

**MIDDLE EAST
CONTEMPORARY SURVEY**

Iraq

1976 – 1999

Volumes I – XXIII

CD-ROM Version

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Preface

This CD product comprises a year-by-year survey of twenty three years in the contemporary political, social, cultural and economic affairs of the Republic of Iraq. It contains the chapters analyzing events in that country as published, annually since 1976, in the *Middle East Contemporary Survey (MECS)*, an acknowledged standard reference work on the region. This is an endeavor to present a comprehensive CD-based study of an individual Middle Eastern country over an extended period of time, allowing the user to follow long-term trends and search for names and concepts throughout Iraq's recent history. The last year covered here is 1999. The CD will be updated periodically, based on demand.

MECS is an annual survey produced by the Shiloah Institute of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Designed to be a continuing, up-to-date reference for scholars, researchers and analysts, policymakers, students and journalists, it examines in detail the rapidly changing Middle Eastern scene in all its complexity. Each volume contains country-by-country surveys of the Arab states from Morocco to the Gulf, Iran, Israel and Turkey, as well as essays on broad regional issues and on the relations of the Middle East with other parts of the world. Most of the chapters in each volume are researched and written by members of the Dayan Center, while contributions are also made by academics and experts from other institutions in Israel and abroad. The period covered in each of the first nine volumes was November-to-October. Subsequent volumes cover calendar years. Over the years, several editors have been successively in charge of coordinating the project and editing the text. Their names are indicated respectively on the title pages of each volume, reproduced below.

The present project may be regarded as a sample of *MECS* standards and concerns. Included are all the annual chapters on Iraq from the series' country-by-country section, as well as other essays focusing on Iraq, the Iraqi Iranian war, the Gulf war, and Gulf security. Other *MECS* sections, not reproduced here, often discuss Iraq in various contexts, and the user is referred to *MECS* for further consultation.

Iraq played a central role in Middle East developments during the last decades of the twentieth century. Especially eventful were the ascent to absolute power by Saddam Husayn, the bloody eight-year war with Iran, and the 1991 Gulf war. All had far-reaching impact, not only within the region, but in international affairs as a whole. A close reading of twenty-two consecutive years of Iraqi modern history promises to confer new insights and deeper understanding of the various forces and mechanisms operating within Iraq, and between Iraq and the rest of the world. The "Iraqi story," marked by the rise and decline of a regional power, the establishment and consolidation of a brutal totalitarian regime, and the phenomenal survival of its leader throughout all of the tumultuous upheavals, is surely an intriguing story worthy of attention.

In the present product, *MECS* chapters have been reproduced in their original format, including page enumeration as appeared in each volume and cross-references to other sections of the same volume.

Transliteration

The **Arabic** language has been transliterated as follows:

b	for	ب	q	for	ق
d	for	د	r	for	ر
dh	for	ذ	s	for	س
f	for	ف	sh	for	ش
gh	for	غ	t	for	ط
h	for	ح	th	for	ث
j	for	ج	w (or u)	for	و
k	for	ك	y (or i)	for	ي
kh	for	خ	z	for	ظ
l	for	ل	'	for	ا
m	for	م	'	for	ع
n	for	ن			

In addition, the following should be noted:

Long vowels are not marked for distinction from short ones. Thus **ناظر** = *nazir*, but also **نظير** = *nazir*.

The *hamza* is used only in the middle of a word.

The *shadda* is rendered by doubling the consonant containing it.

The *ta marbuta* is not shown, except in construct phrases. Thus *madina*, *madinat Nasr*.

The definite article is always shown as “al-”, regardless of the kind of letter following it.

Exceptions to the above are Lebanese and North African proper names which have adopted a French spelling.

In transcribing **Persian**, frequent allowance is made for pronunciation; thus Khomeyni (not Khumayni). Names appearing in both Arabic and Persian texts are transcribed according to the language of the relevant text. Thus Hizballah (Arabic) or Hizbollah (Persian).