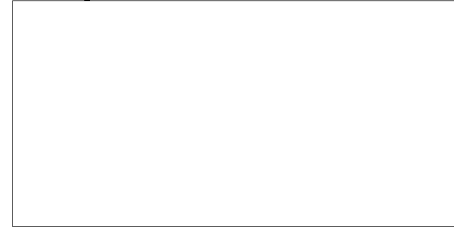




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# **Lessons Learned in the Iran-Iraq War**



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**A Research Paper**

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*NESA 84-10239C*

*August 1984*

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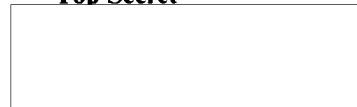
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# Lessons Learned in the Iran-Iraq War



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**A Research Paper**

This paper was prepared by   
 Office of Near Eastern and South  
Asian Analysis. It was coordinated with the  
Directorate of Operations. Comments and queries are  
welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Persian  
Gulf Division, NESAs, 

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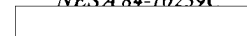
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**Lessons Learned in the Iran-Iraq War**



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**Summary**

*Information available as of 2 July 1984 was used in this report.*

Iran and Iraq will almost certainly draw on experiences during their war to modernize their armed forces once hostilities end. No clear end to the war is in sight, and we assume that the war will end in a stalemate with the existing, or similar, regimes surviving in Baghdad and Tehran.



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The war has stimulated an ambitious expansion and upgrading of the Iraqi armed forces that will take at least the rest of this decade to complete. As a result of this program, we believe:

- The 650,000-man Iraqi Army probably will remain the largest in any Arab state, although some demobilization will occur.
- Baghdad will replace the 2,500 older model tanks in its armored forces with as many T-72 tanks as the USSR is willing to sell.
- Iraq probably will increase substantially the amount of heavy artillery in the Army.
- Iraq probably will add to its helicopter force, already the largest in the Arab world.
- The Air Force is likely to grow by about 25 percent during the next few years to about 600 fighter and bomber aircraft. The quality of the force will improve as Iraq receives advanced French and Soviet aircraft and munitions.
- Iraq will continue to diversify arms suppliers and insist that many weapon systems be coproduced or assembled in Iraq to limit its vulnerability to another Soviet arms embargo.



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Even with these changes in equipment and manpower, the combat effectiveness of Baghdad's forces will continue to be limited, particularly in offensive operations:

- Incompetent senior officers, appointed largely for their political reliability, will remain the most serious weakness, hampering overall command and control of the Iraqi armed forces.
- Command and control problems also will hamper Iraq's ability to integrate its advanced weapons and forces into an effective combined-arms team capable of rapid offensive operations.
- Moreover, the Air Force is unlikely to correct major deficiencies in planning and conducting ground attack, interdiction, and counterair operations.



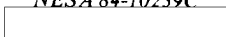
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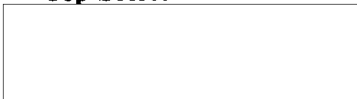
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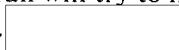
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Iran also appears to have drawn several important lessons from the fighting:

- Statements by senior Iranian clerics indicate their continued belief in the ability of troops with high morale—*faith* in Iranian terms—to defeat a much better equipped foe.
- The importance of religious “faith” and the political reliability of the Revolutionary Guard suggest that irregular forces, rather than professionally trained regulars, will continue to dominate the Iranian military establishment.
- Iran has learned, however, that there are limits to what an irregular ground force can achieve against heavily armed professionals. As a consequence, we expect that Iran will try to improve the capabilities of its infantry and air defense units. 

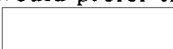
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The clerics and Iran’s regular armed forces are likely to disagree over the extent and nature of future arms acquisitions, but we believe Iran will:

- Seek large quantities of Western and Soviet artillery as well as surface-to-surface missiles.
- Begin the lengthy process of developing an effective air defense.
- Try to enhance its control over shipping in the Gulf by acquiring antiship missiles to supplement the few that are still operational on Iran’s missile boats.
- Make a major effort to expand its domestic arms industry because of the Western arms embargo and Iran’s desire to be independent of both the USSR and the United States. 

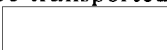
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Iran is not likely to make more than modest improvements in its armored and air forces. Iranian religious leaders still do not trust their regular military forces—particularly the largely US-trained Air Force—and fear that arming them only increases the chances of a military coup:

- The composition of the armored force will shift more toward Soviet-style armor, especially if the arms relationship with North Korea continues to develop.
- Iran probably will continue to prefer an Air Force smaller than that under the Shah. Tehran probably will turn to its Communist suppliers in Asia for fighter aircraft, although it would prefer the currently embargoed US and West European models. 

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***Effect on Regional Military Balance.*** So long as the war continues, neither Iraq nor Iran can play a significant military role against Israel:

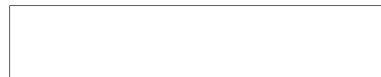
- Almost all of Iraq’s ground forces are committed to the war with Iran, and only a small air element could be spared. In our judgment, it would take an Israeli offensive against Jordan to persuade Iraq to risk withdrawing troops from the front with Iran.
- Iran probably could spare a few brigades of lightly equipped infantry, but these could not be transported by air to the Israeli front unless the war with Iraq ended. 

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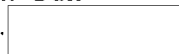
Even if the Iran-Iraq war were to end, the performance of both Iraqi and Iranian forces suggests neither would be particularly effective against Israel:

- Iraq's slow-paced defensive tactics would leave Iraqi forces at a severe disadvantage against the Israelis' fast-moving combined-arms operations.
- Iran's dependence on the fanaticism of its irregular infantry would be a handicap against the highly disciplined and motivated Israelis.
- Geographic distances and political uncertainties will limit the ability of both to support frontline Arab armies.



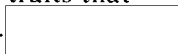
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Although neither the Iraqis nor the Iranians are likely to play a decisive role against Israel, in our opinion, their capabilities against other regional states will improve in the long term because of the war. The expansion of Iraq's ground and air forces as well as their combat experience will make them formidable potential opponents of Syrian, Jordanian, or Saudi Arabian forces once the war with Iran ends. The war also has given the Iranians combat experience that would be useful against their Gulf neighbors if Tehran decided to export its revolution by force.



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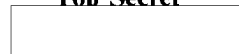
**Soviet or US Intervention.** The war holds several lessons for both the United States and the USSR should they intervene militarily in the Gulf. Although Iran does not have the equipment to counter a major attack by the forces of either power, it has demonstrated a capability to pose significant problems for small intervention forces. The effectiveness of Iran's forces is enhanced by their fanaticism and aggressiveness, traits that will increase particularly as foreign troops move toward Tehran.



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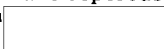
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**Lessons Learned in the Iran-Iraq War**



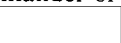
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The war between Iran and Iraq is the longest and largest conventional war fought in the Middle East in modern times. The effects of the war are likely to last for at least a generation and have repercussions far beyond the two belligerents.



**Lessons Learned by Iraq**

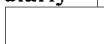
Baghdad's perceptions of the major military lessons of the war were outlined in the report of the ninth congress of the ruling Ba'th Party issued in January 1983.<sup>2</sup> Additional details were supplied in press interviews with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn in early February 1983 and the commander of the Iraqi Staff College in September 1983.



These articles suggest that the Iraqi Government has concluded—rightly, in our opinion—that sophisticated military hardware alone will not win a war. The shortcomings cited by Saddam and the party included incompetent commanders, poor troop morale, inadequate training, inadequate intelligence, and insufficient artillery firepower.

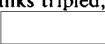


These deficiencies suggest that over the next decade Baghdad's efforts to improve military effectiveness will focus on areas such as leadership, training, and intelligence. Such a program would be in marked contrast to the period between the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the Iraqi invasion of Iran in 1980 when Baghdad concentrated on greatly increasing the size of its armed forces and acquiring large quantities of modern military equipment.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, some increase in equipment inventories is likely, particularly in artillery, aircraft, and air defense hardware.



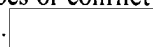
<sup>2</sup> The Ba'th Party report on military affairs is an important document in determining the general thrust of Iraqi military programs over the next several years. The military report of the eighth Ba'th Party congress, issued shortly after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, outlined plans for the major Iraqi arms buildup that took place during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1973 and 1983, for example, the number of Iraqi Army troops increased fivefold, the number of tanks tripled, and the number of fighter aircraft nearly doubled.



**Commanders**

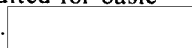
Both Saddam and the Ba'th Party report claim—correctly, in our judgment—that Iraq's greatest weakness during the war has been incompetent military officers. According to the Ba'th Party report, "some" military leaders did not have the required competence or courage. They were "severely punished" and replaced by proven combat leaders. The report notes that only those officers who have proven themselves in the "throes of conflict" should be appointed to senior positions.



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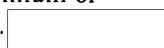
The Iranians are well aware of this Iraqi shortcoming. According to a military attache with close connections to Iranian military leaders, senior Iranian officers regard the incompetence of senior Iraqi officers as the greatest weakness of the Iraqi armed forces. According to the attache, the Iranians believe senior Iraqi officers are unprofessional and unsuited for basic soldiering, much less to fight a war.



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Providing competent commanders is likely to be the most difficult problem for Saddam in revamping Iraq's military. Nearly all important military commanders before the war held their positions because of loyalty to Saddam and the Ba'th Party rather than military competence. The shock of the sudden Iraqi defeats during the first half of 1982, combined with adverse assessments Saddam subsequently received from Egyptian and Iraqi military professionals, brought home the pernicious effects of having politicians masquerade as generals. Saddam's response was ruthless and decisive. At least 11 senior officers were executed, and a minimum of 220 others were arrested or forcibly retired.



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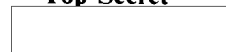
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Figure 1  
Iran-Iraq



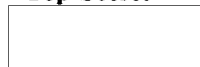
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Figure 2. Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.



Figure 3. Iraqi Minister of Defense Gen. Adnan Khayrallah.

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Nonetheless, we believe Saddam cannot make military competence the sole criterion for command positions. In our judgment, political loyalty will remain the main requirement for the two most critical posts in the Iraqi armed forces—Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff. Moreover, Saddam is unlikely to choose officers for corps and division commands solely on the basis of military competence. The Iraqi President is faced with a classic dilemma—the need to have an effective military force while ensuring that officers in key positions do not plot against him. As a result, the Iraqi armed forces will remain more impressive on paper than in action.

Minister of Defense Gen. Adnan Khayrallah and former Chief of Staff General Shanshal are regarded by professional Iraqi military officers as two of the leading incompetents in the Iraqi military establishment and as primarily responsible for Iraq's poor showing in the war. Khayrallah, who is Saddam's brother-in-law, is unlikely to be replaced no matter how much Saddam wants capable officers in senior positions. Moreover, in our judgment, Saddam may believe that tension between the Minister of Defense and military professionals is useful since it prevents Khayrallah from becoming too powerful.

Former Chief of Staff Shanshal was removed in early 1984 but has been replaced by another party hack,

Gen. Jawad Thannun, former head of Military Intelligence. Thannun is a Ba'thist officer who has held no major combat commands during the war. His rapid rise to power and lack of combat experience and his career in Ba'th Party military posts suggest that Thannun is closely connected to Saddam and holds his new position because of political considerations.

Below the most senior level of the defense establishment, however, we believe field appointments will be made increasingly on the basis of combat experience, and this will increase unit effectiveness. The regime can afford to emphasize competence at this level because the chances of a single unit mounting a successful coup are relatively small given the size of the country's Army and security forces, which number over 1 million. Nonetheless, the major units normally stationed in the Baghdad area during peacetime—four Republican Guard Brigades, the 10th Armored Brigade, and the 10th Armored Division—will continue to be staffed only by trusted political officers.

