And firing the first Phoenix missile in Iran's sky

Amir Brigadier Pilot Mohammad Reza Ataei, in his memoirs, says:

... I'll get back a bit. After revolution some said that the F-14 is an expensive aircraft, and we do not need it, and we have to sell it, so they completely cut off the flights of this strategic aircraft, and we only were three or four pilots who had a sortie flight per week, the rest of us all landed.

To keep the pilots busy, we would tell all of them to go to the classroom. I said at the time I was a battalion commander, we sent the fellow pilots every two months on a 10 t0 15 days’ vacation, having finished the classes. And again when they were back I would ask them to attend the classroom.

The fellow pilots were completely up-to-date on the data, but did not fly, and it was about a year and a half that the pilots did not fly. It was about two months before the outbreak of war that some clashes occurred in the borderline and we thought of preparing the F-14 fighter as soon as possible. We checked each single pilot with the coordination of the Chief of Staff and send them to the war zones.

At first we did not have a war experience at all. However, we began Combat Air Patrols in different regions.

In one of the missions, two F-4s launched to carry out on the frontier mission were to be covered by two F-14s, one of which was piloted by me and Pashapur was in the rear cabin. Amir Shahram Rostami was also on another aircraft.

The F-4s completed the mission and returned. We were on the way back when the radar announced that an aircraft was approaching our aircraft, and if we were ready for the conflict? I was the leader, I checked and there was enough gasoline, so announce our readiness. I said: “we will fight and then land in Dezful, and then the radar declared readiness.

Mr. Rostami, who was piloting the second aircraft, said that his aircraft gasoline was not in a very good condition. I told him you land, and I'll get involved. We found the target in our radar and it was moving towards us. We cut the speed so we can hit it inside our own soil. At the same time, two other aircrafts took off from the Kut Airbase, which we also observed at the aircraft radar.

Radar has announced that two other aircrafts took off on the runway to help the first aircraft and are flying towards you. I said again, we'll get involved in the fight. As they crossed the border and we flew towards them, the other two aircrafts also took off from Kut Airbase to help them (now they were five enemy aircrafts).

We had reduced the speed to give them more time to get into our soil. When we started to intercept, we had twenty-seven or twenty- eight miles away, but the aircrafts came to the borderline and returned.

We could easily hit the target even before, but according to the command, we waited them to get inside our soil.

Having returned the Iraqi aircrafts, I flew back to Isfahan. as I was flying to Isfahan, the radar informed me that there were four aircraft s chasing you, and since I flew a lot in Dezful and many times I flew inside Iraqi territory on educational flight and no aircrafts had dared to take off, on the same basis, I flew a bit further and thought they would return, the radar announced, there are still four chasing you.

I figured they should now be in our territory. I quickly told Pashapur to find them on the radar to align our direction with them, but the four aircrafts turned back.

I checked the gasoline and there was little, I asked the radar to coordinate with Dezful for landing there. As I was going down to Dezful, the radar said one an aircraft is approaching from behind, as I quickly returned that this one was not among those fours and probably they had planned to catch us.

I looked at the radar, and I saw a very low altitude flying aircraft. Perhaps they also told it to return, but he had not heard due to low altitude flight, and came forward, we approached it.

The F-14's radar automatically announced the appropriate time for firing, as it has signs. In short, we arrived at the time when the missile was firing, and I said to Pashapur: Mr. Pashapur, fire. He also complimented and said: “you fire”.

Image 10-1 Major Mohammad Reza Ataei: The first pilot who succeeded in overthrowing an Iraqi Air Force aircraft on September 10, 1980 during an attack on Mimak with a Phoenix rocket.

So I pressed the release button and rocket launcher from the cabin! Until then, nobody had shot the Phoenix in the real battleground[[1]](#footnote-1). Even the manufacturer of this semi-strategic intercept aircraft country (The US) itself; we pressed the button anyway.

To cut it short, we fired (I shot), I thought that the rocket dropped down, so I drove the aircraft and saw the smoke of rocket firing. Until then, I had not fired Phoenix, and nobody else had practical experience in the battlefield. After the rocket launches, the display screen inside the front and rear cabin of the F-14, it shows that the rocket will hit the target in a few seconds. The screen read five seconds and started counting down to four, three, two, one, and zero, and the target disappeared from the radar screen.

And we were waiting for the rocket to launch immediately. We saw something fell below the aircraft. I did not remember how to shoot Phoenix at that time. Having been launched, the Phoenix first cut off from its base on the aircraft and fells down, then its engine starts and moves to the target.

Usually we carried two Phoenix rockets. After the rocket launches, it begins to soar and, given the speed and altitude of the aircraft, the computer itself will tell the missile how much to soar and you see it easily in front of the aircraft, then it drops at high speed and usually the pilot no longer sees it.

The target being disappeared from the radar screen means that the rocket had hit the target, and also the radar informed: hit the target and confirmed it. Later, however, they said that he had fainted from the emotion he had.

