

IRAN

In 1925 Reza Khan deposed the last Qajar ruler and declared himself "Reza Shah Pahlavi", Shah of the modern state of Iran. His collaboration with Nazi Germany in 1941 led to his forced abdication in favor of his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. An army plot to remove him failed in 1953, and the monarchy was restored by a CIA-aided coup. The Shah soon embarked on a modernization and westernization program that alienated many of the country's religious leaders, whose power he restricted. As late as 1977, President Carter praised the Shah for making Iran "an island of stability." Clearly, American intelligence services had been fooled by Iran's relative prosperity and economic and educational modernization, into thinking that the Shah was popular with the average Iranian citizen. A new, progressive, middle class of technicians and bureaucrats, many of them women, seemed to assure political stability.

Western nations had always assumed that less developed countries would naturally secularize their politics and culture as they modernized their society and economy. But, in Iran, a rising tide of Shi'ite fundamentalism was undermining the Shah's legitimacy. In spite of the country's rapid development, Iran began to succumb to religious revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and a wave of fundamentalist reactionism. By November 1978, the beleaguered Shah saw no possibility for continued rule. Two months later his government collapsed and he fled the country. When he requested asylum in the United States a month after that, President Carter proved incapable of showing loyalty toward an old ally, and refused him.

Ruhollah Khomeini, a Shi'ite ayatollah in exile in Paris, returned to Iran and took command of the movement that set up an Islamic republic in 1979. Carter's efforts to placate Khomeini and his supporters were of no avail. In one of his first public statements, Khomeini denounced the United States as the "Great Satan". A "comic-opera" interim government in Tehran quickly gave way to a rigid theocracy in November. Next, Khomeini's fundamentalists "spontaneously" seized the American embassy in Tehran and held fifty-two of the embassy staff hostage there. This hostage drama dragged on for nearly fifteen months. Most Americans were infuriated by the inscrutable Khomeini and a wave of frustration swept through the American electorate fueled by Carter's apparent impotence. Ronald Reagan rode the crest of this wave into the White House in 1980.

The Iran/Iraq War (1980-1990)

Prelude

The Shah had great dreams of Iranian dominance in Southwest Asia, and he intended to use Iran's vast oil reserves to make these dreams come true. Starting in 1971, He ordered the purchase of 400 U.S. "M47" and 460 "M60" Main Battle Tanks (MBT's). To this he added 144 "F-4", 141 "F-5", and 80 "F-14" Jets. During the last half of the 1970's, he began the execution of a long-term military development plan aimed at doubling the size of Iran's armed forces from 250,000 to 500,000 by the early 1980's. To this end he arranged for the purchase of 1,200 British "Chieftain" MBT's and 400+ "Scorpion" and "Fox" reconnaissance vehicles. He ordered large numbers of "TOW" and "Dragon" ATGM's, large numbers of tracked "Rapist" and U.S. "Hawk" AAGM's, 100+ assorted modern helicopters, and 160 American "F-16" jet fighters. In 1976, he made arrangements with the USSR for the delivery of ASU-85's and BMP's for his armored divisions. To this he added large orders for ZSU-23/4 radar-guided, self-propelled, Anti-Aircraft guns, along with SA-7 and SA-9 Anti-Aircraft missile launchers.

Difficulties soon made themselves felt. The rapid expansion and modernization of the armed forces had an impact on their operational competence. Like many other countries in the same position, Iran found it extremely difficult to train, expand, and modernize simultaneously. These problems were only made worse by the poor educational level of recruits who found modern weapons bewilderingly complicated. As a consequence, it took a massive advisory effort by Iran's arms suppliers to make the Shah's new arsenal function. Iran was never able to operate more than eighty percent of its battle tanks. Moreover, the wealth and variety of high-tech weaponry available gave the armed forces the illusion that the sheer "weight of fire" they could deliver would be the solution to all problems. Before this illusion could be dispelled, or the Iranian soldier could absorb the practical knowledge necessary to take full advantage the new weapons' effectiveness, the Shah was out and the foreign advisors and technicians were gone with him!

One of the first actions taken by Islamic Iran was a sweeping purge of the Shah's armed forces, especially the army. It was accomplished in two phases. The first was aimed at senior officers suspected of loyalty to the Shah. Eighty-five were executed and hundreds were imprisoned, or forcibly retired. The second phase was much broader. By the time of the Iraqi invasion, there were 12,000 victims. This number alone would have been a crippling blow to Iran's defense capability, but there was more. Over and above the purges, more than half of Iran's troops deserted and many more were killed by the revolution. Units simply collapsed or were reduced to impotent skeletons. As a result, while Iraq could deploy almost every one of its over five thousand AFV's, the Iranians could now field a mere eighteen hundred. In the air, things were no better. The Shah's military procurement program had been derailed by the revolution, especially the plan to buy 160 U.S. F-16's. When U.S. Air Force advisors left the country, they removed key avionics components from Iran's F-14's. Spare parts for the F-4's and F-5's were also in short supply. When war broke out, Iran could count on no more than half its planes. It is not surprising, therefore, that Saddam Hussein should face his belligerent new neighbor with confidence.

From the very beginning, relations between the new Shi'ite Islamic government in Iran and its neighbor Iraq, had been severely strained. Although Iraq recognized the new Iran, the Iranian leaders would have nothing to do with the Ba'th regime, which they denounced as secular. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, as spiritual leader of the Iranian fundamentalist movement, proclaimed his policy of "exporting the revolution," and Iraq was high on the list of countries whose governments were to be overthrown and replaced by carbon-copies of the Islamic regime in Iran. In addition, Iran still occupied three small pieces of territory along the Iran-Iraq border that were supposed to be returned to Iraq under a treaty agreed upon by the Shah's government and Iraq in 1975. During 1979 and 1980, border clashes between Iranian and Iraqi forces occurred frequently. Saddam Hussein announced on September 17, 1980, that he was abrogating the 1975 agreements since they had been ignored by Iran.