**Troop Morale**

Saddam highlighted poor troop morale as a major Iraqi weakness early in the war. According to his remarks, many reservists and conscripts had no clear

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idea of Iraq's goals when its forces were inside Iran. Desertions became increasingly frequent, especially among irregulars. [Redacted] Saddam pointed out that Iraqi troops inside Iran failed to fortify their positions extensively, calculating that they eventually would withdraw. When Iranian forces counterattacked, Iraqi reserve and militia troops—sometimes entire units—fled in panic or surrendered quickly rather than risk death. [Redacted]

In our judgment, many of these morale problems were the natural product of poor leadership and unimaginative planning. Iraqi soldiers apparently had little confidence in their leaders—a perception that was reinforced by the dearth of battlefield victories after the first few months of the war. [Redacted] soldiers at the front sometimes were disrespectful of senior military leaders, including Defense Minister Khayrallah, when they visited their units. [Redacted]

The withdrawal of Iraqi forces to well-prepared defenses along the border and the failure of major Iranian attacks into Iraq in the latter half of 1982 and in 1983 had a positive effect on Iraqi troop morale. It remained fragile and did not consistently improve after mid-1982, but low morale no longer appeared to be so pervasive or destructive as during the Iraqi occupation of Iran. Saddam's purge of his commanders, new defensive tactics, and consequent battlefield victories also contributed to the improvement. This suggests that the average Iraqi soldier is little different from his counterpart in most other armies whose morale normally reflects the quality of leadership and the degree of success achieved. [Redacted]

**Training**

Baghdad also has blamed training as a factor in battlefield performance. According to the Ba'th Party report, Iraqi infantry units early in the war were inadequately trained and of lower caliber than those in armored and mechanized units. According to the report, this weakness resulted from the infantry's previous preoccupation with antiguerrilla operations in Iraqi Kurdistan—leaving it unprepared for conventional warfare—and from the regime's focus on developing armored and mechanized forces. In his press interview, Saddam noted that Iran often aimed its attacks at Iraq's lines of communications, which were

***Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz on Morale (December 1982)***

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*"There is no doubt that in the first phase of the war, which took place on Iranian territory, the soldiers and their leaders were fighting on a preventive basis to guarantee Iraq's security. That notion was certainly an abstract notion. During the second year when we ordered withdrawal to our own borders, the Iranians revealed their expansionist designs. They tried to invade Iraqi territory at Al Basrah, Mandali, and Al Amarah. Our soldiers then realized that they had to defend the homeland and safeguard territorial integrity. The feeling of the national entity became more acute. It is true that the Iraqi soldier fights better on his own borders."* [Redacted]

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guarded by Iraqi reserve infantry troops. These reserves, according to Saddam, could not hold off the Iranians and fled in disorder once under attack, disrupting efforts by Iraq's better trained regular Army units to reinforce endangered sectors of the front. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Iraqi training programs included almost no preparation for actual combat even after Baghdad had decided to move against the Khomeini regime. Exercises involved little live firing and left limited room for initiative on the part of individual commanders or soldiers. There appears to have been little attempt to rehearse likely combat scenarios. We have no evidence, for example, that Iraqi units ever practiced an Iranian invasion scenario before the actual attack. [Redacted]

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Before the war, moreover, Iraq made only limited use of foreign military expertise. The Iraqis preferred to keep foreign contact with their military to a minimum and sent only a few trusted officers overseas for training. They were then expected to return and train additional Iraqi personnel but could not match the caliber of instruction provided directly by the Soviets, according to the Soviet and Canadian military attaches. [Redacted]

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***Iraqi President Saddam Husayn on Training (November 1982)***

*"We cannot win the battle against Iran by high spirits and . . . preparedness alone. We also must have highly trained combatants. We must begin to draw the required lessons from the battles and use these lessons for the enlightenment, education, conduct, and continuous training of the armed forces. We need strict military discipline in accordance with sound first-rate training which guarantees a strong command. Continuous daily intellectual and psychological training is necessary to ensure victory in the coming battles."* [Redacted]

Growing numbers of Iraqi military personnel, in our view, will be sent abroad for training. Iraq's poor perception of Soviet training suggests that most candidates will travel to Western Europe, South Asia, or moderate Arab states. According to the Canadian attache, approximately 40 Iraqi Army officers are to be trained in the United Kingdom annually. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] The United Kingdom is an attractive source of officer training because certain elements of Iraq's armed forces—such as the ground forces—are organized along British lines, and several senior officers were trained in the United Kingdom. [Redacted]

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Baghdad also is sending significant numbers of military personnel to other European and moderate Arab states. France is training fighter and helicopter pilots as well as artillery personnel. Italy is training helicopter pilots and some naval personnel. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Despite the use of foreign training facilities and expertise, we believe that Iraqi suspicions of foreign influence and the rigid Iraqi command structure will detract from the effectiveness of overseas training and limit the ability of Iraqi field-grade officers to apply any lessons they learn. [Redacted]

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Iraq has taken steps to improve unit training as well. In June 1983 the Iraqi Air Force conducted a joint exercise with Jordanian air defense units—the first time the Iraqis have conducted a joint exercise with any foreign military force. [Redacted]

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The collapse of the Iraqi campaign inside Iran in mid-1982 prompted a major reassessment of Baghdad's military training programs, especially those for reserve infantry units. [Redacted]

[Redacted] We estimate that there are at least 700 Soviet military advisers in Iraq and about 100 from Eastern Europe. In addition, there are at least 75 French advisers and an increasing number of instructors from Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, and India. The technical expertise of these instructors is essential to Iraq's ability to absorb and use advanced military equipment. [Redacted]

[Redacted] the necessity for more combined-arms and inter-service training was a major lesson of the war. As a result, we expect Baghdad to conduct more live-fire training and make a greater effort to integrate arms training into unit maneuvers. [Redacted]

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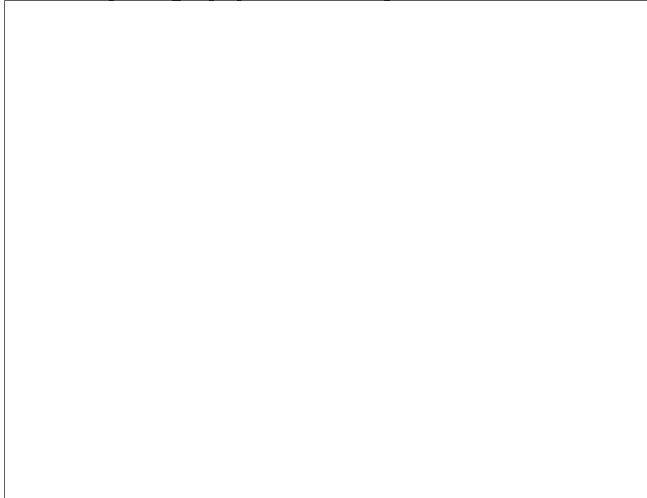
Iraq's performance during much of the war has been hampered by its inability to collect and apply tactical intelligence. According to Iraqi President Saddam, until mid-1982 Baghdad lacked the capability to collect detailed information on Iranian forces through aerial photography and intercepted communications.

to intercept Iranian tactical communications.



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Iraq also strengthened its capability for processing tactical intelligence.



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The results were dramatic. In almost every major battle since July 1982, the Iraqis had detailed information on Iranian plans, forces, and often the exact time of attack. In each of these engagements, the Iraqis could reposition forces, inflict serious losses on the Iranians, and prevent a major breakthrough.



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The lack of intelligence was compounded by the incompetence of senior commanders in using what information was available. In our judgment, many Iraqi officers were unfamiliar with the concept of combat intelligence. According to a defector from the Iraqi Air Force in the late 1970s, most intelligence units in the Iraqi military were responsible for monitoring the loyalty of Baghdad's troops rather than acquiring information on the enemy.



Because of the key role of intelligence in Iraq's successes, we expect Baghdad to make a major investment in obtaining more intelligence collection equipment. According to the commander of the Iraqi Staff College, the Iraqis are particularly interested in equipment to improve the striking power of their air and artillery forces.

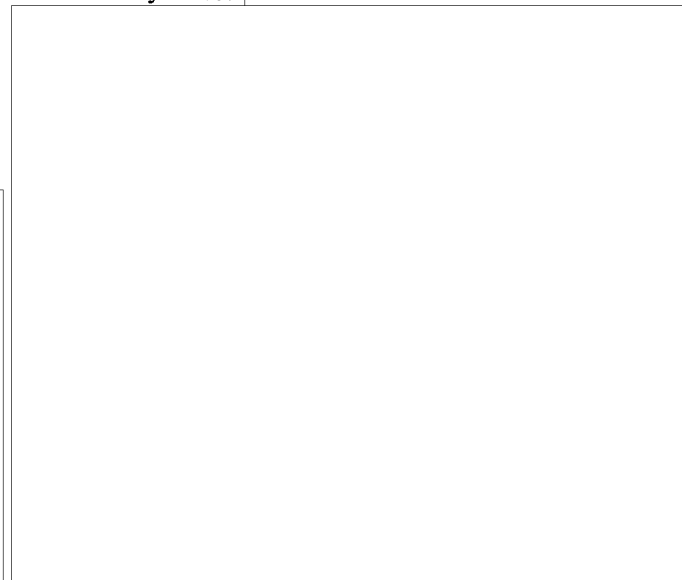
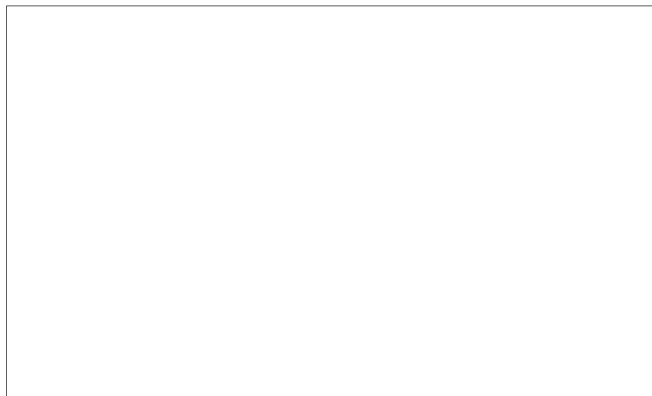


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The first sign of a significant shift in the Iraqi intelligence program came in mid-1982 when US and British diplomats in Baghdad reported that the United Kingdom was supplying armored vehicles equipped



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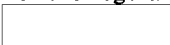


**Iraq: Armed Forces, 1973-90**

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	1973	1980	1984	1990 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Army</b>				
Personnel <sup>b</sup>	90,000	350,000	650,000	450,000
Main battle tanks	950	2,900	4,500	4,500
Artillery over 100 mm	500	1,400	2,030	2,000
Surface-to-surface missile launchers	0	36	47	47
<b>Air Force</b>				
Personnel	8,000	17,000	30,000	50,000
Bombers	34	21	16	25
Fighter aircraft	265	525	487	600
Attack helicopters	0	90	80	150
Transport helicopters	65	225	320	450
<b>Air Defense</b>				
Personnel	2,000	21,000	21,000	30,000
Surface-to-air missile launchers (excludes SA-7s)	30	330	380	500
<b>Navy</b>				
Personnel	3,000	4,500	4,500	10,000
Frigates	0	0	0	4
Corvettes	0	0	0	6
Missile boats	4	12	10	15

**Impact of War on Iraqi Military Planning**

**The Armed Forces.** In addition to prompting Baghdad to reassess the importance to military performance of officer competence, troop morale, training, and intelligence, we believe the war also will have a profound effect on the size of Iraq's armed forces and equipment inventories. Since the beginning of the war, the Army has been increased from 12 to more than 25 divisions and from 43 to over 100 brigades. It is now the largest standing army in the Middle East, larger than the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq in 1973. In addition to some 650,000 regulars, the Iraqis have a part-time militia—the Peoples Army—which Iraqi leaders claim has 750,000 members. Baghdad also has Reserve, Mobile Police, and Border Guard brigades that have an estimated 50,000 to 75,000 troops. These figures suggest that approximately one in 10 Iraqis is serving in either the regular military or part-time militia units. 

<sup>a</sup> Estimated.


<sup>b</sup> Some Mobile Police, Border Guard, and Reserve brigades are serving as components of regular Army divisions. Those brigades serving with the regular Army are not included in our estimate of personnel serving in the paramilitary forces but are counted as part of the regular Army.



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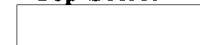
After the war, we anticipate that Iraq will want to keep its Army at greater-than-prewar strength as a hedge against a renewed threat from Iran. Nevertheless, we expect demobilization to ease the depletion of skilled manpower in the civilian sector stemming from the extensive wartime callups. We estimate the Army will release approximately 200,000 men following the war, leaving about 450,000 troops. The Iraqis are unlikely to demobilize any of their six armored <sup>5</sup> and

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<sup>5</sup> Includes four Republican Guard Brigades and the 10th Armored Brigade that are counted here as an armored division. 

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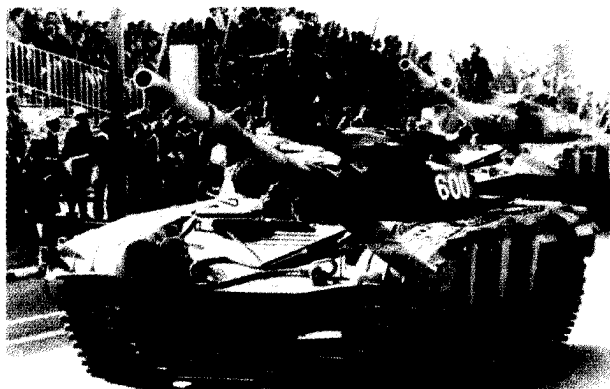


Figure 4. T-72 tank.

The T-72s and BMPs, along with hundreds of tanks on order from China, will upgrade the firepower and mobility of Iraqi infantry units, in our judgment. The additional equipment also may be used to supply the reserve divisions we believe Iraq will form.

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two mechanized divisions. In addition, Baghdad probably will keep at least eight infantry divisions under arms—half the current number—so that it can station one infantry division on each of the major fronts facing Iran and still leave four divisions to monitor Iraqi Kurdistan.

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To minimize the impact of demobilization on military preparedness, we believe Iraq will try to improve its reserve system. According to the commander of the Iraqi Staff College, the war has pointed up the value of a reserve force. Iraq has called up at least 12 classes of reservists during the war, according to press reports, involving between 100,000 and 125,000 personnel. Iraq probably will maintain a cadre of personnel and equipment for most of the divisions and brigades that we believe will be deactivated after the war. Reservists and demobilized personnel probably will be called up once a year to serve a few weeks of active duty so that the Army can reach wartime strength quickly in a crisis.