Because there was no longer an opportunity and there was little gasoline, I quickly turned to Dezful and kept telling the radar to tell Dezful that the F-14 would come up to land in and tell the defenses comrades not fire on us because the situation was red, I repeated this quite frequently that radar said I swear to the Prophet that everyone is being informed. Finally we landed in Dezful and then, Mr.Yazdanshenas was the deputy of operations of the Airbase, and the fellow comrades approached our aircraft and carried pilots on hands and left to flying battalions.

In the afternoon, the Dezful Airbase fellow comrades were operating. I told Major Yazdanshenas, "This has happened and it is likely that the Iraqis will attack the base, be cautious," said Major Yazdanshenas. "If I permitted, I will destroy all Iraqi soil."

In the afternoon, the F-5 fellow comrades wanted to do the operation, they told me: "Are you flying as our top cover (air cover)?

I said, "In coordination with the IRIAF headquarters in Tehran, I will".

The IRIAF headquarters in Tehran did not agree and said that Ataei should be stationed in Dezful, we will fly "F-14" from Esfahan to top cover. That is all what went on! ....

Amir Brigadier, Farajullah Bartupour, Deputy Chief of Operations of Third Airbase

Here is a brief note of the memoirs of the aforementioned Amir referred to as "Heroes, Commanders of the Defense Air Battles, including the Leader of attack on “H-3”[[2]](#footnote-2), on the events before the start of the Iraqi full-scale invasion as follows:

"When the Iraq invaded our country on September 17, we were in a full readiness in the Air Force, and at that time I was responsible for the operational and logistical deputy of the Hamedan base (Shahid Nojeh), according to the forecast and the information of the past (were collecting data for about two months, perhaps three months, we collected different data, and the data increased on a daily basis on that Iraq builds trenches and settles forces. ...) and we had this information, and according to this information, our aircrafts were fully prepared from August 23, 1980 and we predicted that Iraq could raid at any moment. There were Air combat between us and the Iraqi aircrafts since August 23, 1980 and I remember that on September 8, 1980 one of our aircrafts was shot on Khosravi border by Iraqi anti-aircraft rockets and the rear cabin pilot was martyred[[3]](#footnote-3).

On September 15, 1980 Iraqi troops attacked Iran territory between the " Tangab Naw and Tangab Kohneh" from Qasr-e-shirin to "the city of Naftshahr and the Sumar"; there were heights that dominated the road, and the Iraqis seized there, while dominating the region, the road was closed by Iraqi forces and our forces could not move.

That day, given that the martyr Falahi, the martyr Fakori, the martyr Kolahdooz and the late Zahir Nejad were in the garrison of Sarpol Zahab. They asked me to go there. The martyr Fakori called me and I was in Hamedan, so I went there, they told me that they came and took this part and said:

“We want your aircrafts to come and bombard here”.

Given that I returned back from "Sarpul Zahab" at 4 o'clock, however, I arrived at the base and we took off six aircrafts on about 5:30 PM to 6 PM and bombe there with a variety of ammunition[[4]](#footnote-4).

Image 11-1 Maj. Farajollah Bartupour, Deputy Commander of the Third Airbase Shahid Nogheh (Hamadan), leader of the attack on "H-3" and of the prominent Heroes of the Sacred Defense

**3- An overview of attacks on Iran by Iraqi Ba'ath and other countries armies**

Here we first discuss the foreign countries armies attacks on Iran sky, which is considered as a sign of their suspicious movements during the Islamic Revolution to the outbreak of imposed war in Tables 3.1 and 4.1, and then the raids of the Ba'ath regime's army in Table 5 .1, and, finally, the Iraqi invasions are displayed in 3.1 and4.1 figures to bring the minds of the readers.

1. **Foreign countries attacks**

Table 3.1. Afghanistan Air Raids to the Islamic Republic of Iran

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Region | How to cross borders | Comments |
| 10/11/1358 | Modares checkpoint | About four kilometers to attack in Iran | - |
| 20/12/1358 | Between the border bars 61and 62 | A dual-engine aircraft with two red circles in the body returned to Afghanistan after two minutes of flight over the 64th bar. | Gazik checkpoint border guards report |
| 20/12/1358 | Between the border bars 60 and 61 | A gray dual-engine aircraft returned to Afghanistan after two minutes of flight at a height of 1500 feet from the border between the 64 and 65 border bars.. | Gazik checkpoint border guards report |
| 10/1/1359 | Between the border bars | A jet of Afghani entered the 2nd border bar and flew to Do Ab region, followed by a blast from inside Afghanistan. | The type of explosion and its cause were not determined |

Nevertheless, the Iraqi Army attacked Iranian borders for 637 times before its full-scale attack, 130 of airstrikes, 17 marine raids and 90 ground attacks[[5]](#footnote-5).

1. Table 4.1: Border air strikes and illuminated objects registered from February 12, 1979 to September 22, 1980

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General Iraqi Airstrikes | The US Airstrikes | The Soviet Union Airstrikes | Afghanistan  Airstrikes | Illuminating objects | Unidentified Aircrafts |
| 717 | 71 | 83 | 34 | 102 | 17 |

In order to clarify the minds of enthusiasts and researchers, the Iraqi air raids from March 21, 1979 to the end of September 22, 1980 are presented in the following Tables and Figure on a monthly basis, along with general air strikes, marine raids and ground attacks[[6]](#footnote-6).

