to protest poor pay and work conditions. In October–November 1998 *Middle East International* reported that serious allegations of corruption and misuse of funds had been leveled at several agency staff and that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan had sent a team to the region to look into the allegations and check the agency's accounts.

Beginning in September 2000, the UNRWA's efforts to contain expenditures without jeopardizing its programs were set back as open hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians resumed. In October a second *intifada* led the UNRWA to launch a flash appeal for additional funds. This was followed in November by an emergency appeal to underwrite job creation and help offset unemployment caused by Israel's closure of its border. From November 2000 through the first half of 2004, the UNRWA issued seven emergency appeals for sums totaling over \$650 million to cover basic food and medical

supplies, repair local infrastructure, provide temporary shelter for those whose homes had been damaged or destroyed during Israeli incursions into the West Bank and Gaza, and find employment for Palestinians whose movements had been restricted. According to Commissioner General Hansen, two-thirds of Palestinians were unemployed, and half were living in absolute poverty. A study conducted by Johns Hopkins University indicated that one-third of Palestinian children were either chronically or acutely malnourished.

Some Israelis and members of the U.S. Congress, among others, accused the UNRWA of allowing refugee camps to be used for terrorist training and activities. The UNRWA responded that it had "no police force, no intelligence service and no mandate to report on political and military activities" in the camps. Instead, its role was to provide health, education, and humanitarian services. Security was the responsibility of host countries or the Palestinian Authority. A recent audit by the U.S. General Accounting Office concluded that no money provided by the United States—the source of some 30 percent of UNRWA funds—could be linked to terrorist activities in the refugee camps.

The UNRWA had a budget of \$339 million in 2005, with expenditures of \$345 million. The estimated 2006 budget was \$470.9 million, but renewed fighting in Gaza and southern Lebanon substantially increased expenditures. In response, the agency issued a flash appeal for \$7.2 million in emergency aid for food, shelter, water, health care, staff security, and associated expenses. Strife created an additional 200,000 permanent refugees and led the agency to issue another flash appeal in 2007 for \$11.5 million in emergency funding.

In 2007 the UNRWA's budget was \$487.1 million. The United States, the European Commission, Sweden, Norway, and the United Kingdom were the agency's largest donors for the year. In February the EU announced that it would increase support for the UNRWA by 7 percent between 2008 and 2010 with total funding during that period at \$264 million (\$379.1 million). Fighting in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon between security forces and Islamic militants forced most of the

31,000 inhabitants of the settlement to flee. The UNRWA estimated that it would take three years to rebuild the camp. Meanwhile, fighting between Hamas and Fatah in June created a new refugee crisis and led the UNRWA to issue an appeal for \$246.15 million in emergency funding to support an estimated 1.7 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Through November, the UNRWA had collected \$111 million in emergency relief.

### Security Council: Peacekeeping Forces and Missions

In addition to the forces and missions listed below, the United Nations Command in Korea (established on June 25, 1950) remains technically in existence. The only UN member now contributing to the command is the United States, which proposed in June 1975 that it be dissolved. As of 2007 no formal action had been taken on the proposal (see Security Council: Origin and development).

### United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)

**Established:** By Security Council resolution of May 31, 1974.

**Purpose:** To observe the cease-fire between Israel and Syria following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

**Headquarters:** Camp Faouar (Syrian Golan Heights). (A UNDOF office is located in Damascus, Syria.)

**Force Commander:** Maj. Gen. Wolfgang Jilke (Austria).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 1,043 troops from the Austrian, Canadian, Indian, Japanese, Polish, and Slovakian armed forces.

### United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

**Established:** By Security Council resolution of March 4, 1964, after consultation with the governments of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

**Purpose:** To serve as a peacekeeping force between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

**Headquarters:** Nicosia, Cyprus.

**Force Commander:** Maj. Gen. Rafael José Barni (Argentina).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 868 troops and 69 civilian police from Argentina (including soldiers from six other South American countries), Australia, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, India, Slovakia, United Kingdom, and Uruguay.

### United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

**Established:** By Security Council resolution of March 19, 1978, and augmented by subsequent resolution on August 11, 2006.

**Purpose:** To confirm the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, to restore peace and help ensure the return of Lebanese authority to southern Lebanon, to extend access to humanitarian support for the civilian population, to facilitate the return of displaced persons, to establish a zone free of weapons and armed personnel other than those of the Lebanese security forces and UNIFIL, and to aid the government of Lebanon in securing its borders.

**Headquarters:** Naqoura, Lebanon.

**Force Commander:** Maj. Gen. Claudio Graziano (Italy).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 13,264 troops from Belgium, China, Croatia, Cyprus,

Finland, France, FYR of Macedonia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey.

### United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)

**Established:** By resolutions adopted by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan on August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949; augmented and brought under the jurisdiction of the Security Council by resolution of September 6, 1965, in view of a worsening situation in Kashmir.

**Purpose:** To assist in implementing the cease-fire agreement of January 1, 1949.

**Headquarters:** Rawalpindi, Pakistan (November–April); Srinagar, India (May–October).

**Chief Military Observer:** Maj. Gen. Dragutin Repinc (Croatia).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 44 military observers from Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Republic of Korea, Sweden, and Uruguay.

