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Director of
Central
Intelligence

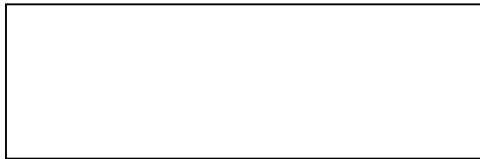
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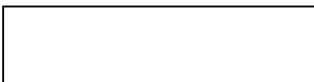
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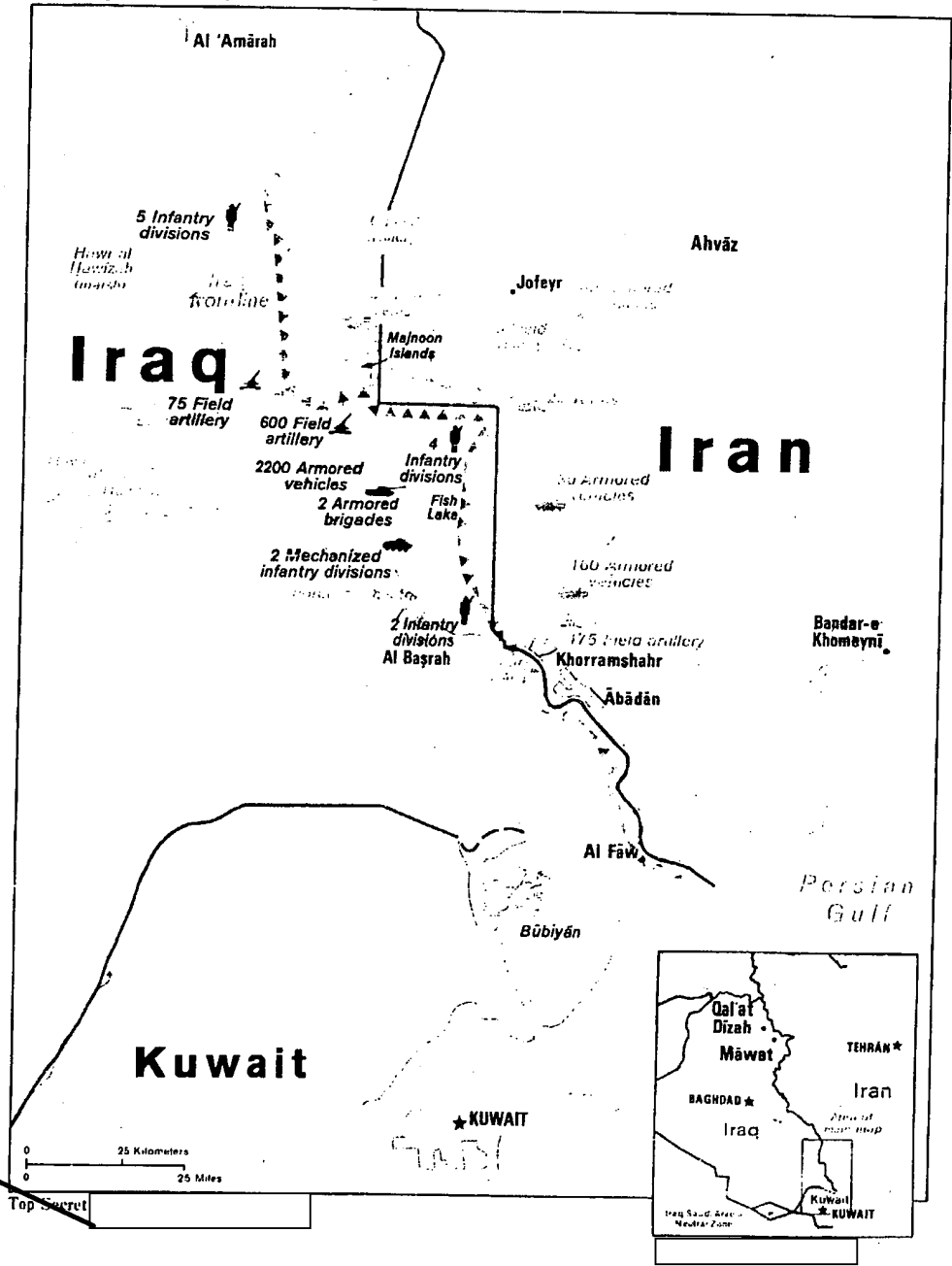
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Military Situation, 17 June 1988



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IRAN-IRAQ:

Iraq Improving Offensive Position

Iraqi forces continue to build in the Hawr al Hawizah marsh area and to the south. [redacted]

Iraqi armored units have moved from positions east of Al Basrah to the "step" area south of the Majnoon Islands, [redacted] [redacted] They had been deployed in the Fish Lake area to counter an Iranian attack there this week. Iraqi artillery units south of the marsh have been increased significantly, and Iraqi forces in the step area now include 2,200 tanks and armored personnel carriers, 600 artillery pieces, engineer and chemical defense troops, and a tactical rocket brigade. [redacted]

Iran has only 60 functioning tanks and APCs opposite the step area and 70 artillery pieces near North Majnoon Island. Most of its forces—160 tanks and APCs and 175 artillery pieces—are opposite Fish Lake. [redacted]

In the north, Iraqi forces continue to gain ground in the Mawat and Qalat Dizah areas. [redacted]

Comment: The concentration of armor in the marsh area is the largest since the battle of Kursk in 1943 between German and Soviet armies. Iraq can launch an offensive at any time; Iranian forces are in a poor position to defend against an attack out of the step area, particularly if Iraq, as in recent battles, uses extensive artillery and chemical bombardment. The Iraqi attack in the north is probably a diversion, although Baghdad presumably will exploit any opportunities there. [redacted]

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