

Chapter 4

FORMULATORS OF POLICY ON THE USE OF WATER

4.A. Decisionmaking Structures and Key Decisionmakers

Section 4.A. of chapter 4 will be divided into five subsections: 1) Governmental, 2) Economic, 3) Socio-cultural, 4) Media, and 5) International bodies. It is not limited to water-policy formulators, but covers many of those who have a significant influence on domestic decision-making and on shaping public opinion.

Subsection 4.A.1 will be divided into the agencies and key decision-makers of a) the legislative branch, b) the party, and c) the executive branch. The judicial branch is beyond the scope of this work. The executive branch will, in turn, be divided into i) the presidency, ii) the military, and iii) the ministries.

Subsections 4.A.2. - 4.A.5. give examples of leaders from other sectors: 2. economic (the public sector, mainly heads of banks, and commercial and industrial leaders in the private sector); 3. socio-religious (educators and relevant members of the religious establishment); 4. media (newspaper editors and publishers and prominent personalities in radio and television); and 5. international bodies (their representatives, both those headquartered in Syria and those engaged in projects in Syria).

4.A.1. - Governmental Structures

The government of Syria rests on a Constitution which was promulgated under the auspices of the Baath Party and last revised in 1973 under the present regime. It emphasizes the service of the state to the people, who are represented in a legislature, which elects a President to head an executive to carry out their decisions. It also gives a constitutional role to the Party, which is to provide the ideological framework of government.

Of service to the people, the Constitution says: "Sovereignty belongs to the people, who exercise their powers in the manner described in the present Constitution [of March 13, 1973]" (Art.2(2))⁽⁴⁶⁵⁶⁾. Further it says: "The state is at the service of the people, its institutions striving to protect the

fundamental rights of the citizens, to develop their lives, and to support their popular organizations in order to make it possible for the people's progress to become self-sustaining."(Art.12)

"People's councils are institutions elected in democratic manner through which the citizens exercise their political rights insofar as the administration of the state and the leadership of the society are concerned."(Art.10)

4.A.1.a. - The Legislature

The People's Assembly (*Majlis al-Shaab*)

Three months after his accession to power, Hafiz al-Asad announced the formation of the most supreme people's council, the People's Assembly. "The People's Assembly exercises legislative power in the manner provided by the Constitution."(Art.50) Although initially appointed, later People's Assemblies have been elected⁽⁴²³⁹⁾.

"The People's Asssembly is to exercise the following powers: ...propose, approve, discuss..." (Art.71). "The members of the People's Assembly are entitled to propose bills, to address questions, and interpellate the Cabinet or one of the ministers in accordance with the provisions of the Assembly's internal bylaws."(Art.70)

"At its first session the Assembly elects its President and the members of its executive office." (Art.60) "Its President represents the People's Assembly, signs documents, and speaks on its behalf." (Art.69(1))

The current President of the Assembly is Abd al-Qadir Qaddurah. He has been Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, 1/15/80 - 4/8/85 and is on the Baath Party's Regional Command. He is a Sunni Muslim. He became President of the Assembly when its previous President Mahmud al-Zuubi became Prime Minister, 11/1/87.

The Deputy President of the Assembly is Ali Rida.

"The People's Assembly can form ad hoc committees from among its members to collect information and research the facts in matters pertaining to the exercise of its duties."(Art.73)

One of the important committees of the Assembly is the Utilities Committee⁽⁴⁴⁰³⁾. Another is the Committee on Inter-Arab and International Affairs, chaired by Shakir al-Saidnd including among its members Nazih Duwaydari and Muhsin Bilal.

The Assembly consists of elected members who sit for four years, of whom half are peasants and workers. Its activities are wider in theory than in practice. It nominates presidential candidates, discusses government policy, enacts laws, and approves

the budget. It has on rare occasions, as in the summer of 1987, forced cabinet ministers to resign through a motion of no confidence. Approved parties other than the Baath (see Appendix III) may stand for election. In the election of February 1968, the Baath won 129 seats and others won 66⁽⁴⁷⁰⁶⁾.

4.A.1.b. - The Party - The Arab Renaissance (Baath) Socialist Party

While officially the Syrian state is ruled by the legislative and executive branches of its government (and they are responsible to the People's Assembly), the real political center of the Syrian state is commonly considered to be the Arab Renaissance (Baath) Socialist Party - and, within the Party, the Regional Command and, within the Regional Command, the inner circle of the President of the state, who is also Secretary General of the Party⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Of the Party, the Constitution says: "*The vanguard party in the society and the state is the Baath - the Arab Renaissance Socialist Party.*" (Art.8) The Baath Party was formed officially in January 1953 by the merger of Mishil Aflaq's and Salah al-Din Bitar's Baath Party with Akram Hawrani's Arab Socialist Party to form the Arab Renaissance Socialist Party (ARSP)⁽⁴⁴¹⁹⁽⁴⁴²⁴⁾⁾ - still, more commonly known as the Baath.

Although the thinking of Aflaq, the first Baath ideologue, was idealistic, almost utopian, the Baath when at last it came to power in Syria did so at the hands of a radical regime which shouldered aside the old guard of Aflaq and Bitar and took power in a military coup in March 1963. The untried political theories of the Party founders were stretched to accommodate the contradictions of a time of rapid change and to provide an umbrella for the disparate groups forming the new elite⁽⁴⁷⁰⁶⁾.

Of the two wings of the party which had emerged, one was labelled "progressive" and described as radical and the other was labelled "moderate". The "progressives", who held the reigns from 1966 to 1970, press for closer ties with the Soviet Union and greater socialization of society. The "moderates", who have been in power since 1970, have been more pan-Arab in outlook and have a more cautious and pragmatic approach to social reform⁽⁴⁴¹⁸⁾.

When Hafiz al-Asad staged his 1970 coup and installed the Correction Movement, he acted as head of a coalition of officers, civil servants, and party functionaries united against the neo-Baathists (left-leaning Regionalists, who had ruled Syria since 1966). This coalition had formed gradually, gaining strength after the party congress of 1968, where various complaints against the regime then in power had been aired without response. Al-Asad's associates had various grievances, provoked by everything from military strategy to bureaucratic feuding, but they all agreed that

the "progressive" (or neo-) Baath was representing the interests of only a segment of the population and that its policies were divorcing the government from the mass of society. ⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾

Before the Correction Movement the countryside had not been ardent in support of the Baath, but afterwards there was a gradual accommodation to it on the part of both villagers and former landlords. More Syrians than ever before had direct access to the state apparatus and to powerful leaders outside the formal party organization and the state bureaucracy. At the same time more and more people needed this access ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

By means of land reform and nationalization, the power of the landlords and hautebourgeoisie had been dramatically curtailed but not totally broken. The Party's resultant unpopularity in the 60s - from these internal causes - led to liberalizing measures in the 70s, which resulted in a broadening of support for the Party ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾. The Syrian state *cum* party appeared to be the mediator between the dominant classes. Resting on a newly emergent middle class: the army and the intermediate stratum (petite bourgeoisie and independent peasantry), it tried to formulate policies which would partially satisfy all classes or, at least, minimize active discontent ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾. However the economic crises of the early 80s - this time from external causes (the war in Lebanon and the world economic slump) - has once again lessened the Party's popularity.

The Baath Party is organized in countries other than Syria, and the Party leadership refers collectively to all of the Middle Eastern Arab countries in which it is organized as the Arab Nation. It refers to each country individually as a Region. Therefore there is both a National Organization, which is pan-Arab (described in Appendix II) and a Regional Organization (*al-qiyadah al-qutriyah*), which is Syrian. Each has its own apparatus, albeit the overlap in personnel is great.

The Secretary General of the Baath Party is the President of Syria, Hafiz al-Asad. (See section 4.B.)

The Deputy Secretary General is Abdallah al-Ahmar. (See section 4.B.)

4.A.1.b.i. - The Regional Congresses

The Party holds Regional Congresses, usually once a year. Between Congresses the party congress apparatus is maintained by the Party Central Committee, which was created at the 7th Party Congress of 1980. Originally consisting of 75 members, it was increased at the 8th Congress of 1985 to 90. Although its mandate is to "maintain the Congress's constant control of the Regional Command in the period between Congresses ⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾" and to provide a forum for quick

consultations between the Regional Command and the representatives of the local party bodies⁽⁴⁷¹⁾, it has been described as meeting irregularly and appearing to have no authority⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾.

4.A.1.b.ii. - The Central Committee

Among the people on the Party Central Committee are people like Muhammad Ghabbash, the Minister of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform (see 4.C.); Ahmad Diab, the Minister of Local Administration (see 4.A.1.c.iii); Nasir al-Din Nasr, formerly Minister of the Interior; Elyas al-Lati⁽⁴¹¹⁸⁾; and Nazih Duwaydari, a member of the People's Assembly who is on the Inter-Arab and International Affairs Committee and who headed a People's Assembly delegation to the USSR in September, 1988⁽⁴⁷¹⁴⁾.

4.A.1.b.iii. - The Syrian Regional Command

At the party's regional congresses the Regional Command is elected. It is the executive committee of the Baath Party in Syria. This executive core consists of 21 senior cadres led by the Secretary General, responsible not only for the various divisions of the party, but for supervising the Syrian government itself.

The internal structure of the Party was overhauled in 1972, centralizing decision-making and strengthening the Regional Command at the expense of the party congresses. The party's ideological emphasis was changed to stress the common denominators among the different Baath traditions, thereby sanctioning a kind of pluralism⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

The current Regional Command was elected at the Party Congress of January 1985. The entire list is given as Appendix I of this chapter. Members of the Regional Command include the President (who is also Secretary General of the Party), the Deputy Secretary General of the Party, the Assistant Regional Secretary of the Party, the Party representatives on Economy, on Higher Education, and on Unions and Associations, two governorate branch Party secretaries (Hums and Aleppo), the three Vice-Presidents, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister for Defense, the head of the Presidential Security Council, the president of the People's Assembly, and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

The Secretary General of the Party, President Hafiz al-Asad, and the Deputy Secretary General, Abdallah al-Ahmar, are as well the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Syrian Regional Command. More specifically focused responsibilities for the Syrian Regional Command itself fall to the Assistant Secretary General of the Regional Command and his deputy, who do not function at the overall Party level or at the National Command level.

The Assistant Secretary General of the Regional Command and also the Third Vice-President for Party and Internal Affairs of the Republic is Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah. Dr. Mashariqah was born to a Sunni Muslim family in Aleppo's Mashariqah quarter. He has a law degree and has been Governor of Hamah, Minister of Education, and Director of the Teachers' Training Institute in Aleppo. He was elected to the Regional Command in 1975 and has been director of the Party's Training Bureau. He became Assistant Regional Secretary in January of 1980 and Vice-president for Party and Internal Affairs, March 11, 1984⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾. He is also Deputy Chairman of the National Progressive Front, the body which organizes all of the non-Baath parties for representation in the People's Assembly. (See Appendix III.)

The Assistant Regional Secretary is Sulayman Qaddah⁽⁴⁷⁵¹⁾. He is an Alawi and the Party representative on economy.

The Regional Command is made up of nine Sunnis, four Druse, three Alawis, one Christian, and four unaccounted for. At least seven were born in remote villages or small towns. Eight hold high office in government and are considered to be in the President's inner circle. The Deputy Secretary General of the Baath does not hold an additional position, but is very close to the President. (See section 4.B.)

4.A.1.b.iv. - The Syrian Regional Inspection and Control Committee

This committee was established by the 1980 Party Congress to supervise party discipline⁽⁴³⁰⁷⁾. It consists of five members: Ghassan Abu Tawq, Mary Haddad, Aziz Sulayman, Abdallah Abu al-Risq, and Abd al-Karim Abu Fakhr.

4.A.1.b.v. - The Syrian Baath Political Bureau

This body was appointed by the Extraordinary Regional Congress in 1969. One of its major functions is carefully to police any fraternization between officers and civilian elites which might lay the groundwork for a coup⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

4.A.1.b.vi. - The Syrian Regional Peasant Bureau (Maktab al-Falahin min Hizb al-Baath al-Ishtiraki)

The operations of the Party's Peasant Bureau at the local and governorate levels will be described in section 4.C. of this chapter. Here the functioning of the central offices is described.

At the central level, the Bureau is one of several functional divisions of the Regional Command: directly connected to it are derivatory bureaus at the governorate and district levels. The bureau has responsibility for preparing the report of the Regional Command to the Regional Congress on rural affairs and for laying down a plan of work, in consultation with lower levels, state organs, and popular organizations, for the implementation of

congress policies on rural areas. At the central level, the office is headed by a member of the Regional Command and includes in its membership the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, the President of the Peasant Union, the President of the Cooperative Federation and the heads of the Agriculture and Cooperative Bank, cotton and wheat marketing offices, etc. Thus, formally, it incorporates, coordinates, and controls the work of these various organs, reconciling conflicts between them (e.g., between the needs of the peasants and the technical requirements of ministries) and its congruence with party policy.

Its plan of work encompasses such matters as the expansion and supervision of the peasant union, recruitment of peasant membership to the party, creation and supervision of the agricultural infrastructure, cooperatives, state farms, performance of relevant bureaucracies, and the general agricultural development plan. (At the regional level, it performs analogously, assembling the directors of the various ministerial fields offices, heads of local peasant and cooperative unions, etc., to follow up on the governorate agricultural plan, insure the flow of supply and credit to peasants, enforce the agrarian relations law, and support rural development schemes, especially those directly involving party and peasant bureau cadres.) The Peasant Bureau and its derivatives, therefore, perform as a center for the implementation of party policy through the control of various bureaucratic organizations and the mobilization of peasant participation. At the same time, it seems to serve as a channel by which peasant opinion is made known to those taking decisions impinging on their interests⁽⁴⁷⁰¹⁾.

An Assessment of the Party:

Because the Baath Party, unlike any previous political force in Syria, has been able to spread its unity, democracy, and welfare program, people have new expectations and are making increased demands on it and through it on the state.

At the same time, many of the Party's national leaders have come to have access to citizens outside the formal Party organization, and people have come to feel that it is not the state or the Party which benefits them, but rather that it is the individual powerholder, who is available to them mainly outside the Party organization.