In general Figures, blue (gray) represents ground attacks, and red (dark) represents Air strikes and white represents marine cases.

Table 5 - 1 Recorded Violations of Iraqi Ba'athist Army before the outbreak of Imposed War on Iran

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time period | The number of strikes |
| From  March 21, 1979 to June 21, 1979 | 14 |
| From June 22, 1979 to September 22, 1979 | 11 |
| From September 23, 1979 to December 21, 1979 | 26 |
| From December 22, 1979 to March 19, 1980 | 23 |
| From March 21, 1980 to June 21, 1980 | 143 |
| From June 22, 1980 to September 22, 1980 | 420 |

The above information and statistics also confirm the fact that the closer to the time of the full-scale Iraqi invasion, the Iraqi attacks are more intense and extensive.

**B- The Enemy Attacks Figure**

The enemy Air, Ground and Marine attacks including the Iraqi Ba'ath army attacks were shown in Figures 1.3 to 1.5 on monthly basis from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1980.

Figure 1.3 Iraqi Airstrikes from March 21, 1980 to September 22, 1979

Figure 1.4 the overall trend of the Iraqi Army's dispersed raids into the borders of the Iran during March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1979

Diagram 4-1 (Ground attacks: light and long; Airstrikes: dark; and Marine raids: white and short)

Diagram 1.5 the overall trend of the Iraqi Army's dispersed raids into the borders of the Iran during March 21, 1980 to September 22, 1980

(Ground attacks: light and long; Airstrikes: dark; and Marine raids: white and short)

By comparing Figures 1.4 and 1.5 with regard to the Iraqi Army's dispersed attacks from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1980, it is concluded that these raids were much more intense and more frequent from 1980, indicating the increased support of the great powers and Arab rulers from Saddam (especially from June 22, 1980 to September 22, 1980); consequently, the Iraqi army, given the diplomatic moves of the country has had more freedom to carry out its offensive plans.

In order to provide a clear understanding of the depth of the enemy's raids, the Air, Ground and Marine attacks of ​​Iraq, border violations from March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1980 are shown in Figure 1.6, as well as the dispersal attacks of the Iraqi army from March 21, 1980 to September 22, 1980 is shown in Figure 1.7.

Figure 1.6. The Air, Ground and Marine attacks by the Iraqi Army against the land, air and sea borders of the IRI from March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1980

Figure 1.7: The trend of Iraqi Army attacks from December 22, 1979 to September 22, 1980

Looking at the above diagrams, we can see the growth of the raging raids of the Iraqi Ba'ath army from March 21, 1980 to June 21, 1980 to September 22, 1980

Notably, it is the increase in the number of Iraqi air strikes during May 22, 1980 to June 21, 1980, which is increasing more than during March 21, 1980 to April 20, 1980, and the ascending increase during August 23, 1980 to September 22, 1980, which is significantly higher than in June 22, 1980 to August 22, 1980.

In those days, the newly formed unit of the "Electronic Information and Reconnaissance Command", which was responsible for monitoring the electromagnetic spectrum of peripheral countries, was able to obtain valuable information about the purposes of the Ba'ath army forces and the intentions of its commanders[[7]](#footnote-7). According to the information received from the unit, the Iraqi Air Force had been in combat readiness since March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1980 , and the general plan for military operations was likely to attack the airspace and land of the Islamic Republic of Iran (this probability took more definitive form during March 20, 1980 to March 19, 1981). Iraq also focused on its Air Force flight operations, and its radar systems have been seriously involved in conducting Iraqi air strikes in long-range bombing, intercepting and targeting. On the other hand, the data contained in the Alborz intelligence appendix indicated that the Iraqi Air Force, one year before the onset of the imposed war, had moved and expanded the MiG-23 from Al-Walid's base in the west to the eastern and border regions of Iran.

1. The expansion of the aircrafts to eastern bases was the evidence of an unexpected event that could be meaningful to the air force from a military point. The operation of this fighter, along with a variety of ground-based radar systems, has led to the creation of a protective loop on the border of Iraq. Hearing radio conversations from the enemy's commanders at the brigade-to-top levels also represents a predictable event and, in fact, was the beginning of a coordinated, heavy, and all-out strike. Factors such as the development of airborne aircrafts at all air bases (with the number of nearly 600 aircrafts and more than 160 helicopters), the deployment of missile defense units and anti-aircraft Artillery in all four vulnerable defense zones[[8]](#footnote-8) with a capacity of near 30 radar warning stations and more than 116 advanced tactical radar systems in 28 bases and focal regions and more importantly, a systematic program for training technical and flight personnel were among the undoubted reasons that led to the analysis by “Electronic Information and Reconnaissance Command” on the upcoming attack on Iranian soil.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The plan of missions before the imposed war

At the end of this chapter, a schedule of operational actions, missions and numbers of flying sorties of combat missions, Combat Air Patrols, and educational flights carried out from the first day of the Islamic revolution victory to the outbreak of the imposed war from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1980, divided into two sections of the fighter aircrafts and transport aircraft, is as follows:

