



Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime

Joseph Sassoon

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The Ba'th Party came to power in 1968 and remained for thirty-five years, until the 2003 U.S. invasion. Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, who became president of Iraq in 1979, a powerful authoritarian regime was created based on a system of violence and an extraordinary surveillance network, as well as reward schemes and incentives for supporters of the party. The true horrors of this regime have been exposed for the first time through a massive archive of government documents captured by the United States after the fall of Saddam Hussein. It is these documents that form the basis of this extraordinarily revealing book and that have been translated and analyzed by Joseph Sassoon, an Iraqi-born scholar and seasoned commentator on the Middle East. They uncover the secrets of the innermost workings of Hussein's Revolutionary Command Council, how the party was structured, how it operated via its network of informers, and how the system of rewards functioned. Saddam Hussein's authority was dominant. His decision was final, whether arbitrating the promotion of a junior official or the death of a rival or a member of his family. As this gripping portrayal of Saddam Hussein's Iraq demonstrates, the regime was every bit as authoritarian and brutal as Stalin's Soviet Union or Mao's China and some of the regimes in the Arab world who are witnessing upheavals, are not not dissimilar from the Ba`th regime.

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