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**Armor.** We expect Iraq to maintain its inventory of armored equipment at about the present level, some 4,000 to 4,500 tanks. The quality of the equipment, however, probably will undergo considerable change as large numbers of T-72 tanks and BMP armored fighting vehicles replace older ones.

**Artillery.** Based on the comments by Saddam and the Ba'th Party report, we believe that the most intense Iraqi military procurement effort over the next several years will be in artillery. We estimate Baghdad has received over 800 heavy artillery pieces since 1980, many to replace war losses. According to Saddam, during the first part of the war the Iraqi Army lacked sufficient artillery firepower and could not mass effectively what it did have. As a result, Iraqi artillery was ineffective both in countering Iranian artillery and in breaking up Iran's massed infantry attacks. According to the Ba'th Party report, Iraqi artillery was inferior to that of Iran both in range and firepower. The report blamed the deficiency on the USSR, claiming Moscow had not supplied Iraq with artillery as efficient as that provided to Iran by the United States.

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At the beginning of the war, the Iraqi Army had significantly less self-propelled and heavy artillery than Iran. Moreover, much of the heavy artillery used by Baghdad's forces had been added to the inventory only a year or two before the war.<sup>6</sup> As a result, ammunition stockpiles for the new artillery pieces were inadequate.

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<sup>6</sup> The report of the eighth Iraqi Ba'th Party congress in early 1974 highlighted a lack of artillery as a major weakness of Iraqi forces fighting in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Improving artillery forces was listed as the last of a series of deficiencies to be corrected. Satellite photography indicates Iraq began a major effort to upgrade its artillery forces in 1978.

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Figure 5. Iraqi BM-21 rocket launchers. [redacted]



[redacted] the Iraqis have been impressed with the accuracy and mobility of the Soviet M-1974 122-mm self-propelled gun. The Iraqis already have Soviet M-1973 152-mm self-propelled guns and French GCT 155-mm self-propelled howitzers. In our judgment, the Iraqis would like to assign some of the higher powered 152-mm or 155-mm self-propelled guns to each armored or mechanized division and possibly to each corps. [redacted]

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According to Iraqi artillery officers who have served at the front, Iranian 175-mm and 8-inch guns have a greater range than Iraqi artillery. These officers claimed the Iranians were using extended-range ammunition to give their 175-mm guns a range of about 40 kilometers. Moreover, they also indicated their surprise at the ability of Iran's self-propelled artillery to move, fire a barrage, and then move again. The Iranians had large numbers of these guns—some 500 supplied by the United States—and could move quickly and avoid Iraqi counterfire. Baghdad began receiving self-propelled guns only two years before the war and had just begun to integrate them into units when the fighting began. The Iraqis also tended to dig in their towed artillery, according to overhead photography, leaving it vulnerable to Iranian counterfire. [redacted]

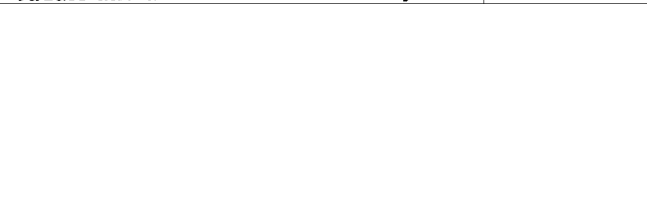
[redacted] Iraqi artillery officers initially preferred towed artillery because it was simple to operate but now realize the importance of mobility and the advantage of relocating quickly. [redacted]

Once Iraq's postwar economy stabilizes, we expect Baghdad to make substantial purchases of towed and self-propelled artillery as well as surface-to-surface missiles and possibly advanced fire control systems. The Army probably plans to nearly double its prewar inventory of artillery, create new rocket-launcher battalions, and add corps-level missile and artillery units. Ideally, Iraq would like to have more than 2,000 artillery pieces at the end of this decade by investing an additional \$300-400 million in new guns. [redacted]

The Iraqis will try to improve the quality of their artillery operations through the acquisition of artillery radars and advanced fire control systems. [redacted]

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**Helicopters.** Although neither Saddam nor the Ba'th Party report explicitly mentioned helicopters, the commander of the Iraqi Staff College cited the extensive use of helicopters as another important lesson of the war for the Iraqis. In our judgment, Baghdad, which has the largest number of helicopters in the Arab world, will expand its helicopter fleet as part of a major effort to improve the firepower and mobility of its ground forces. [redacted]

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Iraq transferred all of its helicopters from Air Force to Army control in mid-1981 so that they could be used more effectively to meet the needs of ground force units. [redacted] each of Iraq's four Army corps controls two attack

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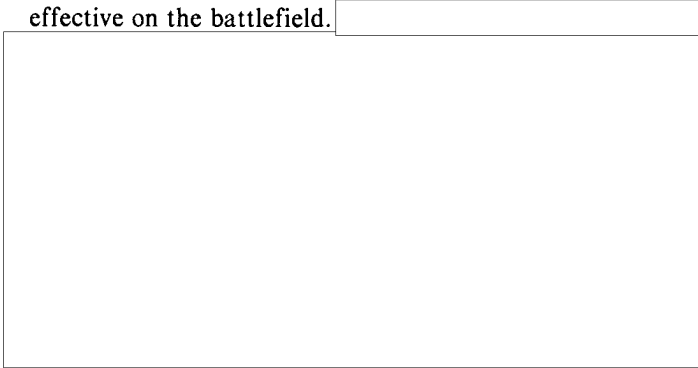


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Figure 6. Gazelle helicopter.

TOW antitank missiles. The Iraqis call the Cobra the ghost of death because it is so maneuverable and effective on the battlefield.



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helicopter squadrons as well as one squadron each of transport and reconnaissance helicopters.



Baghdad probably will seek additional French, West German, or possibly Italian equipment. Iraq already has approximately 40 French Gazelle attack helicopters armed with HOT antitank missiles, the Gazelle/HOT combination has performed well during the war. Iraq also has approximately 30 West German BO-105 helicopters

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If Iraq follows the Soviet organizational model, it will assign a detachment of direct-support helicopters to each division during the 1980s. Each Soviet direct-support squadron consists of approximately eight MI-24 attack helicopters and 16 MI-8 and MI-2 transport and reconnaissance helicopters. Based on the Soviet configuration of such a detachment, Iraq would require some 250 attack helicopters and 375 transport/reconnaissance helicopters. This would triple the number of attack helicopters we estimate Iraq now has and probably double its current inventory of MI-8 transport helicopters. The additional helicopters would cost over \$800 million if purchased from the Soviet Union.



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Moreover, two Italian

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attack helicopters at a military base in Baghdad, possibly as part of a sales demonstration.



Baghdad, however, probably will choose Western over Soviet-made helicopters. Even before the war there were reports that the Iraqis were dissatisfied with the Soviet MI-24 attack helicopters because of maintenance problems and shortages of spare parts.

The Iraqis are improving the quality of their helicopters, in our judgment, by equipping them for night operations and acquiring advanced sighting devices.

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The Iraqis made extensive use of their helicopters in night combat for the first time during the fighting at Panjwin in the fall of 1983 and claimed to have inflicted heavy losses on the Iranians.

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these problems have continued. Moreover, the Iraqis have found the MI-24 to be too sluggish and difficult to maneuver in combat situations.



Finally, the Iraqis want to arm their helicopters for aerial combat. In late 1983 Iran claimed its Cobra gunships had knocked down at least six Iraqi helicopters in air-to-air combat during the war.

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the Iraqis are impressed by Iran's US-supplied Cobra helicopter armed with


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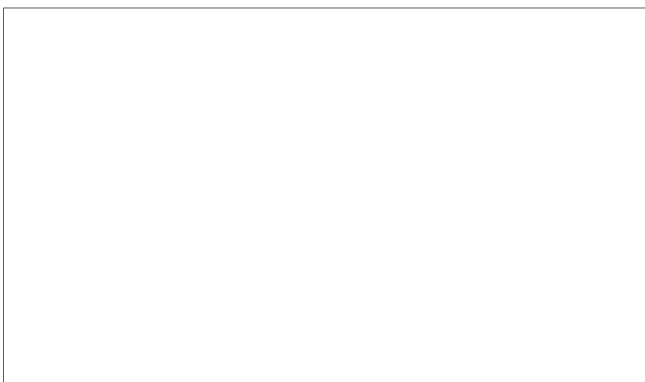



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Figure 7. Mirage F-1C. 




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aircraft. We estimate that during the next five years, if funds become available, the number of Iraqi fighter aircraft may increase by roughly 25 percent to about 600. 



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The new Iraqi airbases and the expansion of existing airfields will greatly improve Iraq's ability to deploy airpower against its neighbors. Twelve of the 21 new airfields and 11 of the 19 expanded airfields are in eastern Iraq, according to overhead photography. They will permit extensive air operations at any point along the Iranian border, something that was difficult for Iraq early in the war. Based on the number of aircraft bunkers and hardstands being built, Baghdad could deploy as many as 150 additional fighter aircraft in eastern Iraq. 


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**Air Force.** The Ba'th Party report praised Iraq's decision to hold its Air Force in reserve during the war. The report compares Baghdad's decision to husband its airpower with the destruction of the Iranian Air Force that was "recklessly committed" early in the war. Saddam did not comment on Air Force performance during his press interview, but 

 the Air Force was instrumental in stopping several major Iranian offensives. As a result, the Air Force has received little criticism despite its long periods of inaction and frequent lack of aggressiveness during the first years of the war. 

Saddam's satisfaction with the Air Force suggests that it will fare well in future programs to modernize the military. Plans in 1981 called for a force of about 500 fighter aircraft by the late 1980s, 

 Iraq is building 21 new airfields and expanding 19. Approximately 375 aircraft bunkers/hardstands were under construction or completed as of early this year. Even allowing for increased dispersal of fighter aircraft already stationed at existing airfields, the construction suggests plans to add at least 250 new

Iraq also will beef up its airpower facing Syria and Israel. The level of construction activity in western Iraq suggests, however, that the buildup will be more limited than along the Iranian border. Five new airfields are being built near the Syrian and Jordanian borders with eight additional airfields being expanded. They probably would house 75 to 100 additional fighter aircraft. In addition to guarding against hostile air activity by Syria, Baghdad probably also wants to counter Iran's ability to use Syria as a base for air raids such as those that occurred in April 1981. 

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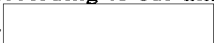
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Finally, four new bases are being built near the border with Saudi Arabia. Israel's raid on Iraq's nuclear facility passed through Saudi airspace, and the new airbases are located to permit better coverage of the Saudi border. Iraq could deploy as many as 40 fighter aircraft to the area, according to our analysis of satellite photography. 

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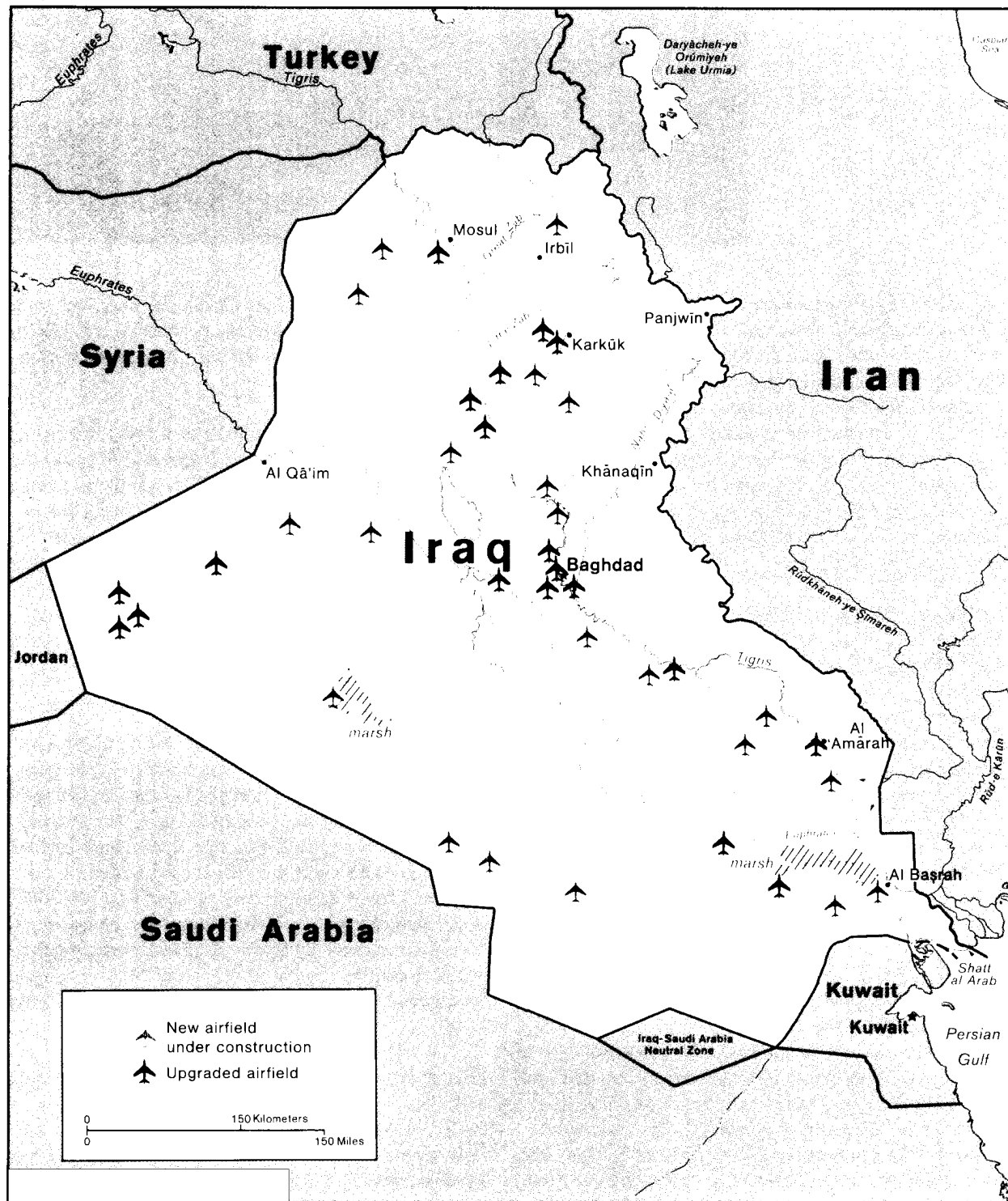