**A) The number of the IRIAF fighter aircrafts missions**

1. The missions of the various types of fighters at the various the IRIAF Airbases, including combat and training, from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1980, has been the number of 13112 flying sorties or was estimated as follows:
2. From the first day of the Islamic Revolution victory up to the first day of the imposed war (from February 12, 1979 to September 22, 1980), the number of 1805 flying sorties or combat flights by types of fighter aircraft has already been recorded in the documents of daily events of command center of the IRIAF, all are listed in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 Types of missions and fighter aircraft flights from the victory of the Islamic Revolution to the onset of the war.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Close air support | Visual Reconnaissance | Air Cover | Low altitude high speed flight |
| 967 sorties | 194 sorties | 146 sorties | 61 sorties |
| Air cover or Combat Air Patrol | Air support at the request of the Revolutionary Guards | Night patrol flight | Scramble |
| 62 | 10 | 42 | 188 |
| Escort flight | Expansion flight | Solidarity flight and air parade | Special flight + photography |
| 20 | 12 | 13 | 57+33=90 |

Note: The table above presents missions and flights that are often undertaken to strengthen the forces of self and counteract the aggression of the enemy or deceived counterrevolutionary agents, and basically current flights, training requirements and even some combat missions such as scrambles available to Defense Centers, or the display of power flights and ... not being recorded in the IRIAF headquarters records are not included in this table.

2) The total number of the IRIAF fighter aircrafts flights of various types according to the documents available at the Deputy of Training and Support of the Air Force Command, from March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1980, are 8651 sorties (4077 from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1979 and 4574 from September 23, 1979 to March 19, 1980 ), and from March 21, 1980 to September 22, 1980, 4461 sorties (A total of 13112 sorties), which are shown in Figures 1.8 to 1.10, respectively.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Figure 1.8 The operational activity of the IRIAF fighter aircrafts in term of flying sorties from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1979 (totaling 4077 sorties)

Figure 1.9 The operational activity of the IRIAF fighter aircrafts in term of flying sorties from September 23, 1979 to March 19, 1980 (totaling 4574 sorties)

Figure 1.10 The operational activity of the IRIAF fighter aircrafts in term of flying sorties from March 21, 1980 to September 22, 1980 (totaling 4461 sorties)

**B) The IRIAF various types of transport aircrafts mission and operations**

The IRIAF various types of transport aircrafts and helicopters mission and operations, including: combat service support, marine reconnaissance and air fueling, support routes, personnel movements, training, etc. from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1980, has been estimated the number of 10302 sorties (9792 transport and 510 Helicopters) as follows:

1. From the first day of the Islamic Revolution victory up to the first day of the imposed war (from 23/11/1357 to 31/6/1359), the number of 3125 flying sorties or combat flights by types of transport aircraft and 510 sorties by the IRIAF helicopters have already been recorded in the documents of daily events of command center of the IRIAF, all humanitarian missions flights and operations carried out through the transportation system are listed in Tables 1.7 and 1.8 , respectively.

Table 1.7 Types of humanitarian missions for the IRIAF aircrafts and helicopters

2 161 4

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Support for Daylam flood victims | support flight for Qayin earthquake [[11]](#footnote-11) | Carrying money | Helping affected workers |
| 3 Sorties | 19 Sorties | 31 Sorties | 50 Sorties |
| Carry meat from overseas | Support for Sistan & Balochestan flood victims | Support for Fars flood victims | Support for Khozestan flood victims |
| 40 | 20 | 3 available helicopters | 219 |
|  | Helicopter flying to distribute flyers | Helicopter flying to support | Climbers Rescue helicopter |
|  | 2 | 161 | 4 |

Table 1.8 Types of missions carried out by the IRIAF transport aircrafts and helicopters from the Islamic Revolution victory to the onset of the imposed war.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Air transportation support | Marine patrol | Transportation of government officials and political leaders | Carrying force, load and grocery |
| 608 sorties | 188 sorties | 390 sorties | 500 sorties |
| Carry equipment | Carry ammunition | Carry prisoners | Air transportation support for the Revolutionary Guards |
| 102 sorties | 84 sorties | 50 sorties | 434 sorties |
| Carry blood | Carry martyred bodies | Carry wounded | Support for institutions |
| 7 | 153 | 95 | 194 |
| Transportation of Basij with equipment | Identification of Intelligence flight | Dispatched medical team | Parachute and unload |
| 2 | 8 | 34 | 28 |
| Transportation of forces based in Golan | (Damavand Plan) transportation and support of Oman-based forces | Educational flights | Counter-revolutionary arrested prisoners transportation |
| 8 | 20 | 176 | 7 |
| Transportation of medicine from Rasht to Zabol | Gendarmerie artifacts | Inactive Defense Assessment | Clerical Transportation + Air Fueling |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 39=35+4 |

2) The total number of flights of the various transport types of the IRIAF aircrafts in accordance with the documents in the Deputy of Training and Support of the Air Force Command during the year 1358 are recorded as 4262 sorties (1955 sorties from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1979 and 2307 from September 23, 1979 to March 19, 1980) and from March 21, 1980 is the number of 2770 sorties (total 7032), shown in Figures 1.11 to 1.13, respectively[[12]](#footnote-12).