So, while the national leaders proclaim that the Baath Party is the spearhead in building the Syrian welfare state, the citizens' faith in individuals undermines their faith in the Party as such and ultimately in the state.

In addition, equality between citizens is a basic ingredient of the Party's goals, yet this dependence of citizens on individual Party members in high office sets up relationships of inequality and

is a contradiction between the verbal ideology of the powerholders and their actual performance as functionaries of the state. This contradiction between rhetorics and actions fosters a lack of commitment to the Baath ideals and thus to building loyalty to the Party and through it to the state⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

4.A.1.c. The Executive Branch

The Executive Branch consists of i) the Presidency, ii) the Military, and iii) the Ministries, in other words, the regime and the pillars on which its authority rests. The Party is also one of these pillars, but, since it serves the broader function in society of regime validation, it has been discussed above.

4.A.1.c.i The Presidency

"It is the People's Assembly which nominates the candidate for the post of President of the Republic on the proposal of the Regional Command of the Baath Party. The nomination is then submitted to a referendum of the citizens." (Art.84(1))

The state establishment is dominated by a powerful presidency resting on the three institutional pillars of the Party, the military, and the ministries.

The President and his Entourage (*al-Jamaah*="The Group")

The President, though clearly in a dominant position, has around him a coterie of old friends, kinsmen, army buddies, party colleagues, etc., whom he consults in the formulation of policy. This group, with formal positions in the party, the military, and the ministries, constitutes the top political leadership and is described in detail in section 4.B.

The Vice-Presidencies

"The President of the Republic appoints one or more Vice Presidents and delegates certain functions to them. He appoints the President of the Council of Ministers and the Vice-Presidents of the Council, the ministers, and their deputies. He accepts their resignation and relieves them of their duties." (Art.95) "The First Vice-President of the Republic or the Vice-President whom the former will designate is to exercise the functions of the President of the Republic when it is impossible for the the latter to exercis them." (Art.88)

When President al-Asad had a heart attack on November of 1983, his brother, Rifaat al-Asad, head of the Defense Brigades, rushed to secure the succession for himself. This was vehemently opposed by other members of the Jamaah. Upon his recovery, the President moved to balance power among his potential political successors by creating a triumvirate of vice-presidents:

The first vice-president for governmental and external affairs, Abd al-Halim Khaddam (see section 4.B), is Hafiz al-Asad's old friend and was the point of focus for the generals opposing Rifaat⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

The second vice-president was Rifaat al-Asad (see section 4.B.), named with no other rank or title save that of 'Doctor'⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. On March 11, 1984, the President gave him the titular charge of national security⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

The third vice-president for party and internal affairs, Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, is Hafiz al-Asad's Deputy on the Regional Command (see section 4.A.1.b)⁽⁴⁷⁸¹⁾.

Rifaat himself was sent abroad, whence he returns periodically, but not for long, although he is not without perks or contacts in high places; and his virtually independent military security forces were reined in and restructured. The Minister of Defense was also named Deputy Prime Minister. Since he is also Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army (under the President as Commander-in-Chief), he, not Rifaat, would seem to hold the actual major military responsibilities, making it look as if Rifaat's Vice-presidency is largely honorific. At the same time, the political structures for internal control have been put on an equal footing with the military security forces by institutionalizing them within the Ministry of the Interior under the direction of an old Party member, very close to the President (see section 4.A.1.c.iii).

On November 29, 1988, a Kuwayti newspaper said that well-informed sources told them that President al-Asad is about to cancel the three posts of vice-president and retain only one.

4.A.1.c.ii. - The Military

"The armed forces and other defense organizations are responsible for the security of the homeland's territory and the protection of the goals of the Revolution as regards unity, liberty, and socialism." (Art.11)

The Baath Party attained a large measure of its political influence in the fifties by virtue of its connections with the officer corps. Its rise to power in March 1963 was also due to the eminence of its military supporters. It was natural that the

officers who had played a dominant role in the party's rise to power, and in Syrian politics generally, would hesitate to withdraw from government completely.

Aside from motives of self-interest, the officers could advance several good reasons why the army should remain part of the decision-making elite. First, Syria had had a tradition of political instability under civilian governments. Second, the Baath Party itself suffered from numerous schisms of a personal and ideological nature. Third - and certainly one still pertinent for the present incumbent, though the relevance of the first two may by now have diminished, al-Asad perceives Israel as a highly aggressive and supremely armed neighbor and as meddling in the internal affairs of Arab countries. Also he has given refuge to upwards of 200,000 Palestinians, most of whom are integrated into Syria's social and economic life, but many of whom would more than welcome a clash with Israel, which he is not ready to provoke. His military and security forces are therefore greater than expected foreign and domestic policy goals might require.

A political department was established within the army in early 1970, and political officers have received indoctrination⁽⁴⁴²⁴⁾.

The civilian and military components of Syria's political dynamics are inseparable. The army's leadership is already Baathist oriented in various degrees, and a considerable effort has been made to indoctrinate non-commissioned officers and enlisted men with Baathist thinking.

These proclivities among Syria's politicians had always tended to infect the armed forces and have threatened their cohesion⁽⁴³⁸⁴⁾.

The present regime has actually exacerbated and exploited divisions within the military, between combat and security units and between Baathist and non-Baathist officers. Fraternization between officers and civilian elites, which might lay the groundwork for a coup, are carefully policed by the Baath's Political Bureau. Syria's three military intelligence units monitor the behavior of the officer corps⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

Despite this intimacy of regime and military, real political influence is confined to a select group of officers who have proven their loyalty to the regime, and the Asad government is not actually a military regime. Officers are included in al-Asad's *jamaah* because of their association with him, not because of their military status⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. Real political influence is confined to a select group of officers who have proven their loyalty to the regime.

The Military includes those forces which guard Syria's borders from external enemies and those which guard the Party and the regime from internal enemies. In this chapter, it is only the heads of the

internal security forces which are relevant; they are described in section 4.B. However, for a fuller listing of heads of military and security forces, see Appendix IV.

The Commander in Chief of the Army and Armed Forces

Article 103 of the Constitution states that "*The President of the Republic is the supreme commander of the army and the armed forces. He is to issue the decisions and orders necessary for the exercise of this power. He can, however, delegate some of these functions.*"

General Hafiz al-Asad, the Secretary General of the Baath Party and President of the Republic, is Commander in Chief of the Army and Armed Forces (see section 4.B.).

The Deputy Commander in Chief of the Army and Armed Forces

Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas, member of the Baath Party Regional Command, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense, is Deputy Commander in Chief of the Army and Armed Forces (see section 4.B.).

The Chief of Staff of the Army and Armed Forces

Lieutenant General Hikmat al-Shihabi, member of the Baath Party Regional Command, is the Chief of Staff of the Army and Armed Forces (see section 4.B.).

First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army and Armed Forces

Lieutenant General Ali Aslan is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army and Armed Forces (see section 4.B.).

Second Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army and Armed Forces

Major General Hasan Turkumani is the Deputy Chief of the Army and Armed Forces. He is a Kurd.

The Martial Law Governor

On March 8, 1963, a state of emergency requiring the imposition of Martial Law was declared and has remained unlifted ever since because of the perception of the aggressiveness of Israel, a country currently in occupation of the governorate of Quaytrah, the continuing involvement in the Civil War in Lebanon, and the large numbers of Palestinian refugees now living in Syria. Areas mainly affected by this situation include many of the major water installations, and the problems will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Article 3 of the State of Emergency Law stipulates that "On proclamation of a state of emergency, the President of the Republic shall name a Martial Law Governor and all powers of internal and external security shall be placed at his disposal" and that "The Martial Law governor shall appoint by decree one or two deputies to work with him."

The Martial Law Governor is the Prime Minister, Mahmud Zuubi.

The Deputy Martial Law Governors

The Prime Minister delegates martial law functions to the Minister of the Interior, who fulfills the role of Deputy Martial Law Governor⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾.

Muhammad Harbah is Minister of the Interior and Deputy Martial Law Governor.

Ahmad Said Salih is Deputy Minister of the Interior with responsibilities for internal security.

For the Internal Security Services reporting to the Ministry of the Interior, see below 4.A.1.c.iii

The Intelligence Services (Al-Mukhabarat al-Ammah)

The intelligence services are coordinated in the Presidential Intelligence Committee, but are attached to the external and internal security services.

Major General Ghazi Kanaan is the senior chief of intelligence⁽⁴⁶⁵⁸⁾. He reports directly to the President. His primary responsibility in the past has been for intelligence relating to Lebanon (see section 4.B.).

Military Intelligence (Al-Mukhabarah al-Askariyah)

Brigadier General Ali Dubah is head of Military Intelligence. He is responsible to the Ministry of Defense⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾. (See section 4.B.) After Ali Haydar had to retire because of a heart attack, Ali Dubah's nephew was named to replace him as head of the Special Units (*al-Wahdat al-Khassah*).

4.A.1.c.iii. - The Council of Ministers

"The President of the Republic convenes the Council of Ministers to meet under his chairmanship. He also has the right to request reports from the ministers." (Art.97)

Alongside the party and the military/security, the ministerial bureaucracy is one of the three pillars on which the authority of the regime rests, albeit the weakest of the three. An early objective of the Asad regime was to arrest the growing breach between the party and the civil service. Bureaucrats were given greater power to implement policy and even attained a certain respect as sources of advice in technical matters. But their control over the direction and objectives of policy remained extremely limited: they were concerned with means, not ends⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is Mahmud Zuubi. He is a Sunni from the Hawran and an agricultural specialist. Early in his career, he worked as an administrator in the agriculture ministry and was in the 1970s responsible for the Lower Euphrates Irrigation Project⁽⁴⁴⁸⁶⁾. From 2/24/85 to 11/1/87, when he became Prime Minister, he was the President of the People's Assembly. He is a member of the Baath Party Regional Command.

The Prime Minister is also the Martial Law Governor; he delegates martial law functions to his deputy, the Minister of the Interior⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾.

Under the Prime Minister serve three Deputy Prime Ministers: for Defense, Mustafa Talas (see section 4.B.), 12-14-84 -; for Social Services, Mahmud Qaddur (who from 12/3/80 - 4/8/85 was Minister of Industry), 4/8/85 -; for Economic Affairs, Salim Yassin (who from 1/5/80 - 12/3/80 was Minister of Planning and from 12/3/80 - 4/8/85 Minister of Economy and External Trade), 4/8/85 -.

The Supreme Planning Council

The Supreme Planning Council is the highest planning authority in the country; it gives final approval to proposed project studies after they have passed through the State Planning Commission⁽⁴⁷⁰⁰⁾.

The Minister of State for Planning is Sabah Baqjaji. He has held this position since 4-8-85, when he replaced Kamal Sharaf, who went to Higher Education.

The Assistant Minister is Khalil Mar'i⁽⁴⁷⁵⁷⁾.

The State Planning Commission coordinates all sector programs of the different agencies and designs the Five-Year Plans and exercises functional authority over individual small planning units. It is staffed by specialists in evaluation of projects and in formulating the short-and long-range economic and social plans of the country. In addition, it provides the planning units of each

industry with detailed instructions and recommendations for the preparation of the quantitative and financial aspects of project studies ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁰⁾.

All of the planning organizations focus their attention on the expanding public sector, but most of the decisions and plans formulated by these organizations affect the private sector as well. The private sector is composed mainly of retail merchants and entrepreneurs involved with small industries. Any entrepreneur may seek statistical, technical, and other information from the Ministry of Industry when formulating plans for the establishment of a new industry ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁰⁾.

Planning Units serve the function of preparing the actual detailed studies of proposed projects, as well as the follow-up on implementation of these projects. They are attached to and under the direct authority of their respective administrative, economic, or cooperative organization ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁰⁾.

Relevant Ministries

The ministries most relevant to irrigation are the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Defense. They will be discussed in detail in Section 4.C.)

Other ministries with responsibilities related to water are Interior, Health, Local Administration, Labor and Social Affairs, Supply and Internal Trade, Economy and External Trade, Electricity, Oil and Mineral Resources, Foreign Affairs, Higher Education, and Finance.

Interior

The Minister of the Interior is also Deputy Martial Law Governor ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾.

The Minister is Muhammad Harbah, the son of a poor peasant ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾, who has been Minister since November 1987, when he replaced Muhammad Ghabbash, who became Minister of Agriculture. He was governor of Hamah muhafazah in the early 80s, and, from 4-8-85 to November 1987, Minister of Local Administration.

The Deputy Minister is Ahmad Said Salih, who until 1987 was head of Political Security ⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾. He is an Alawi and a member of al-Matawirah (see section 4.B.). From his background it can be inferred that he has a prime responsibility for Security and Intelligence Services.

Security and Intelligence Services The extent to which security force commanders are answerable to MI or to the Ministry of Defense or to the Presidential Security Council is not clear.

Political Security (al-Awn al-Siyasi) It monitors political activity in the country and acts upon information gathered⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾.

The head of Political Security is Major General Adnan Badr Abd al-Hasan, who replaced Ahmad Said Salih in 1987, when the latter became Deputy Minister⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾. He is the brother of a close aide of Ali Dubah⁽⁴⁴⁸⁶⁾ and has a reputation for being honest. In the Spring of 1987, he launched an anti-corruption campaign, endorsed by the President, which implicated a number of very highly placed people.

General Intelligence (al-Mukhabarah al-Ammah) Its functions include monitoring and collecting intelligence⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾. A Christian clique from villages where the regime is exceptionally popular has enjoyed systematic promotion within the General Intelligence Service⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. It is also known as State Security (Amn al-Dawlah)⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾.

The head of General Intelligence since 1984 has been Fuad Absi, who replaced Nazih Zurayr⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾.

Internal Security (al-Amn al-Dakhili)

The head of Internal Security is Muhammad Nassif.

Health

The Minister is Iyad Shatti. Dr. Shatti has been Minister since late 1987, when he replaced Ghasub al-Rifai, who had been Minister since 1980.