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Figure 8  
Iraqi Airfield Construction



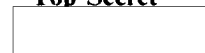
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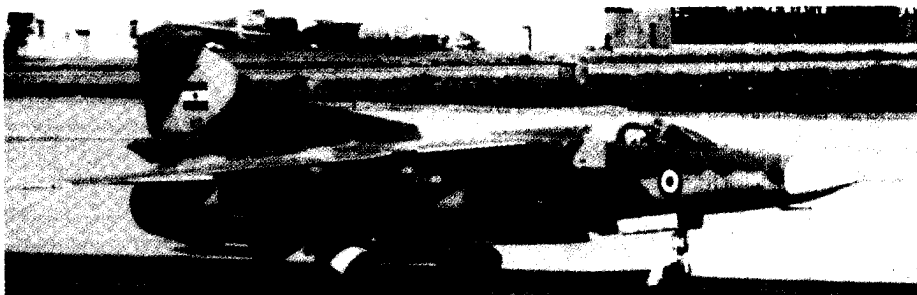
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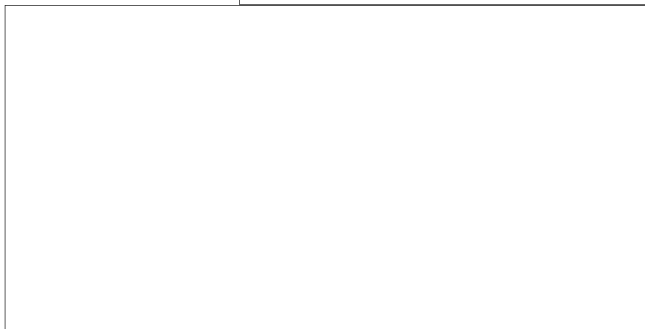
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Figure 9. MIG-23 (Flogger E)



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[Redacted] the Iraqis want to equip existing and new airfields with the latest combat aircraft available. [Redacted]



the Iraqis. [Redacted] Baghdad has armed some of its MIG-21 interceptors with the French missiles, and they are far more effective in combat than the Soviet Atoll missiles. Possibly in reaction, Moscow has provided Iraq with an improved version of its air-to-air missile that has a longer range and a better guidance system. [Redacted]

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The French also are supplying the Iraqis with a wide variety of air-to-ground ordnance and electronic equipment. [Redacted]

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Despite the possible substantial increase in Western aircraft, we believe that Soviet-built aircraft will continue to compose the bulk of Iraq's fighter aircraft throughout this decade. [Redacted]



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In our judgment, the Soviets will try to match the French in the sale of air-to-surface weapon systems and electronic equipment to Iraq. [Redacted]

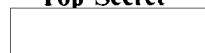
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Before the war Iraq often was among the first recipients of new Soviet weapon systems exported outside the Warsaw Pact. We expect this pattern to resume once the war ends and Baghdad can pay for Soviet arms with hard currency. Moscow will be under pressure to meet French competition by supplying advanced aircraft. We believe that the Iraqis are particularly interested in the Soviet MIG-29 interceptor to enhance their capability to intercept aircraft flying at low altitudes. Like the SU-25, this aircraft has not been delivered outside the Warsaw Pact. [Redacted]

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The Air Force also is gaining access to a wider variety of other weaponry. The French have supplied radar-guided R530 and infrared R550 air-to-air missiles to

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[Redacted]

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Despite these improvements, we expect the Iraqi Air Force to perform far below its potential in any future conflict. Next to the incompetence of senior Army commanders, ineffective use of the Air Force is the second-greatest weakness of the Iraqi military. The misplaced satisfaction expressed by Saddam and the Ba'th Party report concerning the Air Force's performance suggest that critical changes needed to improve Air Force effectiveness will not be made.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] restrictions on Air Force operations by Iraqi political leaders are the primary cause of its ineffectiveness. Saddam limits Air Force operations to conserve aircraft, and senior commanders believe that Air Force capabilities have not been seriously taxed even during major Iranian offensives.

[Redacted] the Air Force can fly three times the number of sorties that were flown even during the heaviest fighting. [Redacted]

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We believe the situation is more complicated [Redacted] Senior Air Force officers probably are reinforcing Saddam's caution to preserve their own political positions. [Redacted] the guiding philosophy of senior Air Force officers is to minimize combat losses to avoid close scrutiny and punishment by Saddam. [Redacted] the Air Force has been able to pursue such a strategy because Saddam and other Iraqi political leaders have little understanding of Air Force operations and capabilities.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] in addition to some political restrictions, senior Iraqi Air Force officers themselves are partly responsible for the cautious employment of Iraq's overwhelming edge in airpower.

[Redacted]

The Air Force also still suffers from inadequate training. According to two Iraqi Air Force defectors in the late 1970s, pilots conducted exercises with live ammunition only once a year. Iraqi Air Force officers indicated in mid-1983 that live-fire training had been increased but still is conducted only twice a year. Air Force training tends to be relatively unimaginative—normally bombing undefended stationary targets, for example—and, in our judgment, of marginal value.

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Current Iraqi Air Force practices may be eroding what few skills the pilots acquire during training. According to an Iraqi pilot, training in cannon firing, dive bombing, low-level operations, and aerial combat maneuvers is becoming superfluous because of the Air Force's cautious approach to ground attack operations and the lack of an effective air challenge from the Iranians. The pilot claims that although he and his colleagues carry out their bombing missions at high altitudes—usually at between 3,000 and 7,000 meters, [Redacted] skills in riskier low-level ground attack procedures and in aerial combat atrophy through lack of practice. [Redacted]

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**Air Defense.** Neither Saddam nor the Ba'th Party report mention air defense, and we have little information on Iraqi planning in this area. The lack of attention is probably due less to Iraqi performance than to Iran's inability to mount a serious air threat.

[Redacted] senior officers recognize that Iraq's air defense system has turned in only a mediocre performance during the war, primarily because of the lack of coordination between air defense elements and the shortage of radars. [Redacted]

[Redacted] the Iraqis have been extending and integrating their air defense network over the past two years. In addition to strengthening radar coverage near Iran, [Redacted] Iraq has beefed up its facilities along the Syrian and Saudi borders. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] the surface-to-air missile network is being extended throughout the country. During the next few years, we expect Iraq to concentrate on deploying surface-to-air missiles along the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys where many important military and economic installations are located. In addition, we expect the Iraqis to deploy surface-to-air missiles near many of their new airbases along the borders with Syria and Saudi Arabia. The inability of Iraq's SA-2 and SA-3 missiles to counter low-level Iranian air attacks and Israel's strike against the nuclear reactor near Baghdad suggests that Iraq probably will protect important facilities with additional French Roland and Soviet SA-6 missiles. [Redacted]

Air defense equipment available to Iraqi armored units also is likely to be strengthened. Iraq had success, [Redacted] using ZSU-23/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns and towed 57-mm anti-aircraft guns against Iranian fighter aircraft and helicopters early in the war and probably will add more of these weapons, along with additional SA-6 surface-to-air missiles. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**Navy.** Although naval operations were not mentioned by Saddam or the Ba'th Party report, the Iraqi Navy is to undergo a dramatic expansion. Before the war, Iraq ordered four Lupo-class frigates, six corvettes, and a supply ship from Italy. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] some ship deliveries will be delayed, however, because of financial problems. In any event, so long as the war with Iran continues, the ships cannot reach Iraq and will be held in Italian or other Arab ports. Iraq also is building several large naval support facilities near Umm Qasr. [Redacted]

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The Navy has had some success using Chinese anti-ship missiles and French Super Frelon helicopters armed with Exocet missiles against commercial shipping, and Iraq may purchase more of both. Baghdad already is extending its reach in the Gulf by acquiring additional fighter aircraft—a combination of Super Etendards and Mirage F1s, [Redacted]

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[Redacted]—armed with Exocet missiles. These aircraft, however, are controlled by the Air Force. [Redacted]

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**Arms Diversification.** We believe the Iraqis want to continue to reduce their dependence on outside sources for military consumables such as ammunition and spare parts. The Ba'th Party report praised the regime's decision in the mid-1970s to diversify arms suppliers and expand domestic arms industries, claiming this move enabled Iraq to overcome "unforeseen difficulties"—Moscow's decision to halt military deliveries—early in the war. In fact, Iraq had made only marginal progress in diversifying its arms supplies when the war began. We estimate that over 90 percent of Baghdad's armored vehicles, artillery, and fighter aircraft were supplied by the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. [Redacted]

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As a result, Moscow's embargo on direct arms shipments to Iraq during the first six months of the war—East European suppliers continued to ship arms—presented the Iraqis almost immediately with serious supply shortages. [Redacted]

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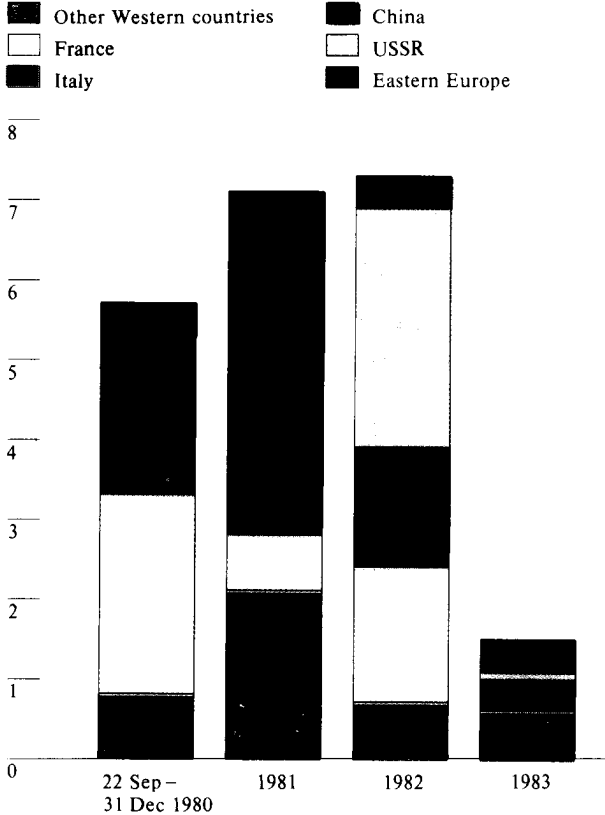
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Figure 10  
Arms Agreements With Iraq,  
22 September 1980-83

Billion US \$



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arms shipments.

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In late 1982 Saddam publicly accused Moscow of wanting the Iranians to win the war and of supplying arms to Iran.

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Although Iraqi-Soviet relations have steadily improved during the past two years, Iraqi concerns continue about the reliability of Soviet arms deliveries, suggesting that arms diversification will continue at least as long as the present Iraqi regime remains in power. Current trends in arms purchases indicate that France, China, and Egypt will be major beneficiaries of Iraq's decision to diversify. Paris already has sold Iraq approximately 80 Mirage F1 and five Super Etendard fighter aircraft, 85 self-propelled artillery pieces, Roland and possibly Crotale surface-to-air missile systems, approximately 150 helicopters, anti-tank missiles, armored vehicles, radars, and communications gear. Some \$3.5 billion in French military equipment has yet to be delivered, and Paris probably will remain Baghdad's main alternative to the Soviets for advanced military equipment.

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lery and air munitions.

we believe that the Soviet embargo was an important—but not the most significant—factor in Iraq's cautious employment of airpower. Baghdad could not risk losing large numbers of aircraft until it was certain of resupply arrangements.

