



**Universiteit Utrecht**

## Erich Mielke's Last Gift

*The Legacy of the Stasi in the Middle East: From the German Democratic Republic to the Islamic State*



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MA Research Thesis International Relations in Historical Perspective

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## Abstract

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This thesis examines to what extent the way the Islamic State operates can be traced back to the intelligence relationship between the Stasi and the Ba'ath party in Iraq during the 1970s and 1980s. As an explorative research, it aims to map potential continuities between the Stasi and the Islamic State with regard to both the organizational structure of the Islamic State's intelligence apparatus, as well as its operational techniques. In the first chapter, the ideological role of the Stasi within the GDR is examined. In the second chapter, materials from the Stasi archives are analysed to determine the extent of the intelligence relationship between the Stasi and the Ba'ath, and to see how this relationship has influenced the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath. In the third chapter, the intelligence apparatus of the Islamic State and its link with the Ba'ath are explored. In order to trace such continuities, a framework of different degrees of influence has been developed, which ranges from level 1 (low) to level 4 (high). There are several similarities, in organizational structure, as well as in the extent of surveillance of citizens, and the heavy use of informants, that indicate that the intelligence apparatus of the Islamic State has been indirectly influenced by the Stasi support to the Iraqi Ba'ath party.

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## List of Abbreviations

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ASBP	Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party
AQC	Al Qaeda Central
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BStU	Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Stasi Records Agency)
DGMI	Directorate for General Military Intelligence
DGS	Directorate for General Security
GDR	German Democratic Republic
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
IIS	Iraqi Intelligence Service
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JTJ	Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad
K-5	Kommissariat-5
KPdSU	Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion (CPSU, Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Stasi (Ministry for State Security)
MdI	Ministerium des Innern (Ministry of the Interior)
MGB	Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti SSSR (Ministry for State Security)
MSC	Mujahideen Shura Council
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for the Interior)
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Occupied Zone)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SdM	Sekretariat des Ministers
SSO	Special Security Organization
ZA	Zentralarchiv
ZOS	Zentraler Operativstab – MfS-Lagezentrum

## List of Relevant MfS Branches

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Abteilung X	Department for International Relations <sup>1</sup>
Abteilung X 104	Cooperation with the intelligence and security organs of Iraq and Syria
HA I	NVA and Border Troops
HA II	Counter-espionage
HA VII	Securing of the des Mdl and of the <i>Volkspolizei</i>
HA XX	Monitoring of the opposition, the churches, as well as the securing of the parties and mass organizations
HA XXII	Counter-terrorism
HV A	Main Administration for Reconnaissance, the Stasi's foreign intelligence organization).
ZAIG	Central Analytical Department

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<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Abteilung X of the HV A, which was responsible for disinformation



## Introduction

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*Syria, late 2012. A former colonel of the intelligence service of Saddam Hussein's air defence force travels to Syria. Part of a then still unknown group, this man, who lived under his nom-de-guerre 'Haji Bakr', would become the architect of the organisation we now all know as the Islamic State. When Haji Bakr was shot and killed in January 2014, he was in the possession of documents that he had intended to keep strictly confidential: the blueprint of the Islamic State, describing how a country can be gradually subjugated. Containing organisational charts, lists and schedules sketching out the structure of the Islamic State, all the way down to the local level, these documents formed a technically precise plan for an 'Islamic Intelligence State' – a caliphate run by an intelligence organization called the Emni, resembling East Germany's notorious domestic intelligence agency, the Stasi.<sup>2</sup>*

This resemblance is likely not a coincidence, but – partly - the result of the relationship between the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Iraqi Ba'ath party during the Cold War. This paper aims at exploring this resemblance within the context of the relationship between the Stasi and the Ba'ath party. Three (proto-)states will thus be examined: the German Democratic Republic, Iraq between 1969 and 2003, and the Islamic State.<sup>3</sup> What these three (proto-states) have in common is that they are all political-ideological dictatorships that demand(ed) complete political-ideological submission of their citizens, and they all use(d) state security to reinforce this. Considering the intelligence relationship that existed between the GDR and Iraq during the Cold War, and the fact that many Iraqi (intelligence) officers have defected to the Islamic State after the American invasion in 2003, it is interesting to see if there are clues for a possible direct or indirect influence of the Stasi on the intelligence workings of the Islamic State. Moreover, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the Global Cold War - a relatively new field of research - and its consequences for the present.

In order to do so, the following question will be answered:

*To what extent can the way IS operates be traced back to the support of the Stasi to the Ba'ath party in Iraq?*

This has led to the following sub-research questions:

- What was the ideological role of the MfS within the GDR and how was this visible in practice, as well as in the organizational structure of the GDR?
- What are the contributions of the MfS to the strengthening of the Ba'ath intelligence apparatus, and to what extent can developments of the Ba'ath intelligence apparatus be attributed to these contributions?

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<sup>2</sup> Christoph Reuter, "Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State," *Der Spiegel Online*, April 18, 2015. accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274-druck.html>

<sup>3</sup> The status and use of the denomination of 'state' for the Islamic State is controversial and subject of discussion. For the purpose of this research, IS will be considered an unrecognized proto-state. This research will refer to the organization as the Islamic State, rather than Da'esh, which is sometimes used instead to indicate the non-recognition of IS as a state. However, due to the fact that 'Islamic State' is more commonly used, this research has opted to follow the general line.

- What is the connection between the Ba'ath party in Iraq and the Islamic State and what are the implications of Stasi support in strengthening the Iraqi (Ba'ath) security apparatus for the organizational structure and operational strength of the Emni?

## Historiography

Although the many proxy wars that were fought in the Third World during the Cold War have been a field of study for some decennia already, this field of research has been given a new impulse after Odd Arne Westad coined this the Global Cold War, in his book *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*.<sup>4</sup>

In the literature, the link between the Stasi and the Iraqi Ba'ath party has not been researched much. Since the Stasi archives have been made accessible to scholars, much has been written on the workings of the East German Ministry for State Security. So far, most research on Stasi interactions with other countries and foreign governments has focused on Stasi espionage in European countries, West Germany in particular. The most important literature in this area, and regarding the Stasi in general, are the books commissioned by the *Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (BstU), the German federal agency that oversees the preservation and protection of the Stasi archives and investigating the actions of the Stasi. In the series called *Wissenschaftliche Reihe*, several important books have been published. In *Die DDR Staatssicherheit: Schild and Schwert der Partei*, German historian Jens Gieseke provides a clear and complete insight in the workings of the Stasi, and analyses the role of the Stasi in protecting the ideology of the GDR leadership.<sup>5</sup> Similar information can be found in his contribution to the book *Handbuch der Kommunistischen Geheimdienste in Osteuropa 1944-1991*,<sup>6</sup> and in *The History of the Stasi*, which is the translated and updated version of his book *Mielke-Konzern: Die Geschichte der Stasi, 1945-1990*. Although Gieseke briefly discusses the fact that the Stasi has supported several foreign regimes in Africa and the Middle East, he does not mention Iraq.

Other literature in *Wissenschaftliche Reihe* provide useful insights into specific events and activities of the Stasi. These include *Das Gesicht dem Westen Zu: DDR-Spionage gegen die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, by Georg Herbstritt and Helmut Müller-Enbergs<sup>7</sup>, and *West-Arbeit des MfS: Das Zusammenspiel von "Aufklärung" und "Abwehr"* by Hubertus Knabe<sup>8</sup> regarding the espionage activities of the Stasi in West Germany, and *Der "Tag X" und die Staatssicherheit: 17. Juni 1953: Reaktionen und Konsequenzen im DDR-Machtapparat*, by Karl Wilhelm Fricke and Roger Engelmann for the uprising in 1953 and its consequences for the Stasi.<sup>9</sup> In *Staatssicherheit am Ende: Warum es den Mächtigen nicht gelang, 1989 eine Revolution zu verhindern*, Walter Süß gives a thorough explanation of the reasons for the downfall of the GDR.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, in *Over de Muur. De DDR, de*

<sup>4</sup> Odd Arne Westad. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Jens Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Jens Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," in *Handbuch der Kommunistischen Geheimdienste in Osteuropa 1944-1991*, ed. Łukasz Kamiński et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Georg Herbstritt and Helmut Müller-Enbergs. *Das Gesicht dem Westen Zu ... DDR-Spionage gegen die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Hubertus Knabe. *West-Arbeit des MfS: Das Zusammenspiel von "Aufklärung" und "Abwehr"*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Karl Wilhelm Fricke, and Roger Engelmann. *Der "Tag X" und die Staatssicherheit: 17. Juni 1953: Reaktionen und Konsequenzen im DDR-Machtapparat. Vol 24*. (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Walter Süß. *Staatssicherheit am Ende: Warum es den Mächtigen nicht gelang, 1989 eine Revolution zu verhindern*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1999).

*Nederlandse kerken en de vredesbeweging*, Beatrice de Graaf provides an insight in the peace movement in the GDR that played an important role in the protests against the Stasi in the 1980s.<sup>11</sup>

Another important source on the Stasi is the *Anatomie der Staatssicherheit*. This is a series of handbooks, also commissioned by the BStU, that describe and analyze the different branches of the Stasi, as well as aspects such as the role of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* (IM).

There is some literature that goes into the support of the Stasi to regimes in the Third World. These include *Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR und dem Ministerium des Innern Kubas (MININT)* by Gerhard Ehlert, Jochen Staadt and Tobias Voigt about the relationship between the GDR and Cuba<sup>12</sup>, "Kontinuität und Wandel in der Namibia-Politik der DDR" by Hans-Georg Schleicher about Namibia<sup>13</sup>, and "*Es geht um unsere Existenz*" *Die Politik der DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien* by Hans-Joachim Döring.<sup>14</sup>

However, none of the works commissioned by the BStU, nor any of the other books examining the relationship between the Stasi and the Third World, provide an insight in the relationship between the Stasi and Iraq. Still, in the past few years, more evidence has been made public from both the Stasi archives and captured Iraqi Ba'ath documents. This has resulted in an article written by Joseph Sassoon in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, called "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1968-1989". This article mainly focuses on the motivations of the Stasi to give or deny support to the Ba'ath party. In his article, Sassoon provides a background for the relationship between the GDR and Iraq, examines the reasons for the change in East-German policy towards Iraq in the late 1970s and 1980s, and explains how the GDR handled the frequent requests from the Iraqi government for intelligence assistance.<sup>15</sup> What is lacking in Sassoon's article, however, is a thorough assessment of the changes within the Ba'ath party that were the result of Stasi support, as only in the conclusion he shortly suggests some similarities between the Stasi and the Ba'ath. One of the goals of this thesis is to provide more insight in this.

Quite some research has been done regarding the Iraqi security apparatus of the Ba'ath regime, although none of this research mentions the support to the regime by the Stasi. An important book on the workings of the Iraqi state security apparatus is *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* by Kanan Makiya, as it describes and analyses in detail the "Kafkaesque world" full of fear that Iraq has become under Ba'athist rule.<sup>16</sup>

On the relationship between the Ba'ath party in Iraq and the Islamic State, a substantial amount of research has been published in the last few years. Important works in this area include *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the 'Islamic State'* by Benjamin Isakhan<sup>17</sup>, *The Origins of ISIS: The Collapse of Nations and Revolution in the Middle East* by Simon Mabon and Stephen Royle<sup>18</sup>, *A History*

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<sup>11</sup> Beatrice de Graaf. *Over de Muur: de DDR, de Nederlandse Kerken en de Vredesbeweging*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Gerhard Ehlert, Jochen Staadt, and Tobias Voigt. *Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR (MfS) und dem Ministerium des Innern Kubas (MININT)*. (FU Berlin, Forschungsverbund SED-Staat, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Hans Georg Schleicher. "Kontinuität und Wandel in der Namibia-Politik der DDR". *Asien – afrika – lateinamerika*, no. 27 (1999).

<sup>14</sup> Hans-Joachim Döring. "*Es geht um unsere Existenz*": *die Politik der DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014).

<sup>16</sup> Kanan Makiya. *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Isakhan. *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the 'Islamic State'*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Simon Mabon and Stephen Royle. *The Origins of ISIS: The Collapse of Nations and Revolution in the Middle East*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).

of ISIS by Fawaz Gerges<sup>19</sup>, and “The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate” by Ahmed S. Hashim, which was published in *Middle East Policy*, Volume 11, Issue 4, in 2014.<sup>20</sup> However, none of these works mentions the Stasi support in the strengthening of the Iraqi intelligence system, and the consequences of the training these Ba’ath officers received for their later activities within the Islamic State.

The most important work regarding the intelligence operations of the Islamic State is “Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State”, written by Christoph Reuter and published in 2015 in *der Spiegel*. This article, which is based on papers that were in the possession of an Iraqi officer that planned the Islamic State’s takeover in Syria, sheds light on the intelligence operations of the Islamic State regarding the way they gain control over villages in Iraq and Syria. Although the article refers to the resemblance of the Islamic State with the Stasi, it does not explicitly mention any links between the two organisations.<sup>21</sup> Partially based on this article is a research report written by Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla called “The ISIS Emni: The Inner Workings and Origins of ISIS’s Intelligence Apparatus” which was published in *Perspectives on Terrorism* at the beginning of 2017.<sup>22</sup>

However, there is no literature at all that has researched a potential direct or indirect link between the Stasi and the Islamic State. More insight in this could provide us with a more thorough understanding of the processes that took place during the Global Cold War, and the consequences of such processes for the present.

## Methodology and structure

The aim of this thesis is to explore the likelihood of a direct or indirect transfer of knowledge and skills regarding the construction of an intelligence organization from the Stasi, through the Ba’ath, to ISIS. The period that will be researched is 1969-present. The research in this thesis will firstly be based on materials from the Stasi archives (BStU). These documents will be used to establish the type and extent of support that the Stasi gave to Iraq. This will be backed up with secondary literature on GDR-Iraq relations during the Cold War.

Moreover, secondary literature on the Ba’ath security apparatus and some reports based on documents captured from the files of the Saddam-era Iraqi intelligence services, and made available by the US Department of Defense (DOD)<sup>23</sup>, will be analysed. This will then be reviewed within the context of the Stasi support provided to Iraq, to see if there are any significant changes in the intelligence system of the Ba’ath party that can be traced back to this support.

For the link between the Ba’ath and the Islamic State, the main source will be secondary literature. This choice has been made because many non-secondary sources are either not available to researchers, and often are in Arabic.

The final link between the Stasi and the Islamic State will be explored using the previously established intelligence methods of the Ba’ath that are (likely) based on the support of the Stasi, and

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<sup>19</sup> Fawaz Gerges. *A History of ISIS*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Ahmed S. Hashim. “The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate”. *Middle East Policy*, 11, no. 4 (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Christoph Reuter, “Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State,” *Der Spiegel Online*, April 18, 2015. accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274-druck.html>

<sup>22</sup> Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla. “The ISIS Emni: The Inner Workings and Origins of ISIS’s Intelligence Apparatus”. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 1 (2017).

<sup>23</sup> Kevin M. Woods and Mark E. Stout, “New Sources for the Study of Iraqi Intelligence during the Saddam Era”. *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 4 (2010): 547-587.

see to what extent these are similar to the intelligence methods of the Islamic State. However, it is important to keep in mind that this thesis has an explorative character, and that any answer to the research question cannot be given with absolute certainty. Therefore, any conclusion will point to the *likelihood* of an indirect or direct transfer, rather than claiming with certainty that such a transfer took place.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the ideological role of the Stasi (or MfS<sup>24</sup> as it will be called from here on) within the GDR will be described. This is necessary because it will function as a comparative framework for the other chapters. Without explaining the role of the MfS within the GDR, it is impossible to look at influences, cooperation, and similarity between the MfS, the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath and the Emni. Then, the first and the second chapter together will function as a comparative framework for the third chapter, in which the organizational structure and operational intelligence skills of the Emni will be analysed and compared with those of the MfS and the Ba'ath, to see if any influences can be discerned.

### *Exploring continuities*

Although it is impossible to claim any (direct) influences of the Stasi to the Emni with certainty, there are too many indications that some degree of influence has occurred over the last few decades to not explore this possibility. Exploring the likelihood of a direct or indirect transfer of intelligence skills between the Stasi and the Islamic States essentially means to look at the process of translation of this knowledge throughout the years. During this process, knowledge will be lost, and new knowledge from other sources will be obtained (as indicated by the black arrows in figure 1). Although this research acknowledges that these influences exist, they will not be examined. Instead, this research aims at exploring and mapping the red line, which indicates the continuity (see the red arrow in figure 1) between the Stasi (MfS) and the Islamic State, through the Ba'ath party of Iraq. Both direct and indirect influences will be looked at.

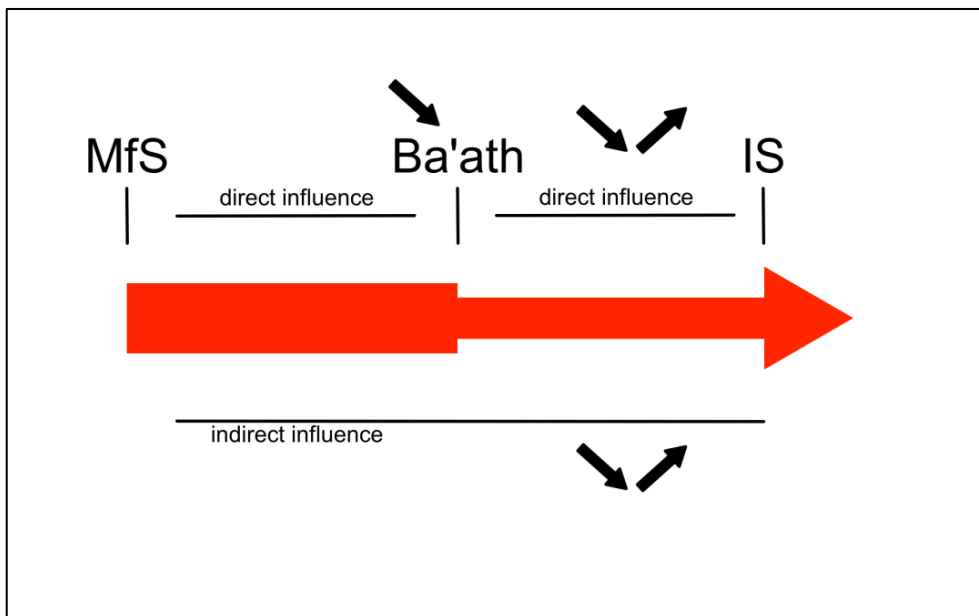


Figure 1: The process of translation

<sup>24</sup> Abbreviation for *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*

This possibility will be explored by mapping the continuities of intelligence knowledge between the intelligence organizations of East Germany's SED, Iraq's Ba'ath Party, and the Islamic State over the years, which will be expressed in a scale that ranges from level 1 (low resemblance) to level 4 (direct cooperation). The categories on this scale are:

1. **Low, indirect influence.** This level is based on resemblance and will be used to categorize similarities between the MfS and the Emni that are similar enough to be mentioned as potential influences, but for which there is not enough evidence to make a strong claim.
2. **Moderate to medium, indirect influence.** Similar to the first category, this level is based on resemblance. This category will be used for similarities between the MfS and the Emni for which it is quite likely that they are the result of an indirect transfer of knowledge. This category will also be used for similarities between either the MfS and the Ba'ath, or for similarities between the Ba'ath and the Emni that are not a direct result of cooperation, but could possibly be an indirect influence of such cooperation.
3. **Medium, direct influence.** This category will be used to indicate influences that are the result of either direct cooperation between the Stasi and the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath, or the result of activities of the Ba'ath officers that joined the Islamic State. These influences are likely, but will be categorized as medium when there is no secondary literature that backs up this connection.
4. **High, direct influence.** This category will also be used for influences that are the result of either direct cooperation between the Stasi and the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath, or the result of activities of the Ba'ath officers that joined the Islamic State. However, this category will only be used if the continuity has been established in secondary literature.

Influences will be explored both at the organizational level, as well as with regard to operational techniques. With the latter is meant the way in which intelligence knowledge is visible in practice. This could for example mean a similarity in monitoring practices, or foreign intelligence techniques.

## Chapter 1: Schild und Schwert der Partei

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*East Berlin, November 19, 1976. After years of being under constant scrutiny and observation, East German writer and dissident Jürgen Fuchs is arrested for protesting against the deprivation of East German citizenship of another dissident, and put into the Stasi prison in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen. Here, he is held for nine months without receiving a sentence, during which time he was subjected to ongoing psychological intimidation. After he was finally released, he and his family were forcefully deported to West Berlin in August 1977.*

Created on 8 February 1950, the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS) - also known as the Stasi - was the Intelligence and Security Service of East German. It was part of the governing body of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED), the dictatorial party that ruled the GDR during its existence from 1949 until 1990. As a one-party state, SED became the government, thus entangling the party structure with the state structure (see figure 2 and figure 3). Designating themselves as the “shield and sword of the party”, the MfS was the most important *Herrschaftsinstrument* of the SED, who used the MfS to systematically supervise and repress the people of the GDR to enforce its claim to power.<sup>25</sup> The MfS functioned as a military body that was not subordinate to the *Ministerrat der DDR* (Ministerial Council of the GDR), but answered directly to the General Secretary of the GDR.<sup>26</sup> So even though it was a ministry, it fell under the responsibility of the party, rather than the ministerial responsibility of a member of the cabinet of the GDR.

The MfS saw its activity as part of the global systemic conflict between socialism and imperialism. In addition, there was the special situation of the “socialism in half a country” practiced in the GDR under the conditions of the two-state system in Germany. From this, the SED established its security logic: internal social conflicts were principally driven by West German or other ‘imperial’ intelligence services, governments, and other organizations.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the East German people had to be monitored closely, to prevent contact with such Western ‘enemy’ influences.

The MfS was first and foremost a secret police, that monitored and fought (presumed) opponents of the SED dictatorship. It had the power to arrest people, and to put them in their own prisons, until they had been tried (a process that was also heavily influenced by the MfS). It was the aim of the MfS to bring the entire society under its control, to make sure that the party’s ideological line was not opposed. As a secret police, the MfS produced top-secret reports to the SED leadership on the situation and mood in the GDR, for which the MfS branch *Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe* (Central Evaluation and Information Group, or ZAIG) was responsible.<sup>28</sup> As it was the responsibility of the MfS to prevent opposition to the SED regime, it also functioned as an ‘ideology police’. In this capacity, the MfS turned the GDR into a surveillance state: it monitored the citizens of the GDR, intimidated opinion-makers, searched houses and tapped phones, intercepted

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<sup>25</sup> Holger Kulick, “Dossier Stasi. Die Angstmacher: Stasi – Was war das?,” (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*), January 17, 2017, accessed 13 April, 2017, [www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/218371/definition](http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/218371/definition).

