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Sommario/riassunto	With each day that passed after the 2003 invasion, the United States seemed to sink deeper in the treacherous quicksand of Iraq's social discord, floundering in the face of deep ethno-sectarian divisions that have impeded the creation of a viable state and the molding of a

unified Iraqi identity. Yet as Adeed Dawisha shows in this superb political history, the story of a fragile and socially fractured Iraq did not begin with the American-led invasion--it is as old as Iraq itself. Dawisha traces the history of the Iraqi state from its inception in 1921 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and up to the present day. He demonstrates how from the very beginning Iraq's ruling elites sought to unify this ethnically diverse and politically explosive society by developing state governance, fostering democratic institutions, and forging a national identity. Dawisha, who was born and raised in Iraq, gives rare insight into this culturally rich but chronically divided nation, drawing on a wealth of Arabic and Western sources to describe the fortunes and calamities of a state that was assembled by the British in the wake of World War I and which today faces what may be the most serious threat to survival that it has ever known. Featuring Dawisha's insightful new afterword on recent political developments, Iraq is required reading for anyone seeking to make sense of what's going on in Iraq today, and why it has been so difficult to create a viable government there.