### United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara Mission des Nations Unies pour le Référendum dans le Sahara Ouest (MINURSO)

**Established:** By Security Council resolution of April 29, 1991.

**Purpose:** To enforce a cease-fire in the Western Sahara between Morocco and the Polisario Front, to identify those eligible to vote in the proposed self-determination referendum in the region, and to supervise the referendum and settlement plan.

**Headquarters:** Laayoune, Western Sahara.

**Force Commander:** Maj. Gen. Zhao Jingman (China).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 185 military observers, 27 troops, and 6 civilian police from Egypt and El Salvador; the military personnel are from Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, China, Croatia, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, and Yemen. An additional 2,200 troops and observers were authorized but not deployed because of the lack of progress in referendum negotiations.

### United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)

**Established:** By Security Council resolution of May 29, 1948.

**Purpose:** To supervise the cease-fire arranged by the Security Council following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Its mandate was subsequently extended to embrace the armistice agreements concluded in 1949; the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979; and assistance to other UN forces in the Middle East, specifically the UNDOF and UNIFIL.

**Headquarters:** Jerusalem, Israel.

**Chief of Staff:** Maj. Gen. Ian Campbell Gordon (Australia).

**Composition:** As of October 31, 2007, 150 military observers from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and United States.

## Economic and Social Council: Regional Commissions

The primary aim of the five Regional Commissions, which report annually to ECOSOC, is to assist in raising the level of economic activity in their respective regions and to maintain and strengthen the economic relations of the states in each region, both among themselves and with others. The commissions adopt their own procedural rules, including how they select officers. Each commission is headed by an executive secretary, who holds the rank of under secretary of the UN, while their Secretariats are integral parts of the overall United Nations Secretariat.

The commissions are empowered to make recommendations directly to member governments and to Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, but no action can be taken in respect to any state without the agreement of that state.

### Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

**Established:** August 9, 1973, as the Economic Commission for Western Asia; current name adopted in 1985.

**Purpose:** To “initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic reconstruction and development of Western Asia, for raising the level of economic activity in Western Asia, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the countries of that area, both among themselves and with other countries of the world.”

**Temporary Headquarters:** Beirut, Lebanon.

**Principal Subsidiary Organs:** Preparatory Committee; Advisory Committee; six specialized committees (Energy, Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization, Social Development, Statistics, Transport, Water Resources); Secretariat. The Secretariat includes seven divi-

sions: Administrative Services; Program Planning and Technical Cooperation; Economic Analysis, Information and Communication Technology; Globalization and Regional Integration; Social Development; and Sustainable Development and Productivity. There are also a Statistics Coordination Unit and an ESCWA Center for Women.

**Web site:** <http://www.escwa.un.org/>

**Executive Secretary:** Bader Al-Dafa (Qatar).

**Membership (13):** Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

**Recent activities** The most important procedural event in the commission’s history was the 1977 decision to grant full membership to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—the first non-state organization to achieve such standing in a UN agency—despite a fear on the part of some UN members that the PLO would use its membership to gain full membership in the General Assembly. Israeli-Palestinian agreements, beginning with the 1993 Declaration of Principles, led to the redesignation of the PLO membership as, simply, Palestine, even though no de jure Palestinian state existed.

In view of growing regional economic cooperation throughout the world, the commission at the 1992 Ministerial Session urged members to adopt policies designed to promote inter-Arab trade and the eventual creation of an Arab common market. A decision was postponed on the designation of a new permanent headquarters for the commission, which had moved to Amman, Jordan, from Baghdad, Iraq, during the Gulf crisis. It was subsequently decided to move the headquarters to Beirut, Lebanon; the relocation was completed in early 1998.

During the mid-1990s the ESCWA reorganized its work agenda, reducing the number of operational programs from 15 to 5: Natural Resources and Environmental Management, Improvement of the Quality of Life, Economic Development and Global Changes, Coordination of Policies and Harmonization of Norms and Regulations for

Sectoral Development, and Coordination and Harmonization of Statistics and Information Development.

In 1997 ECOSOC established a Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Globalization in Countries of the ESCWA Region in order to observe movement toward free trade in other parts of the world and advise members on its benefits.

At its 19th session, held in Beirut May 5–8, 1997, the ESCWA discussed a proposed 1998–2001 medium-term plan that stressed sustainable development and cooperation within the region, reported on the development of databases on population and gender issues, and followed up on actions taken at the previous session regarding new committees on energy and water resources. The 1999 biennial session coincided with the commission's 25th anniversary. The May 8–11, 2000, ministerial meeting focused on the topic of Regional Integration and Globalization. In November 2000 Mervat M. Tallawy of Egypt succeeded Hazem El Beblawi, also of Egypt, as executive secretary.

In 2003 Tallawy lamented the fact that UN negotiations had failed to prevent the U.S./UK-led invasion of Iraq and called for the UN to take a greater role than initially envisioned in the reconstruction of Iraq following the war. For its part, the

ESCWA pledged to concentrate on reviving civil society in Iraq, noting that “turmoil and anxiety” in the region had diverted resources away from development. The 2005 ESCWA session further addressed the question of “peace and security” and determined that too much money had been spent on armaments at the expense of employment and other social programs. The ESCWA also announced plans for its own restructuring to emphasize local community development and cooperation with the private sector. The commission continued to express deep concern over the repercussions of Israeli “occupation” on the living conditions of Palestinians. The ESCWA released a report in June 2005, *Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women, 1990–2004*, that specifically criticized Israel for the erosion of living standards among women in the Palestinian territories. In July 2006 the ESCWA protested the Israeli incursion into Lebanon, including attacks on UN facilities.