The Department of Preventive Medicine controls water quality by control surveys and is equipped with the necessary laboratories.

There are Directorates of Health in each of the fourteen governorates. They are responsible for conducting the water control survey. [ESCWA]

Local Administration

The Minister is Ahmad Diab, who has been Minister since late 1987, replacing Muhammad Harbah, who became Minister of the Interior. From 1979 to 1987 he had been director of the National Security Office (*Maktab al-Amn al-Qawmi*), of which the main purpose is not known, but which appeared to be responsible to the Presidential Security Council. In 1984 he was described as one of the rising young political figures Rifaat al-Asad grouped around him. Until January 1985 he was a member of the Baath Party's

Regional Command, in its National Security Office, and is - or was at one time - a member of the Party's Central Committee. He is a close ally of Rifaat al-Asad. Most references say he is an Alawi, but Roberts ⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾ says he is a Sunni.

Labor and Social Affairs

Labor and Social Affairs sets wages for agricultural workers and compiles Statistical Bulletin.

The Minister is Haydar Bawzu, who has held the post since late 1987, when he replaced Antwan Jubran, who became Minister of Industry. He is new to cabinet lists, the the family name often appeared there in the 50s and 60s, suggesting that he may be a member of a family of the old elite.

Rural Development Program gives government assistance to small-scale enterprises in rural areas ⁽⁴⁶²⁵⁾.

Rural Development Centers

Supply and Internal Trade

"...first, its duty is to secure ample supplies of commodities in accordance with the country's available economic capabilities; second, it is the market whereby both buyers and sellers are aware of the regulated fixed price to be observed; and, third, [it] implements tight control on the supply market with a view to stabilizing prices in the interest of the consumer ⁽⁴²⁴²⁾." It intervenes through cooperation with popular and party organizations to put a stop to all excesses.

The Minister is Hasan Saqqah, who has been Minister since the Summer of 1987, when he replaced Riyad Hajj Khalil, who was forced to resign "because of incompetence leading to negative results".

The Central Pricing Committee is made up of a representative of the Ministry and representatives of the Baath Peasant Bureau, the General Federation of Peasants, and the producing company ⁽⁴³⁶⁵⁾.

The Supply Control Agency provides adequate personnel and tools.

The General Consumer Corporation sells and distributes products.

Economy and External Trade

The Minister is Muhammad Imadi, who replaced Salim Yassin (who became Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs) as Minister in 4/8/85⁽⁴⁴⁸⁶⁾. He had served in this capacity before in the 70s. After completing graduate level studies at NYU in the mid-50s, he became an economics professor at Damascus University. Before his first appointment to MEET, he was Minister of Planning and, between appointments, was head of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, based in Kuwait. Committed to the introduction of more market forces into the economy, he is well-liked, respected, and able. He does not belong to the Baath Party and has been described as a somewhat lonely figure, battling the bureaucracy and party ideology.

Director of International Relations - Mustafa Bitar⁽⁴⁷⁵³⁾

Electricity

The Minister is Kamil al-Babah, who has been Minister since at least 1983, when he replaced Ahmad Umar Yusuf.

Oil & Mineral Resources

The Minister is Mtanyus Habib, who has been Minister since late 1987, when he replaced Ghazi al-Durubi, who was removed partly because of his involvement in a "revolutionary cell" in the air force which was discovered on the verge of a coup attempt. Born in 1940, Habib was trained as an engineer in the USSR. This is a key post with responsibility for the growing oil and gas sector as well as phosphates and diamond mining.

Foreign Affairs

The Minister is Faruq al-Sharaa, who has been Minister since 1984, when he replaced Abd al-Halim Khaddam, who became Vice-President. From 1980-1984, he was Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, a post now held by Nasir Qaddur⁽⁴⁷⁴⁸⁾.

The Assistant Foreign Minister is Diyaallah al-Fattal⁽⁴⁷⁴⁷⁾

Higher Education

The Minister is Kamal Sharaf, who has been Minister since 1/8/85, when he replaced Ziyad al-Shuwayqi. A graduate of the National Institute of Economics in Moscow, he was Minister of State for Planning from 12/3/80 - 4/8/85.

Finance

The Minister is Khalid Muhayni, who has been Minister since at least 1986, when he replaced Qahtan al-Suyuti.

Other individuals and forces help to shape public opinion. A few examples follow.

4.A.2. Economic

The Arab socialist orientation of Syria is retained in the current constitution. The state maintains a great role in the economic sector; nevertheless in response to traditional Syrian reliance on the family and the individual, a non-socialist tradition has been maintained by securing many of the economic rights of the individual, such as inheritance rights and the right to hold patents and copyrights⁽⁴⁴¹⁸⁾.

Overtures to the business community were redoubled after the October 1973 war. Israeli air strikes had gutted Syria's economic infrastructure, destroying \$4.5 billion in capital goods. To expedite reconstruction, the regime declared a relaxation (*infiraj*) of economic controls and a general liberalization of trade. Private entrepreneurs were encouraged to help rebuild the economy by establishing small firms, often acting as subcontractors (especially in construction) or agents (in negotiating foreign tenders or public requisitions) of the government⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

4.A.2.a. The Public Sector

Banks

Central Bank of Syria

Director - Muhammad Rifaat Aqad or Akkad - Alternate Governor of IMF

Agricultural Cooperative Bank

Such private financing of water development as still occurs is mainly in the agricultural sector. The most important provider of credit to the agricultural sector is the Agricultural Cooperative Bank, founded in 1884 and the oldest lending institution in Syria⁴³⁹²). It operates some 59 branches throughout the country, with representation in every province and many of the districts and subdistricts. In 1986, it provided some SL 1,700 to its clients in four categories of loans: short-term cash (less than one year term); short-term in-kind (agricultural inputs at term less than one year); medium term (one to five years, usually for machinery

or livestock); and long-term (five to ten years for land improvement, irrigation, orchard development, selected building construction). It distributes fertilizers and pesticides⁽⁴⁴⁰⁷⁾.

4.A.2.b. The Private Sector

Industry

Commerce

Badr al-Din Shallah is chairman of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce. He is a Damascene patriarch in his eighties and the head of a large clan. Al-Asad seems to recognize the importance of the traditions and leading families of old Damascus. When President Jimmy Carter visited Syria, one of the few places he was taken to was the Shallah farm in the Ghutah⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Umran Adham is a major Syrian entrepreneur. He has been conducting his commercial empire from offices in Paris, from where he laid plans to build a hotel and recreation complex in Damascus. He has also played an important intermediary role between Syria and France. He lives in France - but on 7/15/88 was reported to have been expelled from there in a spat with the then French Prime Minister over hostage dealings; is married to a French woman; and has four children⁽⁴⁵⁴¹⁾.

4.A.3. Socio-religious

4.A.3.a. University Level Education

Aleppo Agricultural College

Damascus Agricultural College

Ladhaqiyah Agricultural College

4.A.3.b. Novelists

Dr. Abd al-Salam al-Ujayli, country physician, parliamentarian, native son of Raqqah, novelist, and thorn in the flesh of officialdom has chronicled his governorate's upheavels. His novel, *The Submerged (Al-Mughmarun)*, published in 1977, is about the fate of refugees, driven from their homes by the waters of Lake Asad and promised resettlement nearby, who found themselves transferred to the far northeast. Wishing to ease rural misery, the government had created another injustice. A second novel, *King River (Al-Nahr Sultan)*, tells the story of a father who loses his only son to the capricious Euphrates and feels avenged when the tyrant is tamed by diversion to a power station. But in Ujayli's story the swarm of officials which descends in the wake of the project brings his hero new trials.

4.A.3.c. Religious

Although SAR is a secular state, the Constitution states that "The President of the Republic is to be a Muslim." (Art.391)) and that "Islamic jurisprudence is the principal source of legislation." (Art.3(2)) The primary interpreter of Islamic law in Syria is the Grand Mufti Ahmad Kuftaru.

Bassam Tibi is a Syrian who teaches international politics at the University of Goettingen, West Germany, and is well-known for his book, *The Crisis of Modern Islam*, supporting the secularization of the faith.

4.A.4 Media

4.A.4.a. The Press

Under the Baath, the structure of the press was modified according to socialist patterns. Most publications are published by approved organizations, such as political, religious, ethnic or professional associations, trade unions, and in many cases government ministries. The two major dailies are *al-Baath*, the organ of the Party, and *al-Thawrah*, the semi-official mouthpiece of the Government. They are known to mount campaigns against specific shortcomings of the regime: failure to carry out Party principles, negligence, incompetence, corruption, etc. Even the President has been singled out for criticism; for instance, for spending too much time on foreign policy to pay adequate attention to domestic matters (4743).

The Party organ, *al-Baath*, is a daily newspaper, edited by Fadil Ansari, an Alawi, and co-edited by John Alexan. John Alexan was born in 1935 in al-Hasakah. He is active as an author of short stories, plays, and literary criticism, as well as being a journalist. He has published three collections of short stories and a collection of plays, intitled *Theater of Battle (Masrah al-Marakah)*. He has also published a history of the Arab cinema (4739).

Al-Thawrah (Revolution) is published by the Peasants' Union. It was originally a technical journal, intitled *Agricultural Magazine*, published by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Peasants' Union turned it into a political journal and changed its title (0060).

Tishrin (October)

Fursan (Knights) is the name of Rifaat al-Asad's European-based press operation, with principle offices in London and Paris, and of its journal. Rifaat maintains contact with segments of the Palestine community of whom President Hafiz al-Asad disapproves and with whom he has no direct links. In late 1986, *Fursan* began to follow approaches previously considered taboo in regard to three issues: Palestine, the Lebanese crisis, and relaxation of controls, hoping to please Arafat and others within Arab circles who disapprove of Syria's policy, but whose financial aid to Syria as a confrontation state is welcome⁽⁴¹⁵²⁾.

The manager of Fustan's press offices is Khalil Ahmad. Rifaat's son Farras al-Asad is the manager of the main office in London.

4.A.4.b. Television, radio, and film

One of Syria's most influential filmmakers is Durayd Lahham. In 1986, the most popular film in Damascus was one of his. It dealt with the hottest political issue in Syria at the time: corruption. There was nothing in the film that identified its locale specifically as Syria, but its critique was clearly directed at Damascus. The Syrian regime tolerates the savage political criticism of Lahham's films and plays so long as he directs his barbs toward "the Arab condition", rather than specifically against Syria. Lahham employs a pan-Arab cast as one of hte ways of coping with this requirement⁽³⁸⁰⁰⁾.

Tawfiq Hallaq is one of the most popular figures on Syrian television. He is an investigative journalist who specializes in revealing corruption. However, the abuses he has exposed never threaten to implicate major regime figures⁽³⁸⁰⁰⁾.

4.A.5 International bodies

The comparative openness of the Syrian political system is further demonstrated by the involvement of foreign companies and governments in the agricultural sector. The Syrians have adopted a strategy of employing foreigners both to diagnose their agricultural ills and to correct them through the provision not only of equipment and technology, but also through the instruction of Syrian agronomists, technicians, and farmers⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾.

ACSAD

On the invitation of the Syrian Government, the Arab League's primary research into dry land farming - the Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) - was established in

Damascus in 1971. Under its sponsorship, the joint exploration of the Hamad Basin, shared by Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, began on 11-3-74⁽¹⁶⁰⁹⁾.

In the Spring of 1988, ACSAD signed a scientific cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union's Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Among other things, the objective of the agreement is to improve available species and create new crop species appropriate to the local environment, especially arid and saline land. In addition, the agreement calls for carrying out joint practical studies and research on soil moisture conservation⁽⁴⁷⁹⁵⁾.

At present, the General Director of ACSAD is Dr. Muhammad al-Khash⁽⁴⁷⁹⁵⁾.

ICARDA

The International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) was originally a Ford Foundation project on dry land agriculture centered in Aleppo. It was established prior to the decision to build the Tabqah dam, which, partly as a result of urgings of the Syrian government, was vastly upgraded.

USAID

In 1978 Syria virtually threw the entirety of its agricultural sector open to scrutiny by the United States Agency for International Development, which with a team of 37 American agronomists scoured the countryside in an effort to pinpoint those bottlenecks impeding the rapid growth of the agricultural sector⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾. The USAID report which grew out of this survey was in turn used by the Syrian State Planning Organization in the fall of 1979 when preparing the 1980-85 Five Year Plan.

UNDP

In 1980 the UNDP project for range management and forage crop production greatly expanded its activities and secured a loan from the World Bank to finance further research and extension activities in the Hamah region.

Other UN Agencies

UNESCO, FAO, ESCWA (the Economic and Social Council for Western Asia) also operate - or have operated - in Syria.

4.B. ROLE OF THE TOP POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The President and his entourage are known in Syria as "the Group" (*al-Jamaah*). The *Jamaah* represents Syria's top political leadership. Although the President is clearly dominant, the other members of the *Jamaah* form a sounding-board in the decision-making process. They are not mere staff readily discarded or ignored⁽⁴²⁶¹⁾.

Such social units are an integral part of the Syrian social fabric. As well as belonging to the traditional kinship group (*ashirah*), virtually all educated male urban Syrians belong to a circle (*jamaah* or, colloquially, *shillah*). They are multi-purpose non-hierarchical groups which function outside, in opposition to, or as a complement to the more traditional relations of kinship. A group of friends at university, in the army, or from political organizations form a circle and socialize more or less intensively within it. Depending on its membership, a circle can be extremely important, socially, professionally, financially, and politically, sometimes more so than one's *ashirah*. Unlike the family, however, it is based on choice, not ascription. A circle consisting of people with extensive links over and across Syrian bureaucracies can thus provide wide access for most of its members⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

The Group surrounding President Hafiz al-Asad fits this description, but it is both *shillah* and *ashirah*. It is made up of men whose authority derives from their old friendship and proven loyalty to him personally⁽³⁸⁰⁰⁾. They are fellow-family members, fellow-military school mates, and/or fellow-early party members. That many of them are Alawis does not mean that the regime is sectarian, but that his family happens to be Alawi. In fact it is said that what most annoys the President is talk about the sectarian quality of his regime⁽⁴⁰⁷⁵⁾.