<sup>26</sup> Kulick, “Dossier Stasi. Die Angstmacher: Stasi – Was war das?,”

<sup>27</sup> Jens Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” in *Handbuch der Kommunistischen Geheimdienste in Osteuropa 1944-1991*, ed. Łukasz Kamiński et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009),

<sup>28</sup> Jens Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2000), 80.

communications between people, discredited dissidents and ruined their careers, and created conflicts within groups that were opposing the regime.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, the MfS was a renowned intelligence service for espionage and counter-espionage. With its department *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (Main Directorate for Reconnaissance, or HV A), led by Markus Wolf, the organization inter alia carried out espionage activities in West Germany, and other 'imperialist' states. Because foreign intelligence and the domestic secret police tasks were integrated within one organization, defense and reconnaissance cooperated closely, blurring the boundaries between intelligence activities and internal repression.<sup>30</sup>

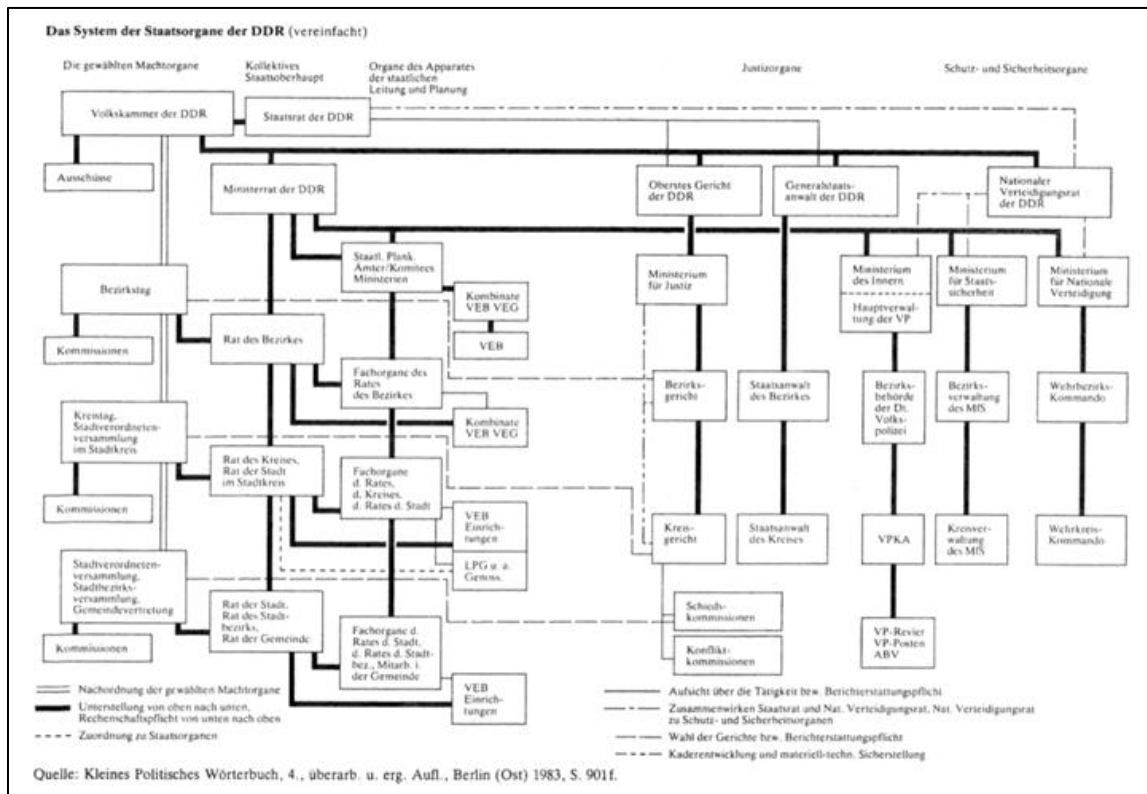


Figure 2: The system of state organs of the GDR<sup>31</sup>

Over time, the state security apparatus developed into a large bureaucracy that took on tasks beyond the scope of intelligence and secret police work; the MfS guarded leading GDR functionaries, operated the Politburo settlement in Wandlitz, took over passport checks from the border police, monitored the travel flows between East and West Germany, and secured and operated secret weapons and technology trade.<sup>32</sup> These developments show how deeply the MfS was embedded within the state apparatus of the GDR.

<sup>29</sup> Kulick, "Dossier Stasi. Die Angstmacher: Stasi – Was war das?"

<sup>30</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Kleines Politisches Wörterbuch* (Bild: East Berlin, 1983), 901f.

<sup>32</sup> Jens Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," 199.



### 1945-1950: Creation and Relationship with the KGB

After 1944, the secret police of the Soviet Union, the NKVD<sup>33</sup>, started to create security services resembling its own image within the newly forming Soviet Bloc.<sup>34</sup> In the aftermath of the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) issued Order No. 201, which called for the establishment of a special police agency to accelerate denazification in the eastern zone.

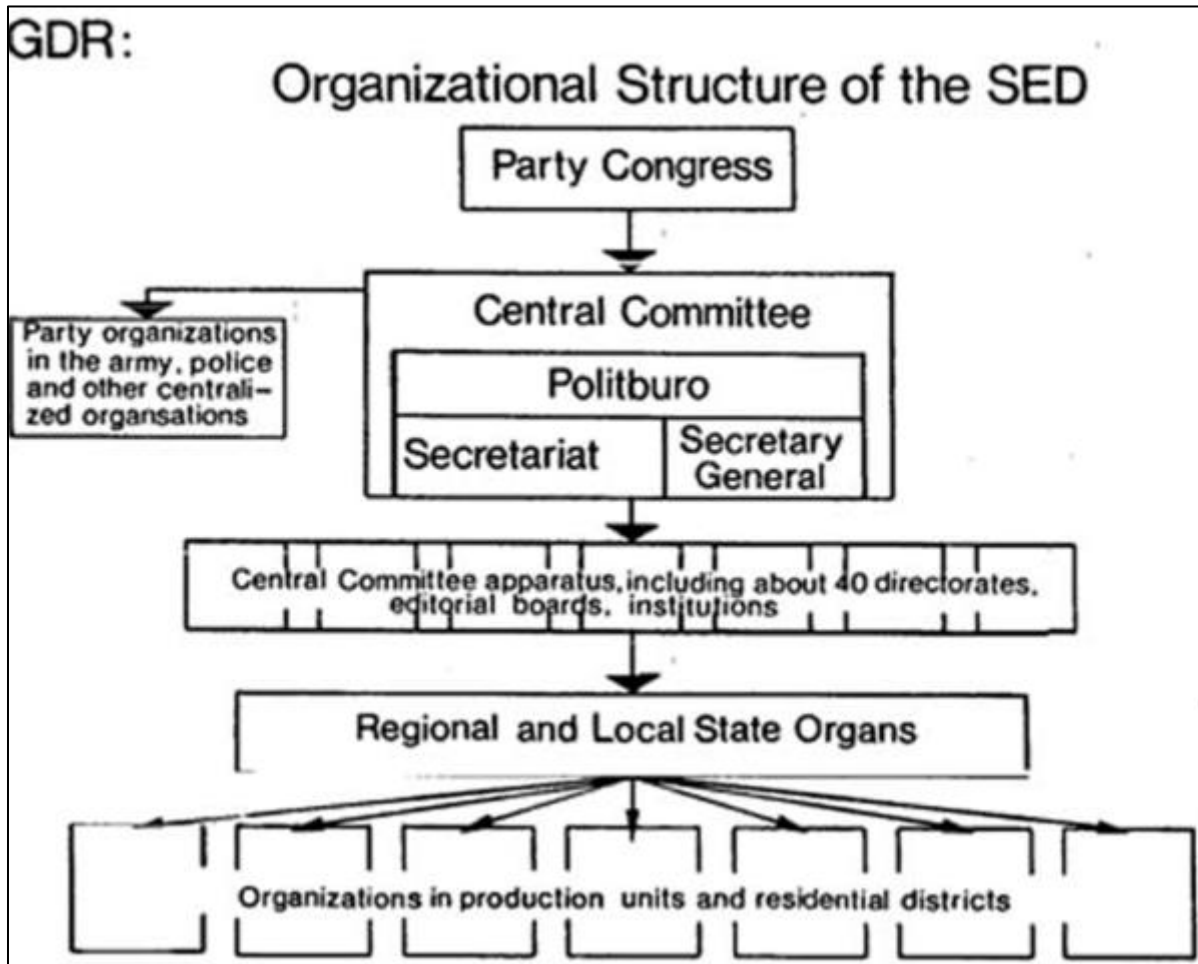


Figure 3: Organizational structure of the SED<sup>35</sup>

This led to the creation of the Kommissariat-5 (K-5) in August 1947. The tasks of the K-5 already comprised the core of the later (domestic) tasks of the MfS, and included the defense against sabotage, assassinations, violations of the orders of the Soviet Military Administration, weapon evasions, the continuing existence of Nazi organizations, crimes against humanity, and the spread of rumors and slogans and other violations against the construction of communist power in East Germany.<sup>36</sup> The tasks of the K-5 thus expanded beyond denazification and included the oppression of opponents of the Soviet and communist regime.

<sup>33</sup> Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for the Interior), after 1946 known as MGB.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Popplewell, "The KGB and the Control of the Soviet Bloc: The Case of East Germany," *Intelligence and National Security* 13, no. 1 (1998): 255.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Rüdiger, "The Other German System: A Look at the German Democratic Republic". In: *Contemporary Germany: Politics and Culture*, ed. Charles Burdick, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Winfried Kudszen. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 221.

<sup>36</sup> Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," 203.

Although K-5 was assisted by the SED, it was in practice an auxiliary of Soviet intelligence; the main task of the K-5 was to assist MGB<sup>37</sup> operative groups in the arbitrary arrest of supposed and actual Nazi activists, as well as the arrest of opponents of the transformation policies that were carried out by the communists and the Soviet occupation forces. Next to this, the top positions were occupied by long-standing SED<sup>38</sup> members who were confidants of the Soviets, and by former concentration camp prisoners.<sup>39</sup>

For the SED leadership, in particular Walter Ulbricht, Wilhelm Pieck, and Otto Grotewohl, the K-5 was not enough: they wanted an independent secret police in the SBZ. This led to the creation of the *Hauptverwaltung zum Schutz der Volkswirtschaft* (Main Administration for the Protection of the National Economy). Initially part of the *Ministerium des Innern* (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Mdi, the secret police was upgraded to an independent ministry on 8 February 1950, and was renamed *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*. The organization was still strictly scrutinized by the Soviet Union; only about ten percent of the almost 1600 K-5 employees switched to the MfS, due to the incredibly strict checks that were imposed by Soviet secret agents.<sup>40</sup> Long-time Soviet ally Wilhelm Zaisser became the first Minister for State Security.

This historic prelude illustrates the important role that the Soviet Union played in the formation of the East German secret police and intelligence service. Although the direct influence of the Soviet Union on the actions of the MfS decreased in later years, Soviet policy and communist ideology kept playing an important role within the MfS.

### 1950-1953: The First Years

In the first years of its existence, the MfS established itself as an instrument of ‘bureaucratic terror’.<sup>41</sup> Although the MfS had become an independent ministry within the SED government, the factual power was still in the hands of the MGB. The MfS resembled the Soviet intelligence organization in organizational form, as it united the foreign and domestic branches of intelligence into one body. Its practice was also modelled after – and controlled by – the MGB. Every leader of a service unit with the MfS was assigned a Soviet trainer. The MfS had to mirror Soviet practices in tracking down and arresting all true and alleged opponents of the transformation to *Volksdemokratie* (people’s democracy) in all sectors of society, including the economy and agriculture, state institutions, parties and mass organizations, and in the religious communities, and in important cases, the Soviet authorities took over proceedings.<sup>42</sup>

The main method of the MfS, in this phase of bureaucratic terror, consisted of arbitrary arrests and confession extortion by nightly interrogations and other means of torture. These interrogations

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<sup>37</sup> Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti SSSR, Ministry for State Security. The MGB was the Soviet intelligence agency from 1946 to 1953, after which it was succeeded by the MVD (1953-1954) and the KGB (1945-1991).

<sup>38</sup> The SED was founded in 1946 by a merger of the East German branch of the KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands) and the East German branch of the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands). The ‘long-standing’ SED members loyal to the Soviets that were occupying the high positions in the K-5 came from the KPD.

<sup>39</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 203.

<sup>40</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 222.

<sup>42</sup> An example is the case of Walter Linse, the Acting President of the *Untersuchungsausschusses Freiheitlicher Juristen* (Association of Free German Jurists), who was involved in the uncovering of human rights violations in the SBZ. He was kidnapped by the MfS from West Berlin, and in 1953 sentenced to death by a Soviet military tribunal Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 15

were aimed at proving alleged 'agent activity' of the arrested for Western intelligence organizations, and for German underground organizations, such as the *Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit* (Combatgroup against Inhumanity). Behind these accusations was the attitude based on Stalinist industrialization in the Soviet Union, which for example did not consider production losses in factories the result of damaged or overloaded machines, but rather the result of enemy sabotage acts.<sup>43</sup>

The peak of the bureaucratic terror carried out by the MfS in these early days was reached as a consequence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SED-Party Conference in July 1952. During this conference, Walter Ulbricht announced the plan to "methodically build up socialism in the German Democratic Republic".<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, he announced that the intensification of the class struggle was inevitable and that the workers had to break the "resistance of the enemy forces".<sup>45</sup> To enforce these plans, the MfS started to increase its activities. Between August and December 1952 alone, 1500 people were arrested, including the Minister of Trade and Supply Karl Hamann, for alleged 'sabotage of the scheduled supply of the population', and Minister of Foreign Affairs Georg Dertinger, who was accused of espionage.<sup>46</sup>

The MfS also expanded and reformed its organizational structure. In 1952, it dissolved its five state administrations, and replaced it with 14 district administrations. This was in line with the GDR land reforms following the 2<sup>nd</sup> SED-Party Conference, which split up East Germany into 14 district administration, and East Berlin. In the same year, the German Border Police and the Transport Police were, following Soviet example, made subordinate to the MfS by the Politburo. The MfS also possessed military units to guard its own buildings as well as important party and government buildings. In light of the 'intensification of the class struggle', the number of full-time MfS employees was doubled from around 4500 at the end of 1951 to about 8800 in 1952. Employees were mainly recruited from the Volkspolizei, as well as the Party apparatus and youth leagues.

In conclusion, it can be said that in these early years, the MfS quickly established itself as a means of the SED to 'terrorize' the East German population, by means of large-scale arbitrary arrests of anyone who opposed the ideological line of the regime. For this, the MfS quickly expanded in size, and reformed its organizational structure.

## 1953-1961: The Birth of the Police State

### *The June 1953 Uprising*

The reforms imposed by the SED following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Party Conference left their marks on East Germany. The increasing number of political prisoners, the oppression of *Andersdenkende* (political opponents to the regime), and the pressure put on workers had caused discontent.<sup>47</sup> The first half of 1953 saw a dramatic increase in emigration from the GDR. The subsequent 'brain drain' put a large pressure on the society as well as the economy.

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<sup>43</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Speech by Walter Ulbricht during the Second SED-Party Conference. *Das War die DDR – Eine Geschichte des anderen Deutschlands. Ich war Bürger der DDR*. Directed by: Gitta Nickel and Wolfgang Schwarze. First Run Features, 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," 223.

<sup>46</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 19.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview of the causes of the 17th of June Revolution, see Karl Wilhelm Fricke and Roger Engelmann. *Der "Tag X" und die Staatssicherheit: 17. Juni 1953; Reaktionen und Konsequenzen im DDR-Machtapparat*. Vol. 24. (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2003), 32-39.

Since the beginning of 1953, the SED had been trying to achieve a 'voluntary' increase in working standards. In practice, this acted as a wage cut for workers, as it demanded more work for the same salary.<sup>48</sup> On June 16, 1953, a large number of construction workers, who were discontent with the increase in work quota, went on strike. The MfS, as well as the SED and other state organs were caught by surprise, as the MfS had not received any relevant information indicating plans for such a strike.<sup>49</sup> The next morning, the strike had evolved into a massive political demonstration, demanding the resignation of the East German government.<sup>50</sup> The MfS could not do much to quell the demonstration. They guarded the party and government buildings, and formed operation groups to arrest the ringleaders of the demonstration. However, since Zaisser had prohibited the MfS to shoot the protesters, and many of the MfS staff had not received a proper training yet, the Soviet troops had to come in to squash the uprising.<sup>51</sup>

### *Consequences of the Uprising*

The 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1953 uprising had some grave consequences for the MfS. It was regarded as an intelligence failure, since the organization had not fulfilled its most important task to recognize and the strike. Unique about this period was, that, as a result of the MfS's intelligence failures, it was temporarily disbanded as an autonomous ministry and was degraded to a State Secretariat within the Mdl. This lasted until 24 November 1955.<sup>52</sup> Zaisser had to step down, after which he was succeeded by Ernst Wollweber.<sup>53</sup>

After the June uprising, the SED leadership demanded the development of a nationwide network of informers. State security was, in line with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Party Conference of 1952, still regarded as the main instrument for the establishment of socialism in the GDR. The MfS was tasked with "proving" the theory that the uprising had been a "fascist" provocation. The alleged Western organizers of the "putsch" had to be unmasked and arrested.<sup>54</sup>

Other new tasks of the MfS in light of the June uprising included active reconnaissance in West Germany and West Berlin with the aim of penetrating the most important instances of Western powers, such as the Bonn government and military and scientific research institutes, the execution of active counter-espionage in West Germany and West Berlin, as well as on the territory of the GDR, and the infiltration of agents within mass organizations, bourgeois political parties and church organizations in order to uncover illegal activities that opposed the ideology of the regime.<sup>55</sup>

In line with this, foreign espionage became a new task of the MfS, for which in 1956 the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (HV A) was created. Its precursor, the Institut für Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Forschung (Institute for Economic Research, or IWF) had been founded in 1951. Back then, it was an independent organization, and was subordinate only to the Politburo of

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<sup>48</sup> Fricke and Engelmann. *Der "Tag X" und die Staatssicherheit*, 38.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>50</sup> Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk. *17. Juni 1953-Volksaufstand in der DDR: Ursachen-Abläufe-Folgen*. (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2003), 105.

<sup>51</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>53</sup> Fricke and Engelmann. *Der "Tag X" und die Staatssicherheit*, 147-156.

<sup>54</sup> Jens Gieseke. *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 43.

<sup>55</sup> Karl Wilhelm Fricke and Roger Engelmann. "Konzentrierte Schläge". *Staatssicherheit und politische Prozesse in der DDR 1953-1956*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1998), S.251f. Cited in Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 25.

the SED and the Soviet intelligence service.<sup>56</sup> In 1953, the IWF was integrated into the MfS under the name HA XV. In 1956, its name was changed to HV A, analogous to the I HA of the KGB, that was responsible for espionage.<sup>57</sup> In 1959, a reorganization took place that divided the HV A into eight departments and one 'object' (object 9, the school).<sup>58</sup> Some other reorganizations took place in the time until 1989, meaning that the HV A in the end had a total of 15 operational departments.<sup>59</sup>

### *De-Stalinization and Political-Ideological Subversion*

On February 25, 1956, the new Soviet leader Khrushchev, announced in his secret speech to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the start of de-stalinization. This announcement led to uncertainty about the future tasks of the MfS, and tensions arose between Ulbricht and Wollweber. In 1957, this led to the forced resignation of Wollweber, who was then succeeded by Erich Mielke. De-stalinization was only limitedly implemented in the GDR, although in the summer of 1956, 25000 prisoners were granted early release. The uncertainty about the future of the MfS only lasted half a year. The internal uproar in Poland and Hungary at the end of 1956, as well as the rebellion of intellectuals and students in the GDR gave Ulbricht the opportunity to correct Wollweber's focus on the activities of Western intelligence services and underground organizations. Instead, he emphasised the fight against internal opposition forces in the GDR, that were influenced by 'imperialist' forces.<sup>60</sup>

This course correction, which was introduced at the 35<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Central Committee in 1958, led to the concept of *Politisch-Ideologische Diversion* (Political and Ideological Subversion, or PID). According to this concept, all forms of internal opposition in socialist countries could be traced back to the influence of "imperialist enemy centres", either by direct control by foreign secret services, or by mental influences. According to the SED, PID was the method of the 'enemy' to disintegrate the party, to eliminate "its ferocious role in the construction of socialism, the weakening of the GDR, and of the whole socialist camp".<sup>61</sup> The MfS focused in particular on persons who adhered to a democratic and Stalinist-critical socialism within and outside the SED. Such thoughts were scourged as "social democratism, opportunism, and revivalism". The concept of PID formed in the decades that followed the basis for the expansion of the secretive presence of the MfS in all areas of East German life.<sup>62</sup> Between the 5th Congress of the SED in 1958 and the building of the Wall in 1961, the main task of the MfS was to fight against the large number of people fleeing the republic, whose organizers had to be arrested.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Hauptverwaltung A (Anatomie der Staatssicherheit, MfS Handbuch – Aufgaben – Strukturen - Quellen)*. (Berlin: BStU, 2013): 20. Contrary to what many people think, the IWF was not subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the name Außenpolitischer Nachrichtendienst (Foreign Political Intelligence Service, or APN), see MfS Handbuch HV A, p. 25.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 41

<sup>59</sup> As not all of the HV A departments are relevant for this research, only the relevant ones will be discussed here. For a complete overview of all of the HV A departments and sub-departments, see *Hauptverwaltung A (Anatomie der Staatssicherheit, MfS Handbuch – Aufgaben – Strukturen - Quellen)*. (Berlin: BStU, 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," 225.

<sup>61</sup> Berichterstattung über die 35. Tagung des ZK, Protokoll der Kollegiumssitzung am 20.2.1958; BStU, MfS, SdM 1554, p. 63. Cited in Jens Gieseke, "Deutsche Demokratische Republik," 225).

<sup>62</sup> Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 32.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

## 1961-1971: The Berlin Wall and Further Expansion of the Police State

The East German authorities did not manage to put a stop to the enormous number of people fleeing the country, which had started to threaten the existence of the GDR, as more than 2.6 million people (on a population of 17 million) had fled, including many skilled workers. Therefore, the SED decided to close the border between East and West Germany on August 13, 1961, and to start building a wall between East and West Berlin to prevent GDR citizens from leaving. These measures were effective, as the mass expulsion from the GDR was stopped.<sup>64</sup>

After the borders in Berlin were closed, the MfS started to arrest many East Germans who were protesting the building of the Berlin Wall, as well as other disobedient persons who had been spared so far, to prevent unrest and to stop more people from trying to flee. Direct enforcement measures thus remained an essential instrument of the MfS, and posed a very effective and latent threat. In West Germany, aid organizations to help East Germans to flee the country had been established. The HA V/5 of the MfS became responsible for fighting these organizations. According to the MfS, these organizations committed “grave crimes against the state border and the sovereignty of the GDR”.<sup>65</sup> The HA V/5 carried out border inspections to prevent human trafficking together with the HA I (the Nationale Volksarmee and the border troops) and the HA IX (the investigative body of the MfS), as well as with the MfS *Arbeitsgruppe* for passport control. For this, the HA V/5 also set up departments in the district administrations, and hired additional staff.<sup>66</sup>

The introduction of the concept of PID by Ulbricht in 1958 was very important for the development of the HA V. In 1964, the name of the department was changed into HA XX, and it became responsible for the fight against PID, and it’s later progressed form *Politischen Untergrundtätigkeit* (political underground activities, or PUT).<sup>67</sup> The work of the HA XX was very influential, and the department has occasionally been designated as the actual core of the MfS. Although such a designation is exaggerated because of the small size of approximately 460 mitarbeiter (1989) in the ministry (and about twice as many in the district administration), it rightly points to the domestic significance of the HA XX in combatting oppositional movements in the GDR.<sup>68</sup>

The HA XX formed the core of the system of political repression and surveillance of the MfS. It was responsible for the monitoring of important parts of the state apparatus (including justice and health care), the bloc parties, the churches, and the entire cultural and media sector, which had been designated as centres of PID and PUT. The HA XX was also responsible for combating the “political underground”, in other words, the opposition.<sup>69</sup> The prosecution of oppositional activities also included the *geheimdienstliche* handling of “centres of PID and PUT” in West Germany and West Berlin. This included scrutinizing political institutions and research institutes, as well as the persecution of expatriated dissidents, such as the exiled writer and psychologist Jürgen Fucks, who was harassed by the MfS with ‘psychoterror’ and attacks.<sup>70</sup>

From 1963 onwards, Mielke introduced his ideas for the expansion of state security. The MfS started to expand its staff, which from 1968 onwards reached unrestrained enlargement. At the

<sup>64</sup> Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Auerbach et al. *Hauptabteilung XX: Staatsapparat, Blockparteien, Kirchen, Kultur, »politischer Untergrund«*. (MfS Handbuch). (Berlin: BStU, 2008), 20.