Figure 1.11 Operational activity of the various transport types of the IRIAF aircrafts in terms of flying sorties March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1979 (total 1955 sorties).

Figure 1.12 Operational activity of the various transport types of the IRIAF aircrafts in terms of flying sorties from September 22, 1979 to March 19, 1980 (total 2307 sorties).

Figure 1. 13 Operational activity of the various transport types of the IRIAF aircrafts in terms of flying sorties from September 22, 1980 to March 19, 1981 (total 2770 sorties).

3) The total number of operational flights of all types of the IRIAF helicopters, according to documents available in the Deputy of Training and Support of the Air Force Command, from March 21, 1979 to March 19, 1980, are 301 sorties (106 from March 21, 1979 to September 22, 1979 and 195 from September 23, 1979 to March 19, 1980), and from March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980, the number of 209 sorties and a total number of 510 operational flying sorties have been recorded March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980 to the outbreak of the imposed war.

4) For all types of aircrafts, including all types of fighter-aircrafts, transport- aircrafts and helicopters, from the first day of the victory of the Islamic Revolution to the first day of the outbreak of the Sacred Defense in accordance with the Deputy of Training and Support of the Air Force Command documents equals to 20 654 flying sorties (excluding coefficients of air fueling and transport routes). In the first half of 1359, the number of 7440 operations was carried out at various the IRIAF Airbases[[13]](#footnote-13).

5) During the course of the aforementioned period, there were an average of 38 flying sorties per day, which is on average at least three operational flight per each one of the IRIAF nine operational Airbases!? And 13 flying sorties per both transport Airbases daily, namely on average six flying sorties per each. This has definitely affected the pilots' reduced flying skill.

**Chapter II:**

**The state of alert in the IRIAF and the process of implementation of the Alborz plan**

The first volume of this collection, “The History of the Air Battle of the Sacred Defense”, presents the most important operational measures against the foreign forces in the Kurdistan and western regions of the country and other post-revolutionary events, along with the aggressive actions of the enemy, the elaboration of the Alborz plan and the defensive measures taken by the IRIAF and the disasters[[14]](#footnote-14); the previous chapter dealt with the dispersed air raids of the Iraqi Army until the start of the full-scale air raids and the measures taken by the IRIAF to counteract them.

This chapter first addresses the instructions related to the combat operations in the army, along with the method of carrying out the combat and operational missions of the Air Force in brief, in order provide knowledge on the "general state of alert process in the IRIAF on days leading to the imposed war," first, then the operational readiness process of the IRIAF is explained using the "Operation Alborz Plan" and "Combat Commands based on it", based on credible documents and resources, along with the stages of the IRIAF combat operations on the Operation Alborz Plan and Command, and the problems ahead as well as related SEMAJA meetings. Then, some important parts of Operation Alborz Plan and the IRIAF state of alert from March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980 are referred to. In the end, the combat power of the two Army forces of Iran and Iraq prior to the beginning of the war is being described in detail as well as the IRIAF overall state of alert of the various aircrafts. Before proceeding to the discussion, it should be recalled that after the conquest of the US Embassy in Tehran, the comprehensive plan of the "Alborz Battle" was revised and on November 18, 1979, it was sent to the relevant authorities being signed by the IRIAF command of the time.

Accordingly, the combat command "Alborz" was approved by the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, and was notified to the Air Force from March 21, 1980 to April 20, 1980 one of the items listed is to confront the movements of the Iraqi army's forces at the western borders of Iran.

1. **Commands related to combat operations and combat mission execution**

In general, in the military and in the planning of military operations, there are a variety of "operational orders” that are briefly presented below:

1. The Battle Order, which is adapted from the operational order and can be considered as an "operational order" alone.
2. The Combat Order, which is adapted from the battle order and this is also an "operational order" alone.
3. The Formation Order or "Battle Arrangement" or "Battlefield Arrangement", which is adapted from Combat Order and is still an "operational order" alone.
4. Tactic Order, which is adapted from Formation Order and is an "operational order" alone.
5. The Fire Order, which is adapted from Tactic Order and is still an "operational order".
6. The Fragmented Order, which are issued and approved by the commander of the unit or commander of the battlefield following each of the above orders and communicated to the units under the command. This is also an "operational order" alone.

For more familiarity with the military aviation skills, it is noted that if the "fire order" is executed at 10 o'clock in the morning, the commander of the received unit who intends to notify it to one of his commanders, justifies the commander on the mission only by sending a "fragmented order", and holds fire in the destruction of the target.

Now, with this brief awareness and attention to the process of implementing the types of missions as described in the header of the first chapter, the following describes in detail the IRIAF state of alert process in the pre-enemy pre-emptive strike phase.

1. **The state of alert and implementation process of the Operation Alborz**

Given the successive changes March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980, and considering the importance of the IRIAF state of alert and a better understanding of the process of preparation, in this section, the subject matter was studied more carefully so that to provide readers and researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of the IRIAF state of alert, the trend and ups and downs in the air force.