The ESCWA's Sustainable Management of the Environment Team increased its efforts to support sustainable development through 2007. The team worked with a number of ESCWA members to create national sustainable development strategies and to harmonize environmental regulations across borders.



**PART FOUR**

**APPENDIXES**

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# APPENDIX A: CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR MIDDLE EASTERN EVENTS, 2007

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## AFGHANISTAN

*January 31. Amnesty for War Crimes.* The lower House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*) approves a bill granting amnesty to those who committed war crimes during the past 25 years. The bill, which includes the Taliban, draws criticism from human rights groups.

*February 15. U.S. Troop Surge.* U.S. President George W. Bush announces an increase in the number of U.S. forces to be deployed in Afghanistan, resulting in the highest level of U.S. troops there since 2001.

*April 3. New Political Group Formed.* Burhanuddin Rabbani spearheads the formation of a new group—the United National Front (UNF). It brings together mujaheddin, former communists, members of the royal family, and other diverse elements in pursuit of national unity and establishment of a democracy.

*June 17. Suicide Attack in Kabul.* The deadliest suicide bombing since the overthrow of the Taliban government in 2001 kills 35 people and wounds at least 50 others in Kabul, prompting fears that the Taliban would pursue the violent tactics used in Iraq.

*December: U.S. Reports Indicate Increased Activity by al-Qaida in Afghanistan.* Defense Secretary Robert Gates visits Kabul on December 3 to discuss improving the economic and political situation at a time when violence is increasing. Subsequently, it is reported that Gates has ruled out a proposal to shift U.S. Marines from Iraq to lead operations in Afghanistan.

## ALGERIA

*April 11. Terrorist Group Steps Up Attacks.* Al-Qaida in the Maghreb, formerly the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*—GSPC), claims responsibility for three bomb attacks. The group also claimed responsibility for other bomb attacks in February and March. Early in 2007, the GSPC announced its affiliation with al-Qaida.

*April 18. New Opposition Group Formed.* Al-Jazeera TV reports that a new opposition group, *Rachad*, has been formed in London. The group, which aims “to bring about a fundamental change in Algeria,” according to its Web site, is said to include members of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front.

*May 17. Legislative Elections.* In regularly scheduled direct elections to the National People’s Assembly, the governing coalition of the National Liberation Front (FLN), National Democratic Rally (RND), and the Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) easily retain a strong majority. A new cabinet named on June 4 retains Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem and most of the incumbent ministers.

*October 10. Terrorist Leader Killed.* Algerian troops reportedly kill the deputy leader of al-Qaida in the Maghreb, Hareg Zoheir, also known as Sofiane Abu Fasila. He was considered to be the operational leader behind the recent deadly bomb attacks.

*December 5. French President Visits.* During French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s visit to

Algeria—meant to ease tensions—the two countries sign a pact to cooperate on the development of a civilian nuclear program.

## BAHRAIN

*February 2. Officials Arrested.* The executive director of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and the secretary general of the Movement of Liberties and Democracy—Bahrain (*Haq*), are arrested following speeches in which they criticized the government.

*November 17. Relations With Iran Stabilize.* Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, visits Bahrain to ease tensions following verbal confrontations between Iran and the United States that had prompted fears of a military buildup in the Gulf region.

## CYPRUS

*July 10. Governing Coalition Dissolved.* The Progressive Party of the Working People (*Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou*—AKEL) leaves the three-party ruling coalition, and its four ministers resign from the cabinet after the party fails to gain the backing of a junior coalition party for its 2008 presidential candidate.

*July 23. President Seeks Reelection.* President Tassos Papadopoulos announces his candidacy for reelection in balloting scheduled for February 2008.

*August 31. Maverick Politician Backs Northern State Recognition.* Marios Matsakis, a member of the Democratic Party (*Demokratiko Komma*—Deko) and a European Union parliamentarian, makes a surprise statement calling for recognition of the northern Cyprus republic.

*September 5. Presidents of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus Meet.* President Papadopoulos and Mehmet Ali Talat, president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, hold what are described as “constructive” talks under the auspices of the United Nations. The meeting is their first since they agreed in 2006 to discuss issues in an effort to revive the UN-backed reunification talks on Cyprus.

*November 30. Offshore Exploration Agreement Ratified.* The Cypriot Parliament ratifies an agreement with Lebanon that resolves a longtime dispute over oil and gas exploration rights in the Mediterranean.

## CYPRUS: TURKISH SECTOR

*September 6. Judges' Appointments Draw Criticism.* The European Court of Human Rights accepts the nomination by Turkey of two judges from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to represent Turkey in the court. The move prompts a rebuke by Cyprus, which claims that the northern state is illegal. (Only Turkey recognizes the northern federal state.)

## EGYPT

*Throughout 2007. Hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood Members Arrested.* The government's increasing suppression of the opposition, most intensely from January through August, appears to have strengthened the Muslim Brotherhood, observers say.