<sup>66</sup> Auerbach et al, *Hauptabteilung XX*, 20.

<sup>67</sup> In the mid-1970s, the MfS put all forms of PID under the umbrella terms “*Untergrundbewegung*” (underground movement) und “*Untergrundtätigkeit*” (underground activity). From this, the abbreviation PIT was derived. See Auerbach et al., *Hauptabteilung XX*, 151 for an overview of all activities that fell under PIT.

<sup>68</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 232.

<sup>69</sup> Auerbach et al, *Hauptabteilung XX*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 234.

beginning of Mielke's reign at the end of 1957, the MfS had 17400 employees. In 1971, this number had been increased to 45500 full-time staff. Now also carrying out the training of its employees with considerable effort, the MfS developed into a post-Stalinist bureaucracy that can be considered a "general enterprise for security, the securing of power, and oppression".<sup>71</sup>

The MfS systematically expanded its intelligence reporting to the SED top. According to Mielke, during this time, the uncovering of enemy activities in the East German economy was the main task of the MfS, to contribute to increasing productivity. In the spirit of prevention, the MfS sought to be present in every area of society. It also increasingly integrated police tasks, such as the passport checks at the border crossing points, and the monitoring of traffic over the border between East and West Germany. This also included the following and spying on Western visitors in the GDR. The *Arbeitsgruppe* responsible for this were in 1970 united into the HA VI. The border espionage unit of the border police was also added to the MfS, and a task division was arranged with the NVA. With this, the MfS strengthened its position against the other armed organs of the SED government.<sup>72</sup> The MfS was furthermore concerned with propaganda activities, such as a propaganda campaign against West Germany in the 1960s, aimed at discrediting alleged Nazi perpetrators.<sup>73</sup>

The Prague Spring in 1968 proved to be a new test for the efficiency of the MfS. This attempt to demand a humane and democratic 'reformcommunism' was in essence an ideal-type of the MfS enemy perception in the form of the concept of PID. After the suppression of the Prague Spring, the MfS helped the Czechoslovak secret police with the cleaning and tightening of its apparatus. In the GDR itself, there was a wave of more than 2100 protests, and over 500 preliminary investigations were launched, mainly in the area of 'anti-state hatred' by GDR citizens who had publicly announced their support to the Prague Spring. However, as the MfS stated, there were no serious incidents that could have increased the political opposition against the GDR, so to this extent, the MfS had fulfilled its repressive function. However, the events showed gaps in the preventive monitoring activities of the MfS; they only managed to spy on less than a quarter of all registered protesters, and in the cases where the MfS was successful, it turned out that they were mostly people that had not previously come to the attention of the MfS.<sup>74</sup>

### 1971-1989: The Honecker Era

In May 1971, Walter Ulbricht was succeeded by Erich Honecker as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED. Erich Mielke entered into an "interest-sharing" policy with Honecker. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the SED in 1971, he was elected by the Central Committee as candidate for the Politburo, which expanded his political playing field. Five years later, Mielke became a member of the supreme executive committee of the SED. Thereby becoming one of the most important leaders of the political bureaucracy, Honecker and Mielke held weekly private conversations about MfS activity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Klaus Dietmar Henke. "Staatssicherheit," in *Handbuch zur deutschen Einheit*, ed. Werner Weidenfeld and Karl-Rudolf Korte. (Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 1996), 647. Cited in Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 38.

<sup>72</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 36.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>75</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 40.

### *Foreign policy*

Already in the 1960's, the foreign policy of the SED started to focus on international recognition. Due to the West German Hallstein Doctrine - that stated that if third countries would recognize the German Democratic Republic, or would maintain diplomatic relations with it, this would be regarded as an unfriendly act (*acte peu amical*) by the Federal Government of the FRG<sup>76</sup> – the GDR found itself in a foreign policy isolation. It was a principal aim of East German policy makers to break this isolation and to gain legitimacy from non-Communist countries. However, until the early 1970s, the GDR did not succeed in gaining international recognition from the West and the developed world, and it therefore turned to the Third World instead.<sup>77</sup> Here, the HVA III was responsible for the support of socialist regimes and anticolonial liberation movements in the Third World.<sup>78</sup>

The associated partial opening to the West (known as *Entspannung*, or relaxation) brought challenges for the MfS. When the Treaty on Basic Principles (*Grundlagenvertrag*) was concluded in 1972 between East and West Germany, the MfS responded with extensive domestic security measures to keep the growing contact between citizens of the GDR and West Germans under control. The *Entspannung* also led to more foreign espionage activity against the West. This inter alia led to the establishment of the HV A XI in February 1971, a department that was mainly concerned with the political and military reconnaissance of the United States and Canada, as well as the US and Canadian armed forces in Europe.<sup>79</sup>

### *Domestic developments*

The department for counter-espionage was not the only branch of the MfS that was expanded in the 1970s. In fact, all branches of the MfS experienced an increase in personnel, which led to an unprecedented degree of penetration in all spheres of East German society. The often-asked question “who is who” by Mielke could thus be answered quite reliably for an increasing number of GDR citizens.<sup>80</sup>

Due to the efforts of the SED to gain international recognition, and the fast growing “hostile” influences that were caused by the contacts between GDR citizens and the West, the possibilities of the MfS for overt violence measures were reduced. For this reason, the MfS increased its degree of covert surveillance and modified its methods<sup>81</sup>. This led to an increase in the network of inoffizielle Mitarbeiter (unofficial collaborators or IM), that had to detect enemy activity with conspiratorial means that were unknown and unrecognized by the person concerned. Between 1970 and 1977, this network increased from 122400 to 203000 IM. After this, this number started to slowly decrease again, and in 1989, there were about 173000 IM. This decrease was due to the introduction of a new IM directive in 1979, which led to a thorough review of the network of IM.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> See Werner Kilian. “Die Hallstein-Doktrin.“ Der diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1973 (1955).

<sup>77</sup> Joseph Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): 5.

<sup>78</sup> The tasks of the HVA III were divided into four areas, namely Europe (A), the Middle East and Asia (B), Africa and Latin America (C), and advisor groups in the Third World (D). See *Hauptverwaltung A*, 74. This topic and the reasons for MfS assistance in the Third World – and for the purposes of this research the Middle East in particular – will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Hauptverwaltung A*, 180.

<sup>80</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 230.

<sup>81</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 42.

<sup>82</sup> Helmut Müller-Enbergs. *Die inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter (Anatomie der Staatssicherheit, MfS-Handbuch – Aufgaben – Strukturen - Quellen)*. (Berlin: BStU, 2008), 37.



The IM were the secret connection between the MfS and the society that it was oppressing. For this, the IM network had various functions. IM had to acquire information, fight “enemies” of the state, help to implement the policies of the SED leadership, and to provide logistical assistance. The first task however, the procurement of information, was the most important one. The first MfS Minister Ernst Wollweber referred to this task when he described the IM as “our respiratory organs: “Ohne diese Atmungsorgane können wir nicht leben und nicht arbeiten”.<sup>83</sup>

The enormous number of informants is a point of ambivalence. A comparison with the Gestapo shows the weak position of the MfS within the East German society. Apparently, the security of the SED state could only be provided by a state security apparatus that was able to exist due to a high degree of ideologization and pressure. The Gestapo in Nazi Germany on the other hand

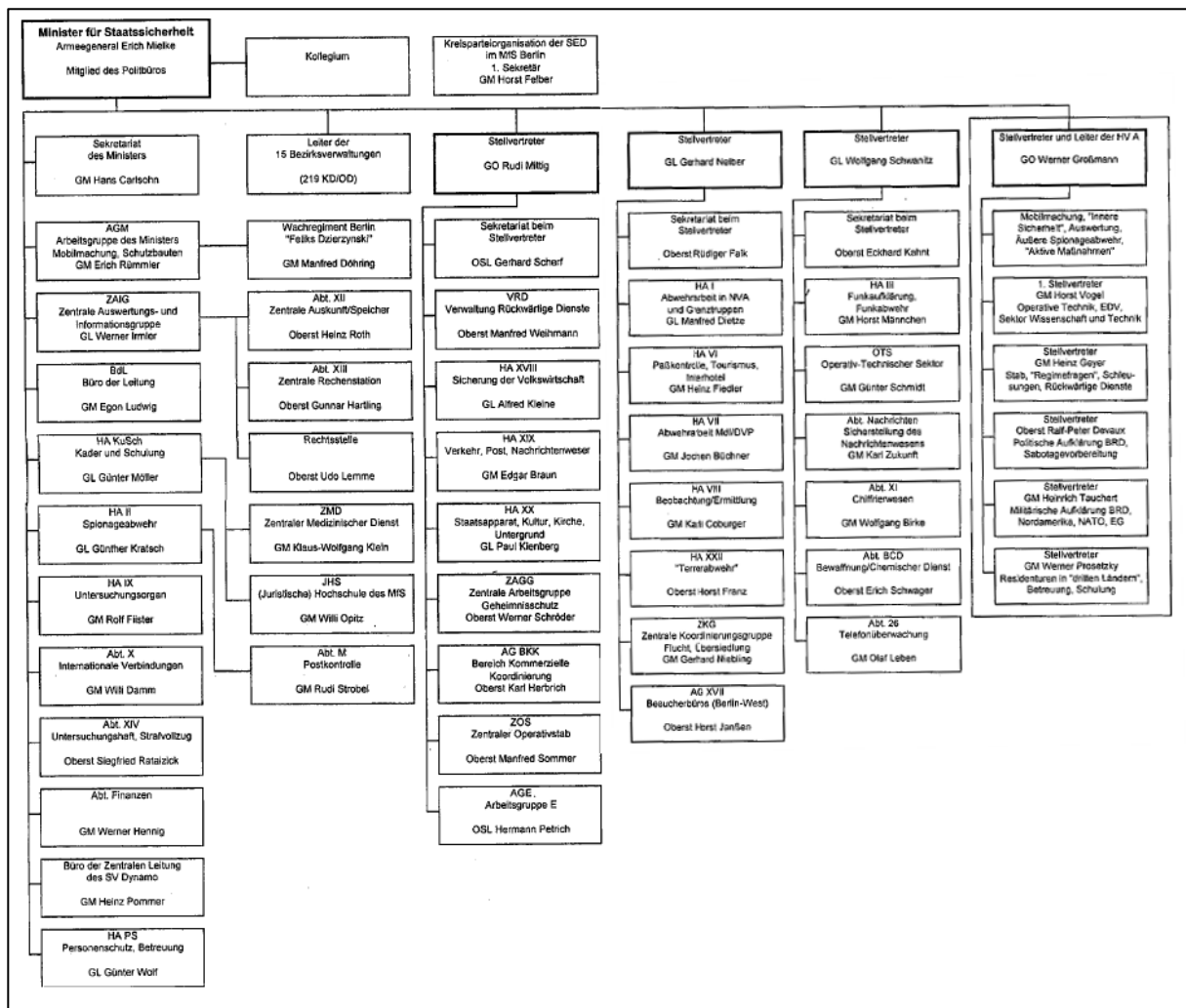


Figure 4: Organizational Chart of the MfS<sup>84</sup>

did not need such a strictly disciplined and large apparatus like the MfS, as there was more than enough interest and spontaneous willingness to participate in the persecution of Jews, Communists,

<sup>83</sup> Helmut Müller-Enbergs. *Die inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter (Anatomie der Staatssicherheit, MfS-Handbuch – Aufgaben – Strukturen - Quellen)*. (Berlin: BStU, 2008), 5.

<sup>84</sup> Figure is based on: Beatrice de Graaf. *Over de Muur: de DDR, de Nederlandse Kerken en de Vredesbeweging*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2004), 378-379.

homosexuals, Sinti, and Roma.<sup>85</sup> Thus, it cannot be concluded from the large number of IM that the MfS necessarily was a powerful state security apparatus.

Because arrests could provoke the interests of Western journalists that were accredited in the GDR, covert means had to be used to eliminate human rights activists, people wanting to emigrate and other ‘conspicuous’ citizens. This was inter alia done by creating and stirring up conflicts between such persons. The decisive factor in this was that the MfS was not recognizable as the mastermind behind such actions. Such covert measures, a practice that was coined *Zerzetsung* in the mid-1970s, were mainly used when direct repression would produce too much rebellion, and therefore more contact between East and West Germans.<sup>86</sup>

The literary and theatrical scenes in the GDR also increasingly fell victim to activities of the MfS. In the 1970s, it became the main focus of the HA XX to penetrate these scenes, due to the important function they had in the articulation of public opinion and criticism against the SED leadership. The MfS inter alia aimed at preventing the publication of critical literature, and numerous artists were recruited as IM for the preventive supervision of the cultural industry.<sup>87</sup>

However, even in the seventies and eighties, the MfS did not limit itself to only monitoring the citizens of the GDR. If it was deemed necessary, and enough ‘evidence’ was collected, overt action could be undertaken, in the form of arrests. For this, the HA IX, the ‘investigative organ’ of the MfS, was responsible. The HA IX mainly investigated political offenses such as ‘subversive propaganda, ‘impairment of state activity’ and ‘unlawful connections’ between East German citizens and the West. In cases that were ‘politically and operationally relevant’, for example when employees or IM of the MfS were involved, the MfS also took over proceedings from the Volkspolizei. Although physical violence was rarely used by interrogators and guards, they used the whole spectrum of psychological torture to persuade detainees to confess their alleged crimes.<sup>88</sup> During prosecution and trial proceedings, the activities of the HA IX far exceeded the formal position of the MfS. The MfS guided the government to a verdict, and in prominent cases, it brought up ‘suggestions’ for a sentence with Honecker. Public prosecutors and courts that were responsible for political cases were controlled by the MfS, who placed IM on important positions, and sometimes even worked together with the defenders. The MfS also had its own detention centers, for which the *Linie XIV* was responsible. Here, inmates were used as ‘cellinformers’, who spied on other prisoners, in exchange for benefits.<sup>89</sup>

### *The decline of the GDR*

In the early 1980s, the MfS had gained unprecedented importance and power within the SED state apparatus and the East German society, and there was barely an area of social life in which state security did not intervene. This was about to change however, due to acute financial problems and a growing unrest among the population.<sup>90</sup> Anger over rigged local elections caused many people to request their departure to the West<sup>91</sup>, which was further enabled when the Hungarian-Austrian border was opened after the abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine by the Soviets in the spring of 1989.<sup>92</sup> Already starting at the end of the 1970s, stronger political opposition had increasingly grown stronger

<sup>85</sup> Gieseke. *The History of the Stasi*, 76.

<sup>86</sup> Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 45.

<sup>87</sup> Gieseke, “Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” 233.

<sup>88</sup> Gieseke. *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 78.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>91</sup> Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende*, 117.

<sup>92</sup> Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende*, 89; Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 194.

within peace-, human rights-, and environmental groups, and the new reform policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* introduced by the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev reinforced the opposition of the East German people to the SED regime, as many saw *glasnost* and *perestroika* as “projection screens for their own desires”.<sup>93</sup> Over the summer of 1989, more and more demonstrations were held, most importantly the “Monday demonstrations” in Leipzig, where discontent citizens assembled weekly. Efforts by the MfS and the Volkspolizei to fight these developments with selective repression did not work.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, a power struggle took place within the leadership of the SED, which on 18 October led to the fall of Honecker. He was succeeded by second man of the Party Egon Krenz, who proclaimed a *Wende* (turn) to ‘dialogue’ between the party and the population.<sup>95</sup> True to its understanding as the ‘shield and sword of the Party’, the MfS restricted itself to defensive measures, the observing of demonstrations, and the infiltration of opposition groups.

On the night of 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall was accidentally opened, after Günter Schabowski mistakenly announced during a press conference that the border checkpoints would be opened that same night. This led to unexpectedly massive crowds tearing down and forcing their way through the Wall. For the MfS this meant that the hopes of reestablishing a dictatorship through Soviet military intervention were rendered obsolete.<sup>96</sup> A couple of days later, the SED lost its leadership role within the GDR. The members of the Politburo, including Erich Mielke, had to step down, and the power was shifted from the SED to the de-facto leadership of the new premier, Hans Modrow.

The MfS now saw a catastrophe coming, as protestors demanded the disbanding of the organization. Mielke ordered files that revealed the extent of surveillance to be taken out of storage or destroyed.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, the Modrow government tried to survive by making concessions. On 17 November, Modrow announced that the MfS would be transformed into the *Amt für Nationale Sicherheit* (Office for National Security, or AfNS), and would be placed directly under his command. Its director was Wolfgang Schwanitz. However, the AfNS would not last long. On 3 December, Erich Honecker, Erich Mielke, and the former chairman of the Council of Ministers, Willi Stolph, were expelled from the Party by the Central Committee. On 4 December, activists stormed and occupied the regional national security office in Erfurt and prevented the further destruction of files. At the same time, citizens’ committees formed spontaneously, and occupied several other district and regional offices, where they sealed off the Stasi files with the help of state prosecutors and the Volkspolizei. On the same day, the executive board of the AfNS unanimously resigned, and two days later, eighteen *Spitzenkader* (top cadre) were discharged from their positions. On 7 December, the *Zentralen Runden Tisch* (Central Round Table, an advising board set up after the resignation of Egon Krenz on 6 December), demanded the disbanding of the AfNS. Although this was put off for a couple of days, the Council of Ministers complied with this demand on 14 December. A plan arose for two smaller successor organs, but these plans were soon abandoned due to the strong public pressure of citizens’ committees and the opposition groups at the *Zentralen Runden Tisch*.<sup>98</sup>

On 15 January 1990, a citizens’ committee that was collaborating with the state prosecutor’s office and the Volkspolizei took over the MfS/AfNS headquarters in the Lichtenberg district of Berlin. The employees of the State Security were given notice by 31 March 1990, and the passport-control

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<sup>93</sup> Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende*, 301.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>96</sup> Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 197.

<sup>97</sup> Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende*, 555.

<sup>98</sup> Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei*, 98-101.

units were reassigned to the border troops of the GDR. The AfNS was finally permanently disbanded during the German unity on 3 October 1990.<sup>99</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The MfS called themselves the '*Schild und Schwert der Partei*' and indeed functioned as such; it protected the SED against ideological opponents and in that way re-enforced the power of the Party within East Germany. Throughout the years, the MfS continued to expand - both in duties and in personnel - as the SED leadership identified more potential dangers against East-Germany. This was mainly due to the increased alleged 'political-ideological subversion' tactics of enemy intelligence services against the citizens of the GDR. In doing so, it became a repressive machine that aided the SED dictatorial leadership in oppressing the masses, and turned the GDR into a surveillance state of unprecedented proportions, where everyone was monitored, and no one could be certain they were not being spied on.

When growing unrest and protests, together with new reform policies in the Soviet Union, started to threaten the existence of the GDR, the MfS remained true to its understanding of 'shield and sword of the party', and followed the course taken by the SED. After the SED lost its leadership role, the MfS lost its role as protector of the party. Although it was briefly tried to continue the work of the MfS in the form of the AfNS, these plans were soon abandoned when it became clear that the end of the GDR was nigh, and with the German unity on 3 October 1990, all that remained of the once so powerful *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* was finally permanently disbanded.

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<sup>99</sup> Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 199.

## Chapter 2: 'Fraternal Assistance' in Iraq

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*East Berlin, 15 September 1969. Unbeknownst to his Embassy, an Iraqi general set out to meet with Colonel Wagner. The Stasi, uninformed of the visit of the general, received him with surprise. In a high-level meeting, the general revealed his reasons for the surprise visit. His party, the Ba'ath, who had just consolidated power in Iraq, needed aid in an important matter: intelligence. This request marked the start of an intelligence relationship between Iraq and the GDR that would last for almost twenty years.*

### The Middle East in the Global Cold War

After the Berlin Wall was built in 1963, the operational tasks of the HV A/III were expanded to the support of socialist regimes in the Third World.<sup>100</sup> Starting in the mid-1960s, the GDR provided "fraternal assistance" or "chekist development aid" to Third World countries. An important motivation for the MfS in the 1960s and 1970s to support the Third World had to do with international recognition. Due to the West German Hallstein Doctrine - that stated that if third countries would recognize the German Democratic Republic, or would maintain diplomatic relations with it, this would be regarded as an unfriendly act (*acte peu amical*) by the Federal Government of the FRG<sup>101</sup> – the GDR found itself in a foreign policy isolation. It was a principal aim of East German policy makers to break this isolation and to gain legitimacy from non-Communist countries. Because the GDR did not succeed until the beginning of the 1970s in gaining international recognition from the West and the developed world, it turned to the Third World instead.<sup>102</sup>

The Third World, which refers to the former (semi-)colonial countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that were economically and/or politically dominated by pan-European (including American and Russian) powers, played an important role within the Global Cold War. Functioning as a theatre-by-proxy, both the Americans, as well as the Soviet Bloc wanted to gain as much influence as possible. The United States and the Soviet Union wanted to intervene in the Third World due to the ideologies that were inherent in their politics. Tangled up in a conflict about the concept of European modernity – to which both superpowers considered themselves as successors – the United States and the Soviet Union had to change the world so that they could prove the universal applicability of their respective ideologies. The elites of the newly independent states in the Third World proved to be useful in this competition. By providing aid in the expansion of the domains of freedom or of social justice, both powers considered themselves to be assisting "natural trends in world history", while at the same time defending their own security. Both powers believed there was a specific mission, namely to bring development in and for the Third World. They believed that only they were fit to carry out this out, and that without their involvement, this mission would fail.<sup>103</sup> In line with this, both superpowers felt it was necessary to gain control over the Third World, to push back the influence of its opponent's ideology.<sup>104</sup> Both world powers used their intelligence- and secret services in endeavouring to achieve

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<sup>100</sup> *Hauptverwaltung A (Anatomie der Staatssicherheit, MfS Handbuch – Aufgaben – Strukturen - Quellen)*. (Berlin: BStU, 2013): 42.

<sup>101</sup> See Werner Kilian. "Die Hallstein-Doktrin." *Der diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1973 (1955)*.

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): 5.

<sup>103</sup> Odd Arne Westad. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 5.