The deep distrust engendered by the Soviet embargo during the first six months of the war continues despite the resumption in 1981 of large-scale Soviet

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China and Egypt probably will continue to be Baghdad's preferred sources of spare parts and ammunition for Soviet-style military equipment. About \$3 billion worth of Chinese arms remains to be delivered, mainly tanks, aircraft, artillery, and ammunition. Iraq has purchased at least \$500 million in Egyptian arms and munitions and also some tanks and possibly aircraft. [Redacted]

buys is assembled or produced domestically. In our judgment, Baghdad realizes it cannot produce major weapon systems—except artillery—any time soon, [Redacted]

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We also believe that Baghdad will push ahead on expanding its domestic arms production, particularly artillery ammunition. Iraq already has a large complex—covering over 100 square kilometers, according to [Redacted]—that attempted to produce Soviet-type artillery ammunition during the Soviet embargo. [Redacted]

We estimate that Iraq's dependence on the Soviet Union for major weapon systems, therefore, will be only marginally reduced through at least the end of this decade. The Soviets are the only major supplier capable of furnishing equipment quickly—particularly armor, artillery, and aircraft—and in the large quantities desired by the Iraqis. The diversification program, however, probably will reduce the Soviets' leverage over the supply of ammunition and other consumables. This, combined with probable Iraqi stockpiling of major equipment and the relatively long operational life of major systems like tanks and aircraft, will make Baghdad much less vulnerable to the type of short-term embargo imposed by the Soviets in 1980-81. [Redacted]

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In addition to artillery ammunition, Baghdad has signed contracts in the last three years covering production facilities for a wide range of military equipment, including antitank and air-to-air missiles and protective masks. [Redacted]

**Chemical Warfare Agents.** Perhaps the most dramatic Iraqi military development of the war is Baghdad's acquisition of chemical agents. Baghdad had a long-standing program to develop chemical weapons before the war began but had not made much progress. Beginning in 1981 [Redacted]

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[Redacted] however, the Iraqis rapidly developed a capability to produce mustard agent, [Redacted] By mid-1982 Baghdad had several thousand artillery shells filled with mustard agent. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] current production of mustard agent is about 3 tons per day, and this will soon be expanded to 6 tons per day. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Iraq first used mustard agent during the fighting at Haj Umran in July 1983, but it was only marginally effective. The next instance was at Panjwin a few months later, where [Redacted] Iraqi officers credit the agent with stopping the Iranians. Baghdad's use of mustard agent resulted in several thousand Iranian casualties during fighting near Al Basrah in the early spring of 1984, but a UN official who visited the battlefield claims that Iraq's tactics and technical preparations for using the agent were haphazard. [Redacted]

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Even if these facilities are completed, Iraq will require foreign technicians to operate them. Moreover, many of the facilities will be nothing more than assembly operations with critical components manufactured abroad. Nonetheless, we expect Iraq will attempt to ensure that some portion of each weapon system it

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Baghdad hopes to produce enough of the nerve agent Tabun to begin using such weapons extensively during the second half of this year. We estimate that production could reach 4 tons per day.



affordable systems—artillery, tactical surface-to-surface rockets, and helicopters. The acquisition of more expensive items—French-made surface-to-air missiles and advanced fighter-bomber aircraft—may have to be delayed for several years. If France and other suppliers agree to favorable repayment terms, however, even this delay may be unnecessary.

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Tabun is one of the most basic nerve agents produced. The Iraqis also are attempting to produce the nerve agent Sarin. By the end of the decade, they probably will have acquired considerable stockpiles and experience in using these agents and would be willing to use them against any invader.

**Lessons Learned by Iran**

Unlike the Iraqis, Iran has not published a comprehensive document on the lessons of the war, and we have had to piece together Iranian thinking from fragmentary information. Statements by senior Iranian officials, Iranian procurement patterns,

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**Economic Constraints on Arms Purchases**

Baghdad's ability to implement its military force modernization proposals will be largely determined by the country's postwar financial situation. The cost of the war—an estimated \$700 million per month—and Iraq's inability to export oil through the Persian Gulf have already forced a severe drawdown of Iraq's foreign reserves from a prewar high of \$31 billion to less than \$4 billion early this year. The government has postponed or canceled many civilian industrialization and construction programs and has imposed austerity measures.

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\_\_\_\_\_ suggest that the following are the important features of the war from Tehran's perspective:

- "Faith"—not sophisticated military equipment—is the critical element of military success.
- Iran can wage war relying primarily on mass mobilization of volunteers and a reserve system rather than on a professionally trained, full-time military organization.
- Iran can obtain essential military arms without having to deal directly with either the United States or the Soviet Union.
- Airpower has had a limited effect on the course of the war.
- Iran's control of shipping in the Gulf gives Tehran the capability to seriously disrupt Iraq's economy, influence the Arab Gulf states, and threaten the West.

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If oil exports are restored, we believe Iraq will be able to purchase the major weapons it seeks within five years. We estimate that the cost of these weapons, including initial support packages, will add less than \$10 billion to the remaining payments for equipment purchased during the first three years of the war. The Arab Gulf states are expected to continue to help meet the arms debt burden.

Assuming that these conclusions guide Tehran's thinking during future military planning, we believe that Iran will be selective in its arms purchases and will not engage in a major arms buildup similar to that carried out by the Shah. We anticipate that the clerical regime will replenish its equipment inventories in areas that would not give the military the capability to threaten the regime. Iran probably will focus its efforts on acquiring additional artillery, air defense systems, warships, and aircraft with an anti-shiping capability. Less attention will be paid to fighter aircraft and armor, in our opinion.

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Iraq can expect to receive continuing financial assistance from its Arab Gulf allies, although significantly less than during the war. The Gulf states provided an estimated \$22 billion in financial aid to Iraq during the first three years of the war and probably would be willing to provide some \$2 billion per year after Iraq resumes exporting from the Gulf.

During the immediate postwar years, therefore, Iraq will have to allocate a major part of its budget to economic recovery. Consequently, Iraq's initial military purchases probably will be confined to more

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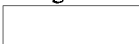
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Figure 11. Iranian troops praying. 

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**Faith**

Numerous Iranian leaders attribute Iran's early battlefield successes to the "faith" of their troops, and they minimize the important role of the regular Army in containing the Iranian invasion. The term *faith* in this context denotes high morale, fanaticism, and a willingness to die.<sup>7</sup> Iranian clerical leaders led by Ayatollah Khomeini have attributed—correctly, in our view—the superior morale of their troops to Islam and religious motivation. In our judgment, the extreme dedication of Iranian troops did play a major role in their successful counteroffensive of 1981-82. The ruling clerics are pursuing the axiom that men, not weapons, win battles. 

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that nationalism is an equally strong component of the Iranian will to fight. Most military defectors and exiled Iranian military officers have reported that

Iranian troops are motivated primarily by devotion to country. This judgment somewhat reflects the bias of regular officers who comprise the bulk of the military exiles and defectors. But the importance of nationalism is underscored by reports that Iranian troops suffered serious morale problems once the war moved onto Iraqi soil. During the initial Iranian invasion in July 1982, Iran cast its objectives largely in religious terms. A year later, after five major Iranian attacks along the border either had failed or achieved only limited success, Iranian leaders began justifying Iran's military actions as necessary to protect Iranian cities from bombardment and to prevent a new Iraqi invasion. We believe that the change in the way Iranian leaders presented the war's objectives was an attempt to appeal to their soldiers' nationalism as well as to establish more realistic goals. 

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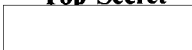
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**Iranian Leaders on the Importance of Faith**

*It is faith that has transformed our armed forces. Armed forces personnel or Revolutionary Guards who pray in their bunkers can resist like a lion.*

*Ayatollah Khomeini  
December 1982*

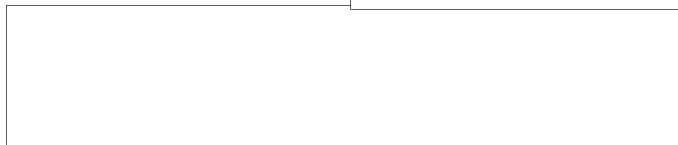
*We believe an army becomes triumphant depending upon the morale and faith of its troops.*

*Iranian Defense Minister Mohammed Salimi  
September 1983*



**Mass Volunteer Mobilization**

In addition to extolling the importance of high morale, Iranian officials have emphasized the key role of volunteers in Iran's success.



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we agree with the Iranian claim that their irregulars have played an essential role in the war effort.



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The importance that the clerical regime attaches to "faith" means that Iran will continue to pay close attention to the ideological training of its troops. This also suggests that Iran's irregulars—rather than the regular military—will continue to play a major role in the Iranian military structure. The regime regards the Revolutionary Guard and Basij militia as its most ideologically fervent troops.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of "faith" in Iranian military thinking suggests that Tehran will be careful about where it employs its forces. For example, Iranian clerics will choose opponents that they can portray as enemies of Islam or as direct threats to Iran. The forces of either superpower would qualify for both categories. Iran, however, is likely to be cautious about military activity against other Muslim states in the region such as Turkey, Pakistan, or the moderate Gulf states.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Revolutionary Guard consists of lightly equipped, highly motivated military units that appear to have an organization and command structure similar to the regular Army but under the direct control of the clerics. The Basij is an Iranian militia organization. Members are organized into 22-man infantry squads and receive a few weeks of small arms training before they are sent to the front. Basij troops have generally been quite fanatic during the Iran-Iraq war and often comprise the first echelons of Iranian "human wave" attacks.

<sup>9</sup> This does not preclude Iran's use of limited forces, airstrikes, or commando raids—where only relatively small numbers of personnel need to be motivated—against the Gulf states. Iranian experience in the war, however, suggests Tehran might find it difficult to motivate large numbers of troops to invade Saudi Arabia or the other Gulf states.

Despite the regime's professed dedication to mass mobilization, we estimate that only about 7 percent of the estimated 9 million Iranian males eligible for military duty are serving in regular military, paramilitary, or domestic security elements. By this measure, Iran's military commitment is less than one-third of Iraq's and lower than that of most other Middle Eastern states. Iran claims to have trained some 2.5 million Iranians in the Basij militia, but the Iranian press indicates that approximately 400,000 had been to the front by late 1982. In addition, we estimate that Iran has more than 100,000 Revolutionary Guards, about half serving at the front at any one time.

Although the regime has tapped only a fraction of available manpower, evidence indicates Tehran is concerned about the shortage of trained personnel. According to the Iranian press, Iran has formed a reserve system to enable it to recall on short notice those who have previously served or who have had specialized training. The *Labbayk ya Khomeini* (We respond to you, O Khomeini) plan involves compiling dossiers on all Iranians who have had military training, particularly those who served in Basij units. According to Iranian press articles, in late November



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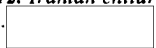


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Figure 12. Iranian children in uniform.



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1983 Tehran conducted a nationwide callup of personnel registered under this plan. We have no firm information on the numbers involved, but Ayatollah Khomeini claimed in September 1983 that approximately 1 million Iranians with military training could be called up and sent to the battlefield on short notice.



Statements by Iran's clerical leaders about the role of mobilized volunteers ignore the important role of conscripted regulars, in our judgment, and could invalidate future Iranian assumptions on the proper use of manpower. Tehran's reliance on volunteer mobilization and "faith" as its major military assets suggests that the Basij will continue to be an important part of Iran's military organization. The majority of reserve troops available in an emergency will continue to be lightly armed and will lack offensive firepower and mobility.



Iranian military officers publicly acknowledge that this policy hampers Iranian military operations. The regime, however, insists on such a course to preserve its political independence and, in our judgment, has tailored its prosecution of the war—relying on manpower, small arms, and artillery—at least partially to accommodate this political imperative. Iranian arms orders during the war recently surpassed \$5 billion—still less than one-fourth those of Iraq. Although arms supplies from the United States were never a realistic possibility after the hostage crisis, the Soviet Union offered Iran large quantities of arms at least once during the war.

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Large quantities of modern Soviet arms combined with the fanaticism of Iranian troops would have given Tehran a decisive edge in the war, in our view. The clerics, however, turned down Moscow's offers, fearing the political concessions the Soviets might demand.



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**Impact of the War on Iranian Military Planning**  
**Arms Diversification.** Throughout the war Iranian leaders have emphasized their determination to be independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union for arms supplies. At the same time, senior



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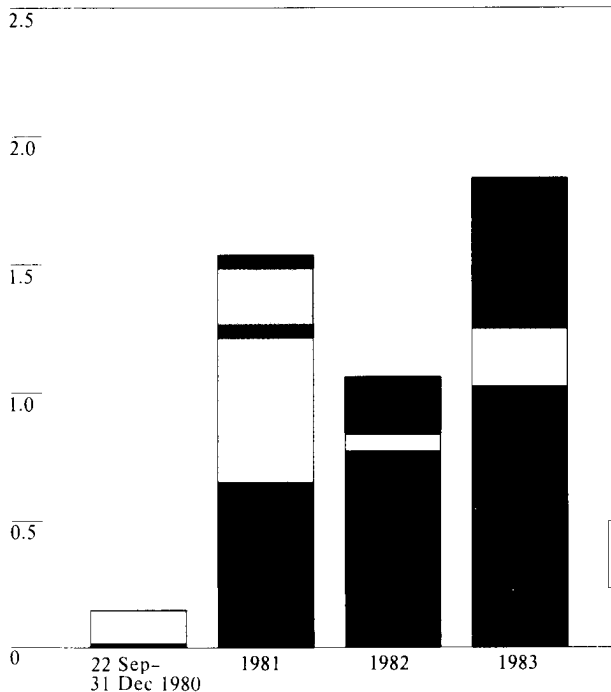


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**Figure 13**  
**Arms Agreements With Iran,**  
**22 September 1980-83**

Billion US \$

■ All Western countries	□ USSR
□ North Korea	■ Eastern Europe
■ China	



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Iran has sought arms from Western Europe, smaller Third World suppliers, and the gray market.