*March 26. Constitutional Amendments Approved.* Nearly 76 percent of voters approve controversial constitutional amendments in a referendum held seven days after parliament approves President Mubarak's proposed changes. The new provisions include granting the government the authority to ban political parties based on religion, entrenching most of the restrictions in effect under the emergency law, and reducing judicial oversight of balloting. Egypt's judges reject the results and vow not to supervise future balloting.

*June 11 and 18. Advisory Council Elections.* The ruling National Democratic Party wins 84 of 88 seats in partial direct elections for the Consultative Council.

*October 29. Nuclear Program to Resume.* President Mubarak announces that Egypt will begin construction of nuclear power-generating stations for peaceful purposes and will cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

## IRAN

*February 8. Supreme Leader Warns United States.* Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, warns that Iran will retaliate against U.S. interests worldwide if the United States attacks Iran. The warning is the latest exchange in escalating rhetoric between the two countries, spurred by the possibility of Iran developing the capability of producing a nuclear weapon.

*February 22. Iran Fails To Comply With Resolution.* The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirms that Iran has failed to abide by a Security Council resolution calling for suspension of its uranium enrichment. (The resolution had imposed limited sanctions on Iran.) The IAEA says Iran is attempting to escalate enrichment of nuclear fuel through a process that could produce fuel for nuclear reactors or for a bomb.

*February 23. Iranian President Refuses to Halt Nuclear Program.* President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vows to resist pressures on Iran to abandon its nuclear development program.

*March 23. British Sailors Detained.* Tensions with the West flare again when Iran captures 15 British sailors, claiming they had invaded Iranian waters. The crew is released on April 5, following a speech by Ahmadinejad in which he attacks the West and its Middle East policy.

*June 27. Gas Rationing Prompts Riots.* Parliament rejects an emergency measure that would have postponed gas rationing, despite violent riots in protest of the rationing policy. Iran reportedly imposes rationing in anticipation of possible U.S. sanctions that would ban companies from selling gas to Iran.

*July 2. Iranian Forces Accused in Attacks Against U.S. Soldiers.* The United States accuses the Revolutionary Guard of assisting Iraqi militants in abducting and killing five U.S. soldiers in January. It also declares that militants are using explosive devices from Iran against coalition forces in the U.S.-backed war in Iraq.

*September 4. Rafsanjani Elected Speaker.* Former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who has increasingly sided with reformists opposed to

President Ahmadinejad, is elected speaker of the Assembly of Experts. His election is seen as further increasing his influence at the expense of Ahmadinejad.

*September 23. Ahmadinejad Makes Controversial New York Appearances.* Ahmadinejad arrives in New York to address the United Nations General Assembly. In a controversial appearance at Columbia University on September 24, the Iranian president says he considers the matter of his country's nuclear development program "closed."

*September. Kurdish Rebels Step Up Attacks Against Iranian Forces.* There is a sharp escalation in cross-border fighting with Kurdish rebels in Iraq, who claim to have several thousand members seeking autonomy for Kurds in Iran near Iran's border with Iraq. The main group identified with the attacks is reportedly the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan. At various times during the month, Iran closes its border with Iraq.

*October 25. U.S. Sanctions Against Iranian Armed Forces.* The United States announces sanctions against Iran's banking system and the Revolutionary Guard, the first time the United States has taken punitive steps against the armed forces of a sovereign country.

*December 3. Intelligence Report Says Iran Halted Nuclear Program.* A new U.S. intelligence estimate says that Iran halted its nuclear program in 2003 and had not restarted it as of 2007, but President George W. Bush says the findings will not change U.S. policy toward Iran.

## IRAQ

*March 7. Party Defects From Shiite Bloc.* The Islamic Virtue Party (*Hizb al-Fadilah*) withdraws from the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), a Shiite legislative faction, and from the cabinet in a dispute over cabinet posts.

*April 16. Cabinet Ministers Resign.* Six Shiite ministers representing the supporters of hard-line Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr resign from the cabinet. Ministers from the Iraqi Accord Front (IAF) suspend their participation in the cabinet in August, citing Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's failure

to disband Shiite militias and release Sunnis who had been “arbitrarily arrested” in the 2006–2007 crackdown on sectarian violence. Over a perceived lack of reforms by al-Maliki, Iraqi National List (INL) ministers resign their posts as directed by former prime minister Ayad Allawi.

*May 11. Parliamentary Group Adopts New Name.* The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) adopts the name Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), a move seen, in part, as an effort to underscore the moderate stance of the group in relation to the Sadrists.

*September 4. Bush Praises Success of Surge.* U.S. President Bush cites what he describes as the success of the nine-month U.S. troop surge and urges continued support for the al-Maliki administration despite its failure to achieve many of the “benchmarks” established earlier to measure progress.

*September 13. Prime Minister al-Maliki Makes Efforts to Placate Sunnis.* Prime Minister al-Maliki reportedly intensifies his efforts to placate Sunnis by releasing those who had been arrested in a recent crackdown and by endorsing proposed legislation that would permit former *Baath* members to return to government service.

## ISRAEL

*January 25. Legislative Speaker Serves as Acting President.* *Knesset* Speaker Dalia Itzik (*Kadima*) begins serving in an acting presidential capacity after Moshe Katsav takes a leave of absence due to a police investigation into allegations that he sexually assaulted female employees.