Nor does the fact that some of them are military mean that the regime is military. In fact, the backgrounds of the Party Regional Command as well as that of "The Group" show ever-increasing reliance on civilians. The critical post of head of the Presidential Security Council, until 1987 held by a Major General, has since then been held by a civilian, and security functions seem to be ever more tied into the Ministry of the Interior, rather than being left to specialized agencies headed by military personnel.

The *Jamaah* operates as an essentially informal organization. It is a network, nestled atop a pyramid of similar networks which extend deep into Syrian society⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. The high offices which many members of the *Jamaah* occupy do not always reflect their full influence. Association with the President confers prestige and

power which some translate into wealth and malignant form of patronage, beneficial to themselves, but in the long run destructive to the Party and to the regime. (See section 4.E.)

Here follow brief biographies of members of the Jamaah.

Hafiz al-Asad - The President - Secretary General of the Baath Party - Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Armed Forces General (*fariq*); Alawi; al-Matawirah

Family and Educational Background:

Hafiz al-Asad was born in 1930 to a poor family of the Alawi Shii clan of Numaylatiyah of the Matawirah tribe in the town of al-Qardahah. He attended primary school in Qardahah, secondary school in Ladhaqiyah, the Military Academy in Hums, and the Air Academy, from which he graduated in 1952.

As Party member and Party leader

Al-Asad became a member of the Baath Party at the age of 17, well before he was committed to a military career, and ever since has ideologically and emotionally accorded considerable respect and prestige to it. In 1958, when the Party was officially dissolved as part of the agreement to unify with Egypt, he was one of a group of military officers who founded a Secret Committee to keep the Party alive underground. In Their efforts were not enough to bring the Baath to power when the union with Egypt was dissolved in 1961, but two years later the oldtime Baathists assumed the reins of government. In 1966 occurred a second coup, partly over ideology with the Party "progressives" ousting the Party "moderates" and partly over personalities, with the new blood, mostly represented by the newly politically conscious religious minorities, ousting the oldtimers, largely representing Sunnis and Christians.

In November 1970, at the head of a group which thought the New Baath Party was becoming too radical and too prone to act at the expense of Arab unity, al-Asad eased out his predecessor, ushered in the Corrective Movement, and became head of the government. Since then he has dominated the Baath regime and brought a high degree of political stability to Syria. Consequently the two institutions of the Presidency and the Party in Syria have been dependent on each other for ideological credibility and political survival - an interdependence rare among Arab political systems where institutions were generally completely dependent upon, and subservient to, the power and authority of the Chief Executive⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾. He has ruled with the pragmatism of the moderate wing of the Party⁽⁴⁴¹⁸⁾. Al-Asad is loyal to a concept of collective national interest and has often put his personal power at risk to press for his vision of Syria's future which is still Baathist in inspiration. It is

characterized by hostility to sectarianism, feudalism, and imperialism and by efforts to link the building of Syria's national economy to the pursuit of comprehensive Arab unity⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

As Military leader:

After the lycee, Hafiz went to the Hums Military Academy. In those days in Syria, military schools were only access promising boys from poor families had to education. Hafiz graduated from the Hums Military Academy and then from the Air Academy in 1952. When Syria and Egypt joined to form the United Arab Republic in 1958, he commanded a night fighter squadron in Cairo and was a member of the small Military Committee there which formed a nucleus of the Military Command Council which would usher the first Baath regime into power in Syria in 1963. In 1964, he joined the staff of the Air Force. Hafiz was part of the New Baath regime which took the reigns of government in 1966, and, in 1968, he became a general and the Minister of Defense and Commander of the Air Force. In 1970, Hafiz staged his own coup and assumed the reins of government⁽⁴⁷⁰⁶⁾, handing over the Ministry of Defense (in March of 1972, a year after he was elected President by a plebiscite) to his old friend and Chief of Staff, Mustafa Talas. He remains Commander-in-Chief.

As Governmental leader:

In October 1970, General al-Asad, then Minister of Defense and Commander of the Air Force, took over the reins of government in a bloodless coup (termed by him "The Corrective Movement") and became prime minister. A national plebiscite in March 1971 overwhelmingly elected him President. Al-Asad has been a very popular President in Syria and in most of the Arab world. He is not a great orator; his style is very low-key and determined. The Syrian public particularly liked the personal dignity and pride that their President displayed in his dealing with world leaders. This popularity helped to lift him to a position above the rest of the Party's hierarchy and set him above the Party's Regional Command⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾.

The President's power and authority was also legally endorsed by the revised Syrian Constitution of 1973. This provided for a very strong Executive with sweeping powers to appoint ministers and members of the judiciary. While the directly elected People's Assembly served as the national legislature, the President was given important legislative functions between sessions of the People's Assembly and "in cases of absolute need". The President could also "submit important matters concerning higher national interests" to a popular referendum, thus circumventing the People's Assembly and the Party⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾.

In his personal conduct, the President lives simply, is married to one wife, Anisah Makhluf, who is said to reinforce some of his political views, and has five children. Although he is a workaholic to the extreme, he has had a lifelong interest in literature and he known for his elegant - though dispassionate - use of the Arabic language. There is no indication that he has ever used his office for personal gain.

Anisah Makhluf al-Asad - First Lady of Syria

Anisah Makhluf al-Asad was born in Bustan al-Bashah and educated in the French-run Convent of the Sacred Heart in Banyas. She was from a family of notables, more prosperous than Hafiz's and noted for their generosity. She and he had known one another since childhood, and theirs was not an arranged marriage. Anisah was a school teacher at the time of her marriage, has a mind of her own, and has been Hafiz's most trusted confidante. She is a quiet woman who leads a life of great discretion⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Their Children:

Basil al-Asad - Head of the Republican Guard

Born on 3/23/62, he studied civil engineering at Damascus University. He is a serious determined person, interested in computers, and a sportsman, good at riding, sailing, shooting, and parachuting⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Also trained as an Air Force pilot, he is the commander of the Republican Guard, an umbrella organization which includes units of the Defense Brigades, the Presidential Guard, and the Special Forces. He is said to have been close to Muhammad al-Khawli. Many think the President is grooming him as his successor.

During 1987 he assumed a higher profile, apparently with his father's blessing⁽⁴⁸²³⁾.

Al-Asad's other children are not prominent in public life. His first child and only daughter, Bushrah ("Glad Tidings") - her father's favorite - was born on October 1960 in Egypt. She is a qualified pharmacist, educated, as were all of her brothers, at Damascus University. Bashar, born 9/11/65, studied medicine; Majd, born 12/18/66, studied business; and Mahir, born 12/8/67, studied electrical engineering⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

The Inner Circle of the Jamaah - al-Asad's Most Trusted Associates On Security and Intelligence Matters

Four men have been the covert props of the regime⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾:

Ali Dubah - Commander of Military Intelligence (al-Mukhabarah
al-Askariyah)

Brigadier General; Alawi; al-Matawirah

A tall, fair man from the village of Qurfays, Ali Dubah shares some of Hafiz al-Asad's traits: his sardonic humor, his unsocial tastes, his love of literature and his mix of ruthlessness and sentiment. When he was in his twenties his first-born son, to whom he was deeply attached, fell ill after developing an allergy. Rushed down the mountain to a doctor, the child was wrongly diagnosed as suffering from typhoid fever. He was given an injection and died. Crazy with grief Dubah summoned his friends to gather threateningly round the doctor's clinic. "What you do today", his brother cautioned him, 'will determine the sort of man you will be for the rest of your life.' Dubah called off his men. Although he later fathered five other children, he was said never to show as much overt affection again⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Since 1972, he has been chief of Military Intelligence, reportedly the largest and most powerful of the security forces⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾, collecting and acting upon intelligence about or affecting the armed forces and responsible to the Ministry of Defense⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾. In 1975 he was elected to the National Command's Central Committee. He has allied with Hikmat al-Shihabi and been in opposition to Rifaat al-Asad. In 1986 he was described as second to Hafiz al-Asad in the power hierarchy and as his possible successor. The new head of Special Units is his nephew⁽⁴⁶⁵⁸⁾, and the head of the Political Security Department in the Ministry of the Interior is the brother of a close aide⁽⁴⁴⁸⁶⁾.

Muhammad al-Khawli

Major General; Alawi; al-Matawirah

Al-Khawli had served in the Air Force with Hafiz al-Asad and, in 1970, he was assigned the task of recruiting loyal men to command all the military intelligence services. This he accomplished by recruiting fellow members of the Alawi al-Matawirah tribe. In 1987, he was stripped of his formal positions as head of the Presidential Intelligence Committee, which he had headed since the early 80s, and as head of Air Force Intelligence(10-31-87), in the wake of the British blaming him for the Hindawi affair and demanding his removal as the price of continued diplomatic relations⁽⁴⁶⁹⁴⁾. More probably the change in his position came about less because of the British position and more because al-Asad saw the Hindawi family as double agents for Israel and was furious at him for laying himself open to Israeli penetration⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. However, he still has considerable influence as one of President al-Asad's advisers and emissaries and as a prominent figure in the Alawi community; he was closely involved in Damascus's recent efforts to assist in the election of a new Lebanese president⁽⁴⁶⁹⁴⁾.

Fuad Absi - Head of Civilian Intelligence

The head of General Intelligence since 1984 has been Fuad Absi, who replaced Nazih Zurayr⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾.

General Intelligence (al-Mukhabarah al-Ammah) Its functions include monitoring and collecting intelligence⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾. A Christian clique from villages where the regime is exceptionally popular has enjoyed systematic promotion within the General Intelligence Service⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. It is also known as State Security (Amn al-Dawlah)⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾.

Muhammad Nasif - Absi's Deputy in Charge of Internal Security (al-Amn al-Dakhili)

Nasif is a highly intelligent, very secretive man, who virtually lives in his office and is one of the very few people allowed to telephone al-Asad at any time. Apart from heading what was in effect the political police, he was one of al-Asad's key advisers on Shii affairs whether in Lebanon or in Iran. He had been close to Musa Sadr and to Iranian revolutionary leaders such as Ghutbzadah and Tabatabai and frequently travelled from Damascus to Bonn and Switzerland, the poles of Iran's Western networks⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

The Presidential (National) Security Council

Under Muhammad al-Khawli, an entity known as the Presidential Security Council developed. When al-Khawli was 'retired', another old friend of the President took his place as head of the Presidential Security Council.

This body is chaired by the President and appears to be the means whereby the heads of the security forces report back to or receive their latest instructions from him. There are several networks of security forces in Syria. It is unclear how insofar security force commanders are answerable to the Presidential Security Council or to their respective ministries, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense. Each force has its own branches throughout the country and its own intelligence service (*mukhabarah*)⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾. The PSC also coordinates the civilian security agencies and police with their military counterparts⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

Abd al-Rauf al-Kasm - Head of the Presidential Security Council Sunni

Dr. al-Kasm was born in Damascus in 1932. From a religious family, he is the son of a Mufti. He is an architect and engineer with degrees from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Damascus (1953), in Engineering at the University of Istanbul, and a Ph.D. in Architecture from the University of Geneva in 1963. That same year he was appointed to a position in the Department of

Architecture at the University of Damascus in the Faculty of Arts. From 1964-1970 he was dean of the Faculty of Arts. From 1970 -1977 he was Director of the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Engineering and from 1977-79 Vice-President of the University and dean of the College of Fine Arts there. From June 1979 he was also briefly Governor of the City of Damascus. He was a member of the Planning Committee for Municipal Construction in Syria and of the International Society of Architects. In 1975-76 he was Visiting Professor at the University of Geneva⁽⁴⁸²⁰⁾.

On 1/9/80, with long experience as an administrator, but with little previous experience of public life, but with a reputation for integrity, he was appointed Prime Minister and immediately began implementing a series of agricultural policies beneficial to small and middle-sized farmers and a drive against corruption. On 10/31/87, after the People's Assembly had censored four members of his cabinet for incompetency, he resigned as Prime Minister. It has recently been suggested that one of the reasons for his resignation involved the failure of a deal to bury nuclear waste in Syria's northeast, a deal in which Abd al-Halim Khaddam was also involved⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾. Another reason given was his objection to the interference of the security organs in the government's work. He was, in any case, immediately tapped to head the Presidential Security Council, a post which had recently been vacated by Muhammad al-Khawli (q.v.). The appointment was seen in some quarters as an attempt to reduce al-Khawli's supporters permanently⁽⁴³⁶³⁾.

Al-Kasm has been a member of the Baath party since 1949⁽⁴⁸²⁰⁾ and a friend of the President's through their Party work from that time. Al-Kasm is now a member of the Baath Party Regional Command and has, since April 1980, been a member of the Central Command of the National Progressive Front - see Appendix II.

Al-Kasm's older brother, Badi, was a founder of the Baath Party and is known as a major theoretician behind the pan-Arab idea. Abd al-Rauf al-Kasm is independently wealthy because of his private architectural practice and contracting business. His wife is German, and he speaks Turkish, German, and French, as well as Arabic.

Other Members of the PSC:

Ghazi Kanaan - Head of the Presidential Intelligence Committee
Major General; Alawi; al-Matawirah; cousin of Hafiz al-Asad

Formerly the chief of intelligence services in Lebanon, on 9/13/84 he was promoted to acting chief of all intelligence. On 11/27/84 he was one of two senior officials representing Syria on the Syria-Lebanon military committee charged with supervising the plan to extend the authority of the central Lebanese government to the north and the south of the country. At the end of 1987 he was

said to be the intelligence officer whom Hafiz al-Asad most favored⁽⁴⁶⁵⁸⁾. It was even rumored that he was crowding and might replace Ali Dubah⁽⁴⁴⁸⁶⁾.

The Kanaan family is from Alexandretta.

Ahmad Said Salih - Deputy Minister of the Interior
Major General; Alawi; Matawirah

Salih has held this post since 1987, before which time he had for many years been head of Political Security⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾. This is an important post. The Prime Minister delegates his function of Martial Law Governor to the Minister of the Interior. It can be inferred that he, in turn, delegates it to his Deputy Minister, who probably received this appointment because of his close ties to al-Asad. After Rifaat al-Asad's Defense and Security Brigades were divided up and most of them taken from his command in 1984 and put under the control of the regular army, responsibility for internal security came much more under civilian control and the newly more institutionalized political structures for maintaining internal control were put on an equal, if not superior, level to the military.