From October 23, 1980 to November 22, 1980, after the Seizure of the U.S Embassy and the highlighting of the Iraqi military threats, initial actions were initiated by the IRIAF Chiefs of Staff. Subsequently, measures were also taken to revise the operational plans and the unit’s state of alert, which on the November 17, 1979 the air defense command units were first announced the "A-3" state of alert, which meant the possibility of the outbreak of the war.

Until then on April 7, 1980, by announcing the first state of alert "A-3" by the head of SEMAJA, until the last state of alert on September 22, 1980, the premier air bases and the defense system quiet often were on "A-3" and "B-3" states of alert. In this section, to provide a clearer picture of the state of alert and the IRIAF measures, briefly, firstly, we discuss the problems of the Operation Alborz after the final determination of the enemy's invasion followed by the operational measures taken by the IRIAF, and in the end, we address the process of state of alert “A-3” to “B-3” and the changes made (daily or monthly) in accordance with the documents and sources available at the IRIAF Office of Strategic Studies.

1. **Operations Alborz Command and Challenges**

According to the "Alborz Combat Order" the state of alert “B-3” meant that bomber-fighter aircrafts of the Air Force were prepared to attack critical targets on the enemy's soil with a variety of conventional ammunition.

**The IRIAF state of alert from March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980:**

With the increasing likelihood of the Iraqi invasion from April 7, 1980, the "A-3" defensive situation was communicated to the base by the Army's air force. However, third and fourth (Hamadan and Dezful) bases were in the "B-3" state of alert due to their central position. Although the Dezful, Tabriz and Hamedan bases were actually involved in the war with the enemy since the March 19, 1980 to September 22, 1980, the Air Force has not yet received a decisive order to implement the Operation Alborz Battle Command, and instead of a crossroads to enemy bases and installations, they defended the country's sky.

In fact, the "Operation Alborz Comprehensive Plan" was carrying the structure planned before the victory of the revolution, but undergone changes appropriate to the Islamic Republic's defense strategy and doctrine. The final announcement, in the form of an "operational order" to the Air Force bases on July 18, 1980 (two months before the outbreak of the war), is in some ways to be discussed, including:

"The Alborz Battle Order" was received by the IRIAF in the circumstances, that this force had been involved in intense intentions and hostile riot schemes in the west of the country months ago (about 20 months before the victory of the Islamic Revolution)[[15]](#footnote-15). It seems that the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, based on their existential nature and their intrinsic mission, must necessarily follow the trail of a targeted plot by an outside enemy in the west of the country, so that the activities of the forces under the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran command arranged in the proper direction on the revision of the defensive plan and in general, the combat readiness to prevent a national crisis. Of course, all the command elements in the army were aware of the unfortunate events in the West and had fairly detailed news of the subject. For example:

* Overthrowing a F-4E fighter in the Paveh region and the martyrdom of Major Mohammad Nojeh and 1st Lt. Bashiri Mousavi on August 16, 1979؛;
* The occurrence of two air crashes for the IRIAF, respectively, in March 1978 in Kurdistan and July 1979 at the border of Shalamche[[16]](#footnote-16);
* Development of two mechanized Iraqi forces on the border of Ilam on May 8, 1980;
* Iraqi airstrikes on parts of Ilam province and bombarded Saleh Abad village on the same day;
* Increased the number of Iranian deported from Iraq to the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 11, 1980
* Overthrow two fighter-bombers F-5E and captived Hossein Lashgari, along with the disappearance of Captain Mohammad Zare Nemati on September 18, 1980.

These events and similar events (before and after) with the continual aggression of Iraqi aircrafts to the Iran sky, the full description of which is given in the first chapter; all and all could in some way extract the possible solutions from the current instructions to first design and then execute (tactical) operations. Just like that and in the aftermath of the following days, the lack of appropriate and on time analysis of these events on the northwest, west, and southwestern borders of the country caused for a variety of reasons led to waste of time and delay in the transfer of battle orders to forces, including the air force, prior to the outbreak of the war.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Figure 2.1 the image of the MiG-23 fighter, known as the "flagger" made of the former Soviet Union, constituting the main body of the Iraqi Air Force.

It is once again recalled that at a critical time that the Alborz Battle Order issued to the Air Force, a significant number of experienced commanders and specialist staff were already redeemed or retired early, and as a result, the combat power of the IRIAF was reduced[[18]](#footnote-18).

Thus, the Air Force began to develop operational orders from the Operation Alborz Battle Guide, which, on the one hand, faced with training problems, and, on the other hand, although defending against the enemy's dispersed attacks (was clearly defined as the first mission of The Air Force in this order, however, because of the fundamental changes in this order and its adaptation to the provisions of the Islamic Revolution and the guidelines or defense doctrine, the freedom of the air force to select pre-emptive operations and practices was faced with limitations).