*April 22. Pro-Arab Knesset Member Resigns.* Azmi Bishara (now resident abroad), leader of the pro-Arab National Democratic Alliance (*Balad*), resigns his *Knesset* seat after Israeli police confirm that they are investigating him on suspicion of having “aided an enemy” during the 2006 war between Israel and *Hezbollah* in Lebanon. (Bishara had denounced Israel’s actions in that conflict.)

*May 5. One Hundred Thousand Protesters Call for Prime Minister’s Resignation.* A number of

cabinet-level scandals and corruption allegations apparently contribute to a demonstration in Tel Aviv by some 100,000 protesters who demand Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s resignation. Subsequently, operating with what is described as a “survival cabinet,” Olmert appears to base his future prospects on plans for renewed talks toward a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

*June 13. Peres Elected President.* Shimon Peres, who helped launch *Kadima*, is elected president in second-round balloting in the *Knesset*. Peres is inaugurated for a seven-year term on July 15 after President Katsav formally resigned effective July 2 as part of an apparent plea-bargaining arrangement involving charges of sexual harassment.

*August 14. Netanyahu to Seek Return as Prime Minister.* Benjamin Netanyahu easily wins reelection as leader of the Unity–National Liberal Party (*Likud–Liberalim Leumi*) party. He immediately announces his intention to pursue a return to the prime ministership in the next election. Subsequent popularity polls show him leading all other potential candidates.

*August 20. Sudanese Refugees Turned Away.* For the first time in two years, Israel sends back scores of Sudanese refugees who had illegally crossed its border with Egypt.

*November 27. Prime Minister Readies New Peace Plan.* Middle East peace talks are formally launched in the United States, and Olmert signals his readiness to discuss the eventual division of Jerusalem and the Israeli withdrawal from much of the West Bank as part of a final two-state settlement. Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas commit to negotiating a peace agreement by the end of 2008.

## JORDAN

*September 29. New Political Party Formed.* A new political party, the Unified Jordanian Front, is formed by Amjad Majali, who describes it as reformist.

*November 20. King’s Supporters Win Majority in Parliament.* In regularly scheduled elections

for the lower House of Representatives (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*), supporters of King Abdullah II win an overwhelming majority. The opposition Islamic Action Front (IAF) wins six seats, down from 17 in the previous election.

*November 22. New Prime Minister Named.* The king names Nader al-Dahabi, a technocrat, as the new prime minister. He succeeds Marouf Bakhet, who resigned after parliamentary elections.

*November 25. New Government Formed.* Al Dahabi forms a new government that retains only eight members of the previous administration.

*November 29. Upper House Renewed.* The king renews the 55-member House of Notables (*Majlis al-Ayan*), the upper chamber of the National Assembly.

## KUWAIT

*March 4. Cabinet Resigns.* The full cabinet resigns, reportedly to avoid a planned no-confidence vote in the assembly against the health minister, who is a member of the royal family. Had the minister lost the no-confidence vote, observers said, it would have been a major embarrassment to the Sabah family.

*March 25. New Government Named.* Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah names a new government, retaining his nephew, Sheik Nasser Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, as prime minister and putting family members in key ministries.

## LEBANON

*October. Presidential Election Postponed.* The election of a successor to the president, Gen. (Ret.) Emile Lahoud, a Maronite Christian, is repeatedly postponed by parliament as the divided political groupings are unable to agree on a compromise candidate.

*November 24. Prime Minister Takes Control.* The prime minister, Fouad Siniora, a Sunni Muslim, and the cabinet take over the powers of the presidency, following the expiration of the president's term of office on November 23.

*November 29. Candidate Nominated but Elections Again Postponed.* The Siniora government nominates army chief Gen. Michael Suleiman as the new president. He is an acceptable compromise candidate to the pro- and anti-Syrian camps, though the constitution bars a sitting army chief from seeking the presidency. Political factions dispute how the constitution should be amended.

## LIBYA

*July 11. President Bush Nominates Ambassador to Libya.* U.S. President George W. Bush announces that he will send the first ambassador to Libya in nearly 35 years.

*July 24. Release of Bulgarian Medics.* Libya releases five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor who had been facing the death penalty. In return, Libya reportedly receives a major arms agreement from France and a waiver of \$57 million in debt by Bulgaria.

*October. Libya Elected to UN Security Council.* As of January 1, 2008, Libya will begin its two-year term on the Security Council.

*October 27. Libya Hosts Peace Talks on Darfur.* In Sirte, Libya opens talks to end the conflict in western Sudan.

## MOROCCO

*September 7. Legislative Elections.* Following elections to the House of Representatives (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*), the reformist Independence Party (*Istiqlal*) wins 52 seats, becoming the largest party in the lower chamber, followed by the Justice and Development Party with 46 seats. The Socialist Union of Popular Forces (*Union Socialiste des Forces Populaire*—USFP), the largest party in the outgoing coalition, places fifth with 38 seats. The leader of the Independence Party, Abbas El Fassi, is appointed prime minister on September 19, replacing Driss Jettou, an independent.

*October 15. New Government Named.* El Fassi names a new cabinet that reflects King Mohamed VI's desire for a reformist government.