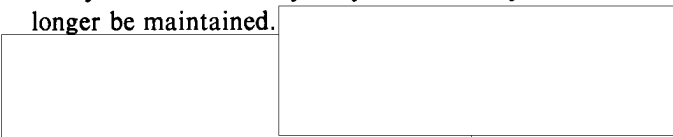
North Korea is Tehran's major arms supplier, selling more than 20 percent of all the arms Iran has ordered since the start of the war. China, Eastern Europe, and the USSR have supplied another 25 percent. Libya and Syria have accounted for 12 percent of Iran's purchases.

We believe Iran will accelerate its attempts to diversify arms suppliers once the war with Iraq ends and a

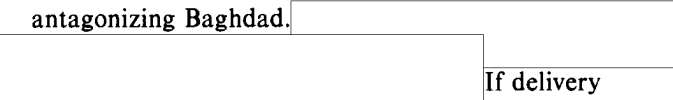
number of Western countries lift their wartime embargos. Iran is particularly disappointed with the quality of North Korean weaponry, suggesting that Pyongyang's share of the Iranian arms market will diminish after the war.



China might be another major beneficiary, but arms negotiations between Tehran and Beijing were broken off by the latter in early May when secrecy could no longer be maintained.

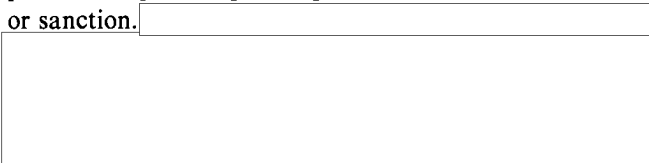


Beijing also is a major arms supplier to Iraq, however, and insisted on a low profile in its dealing with Iran to avoid antagonizing Baghdad.



If delivery arrangements and financial details can be worked out or if the war ends, China could become one of Iran's most important arms suppliers.

Since the war began in September 1980, West European sources have accounted for about one-third of the arms sold to Iran. Many of these sources are private companies operating without official direction or sanction.



West European governments that have legal restrictions on sales to Iran will have difficulty ignoring the potentially lucrative Iranian arms market after the war, especially if there is a formal settlement of the conflict and mutual trust is restored between Iran and Western Europe.

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Iran's inventories of major weapon systems have been severely depleted by both the war and the Western arms embargo. We anticipate that the strong desire of the clerical regime to remain independent of the superpowers will restrain Tehran from pursuing a major arms buildup similar to that undertaken by the Shah. [redacted] the clerics still distrust the regular armed forces, particularly the Air Force, which was the Shah's favorite service. Therefore, we believe the regime will concentrate its efforts on selected portions of the armed forces that will be less likely to pose a threat to the regime—air defense, artillery, and the Navy. The net result of such a policy would be a large Iranian militia supported by relatively small air and armored elements. [redacted]



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Tehran also has investigated the possible purchase of fighter aircraft from West European countries. [redacted]

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[redacted] Strained relations preclude direct arms deals with the United States and France, however, and other possible sources of US or other Western aircraft are limited. [redacted]

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**Air Force.** We suspect that one of the conclusions the clerics have drawn from the war is that airpower has not been an important factor. [redacted]



[redacted] Iranian ground forces have been largely able to neutralize Iraqi airpower by fighting at night and in bad weather. Moreover, the Iranians probably are aware that their own Air Force has not played a critical offensive role in the war. [redacted]

Iran's suspicion of the Soviets, moreover, means that Moscow cannot fill the gap directly. Instead, Tehran is likely to seek the transfer of Soviet aircraft from a third country such as Libya, Syria, or one of the East European states. Chinese-designed North Korean aircraft probably would be least preferred by Iranian Air Force officers because of their more limited capabilities. The clerics generally regard P'yongyang as relatively free of superpower influence and unable to manipulate Iran, however, and may decide on this basis to purchase aircraft from the North Koreans. [redacted]

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Iran probably will make a major effort to rebuild its helicopter forces—once the largest in the Middle East. [redacted] the Iranians are pleased with the performance of their Cobra gunships armed with TOW missiles. [redacted]

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We have no information on how large an air force Tehran might want after the war. It almost certainly will be much smaller than the Shah's inventory of more than 440 fighter-bombers. Allowing for some refurbishing of Iran's US-supplied F-4 and F-5 fighter aircraft and its F-14 interceptors—assuming spare parts are available—we would expect Iran to be satisfied with a force about one-third the size of the Shah's—some 150 to 200 fighter aircraft toward the end of this decade. Unless Western Europe's relations with Tehran improve dramatically, at least half of these aircraft probably would be Soviet or Chinese models. Iran's shortage of qualified fighter pilots and the desire of the clerics to limit the potential political threat of the Air Force argue against a larger force. [redacted]



Failure to line up Western suppliers probably would prompt Iran to turn to the Soviets or, more likely, Soviet clients. [redacted]

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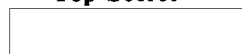
The clerical regime's suspicions regarding the Air Force's political reliability have not prevented efforts to purchase additional equipment. [redacted]



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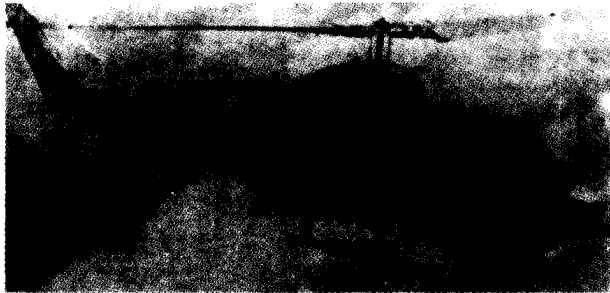


Figure 14. Iranian Cobra helicopter gunship.

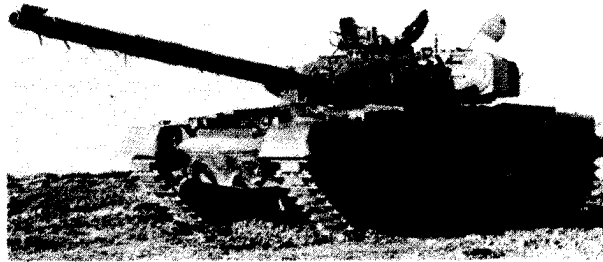


Figure 15. Chieftain tank (MK-5).

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**Air Defense.** Although we believe Tehran desires to attempt a major expansion of Iran's air defenses, political restraints are likely to force it to settle for a modest upgrading. Statements by Iranian clerical leaders indicate they have been frustrated and angered by the civil destruction caused by Iraqi air raids and missile attacks. Iran's present air defense system consists of US-supplied HAWK and British-supplied Rapier SAM systems, supplemented by Soviet anti-aircraft guns. Several SAM sites are occupied, Iranian defectors claim that few are fully operational. We believe the Iranians might turn to Communist countries for an air defense system following the war. As in other Iranian bids for advanced Soviet military equipment, we anticipate that Moscow would attempt to gain political concessions from Tehran or, at a minimum, some softening of Tehran's public attacks on Soviet policies. Moreover, an extensive air defense system would be needed to protect the border with Iraq, and this would require a large number of Soviet military advisers. It also would require several years of training before the Iranians would be competent to run the system even at a reduced level.

**Armor.** As long as the military professionals in Iran are mistrusted by the clerics, we believe Tehran will sanction only modest increases in the size of its armored forces. The clerics are well aware that a large armored force, in the hands of a political opponent, could carry out a coup, especially if the regime's supporters are less well armed. We estimate Iran now has fewer than 900 tanks—half its prewar inventory—and that approximately one-third of these are not operational because of maintenance problems. About 150 to 200 are Soviet models either supplied by Libya and North Korea or captured from Iraq.

Although some senior Iranian military officers indicate that they prefer Soviet to US and British armor, we believe that Tehran initially will seek to acquire spares and suppliers for its existing inventory of US and British equipment to reduce costs and minimize training problems. Eventually we expect the Iranians to replace their older US tanks with Soviet models acquired from North Korea, China, or Libya and to retain their Soviet-supplied armored personnel carriers.

We anticipate Iran will take a greater interest in developing its antitank capabilities. This would be consistent both with the large infantry force we believe Iran will maintain after the war and with the clerics' fear of a coup attempt by the regular military.

Iranian units already are heavily armed with antitank weapons, particularly RPG-7s and recoilless rifles. Iran's US-supplied TOW and Dragon missiles also have been effective.

If Iran cannot secure US antitank missiles, we expect attempts to purchase large numbers of Soviet Sagger and, less likely, French HOT and Milan antitank missiles.

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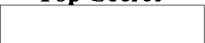
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**Artillery.**

[Redacted]

Tehran probably will replenish its artillery inventory once the war ends. Unfortunately for the Iranians, there are no non-US sources of supply for long-range 175-mm and 8-inch howitzers.

[Redacted]

We believe the Iranians also would be willing to purchase large quantities of artillery from the Soviet Union. Many of the 260 130-mm artillery pieces purchased by the Shah are still in Iran's inventory. Because Iranian crews are already trained on these guns, Iran probably could absorb significant numbers of towed Soviet artillery pieces without having to accept large numbers of Soviet advisers. Iran probably would be less willing to purchase Soviet self-propelled guns because they would require the presence of Soviet military advisers.

[Redacted]

**Naval Capabilities.** The delivery of Super Etendard aircraft to Iraq has focused the attention of Iran's leaders on their naval capability in the Gulf and the leverage it gives them in dealing with the Gulf Arabs and, more importantly, the West. According to Majlis Speaker Rafsanjani, possibly the second most powerful man in Iran, "Our ability to dominate the Persian Gulf is Iran's most important weapon . . . it is like an atomic bomb . . . because of this, the Americans will never dare attack us."

This suggests that revitalizing the Navy will be a priority item in Iran's postwar military planning. Moreover, the regime probably feels less anxiety about improving the Navy's potential because it cannot mount a viable coup threat.

[Redacted] the clerical regime already plans to build a series of naval bases along Iran's Gulf coast and to acquire additional warships. We expect Iran

initially to concentrate on repairing the warships it already has, however, which will require major refitting, probably by the British.

We also expect Iran to increase its antishipping capability.

[Redacted] The Iranians probably will seek to obtain helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, and missile boats, all armed with antiship missiles. The Khomeini regime has been interested in acquiring submarines as well, probably because of the threat they could pose to shipping in the Gulf. Iran has approached the West Germans to determine if they would be willing to fulfill a prerevolution commitment to supply submarines.

In our judgment, the Iranians will make a major effort to strengthen their capability to close the Strait of Hormuz.

[Redacted]

Although Iran's potential for shutting off the Strait of Hormuz probably will be much greater in the late 1980s than it is today, we doubt that Tehran will be any more eager to flex its muscles because of the anticipated military response from Western governments and the damage that would be inflicted on Iran's oil exports.

**Chemical Weapons.** We believe that Iran will develop and produce chemical weapons in response to Iraqi use.

[Redacted]

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**Alternative Iraqi and Iranian Military Buildups**

*This paper has been predicated on the assumption that the present, or similar, regimes will remain in power in Baghdad and Tehran. Changes in one or both governments are possible, however, and could significantly alter the pace and scope of Iraqi and Iranian arms programs.*

*Iraq. The most likely scenario for change in Iraq would be the replacement of President Saddam Husayn by a military regime or a government in which the Iraqi military played a greater role. Because of the political and military infighting that would accompany such a change, the attention of the armed forces would be diverted from foreign military threats to competition for internal political prominence. We would expect many military programs—particularly training and the promotion of more competent officers—to suffer, making the Iraqi armed forces much less effective than they might be under a more stable regime. Officers from tribal groups different from the one that took control would be denied important positions regardless of their military qualifications.*

*Once the new regime stabilized, however, it might increase spending on the military to mollify the officer corps. To guarantee its own strength and prevent the possible negative impact of creating a large pool of unemployed veterans, it also would be less likely to demobilize substantial numbers of Iraqis after the war with Iran. A military government might be more willing to expand substantially Iraq's already large armored and air forces, concentrating on prestige items such as the latest Soviet or West European weaponry, regardless of Iraq's ability to use them. Although the Iraqi armed forces might appear more impressive on paper following such a buildup, in our judgment, they would be weaker because the officer corps would be more involved in politics and devote less time to strictly military issues.*

*A less likely development, but one we cannot totally rule out and one that would have major repercussions, would be the replacement of Saddam Husayn*

*by an Islamic fundamentalist government aligned with Iran. In our judgment, such a regime probably would come to power only after the near collapse of the Iraqi security services and armed forces, followed by considerable political turmoil. A change of this sort would remove Iraq as a major military power among the Arab states for at least several years and ensure Iranian military dominance in the Gulf.*

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*The ascension of an Islamic regime in Baghdad probably would have an impact on the Iraqi military similar to developments in Iran after the Shah's departure. Most senior officers would flee the country or be jailed or executed. Military purges would probably reach well down into the ranks. Training programs probably would halt temporarily, and discipline could well collapse as Shias, who make up the bulk of the enlisted men and noncommissioned officers, assume positions previously occupied by Sunni officers.*

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*An Islamic regime in Baghdad allied with Iran presumably also would reduce substantially Iraq's arms acquisition programs. Iraq's French and Egyptian arms contracts would be abrogated in part to punish Paris and Cairo for their support of Saddam. In addition, an Islamic government also might sharply scale back existing contracts with the Soviet Union and China. Tehran will want to ensure that Iraq does not have sufficient arms to again pose a serious military threat.*

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*In addition to turmoil in the officer and enlisted ranks and the abrogation of arms contracts, the Iraqi armed forces would probably undergo a major restructuring along the lines of the Iranian armed forces. The regular Army probably would continue in existence, but the new leadership, particularly one guided by Iran, would form irregular forces similar to Iran's Revolutionary Guard and Basij. As a result, we expect that the new regime's main fighting force would be largely Shia infantry.*

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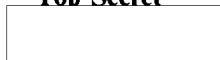
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Iran's offensive chemical warfare program appears to be in the earliest phase of research and development.