Under Salih function the Political Security Branch, the Internal Security Branch, and the General Intelligence Branch.

Among the Generals

Commanders of Key Units

Ali Haydar

Major General; either an Alawi of al-Haddadin tribe from the village of Hillat Ara high in the Alawi mountains or landed Shia from Salamiyah

He joined the Baath Party before enrolling at the Military Academy. From 1972⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾ to September 1988, he was commander of the Special Units (*al-Wahdat al-Khassah*), a division of 5000 to 8000 commandos and paratroopers, which has operated largely in Lebanon since 1985⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾. In 1975 he was elected to the National Command's Central Committee. As of September 1988, when he suffered a heart attack, he has been officially in retirement^(0620,0898,4599) and replaced as commander of the Special Units by a nephew of Ali Dubah⁽⁴⁶⁵⁸⁾.

Adnan Makhluaf - Commander of the Presidential Guard
Colonel; Alawi; Hafiz al-Asad's wife's cousin

He has been head of this 10,000 man force, which is responsible for security around the presidential palace, in central Damascus, and in the Malki residential quarter where the top people

live, since May 1979⁽⁰⁶²⁰⁾. He had originally served in Rifaat al-Asad's Defense Brigades (of which this unit then may have been a part), but, after a quarrel, had been given command of the Presidential Guard on the suggestion of his kinsman, Muhammad Makhluf, the President's brother-in-law⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

He is from a prominent Syrian family with strong ties to the SSNP.

Adnan al-Asad - Commander of the Struggle Companies
Major General; Alawi; Hafiz al-Asad's cousin

The Struggle Companies are a small security force. Adnan al-Asad been another active opponent of Rifaat al-Asad⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Regular Army Generals

These four men first supported the inclusion of Rifaat al-Asad in the temporary governing council at the time of Hafiz al-Asad's indisposition, but then led the movement to hold him in check.

Shafiq Fayyad - Commander of the Third Division
Brigadier General; Alawi; married to Hafiz al-Asad's sister

The Third (Armored) Division of the Army is an elite regular division, which draws most of its recruits from the governorate of Ladhahiyyah, the home of the Asad family, and is largely made up of Alawis⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. It is based at Qutayfah near Hamah, thirty minutes north of Damascus.

Fayyad, a rough bear of a man, comes from Ayn Arus near Qardahah⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

In 1984, when Hafiz al-Asad had his heart attack, Fayyad was a leader in the opposition to the attempted take-over of power by Rifaat al-Asad, whom he is said to oppose politically and to dislike personally, and turned his villa near his headquarters into a fortress surrounded by armored vehicles during the height of the crisis of February-March 1984. He was one of those whom by Hafiz al-Asad, when he recovered, sent on mission abroad for a cooling off period⁽⁴⁶²¹⁾.

Ibrahim Safi - Commander of the First (Armored) Division
Brigadier General; Alawi

He is the son of a landless sharecropper⁽⁴⁹⁰⁵⁾.

Ali Salih - Head of the Missile Corps
Major General; Alawi; Matawirah

Ali Aslan - Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Operations
Lieutenant General (*imad*); Alawi; al-Matawirah

Aslan had a distinguished record in the 1973 war and in the subsequent dramatic expansion of the armed forces ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

He has been Deputy Chief-of-Staff since the mid-70s. On 7-2-85, he was promoted to Lt. Gen., a rank only held by two others, Mustafa Talas and Hikmat al-Shihabi. On 11-27-84 he was one of two senior officers representing Syria on the Syria-Lebanon military committee charged with supervising the plan to extend the authority of the central Lebanese government to the north and south of the country.

He is widely considered a sober man and one of the ablest members of the officer corps ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. He has been referred to as an up-and-coming figure and as Hafiz al-Asad's closest ally today ⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾.

Less personally close, but an old and trusted friend of the President:

Hikmat al-Shihabi - Chief of Staff
Lieutenant General (*imad*); Sunni

Al-Shihabi was born in 1932 in the town of al-Bab in the Aleppo governorate. He has been a close friend of Hafiz al-Asad for many years. From the post of Director of Military Intelligence ⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾, he became Chief-of-Staff in August 1974 ⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾. He is a largely non-political professional whom the President relies on for technical advice and information. He has undertaken missions for his President in Washington, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

He was the Syrian emissary who met with Kissinger after the October War, at which time he approved of the principle of a three-zone disengagement schema, a UN buffer area flanked by Syrian and Israeli zones of restricted forces and weapons ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

With Khaddam, he was the chosen instrument of the President to try to mediate the Lebanese Civil War in the mid-seventies ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. He has also been sent on missions requiring great persuasive power to Iraq and the Soviet Union.

He is a member of the Baath Party Regional Command.

He is close to Abd al-Halim Khaddam and opposed to Rifaat al-Asad ⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾⁽⁴⁶⁵⁷⁾⁽⁰⁶²⁰⁾, whose action to assume control of the government in 1984 he helped to frustrate.

On November 29, 1988, a Kuwaiti newspaper wrote that well-informed sources told them that al-Shihabi, a man who has not carried out any political activities for the past few years, was

about to be given the post of prime minister and to be asked to form a new government. Al-Shihabi is said to have set conditions for his assumption of the post: 1. To be given a free hand with respect to domestic and foreign policies and 2. To have the security organs banned from interfering in the government's work.

The Public Core of the Jamaah

The visible trio at the President's side are the more public core of the Group, the three leading Sunnis of the regime, Abd al-Halim Khaddam, Mustafa Talas, and Abdallah al-Ahmar, who not only have been close to Hafiz al-Asad from the early '50s, but who also used positions they held in the 60s to promote his rise to power⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

Abd al-Halim Khaddam - Vice-President for Foreign Affairs
Sunni; lawyer

Family and Educational Background:

Abd al-Halim Khaddam was born in Baniyas, the son of a highly respected lawyer from a relatively humble Sunni family. He attended the Hums Military Academy, but did not pursue a military career.

As Party leader:

He has been a member of the Baath Party since the early fifties and a member of the Regional Command since 1975.

As Governmental leader:

He had worked himself up through the civilian ranks to become Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, when Hafiz al-Asad took over the government in 1970, and has been in charge of external affairs ever since. He has proven himself an able and shrewd diplomat, especially in national reconciliation talks in Lebanon. On 3-11-84, he became First Vice-President with continuing charge for Governmental and External Affairs and as such is the next in line to head the government, should anything happen the Hafiz al-Asad.

In addition to Khaddam's close and long-standing professional ties with Hafiz al-Asad, his first wife is an Alawi from al-Asad's al-Matawirah tribe.

His second wife is a Sunni from the al-Tayyarah family. This family has also provided the Syrian government with a top officer, Major General Adnan Tayyarah⁽⁴⁷⁴²⁾, who is head of the Syrian Arab delegation to the truce committee in Lebanon⁽⁴⁷⁵⁸⁾, and a top politician, Muharram Tayyarah, a member of the NPF's Central Command and the SUP's Politburo⁽⁴⁷⁴⁶⁾. One of Khaddam's daughters is married to the son of one of Saudi Arabia's key financial

advisors⁽⁴⁸¹²⁾. A son is married to a woman from the distinguished Atasi clan of Hums⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. In 1987, two of his sons were involved in the failure of a deal to bury nuclear waste in Syria's northeast, a deal in which Abd al-Halim Khaddam was also involved⁽⁴⁷⁴³⁾.

Mustafa Talas - Deputy Prime Minister for Defense, Minister of Defense, and Deputy Commander in Chief
Lieutenant General(*imad*); Sunni

Family and Educational Background:

Lt. Gen. Talas, a Sunni, was born in 1931⁽⁴⁷⁵⁰⁾ in al-Rastan in Hums governorate and comes from a rural background. He graduated in 1954 from Hums Military Academy, where he first became acquainted with Hafiz al-Asad, and in 1966 he completed an additional course in general staff training at the Voroshilov Command Staff Academy in Moscow.

As Party leader:

He has been a member of the Baath Party since 1947 and a member of the Regional Command since 1975.

As Military leader:

Together with Hafiz al-Asad, he served in Egypt, where the two became friends. In 1968, with al-Asad as Minister of Defense and Commander of the Air Force, Talas became Chief of the Syrian Armed Forces General Staff. In 1972, a year after he became President, al-Asad turned over the Ministry of Defense to Talas. He still holds this position and, as of 12-14-84, he holds those of Deputy Prime Minister⁽⁴⁷⁵⁰⁾ and Deputy Commander-in-Chief as well⁽⁴⁵⁶²⁾⁽⁴⁵⁶¹⁾⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾.

As Governmental leader:

In March 1972, when Hafiz al-Asad became President, Talas became Minister of Defense and Deputy Commander-in-Chief. On 12-14-84 he added the post of Deputy Prime Minister⁽⁴⁷⁵⁰⁾. Originally a staunch ally of Rifaat al-Asad, he joined those opposed to him in 1984.

Mustafa Talas is the author of a number of serious works of fiction and poetry, as well as of military science. He is a member of the Syrian Writers' Union. He is known to be something of a *bon vivant* and man about town.

Abdallah al-Ahmar - Deputy Secretary General of the Baath Party

Family and Educational Background:

Abdallah al-Ahmar, a Sunni, was born in 1936 in the village of Tal near Damascus. He was from a poor family, the son of a construction worker. Educated at the local primary school and the Jawdat al-Hashimi Secondary School in Damascus, he earned a teaching diploma at the Dar al-Muallimina in Damascus and, in 1964, a law degree at the University of Damascus.

As Government Leader:

After the February 1966 coup, Al-Ahmar was provincial governor first of Idlib, then of Hamah⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

As Party leader:

He has been a member of the Baath Party since 1950 in secondary school, where he helped create the Tal Sports Club, a good party recruitment tool. He was prominent in reorganizing the Party after the dissolution of the UAR and was jailed many times between 1961 and 1963. He has been Deputy Secretary General of the Party's National Command since 1971 and as such also a member of the Party's Regional Command (As of 1980 he is also a coordination and liaison officer of the National Progressive Front.)

On February 4, 1986, Israeli fighters forced down a Libyan executive jet carrying home to Damascus a Syrian delegation led by al-Ahmar. Syria complained to the Security Council, but the United States vetoed the condemnation of Israel⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

He is Hafiz al-Asad's chief Party Assistant and an ever more influential Baathist bureaucrat.

Al-Ahmar had never before been identified as a recipient of commissions, but in the beginning of 1979 he was reported to have taken 6.5 percent for his personal use out of a Party contract to spend more than one million pounds with a German company to set up the Party's publishing house⁽⁴⁸⁰⁴⁾.

Other al-Asads and Makhlufts

Jamil al-Asad - Commander of a Special Unit (al-Wahdah al-Khass) of the Defense Brigades

Major General; Alawi; Matawirah; brother of Hafiz al-Asad

The special unit which he commands is stationed at Ladhaqiyah to look after the security of the Alawi community there⁽⁰⁶²⁰⁾.

Jamil was born in 1933 at Qardahah. He qualified as a lawyer, but did not practice⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾. In May 1973 he was elected to the People's Assembly and on 4/1/75 was a member of the 12th National Baath Party Congress⁽⁴⁵⁷⁸⁾. He was also founder, in 1981, and head of the Humane Committee of Imam Murtada, the most prominent of six religious groups which were founded with Hafiz al-Asad's approval

to bring a poorer, less educated segment of Syrian Shiite society which had shown little enthusiasm for the Baath Party into political participation. The Humane Committee was the most nearly sectarian body the regime has ever tolerated⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾. It was banned on 12/19/83⁽⁴⁴²⁸⁾, on orders from the President, who was not sure of Jamil's ultimate position vis a vis his difficulties with Rifaat.

Rifaat al-Asad - Vice-President; [Ex- Commander of the Brigades for the Defense of the Revolution (Saraya al-Difaa an al-Thawrah)]
Brigadier General; Alawi; Matawirah; youngest brother of
Hafiz al-Asad

Rifaat al-Asad was born in 1937 in Qardahah. He attended elementary school in Qardahah and secondary school in Ladhaqiyah. He majored in Political Science and Economics at Syrian University in Damascus and obtained a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Moscow in July 1974. He submitted a thesis on class on class struggle in Syria thought to be the work of a Russian-speaking Alawi, Ahmad Dawud⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

In the early 60s, he worked for the Syrian Customs Department, then joined an infantry brigade.

When Hafiz al-Asad took over the reigns of government in 1970, he charged his brother Rifaat with organizing and commanding the Brigades for the Defense of the Revolution. In their heyday their numbers were estimated to be 55,000 strong. Their main charge was to protect the President, the administration, and the revolutionary program. Wearing orange berets, they were stationed mainly in and around Damascus. Over time they became more and more obtrusive.

By the early 80s, Rifaat also had a headquarters in Labwah in the northern Biqaa valley of Lebanon, where there is a small colony of Lebanese Alawis. It was even rumored in Bayrut (where he was referred to as the Prince of the Coast (*Amir al-Sahil*)) that he was nurturing ambitions for an Alawi enclave extending from Ladhaqiyah into the remote Akkar district of north Lebanon. In any case, from the northern Biqaa region, the Arab Democratic Party, owing allegiance to Rifaat, operated a militia called the Arab Knights (*Fursan al-Arab*). Informed sources also speculate that it may have been he who was mainly responsible for the importation of Iranian extremists into the Shia movement in Lebanon⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾. He also has close ties with important Lebanese leaders, such as Butrus Khuri and the Franjiyahs.

His influence and autonomy of action and economic activities were at their height - and his economic activities burgeoning - at this period and were a large element in the Sunni backlash of 1982 in Hamah and Aleppo.