## OMAN

*September 9. Government Changes.* Sultan Qabus reshuffles the cabinet. He appoints Sheik Ahmed al-Isai as the new president of the Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*), replacing Sheikh Abdullah ibn Ali al-Qatabi, who is named a state adviser.

*October 27. Legislative Elections.* In direct elections for the advisory Consultative Council, none of the 21 women seeking a seat was elected, and the two women who had held seats on the council did not retain them.

## PAKISTAN

*March 8. Chief Justice Suspended.* President Pervez Musharraf sets off a political firestorm by suspending Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry on grounds of misconduct and abuse of authority. In response, dozens of judges resign.

*July 3–11. Troops Storm Besieged Red Mosque.* President Musharraf orders an assault on the Red Mosque in Islamabad after six months of clashes with militant Islamist students. Following unsuccessful negotiations with the students and their clerical mentors, military personnel clear the mosque and adjacent madrasas in a prolonged assault that costs more than 100 lives. Although Musharraf's decision to storm the mosque wins considerable praise in the West and from domestic secularists, Islamists vow retaliation, which leads to an upsurge in suicide bombings and other attacks. Meanwhile, tribal militants in North Waziristan cancel the September 2006 peace agreement with the government.

*July 20. Chief Justice Reinstated.* Chaudhry is reinstated by the Supreme Court, which unanimously rules Musharraf's action in March illegal. Forty people had been killed in May when members of the government-supportive Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) clashed with Chaudhry supporters in the streets of Karachi over Chaudhry's ouster.

*August 23. Former Prime Minister Sharif Tries to Return.* The Supreme Court rules that former

prime minister Nawaz Sharif cannot be prevented from returning "to his motherland." Nevertheless, when he arrives in Islamabad on September 10, the government detains him at the airport and then deports him to Saudi Arabia within hours. Four days later, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, in the context of negotiations with Musharraf on power-sharing arrangements, announces that she plans to return to Pakistan in October.

*September 28. Musharraf Declared Eligible for Reelection.* With Chief Justice Chaudhry having recused himself, the Supreme Court rules that President Musharraf can stand for reelection while still serving as army chief. Although Musharraf states that, should he win reelection, he will resign from the military before his inauguration, most of the opposition declares that it will boycott the presidential voting.

*October 6. Musharraf Reelected.* An electoral college of parliament and the four provincial assemblies reelect Musharraf to a five-year term by a margin of 671–8.

*October 18. Bhutto Returns to Pakistan.* Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto ends eight years in exile and returns to Karachi. The triumphal occasion turns grim, however, when suicide bombers attack her motorcade, killing 145 and wounding more than 200 others.

*November 3. State of Emergency Declared.* Citing the need to combat rising Islamic extremism, President Musharraf, in his capacity as chief of the army staff, suspends the constitution and declares a state of emergency. Chief Justice Chaudhry is immediately dismissed. Most of his fellow justices resign or refuse to take a new oath under a provisional constitutional order. The emergency declaration provokes demonstrations by many of those associated with the July protests. More than 5,000 activists are temporarily jailed in the following days, and Bhutto is twice placed under house arrest. Within days Musharraf announces that parliamentary elections will be held on January 8, 2008.

*November 16. Caretaker Government Sworn In.* One day after the completion of the 2002–2007 legislative term, Musharraf swears in a caretaker

government headed by Senate Chair Mohammad-mian Soomro, an ally.

*November 22. Supreme Court Clears Way for Musharraf's Reelection.* The Supreme Court, now packed with Musharraf supporters, dismisses the last of four opposition petitions challenging Musharraf's reelection.

*November 25. Sharif Returns to Pakistan.* Opposition demands for restoration of the constitution are further strengthened by the successful return to Pakistan of Nawaz Sharif, following intervention on his behalf by the king of Saudi Arabia.

*November 28. Musharraf Resigns as Army Chief.* Musharraf steps down as chief of the army staff on November 28 and takes the presidential oath of office as a civilian for another five-year term on November 29.

*December 15. State of Emergency Lifted.* Musharraf lifts the state of emergency.

*December 27. Bhutto Assassinated.* Benazir Bhutto, the former Pakistani prime minister, is assassinated in a suicide attack as she leaves an election rally in Rawalpindi. Protests and riots erupt across the country, resulting in the deaths of at least nine people. Western sources say al-Qaida is responsible for the attack.

## PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY/ PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

*January. Violence Spreads.* After President Mahmoud Abbas threatens to call for early elections unless a national unity government can be established, fighting between *Hamas* and *Fatah*, which began in December 2006, spreads from Gaza to several major cities in the West Bank.

*June 13. Hamas Takes Control of Gaza.* The Islamic Resistance Movement (*Hamas*) takes control of Gaza, following severe factional infighting between it and *Fatah* in May. The Palestinian Authority retains control of Palestinian self-rule territory in the West Bank.

*June 14. Emergency Government Appointed.* President Abbas (*Fatah*/Palestine Liberation Orga-

nization) appoints Salam Khaled Abdallah Fayyad as prime minister and dismisses Ismail Haniyeh (Islamic Resistance Movement [*Hamas*]) and his cabinet.

*November 27. Peace Initiatives Discussed.* At a U.S.-led peace conference in Annapolis, Maryland, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Abbas agree to resume formal negotiations with the goal of reaching a final peace agreement within a year. Olmert had indicated in October that Israel might consider a division of Jerusalem as part of a final settlement.