<sup>104</sup> See inter alia Madlen Shepherd. "Waffenhilfe für Syrien". Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung. 1 February 2017. Accessed on 8 May 2017, [www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien](http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien).

such domination, albeit in slightly different ways. Whereas the Soviet Bloc leaned heavily on the use of disinformation, the CIA - although making use of this technique as well - did so to much lesser extent.<sup>105</sup>

For the largest part of the Cold War, policy-makers in the Soviet Union were of the opinion that they had a geopolitical advantage in the struggle with the United States and its allies for power and influence in the Middle East. If Latin America was to be considered the 'backyard' of the United States, the Middle East was that of the Soviet Union. However, unlike Latin America, there was no realistic prospect in the Middle East of the rise of a Marxist-Leninist regime that could act as a role model to spread revolution through the region. The KGB therefore tried to establish an alliance with one of the leading 'progressive' Arab powers, in the hopes that such an ally would gradually progress to Marxism-Leninism. Between 1955 and 1970, Moscow's hopes were mainly pinned on Nasser, who was "by far the most charismatic Arab leader of the Cold War", and the ruler of the largest state in the Middle East in terms of territory.<sup>106</sup> After his sudden death in 1970, the KGB turned first to Saddam Hussein, and later – due to Hussein's suspicious attitude towards Soviet policy – to Hafez al-Assad.

### *Foreign policy of the GDR*

Within the Soviet Bloc's Third World policies, the MfS assumed an important role. Whereas the KGB was providing military aid<sup>107</sup>, the intelligence apparatus of the GDR became a pivotal source of training and development assistance in the domains of internal security, guerrilla warfare, strengthening of police and security services, and intelligence aid.<sup>108</sup>

The GDR's foreign policy in the Middle East and the Arab world was – apart from the aim to gain more ideological influence in the Middle East - dominated by the quest for international recognition and the economic benefits that would follow from it.<sup>109</sup> Between 1969<sup>110</sup> and the 1980s, the MfS supported anti-imperialist regimes in Libya, the Yemen Arab Republic (also known as North Yemen), the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (also known as South Yemen), Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria.<sup>111</sup> It furthermore aided certain 'national liberation movements' such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).<sup>112</sup> The support of the MfS to the Middle East included trainings provided by the GDR to military sectors and intelligence officers in order to build up or strengthen the police and security services, the provision of medical treatment, and the delivery of weaponry.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>105</sup> For more information, see inter alia Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin. *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*. (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

<sup>106</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 141.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>108</sup> Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 180.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): 5. The MfS was involved in much more Third World countries than just in the Middle East, including Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique, the Congo, Vietnam, and Tanzania (MfS, "Notice regarding the Training of Foreign Military Sectors", 17 November 1983, Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republic (BStU, Zentralarchiv (ZA), HA I 13695, pp. 13-14). However, for the purpose of this research, the focus will be on the MfS activities in the Middle East and Arab world.

<sup>110</sup> There is at least proof that relations with Iraq and Syria started as early as 1969, see for Iraq inter alia MfS, Hauptverwaltung A (HV A) Department III/C, "Proposal for Measures for Support of the State Security of the Republic of Iraq by the GDR", 19 June 1969, in BStU, ZA, SdM 1060.; for Syria see Madlen Shepherd. "Waffenhilfe für Syrien". Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung. 1 February 2017. Accessed on 8 May 2017, [www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien](http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien).

<sup>111</sup> MfS, "Notice regarding the Training of Foreign Military Sectors", 17 November 1983, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13695, pp. 13-14.

<sup>112</sup> MfS, "Basis for the Development and Expansion of the Military-Political Foreign Relations of the Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung in Trainingsyear 1985/86" 20 December 1985, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13676.

<sup>113</sup> MfS, "Basis for the Development and Expansion of the Military-Political Foreign Relations of the Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung in Trainingsyear 1985/86" 20 December 1985, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13676; For weapon delivery to Syria, see Madlen

Both politically and economically, Iraq was an important country for the GDR. Not only would cooperating with Iraq provide a means to gain more influence for the communist bloc in the Middle East, Iraq was also interesting to the East Germans from the point of view of economic modernization. Even though Iraq's economy was based mostly on free-market principles, the Ba'ath party had started to introduce central planning in the 1960s, and the GDR – attracted by Iraq's great wealth – was “eager to provide assistance for it.”<sup>114</sup>

## The MfS and Iraq

### *The Rise of the Ba'ath Party*

The *Hizb al-Ba'ath al-'Arabi al-Ishtiraki fi Al-Iraq* (Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in Iraq, or ASBP) seized power in Iraq through a military coup d'état in July 1968. Opportunities for such a coup arose from the anger and humiliation caused by Israel's crushing victory in the Six Day War in 1967, which had destabilized Arab governments.<sup>115</sup> It was the third coup occurring within a decade, and not the first time the Ba'ath Party had tried to gain control. Between the end of World War II and 1958, Iraq was ruled by the Hashemite monarchy and its agents. In July 1958, Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim led a bloody military coup that overthrew the monarchy. Many people were killed, including the king. The coup shocked the eastern Arab world, and was the start of a decade of “unstable military rule during which Iraq joined Egypt and Syria in proclaiming revolution at home and neutrality abroad.”<sup>116</sup> Qasim, who established a military dictatorship that lasted until 1963, was in return overthrown by a Ba'ath-led coup. The non-Ba'athist Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif was installed as President, and the prominent Ba'ath general Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr was named Prime Minister. The Ba'ath rule was short-lived however, as the party was ousted from the government only a few months later. When they tried again in July 1968, it appeared to be just another event in the series of ongoing political upheavals that plagued Iraq. However, this coup brought to power a resolute group of individuals who established a stable (albeit dictatorial) regime that lasted for 35 years.<sup>117</sup>

In order to understand the nature of the Ba'ath regime, it is important to understand Ba'athism as an ideology. 'Ba'ath', also spelled as 'Ba'th', literally means 'renaissance' or 'resurrection'. The ideology was founded by Michel Aflaq, who was an Orthodox Christian, and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. Having met during their studies in Paris, they worked together to create an ideology that combined aspects of nationalism with socialism. Becoming a formal party in Syria at the time of its independence in 1946, a central feature of the Ba'ath party was its belief in “the existence of a single Arab nation and a commitment to the achievement of Arab unity.” This unity in return would evolve into the restoration of Arab dignity and the reemergence of Arab virtues.<sup>118</sup>

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Shepherd. “Waffenhilfe für Syrien”. Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung. 1 February 2017. Accessed on 8 May 2017, [www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien](http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/stasi/233561/stasi-in-syrien).

<sup>114</sup> Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security”, 5.

<sup>115</sup> Kevin Woods et al. *Iraqi Perspectives Project. A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership*. (Norfolk, VA: United States Joint Forces Command, 2006), 3.

<sup>116</sup> William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016), 305.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>118</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 448.

After the Ba'ath Party took over control, they established a new government with Hasan al-Bakr as president and prime minister, and Saddam Hussein as vice-president. In many ways, its structure was similar to that of the SED in East Germany. Both societies are mono-organizational, meaning that all activities were carried out by hierarchies or appointed officials under a single command (see figure 5 and 6).<sup>119</sup> Moreover, Iraq had, just like the GDR, a single-party system, in which the Ba'ath Party thus became the government. The Regional Command (RC) was the highest decision-making organ of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq. It controlled the party from the top down, thus organized following the Marxist-Leninist model that the SED was also organized on. Originally, the Regional Command was to be subordinate to the National Command, which was the executive body in charge of the different regional Ba'ath commands within the Arab world. However, although it continued to function, its powers became increasingly symbolic, thus making the RC the highest authority of the Party in Iraq.<sup>120</sup>

At the same time, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was formed, of which al-Bakr became the chairman. Saddam Hussein became the vice-chairman of the RCC, which *de jure* served as the main decision-making body within the country.<sup>121</sup> Among its tasks and responsibilities were enacting and ratifying laws, defining new policies, confirming development plans, deciding on matters of national defense, state, and foreign policy, ratifying treaties with other states. Furthermore, the RCC had the right to declare war and conclude armistice treaties.<sup>122</sup> In the relationship between the RC and the RCC, the notion of 'the Party leadership becoming the government' becomes clear, as membership between the two organs overlapped. The RC consisted of nineteen to twenty-one members. Its 2001, its six most important members were Saddam Hussein, Izzad ad-Douri, Taha Yasin Ramadan, Tariq 'Aziz and 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, and Qusay Saddam Hussein<sup>123</sup>, whereas the Revolutionary Command Council since 1979 had been led by Saddam Hussein, Izzat ad-Douri, Tariq Aziz, and Taha Yassin Ramadan.<sup>124</sup>

The Ba'ath regime consolidated its control in "the usual manner": they purged the officer corps and the higher civil servant positions, and appointed loyalists to the Ba'ath regime to the vacated positions. From the beginning, the regime was relentless towards persons who were suspected to be disloyal. Hundreds of people were sentenced to long prison terms, and others were publicly executed to remind the Iraqi people of the fate that would await them if they dared to oppose the regime.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Joseph Sassoon. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>121</sup> According to the 1970 Iraqi constitution, the RCC was "the supreme body of the state". Cited in Con Coughlin. *Saddam: His Rise and Fall*. (New York City, NY: Harper Perennial, 2005), 74.

<sup>122</sup> Salar Bassireh Sulaimania, "Das Politische System im Irak unter der Baath-Partei: Stabilisierungs- und Destabilisierungsfaktoren der Baath-Herrschaft". (PhD diss., University of Wuppertal, 2003), 64.

<sup>123</sup> Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 37.

<sup>124</sup> See Edmund Ghareeb and Beth Dougherty. *Historical Dictionary of Iraq*. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004).

<sup>125</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 678.



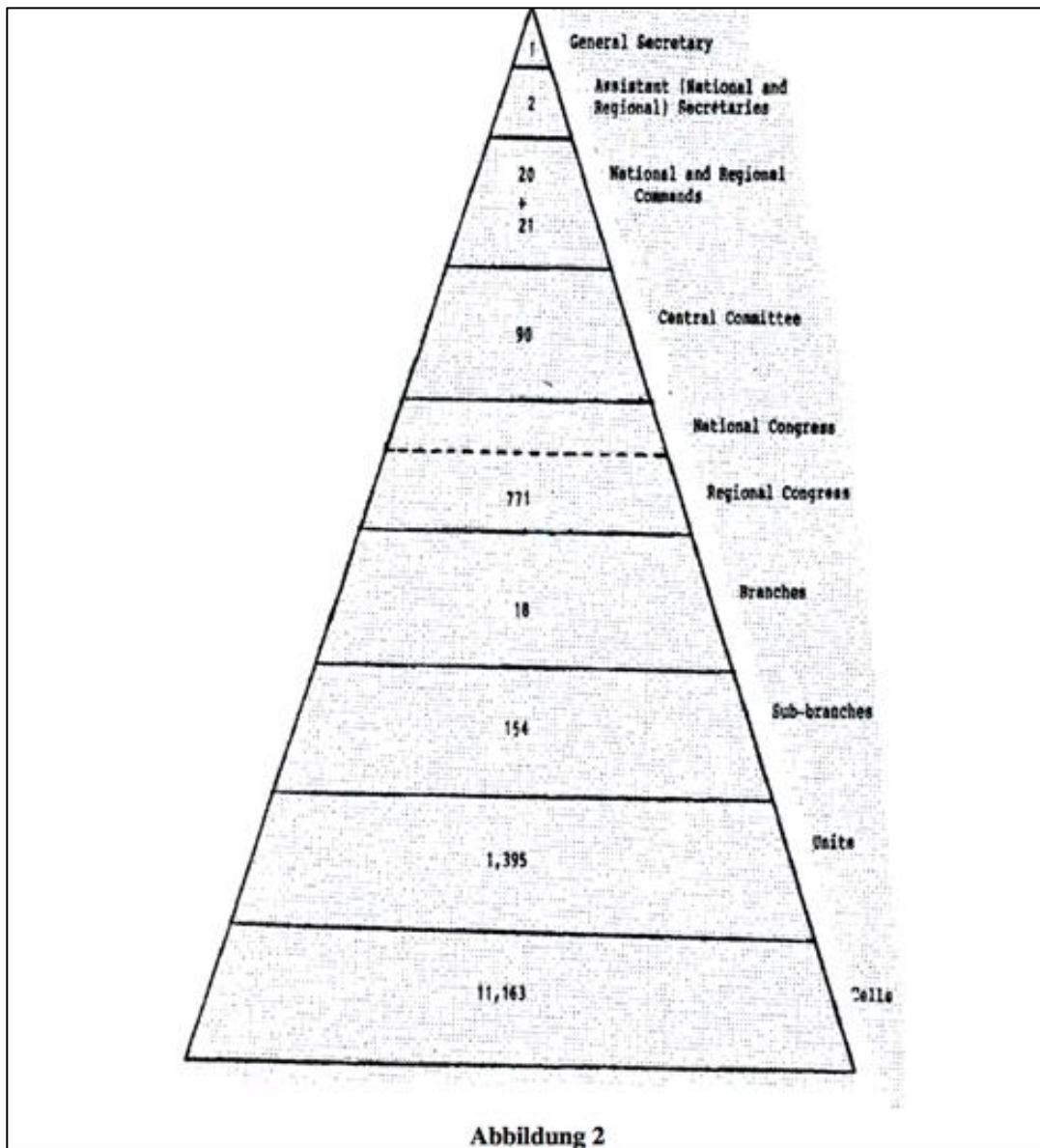


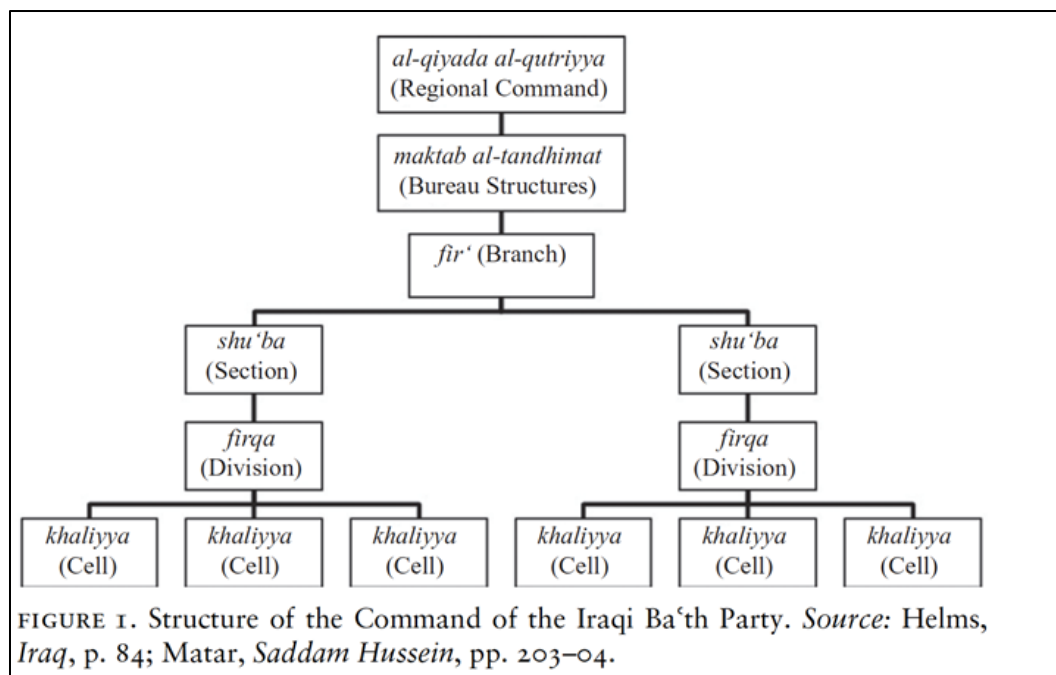
Figure 5: Structure of the Command of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq (1)<sup>126</sup>

After the Ba'ath regime had consolidated its power, they prioritized economic modernization and the establishment of solid defense and technological capabilities, include intelligence. Although Iraq was able to import most of its needs from various countries, the Ba'ath regime was aware that it "had to rely on the Communist bloc for intelligence equipment and training".<sup>127</sup> Considering that the Ba'ath's ideology was based on socialism, the Communist bloc was a natural ally.<sup>128</sup> It therefore did not take long before they turned to the GDR with a request for assistance with matters of intelligence.

<sup>126</sup> Raymond A. Hinnebusch. *Authoritarian Power and State Formation in Ba'athist Syria: Army, Party, and Peasant*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 169. Cited in Bassireh Sulaimania, "Das Politische System im Irak unter der Baath-Partei," 64.

<sup>127</sup> Joseph Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): 5

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.; The Ba'ath Party also turned to the Soviets for intelligence aid. As stated by Kanan Makiya, leaked documents from 1979 indicate Soviet intelligence aid in reorganizing the internal security branch, the supply of intelligence and surveillance equipment, training of Iraqi personnel in the Soviet Union, and exchange of intelligence information, see Kanan Makiya. *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 12.

Figure 6: Structure of the Command of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq (2)<sup>129</sup>

### 1969-1978: Intelligence relations between the GDR and Iraq

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1969, Otto Winzer, the Minister of Foreign affairs of the GDR at the time, sent a letter to Erich Mielke, informing him about a memo that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received from the Iraqi General-Consulate in Berlin. This memo was the first in a long line of requests from the Iraqi government. In the memo, the government of Iraq asked the GDR to provide them with materials, lessons, and other literature for the training of officers for the civil protection. At the same time, they inquired about training possibilities in the GDR for officers of the Iraqi secret service and expressed their interest in sending a large number of Iraqi officers to be trained in the GDR.<sup>130</sup> The MfS followed up to this request with a proposal for measures to be taken for the support of the state security of the Republic of Iraq by the GDR. In this report, it is proposed to support Iraq with the means available at the time. This would be done by sending two employees of the MfS to Iraq to get a more concrete understanding of the wishes of the Iraqi government. Although the MfS stated that the possibility of support by means of technique could be excluded in advance, they were open to the idea of training Iraqi officers in the GDR, thereby specifying that the first training session could start in November 1969.<sup>131</sup>

Around the same time, from the 15<sup>th</sup> until the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1969, a military delegation from Iraq, which included the vice-president General-lieutenant Hamad Shehab<sup>132</sup>, visited the GDR. Although the original plan was to visit the training facilities of the Nationale Volksarmee (National

<sup>129</sup> Sassoon. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 37.

<sup>130</sup> MfS, "Letter from Otto Winzer to Comrade Colonel-General Erich Mielke", 16 June 1969, in BStU, Zentralarchiv (ZA), Sekretariat des Ministers (SdM) 1060.

<sup>131</sup> MfS, Hauptverwaltung A (HV A) Department III/C, "Proposal for Measures for Support of the State Security of the Republic of Iraq by the GDR", 19 June 1969, in BStU, ZA, SdM 1060.

<sup>132</sup> Considering that Saddam Hussein was Iraq's Vice-President between 1968 and 1979, this could be a pseudonym. Or it could be Hamad Shihab, who was the Minister of Defense between April 1970 and 30 June 1973. He however never was Vice-President of Iraq.

People's Army, NVA), it soon became clear that the primary motive of the visit was to negotiate the delivery of weapons and equipment for the Iraqi armed forces. In the negotiations, the leader of the military delegation stressed the consistent anti-imperialistic stance of Iraq, and pointed out that Iraq refused offers made by West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany, FRG). Therefore, the Iraqi delegation was of the opinion that the GDR had a moral duty to provide assistance, thereby stating that Iraq considered the GDR and the USSR to be its most important allies. There were several reasons for the request for a large number of weapon deliveries. Not only did Iraq's current military-political conception demand the arming of the people, but it also materially aided the national liberation movements in the Afro-asiatic realm. Furthermore, the delegation pointed out that Iraq was factually in a state of war with Israel and Iran, and that the Iraqi armed forces were engaged in the Arabic Eastern front (Syria and Jordan) and on the Iraqi-Iranian border, thereby showing the leading role of the Iraqi leadership in the Arabic realm. Towards the end of the negotiations, it was agreed that the General Staff of the Iraqi army would receive an answer about the final decision regarding the possible delivery of weapons by the GDR to Iraq in the middle of August 1969. Although it is unclear what the final answer of the GDR regarding the matter was, it is likely that the deal went through, considering that the visit from General Shehab was regarded as a good foundation for further relations between the army of the GDR and the army of Iraq.<sup>133</sup>

In September 1969, the Iraqi General Director of Security, al-Ani<sup>134</sup>, travelled to Berlin to request more assistance from the East Germans. Not having informed the MfS, nor his own embassy in Berlin or other government agencies in Iraq (with the exception of the President, the Revolutionary Command Council, and the Ministry of Interior) of the reasons for his visit, Al-Ani was received with surprise. In a meeting with Colonel Kurt Wagner, the retired Deputy Defense Minister of the GDR<sup>135</sup>, on September 15, 1969, al-Ani set out the shortcomings of the Iraqi security apparatus in fulfilling the tasks required by the new regime. So far, the security apparatus had exclusively been monitoring political parties within the country. Iraq felt that it needed to counter activities from imperialist and reactionary countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Israel. However, within the security directorate, there was no department concerned with (counter)-espionage and diversionary tactics of such imperialist and reactionary activities. Furthermore, al-Ani explained that Iraq lacked the experience and technological resources for foreign espionage, and therefore they turned to the GDR requesting assistance. In order to strengthen the Iraqi security apparatus, he asked the GDR for assistance in training officers in secret observation techniques, in the use of secret ink and ways to decode enemy communications, in the employment of transmitters and bugging devices, and in training for the protection of high-ranking political officials. Al-Ani furthermore requested assistance from the GDR with operational intelligence technology including but not limited to small tape devices, transmitters, test instruments for finding integrated operative technology, detectors to find explosives

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<sup>133</sup> MfS, Hauptabteilung (HA) I, "Information about the Iraqi Military Delegation", 23 June 1969, in BStU, ZA, Abteilung X 104; See Klaus Storkmann. *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die "Dritte Welt"* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2012), pp. 93-106 for more information on the weapon delivery by the NVA to Iraq.

<sup>134</sup> There is a possibility that this is in fact Nadhim Kazzar, the head of the Directorate of General Security (al-Amn al-'Amm). "Er habe das Generaldirektorat für Sicherheit übernommen, das seit ca. 40 Jahren besteht". Considering that the Iraqi government, nor the Embassy in Berlin, knew of his intentions, it would make sense for him to use a pseudonym. Another possibility is that this is Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim Samir Al-Ani, an Iraqi diplomat and suspected intelligence officer, who was a spy in Prague and was arrested by the Americans in 2003.

