



THE SPYMASTER OF BAGHDAD

A TRUE STORY OF BRAVERY,
FAMILY, AND PATRIOTISM IN THE
BATTLE AGAINST ISIS

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NOTES ON INTERVIEWS AND CITATIONS

Research for this book took place across Iraq, in London, and in Washington, D.C., between December 2018 and February 2020 and involved interviews with thirty-two current and former Iraqi and U.S. intelligence, military, and government officials and, separately, seven European and Mideast officials with direct knowledge of counterterrorism operations in Iraq. Some of the Iraqis interviewed include former prime ministers Haider al-Abadi, Nouri al-Maliki, and Ayad Allawi. Iraq's longtime national security adviser, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the former State Minister for National Security Shirwan al-Waeli, and director of National Intelligence Mustafa al-Kadhimi were generous with their time and insight. Some of those interviewed agreed to be named in this book, while others, especially officials who remain in active service and involved in Iraqi intelligence operations, remain anonymous for security and operational reasons.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Abu Ali al-Basri and his colleagues in the Falcons Intelligence Unit who participated in more than ninety hours of interviews about their lives and work defending Iraq and its allies from terrorism.

I thank the al-Sudani family and the al-Kubaisi family for their trust and cooperation. Both extended to me the greatest hospitality and generosity during months of interviews in their homes. The al-Kubaisis provided me access to their daughter's legal documents as well as help communicating with Abrar in prison.

In addition to these primary sources, I also drew upon secret and classified reports of Iraqi intelligence and counterterrorism operations, interrogation records of Al Qaeda and Islamic State detainees, and minutes of interagency meetings between Iraqi, U.S., and other security officials. The official history of the Iraq War published by the U.S. Army War College in 2019, which drew on thirty thousand pages of declassified documents, was also invaluable.

The English translation of Qabbani's poem on p. 16 comes from Nizar Qabbani, Bassam Frangieh, and Clementina R. Brown, *Arabian Love Poems: Full Arabic and English Texts* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993).

The George H. W. Bush quote on p. 58 encouraging Iraqis to rise up against Saddam Hussein comes from remarks made by the president on February 16, 1991, to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science in Washington and to an audience at a Raytheon plant in Andover, Massachusetts.

The clandestine meeting during which Samarra was selected as the site of Al Qaeda's next terror attack is documented in Colonel Joel D. Rayburn and Colonel Frank K. Sobchak, *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, Vol. 1, pp. 531–532 (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army College Press, 2019).

The quote from Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's announcement of the Islamic State on p. 144 comes from Cameron Glenn, "The ISIS Primer," The Wilson Center, November 19, 2015, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-isis-primer>.

General Ray Odierno's assessment of the Iraq war on p. 170 comes from his briefing on the state of the army in the Pentagon Press Briefing Room, August 12, 2015, Washington, D.C.

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