## QATAR

*April 1. Municipal Elections Held.* Many observers view the municipal elections as a democratic test that could lead to long-promised parliamentary elections.

*April 3. New Prime Minister Named.* Sheikh Abdallah ibn Khalifa Al Thani resigns as prime minister and is replaced by Sheikh Hamad ibn Jasim ibn Jabir Al Thani. The new prime minister is sworn in along with a reshuffled cabinet.

## SAUDI ARABIA

*February 8. Saudi Arabia Hosts Middle East Summit.* Saudi Arabia invites the leaders of *Hamas* and *Fatah* to a summit in Mecca, where the warring Palestinian factions agree to form a unity government (which subsequently fails).

*April 27. Alleged Islamist Militants Arrested.* Some 172 Islamist militants are arrested after the government accuses them of planning attacks on public figures, military areas, and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

*October 1. Judicial System Reforms.* King Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud decrees changes to the judicial system. They include formation of a supreme court (whose chief is to be appointed by the king) and courts to deal with trade and labor disputes. The reforms will not supersede Islamic law, however.



## SUDAN

*January 7–10. U.S. Governor Mediates Cease-fire.* Bill Richardson, governor of New Mexico, brokers a 60-day cease-fire agreement between the government of Sudan and the main rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). However, Sudan's president, Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, rejects calls to replace the African Union Mission in Darfur with United Nations peacekeeping troops.

*January 8. New Currency Introduced.* As part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Central Bank of Sudan introduces the Sudanese pound. The currency replaces the dinar, which southerners feel represents the northern government's Arabization policies.

*January 22. Political Parties Act Approved.* The National Assembly passes the Political Parties Act, a controversial bill criticized by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), both of which withdraw from the vote in protest. The bill allows the government to suspend or dissolve any political party whose activities it deems to be contrary to the terms of the CPA. The bill also prevents any member of the security forces or the police, diplomats, civil service heads, and judges from joining any political party until the end of the CPA's transitional period. The president and vice president may still belong to political parties.

*February 27. War Crimes Cases in International Court.* The International Criminal Court formally accuses two Sudanese men of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. They may become the first to face prosecution since the United Nations Security Council referred cases to the ICC in April 2005.

*March 10. New Political Party Formed.* A new party called the Sudanese Socialist Union is formed by Fatima Abd al-Mahmud, according to *al-Khartoum* newspaper. It is unclear what, if any, relation the party has to the SSU, which was suspended in 1985.

*March 14. Government Accused in Attack on USS Cole.* A federal judge in Norfolk, Virginia, says the government of Sudan is responsible for the attack in 2000 on the USS *Cole* in the harbor of Aden, Yemen, which killed 17 U.S. seamen. Families of the seamen had filed a lawsuit against the government of Sudan.

*July 14. Party Leader Arrested.* The head of the People's Party (*Hizb al-Umma*–UP), Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi, is arrested with 27 other opposition leaders and charged with plotting to overthrow the government.

*July 31. Peacekeeping Force Authorized.* A UN Security Council resolution authorizes an African Union–UN peacekeeping force, which the Sudanese government formally accepts.

*August 31. Progress in Eastern Sudan.* Musa Muhamed Ahmed, chairman of the regional interest group, the Eastern Front, is sworn in as a presidential adviser to President Bashir, and the group's secretary general is given a ministry post. The Eastern Front is also given several parliamentary seats, in furtherance of the peace process with eastern Sudan.

*October 17. SPLM Ministers Withdraw from Cabinet.* The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) members of the cabinet withdraw from the government, claiming that it had failed to implement the 2005 peace deal.

*October 27. Peace Talks Break Down.* Peace talks in Sirte, Libya, stall over objections from rebel leaders of the JEM and the SLM/A. The rebel leaders boycott talks scheduled with the Sudanese government.

*October 29. Attack on African Union Peacekeepers.* At least 10 African Union peacekeepers are killed in Darfur.

*November 14. New Separatist Party Formed.* Clement Juma Mbugoniwia announces the United South Sudan Party, which will advocate for democracy and secession.

*December 27. Unity Government Sworn In.* President Bashir installs a new unity government, reportedly to ease a renewed north-south rift. The cabinet includes several SPLM ministers and other opposition members.

## SYRIA

*May 27. President Reelected.* Dr./Lt. Gen. Bashar al-Assad (*Baath Party*) is endorsed for a second seven-year term as president with a “yes” vote of 97.62 percent.

*April 3–4. U.S. House Speaker Visits Syria.* The Democratic speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, leads a delegation to Damascus to meet with President Assad. U.S. President George W. Bush sharply criticizes Pelosi, expressing concerns that the visit sent “mixed signals” that would undermine U.S. policy toward Syria.

*May 4. U.S. Secretary of State Meets With Syrian Counterpart.* In what is called a diplomatic turning point, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meets with Syria’s foreign minister to express U.S. concerns over Syria’s porous borders with Iraq, which allow foreign fighters to enter Iraq. The U.S. had, until Rice’s visit, resisted talks with Syria.

*April 22. Legislative Elections Held.* The governing *Baath Party* and its six allies in the National Progressive Front win 172 seats. Independents win the remaining 78 seats.