With such a background, as stated above, on January 18, 1/ 1359, the state of alert order is issued by from the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army. But, it was rightly clear at this point of time that raising the level of the state of alert from the "A-3" to “B-3" could put the forces that have been on the state of alert “B-3” for the past several months and are very worn out and with their efficiency is also failed under pressure. accordingly, the IRIAF Deputy of Operations Commander, in the letter No. 4-1 / 06-21 / 3, dated April 8, 1980, ordered all of his flight departments to:

“All bases provide the number of flying sorties for the logistic facilities, regardless of flight personnel, up to 11:00 am on April 8, 1980 so that the flight crew can be adjusted in the mission’s assignment”.

Thus, all the IRIAF Airbases declared their combat capability in terms of aircrafts and crews, which all are presented at the end of this chapter under the title "General condition of the readiness of all types of the IRIAF aircrafts."

In line with the military operational planning manual for defense against the enemy, it is once again emphasized that Brigadier Vahid Kimiyagar, deputy commander of the Air Force, in collaboration with Colonel Ghassemian, Colonel Pirouz and Col. Qaidian, all of whom are capable, intelligent, and skilled pilots began to study and plan with earnestness and came up with the "SEMAJA planning guide". This collective effort ultimately led to the formulation of the "Operation Alborz ", which was eventually announced on July 18, 1980 to the IRIAF subsidiary units.

In describing the importance of "fragmented orders", it is once again noted that following each of the above instructions from the commander of the unit or the commander of the battlefield, a special order, with details of the entry into the operation, was prepared and approved by the units and then notified to the units under command (the notification text can be considered as an "operational order" alone).

Anyway, how the air battle with the enemy was carried out with all its shortcomings and deficiencies[[19]](#footnote-19), was formulated based on the “Operation Alborz Order” and the other Combat Air Force Orders consistent with the mission of the force were extracted and made ready to be communicated to the unit under the command of the IRIAF.

At this point, it should be acknowledged that the Alborz Battle Guide (sent by the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army) was in many failings. At that critical time, a number of experienced staff in senior Amir and senior Officer Positions had been retired, and aeronautical knowledge in force was equally reduced. Therefore, the Air Force experts faced with many problems when determined to formulate the "Alborz Operations Order" based on a handover from SEMAJA.

One of the obvious drawbacks in setting this command was that instead of explaining critical operational points, it recalled flying techniques and training items (such as how to work with switches inside the cabin or the process of using timed bombs); of course not relevant to an operational order.

Among the six Air Forces missions that are briefly described, the Tactical Air Offensive mission enjoys a special operational position.

In this type of mission, disabling the enemy flight units and gaining air superiority is aimed through attack on enemy air bases, a good example could be “the one hundred and seventy aircraft operation” in the dawn of September 23, 1980 operation with the organization of more than 200 flying sorties against the bases and other sensitive Iraqi targets. Such flights were more intended by the designers of the "Alborz Battle Order".

The reason for this was (contrary to some of the prevailing perceptions that the Air Force has ignored the enemy's preemptive hostilities) was the policy of the Supreme Council of Defense in dealing with the threat.

In the first chapter, we noted that the conditions after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the political governing atmosphere of the country had created a kind of delayed attention to the seriousness of Iraqi threats and the Ba'athist's vicious goals in the minds of the military and civilian authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Accordingly, in the “Alborz Battle Order”, the principle of defense and the halt of the enemy's dispersed attacks were set as an important part of the air force's mission, so that the process of revolution's growth and the revolutionary spirit of people would not even be affected by the fears of an external threat. Thus, regardless of political issues, the denial of the freedom of action of the Air Force to carry out deterrence was the first and foremost disadvantage in the "Alborz Battle Order". Another critically acclaimed case in the "above-mentioned order" (which could be considered a weakness in the prediction of the conditions and even the planning process) was the search and rescue plan for pilots who were emergently parachuted and landed in the enemy's soil land were coming. This Order did not clearly and precisely describe the techniques and methods of doing the work.

For example, a search helicopter is ordered to search for the pilot and save him from potential dangers (on the enemy's territory), but on the other hand, it stated that stop the operation if there is a slight risk to the helicopter and crew. Given the above considerations, some questions are raised, including:

* What are the risk threshold and its types?
* How did the pilot and crew of the helicopter carry out professional and specialized training for rescue operations, in order to continue to work in spite of the danger?
* Is there no perception (anxiety, temptation, hesitation) that with the first signs of danger, or the anticipation of an enemy's reaction, the decision would be made to stop the operation?

In fact, such inter-organizational and intra-organizational disagreements had not been overlooked by a hostile enemy which on the one hand, sought to create a historical identity for itself, and on the other hand in addition to the support of world arrogance, held information from a number of informant fugitives of the former regime.

Although the provisions of the "Alborz Battle Order" put the Air Force in a precautionary position and abandoned the opportunity to exploit the principle of surprise attack (one of the nine accepted principles of the war in the Iranian Army), but now the situation was different from that of the past. A major war was on the way, and the enemy had put the attack in the Islamic homeland on agenda since weeks ago. In these days and hours full of fears, the nation expected the air force to take the necessary urgent and demonstrative measure to exhibit its agility, flexibility and power against the enemy.