In 1984 Rifaat made an unsuccessful power grab for supreme power following the President's heart attack in November 1983. Rifaat's irregulars clashed with the regular military whose heads -

especially Shafiq Fayyad, Commander of the Third Division, and Ali Haydar, then Commander of the Special Units - opposed his efforts. In the subsequent reorganization, the Defense Brigades' numbers were drastically reduced with the incorporation of two-thirds of them into the regular army and the rest passing out of Rifaat's hands.

Further to contain Rifaat without additional alienation, Hafiz al-Asad made him, on March 11, 1984, one of three newly created vice-presidents. His duties were left unspecified and depended on the President's favor. On November 10, 1984, the President formally intrusted Rifaat with the supervision of national security, but it was a sham. He was prevented from renewing contact w his slimmed cown Defense Brigades and was hemmed in everywhere he turned⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

Rifaat has been a member of the Baath Party Regional Command since 1975, at which time he headed its Higher Education and Scientific Research Department. He carved out a constituency for himself representing the interests of young university students through the Party and through an Organization which he headed known as the League of Higher Studies Alumni (Rabitun). His support in the Party proved another source of power and influence for him to the point where it challenged the institutionalized structures⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾. Despite the political reverses which he suffered in 1984, in 1985 he was reelected to the Regional Command.

Since his attempt to grab power in Syria in the wake of Hafiz al-Asad's heart attack in November 1983 and the successful opposition to it by a counterforce of officers from the regular army loyal to his brother, Rifaat has lived mainly in Europe. He has homes in Switzerland, France, England, and Spain. He also has a home in the United States, whose interests he is said at times to promote.

Since 1986 he has run a communications and economic empire from Paris and London of benefit not only to himself, but also, some claim, to the regime itself, insofar as it allows the regime to have contacts with economically sustaining enterprises which it could not otherwise, for ideological reasons, maintain.

As for his economic power at home, it too has been and, no doubt, still is significant. He has sponsored select businessmen, granting them exemptions from normal import-export restrictions, giving them first chance to bid on state tenders, and protecting them from investigation by various regulative agencies. To take advantage of such a relationship, Rifaat's clients must have great capital and daring, so they are recruited primarily from the nouveau riche entrepreneurs of Damascus and Aleppo. The fact that these urban elites are overwhelmingly Sunni or Christian has never inhibited their relationship with Rifaat⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

Rifaat also retains some close allies in key positions in the Syrian administrative bureaucracy. One of them is Ahmad Diab, since 1987, Minister of Local Administration (see above 4.A.1.c.iii.).

Rifaat has four wives: Salmah Makhluf, the niece of Hafiz al-Asad's wife; Lina Khayyar; a Damascene Sunni; and a Circassian Sunni. One of his wives is described as a woman of the Shammar tribe. He is also described as related by marriage to Crown Prince Abdallah of Saudi Arabia, who also has a wife from the Shammar tribe⁽⁴⁵⁷²⁾. The two men are said to maintain homes next door to one another on Mt. Qasiyun overlooking Damascus. He has seventeen children.

Rifaat has been Syria's most controversial figure. Though he has presented himself as an advocate of economic and political liberalization, he has a reputation for flamboyance and corruption which makes him unpopular in many circles. His brother, the President, while not oblivious to the family tie, is at pains to keep a watchful eye on him and his decisional role in Syria at present is very peripheral.

Muhammad Makhluf

Alawi; Hafiz al-Asad's wife's brother

He is the head of the economically powerful Syrian Tobacco Company. The Makhlufs are said to be great supporters of the Syrian Socialist National Party, a party not active in Syria, but active in Lebanon. It espouses *inter alia* the pan-Arab idea.

4.C. ROLE OF LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES

At the local level there are four distinct, but overlapping sets of decision-makers: 1. members of the popular organizations, 2. the Party cadres, 3. members of the local popular assemblies, and 4. representatives of the administration. There is a multiplicity of systems, sometimes paralleling, sometimes intersecting, sometimes overlapping, but always affecting each other⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

4.C.1. The Popular Organizations (*Munazzamat Shaabiyah*)

"The popular organizations and the cooperative associations are institutions which comprise the popular forces striving for the progress of the society and to serve the interests of their members."(Art.9) They were founded in the late 60s to counterbalance the widespread urban opposition to the Baath regime and to broaden the its popular base. But these organizations served only as instruments to channel the energies of the people for Jadid regime causes without allowing them to participate in the political process. They were so tightly controlled by the former regime that, under it, they were never able to develop into strong political structures to provide greater regime support and continuity⁽⁴⁴²³⁾.

Along with the General Federation of Trade Unions (not discussed here), the most important of the popular organizations are grouped in the General Federation of Peasant Unions (GFPU), headquartered in the capital city of Damascus, with a Peasant Union Office (*Maktab al-Ittihad al-Fallahiyah*) in each governorate, under the supervision and control of the Damascus office. In turn, each district (*nahiyah*) of the governorate has a Peasant League Office (*Maktab al-Rabitah al-Fallahiyah*) under the supervision and control of the governate level office; and each village of the district has a Peasant League/Cooperative Office under the supervision and control of the district level office⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

The governing councils of each one of these organizations are elected by official members at each particular level through a democratic secret ballot for a three-year term. The exception is the village level Peasant League, for which elections take place annually⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

Business meetings within these various organizations take place once every month except at the village level, where they are called once a week. In addition a meeting can be called for at any of these levels when a pressing problem or circumstance occurs. For a vote to pass on a given matter, half of the votes plus one must be secured. In case of a tie, the president's vote will be the deciding one⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

This nationwide organization is supported by the small membership fees collected from the members⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

4.C.1.a. The General Federation of Peasant Unions

At the top of the pyramid-like organization is the GFPU.

The GFPU has four major functions. First, it is an instrument for carrying out the government's socialist rural policy. Second, it represents the peasants' interests in the system, being the main organ for channelling their demands and expectations. Third, it encourages peasant participation, self-management, and articulation of political demands in such areas as conflict control and/or resolution and village development. Fourth, it has directed peasant politicization toward the Party⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

4.C.1.b. The Peasant Unions (*al-Ittihad al-Fallahiyah*)

At the governorate level, are the Peasant Unions, one for each governorate⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

4.C.1.c. The Peasant Leagues (*al-Rabitah al-Fallahiyah*)

Next, at the district level, are the Peasant Leagues, one for each district⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

Each Peasant League is responsible for the Peasant Cooperatives within its administrative district⁽⁴³⁶²⁾. Members of the Executive Board of the Peasants' Federation supervise the work in the cooperatives, each board member being assigned one⁽⁴²⁰⁸⁾.

4.C.1.d. The Peasant Cooperatives (*al-Jamiyah al-Taawiniyah al-Fallahiyah*)

At the village level are the Peasant Cooperatives, consisting of one or more units⁽⁴³⁶²⁾. These Peasant Cooperatives are now made up of a 1984? merger of the Peasants Collectives (*al-Jamiyah al-Naqabah al-Fallahiyah*), then a very inclusive organization, extending from the village at the periphery to the metropolitan capital, with the Peasant Cooperatives (*al-Jamiyah al-Taawiniyah al-Fallahiyah*), which originally functioned in the village or in a small number of village settlements, to support and facilitate agricultural production along socialist principles⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

The establishment of a Peasant Cooperative in a particular village requires that its size exceed 400 inhabitants. Two collectives cannot be founded in one and the same village, although it is possible to combine a number of small farming settlements under one collective. There are cooperatives for rain-fed agriculture; there is another type mainly for animal husbandry. They are state supported⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

The Peasant Cooperatives assist the relatively new beneficiaries of agrarian reforms in agricultural production. To become a member, one must be from a peasant background, over eighteen years old, of good conduct and moral standing, and not possessed of more than twenty acres of land⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

The main goals of the Cooperatives now include the socio-political as well as the economic. They safeguard the interests of the peasantry in terms of fighting tribalism, feudalism, sectarianism, and nepotism. They are also responsible for helping to achieve a nationwide cultural transformation by providing the peasantry with education and political socialization⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

For the realization of such goals, Institutes for Peasant Education have been founded in each governorate. Students receive full accommodations plus a small salary to compensate their family for the loss of their work time. The Peasant Organization sends the best of them to higher institutes in the major cities or to socialist countries in Europe for special training programs⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

4.C.2. The Party Organizations (*Tanzim Hizbi*)

The Party (in theory, at least) does not infringe upon the authority of the Popular Organizations, since it was originally the Party that had set up the rules and regulations. Yet it is well-known that, in case of deviation, a term very loosely defined, the Party is apt to intervene and pull rank on the other hierarchies⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

There is an elaborate system of Party organizations at the local level: i. the Party Branch (*Farii al-Hizb*) at the governorate level; the Party Division (*Shui al-Hizb*) at the district level; and the Party Cell (*Friqaa al-Hizb*) at the village level⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

Hafiz al-Asad's creation of the National Progressive Front - a coalition of five parties (See Appendix III of this chapter) - strengthened the established infrastructure of party (and peasant) organizations by bringing in additional rural segments and supporters⁽⁴³⁶²⁾.

Under the present regime, purges of neo-Baath radicals created many vacancies in rural party branches, peasant federations, and agricultural cooperatives. The more prosperous elements of the peasantry (whom the Syrians themselves call "kulacs") were eager to occupy these posts, both for the powers they accorded and to insure they would not again fall into the hands of the radicals. The government was happy to tolerate this. Therefore the decisional element at this level is dominated by a rural bourgeoisie.

4.C.3. The Local People's Assembly or Council

"The people's councils are institutions elected in democratic manner through which the citizens exercise their rights insofar as the administration of the state and the leadership of the society are concerned." (Art.10)

"The local people's councils are organs which exercise their powers in administrative units in accordance with the law." (Art.129(1))

Each governorate has its own elected People's Assembly, headed by the Governor, who has been selected by the President. But, just as some see the Governor as a mere figurehead, so they see these Assemblies as powerless.

The governorate Assemblies are meant to be policy determining and deliberative bodies. Members serve on a part-time basis during their four year elective terms. At least sixty percent of the membership of the Assemblies must represent the peasants, laborers, craftsmen, and people from the lower income levels. The assemblies formulate local plans and indorse, after deliberation, plans from a higher level; adopt local rules and regulations for the administration of utilities and government projects; assume organization authority not specifically reserved to the Central Government; and generally monitor government programs, the expenditure of funds and generation of revenues⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾.

4.C.4. Representatives of the Central Government

4.C.4.a. The Governorate Level

At the governorate level, the executive administration is composed of a. the Governor, b. the Executive Office, and 3. representatives of relevant ministries and ministerial committees, including the Ministry of the Interior's security departments.

4.C.4.a.i. The Governor

The Governor is appointed by the President to serve at the pleasure of the President. He is Chairman of the Governorate Popular Assembly (or Council) and Chief of the Executive Office. But, just as the Regional Command of the Party, and not the legislative and executive branches of government, is regarded as the real seat of power of the Central Government, so the governor - in most cases - is seen as a mere figurehead.

On occasion a governor has become the locus of real power. One governor of Raqqah was a Party member with close links to the President's Group. He used his formal role as governor to create relations with all the important groups in the region. He became the locus of regional power, because he was able to by-pass the provincial party committee. He has strengthened the position of the Party, but also made himself an alternative to the formal Party organization. Though an outsider, he made alliances with local leaders and through them was able to reach a great number of regional inhabitants and vice versa⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾. (He is now Minister of Information.)

4.C.4.a.ii. The Executive Office

Each governorate has its own Executive Office, headed by the Governor. This is the directing, administrative or executive body for the follow-up and day-to-day supervision necessary to carry out the governmental activities within the governorate. Executive Office members, numbering from seven to eleven, are elected by the governorate People's Assemblies (Councils) from among its members for up to two-thirds of the total. The remaining one-third are appointed by the Minister of Local Administration. The tenure for Executive Office membership is two years. The Executive Office distributes the administrative responsibilities among its members, and, when these are agreed to, this is ratified by a decree from the President. Typical duties of the governorate Executive Office include the supervision of the offices of the Central Government's representatives, i.g., the Directorates of Agriculture, Public Works, Health, etc.; preparation of annual economic and social development plans; contracting local works projects, etc.

4.C.4.a.iii. The Representatives of Relevant Ministries

(Of the relevant ministries, the structures of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform (MAAR) are the ones most developed; we shall take them as a model.)

In each governorate the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform has offices making up its own field organization. The principal one is the Directorate of Agriculture at the governorate level. These organizations are smaller versions of the central Ministry and are organized by subdividing them sectorally. While the Directors of Agriculture are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, as are also all of the college graduates working at this and at subordinate levels, the tie in to the local government is through the Governor, the Baath Party representative for agriculture in the governorate, and the chief of the Peasants' Union in the governorate, and the governorate agricultural council.

For technical backstopping and activities related primarily to the Ministry, the Directors of Agriculture report directly to the Ministry of Agriculture or his delegated representative. But these

Directors are also under the direction of the Governors. The Governors have paramount authority as Presidential appointees and are the most influential officers in the governorates. They also serve as the chairmen of the governorate agricultural councils⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾.

Governorate Agricultural Councils were created by law to serve the needs of planning and follow-up relating to the Central Government's Supreme Agricultural Council (see section 4.C.) at the local level. Each is chaired by the incumbent Governor and its membership includes the Chief of the governorate Peasant Union, the governorate's Director of Agriculture, the Branch Director of the Agricultural Cooperative Bank, a representative of the governorate's Executive Office, and the Baath Party's governorate representative responsible for peasant affairs. These GACs develop local plans, make recommendations, and forward recommendations to the central level. They also monitor and coordinate implementation of projects in these respective areas.

(See APPENDIX V for a listing of some of the governorate officials.)

4.C.4.b. The District Level and Sub-district Level

The Executive Office of the governorate also provides some guidance to the lower level executive offices in the districts (*mintaqah*) and sub-districts (*nahiyah*). Neither of these two are corporate or legal entities, but are administrative subdivisions of the governorate. The districts and sub-districts provide services such as doctors and teachers on an area basis where they would not otherwise be provided. They also each have a District Administrative Committee and a Chief of District who represents the executive authority of the government. The Chief's responsibilities include administration of district activities, such as security, welfare, health, and law enforcement⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾.