<sup>135</sup> Helmut Müller-Enbergs, Jan Wielgohs, and Dieter Hoffmann. *Wer war wer in der DDR?: ein biographisches Lexikon*. 2000.

in transportation, such as airports and railways, and lie-detectors, and with operational tasks such as arresting agents abroad and transferring them back into Iraq in secret.<sup>136</sup>

Although the East Germans were certainly interested in the request submitted by al-Ani, they were non-committal about certain things such as the provision of intelligence devices, and recommended going to the Soviets for technological assistance. Although al-Ani stressed the importance of a quick reply on the matter from the MfS, the East Germans told him that due to the surprising character of the meeting, they could only provide an answer within four to six weeks.<sup>137</sup>

In October 1969, the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Saleh Mahdi 'Ammash, had a meeting with Erich Mielke, in which he repeated al-Ani's requests. In a proposal regarding this meeting, the MfS stated that refusing support to Iraq would be seen as a political provocation, since the government of Iraq was aware of the GDR's assistance to other Arab states. Therefore, the MfS agreed to train five to eight officers in the Iraqi security services, in training sessions lasting six to eight weeks. These trainings covered the areas of 'offensive defense', the protection of important persons, and operative techniques, such as coding, cryptography, and recording and taping techniques. The requests for the provision of intelligence devices such as bugging devices and radio and telephone techniques were met with hesitation, due to the lack of production capacities on the part of the MfS. It was furthermore specified that to deliver such materials, more information should be provided regarding the goals and methods of their use. However, if the Iraqis would be interested in the delivery of commercial technology, the MfS was willing to assist in obtaining such technology. Lastly, it was specified that regarding the wish of Iraq to exchange information between the two intelligence agencies, the Iraqi Minister of Interior needed to provide more detail about this. The MfS preferred to restrict this exchange of information only to the actions of enemy intelligence services and activities of imperialistic states, and was willing to maintain the relationship with the Minister of Interior of Iraq through the ambassador of the GDR in Iraq.<sup>138</sup>

The MfS documents are not entirely clear on the specific intelligence and security organizations the support was requested for. Therefore, although there is clearly enough evidence of direct cooperation between the MfS and the Ba'ath, it is impossible to say with certainty what the exact influence of this cooperation is, because there are no sources describing such a connection. Therefore, almost none of the developments that were potentially influenced by this cooperation can be categorized into the fourth category of influence.

Around 1969, the requests for intelligence aid could have applied to two or three organizations. The most likely is the *Al-Amn al-Amm* (Directorate for General Security, or DGS), that was responsible for domestic counter-intelligence operations, including the monitoring of opposition groups, ethnic minorities, and religious organizations, patrolling Iraq's borders and watching out for illegal economic activities, including the black market and currency trading.<sup>139</sup> The MfS rapport speaks of a 'General Directorate for Security', that at that time had existed for about 40 years (the DGS was established in 1921). However, it names the general al-Ani as head of this organization. The head of the DGS at the time was Nadhim Kazzar, a notorious and ruthless man, who had a penchant for

<sup>136</sup> Report of a meeting held between General al-Ani and Colonel Wagner on 15 September 1969, Berlin, MfS, Dept. III/C/3408, 18 September 1969, in BStU, ZA, SdM 1465.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III/C "Proposal for the Reception of the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq by Comrade Colonel-General Mielke", Berlin, 8 October 1969, in BStU, ZA, SdM 1465.

<sup>139</sup> Joseph Sassoon. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 96.

extinguishing his cigarettes in the eyeballs of his victims.<sup>140</sup> It is a possibility that al-Ani was in fact a pseudonym for Kzar. A reason for this could be that not many people in the Iraqi government or the East-German embassy had been made aware of his mission, and that therefore he needed to hide his true identity. Due to this connection, it is quite likely that the support of the MfS was used in connection to the DGS. Therefore, this can be categorized as a level-three degree of influence.

The request could also have applied to the *Al-istikhbarat al-'askariyya al-'amma* (Directorate of General Military Intelligence, or DGMI). This agency, that was established either in 1921<sup>141</sup> or 1932<sup>142</sup>, was primarily responsible for ensuring the loyalty of the army's officer corps, and the collection of intelligence on the military capabilities of surrounding countries, as well as intelligence on the Kurdish forces.<sup>143</sup> It furthermore gathered information on Iraqi political dissidents abroad, monitored the activities of foreign military attachés in Iraq, and combatted Kurdish insurgents in Kurdistan, for which it had unlimited authority. The DGMI was also involved in foreign operations such as assassinations of enemies of the Ba'ath party.<sup>144</sup> No information can be found on the director of the DGMI around 1969, so there is a chance that this was al-Ani. Additionally, when looking at the reasons for his request for East-German assistance, these seem to be connected more to the tasks of the DGMI than to the tasks of the DGS, as most requests were concerned with foreign espionage.

It is known that the DGMI reported directly to the president, even though it was headquartered in the Ministry of Defense.<sup>145</sup> Although it is unclear if the IIS and the DGS reported directly to the president as well, it is likely that this was the case, considering the likeness of the party structure of the Ba'ath Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the SED. Here a similarity with the MfS can thus be seen, as the MfS reported directly to the Secretary-General of the SED.

Although the MfS documents lack the evidence that would support a claim that the support of the MfS was without (almost any) doubt used to further develop and strengthen the Istikhbarat, it is quite likely that there was some connection between the Istikhbarat and the MfS support. This can be derived from the fact that the tasks and structure of the Istikhbarat align with the description given by al-Ani when he requested aid, which makes it quite likely that he was referring to the Istikhbarat. Therefore, this likely connection can be categorized as a third-level degree of influence.

Another possibility is that the support of the MfS was used in the strengthening and developing of the *Jihad al-Mukhabarat al-Iraqiyya* (Iraqi Intelligence Service, or IIS). This organization evolved from the *Jihaz Hunain*, which was the internal security apparatus of the Ba'ath that had been created after 1963.<sup>146</sup> In 1973, *Jihad Hunain* was dissolved by Saddam Hussein, who was then the deputy secretary of the ASBP and the vice-president of Iraq, and in its place came the IIS. As stated by Kanan Makiya, the IIS differed distinctly from the other security organs, as it was more a political body than merely a

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<sup>140</sup> Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, 6.

<sup>141</sup> Ephraim Kahana and Muhammad Suwaed. *Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Intelligence*. (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 142.

<sup>142</sup> Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network; A Guide and Analysis", *Calhoun: The NPS National Archive*: 2002.

<sup>143</sup> Iraq Survey Group. *Regime Strategic Intent*. Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence, vol. I. (2004), 83.

<sup>144</sup> Ephraim Kahana and Muhammad Suwaed. *Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Intelligence*. (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 140.

<sup>145</sup> Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 96.

<sup>146</sup> See Saïd K. Aburish. *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000). As Aburish points out, most writers (including Kanan Makiya) mistakenly call the organization Jihaz Haneen (Instrument of Yearning). In fact, Jihaz Hunain was named after the battle of Hunain (see pp. 64 and 76).

"professional organ of the state charged with safeguarding national security".<sup>147</sup> Its first members combined "professional inexperience with political knowledge, not mere loyalty".<sup>148</sup> The IIS was responsible for collecting foreign intelligence, as well as intelligence on domestic Iraqi affairs. It kept tabs on Ba'ath Party members, it monitored the activities of Iraqi students abroad, it targeted operations against foreign intelligence services. Moreover, from 1997 it was used for illegal procurement for the Military Industrial Commission.<sup>149</sup> The IIS had regional offices in nine provinces, that carried out 'miscellaneous' functions for its directorates.<sup>150</sup>

In the organizational structure of the IIS, similarities can be seen with the MfS. A characteristic of the communist secret services was that they united domestic secret police work with foreign intelligence tasks within one body (see figure 7). This is different in most Western states, such as the United States, where the FBI is responsible for the domestic security and intelligence, and the CIA for foreign intelligence and espionage, and the United Kingdom, with the MI5 and MI6 respectively. Similarly to the MfS, the IIS united domestic secret tasks, such as the collection of domestic intelligence, with foreign intelligence tasks, such as targeting operations against foreign intelligence services, and monitoring the activities of Iraqi students abroad.

Due to the fact that the IIS was created in the years that the MfS was supporting Iraq on matters of intelligence, it is very likely that the establishment of the IIS was at least partly the result of the cooperation between the MfS and the Ba'ath. Although it is of course impossible to say whether the IIS would not have existed without MfS support, the chance that the tasks, as well as the organizational structure of the IIS - which quite strongly resemble the MfS in that they both unite domestic and foreign intelligence in one body - were influenced by this support is quite high. Therefore, this can be categorized as a third-level degree of influence as well.

A potential important difference between the DGMI and the IIS on the one hand, and the MfS on the other is that in the East German and Soviet party structure, the intelligence organizations were established as independent ministries. Within the party structure of the Ba'ath the 'sections' or 'divisions' possibly correspond to the ministries in the GDR and the Soviet Union. However, it is unclear how exactly the intelligence organizations place into the organizational chart of the Ba'ath party.

The consolidation of the Ba'ath regime and the strengthening of its security and intelligence organs had an oppressive effect on the population of Iraq. In a world held together by fear, "the ideal citizen became the informer".<sup>151</sup> The Ba'ath developed the politics of fear into a form of art, that served the purpose of legitimizing their rule "by making large numbers of people complicit in the violence of the regime".<sup>152</sup> The Iraqi society became paralyzed by fear and suspicion, as neighbors could no longer trust neighbors, children denounced their parents, and siblings turned upon siblings.<sup>153</sup> The Ba'ath regime furthermore indoctrinated the youth; infiltrated workplaces, religious institutions, and professional organizations, and completely controlled all aspects of culture.<sup>154</sup> This development of the Iraqi society into a state of paranoid, omnipresent surveillance that largely drew upon the use of

<sup>147</sup> Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, 15.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>149</sup> Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 97.

<sup>150</sup> See Iraq Survey Group, *Regime Strategic Intent*, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence, 3 volumes, September 30, 2004, Vol. 1 for a comprehensive review of the specific branches of the IIS. [https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq\\_wmd\\_2004/chap1.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/chap1.html)

<sup>151</sup> Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, xi.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>153</sup> Woods et al., *Iraqi Perspectives Project*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 23.

citizen informers – much alike the MfS IM – quite resembles the East German society.<sup>155</sup> It is likely that the Iraqi intelligence officers received information on how to control and monitor the Iraqi population from MfS officers, and therefore this similarity can be categorized as a level-four degree of influence. It is furthermore known that the Ba'ath regime was a heavy user of bugging devices during its 35-year rule, not only against its opponents, but also to monitor its own officials and security officers.<sup>156</sup> Considering that recording and taping techniques were two of the aspects covered in the MfS training sessions, it is very likely that the use of these bugging devices is a direct results of these training sessions. Therefore, this can be categorized as a level-four degree of influence.

The training of Iraqi officers and other government officials continued throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s.<sup>157</sup> Although the relationship between the two countries was not centred on intelligence only – commerce and technical aid was also provided – the MfS was “the main supplier of Iraq's intelligence aid”, and intelligence assistance was a very important part of the relationship.<sup>158</sup>

### *Deterioration of the relationship*

In the late 1970s however, the relationship between the MfS and Iraq began to deteriorate. This deterioration is evidenced by the MfS documents. Throughout the years, the GRD kept being admired by the Iraqis for its “intelligence services and organizational capabilities”, and the Iraqi government continued to request aid from the East Germans.<sup>159</sup> These requests focused on the areas of fighting state crimes (*Staatsverbrechen*), counter-espionage, and the use of technology, such as radio defence and radio reconnaissance.<sup>160</sup> However, as specified in a MfS report, “the MfS has always reacted to these efforts with reserve”.<sup>161</sup> The MfS furthermore noted that the MfS “did not reject formal collaboration but did not launch any initiatives”.<sup>162</sup>

These reservations by the MfS can indeed be noticed when looking at the requests made by the Iraqis since 1969. Between 1970 and 1980, four delegations from the Iraqi government visited the GDR. During these trips, they submitted requests for cooperation with the MfS. The first of these trips took place in January 1970. During this visit, a delegation from the Iraqi Ministry of Security requested the delivery of a large number of technical devices for counter-espionage and forensic police work.<sup>163</sup> The MfS mostly rejected this request. However, they stated that 40 out of 63 of the materials requested in the area of laboratory work were described specific enough to offer appropriate equipment and facilities. It is however unclear whether this has actually been done.<sup>164</sup> A second visit and request from the Iraqi delegation, in early 1972, resulted in a visit from an MfS team of specialists

<sup>155</sup> Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security,” 23.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>157</sup> Training sessions in the 1970s included the training of forensic experts by the GDR, see MfS, Kriminalistisches Institut der Deutschen Volkspolizei, “Report about the Business Trip of an Expert Delegation in the Republic of Iraq”, Berlin, 17 February 1976, in BStU, ZA, HA VII 1024; Trainings continued in the 1980s (although in lesser extent), MfS, “Notice regarding the Training of Foreign Military Sectors”, 17 November 1983, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13695, and MfS, “Information about the Result of the Conversation with an Iraqi Delegation led by the Minister of Interior of Iraq, Saadun Shakir Mahmud, at the Ministry of Interior of the DDR”, 1985, in BStU, ZA, HA VII 1024.

<sup>158</sup> Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security”, 8.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>160</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III “Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq”, Berlin, 27 February 1986, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

<sup>161</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III “Statement on the Iraqi Request”, Berlin, 28 February 1985, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

<sup>162</sup> “MfS, HV A Dept. III “Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq”.

<sup>163</sup> MfS, Letter and Appendix from the Mdl of Iraq to Colonel Damm, Baghdad, 25 April 1970, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104 pp. 13-20.

<sup>164</sup> MfS, “Wishlist of the Mdl of the Republic of Iraq”, Berlin, 27 June 1970, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

to Iraq to perform a counterintelligence technology check on the building of the former U.S. embassy in Baghdad, which the Iraqi Foreign Ministry intended to use.<sup>165</sup>

In August 1975, a delegation from the Mdl of Iraq visited Berlin. During this visit that was led by the Minister of Interior at that time, Izzat Ibrahim el Douri, Comrade Lieutenant General Scholz met with Taher Ahmed Amin, the substitute Director for general security in the Mdl and the substitute of

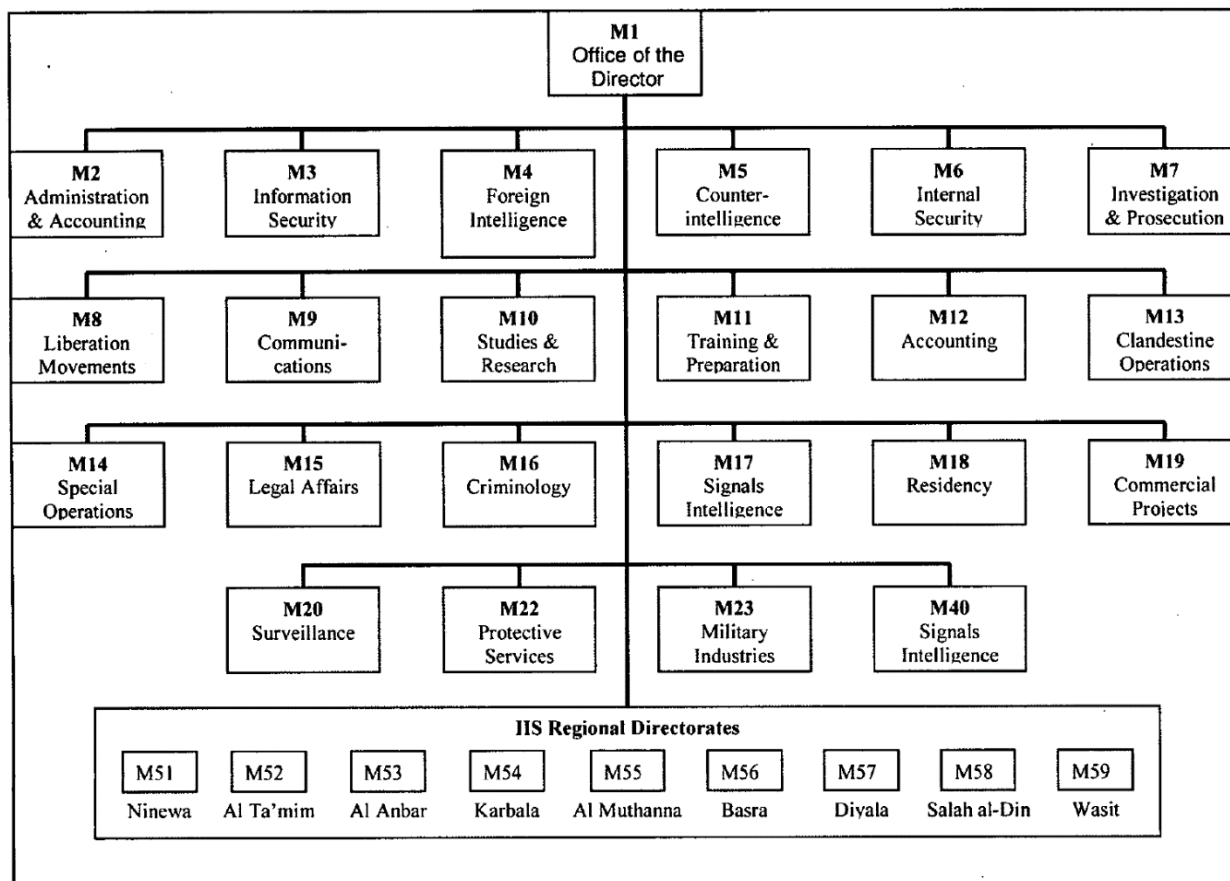


Figure 7: The Organizational Structure of the Iraqi Intelligence Service<sup>166</sup>

the Security Bureau of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).<sup>167,168</sup> On 28 August 1975, Lieutenant General Scholz met with Saadoun Shaker Mahmoud, the Leader of the Security Bureau of the RCC at the time. As a result of these conversations, a delegation of the MfS consisting of members from the Operative and Technological Services (OTS) and the Department for Radio Reconnaissance and Radio Defence (HA III) travelled to Iraq in December 1975. The activities of this delegation are not specified, but the MfS mentions that after this trip, no further activities were developed. In 1979, a study delegation of the Mdl of Iraq visited the GDR. During this visit, the substitute head of General Security of the Mdl, Ghanem Hussein Daoud, made "relatively concrete inquiries" about the training of officers in the areas of the protection of high-ranking officials, for examination work, and for public relations,

<sup>165</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III "Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq".

<sup>166</sup> Iraq Survey Group, Regime Strategic Intent, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence, 3 volumes, September 30, 2004, Vol. 1, 75.

<sup>167</sup> The RCC served as the main decision-making body within Iraq after the Ba'athist coup of 1968, see William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton. A History of the Modern Middle East (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016), 678.

<sup>168</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III "Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq".



as well as inquiries about the possibility to buy technological equipment in the GDR. For some reason, the Iraqis never followed up on this request.<sup>169</sup>

An important reason for the increasing unwillingness to cooperate on the part of the MfS was the ascendance of Saddam Hussein as leader of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq at the end of the 1970s – which the MfS had failed to anticipate, instead considering Ammash to be the rising star.<sup>170</sup> Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, the relationship between the communists in Iraq and the Ba'ath Party began to deteriorate. The start of this deterioration was marked by an event that took place on May 1978, when 21 communists were executed after being charged with subversion against the Ba'ath regime. From that moment on, until the collapse of the Iraqi regime in 2003, communists were pursued relentlessly, and anyone who had communist sympathies was expelled from the armed forces. One reason for the aversion of the Ba'ath party for communism was the belief held by Saddam Hussein that “Ba'ath ideology was not as successful as communism in attracting young people and intellectuals”.<sup>171</sup> He therefore repeatedly called for “a more creative Arab worldview” to fight communist ideology.<sup>172</sup>

The MfS was aware of the fact that Iraqi intelligence agents were monitoring the activities of Iraqi students in the GDR, inter alia to see if there was any communist activity among these students. According to a report dating from 1977, Arab students in the GDR were invited for a trip to Baghdad, under the condition that they were members or sympathizers of the Ba'ath Party. Being promised financial support, the Ba'ath tried to recruit many of these students.<sup>173</sup>

After the relationship between the Ba'ath and the Communists in Iraq continued to become worse, the MfS issued a report in the summer of 1979 that warned that “the leadership of the Ba'ath Party of Iraq has decided to persecute and physically liquidate members of the Communist Party of Iraq who live in foreign countries”.<sup>174</sup> The report called for precautions to ensure the safety of the 254 Iraqi citizens who were living in the GDR at the time, and recommended that the authorities monitor any Iraqi that would enter the country closely. These warnings were not idle: in early December 1979, five Iraqi students were killed in Sofia, Bulgaria, after fights had broken out between Communists and Ba'athists. The MfS was informed that the killings had been provoked by student members of the Ba'ath Party, and that it was very likely that the Iraqi embassy had been made aware of these killings in advance. The MfS also knew from own intelligence sources that Iraqi intelligence officials had been traveling to embassies on a regular basis to coordinate such attacks.<sup>175</sup>

It was furthermore reported by the MfS that Iraq had started to cooperate closely with its ‘imperialist and subversive’ neighbouring countries Saudi-Arabia and Jordan in the persecution of Communists abroad.<sup>176</sup> This hostile attitude of the Ba'ath Party against Iraqi Communists was a reason

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<sup>169</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III “Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq”.

<sup>170</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III/C, “Information about General Saleh Mahdi el Ammash, Vice-President and Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq”, Berlin, 8 October 1969, in BStU, ZA, SdM 1465.

<sup>171</sup> Joseph Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): 9.

<sup>172</sup> See inter alia a report by the General Security, “Study: The Iraqi Communist Party and the Military forces,” 11 November 1987, in North Iraq Dataset (NIDS), PUK 017, Box 071 (310013-310021), cited in Joseph Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq, 1967-1989”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16, no.1 (2014): supra note 20.

<sup>173</sup> MfS, HA XX, Memorandum, 5 September 1977, in BStU, ZA, Hauptabteilung (HA) XX 3896, 9–11.

<sup>174</sup> MfS to All Units, 22 August 1979, in BStU, ZA, Arbeitsgruppe des Ministers (AGM) 421, 26. Cited in “The East German Ministry for State Security, 9.

<sup>175</sup> MfS, Main Dept. II, Report, 8 December 1979, in BStU, ZA, HA II 4797, pp. 11–13. Cited in Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security”, 9.

<sup>176</sup> MfS, HV A III/711, Memorandum, 16 October 1980, in BStU, ZA, HA II 17923. Cited in: Sassoon, “The East German Ministry for State Security”, 10.

for the MfS to be hesitant in its support to Iraq, and led inter alia to the rejection of Iraq's requests for material support.

However, despite these rejections of the requests for material support during the 1970s, the training of Iraqi experts in intelligence continued in the 1970s, as mentioned before. Further training to Iraqi officers continued into the 1980s.<sup>177</sup> According to Klaus Storkmann, this concerned the training by the NVA of ten Iraqi sports officers.<sup>178</sup>

### *1980s: Continuing requests by the Iraqis*

In the 1980s, the Iraqis continued to submit requests for further cooperation in matters of intelligence. According to the MfS, they never agreed to these demands. For instance, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1985, a conversation with Fawzi al-Bander, the envoy of Iraq, took place at the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in the GDR. In this conversation, Bander asked whether the GDR would be willing to receive a group of security officers of the Mdl of Iraq, who wanted to get acquainted with the tasks of the MfS. The MfS reacted to this request with reservations, and claimed not to have been provided with enough details to make a decision.<sup>179</sup> On 9 September 1985, this request was followed up by another request from Bander. In another meeting at the embassy of Iraq in the GDR, he reported the wish of the Iraqi government to send six security officers into the GDR, to acquaint themselves with methods for the fight against subversive actions, methods for the protection of important persons and objects, laboratory devices and establishments for forensic purposes, as well as 'secret information' (Bander could not provide information on what this 'secret information' entailed, and whether this included cryptography or coding), technology to check and compare handwriting and track investigations, and methods for secret searches and the 'most modern' locking technology. He furthermore submitted the request that these officers would like to visit the research and educational facilities of the security organs of the GDR. The envoy was told that the request would be sent to Comrade Minister Mielke and that his decision would be returned to the envoy at a given point in time. A handwritten note on the MfS report however indicates that the Minister is unwilling to agree to the requests from the Iraqis.<sup>180</sup>

Around the same time, in 1984, Saddam Hussein set up the *Jihaz al-amn al-khass* (Special Security Organization, or SSO). Created from within the DGS, the SSO soon became the "most powerful of all agencies".<sup>181</sup> It reported directly to Saddam Hussein, and in essence was the leadership's "eyes and ears".<sup>182</sup> A highly secretive organization, it operated on a functional, rather than a geographical basis. The SSO had a staff of about 5500 people, and consisted of eleven departments and directorates that reported to the SSO director (see figure 8).<sup>183</sup> In the 1990s, also had a Scientific Branch, that reported directly to the director, Qusay Hussein. Functioning solely as a domestic security organization, as opposed to the IIS that had both domestic and international responsibilities, the SSO's most important department was the Directorate of Security Affairs (DSA), which initially was responsible for

<sup>177</sup> MfS, "Notice regarding the Training of Foreign Military Sectors", 17 November 1983, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13695.