In order to accomplish this great goal, and in spite of the problems ahead, it was no longer possible to formulate its own operational plan and harmonize the conditions of the force with the "Alborz Battle Guide". The importance of this prominent action cannot be easily expressed in terms of words. In describing this measure, the indicator should focus on the IRIAF sensitive and dangerous situation of that time. The heightened consequences of the Western military boycott on the vital equipment of the force, the existence of shadows of distrust caused by a failed coup, the lack of coherence and combat readiness in other units under the Army Command, all impose heavy mental pressures on staff and command lines. On the other hand, the multipurpose mission of the Air Force required special attention to be paid to support the combat operations of other units of the Armed Forces: therefore, planning for the optimal use of offensive and defensive equipment and force (despite Security and Political Dilemma along with the shortcomings in the Alborz Battle Guide) is a measure rooted in the knowledge-based Air Force initiative.

1. As mentioned, Lieutenant Behruz Pashapur, a qualified teacher of the pilots in the rear cabin of the F-14, was previously considered the rear cabin master of the F-14 selected together with Major Pilot Mohammad Fahravar, at a US air base to carry out a test case shot a Phoenix rocket to a predetermined target, which was definitely effective in deciding and firing the first Phoenix rocket by the IRIAF. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The biography and description of the services of this noted pilot and the champion of the sacred defense will be in the next volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We will write more about this hero pilot, unique commander and the IRIAF pioneer in the upcoming Volumes. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Mohammad Hassan Bagheri, Shadab Asgari (2009), Imposed War An Opportunity to Revive Islamic Iran's Dignity, Tehran: Andesh-e Asr Publication, p. 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In the first volume, the second edition of the "Sacred Defense Air Combat," briefly looked at the importance of “Electronic Information and Reconnaissance Command” and the attack on one of the sites in this command in Ilam. (P. 329). It was also noted that the unit was able to control and monitor the military-political movements of Iraq with the help of advanced electronic information gathering and trained personnel, and by analyzing the electromagnetic waves emitted from the country's electronic equipment intercepted and evaluated the enemy's combat capability and combat readiness with a high degree of reliability, as further explained in the following chapters. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Iraq has four defense zones and, in fact, four air and missile defense commands in the cities of Baghdad. Tikrit, Basra and Kirkuk, which was directly under Saddam's command, the command of the entire armed forces of Iraq, as detailed in chapter four. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Although Indian, Pakistani, Iraqi and Russian coaches were part of the training of the pilot school and the flight crews, the Ba'ath army, however sent pilot and technical students to the former Soviet Union, England, Pakistan, India, France and the Czech Republic. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For more information, see: Nasrallah Zeinali (2015) " Air Training and Support (Logistics) in the Sacred Defense" Tehran: the IRIAF Publishing Strategic Center, Vol. I, p. 338 and p. 340 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. At the command of the late commander (martyr Jawad Fakori), the entire Mehrabad Air Transportation Units was assigned to be at the service of Qayin earthquake support headquarters. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For more information, see: Nasrallah Zeinali (2015) " Air Training and Support (Logistics) in the Sacred Defense" Tehran: the IRIAF Publishing Strategic Center, Vol. I, p. 339 and p. 341 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For more information, see: Nasrallah Zeinali (2015) " Air Training and Support (Logistics) in the Sacred Defense" Tehran: the IRIAF Publishing Strategic Center, Vol. I, p. 333 and p. 346 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See Volume I, Second Edition, “The History of the Air Battle of the Sacred Defense”, pp. 154-425 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Volume I, Second Edition, “The History of the Air Battle of the Sacred Defense”, pp. 21-154. It is noteworthy that several days after the Islamic Revolution victory on February 19, 1979, the Mahabad Armybase was disarmed by the counter-revolutionary forces, and this was the starting point for the clash and interference of the army and, consequently, the request for air support from the IRIAF and the formation of the Kurdistan conflicts. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid, pp.368-372, F-5 aircraft crash at nine miles northwest of Khorramshahr, which led to the martyrdom of 1st lieutenant Gholam Hossein Bastani. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. As in Volume I, Second Edition, The History of the Air Battle of the Sacred Defense, pp. 368-335. It should not be forgot to note that in the Alborz Battle Plan, it was forbidden to carry out pre-emptive operations that were in the nature of the Air Force, and should have been in a position to defend itself with retaliation to deal with the enemy. It should be acknowledged that this strategy was very wise due to the regional and international ruling space of politics and propaganda. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. By September 22, 1980 a total of 27 the IRIAF aircraft and helicopters had been traumatized and a significant number of efficient and experienced staff had been lost. In addition to cruel sanctions and logistical problems, with 4% to 5% reduction in aircrafts and about 30% of trained human forces, The IRI entered the war with the enemy, although on the eve of the full-scale aggression of the enemy the wise decree of martyred, Colonel Javad Fakori prevented the removal of a number of the IRIAF pilots, and some others volunteered to return to work. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Among these deficiencies is the non-renowned term "revenge", or, in the proper sense, "retaliation," which is mentioned in the final discussion of the chapter five of this book. However, from September 1980 on, with the decisive attack by the enemy, the response order was received from Commander-in-Chiefا [↑](#footnote-ref-19)