Each governorate has a branch of the two security departments responsible to the Ministry of the Interior: Political Security (*al-Amn al-Siyassi*) and General Intelligence (*al-Mukhabarah al-Amah*) - formerly State Security (*Amn al-Dawlah*). The former dealt with civilian political opposition and the latter with surveillance and information gathering⁽⁴⁷²⁰⁾. The expanding powers and greater freedom of action enjoyed by the security forces plus the apparent lack of direct supervision of their activities at any but the district and sub-district levels have prompted numerous reports of the abuse of such powers⁽⁴⁷⁰⁷⁾.

There are subordinate offices of representatives of MAAR stationed at the district and sub-district levels which deal in agricultural matters. These are smaller in scale and more directly connected to the villages and farm level needs. It is at district and sub-district levels that licenses for agricultural production

are issued to farmers. These licenses are related to the program targets in the agricultural plan and intitle the farmer to obtain loans from the Agricultural Cooperative Bank⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾.

Councils similar to, but less structured than, the governorate Agricultural Councils are also prescribed for the district, sub-district, and village levels. This is to permit communications on matters of agriculture to flow through official channels from the bottom to the top and vice versa⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾.

4.C.4.c. The Village Level

Every Syrian village and town section has an appointed Headman, *al-Mukhtar*, who is authorized to stamp and sign papers verifying a person's identity. The headman has no executive power, but is more like a respected witness. Every few villages form a unit with a police-station, *makhfar*, which is responsible for control and order. The headmen represent their villages vis a vis the police-station. In isolated regions the police-stations deal with most aspects of the civil service. Above the police-station there is the director of the community. He has military rank, but is employed by the Ministry of the Interior. Although in the rural areas there is a formal hierarchy of executive power, clothed in military terms, real local power is at the governorate capital⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

4.D. LEADERS, POWERS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WATER AGENCIES

In the mid-1980s a major reorganization took place of 1. the way in which decisions relating to water are made and 2. the way in which water resources are administered. The new organization is based on the natural division of Syria into seven basins: the Euphrates river, the Orontes river, the Yarmuk river, the steppes, the coast, the city of Damascus, and the city of Aleppo. (This is the same division that the authors of this report found found the most logical one to use.)

In this section, 4.D.1. will address decisional structures and 4.D.2. will address administrative structures.

4.D.1. Decisional Structures

The Supreme Authority for Euphrates Projects

The Euphrates is the principal source of water for Syria, and maximum development of this source and its basin has been a major concern of the government for over two decades. The Supreme Authority for Euphrates Projects is an example of this basin-focussed organization in the realm of decision-making.

The Supreme Authority for Euphrates Projects meets as needed, and its membership is made up of heads of relevant organizations and institutions. Its meetings are chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by members of popular organizations and local institutions and of the Party's Regional Command, relevant ministers, the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Services and the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs as well as general managers of companies and institutions operating their businesses in the Euphrates Basin⁽⁴⁷⁹⁴⁾.

In sum, the components of Supreme Authorities are: a. the Popular Organizations and local institutions, b. the Party, and c. agents and agencies of the Central Government.

4.D.1.a. The Popular Organizations and Local Institutions

4.D.1.a.i. The Peasants' Union

Because of its wish to supervise agricultural development, the Party leadership opted to downplay the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultutal Reform in this sphere and to replace it with the Peasants' Union.

Created in 1963 under Party guidance, the Peasants' Union has gradually taken over much of MAAR's role, since the Baathist leadership has sought the grass roots support essential for governmental programs and found that such support was mobilized far more easily and effectively through this mass organization than through MAAR. The Peasants' Union, therefore, has come to possess very considerable power within the agricultural sector, and its original *raison d'être* (see 4.C.1.a.) has been extended and is no longer central to its continued existence and consolidation of power⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾.

In 1974, a new headquarters of the Peasants' Union arose in Damascus very much resembling a ministry building and symbolizing the transformation of the Peasants' Bureau into a Ministry of Agriculture, but one minus the partial insulation from political intrigue provided by civil service regulations⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾.

Also in 1974, an even more significant erosion of MAAR to the benefit of the Peasants' Union began with the creation of thirteen directorates (*mudiriyah*) in the Peasants' Union with a Party cadre in charge of each and with a seconded employee from MAAR being placed very much in a subordinate position.

Early in that same year, the Peasants' Union removed agricultural cooperative societies and responsibility for training farmers in agricultural techniques from MAAR's jurisdiction.

While the activities of the Peasants' Union still include a significant measure of regulation and control, it has gone a long way toward accomplishing its goal of full peasant participation in decision-making. While this may be an objective still not yet fully achieved, organizational structures reflect and reinforce the intention.

(See also 4.C.3.)

4.D.1.a.ii. The Local People's Assembly or Council

The elected Peoples' Assemblies of each governorate are policy determining and deliberative bodies. They formulate local plans and endorse, after deliberation, plans from a higher level, adopt local rules and regulations for the administration of utilities and government projects, assume organizational authority not specifically reserved to the central government, and generally monitor government programs, the expenditure of funds and the generation of revenues⁽⁴⁶³¹⁾. (See also 4.C.3.)

4.D.1.a.iii. The Agronomists' Syndicate

An indication of some freedom granted by the Party to professional agronomists is the presence in Syria of an agronomists' syndicate. Founded in 1965 - and while not decisional

in itself, but perhaps providing a forum for decision-makers - it meets occasionally to provide an audience for visiting dignitaries; provides a social arena in which agronomists make and maintain personal contacts; and dispenses to members a small pension on their retirement. It is, however, politically "contained", not being allowed to publish a journal in which technical matters, many of which have political overtones, might be discussed. Nor may syndicate leaders choose their leaders. Leadership is imposed by the regime and can consolidate control over agronomists by not calling a meeting of the board and by refusing to hold elections on a bi-annual basis for the syndicate's leadership positions, as is called for in the syndicate's by-laws⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾.

4.D.1.b. The Party Organization The Syrian Regional Peasant Bureau (Maktab al-Falahin min Hizb al-Baath al-Ishtiraki)

At the top of the Baath hierarchy in this sector is the Peasants' Bureau in the Regional Command of the Party. (See also 4.A.1.b.vi.) Its purpose is to insure Party control of the agricultural bureaucracy, in particular, and the agricultural sector, in general. It also links the people's Peasants' Union to Party and to the central government.

At the central level, the Bureau is one of several functional divisions of the Regional Command, and its Central Office is headed by a member of the Regional Command. It includes in its membership the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, the President of the Peasant Union, the President of the Cooperative Federation, and the heads of the Agriculture and Cooperative Bank, the cotton and wheat marketing offices, etc. Thus, formally, it incorporates, coordinates, and controls the work of these various organs, reconciling conflicts between them (e.g., between the needs of the peasants and the technical requirements of ministries) and assuring for each its congruence with party policy.

Informally, at least at the higher levels, many of these well-placed Party loyalists are reportedly involved in - and operate mainly through - influence networks and patronage (see 4.E.) which spread down from the Party's Peasants' Bureau. The chief Party patron of the agricultural sector is apt to be the director of the Party's Peasants' Bureau. This post has been held by Yusif al-Asad, a man who is also close to the President⁽⁰⁰⁶⁰⁾.

The Bureau's plan of work encompasses such matters as the expansion and supervision of the Peasant Union, recruitment of peasant membership to the party, creation and supervision of the agricultural infrastructure, cooperatives, state farms, performance of relevant bureaucracies, and the general agricultural development plan.

At the same time, it seems to serve as a channel by which peasant opinion is made known to those taking decisions impinging on their interests⁽⁴⁷⁰¹⁾.

Directly connected to the Party's Peasant Bureau's Central Office are derivatory bureaus at the governorate and district levels. At the governorate level, it performs analogously to its central office functions, assembling the directors of the various ministerial field offices, heads of local peasant and cooperative unions, etc., to follow up on the governorate agricultural plan, insure the flow of supply and credit to peasants, enforce the agrarian relations law, and support rural development schemes, especially those directly involving party and peasant bureau cadres.

4.D.1.c. Central Government Bureaucracies

4.D.1.c.i The Prime Minister's Office

The Prime Minister, Mahmud Zuubi (see 4.A.1.c.iii.), chairs the Supreme Council for Euphrates Projects and, if it can be assumed that the SAEP is a model for the other basins, he or his deputy chairs the Supreme Councils for the other six. These seven councils would be the ultimate decision making bodies on water in Syria and any coordination would take place in the Prime Minister's office.

As well as chairing the Supreme Council for Euphrates Projects, the Prime Minister also chairs the Supreme Agricultural Council. It includes as members the head of the Peasants' Union and several ministers and parallels the Party Peasants' Bureau. It has been the ultimate decision-making body - though one whose relative importance is not what it once was - on agricultural needs in the governmental chain of command. Since water is so vital to agriculture, the overlap in personnel beyond the chairmanship can be assumed.

4.D.1.c.ii. - The Deputy Prime Ministries

The Deputy Prime Minister for Public Services is Mahmud Qaddur (see 4.A.1.c.iii.), formerly Minister of Industry.

The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs is Salim Yassin (see 4.A.1.c.iii.), formerly Minister of Planning and Minister of Economy and External Trade.

4.D.2 Administrative Structures

The decisions of institutions like the Supreme Authority for Euphrates Projects are implemented by committees, headed by ministers, such as the Minister of Irrigation, and directorates, which draw up the necessary physical programs and timetables⁽⁴⁷⁹⁴⁾. In addition, the Popular Organizations and the Party have administrative responsibilities.

4.D.2.a. Popular Organizations and Local Institutions

4.D.2.a.i The Peasants' Union

The Party put into Peasants's Union hands the administration of agricultural extension work, traditionally a responsibility of MAAR. Only a handful of trained agronomists were left in the extension department of the Ministry in Damascus.

4.D.2.a.ii. The Water Resources Directorates in the Governorates

The governorates are Damascus; Suwayda; Daraa; Qunaytrah; Hums; Hamah; Ladhadiyah Tartus (Director - Hilal al-Yusufi⁽²⁴⁴⁵⁾); Idlib; Aleppo; Raqqah; Hasakah; and Dayr al-Zawr.

Prior to 1980, the Water Resources Directorate in Hums was given the responsibility of following up on a major contract with the Soviet Union to study ground and surface water, to plan the use of all water resources, and to make projections of all water consumptive uses for the last quarter of the century⁽³⁰⁴⁶⁾.

4.D.2.b. The Party Organization - The Party's Peasant Bureau

The bureau has responsibility for preparing the report of the Regional Command to the Regional Congress on rural affairs and for laying down a plan of work, in consultation with lower levels, state organs, and popular organizations, for the implementation of congress policies on rural areas.

The Peasant Bureau and its derivatives perform as a center for the implementation of party policy through the control of various bureaucratic organizations and the mobilization of peasant participation.

Just as the Party has created specialized organizations to insure its control over agriculture, so did it seem to harbor especially negative feelings toward the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform itself. Disenchanted with the performance of the traditional bureaucracies in the management of agriculture and suspicious of bureaucrats' desires for autonomy from Party or any other outside control not legitimated by professional credentials, the Baathists were systematically downgrading MAAR. Functions it

previously executed were spun off to specialized (e.g., GHADEB, now GALR) and to other ministries (e.g., agricultural credit to the Ministry of Finance).

But, while the Party has penetrated MAAR to a greater extent than many other ministries unrelated to foreign or domestic security matters and while there are Party members in various posts in the agricultural administration for which from the point of view of expertise they are altogether unsuited, the Syrian Baath has generally not imposed itself on the agricultural bureaucracy to a degree damaging to agricultural performance(0600.

4.D.2.c. - Governmental Bureaucracies

4.D.2.c.i. The Deputy Prime Minister for Public Services

The major public water development programs in Syria are under the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Services, Mahmud Qaddur. The main components of Public Services are, firstly, water resources and reclamation and, secondly, domestic water supply. The two main ministries responsible for these functions and therefore coming within this Deputy Prime Minister's purview are 1) The Ministry of Irrigation and 2) The Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities.

Three other ministries still play a role in the administration of water, although its importance is dwindling: 3) The Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform, 4) The Ministry of Industry, and 5) The Ministry of Defense.

4.D.2.c.ii. - The Ministry of Irrigation

Until 1985 there was a Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources, which had three Directorates: 1. the General Administration of Major Projects; 2. the Directorate of Irrigation and Water Power; and 3. the Directorate of Public Water Anti-pollution. From 1970 to 1985 there was also a separate Ministry of the Euphrates Dam.

In July, 1985, Law Number 16 of 1985 was issued, establishing the Ministry of Irrigation, which included in its framework the Ministry of the Euphrates and other agencies relating to the Euphrates projects, relevant offices in the Major Projects Administration, and the two directorates of Irrigation and Water Resources and Treatment of Polluted Water, which had belonged to the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources. In addition, other local agencies dealing with water projects in the administrative governorates became part of the Ministry of Irrigation.

The Minister of Irrigation is Eng. Abd al-Rahman al-Madani. He had been Minister of the Euphrates Dam since 12-3-80, and in 1983 the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources was also given into his charge. In the 4-6-85 cabinet and by Law Number 16 of 1985 (July), these two ministries were merged under him to become the Ministry of Irrigation, of which the primary responsibilities are water resource development and the conduct of the hydrological survey.

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation is Mahmud Tajjar (3-19-84).

The main responsibilities of the Ministry of Irrigation are the following:

- To prepare studies related to water resources.
- To keep track of the measurements of water levels and other indicators.
- To develop plans to protect water resources from pollution.
- To regulate ways and means of making the best use of water resources.
- To recommend needed projects and introduce legislation to facilitate the execution of water projects.

Despite the difficulties which faced the establishment of the Ministry of Irrigation, it was able to accomplish the following:

- The gathering of trained staff, qualified to work in this field, into a central agency which is concerned with water resources only.
- The establishment of a national agency which is specialized in hydraulic affairs and major water projects and which reports directly to the Minister of Irrigation concerning the study and the execution of different water projects. This has led to the centralization of the data collected, a more efficient cadre, and less dependency on foreign experts.
- The establishment of directorates of irrigation according to natural water basins and not according to administrative governorates. By Law Number 17 of 1986, Syria was divided into seven major basins, each with its own directorate. These directorates have already started to work. Only the Directorate of the Euphrates Basin needs more organization, because of the magnitude and variety of the responsibilities assigned to it.