*September 6. Israel Strikes “Military Target” in Syria.* An Israeli air strike hits an unspecified “military target” in Syria, which President Assad insists is an ordinary construction site, not part of Syria’s nuclear program. *The New York Times* reports in October that the target may have been a partially built nuclear reactor. Israel refuses to comment.

*October 1. Syria Shuts Off Access to Iraqis.* Bowing to pressure from the United Nations, Syria closes its borders to Iraqi refugees and imposes new visa rules that require the 1.5 million Iraqis in Syria to return to their homeland.

*November 27. Syria Attends U.S.-Brokered Peace Talks.* At the invitation of the United States, Syria attends a Middle East peace conference in Annapolis, Maryland, hosted by Secretary of State Rice. Syria refers to the conference as a “defeat” for the Palestinians and for peace in the region following an announcement by Israel and the Palestinians that they will resume peace talks and aim for a resolution by the end of 2008.

*December 13. Political Dissenters Arrested.* Syria cracks down on reformists, reportedly arresting as many as 30 people. The arrests come a week after dissidents form an opposition front.

*December 30. France Cuts Ties with Syria.* President Nicolas Sarkozy says there will be no diplomatic relations with Syria until it stops interfering with elections in Lebanon.

## TUNISIA

*January 3. Authorities Fight Terrorists.* Security forces clash with terrorists, whom the Tunisian government calls Islamic extremists. The fighting had been going on since December 23, 2006.

*February 2. Opposition Parties Organize for Reform.* Four opposition parties—Popular Union Party, Unionist Democratic Union, Liberal Social Party, and Green Party for Progress—meet as the Democratic Alliance to push for political reform.

## TURKEY

*July 22. Early Legislative Elections.* In early legislative elections following an electoral crisis, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, scores a stunning victory, improving upon its 2002 return by 12 percent to take 341 seats in the National Assembly.

*August 28. New President Takes Office.* Abdullah Gul (Justice and Development Party) takes office following a vote by the new parliament.

*August 29. New Government Formed.* Erdogan forms a new government entirely with AKP members. (The cabinet receives a vote of confidence from parliament September 5.)

*October 21. Electoral Referendum Approved.* A referendum backed by the AKP approves a change from indirect to direct presidential elections.

*December 1. Cabinet Approves Attacks in Iraq.* Turkey’s cabinet gives the army authority to attack Kurdish militants in Iraq.

*December 16. Turkey Bombs Militants in Iraq.* Following a series of deadly attacks spearheaded by the PKK based in Kurdish-controlled Northern

Iraq, Turkish warplanes cross the border to bomb the militants, reportedly with at least tacit approval from the United States.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

*March. Draft Labor Law Under Consideration.* A law that would grant more rights to workers, first proposed in 2006, remains under consideration. The UAE seeks constructive input from international organizations.

*April 20. UAE Reopens Embassy in Iraq.* Following a break in diplomatic relations over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the UAE reestablishes relations with Baghdad.

## YEMEN

*January 2007. Hundreds Killed in Clashes.* Fighting escalates between members of the Shiite group, Organization of Believing Youth, and government security forces in northern Yemen. President Ali Abdallah Salih calls on the group, whose

members are followers of Husayn al-Huthi, to disarm.

*March 31. New Prime Minister Appointed.* Ali Muhammad Majur (General People's Congress) is appointed prime minister. A new government is sworn in on April 7.

*June 16. Cease-fire with Insurgents Announced.* The Yemeni government and followers of Husayn al-Huthi announce a cease-fire after the government of Qatar intervenes to facilitate an agreement. The rebel leaders will live in exile in Qatar.

*July. Government "Deal" with Islamic Extremists Reported.* The government reportedly frees al-Qaida members and other Islamic extremists who sign an agreement to obey the law.

*September 24. President Announces Political Reform Initiative.* President Ali Abdallah Salih announces a reform initiative to reduce the presidential term from 7 years to 5, reduce the terms of legislators from 6 years to 4, abolish the post of prime minister, and reserve a total of 15 percent of seats for women in both houses of the legislature.

# APPENDIX B: SERIALS LIST

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Africa Confidential  
Africa Research Bulletin (Economic Series)  
Africa Research Bulletin (Political Series)  
The Boston Globe  
The Christian Science Monitor  
Cyprus Newsletter  
The Economist  
Editor and Publisher International  
The Europa World Yearbook  
Facts on File  
Financial Times  
IAEA Bulletin  
IMF Article IV Reports  
IMF Balance of Payments Statistics  
IMF Direction of Trade Statistics  
IMF Government Finance Statistics  
IMF International Financial Statistics  
IMF Survey  
IMF World Economic Outlook  
Keesing's Record of World Reports  
Middle East International  
Middle East Journal  
Middle East Policy  
Middle East Report  
Middle East Studies Association Bulletin  
Middle Eastern Studies  
Le Monde  
The New York Times  
People in Power  
Permanent Missions to the United Nations  
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty  
UN Chronicle  
UN Handbook  
UN Population and Vital Statistics Report  
UN Statistical Yearbook  
UNESCO Statistical Yearbook  
US CIA Heads of State and Cabinet Members  
US Department of State, Diplomatic List  
The Washington Post  
Willings Press Guide  
World Bank Atlas  
World Bank Country Reports  
World Development Report



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