<sup>178</sup> Klaus Storkmann. *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die "Dritte Welt"* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2012), 515.

<sup>179</sup> MfS, Notice, Berlin, 12 July 1985, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

<sup>180</sup> MfS, Notice, Berlin, 9 September 1985, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

<sup>181</sup> Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 97.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Iraq Survey Group, *Regime Strategic Intent*, 87.

the protection of the president. After this responsibility was removed from the SSO in the late 1980s, the DSA's duties included checking and monitoring all palace employees and people accompanying the president on his travels. This monitoring included installing secret listening devices in the homes of palace employees, telephone tapping at work and home, personal monitoring of after-work activities, and the continual gathering of information about the people in the inner circles of the palace and their families.<sup>184</sup>

Another significant branch of the SSO was the Public Opinion Department, which was tasked with the collection of information on all rumours regarding the regime. The department had sources in all major cities that would report on all aspects of public opinion regarding Saddam Hussein or the Ba'ath regime.<sup>185</sup> These duties of the SSO seem to resemble the duties of the MfS ZAIG department, which was responsible for providing the SED leadership with reports on the mood and situation in the GDR. Other responsibilities of the SSO that are similar to the MfS's responsibilities include the collecting and analysing intelligence regarding all Iraqi dissidents, as well as the implementation of actions against 'enemies of the state'. Such actions included arrests, interrogations, and executions.<sup>186</sup> Although it should be noted that, due to the declining relationship between the GDR and Iraq, it cannot be strongly assumed that these similarities are a direct result of MfS support to Iraq, there is a possibility that knowledge previously acquired from the MfS was used in later years in the construction of the SSO. Still, due to the lack of evidence of the creation of the SSO being (partly) the result of the cooperation between the MfS and the Ba'ath, this should be categorized as a level-two degree of influence.

A second reason for the deteriorating relationship between Iraq and the GRD was the fact that Iraq was improving its relations with non-progressive (according to the Soviet bloc) countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Morocco, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>187</sup> The MfS started to realize that Iraq was not as progressive and socialist as the regime had claimed in its first decade. At the same time, the MfS also reported the Iraqi regime's rapprochement with the West, in particular with the United States and France. An MfS report describes that the Iraqi foreign minister had emphasized that Iraq had strongly reduced its reservations about the United States. The reason for this was Iraq's concern about 'Soviet expansion' in the Gulf area<sup>188</sup>, which was mainly due to the strong relationship between the Soviet Union and Kuwait.

Iraq had also started to collaborate with France, the FRG and Japan in the area of the delivery of technical devices such as film and radio technology, as well as training for the use of such technology.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, the MfS stated in 1986 that it had operational evidence that Iraq had been collaborating with (intelligence) organs of the FRG since 1984.<sup>190</sup> One reason for this duplicity in relations was the Iran-Iraq war that had started in September 1980, for which the Iraqi wanted as many arms as possible, from any source. The policy of the Soviet Union towards the Iran-Iraq war is pivotal

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<sup>184</sup> Director of SSO Security Branch to Director of SSO, "Plans of Operation of the Special Section," January 12, 1994, BRCC, B 002-1-5 (257-260). Cited in Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 97.

<sup>185</sup> Iraq Survey Group, *Regime Strategic Intent*, 92.

<sup>186</sup> Kahana and Suwaed, *Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Intelligence*, 151.

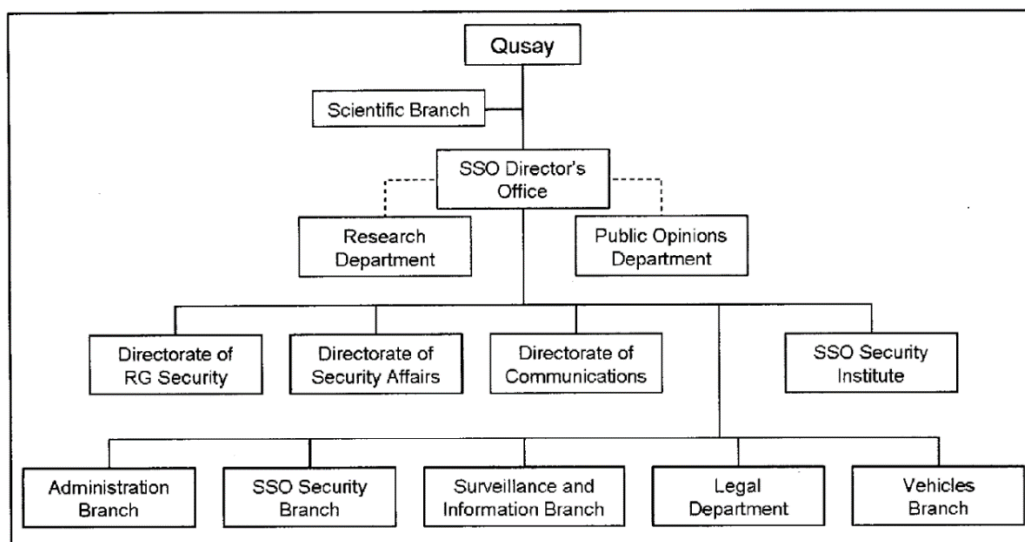
<sup>187</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 12.

<sup>188</sup> MfS, Memorandum, 16 July 1980, in BStU, ZA, HV A 2, pp. 133-138. Cited in Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security and Iraq", 12.

<sup>189</sup> MfS, "Report on the Security- and Defense regime in the Republic of Iraq", O.U., 22 August 1987, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13758.

<sup>190</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III, "Statement on the Iraqi Request", Berlin, 28 February 1986, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104. The document does not specify which FRG-organs the Iraqi's were collaborating with.

for the understanding of the relationship between the GDR and Iraq in the 1980s.<sup>191</sup> Despite the close military ties that existed between the USSR and Iraq, the Soviet authorities had not anticipated the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>192</sup> During the first two years of the war, the Soviet Union did not provide either side with weapons, and attempted to use the sale of weapons as a way to pressure both sides into ending the hostilities. These efforts failed, and instead, Iraq established closer ties with the West. The Ba'ath regime was thus playing both sides in the Cold War in its attempts to get its hands on as many weapons as possible, a policy the GDR became increasingly aware of. This included the United States, who embraced the Iraqi regime as an offset to Iran.<sup>193</sup>



*The Special Security Organization.*

Figure 8: The Organizational Structure of the Special Security Organization<sup>194</sup>

Because of this, the Iraqi leadership felt confident enough to reject the Soviet leadership after it resumed the weapon supply in 1982.<sup>195</sup> Though not arming Iraq directly, starting in March 1982, the United States provided Iraq with vital intelligence information.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, the United States accelerated Iraq's arms build-up by allowing its allies, such as the FRG, to supply the Iraqis with weaponry,<sup>197</sup> sold civilian products that could be used for military purposes and provided agricultural credits that "were used to acquire military technology".<sup>198</sup> This improved relations between Iraq and the United States likely constitutes another reason for the colder relations between the MfS and Iraq, as the MfS suspected that any intelligence relationship aid and knowledge would be disclosed by Iraq to the

<sup>191</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 14.

<sup>192</sup> M.S. El Azhary, "The Attitudes of the Superpowers towards the Gulf War," *International Affairs*, 59, no. 4 (1983), pp. 609-620, cited in Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," *supra* note 49.

<sup>193</sup> For more detailed information on the US policy in the Iran-Iraq war, see inter alia Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*. (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2010), and Adam Tarock, *The Superpowers' Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War*. (Hauppauge, Nova Publishers, 1998).

<sup>194</sup> Iraq Survey Group, *Regime Strategic Intent*, 89.

<sup>195</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 15.

<sup>196</sup> Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*. (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2010), 69.

<sup>197</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 15.

<sup>198</sup> Michael T. Klare, "Arms Transfer to Iran and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88 and the Origins of the Gulf War," in Andrew J. Bacevich and Efraim Inbar, eds., *The Gulf War of 1991 Reconsidered* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 5, cited Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," *supra* note 51.

United States.<sup>199</sup> At the same time, the MfS increasingly started to take the Iranian side in the Iran-Iraq war, as it saw Iran as a new force that opposed the West.<sup>200</sup>

There are also economic explanations for the reluctance of the MfS in cooperating with Iraq. As the Iran-Iraq war progressed, Iraq's economy declined due to damage to oil production facilities. This had two results. First, it is a reason for Iraq's rapprochement to the West, as the declining economic situation meant that Iraq had to befriend as many countries as possible.<sup>201</sup> Secondly, Iraq, who was known to pay in hard cash, would become a burden on the socialist states in the Eastern bloc, if they needed loans instead. Considering that the economic situation of the socialist countries was also in decline, this explains the disinterest of the MfS, since Iraq would not have been able to provide cash.<sup>202</sup>

The MfS was aware that the Iraqi security apparatus did not get the results it had wished for in the possibilities for support offered by the MfS.<sup>203</sup> In a statement written on 28 February 1986, the MfS summed up its position on the matter. In this statement, that was endorsed by Mielke through a written handwriting, the reasons for the reluctance of the GDR to assist Iraq in matters of intelligence (especially in the 1980s) are stated clearly:

From our point of view, the collaboration with Iraqi security organs does not appear to be useful nor necessary for political and operative reasons. It should furthermore be noted that if the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) would become aware of the collaboration, that this could damage the political relations between the GRD and the IRI. The Iraqi intelligence and counter-intelligence organs would use any form of collaboration in these areas [i.e. intelligence] against progressive [communist] Iraqi forces. The MfS Main Directorate for Reconnaissance [HV A] has operational information that shows that Iraqi intelligence organs concluded an agreement of collaboration with West German intelligence organs in 1984.<sup>204</sup>

Senior MfS officials also indicated, after consultation with the GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MfAA) and Ministry of Foreign Trade (MAH), that refusing or not engaging with new Iraqi requests would have no negative political or economic consequences in the bilateral relations between Iraq and the GRD.<sup>205</sup> From the MfS documents, it can be noticed that the East Germans throughout the 1980s engaged in delaying tactics, rather than directly rejecting the Iraqi demands: "The reply could follow in the sense that the MfS sees no possibility to receive the delegation in 1986, on the grounds of constraints in time and capacities. This question has to be re-examined at a later point in time."<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 15.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 22; The MfS also started to support Iran, inter alia with trainings. In 1985, Iran requested that the DDR would train Iranian fighter pilots and technical specialists. Although the GDR declined to train fighter pilots, it was willing to train technical specialists, see MfS, "Information", Berlin, September 1985, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13558.

<sup>201</sup> Sassoon, "The East German Ministry for State Security," 15.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>203</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III "Relations between the MfS of the GDR with Intelligence Organs of the Republic of Iraq", Berlin, 27 February 1986, in BStU, ZA, Abt. X 104.

<sup>204</sup> MfS, HV A Dept. III "Statement on the Iraqi Request".

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

There was one area however, in which cooperation continued despite all these reservations, namely the development of chemical warfare capabilities. From 29 September until 1 October 1985, a delegation from the Department of Chemical Services of the Ministry for National Defence of the GDR (MfNV) reviewed the conditions of the training site of the chemical services in Iraq. This training site was built by the Engineering-Technical Foreign Trade (ITA) agency of the GDR, though it had not been finished due to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. The GDR signed an agreement for a three-month training course of Iraqi personnel in the chemical services by experts from the NVA.<sup>207</sup> The MfS documents do not provide any details on the exact nature of the training, which in the end took place between March and June 1986.<sup>208</sup>

### Concluding remarks

When examining the relationship between the MfS and Iraq, a distinction can be made between the first decade of Iraqi under control of the Ba'ath party (1968-1979) and the ten years after that, until the late 1980s. In the first decade, Iraq enjoyed active support from the GDR, especially in the training of intelligence officers. This support was motivated by a strive for international recognition on the part of the GDR, and by the ongoing race between the Soviet Bloc and the United States to gain as much influence in the Third World as possible, to prove the superiority of their respective ideologies. For Iraq, the cooperation with the GDR was motivated by a long-lasting admiration for the intelligence operations and organizational capabilities of the MfS. Moreover, considering that the Ba'ath party was founded on a socialist ideology, turning to the Soviet bloc for help made sense.

There is quite some evidence that could attribute developments within the Ba'ath intelligence apparatus directly to the training sessions provided by the MfS. This includes the heavy use of bugging devices, the establishment of the IIS, and the creation of a paranoid state of surveillance and fear within Iraq with the use of citizen informants, that strongly resemble the MfS IM. Furthermore, knowledge obtained in the training sessions is very likely to have been used in connection to the DGS and the DGMI.

However, the archives also show a reluctant attitude on the side of the GDR to deepen the collaboration with Iraq. In fact, the GDR became increasingly unwilling to support Iraq in intelligence and other matters. This had largely to do with the rise to power of Saddam Hussein, which came with an increased persecution of communists in Iraq, and caused the GDR to view Iraq in a new, not so positive, light. Secondly, the Iran-Iraq war, during which Iraq turned to both the West and to other 'non-progressive' Arab states, negatively influenced the relationship between the GDR and Iraq. The GDR feared that the increased relationship between Iraq and the West would mean that any technical aid it would give to Iraq would be passed on to the West. Furthermore, as it became clear to the East Germans that Iraq was playing both sides in the Cold War, they started to realize that Iraq was not such a progressive socialist state as the Ba'ath regime had claimed to be in the first decade of its rule. Instead, they started to regard Iran as the new anti-Western and anti-Imperialist power in the Middle East, and therefore increasingly took Iran's side in the war. In this time, the formation of the SSO is a possible indirect influence regarding organizational structure, as it is very possible that knowledge earlier obtained was applied later on as well.

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<sup>207</sup> MfS, "Information about the planned visit of a Delegation of the Department of Chemical Services of the MfNV in the Republic of Iraq", Berlin, 27 September 1985, in BStU, ZA, HA I 13558.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 3: The Islamic Intelligence State

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*Mosul, July 4, 2014. A man clad in black robes and a black turban makes an appearance, his first and last public appearance to date, in the Great Mosque of al-Nuri. "I am the Caliph Ibrahim" he said, addressing the worshippers who had come to the mosque for the prayer on the first Friday of the Ramadan. "God has given our fighters victory after victory after long years of jihad and patience". With this speech, the declaration of the caliphate by an until then quite unknown group called the Islamic State, became worldwide news.*

The rise of the Islamic State forms a complete new chapter in the history of both terrorism and intelligence. Unlike any group that came before, IS has managed to capture a large amount of territory in a short period of time, on which it has declared a caliphate. Still, at the moment of writing, there seems to have come an end to the successes of IS, as Iraqi and international troops close in on the last strongholds of the organization that is known for its 'organized evil'.

Within the context of this research, on first sight there seems to be absolutely no continuity with the previously examined organizations, as the activities and practices of the Islamic State break with everything that has come before them. Still, upon further examination, there are more similarities and there is more continuity than seems at first. This chapter aims at exploring and mapping these continuities, to give more insight in a line of influence that has started with the East German Stasi, and has managed to be passed all the way down to the leadership ranks of the Islamic State's Emni, the powerful intelligence apparatus of IS that is responsible for both foreign intelligence and domestic secret police duties, as well as planning terrorist attacks around the world.

It is important however to keep in mind the one big difference between the Emni and the intelligence apparatuses of East Germany and Iraq. Whereas the latter two were internationally recognized states, the caliphate is an unrecognized proto-state - in which the Islamic State can be seen as 'the party' – that uses terrorist tactics as its modus operandi to spread terror by attacking innocent people all around the world. The Emni, who is responsible for organizing these 'external operations', as IS calls the worldwide attacks, is thus (partially) dedicated to spreading terror abroad. Still, even though its aims thus for a large part differ a lot from the aims of the Stasi and the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath, it is interesting to see if any continuities can be discovered. Therefore, not only the domestic and foreign intelligence duties of the Emni will be discussed, but the external operations as well.

### A Preliminary History of the Islamic State

The origins of the organization that is now known as the Islamic State (ISIS or IS) can be traced back to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian thug-turned-terrorist. The exact roots of the Islamic State are however a source of dispute. According to most scholars, its origins lie in a little-known militant group called Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (Organization of Monotheism and Jihad, or JTJ) that was reportedly established by Zarqawi in 1999 or 2000<sup>209</sup>. After the U.S. led invasion in Iraq in 2003, JTJ developed

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<sup>209</sup> Most scholars use the establishment of the JTJ by Zarqawi as a starting point. However, some other scholars, such as Stern and Berger, do trace the origins of the Islamic State back to Zarqawi, but not to the JTJ. Instead, they focus on the 2003 U.S. invasion in Iraq as a starting point. Mentioned by most scholars, for example not by Stern and Berger, who trace the start of ISIS back to Zarqawi, but don't mention this group, instead focusing on the 2003 US invasion as a starting point.

into a network that aimed at resisting the coalition occupation and their Iraqi allies, thereby mainly drawing upon the use of suicide bombers.<sup>210</sup>

In 2004, Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden, after which he changed the name of his organization to *Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* (Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia, more commonly known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, or AQI). About a year later, in January 2006, AQI created an umbrella organization called the Mujahedeen Shura Council (MSC), in an attempt to unify Sunni insurgent groups in Iraq. Recruitment efforts were undermined however by its violent tactics against civilians.<sup>211</sup> The MSC was made up of at least six Sunni insurgent groups, that besides AQI included *Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansurah*, *Katbiyan Ansar al-Tawhid wal Sunnah*, the *Saray al-Jihad Group*, the *al-Ghuraba Brigades*, and the *al-Ahwal Brigades*.

A couple of months later, on June 7, 2006, Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. drone strike, after which one of the top Al-Qaeda operatives, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (also known as Abu Ayub al-Masri) was promoted to AQI representative in Iraq. Three months later, on October 15, the MSC announced the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Muhajir pledged loyalty to ISI and to its newly appointed leader, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, and in return became ISI's second man. During this time, ISI's organizational structure, which had been a very loose one under the leadership of Zarqawi, was changed into a strict hierarchical one by Abu Omar al Baghdadi, thereby strongly improving the organization's efficiency.<sup>212</sup>

Still, the organization's first attempt to establish an Islamic State was a failure. ISI lacked the resources and personnel to hold territory or to rule over people. Furthermore, the death of Zarqawi did not lead to a decrease in the use of violent tactics. ISI's excessive use of brutal violence accelerated the loss of support from the Sunni tribes and other insurgents in Iraq. ISI's attempts to intervene in Sunni economic enterprises, and its tendency to insult the mores and customs of the Sunni tribes made matters even worse, and led to the emergence of the *Sahwa* (Awakening) movement. This movement consisted of Sunni tribes and insurgents that allied with their former enemy, the United States, to fight ISI. In return, the Sunni fighters would be integrated in the Iraqi security services, and majority-Sunni areas would benefit from generous economic measures. The Awakening movement proved to be too strong for ISI, and at the end of 2008 the jihadist organization was almost entirely defeated, bringing Iraq "on the path to stability and security".<sup>213</sup> However, after the U.S. troops began to withdraw from cities across Iraq in early 2009, the Iraqi government abandoned the Awakening movement. Feeling betrayed, many of the Sunni fighters joined what was left of ISI. This caused ISI to rebound later that same year, after which it "appeared to be launching a concerted effort to cripple the Iraqi government", by sabotaging government infrastructure and carrying out terrorist attacks that killed hundreds of civilians.<sup>214</sup>

In April 2010, ISI suffered significant defeat when Baghdadi and Muhajir were killed in a US-led air strike. This decapitation of ISI's leadership made room for the emergence of the current leader of the Islamic State, Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai, more commonly known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The reason that Baghdadi<sup>215</sup> was chosen as ISI's new leader was that he, as an educated

<sup>210</sup> Ahmed S. Hashim. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate". *Middle East Policy*, 11, no. 4 (2014): 70.

<sup>211</sup> Hashim, "The Islamic State", 72.

<sup>212</sup> Botje, Harm, E., and Abdou Bouzerda. "Anatomie van IS – De Islamitische Staat ontrafeld." *Vrij Nederland*. 3 March, 2015. Accessed July 3, 2017, <https://www.vn.nl/de-anatomie-van-de-islamitische-staat/>

<sup>213</sup> Hashim, "The Islamic State", 72.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Not to be confused with Abu Omar al Baghdadi, his predecessor.



cleric, would give the group a religious face.<sup>216</sup> Under his leadership, ISI's hierarchical structure was further strengthened, and many reforms were introduced. Most importantly, former Ba'athist officers who had been fired during the first or second de-Baathification round after 2003, joined the ranks of ISI and started to play an important role, as Baghdadi was convinced that ISI would only be able to survive if it was turned into a professional military organization. In this, ISI(S) and its successor the Islamic State differ greatly from Al Qaeda Central (AQC): when the latter found itself in increasingly militarized circumstances after the U.S invasion in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden – who lacked military experience – turned out to be unfit to lead in such an environment.<sup>217</sup>

In 2013, ISI announced that Jahbat al Nusra, a terrorist organization active in the Syrian civil war, would become its official Syrian offshoot. Following this announcement, ISI changed its name into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Despite the immediate rejection of this statement by al Nusra's leadership and its appeal to AQC for judgment, Baghdadi's organization kept being known as ISIS from then on.

Successfully capturing large amounts of territory in both Syria and Iraq, ISIS' leadership decided in 2014 that it was time to announce the re-establishment of a caliphate. On June 29, 2014 – the start of the Ramadan – an audio message titled 'This is the Promise of Allah' was released. In this message, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, the spokesman for ISIS, announced the re-establishment of the caliphate, and stated that ISIS accordingly had renamed itself 'Islamic State' (IS) and that the Ummah was obliged to pledge loyalty to the new Caliph Ibrahim, who was formerly known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

## Origins of the Emni and the Capture of Territory

The outbreak of the Syrian civil war in March 2011 gave rise to new opportunities for ISI. Its leadership decided to become active in the war, a move that made sense for Baghdadi, who was of the opinion that the secular Assad regime - which is dominated by the Alawite sect that is considered non-Muslim by most of the Islamic world - was "trying to crush Muslims".<sup>218</sup> Another reason was that the battlefield in Syria provided an opportunity for ISI fighters to refine their skills and to learn 'small-unit tactics' by fighting against a professional army. In order to prepare for the entry of ISI into the civil war, a number of operatives, who were mostly Syrian veterans of the Iraqi insurgency against the United States, were sent into Syria.<sup>219</sup>

Beside these Syrian veterans, an important role within ISI was taken on by former Ba'ath officers. After the American invasion that led to the fall of Ba'ath regime in 2003, L. Paul Bremer, who was the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (Iraq's transitional government established by the U.S.-led Multinational Force), promulgated a de-Baathification law that barred Iraqi's who had ranked in the top four levels of the Ba'ath Party or who had held positions in the top three levels of any ministry from working for the new Iraqi government. The same law also disbanded the Iraqi Army and replaced it with a new army "built from scratch".<sup>220</sup> Long identified as one of the contributors to the later Sunni jihadist insurgency<sup>221</sup>, the creation and implementation of the de-Baathification law went against the

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<sup>216</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>217</sup> Stern, Jessica, and John M. Berger. *ISIS – The State of Terror*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2015), 61.