- The recommendation of needed legislation to facilitate and enhance cooperation between the Ministry of Irrigation and other ministries and government agencies and the continuing recruitment of qualified staff to meet the increasing national needs for the planning and execution of projects relating to water resources.

There are several substructures under the Ministry of Irrigation. Among them are:

- The General Authority for Land Reclamation (GALR)

GALR is a national authority which evolved out of the Land Reclamation Directorate. By 10/25/84, it had replaced the Major Projects Administration⁽²⁴⁴⁴⁾. By 3/14/86⁽⁴⁶⁷⁶⁾ the General Authority for the Development of the Euphrates Basin (GADEB) had also been incorporated into it.

- The Public Irrigation Works Company (SARICO)

This company constructs conversion canals⁽²⁴⁴⁴⁾.

4.D.2.c.iii. The Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities

This Ministry has the prime responsibility for the design and construction of the countrywide water supply and sewerage facilities, including Damascus, Aleppo, Hums, and Hamah, which have their own administrations⁽⁴⁷¹²⁾.

Law Number 14 of 1984 stipulated the establishment of fourteen public institutes for drinking water and sanitation covering all the governorates and made them part of the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, which is to be the only authorized agency to plan, execute, and coordinate projects for the provision of drinking water and sanitation and is to replace or take over responsibilities of any previous authority dealing with this field throughout the country.

The responsibilities of the fourteen public institutes were defined as follows:

- To prepare, coordinate, and execute plans in the governorate relating to drinking water and sanitation within the overall government policy, while taking into consideration the economic and financial indicators, and then to recommend these plans to the authorized ministry.

- To study, plan, and execute drinking water and sanitation projects in each governorate.

- To administrate, maintain, and supervise drinking water and sanitation projects in each governorate.

The Minister of Housing and Public Utilities is Muhammad Nur Intabi. He has been Minister since late 1987, when he replaced Adnan Quli, who became Minister of Tourism.

Within the Ministry there is a Technical Services Directorate, which conducts preliminary studies⁽²⁴⁴⁵⁾.

Its Director of Mechanics is Dr. Riyal al-Shahmah⁽²⁴⁴⁵⁾.

Under the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, there is a General Organization for Water Supply with a branch located in each of the 14 governorates. They operate under the supervision of the MHPU, but administratively have subordinate to the Ministry of Local Administration. They work with the local authorities, especially the local Water Establishment⁽²¹³⁹⁾, on the operation and maintainance of facilities.[ESCWA]

The Military Housing Organization works along with MHPU.

"Milihouse" works in cooperation with several ministries. For MHPU, it constructs pumping plants, reservoirs, and pumping lines⁽²⁴⁴⁵⁾. It is also intrusted with earth-filling activites⁽²⁴⁴⁴⁾.

Milihouse has been by far the most important of the thirteen state construction companies which by the mid-1980s had become the prime instrument in the transformation of the country. It is an example of free-wheeling enterprise which few state-controlled economies could match. Its creator was a short, stocky, hyper-energetic Alawi colonel, Khalil Bahlul, born in 1935 of peasant stock, who first attracted al-Adad's attention by his efficiency in building aircraft shelters and airfields after the devastation of the 1967 war. He moved on to building housing for the army, recruiting young engineers straight from college, training them at speed on the job, circumventing controls and getting results. In 1975 the basic legislation setting up the state construction companies was passed, launching Bahlul on his spectacular career. Within a decade Milihouse was the largest firm in the country - in fact a conglomerate of sixty-six companies - employing a good half of the 150,000 workers in the Syrian construction industry and responsible for some of the best buildings all over the country.

Bahlul introduced the management and accounting methods of private busivess into the public sector and freed himself from dependence on others by manufacturing or processing almost all his materials. Introducing modern techniques, encouraging engineers, craftsmen, and managers to be flexible and innovative, he contributed as much as any one person could to getting the country moving. In the mid-80s he branched out further into agriculture,

but his success and a forceful disrespect for government controls won him enemies and his clashes with Prime Minister al-Kasm brought him down in 1987⁽⁴⁸⁰⁵⁾.

After his dismissal, Bahlul is said to have spent much time in the US. As for Milihouse, it is undergoing reorganization and may be cut to about 20,000. It had been a generous source of patronage and was greatly overstaffed with salaries higher than those in other parts of the economy⁽⁴⁴⁸⁵⁾.

4.D.2.c.iv. Other Relevant Ministries

The Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform

Just as the Party has created specialized organizations to insure its control over agriculture, so did it seem to harbor especially negative feelings toward the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform itself. Disenchanted with the performance of the traditional bureaucracies in the management of agriculture and suspicious of bureaucrats' desires for autonomy from Party or any other outside control not legitimated by professional credentials, the Baathists were systematically downgrading MAAR Functions it previously executed have been spun off to specialized (e.g., GHADEB, now GALR) and to other ministries (e.g., agricultural credit to the Ministry of Finance).

But, while the Party has penetrated MAAR to a greater extent than many other ministries unrelated to foreign or domestic security matters and while there are Party members in various posts in the agricultural administration for which from the point of view of expertise they are altogether unsuited, the Syrian Baath has generally not imposed itself on the agricultural bureaucracy to a degree damaging to agricultural performance⁽⁰⁶⁰⁰⁾.

The appointment of Muhammad Ghabbash as Minister of Agriculture in the summer of 1987 follows the pattern of most previous appointments in bringing in a Party loyalist with administrative experience at the cabinet level. He replaced Mahmud al-Kurdi who had been forced to resign because of "incompetence leading to negative results". Ghabbash had previously been Minister of Supply and Internal Trade (- 1/15/80 - 4/15/85) and Minister of the Interior 4/8/85 - Summer 1987). He is a member of the Baath Party Central Committee and the Baath Party Peasant Bureau and had by 1985 emerged as a powerful member of the younger generation of Baathists.

The Ministry of Industry

The Ministry of Industry is responsible for the industrial uses of water. A large number of industries require substantial amounts of water either for consumptive use or for other purposes,

much of it involving agricultural processing and related industries - canning, yeast-making, etc. In addition, plants making steel pipe, cement, plastics, glass, and paper are heavy consumers.

The Ministry of Industry regularly studies proposed new industries and considers manpower, financing, transportation, markets, people, raw materials, water, and power⁽³⁰⁴⁶⁾.

The Minister of Industry is Antwan Jubran. He has been Minister since 1987, when he replaced Ali al-Tarabulsi, who was removed because of President al-Asad's concern over the electricity crisis. Jubran was Minister of State for Premiership Affairs from 12/3/80 to 12/4/81 and, from 12/4/81 to October 1987, Minister of State for People's Assembly Affairs. In 4/27/84 he was given the additional authority of the prime minister for the Cabinet Affairs Office, the Council of State, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and the Syrian Red Crescent. From 4/8/85 to 1987, he was also Acting Minister of Social Affairs and Labor.

The Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense is responsible for providing meteorology data and programs.

The Minister of Defense, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister for Defense, is Mustafa Talas (See section 4.A.1.c.iii. and 4.B.)

In addition to the Central Government Offices, most of these ministries have offices at Governorate, Basin, and Project levels.

4.E. DESCRIPTION OF THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

The leaders of the Party, Military/Security, and Ministerial bureaucracies make up a power elite that the President both leads and consults in the decision-making process. Although the President is clearly dominant, the decision-making process appears to be colligial; other members of the elite are not mere staff readily discarded or ignored⁽⁴²⁶¹⁾.

The Party

Under the Baath Party, Regional Congresses are held at which delegates debate government policy and on occasions go further than merely rubber stamping. At the 8th Congress in January 1985, 771 delegates were present. The most prominent were members of al-Asad's inner circle. The others were Party members from the army, the security services, the professions and universities, the rural middle class, together with workers and peasants. The delegates debated, often in small committees, for fourteen days and elected members of the higher party bodies, the Central Committee and the Regional Command, which is responsible for supervising the activities of the government. The candidates were nominated by the ruling elite.

The Congress is a time for al-Asad and his circle to meet party delegates and to get their input into the shaping of policy. While this process is in large part for appearance's sake, the regime does encourage debate of certain issues affecting the economy and domestic affairs and from the debate assesses the mood of its supporters and tests the feasibility and popularity of future policies. The debate cannot go too far, and this is recognized by both sides. Once a policy is decided upon, the government ends debate and enforces its decisions⁽⁴⁷⁰⁶⁾.

When the regime has sought consultation on the wider objectives of economic policy, it has been more likely to turn to the party than to the bureaucracy. During the economic crises of 1976-77, when the existing draft of the fourth five-year plan had to be scrapped, a special session of party cadres was convened to discuss the parameters of the new plan. Similarly, when military expenditures and civil war forced the adoption of an austerity program in 1980, it was the delegates to the eighth party congress who decided where the cuts should be made and who would shoulder them⁽⁴⁷¹¹⁾.

The State

The state has been the motor behind all large scale development projects. They have been imposed from above and the major decisions taken by decision-makers in the central government.

Some view this as a symbol of the state's repressive power. Others view it as a symbol of the state's welfare aspirations, of its expeditious response to public demands. Native townspeople want schools, health facilities, communications networks, and the amenities, as well as for their town to have national importance and recognition. Officials and representatives from Damascus want to see results from their efforts and to be valued for their work.

Major decisions about the future of a governorate are taken by those in power in Damascus and delivered to the local people through the state apparatus and the provincial political leaders. Development comes to the governorate from the outside, its 'terms of reference' defined by the elite in the capital. The political and administrative structure provided by the state is crucial, not only for the development, but also for the social organization of the region. But people living in the area do not merely react to forces beyond their influence. There is an active two-way communication, which cannot, however, disguise the structural inequality between the national power-holders and the ordinary local inhabitants or those employed to develop the governorate⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Linkage Phenomena

Ashirah

To gain access to power-holders, ordinary citizens manipulate and use kinship links, and conversely powerholders use kinship links to expand their power base. By using the family (*ashirah*) idiom in the context of party relations and of bureaucratic procedures, as well as in the building of networks to powerful patrons, the state apparatus can create relations of dependency and contain conflicts. The use of kinship links enables those controlling the state apparatus partially to obscure repression and exploitation. The line between ruler and ruled becomes blurred when individuals act in this context, and the blurring acts as an obstacle to the active realization of class consciousness. As long as town natives and villagers talk of *ashirah* ideals as important but at the same time use available relations which are contrary to these ideals to solve their individual problems, the powerholders can control the distribution of favors⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Jamaah or Shillah

In addition, virtually all educated male urban Syrians belong to a circle (*jamaah* or, colloquially, *shillah*). They are multi-purpose non-hierarchical groups which function outside, in opposition to, or as a complement to the more traditional relations of kinship. A group of friends at university, in the army, or from political organizations form a circle and socialize more or less intensively within it. Depending on its membership, a circle can be extremely important, socially, professionally, financially, and

politically, sometimes more so than one's family (*ashirah*). Unlike the family, however, it is based on choice, not ascription. A circle consisting of people with extensive links over and across Syrian bureaucracies can thus provide access for most of its members.

Women do not participate in these circles, and it will be interesting to see if the increased number of women in the work place will dissipate their hold or if women will become absorbed into them⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Wastah

In these complex relationships, a significant means for powerholders to gain access to the local population and for the local population to gain access to those in power is an age old social phenomenon, known as mediation (*wastah*)⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Wastah can be defined as mediation, and it is central to the understanding of political relations as comprehended by the local population. These relationships come in many forms. They can be flexible and varied; they can be *ad hoc* or permanent; they can be direct or indirect. In almost all contacts with the bureaucracy, mediation is used⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

Many people act at different times both as mediators and as seekers of mediation, expanding through such activities their personal network. Mediation is often enacted among kinship groups or interlocking circles of friends. Networks of relationships and access are cultivated when no immediate goals are sought. But, while this system is successful in solving daily problems and in paving the way for individuals to cut through red tape and connect with their legal, but rather inaccessible, rights, it does not give more people a share in or an influence on the actual running of the state. On the contrary, it reinforces the *status quo*⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

In addition, the prevalence of this routine everyday mediation also paves the way for a less benign form of mediation, a super-mediation (*wastah qawiyah*) which in many ways resembles patronage. Unlike simple, everyday mediation, which does not threaten the explicit ideals of the state, this super-mediation is used as a device to circumvent the basic intentions of the Syrian state. Whether or not it is justified, super-mediation has become almost wholly identified with the Baath party, because the Party is so intimately tied in with the state apparatus and because the Party cadres are stronger than the state bureaucracy⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾. However, since it operates outside the formal structures of the Party at the hands of individual Party members, it does not strengthen the Party as an institution, but only the "empires" of the individual Party members.

Super-mediation can arrange the impossible. But in doing so it creates relationships of overt dependency. Nor is it easily obtained. Such relationships have to be built up slowly. They involve a member of the in-group, a patron; a member of the out-group, a client; and a go-between, a mediator. A mediator with access to clients can, in relative terms, become a junior patron. If the client has been committed long enough to the relationship with the patron, he too will become a mediator for new applicants for mediation and the patron. But ultimately super-mediation is controlled by the politician official who as a Party member has been able - through his network of *shillaal* - to have a finger in all the state's vital economic and political pies⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.

The Syrian political system cannot be understood simply by reference to *wastah*, nor can political decisions in Syria be reduced to issues of patronage. But for the people at the local level, local politics is seen in terms of relations of mediation, and their relationship with Damascus is seen in terms of patronage. Access to a patron through a mediator creates an illusion of sharing power and the decisional role, and the patron in power tries to stress this perception of the client that he is an active partner. What the patron realizes - and the client does not perceive - is that these relations give him and his fellow patrons access to the citizenry and augment their ability to preempt decision-making and to control⁽⁴⁷⁰⁴⁾.