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Some

West European diplomats in Tehran believe that industrial complexes in at least two major Iranian cities are involved in preparing chemical agents for military use.

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*Iran. Although unlikely in the near term, the clerical government in Tehran could be replaced by an Iranian military regime or a regime heavily dependent on the military. We believe this would occur only if divisions among leading clerics after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini degenerated into fighting. In this situation some clerics might align themselves with elements of the Revolutionary Guard or the regular armed forces, giving ambitious commanders room to maneuver for power.*



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**Implications for the Arab-Israeli Balance**

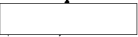
*An Iranian regime led by military officers probably would begin a major conventional arms buildup. The military might well reason that only the Shah's ambitious military programs and arms stockpiles saved Iran from disaster during the war with Iraq and that a major buildup was needed to match that of the Iraqis.*

The Iran-Iraq war has reduced substantially the ability of Iran and Iraq to play a major military role against Israel. Even if the war ends soon, both countries will face logistic and political constraints and the continuing need to orient their defenses against each other. Combined with Egypt's withdrawal from the Arab military front against Israel as a result of the Camp David agreement, the war between Iran and Iraq leaves Syria as Israel's most likely military opponent and Tel Aviv has the clear military advantage.

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*An early signal that such an arms buildup was under way would be Tehran's desire to acquire large quantities of armor and combat aircraft from any source willing to sell. The regular military, in general, still prefers US and Western equipment, particularly fighter aircraft, while Revolutionary Guard units are generally equipped with Soviet-style equipment. A military regime in Tehran probably would attempt to reestablish prerevolution arms relationships with the West.*



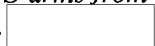
**Iraq**

Before the Iran-Iraq war, the US Intelligence Community estimated that Iraq could send approximately five divisions with some 85,000 troops, 1,800 tanks, and 140 fighter aircraft to fight the Israelis.<sup>12</sup> This would have been the largest expeditionary force contributed by any of the Arab states not directly on the Arab-Israeli frontlines. The war with Iran, however, has drastically reduced Iraq's ability and willingness to involve itself in a conflict with Israel.

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*A major Iranian military expansion would send shock waves through Iraq and the Arab Gulf states. It would spur Iraq into even greater efforts to expand its military capability, and an arms race would ensue similar to the one in the late 1970s. Moreover, Iraqi and Iranian acquisitions probably would generate additional requests for US arms from an alarmed Saudi Arabia and Israel.*



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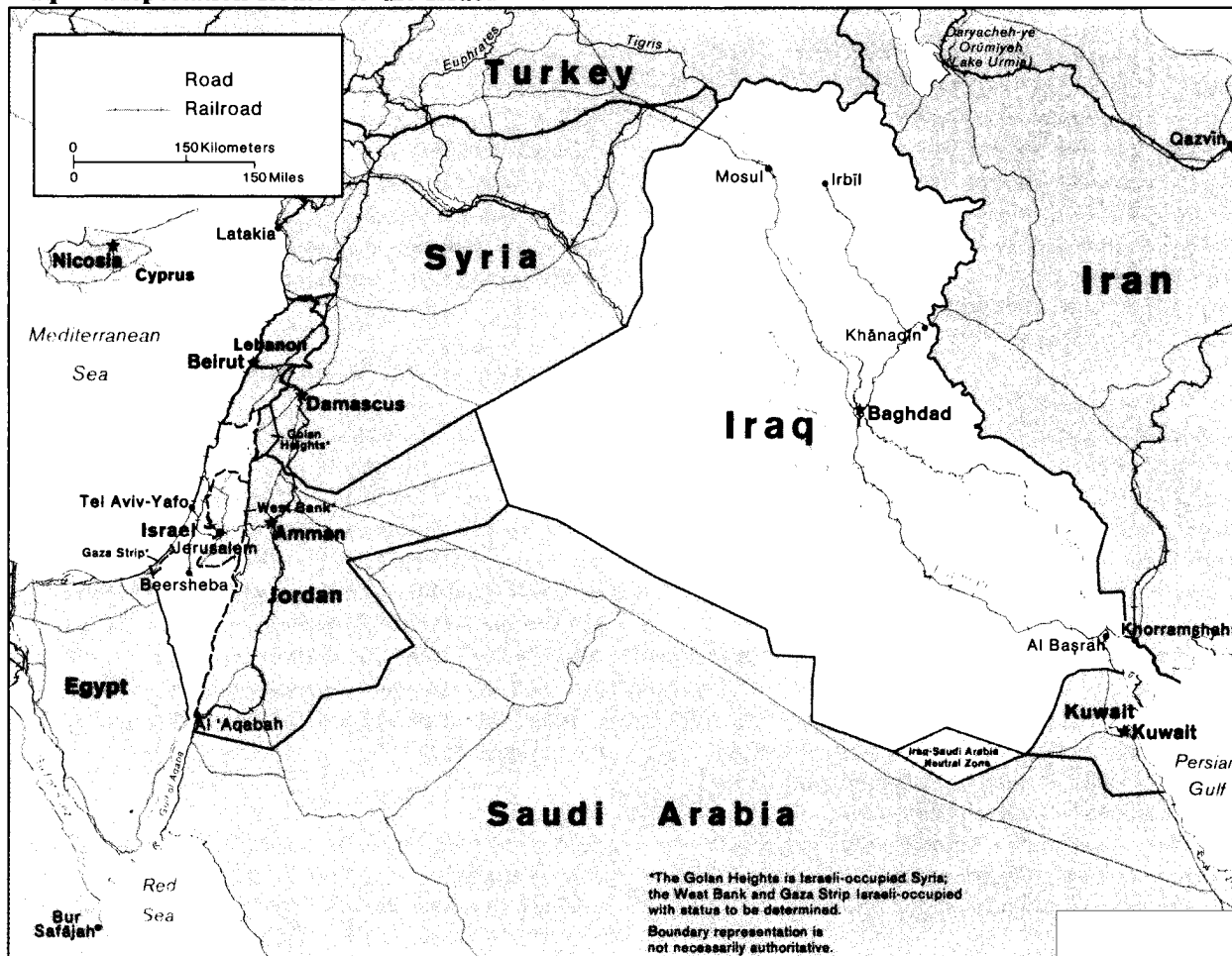


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Figure 16  
Iraqi Transportation Routes to the Israeli Front



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We believe that several limitations on potential Iraqi support for Syria will continue to apply as long as the present regimes rule in Damascus and Baghdad. Given the current Iranian threat, Baghdad will be even less willing to send troops to Syria than in 1981 when Iraqi troops held considerable portions of Iranian territory. Moreover, Syria has deepened its support for Iran by serving as a conduit for foreign arms and by closing off the Iraqi oil pipeline across Syria, depriving Baghdad of an important means to export oil. In our judgment, Saddam Husayn's hatred of Damascus runs so deep that Iraq will be reluctant to offer serious help to Syria under any circumstances. If Baghdad foresees an impending total Israeli military victory over Assad, it might dispatch a token force—possibly only a few squadrons of fighter aircraft. In

any event, the Syrians, fearing Iraqi subversion, might not agree to accept Iraqi troops except as a last resort in the face of a major defeat.

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In our judgment, the only factor that might persuade Iraq to pull significant ground forces from the Iranian front would be an Israeli military confrontation with Jordan. Throughout the war the Jordanians have provided political support to Iraq, helped it acquire arms, and have agreed in principle to the construction of an oil pipeline from Iraq through Jordan. Even in such circumstances, however, we would expect Iraq to

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offer no more than one or two divisions and up to three squadrons of fighter aircraft. In contrast, if the war with Iran were over and a political settlement had been reached, Iraq would probably offer significant forces to help Jordan defend itself. Freed from a direct Iranian threat, Baghdad might furnish a larger force than we estimated it could send prior to the war with Iran.

Limited road links and political restraints on Jordan's part, however, will restrict the size of an Iraqi expeditionary force. Unlike Syria, which has one rail and two major road links with Iraq, there is only one road connection with Jordan.

[redacted] it passes through lava beds on the Jordanian side of the border, limiting off-road mobility. Iraq probably could move a maximum of only three or four armored or mechanized divisions—about 45,000 troops and 1,000 tanks—along this route in a week.

Moreover, Iraqi forces sent to Jordan or Syria in a future Arab-Israeli war would be vulnerable to Israeli air interdiction. Jordan's air defenses are thinner than Syria's, and Iraqi units crossing Jordan would be particularly vulnerable. Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have had difficulty coordinating air defense operations and are unlikely to provide the kind of intensive air defense network that might deter Israeli activity.



The performance of Iraqi ground forces in the war with Iran suggests that they would be vulnerable to the type of fast-moving, combined-arms operations the Israelis demonstrated in Lebanon in 1982. The Iraqis prefer set-piece defensive battles and, in the case of their war with Iran, often have been saved from disaster only by the slow advance of Iran's forces which allowed the Iraqis time to regroup. Baghdad's forces are likely to enjoy few such advantages against the Israelis.

There are, however, at least two weapons Iraq possesses that could pose serious problems for the Israelis in a future war—surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons. Baghdad could use surface-to-surface missiles against Israeli civilian targets, although the threat of Israeli retaliation might restrain the Iraqis. Iraq's FROG and Scud missiles cannot

reach Israel from Iraq, moreover, and Jordan or Syria probably would not allow Iraq to launch missile attacks on Israeli civilian targets from their territory for fear of an Israeli military response. The chances of such attacks would increase greatly if Baghdad acquires missiles that can reach Israeli targets from Iraq such as the Scaleboard.

The Iraqis have conducted over 50 attacks with surface-to-surface missiles against Iranian targets, mainly cities, during the war. During the fall of 1983, Iraqi Scud missile attacks on three Iranian cities resulted in over 500 civilians killed and more than 2,000 seriously wounded in a single week, according to Iranian press reports. Given the population densities of Israel's major cities, significant civilian casualties could be expected from missile attacks, and Arab civilians probably would suffer during Israeli retaliatory strikes. Heavy civilian casualties on both sides might well stiffen the negotiating posture of Tel Aviv and its Arab opponents in any peace talks.

As indicated previously, Iraq will have a variety of chemical weapons available for military operations by the end of this decade. Until now, the Israelis, Egyptians, and Syrians, who also have chemical and nerve agents, have not used them for fear of retaliation. The restraint exhibited by these states probably would erode if the Iraqis begin using chemical or nerve agents against the Israelis.

**Iran**

In our judgment, Iran could play a significant role in an Arab-Israeli war only if a pro-Iranian regime came to power in Baghdad. Such a government probably would agree to the free passage of Iranian forces as well as the pre-positioning of Iranian troops on Iraqi soil. This would considerably reduce their transit time to the Arab-Israeli battlefields, but they still probably would not arrive soon enough to play a major role in the fighting.

As long as its war with the present regime in Iraq lasts, however, Iran's ability to dispatch forces against Israel will be severely constrained. Iran probably could spare a few brigades of lightly armed infantry for the Israeli front, but the timeliness of their arrival would depend on suitable transport arrangements.