<sup>218</sup> Hashim, "The Islamic State," 77.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> James P. Pfiffner. "US Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Army". *Intelligence and National Security*, 25, no. 1 (2010), 76.

<sup>221</sup> The Iraqi insurgency has its roots in the 2003 U.S. invasion and was mainly aimed against the Multi-National Force Iraq. One of the major parties within the insurgency was the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and its predecessor, ISI. Lasting

advice of the U.S. military and CIA, and was done without consultation of important members of the President's staff and cabinet.<sup>222</sup> The 400,000 members of the disbanded Iraqi army were barred from government employment, were denied pensions – but were allowed to keep their guns.<sup>223</sup> This process of de-baathification had several consequences. First, it alienated hundreds of thousands of people, who were unable to support themselves or their families since their income had disappeared, from the new government. It also undermined the infrastructure that is necessary for social and economic activity, and it ensured that there was no sufficient security to go on with 'normal life'. Finally, the de-baathification law created insurgents – many of whom had weapons and were trained to use them - who were angry at the United States.<sup>224</sup> Some of these fired former Ba'athist officers became early recruits of AQI. However, distrusting their secular outlook, Zarqawi was not keen on recruiting the Baathists into the ranks of AQI.<sup>225</sup> It was under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi that the recruitment of Baathist officers into both the rank and file as well as the leadership positions of the Islamic State became a deliberate strategy.<sup>226</sup> Convinced that ISI would only be able to survive if it possessed professional military capacities, Baghdadi reserved an important role for former Baathist officers. Embarking on an aggressive campaign to recruit these former officers, Baghdadi focused on the large group that had either remained unemployed after the de-baathification, or that had joined less extremist insurgent groups. These efforts were aided by a second round of de-baathification in 2011, when President Nouri al-Maliki fired even those officers who had been rehabilitated by the U.S. military.<sup>227</sup> In July 2012, Baghdadi announced the initiation of the 'Breaking Down the Walls' campaign, which was aimed at liberating Iraqi prisons that were packed with former Baathist officers and jihadists.<sup>228</sup> Between the start of the campaign and 2014, ISI militants managed to free over 1200 inmates from two prison facilities in Mosul, and 300 from Tikrit.<sup>229</sup> With this campaign, ISI evolved into a mix of Baathist and jihadist ideologies, armed with a strong strategic battle plan.

The skills and expertise of the former Ba'ath military, police, and intelligence officers were also of great importance for the development of the Emni. Haji Bakr, the man denoted as the architect of the Emni, was one of the operatives that traveled to Syria, in late 2012.<sup>230</sup> His plan: to capture as much territory as possible in Syria, after which the organization would invade Iraq, using Syria as a beachhead. Bakr's background story is similar to that of many of the Ba'ath officers that joined the Islamic State. A former career officer stationed at the Habbaniya Air Base, he was part of the secret-service unit attached to the anti-aircraft division. After being fired from the army, Bakr became bitter and unemployed, and went underground, after which he met Zarqawi in the Anbar Province in western Iraq. Gradually becoming one of the leaders of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, he was held in Camp Bucca and the notorious Abu Ghraib Prison between 2006 and 2008. This imprisonment gave rise to the opportunity

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from 2003 to 2011, the insurgency later escalated into the ongoing Iraqi Civil War (2014-present), which is mainly dominated by fighting between militants of the Islamic State and government forces.

<sup>222</sup> Pfiffner, "US Blunders in Iraq," 76.

<sup>223</sup> Liz Sly, "The Hidden Hand behind the Islamic State Militants? Saddam Hussein's," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2015, accessed June 15, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-husseins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.0c7db01aec46](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-husseins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html?utm_term=.0c7db01aec46).

<sup>224</sup> Pfiffner, "US Blunders in Iraq," 76.

<sup>225</sup> Sly, "The Hidden Hand".

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, 61.

<sup>229</sup> Aki Peritz, "The Great Iraqi Jail Break," *Foreign Policy*, June 26, 2014. Accessed 10 July 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/26/the-great-iraqi-jail-break/>

<sup>230</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

to seize power in a small circle of jihadists. Bakr and a number of former high-ranking Ba'ath officers used the time they shared in Camp Bucca to establish a large network of contacts.<sup>231</sup> This opportunity worked two ways. For the jihadists, the military and intelligence knowledge of the former officers was an asset in achieving their goals, namely the establishment of a caliphate. For the officers, the religious fanaticism of the jihadists could be used as a façade to seize power in Iraq.

It was in Tal Rifaat, a town north of Aleppo, that the 'Lord of the Shadows', as Haji Bakr was called by some, drew the structure of the Islamic State, all the way down to the local level. It was also here that the foundations of the Emni were established. The blueprint that he created was implemented with "astonishing accuracy" in the months that followed.<sup>232</sup> For every village, city or town that ISIS wanted to take over, the plan would start with the same detail: the organization would recruit followers under the pretense of opening a *Dawah* office, an Islamic missionary center. Of the people that attended lectures and courses, one or two men were selected by members of ISIS. They received instructions to spy on their village or town, in order to find out as much as possible. ISIS wanted to receive information about the people that lived in these villages or towns, which of the families were religious, and to what Islamic school of thought they belonged to, how many mosques there were, who the imam was, and how many wives and children he had, what the imam's sermons were like, whether he sided with the opposition or the regime, and what his position was on jihad.

Haji Bakr furthermore wanted to know how many people were in favor of democracy, information on the powerful families, their names, their source of income, the names and sizes of the (rebel) brigades, their leaders, those in control, and their political orientation, and information on any illegal activities (according to Sharia law), which could be used for blackmail. Further details that had to be obtained included information on whether someone was a criminal or a homosexual, who was involved in a secret affair, and with whom, which was all to be used for later blackmail. Additionally, followers of the Islamic State would be selected in each town to marry the daughters of the most influential men, so that "penetration of these families without their knowledge" would be ensured.<sup>233</sup> In short, ISIS wanted to have any information with which the local population could be divided and subjugated. Informants included some former intelligence spies and regime opponents who had fallen out with one of the rebel groups, but also young men and teenagers – some as young as 16 or 17 - who needed money or found it exciting to be a spy for ISIS.<sup>234</sup>

### *The Capture of Raqqa and other territory in Syria*

The expansion of ISIS within Syria began in such an unremarkable way, that many people did not notice the moment the jihadists appeared. When a *Dawah* office was opened in Raqqa, a Syrian city located on the northeast bank of the Euphrates, it seemed nothing more than an innocent-looking missionary office. It was only when the fighting started in January 2013, that citizens found out that ISIS had already rented apartments throughout the city where it hid fighters and weapons. *Dawah* offices were also opened in al-Bab, Atarib and Azaz, and in the neighboring Idlib Province, in Sermada, Atmeh, Kafr Takharim, al-Dana and Salqin. The modus operandi of ISIS was the same in each of these towns: as soon as it had recruited enough spies, the organization expanded its presence. In al-Dana for example, ISIS rented more buildings, raised black flags and took over streets. If a town resisted the arrival of ISIS

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<sup>231</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

too much, it would withdraw temporarily. At the beginning of ISIS' expansion activities, its modus operandi was one surrounded by secrecy. The goal was to expand without causing any open resistance. It would therefore abduct or murder 'hostile individuals', while afterwards denying any involvement in these activities.<sup>235</sup>

The operation to take over Raqqa, which was to become the "prototype of the complete IS[IS] conquest", started small and subtle, and gradually became more brutal. In the end, ISIS dominated its much larger opponents without having to put up much of a fight, due to its infiltration techniques and use of intelligence. After Raqqa was captured, ISIS turned it into a proto-state with "a holistic system of governance that includes religious, educational, judicial, security, humanitarian and infrastructure projects..."<sup>236</sup>

Following the plan set out by Haji Bakr, the infiltration phase was succeeded by an elimination phase, in which each and every person who may have been a potential leader or opponent was kidnapped and/or killed. Victims included the head of the city council that was established after the capture of Raqqa in order to organize resistance, the brother of a prominent novelist, and the man who was the leader of the group that had painted a revolutionary flag on the city walls. With this, the system of fear that characterized the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein, also took hold in the ISIS proto-state of Raqqa. Starting in July 2013, dozens of people vanished without a trace. Not soon after, this number was quickly raised to hundreds of kidnappings. Members of the opposition against ISIS were intimidated and threatened, and most of them soon fled to Turkey, thereby ending the revolution in Raqqa, and making the takeover by ISIS complete.

The capture of Raqqa did not make ISIS any more popular with the other rebel groups in Syria. Although most of the rebels seemed "paralyzed in the face of IS[IS]' sinister power"<sup>237</sup>, they experienced some resistance when in June 2013, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's successor as leader of AQC, ruled against a merger between al-Nusra and ISIS. He stipulated that al-Nusra would fight in Syria, and that ISI would have to stay in Iraq. However, Baghdadi rejected this ruling and declared that the merger would go through. As a response, Zawahiri ordered that ISIS had to be disbanded, thereby putting al-Nusra in charge of the jihadist effort in Syria. Again, Baghdadi and others within ISIS contested Zawahiri's ruling, this time on the basis of "Islamic jurisprudence and practical and logical grounds".<sup>238</sup> They argued that it would be a sin to disband ISIS, that the Sykes-Picot boundary that outlines the border between Iraq and Syria was an artificial line that was not recognized by Islam, and that it made 'no sense' for the jihadists to not unite their combat.<sup>239</sup> Baghdadi's subordination, reportedly together with its brutal violence that was too much for even al-Qaeda's leadership<sup>240</sup>, caused Zawahiri to officially disavow ISIS at the beginning of 2014.

At the end of 2013, ISIS unexpectedly started to experience resistance from the other rebel groups in Syria. After ISIS henchmen had tortured and killed a popular rebel leader and doctor, Syrian rebel brigades, that consisted of secular groups, as well as parts of al-Nusra, worked together in attacking ISIS. Because they attacked ISIS at the same time from different sides, the organization lost its tactical advantage of being able to quickly move its units to where they were needed the most. As a result, ISIS was driven out of large regions of northern Syria within weeks. By the time back-up arrived

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<sup>235</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>236</sup> Charles Caris and Samuel Reynolds, "Isis Governance in Syria" Middle East Security Report No. 22, Institute for the Study of War (2014), no. 9. Cited in Hashim, "The Islamic State," 77.

<sup>237</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>238</sup> Hashim, "The Islamic State," 78.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, 3.

in the form of 1300 ISIS fighters from Iraq, Raqqa had almost fallen. However, these fighters did not march straight into battle, but chose a sneakier approach instead. Considering that there were so many rebel brigades active in Raqqa, nobody knew exactly who was who. All of the sudden, a group in rebel dress started to shoot at the other rebels, who decided to flee. These rebels, in fact, were ISIS fighters, who had changed out of their black clothes and into jeans and vests. ISIS had managed to take over Raqqa and other towns and villages in Syria with not much more than “ninja outfits, cheap tricks and espionage cells camouflaged as missionary offices”.<sup>241</sup> In January 2014, it could claim complete control over Raqqa, and named it the capital of the ISIS emirate.<sup>242</sup>

Although Haji Bakr was killed in January 2014 when fighting broke out between ISIS and other rebel groups in Tal Rifaat, his work continued. The preciseness of the implementation of his plan became clear when another file was discovered in the same month as Bakr was killed. When ISIS had to quickly abandon its headquarters in Aleppo, they tried to destroy their archive, but they ran into a similar problem as the MfS had experienced 25 years earlier, namely that they had too many files. Some of these files survived the destruction attempts and fell in the hands of the *al-Tawhid* Brigade, which was Aleppo's largest rebel group at the time.<sup>243</sup> The files show the complicated system set up by ISIS to infiltrate and monitor all groups, including its own people. They contained lists of which informants were installed in which rebel brigade or government militia, and who among the rebels was a spy for Assad's intelligence service. They also included letters of applications from incoming foreign fighters. At the same time, the files showed that not only did ISIS want to know everything, at the same time, they wanted to deceive everyone around them about the group's true goals. This becomes for example clear from a multi-page report listing all of the potential pretexts ISIS could use as a façade for the seizure of the largest flour mill in northern Syria. Suggestions included alleged embezzlement as well as the ‘ungodly’ behavior of the workers of the mill. ISIS' true motivations for the seizure of the mill, namely that all strategically important facilities such as industrial bakeries, grain silos and generators had to be seized, so that their equipment could be sent to Raqqa, was kept hidden.<sup>244</sup>

### *Expansion into Iraq*

The victories of ISIS did not stop at the Syrian border. In June 2014, ISIS returned to Iraq to seize large parts of territory. Using an insurgent version of ‘shock and awe’<sup>245</sup>, the organization concentrated its forces for a “lightning attack on the Iraqis and the capture of territory and cities.”<sup>246</sup> ISIS also activated its operational links with many insurgents who had been officers and intelligence personnel in the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein.

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<sup>241</sup> Reuter, “Secret Files”.

<sup>242</sup> Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, XX.

<sup>243</sup> After ‘lengthy negotiations’, the papers were made available to *der Spiegel* for exclusive publication rights. The only thing *der Spiegel* did not have access to was a list of ISIS spies within *al-Tawhid*.

<sup>244</sup> Reuter, “Secret Files”

<sup>245</sup> ‘Shock and awe’ is a military strategy based on achieving dominance quickly over an adversary by “the initial imposition of overwhelming force and firepower”. See <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100502693>

<sup>246</sup> Hashim, “The Islamic State”, 78.

Among these were groups such as *Rijal Jaysh al-Naqshbandiya*, who had entrenched themselves in Mosul, where they ran a shadow administration. Several military and local leaders were convinced by the Shura Council (ISIS’ religious monitor) to resign and flee, and the remaining military units and civilian leaders were isolated and killed, either by assassinations squads and suicide bombers, or became the victims of mass murders when captured. Videos of such massacres were distributed widely, and reached the remaining Iraqi troops on the front lines. Many of the Sunni soldiers among the Iraqi forces felt no particular allegiance to the Maliki government, and therefore deserted *en masse*. Weakened by the ISIS advance, the Iraqi security forces collapsed completely. After four of its army divisions disappeared, with its personnel either deserting or massacred, ISIS managed to capture a large amount of army equipment, including 1500 armored Humvees, and large numbers of mortars and heavy artillery pieces.<sup>247</sup> Each time ISIS seized a city, the first thing they did was to take over control of the police and municipal buildings and the core infrastructure such as water and electricity. In that way, they gained control over the access to vital needs.<sup>248</sup>

The creation of the Emni is a direct result of the intelligence knowledge that has been used by Ba’ath officers who became part of the Islamic State. Therefore, this can be categorized as a level-four degree of influence between the intelligence apparatus of the Ba’ath and the Emni. It can furthermore be categorized as an indirect influence from the MfS to the Emni, as it is quite likely that intelligence knowledge obtained by Ba’ath intelligence officers from MfS officers has been used in creating the Emni. After all, it is very feasible that the Ba’ath also used knowledge obtained from the MfS to create and strengthen its own intelligence apparatus. Therefore, this can be categorized as a level-two degree of influence between the MfS and the Emni.

**The Emni in the Caliphate**

With the proclamation of the caliphate in June 2014, the Islamic State became an unrecognized proto-state, equipped with a strongly motivated and ruthless force made up of tens of thousands of (foreign) fighters. Although its political structure is not as elaborate as the organizational structure of East Germany or Iraq under Ba’ath control, it is similar in the sense that it can be seen as a one party state. In this context, the caliphate should be seen as the state, and IS as the party.

The organizational structure of the caliphate had been set up in the years before it was actually established. Haji Bakr’s blueprint encompassed a large scale of elements that make up a (proto-)state, with state structures, bureaucracy and authority, including areas such as finance, schools, daycare, the media, and transportation.

Table 1: The Emni's Duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Collecting intelligence for battles in Syria and Iraq</li> <li>•Gathering intelligence on the citizens of the 'Islamic State'</li> <li>•Gathering detailed intelligence on the areas that IS aims to take over</li> <li>•Counter-intelligence</li> <li>•Spreading propaganda and fear within the Islamic State and globally</li> <li>•Recruiting and deploying foreign fighters for intelligence gathering and attacks in their home countries</li> <li>•Feeding IS media centers about IS inspired and IS directed external attacks</li> <li>•Sending and deploying spies and recruiters inside Turkey and other countries, including spying upon Syrian refugees</li> <li>•Monitoring IS' logistical support operations inside Turkey to ensure that there are no leaks or interruptions</li> <li>•Interacting with agents from other rival terrorist groups and states, including those from Assad's intelligence</li> <li>•Any kind of critical 'dirty job' including organizing slave, oil, wheat and antiquities trade, as well as assassinations, kidnappings, and bartering for hostages</li> </ul>

<sup>247</sup> Hashim, “The Islamic State”, 79.  
<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 78.

Working besides this however, is a parallel command structure: elite units exist next to normal troops; there are additional commanders that work alongside the 'nominal' military leader and there are power brokers who transfer or downgrade provincial and town emirs, or in some cases even make them arbitrarily disappear. Moreover, decisions are not made in the Shura Council, which nominally is the highest-decision making body. Rather, they are being made by the 'people who loosen and bind' (*ahl al-hall wa-l-aqd*), a "clandestine circle whose name is taken from the Islam of medieval times".<sup>249</sup> This parallel command structure is the Emni.<sup>250</sup> Thus, the Emni plays an even bigger role within the society of the caliphate than the intelligence apparatuses did in East Germany or Iraq, as it not only functions as a secret service and foreign intelligence organization, but also as the de-facto decision-making and governing body, through this parallel command structure.

Within the entire organizational structure of the caliphate – both the parallel Emni structure as well as the 'normal' command structure - a constant recurring theme can be found, namely surveillance, espionage, murder and kidnapping. In fact, all bureaucratic instances in the blueprint for the Islamic State, including Shari'ā, the courts, and the prescribed piety, served a single goal: surveillance and control. As a model for this omnipresent apparatus of paranoid surveillance, Bakr used what he had learned in the past: the security apparatus of Saddam Hussein, in which everyone, including generals in the intelligence service, were being spied on. Although the Ba'ath Party was secular, it shared with ISIS the conviction that "control over the masses should lie in the hands of a small elite that should not be answerable to anyone – because it ruled in the name of a grand plan, legitimized by either God or the glory of Arab history".<sup>251</sup> Bakr was not a religious man himself, and believed that fanatical religious convictions on its own could not achieve victory, but he did believe that "the faith of others could be exploited".<sup>252</sup> The secret of the success of the Islamic State can be found in this conviction, as it successfully combined opposites, namely the fanatical religious beliefs of one group, with the strategic calculations of the other group.

Deriving from the Arabic word *emniyyah*, which roughly means 'gained intelligence', the Emni is responsible for the collection of domestic and foreign intelligence, as well as the planning of external attacks all around the world (see table 1). Headquartered in the Syrian town of al-Bab, its last known chief was ISIS spokesman al-Adnani, who was killed in August 2016 by a U.S. airstrike.<sup>253</sup>

The Emni as IS' intelligence organization has been of major importance. In fact, researchers have called it "core structure" of the Islamic State, to which IS owes its existence as a terrorist group and as a nascent totalitarian state.<sup>254</sup> Thus, in contrast to the intelligence apparatuses of East Germany and Ba'athist Iraq, the Emni created the Islamic State, rather than the other way around.

Similar to the MfS, as well as the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS), the *Emni* seems to unite domestic security and intelligence with the tasks of a foreign intelligence service (see table 1). Considering that this is a characteristic of communist regimes, and therefore a likely direct influence from the MfS on the Ba'ath Party, it can be argued that this organizational structure is an indirect translation of the lessons that the Iraqi Ba'ath officers took over from the MfS training they received in the 1970s. Considering that this is a characteristic that can be seen in all three organizations, but

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<sup>249</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>250</sup> Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla. "The ISIS Emni: The Inner Workings and Origins of ISIS's Intelligence Apparatus," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no 1 (2017): 5.

<sup>251</sup> Reuter, "Secret Files"

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Speckhard and Yayla, "The ISIS Emni," 5.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 12.

lacks proof of being a result of direct cooperation (although likely), this could be categorized as a level-two (B) degree of influence.

The captured blueprints developed by Haji Bakr provide more insight in the organizational structure of the Emni. When looking at the draft for the structure of the Emni (figure 9), as was set out by Haji Bakr, it becomes visible that two levels are working in parallel, namely a regional branch and a district branch. For each of the Islamic State's provincial councils, Haji Bakr's plans included the appointment of an emir or commander, who would be in charge of murders, abductions, snipers, communication and encryption, as well as an emir to supervise the other emirs, "in case they don't do their jobs well".<sup>255</sup> The Emni has been playing an important role in the Islamic State from the beginning. Functioning as an 'iron spine' throughout the organizational system of the Islamic State, Haji Bakr planned to have the intelligence service operating in parallel, as far down as the provincial level. At the regional level, a 'security emir' is put in place. The regional security emir is in return responsible for the deputy emirs at the district level. The head of one of the 'secret spy cells' and an district 'intelligence service and information manager' reports to each of these deputy-emirs. Further down, at the local level, there are more spy cells, which report to the deputy of the district emir. The goal of this all-embracing intelligence network is "to have everyone keeping an eye on everyone else".<sup>256</sup> Furthermore, Shari'ā judges have been trained in intelligence gathering. The people that provided this training had to report to the district emir as well, whereas a separate department of 'security officers' was in charge of informing the regional emir.

### *The Secret Police*

The Emni is responsible for ensuring the internal security inside *Dawla* - the Arabic word for state which is used to refer to the caliphate, and functions in that way as a secret police. It is tasked with policing the people who live inside *Dawla*, which – according to both records of interrogations of former IS members as well as analysts - included the conduction of interrogations and tracking down spies.<sup>257</sup> When foreign fighters wishing to join IS arrive in the caliphate, they are held by the Emni for up to a week in a holding center close to the border, where they are interrogated to ensure that they are not enemy spies.<sup>258</sup>

The Emni also gathers intelligence about everyone who lives inside the caliphate, as well as about the population of captured territory to maintain power and to get rid of all opponents to the regime inside the borders of the caliphate. Drawing lessons from the totalitarian state created in Iraq by Saddam's intelligence services, IS places paid informants everywhere within the society inside the caliphate, thereby creating a widespread fear to defy the terrorist group in any way. In interviews, Islamic State defectors revealed to have been skeptical of even their own family members, including children as young as 6 or 7, fearing that they may have been working as informants.<sup>259</sup> In this way, IS has thus created a state of paranoid surveillance that does not only resemble Iraq during the Saddam era, but also the employment of the infamous Stasi IM in East Germany. Due to the strong proof of influence from and cooperation with former Ba'ath officers, this state of paranoid surveillance could be characterized as a level-four degree of influence when tracking this continuity from the Ba'ath to

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<sup>255</sup>Reuter, "Secret Files".