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The most direct land and air routes to areas near Israel pass through Iraq or Turkey. Turkey might approve unpublicized overflights, but Iranian troops almost certainly would have no tanks or artillery and little air support. The fanaticism of Iran's irregulars might prove to be a disadvantage against the well-disciplined Israelis, and in any event we believe an Iranian force would be too small to be more than a minor irritant. [Redacted]

bulk of Riyadh's Air Force, would suffer heavy losses to Iraqi fighters and air defenses. This would leave the Saudis with too few aircraft to mount a major interdiction campaign against advancing Iraqi ground forces. [Redacted]

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On the other hand, Iraqi capabilities would be much more limited in the event of a confrontation with Jordan or Syria. Both the Syrians and Jordanians have substantial ground and air forces and could force a halt to Iraqi advances. The likely result, in our judgment, would be a draw. [Redacted]

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**Capabilities Against Other Middle Eastern States**

The war between Iran and Iraq provides a standard to gauge the potential effectiveness of their armed forces against other regional opponents. Iraq has drawn close to the moderate Arab states led by Saudi Arabia, and we expect that relationship to continue after the war to balance a potentially hostile Iran and Syria. This assumes that the present or a similar regime survives in Baghdad. [Redacted]

**Iran**

The war has demonstrated Iran's distinct geographic advantage in the Gulf. Iran's 1,500 kilometers of Gulf coast and its numerous air and naval bases allow Tehran to operate the length of the Gulf, a capability unmatched by any other Gulf state. The US Intelligence Community judges that the Gulf states cannot prevent the Iranians from launching commando or terrorist raids, air attacks, or naval strikes and cannot stop Iran from blockading or mining the Gulf. Moreover, we anticipate that, once the war ends, Tehran will want to enhance its capability in the Gulf as a guarantee that its concerns are not ignored by either the moderate Arab Gulf states or the West. [Redacted]

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**Iraq**

If, however, Iraq should decide to move against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, the fighting with Iran has demonstrated that Baghdad's forces can inflict considerable damage. Neither the current Kuwaiti Army nor the two to three brigades—5,000 to 10,000 combat troops—the Saudis plan to station at King Khalid Military City in northeastern Saudi Arabia could withstand an Iraqi assault. Kuwaiti and Saudi chances of mounting a successful defense would rest on the effective use of their airpower. In our judgment, Kuwait will not possess a viable deterrent for at least the rest of the decade. [Redacted]

Iran's ability to disrupt shipping in the Gulf could be offset by the completion of various oil pipelines currently under consideration in the Gulf states. Iraq and Saudi Arabia have agreed in principle to link their pipeline networks, which would permit Iraq to export oil from the Red Sea. In our judgment, however, the Saudis are concerned about potential problems with the volatile Iraqi regime and will indefinitely delay construction. Baghdad and Jordan have agreed in principle on the construction of a pipeline through Jordan, but Iraq is concerned about its vulnerability to Israeli disruption. The Gulf states have discussed pumping oil through Oman, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, but no substantial progress has been made in planning this costly project. [Redacted]

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The Saudi Air Force, however, would be in a better position to defend itself. Iraqi combat aircraft can attack targets as far away as Riyadh and Dhahran, but the poor performance of Iraqi pilots against Iran suggests that such attacks would not inflict heavy damage on Saudi airbases, oil installations, or Saudi aircraft on the ground. Nevertheless, the Iraqis have the advantage of combat experience and have more planes, and this will offset the fact that Saudi Arabia's F-15s are more advanced than any aircraft the Iraqis are likely to receive in this decade. Moreover, while the Saudi F-15s probably would hold their own against Iraqis in air-to-air combat, Saudi F-5s, the

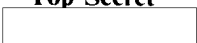
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The war has demonstrated that Iran has no significant military capability outside the Gulf area. Tehran's forces have had little success inside Iraq, and, in our judgment, could not pose a significant threat to Turkey or Pakistan, even after the war with Iraq. The Iranians can make things more difficult for the Soviets in Afghanistan, but through subversion, not conventional military force. We believe the major reason the Iranians have been relatively circumspect in their support for the Afghan rebels has been the poor state of Iran's defenses along the border with Afghanistan and Iran's preoccupation with the Iraqis. Iran has no major ground or air combat units stationed in the east. When the war with Iraq ends, however, we expect at least one infantry division and one armored division will be returned to bases near Afghanistan.

**Lessons Applicable to Soviet or US Military Intervention**

The performance of Iranian forces during the hostilities provides some clues about problems that Soviet or US armed forces might encounter should they become involved militarily in the Persian Gulf, particularly Iran.<sup>14</sup> We anticipate that any invading force during this decade would face strong resistance from Iranian defenders; a small expeditionary force of fewer than 20,000 men could face serious difficulties. The Iranian Air Force could be a threat to shipping and would harass ground troops. The tactics used by the two sides during the war suggest that an invader will have to fight in all kinds of terrain and weather conditions. On the other hand, Iranian units would be vulnerable to fast-moving offensive operations mounted by invading forces.

During an invasion Tehran could muster as many as 1 million troops if reservists, irregulars, and paramilitary forces were included. Iran also has demonstrated the ability to control about 150,000 troops in a set-piece attack. This suggests that an invasion force would have to rely heavily on superior firepower and combat intelligence to offset its numerical disadvantage.



Iran has experienced logistic problems throughout the war and probably would require weeks to move significant forces to face either the USSR or United States, although several thousand local militia are likely to be immediately available. Iran currently has only a few thousand regulars and Revolutionary Guard troops near the Soviet and Afghanistan borders.

**Fanaticism**

The large number of Iranian irregulars are strongly motivated by religious fanaticism and would play an important role should the Soviets launch a full-scale invasion or the United States intervene on Iran's Gulf coast. To reach Tehran, Soviet forces must pass through or near several major cities, including Tabriz, Zanjan, Rasht, and Qazvin. Several of these are near major Iranian military bases that presumably are well stocked with small arms, ammunition, and rocket-propelled grenades with which to arm civilians. Moscow's forces probably would find their advance delayed by having to fight their way through every major built-up area on their axis of advance.

Once in Tehran, Soviet troops would be confronted with seizing, or trying to reduce to submission, a city of over 6 million people—a half million of whom could be armed on short notice if Iranian press reports are correct—that covers over 150 square kilometers. Even if Tehran were occupied, the Iranians could conduct a guerrilla war against the Soviets for months.

A US invasion force might face a somewhat less difficult time, at least initially. The cities on Iran's Persian Gulf coast are smaller and more isolated than those in northern Iran along the Soviets' line of advance. Once US forces dug in, however, they would face increasingly large ground attacks by Iranian forces. If US units began to move into the Iranian interior, they would encounter many of the same problems as the Soviets.

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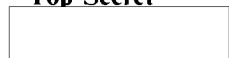
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**Equipment**

In our view, the lack of major combat equipment would seriously hamper Iranian efforts to resist a superpower invasion. Even if Tehran completed most, if not all, of our projected increases in military equipment purchases, the Iranians would be at a significant firepower disadvantage. Moreover, if Soviet or US intervention occurred during or soon after the war, we believe Tehran would require at least several weeks to reposition its armor and artillery, most of which is stationed along the Iraqi front. In any case, Iran probably would rely on its infantry forces, which would be significantly outgunned by a sizable superpower contingent. [Redacted]

The Iranians generally have directed their attacks at the Iraqis' flanks and supply lines and are likely to use a similar strategy against Soviet or US expeditionary forces. [Redacted]

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They also have acquired considerable experience in guerrilla operations in their campaigns against the Kurds. Moreover, Soviet or US rear headquarters, depots, and barracks almost certainly would be subject to car/truck bomb attacks or other terrorist assaults, particularly if located in Iranian towns or cities. [Redacted]

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Iraqi troop behavior in various combat situations during the current war suggests that Baghdad could mount a stubborn defense against a limited attack by either superpower. [Redacted]

Finally, the Iranians would make extensive use of combat and civilian engineers to create or enhance obstacles in the path of an invading army. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] under the Shah, the Iranian Army had targeted key bridges and tunnels along likely Soviet avenues of advance for demolition. We also anticipate that Iranian troops will destroy electric generating facilities and water plants in builtup areas. Statements by Iranian leaders that an exercise in late 1983 involved the transporting of troops to the possible invasion routes of the superpowers to "familiarize them with the areas" suggest Iran is beginning to examine possible defensive positions and ways they might be strengthened. [Redacted]

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Iraqi forces are better equipped than the Iranians, and Iraq can rapidly reposition a large portion of its frontline forces, plus additional armor and artillery normally held in reserve in the Baghdad area. If an invasion occurred almost immediately after the end of hostilities with Iran, we believe the Iraqis could concentrate some 1,500 tanks and 750 artillery pieces against an invading force near Al Basrah within a week of an attack.<sup>15</sup> Such an Iraqi force would inflict serious casualties and possibly defeat a small expeditionary force, even if the Iraqis merely dug in and fired artillery at their opponents. Moreover, the Iraqis probably would use surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons. [Redacted]

The Iraqis, on the other hand, are likely to be more cautious in their tactics. Aside from the early weeks of the war, Baghdad's forces have been on the defensive for over three years. In our judgment, therefore, Iraqi commanders would prefer to dig in, occupy defensive positions, and shell the enemy. The Iraqis have demonstrated good capability to construct extensive fortifications. Based on their activities in the war, the Iraqis, like the Iranians, will try where feasible to flood enemy positions. [Redacted]

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**Tactics**

Events during the Iran-Iraq war suggest that the Iranians almost always attack at night or during poor weather. They also have launched major offensives in the mountains during the winter and in desert areas during the summer. As a result, Soviet and US forces in Iran would need to anticipate strong Iranian action regardless of weather and terrain. [Redacted]

The favorite battle tactic of Iraqi commanders as demonstrated in most of their victories is to withdraw, drawing their opponent into a three-sided trap. The Iraqis frequently have used water barriers—rivers or lakes—as one side of their trap. We doubt that Baghdad's forces will initiate night attacks. [Redacted]

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**Air Force**

A major Iranian weakness is its lack of airpower. The Air Force does not provide ground support for Iranian offensives and is hard pressed even to provide air cover for strategic targets in the interior of Iran. Moreover, the Iranians do not have a credible defense against a major air attack. Once the war ends, Iran could refurbish and slightly increase the size of its Air Force but still could not defend against either Soviet or US airpower. 

naval and air forces could harass a foreign fleet. Iran is seeking additional combatants and new antiship and surface-to-air missiles that would require an invading force to pay a much heavier price before gaining control of the Persian Gulf. 

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Iraq's difficulty, on the other hand, is its inability or unwillingness to employ effectively the airpower that it already has. With 19 major airfields being expanded, 21 airfields under construction, and almost 500 combat aircraft in Iraq's growing inventory, an expeditionary force could knock out the Iraqi Air Force only after destroying several airbases and scores of fighter-bombers. An expeditionary force with only limited air support, although vulnerable to air attacks, might be spared by Iraq's conservative employment of airpower. After the war, Iraq's Air Force probably will grow larger and more difficult to knock out as new bases are occupied and additional air defense weapons deployed. 

Iraq also will develop a greatly increased capability to strike at targets as far south as Khark Island and Bushehr during the next few years. We anticipate Iraq will have at least one operational squadron of Mirage F1 fighter aircraft armed with Exocet anti-ship missiles this year.  these aircraft can be refueled by tanker aircraft, allowing them to attack targets throughout the Persian Gulf. After Iraq's Italian-built frigates and corvettes arrive during the next few years, Iraq will, for the first time, have the basis of a surface force that eventually could operate throughout the Gulf. 


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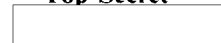
**Naval Operations**

With existing equipment inventories, both the Iranian and Iraqi Navies would be quickly neutralized in a confrontation with the superpowers. Most major Iranian naval combatants are stationed at Bandar Abbas, providing a concentrated target. Moreover, many weapons and electronic systems on Iranian ships are not operational, according to Iranian defectors, increasing their vulnerability. Iran still keeps Iraq's missile boats bottled up at Umm Qasr. 

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Once the war is over, however, assuming both Iran and Iraq refurbish and modernize their fleets, a superpower intervention force in the Gulf could face more serious problems. The Iranians may already have as many as 300 North Korean naval mines and probably will acquire more, as well as antiship missiles. These mines could briefly delay a naval intervention until mine surveying operations were completed—a period of several days. Subsequently, Iranian

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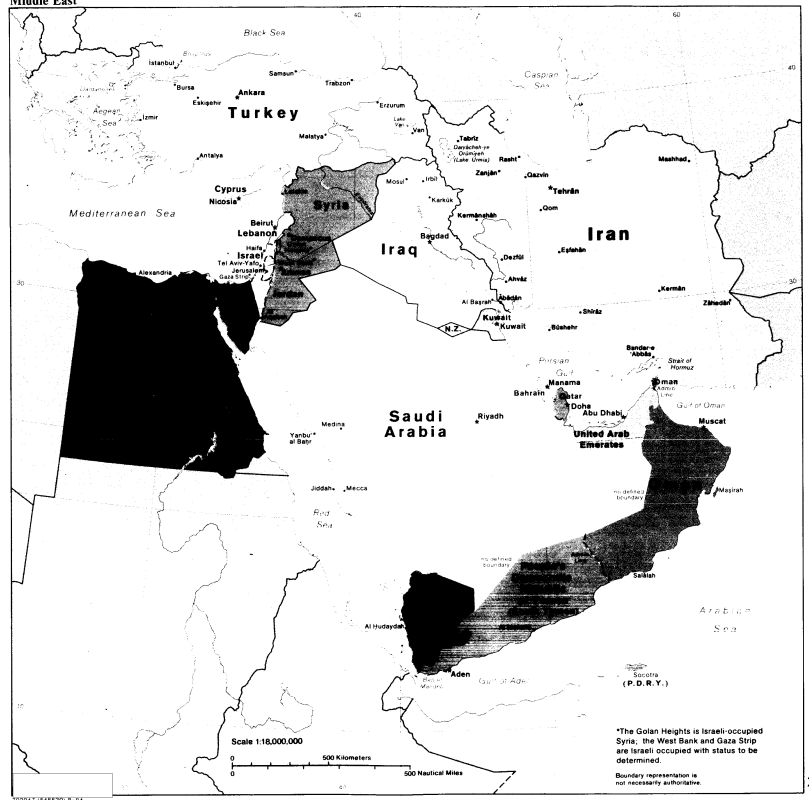


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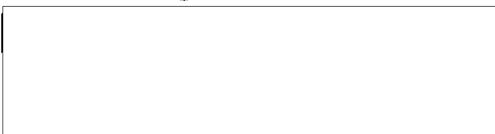
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