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, "How a Secretive Branch of ISIS Built a Global Network of Killers," *New York Times*, August 3, 2016, accessed August 8, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/04/world/middleeast/isis-german-recruit-interview.html>

<sup>258</sup> Speckhard and Yayla, "The ISIS Emni", 3.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.



the Islamic State. When mapping such a continuity down to the MfS however, it should be characterized as a level-two degree of influence, because there is a lack of concrete evidence that this exact skill that the Islamic State learned from the Ba'ath was taught to the Ba'ath by MfS officers, although similarities between the MfS and the Ba'ath regarding this far-reaching implementation of surveillance should be acknowledged.

Another aspect for which the Emni is responsible domestically is propaganda, which is spread within the caliphate as well as globally. It furthermore provides IS media centers with information on IS inspired and IS directed external attacks. Interestingly enough, whereas influencing public opinion inside and abroad was an important duty of the MfS - inter alia by discrediting dissidents and spreading disinformation through its notorious Hauptabteilung X – it seems not to have been included in the tasks of Saddam's intelligence services. It is therefore impossible to say whether this could be considered as a continuity or not, and should therefore be categorized as a level-one degree of influence.

The Emni is also responsible for the control of communications, including strict control of Internet usage. Internet access is provided to both IS fighters and civilians within the caliphate in cafes that are referred to as 'post offices'. For this, the Emni does not rely on any complicated technical intelligence techniques, but rather places cadres in these 'post offices' that eavesdrop and watch what is being communicated.<sup>260</sup> This is a tactic that is eerily similar to the monitoring practices of the MfS for such an age of modern technology. However, this merely is an observation about resemblance that is not based on any hard evidence connecting the two, and therefore should be categorized as a level-one degree of influence.

### *Foreign Intelligence*

Similar to the MfS and the Ba'ath, the Emni unites domestic secret police duties with foreign intelligence tasks. Applying the totalitarian intelligence techniques the former Baathist officers learned in Saddam Hussein's government, many IS intelligence agents embed their own cadres into rival groups such as al-Nusra, to turn and recruit individuals from such groups to serve as double agents, and thus spy on their own groups for the Islamic State. In this way, the IS leadership could learn key information about rival groups, including their strong points and weaknesses. At the same time, these embedded spies killed important rival leaders, set off explosions, and carried out suicide attacks to spread unease and terror among opposing groups, prior to attacking.<sup>261</sup>

Other foreign intelligence tasks of the Emni include gathering and analyzing intelligence about potential attacks against the Islamic State, gathering intelligence about territory that IS tends to capture, and in line with this, collecting intelligence for battles in Syria, Iraq and in other countries where IS is active, such as Libya.<sup>262</sup> It is furthermore responsible for controlling and monitoring the logistical support operations of IS inside Turkey, including the transport of materials that are used for the construction of explosives, such as igniters, chemicals, fertilizers and cables, that have been funded through Turkey.<sup>263</sup>

Like the MfS and the Ba'ath, the Emni also deploys spies, assassins, and recruiters in other countries, to monitor both Syrian refugees as well as IS members abroad. Examples provided by

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<sup>260</sup> Speckhard and Yayla, "The ISIS Emni", 6.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 6.

defectors include the case of an Emni agent that followed and photographed a member of the Islamic State that was on a break in Sanliurfa, Turkey, where he met in a bar with a member of an opposition group. When this person returned to Syria, he was arrested and interrogated about this meeting, after which he was killed. The Emni furthermore collects intelligence about the activities of opposition groups, and eliminates enemies of the Islamic State: at least four Syrian opposition leaders who were critical of the Islamic State have been assassinated in Turkey by the Emni.

Due to the strong evidence that can be found in the literature regarding the intelligence techniques that the Islamic State has learned from former Ba'ath officers, the foreign intelligence activities of the Islamic State can be categorized as a level-four degree of influence from the Ba'ath to IS. Although it is difficult to say with certainty that these foreign intelligence activities of the Islamic State are (at least partly) an indirect result of the intelligence relationship between the Ba'ath and the MfS, it is likely that the Ba'ath received part of its foreign intelligence training from the MfS, as was discussed in the previous chapter, where this link was categorized as a level-three degree of influence. Therefore, there potentially is a continuity in foreign intelligence tactics between the MfS and the Islamic State, which can be categorized as a level-two degree of influence.

Lastly, the Emni communicates and cooperates with intelligence agents of rival terrorist groups and states, including agents of Assad's intelligence service. In 2014, Haji Bakr rekindled the intelligence ties between the Emni and the Syrian government that had been established in 2003, when Assad was afraid that the U.S. troops that were deployed in Iraq would topple his dictatorship as well. Through these ties, the Emni "bartered for assistance" from the Syrian air force, which would bomb the positions and headquarters of rebel groups, but would leave the Islamic State alone. In return, the Emni ordered IS fighters not to shoot at Syrian government forces. Defectors have also recounted stories of regime forces giving up territory to IS without putting up a fight, and even handing over their weapons to IS fighters, rather than destroying them.<sup>264</sup>

### *External Operations*

French members arrested in 2014 and 2015 revealed that although initially engaged mainly in secret policing tasks and foreign intelligence, the Emni later on added a new portfolio to its duties, namely projecting terror abroad.<sup>265</sup> Desiring the expansion of the caliphate beyond the borders of Syria and Iraq, IS puts a lot of effort into the recruitment and planning of attacks in surrounding countries, as well as attacks against the West. These tasks are carried out by the Emni, who was also responsible for the training of the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, and the recruitment of the cadres that carried out the Brussels airport attacks on 22 March 2016, for which it also built the bombs. In fact, Abdelhamid Abaaoud – the architect of the Paris attacks and the leader of the cell that carried out the Brussels attacks – was one of the leaders of the Emni until he was killed in a police raid in Saint-Denis following the Paris attacks.<sup>266</sup> The Emni was also allegedly responsible for the organization of the terrorist attack in Tunisia, where an Emni-trained and dispatched gunman opened fire on tourists in Sousse in June 2016, and the failed Thalys attack in August 2015.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Speckhard and Yayla, "The ISIS Emni", 6.

<sup>265</sup> Callimachi, "A Secretive Branch of ISIS".

<sup>266</sup> Speckhard and Yayla, "The ISIS Emni", 9.

<sup>267</sup> Callimachi, "A Secretive Branch of ISIS".

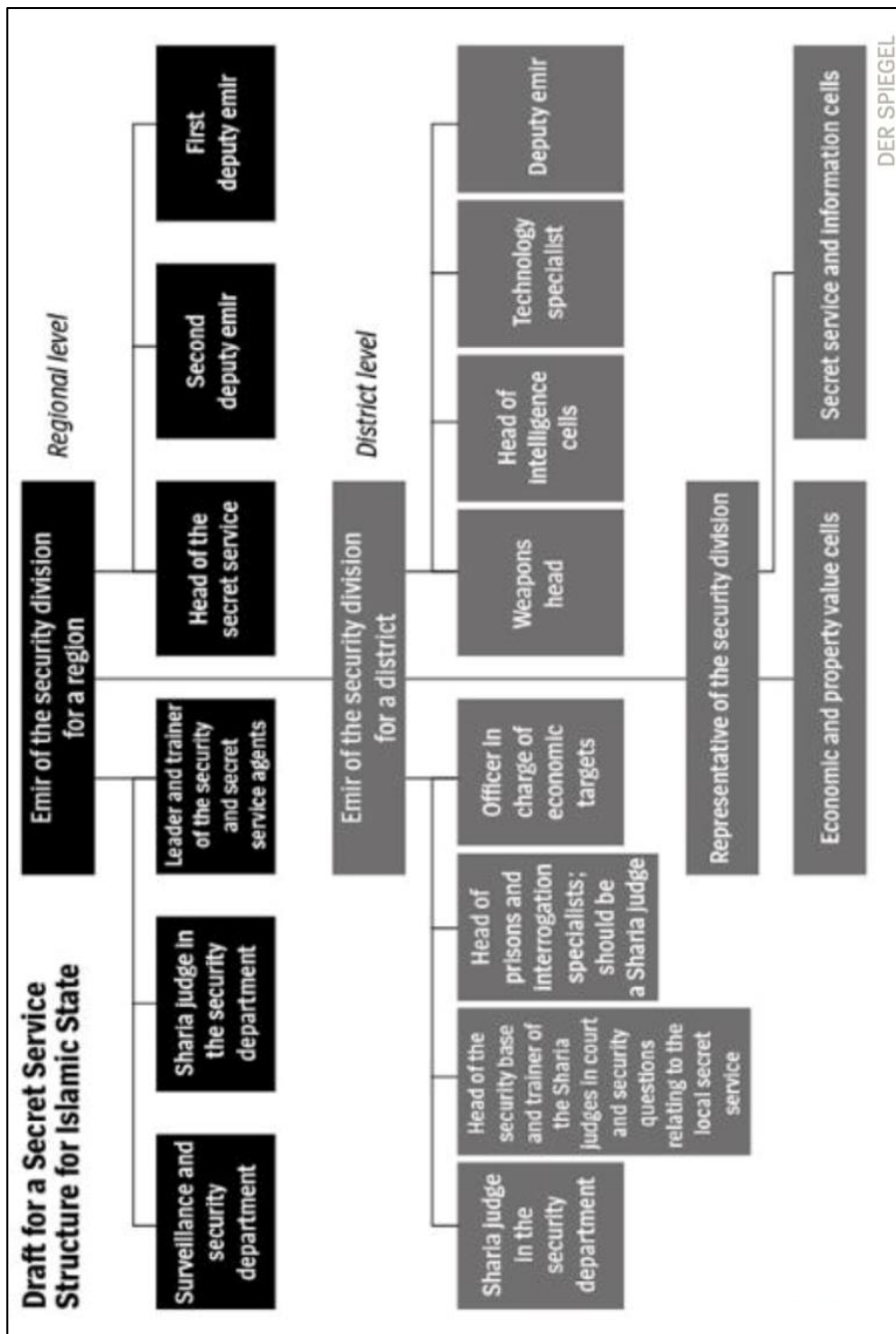


Figure 9: Draft for a Secret Service Structure for the Islamic State<sup>268</sup>

Defectors have described the External Operations branch of the Emni as a multilevel secret service, which is made up of different branches that each plan attacks in different regions of the world, including a “secret service for European affairs”, a “secret service for Asian affairs” and a “secret service for Arab affairs.”<sup>269</sup> This organizational structure does slightly resemble the HV A of the MfS, which also had different branches for different regions in the world. However, this resemblance is so general and lacks any evidence of either a direct or indirect influence, that it is impossible to categorize this even as a level-one degree of influence.

<sup>268</sup> Reuter, “Secret Files”.

<sup>269</sup> Reuter, “Secret Files”.

Furthermore, it is in general quite difficult and perhaps even impossible to categorize influences from both the MfS and the Ba'ath to the terrorist activities of the Islamic State. This is not only due to the fact that the purposes of the MfS and the intelligence services of the Ba'ath on the one hand, and the external operations branch of the Emni on the other differ a lot (due to the terrorist objectives of the latter), but also because of a lack of information regarding the Emni's external operations branch. Not much is known about the way it operates, except for that it trains perpetrators and coordinates attacks by keeping in touch (mainly through cellphones) with the operatives sent into Europe to carry out such attacks. Therefore, without any more information, no further categorization can be done.

### Concluding remarks

In this caliphate ruled by fear, the leaders of the Islamic State know everything about everyone. Using Baathist tactics of instilling fear in the population, minimal room is left for its subjects to organize and arm themselves for a rebellion. The Emni has created a world of paranoid surveillance, in which a comparison with the repression of the East German population by the MfS does not seem out of place.

The Emni, which was created and developed by Haji Bakr and other former Ba'ath officers, was first of all used to capture territory. In that way, it created the Islamic State. Thus, in the caliphate, the intelligence apparatus created the 'party', rather than the other way around, as it usually happens. After the caliphate was established, the Emni has been functioning as a parallel command structure, which runs as an 'iron spine' through the Islamic State.

The roots of the Emni lie with the intelligence knowledge of the Ba'athist officers, who, after being fired from the Iraqi government, became a member of ISI, the predecessor of the Islamic State. Thus, strong Baathist influences can be uncovered when examining the intelligence tactics and structure of the Islamic State, both in foreign intelligence as well as domestically. Although it is difficult to say anything with certainty about the influences of the MfS training sessions when it comes to the operational strength and structure of the Emni, some similarities become visible. First of all, the Emni has created a paranoid state of surveillance and fear within the caliphate, that is reminiscent of both Iraq under Saddam Hussein, as well as the oppression of the population of East Germany, although the caliphate is arguably subjected to the highest degree of brutality when comparing the three societies. In this omnipresent intelligence apparatus, not only the population is subjected to constant monitoring, but also the officers within the apparatus itself are kept under constant watch, a practice not unknown to both the MfS and the Ba'ath. Secondly, it is interesting to notice that the Emni unites foreign intelligence with domestic secret policing tasks, which is quite uncommon in most countries, and a characteristic of both the Ba'ath intelligence apparatus as well as the MfS.

Still, recent developments at the time of writing make it clear that the future of the caliphate is uncertain. With the recapture of Mosul by Iraqi forces on 9 July 2017, the Islamic State has lost its stronghold in Iraq. The Battle of Raqqa is ongoing at the time of writing. It is possible that if the Islamic State loses its caliphate, it will continue as an insurgent group without any territory. If this happens, it will be interesting to see if the intelligence knowledge that IS has obtained from the Ba'ath, and indirectly from the MfS, will be applied in a different manner.

## Conclusion

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Between 1950 and 1990, the MfS created a police state in East Germany, where omnipresent and paranoid surveillance was the norm. Functioning as the shield and sword of the SED, it oppressed and persecuted anyone who was deemed an opponent of the regime. Years later, and thousands of kilometers away, a terrorist group that called themselves the Islamic State declared the re-establishment of the caliphate. In this caliphate, which is situated on the Iraqi and Syrian territory that IS captured, aided by techniques that the Ba'ath officers now member of IS had learned in the past, a totalitarian intelligence state has been created that to a certain extent is reminiscent of East Germany.

This research has aimed to explore the question as to what extent the way the Islamic State operates can be traced back to the support of the MfS to the Ba'ath party in Iraq. If anything, the answer to this question should first of all be that it is very difficult to say anything with certainty, due to the limitations of this research and the lack of sources, in particular with regard to the Islamic State. Still, some interesting observations can be made with regard to answering the research question.

In order to explore a potential indirect transfer of knowledge between the MfS and the Emni, this research has first looked to see if there are any direct influences between both the MfS and the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath, and between the Ba'ath and the Emni.

When looking at the intelligence relationship between the MfS and the Ba'ath, a large difference can be seen between the first decade of this relationship (1968-1979), and the time between Saddam Hussein's rise to power and the end of the GDR (1979-1990). In the first decade, the two countries maintained a positive intelligence relationship based on training sessions provided by the MfS, although repeated requests by the Ba'ath for material aid were denied. In this period, the main motivation of the East Germans to cooperate with Iraq was the quest for international

Direct influence MfS - Ba'ath	Direct influence Ba'ath - Emni	Indirect influence MfS - Emni
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Level 4: Use of bugging devices</li> <li>•Level 3: The creation of the IIS</li> <li>•Level 4: Use of citizen informers</li> <li>•Level 4: State of 'paranoid', omnipresent surveillance</li> <li>•Level 3: Uniting foreign intelligence and domestic secret police into one body</li> <li>•Level 3: Knowledge used in connection to the DGS and the DGMI</li> <li>•Level 2: The creation of the SSO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Level 4: The creation of the Emni</li> <li>•Level 4: Foreign intelligence techniques</li> <li>•Level 4: State of fear and omnipresent surveillance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Level 2: The creation of the Emni</li> <li>•Level 2: Use of large network of informants</li> <li>•Level 2: Omnipresent surveillance</li> <li>•Level 2: Uniting foreign intelligence and domestic secret police duties into one body</li> <li>•Level 1: Propaganda</li> <li>•Level 1: 'Physical' monitoring of internet-usage</li> </ul>

Table 2: An overview of direct and indirect influences

recognition. It was furthermore part of the GDR's policy to closely cooperate with regimes in the Third World, which functioned as a proxy during the Cold War, in which both the United States and the Soviet Union tried to expand their ideological influence as much as possible.

In this period, both level 3 and level 4 direct influences can be discerned (see table 2), at the organizational level, as well as on the operational level. On the organizational level, these include the creation of the IIS, the fact that foreign intelligence and the domestic secret police are united within one body – at least in the case of the IIS – and the likeliness that knowledge obtained from the MfS has been used in strengthening both the DGMI, as well as the DGS. On the practical level, an important influence is the heavy use of bugging systems, which very likely is the result of the MfS training sessions that taught Ba'ath officers how to use recording and taping devices. Furthermore, the use of an extensive network of citizen informers and the complete monitoring and control of all spheres of society created a society paralyzed by fear and suspicion, in which people were terrorized and oppressed by means of extensive surveillance. This is to such an extent reminiscent of the use of IM by the MfS and the oppression of the East German society, that it is very likely that this is a result of the intelligence cooperation between the MfS and the Ba'ath.

After Saddam Hussein became the president of Iraq in 1979, the intelligence relationship between the MfS and the Ba'ath quickly started to deteriorate. Under Hussein's rule, the persecution of Iraqi communists both domestically and abroad increased, which caused the GDR to view the Ba'ath regime in a less positive light. Another reason for this deteriorating relationship was the Iran-Iraq War and Iraq's rapprochement towards the West, which fueled the GDR's fear that any technical intelligence aid delivered to Iraq would find its way to the West. During this time, the MfS also grew more interested in Iran as a force opposed to the West, and therefore increasingly sided with Iran. Furthermore, a decline in Iraq's financial situation which was the result of lower oil production and lower global prices for oil made it less lucrative for the GDR to maintain a relationship with Iraq. Finally, Iraq had been playing both sides of the Cold War during the Iran-Iraq war in its attempts to purchase weapons and receive support for its cause, which made the GDR realize that Iraq was not a progressive socialist state, which the Ba'ath regime had claimed to be in the first decade of its rule.

During this period, less influences can be discerned. Requests for material aid continued to be denied by the GDR, and the provision of intelligence training sessions seems to have stopped in the 1980s. However, a potential indirect influence of the training sessions provided in the 1970s could be the creation of the SSO, as its responsibilities resemble the domestic tasks of the MfS.

After the Ba'ath regime was toppled by the U.S. army in 2003, the former Ba'ath officers were fired from the Iraqi government in two rounds of de-baathification. This policy led to alienation and bitterness among the former officers, and many of them joined ISI(S), the predecessor of the Islamic State. Here, they applied their extensive intelligence knowledge that they had learned during their years in service of the Iraqi Ba'ath regime, and built up the Emni, the extensive and powerful intelligence apparatus that gave birth to the Islamic State. After enough territory was captured, which was to a large extent done by using Ba'athist intelligence techniques, a caliphate was established in June 2014, and ISIS changed its name into Islamic State. Here, the Emni continued to play an important role. Set up as a parallel command structure, it runs as an iron spine throughout the society of the caliphate, where it is responsible for domestic secret policing tasks and foreign intelligence, as well as for the planning and recruitment of external operations (the Emni's name for terrorist attacks) all around the world.

More direct influences from the Ba'ath to the Emni can be observed than merely its creation (see table 2). With regard to organizational structure, the foreign intelligence branch of the Emni is

largely constructed and based on knowledge obtained from former Ba'ath officers. When looking at operational influences or influences with regard to practice, the caliphate can be characterized as a republic of fear of ever more far-reaching proportions than the Iraqi society under Ba'athist leadership. The domestic secret police branch of the Emni extensively monitors everyone that lives in the caliphate, with the use of its large network of informants. This has led to a state of surveillance in which everyone is paranoid of even their own family members, afraid that they may be working as an informant for the Emni. In this way, a situation has been created that is reminiscent of not only Baathist Iraq, but also of the East Germany society under the extensive surveillance of the MfS, with its excessive use of IM. Although it cannot be said with absolute certainty that this is an indirect influence of the MfS training sessions to the Ba'ath, it is arguably the most important potential continuity that can be traced down from the MfS to the Islamic State.

Another important continuity between the MfS and the Islamic State is the organizational structure of the Emni, as it unites foreign intelligence with domestic secret police duties. Considering that this is a very uncommon feature of intelligence organizations, and a characteristic of both the IIS, as well as the MfS, it is quite likely that this is an indirect influence from the MfS to the Emni.

At the organizational level, it is interesting to observe that the Emni is responsible for propaganda, similarly to the propaganda tasks of the MfS. This could be a potential indirect influence, although it is difficult to conclude this with certainty, due to the fact that the intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath was not concerned with propaganda.

Lastly, some other potential indirect influences from the MfS to the Emni can be discerned at the operational level, although it is very difficult to say anything conclusively about this without further research. This most importantly includes the physical monitoring of Internet usage – physical in the sense that the Emni places informants in its 'post offices' who closely observe anyone who uses the Internet – rather than making use of high-tech intelligence techniques.

To come back to the research question, which was focused on exploring the way IS operates can be traced back to MfS support to the Ba'ath, some answers can thus be given. Both in operational terms, as well as on the organizational level, the way IS operates has been most likely influenced to some extent by the MfS support to the Ba'ath. The most important indications for this are the organizational structure of the Emni that united foreign intelligence with a domestic secret police and the state of paranoid surveillance that has been created in the caliphate. Furthermore, some small observations can be made with regard to tracing down continuity from the MfS to the Emni, namely that it seems to have similar observation techniques, and that both the MfS and the Emni also concerned themselves with propaganda tasks.

The results of this research provide an important insight in the relations between the Soviet bloc and the Third World during the Cold War, and therefore contributes to a better understanding of the Global Cold War, a field of history that has not been researched much. It also sheds light on the functioning of the Islamic State with regard to intelligence. It helps to understand the successes of the Islamic State in managing to rapidly capture territory and declare a caliphate. It also shows that the intelligence influences can be traced back further than only the Ba'ath officers who became a member of the Islamic State, which is a well-studied connection, but that the operational strength of the Islamic State is at least partly the result of the trainings to the Ba'ath provided by an organization that on first sight seems to have absolutely no connection with the Islamic State – both in terms of the time period as well as organizational and ideological aims. This gives us more understanding in the consequences of

cooperation between different regimes, and how such cooperation can have unwanted effects decades later.

Still, there is a lot that has to be researched more extensively. First of all, the Ba'ath archives that fell into the hands of the United States after 2003 should be examined for further information on the practices of the Ba'ath intelligence apparatus. This could provide more insight into potential influences from the MfS to the Ba'ath, for example with regard to the *Zersetzung* measures of the MfS, and if these have been copied or taken over by the Ba'ath, and possibly even by the Emni as well. Contra-indications should be studied as well, to see if some of the influences attributed to the MfS could potentially be attributed to cooperation between the Ba'ath and other regimes. However, an important limitation to this research is the fact that a lot is still unknown, especially with regard to the workings of the Emni. Therefore, further information should be uncovered first, before any conclusive answers can be given to the question as to what extent the way the Islamic State operates can be traced back to the support of the MfS to the Ba'ath party in Iraq. It is possible that with the demise of the Islamic State as it is occurring now, more documents will be captured that will give us more insight, just as has happened when the GDR fell in 1990, and the Ba'ath regime in 2003.



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