Invasion

On September 22, 1980, five Iraqi divisions crossed the border on a four hundred-mile front in the face of fierce, but disorganized, Iranian resistance. The Iraqi attack plan quickly became apparent. The invasion was not aimed at the total destruction of Iran, but at the occupation of specific areas as part of a strictly "limited" conflict. The main axis of advance was made in Khuzestan aimed at separating the Shatt al-Arab from the rest of country. A second (Central) thrust was aimed at Mehran-Qasr e Shirin and a third (Northern) one at Penjwin. But these were no more than secondary and supportive of the main effort, although they had important objectives of their own. The central thrust was concerned with the occupation of the traditional Tehran-Baghdad invasion route.

Baghdad, it should be noted, stands a mere eighty miles from the Iranian border. Blocking this route would protect Baghdad from Iranian counter-attack. The northern advance was aimed at establishing strong defensive positions opposite Sulaymaniyah to protect the Kirkuk oil complex. The limited scope of Iraqi operations, their limited objectives, and limited force allocations were all indicative of a "limited" war strategy.

The Iranian strategy was for "general" war from the outset. They realized their relative military inferiority and put their faith in determined resistance within and around all border towns and a defense "in depth" to blunt any Iraqi thrust. At the same time, Iran was determined to bring the war home to the Iraqi's by initiating air and naval raids on strategic Iraqi targets less than twenty-four hours after the first shots were fired. This strategy was a reasonable one based on several facts in evidence. The southern sector of the front located in Khuzestan is a vast area of lowland and marshes criss-crossed by several large rivers, (including the Tigris and Euphrates) numerous irrigation canals, and lakes. The topography is almost universally flat and, by defending the towns and cities of this area, Iran would dominate all "covering" terrain, allowing the Iraqi's to occupy only the exposed flats. The terrain of the central and northern war zones stands in sharp contrast to the southern zone. The height of the mountains here is over ten thousand feet in places and any military advance between these peaks is possible only along a few major axes. Iran believed that no decisive Iraqi breakthrough would be possible here.

Maneuver

The Khuzestan operation consisted of a two-pronged advance. One armored and one mechanized division looped south and laid siege to Khorramshahr and Abadan. In addition, two armored divisions left Basra and enveloped an area bounded by Khorramshahr, Ahvaz, Susangard, and Musian. The lack of a coordinated defense was not, as is often assumed, a symptom of complete Iranian surprise. Iraqi invasion preparations could not be concealed and Iran began massing forces of its own. Iran simply ran out of time. As a result, the forces opposing the Iraqi advance in the south were composed almost exclusively of "Pasdaran" (Revolutionary Guards), supported by a single regular army armored division. The rest of the army had been moved either to the north or deep into Iran's hinterland. This policy was a deliberate one. The army needed time to recover from the purges. By keeping it away from the worst of the fighting, the government hoped to preserve its strength for a later counter-offensive. In the long run, this policy proved to be sound. In the short term, however, the Pasdaran could not hope to halt the Iraqi's in open terrain. It was only when the campaign turned to street fighting (especially in Khorramshahr) that the Pasdaran proved their worth. The Iraqi's were unwilling to suffer the kind of casualties required to storm a strongly defended city. They bombarded Khorramshahr for weeks, reluctant to risk an assault.

Stalemate

Only two weeks after the war began, it had turned from a "limited" war of maneuver to a static "general" war. The shift to "general" war was a direct result of Iran's strategy of striking deep into Iraq. Naval and air attacks did severe damage to Basra and Iraq's oil shipping facilities. The Mosul and Kirkuk oil fields were struck as well, in addition to the Zab river dams, important petrochemical plants, and even the Baghdad nuclear reactor. Baghdad was itself struck by eight separate air raids in the first week of the war. The Iraqi's, in return, struck Iran's Kharg Island oil complex. Soon both sides were hitting strategic targets regularly. The shift to a "static" campaign was a deliberate tactic on the part of the Iraqi's. By the end of October, with the fall of Khorramshahr, Saddam had achieved all his prewar objectives, and appeared satisfied to hold these until Iran gave up trying to take them back. The next eight months were marked by limited Iranian counter-attacks and raids by Iranian Pasdaran units and Iraqi special forces, punctuated by continuous artillery bombardments and air strikes.

There were some exceptions to this. In November, Iraq unsuccessfully tried to drive Iranian forces out of Ahvaz. In December, Iraqi mountain troops struck around Penjwin in an attempt to force the Iranians further away from Kirkuk and encourage action by Iranian Kurd guerrillas. In January of 1981, the Iranians made a serious attempt at an armored breakthrough. One of their armored divisions drove deep into Iraqi lines as far as Hoveyze. In a few days, however, this division was destroyed in one of the largest tank battles of the war near Susangard. Iranian losses ran to one hundred M-60 and Chieftain tanks destroyed compared with fifty Iraqi T-62's. The fact that an additional one-hundred-fifty Iranian tanks were captured graphically illustrates the shoddy maintenance procedures practiced by both sides. Had the Iranians held the ground after the fighting, large numbers of Iraqi vehicles would have been captured.

Both sides otherwise used the time provided by the eight month stalemate to rebuild their infrastructure, fortify their positions, and institute intensive training programs for tank crewmen and maintenance personnel. Iraq built an all-weather paved highway from Basra to the front lines near Ahvaz and earthen walls to prevent winter rains from flooding their positions in the south. Iran mobilized large numbers of Pasdaran and "Youth Brigades" (Basij). They even decided to set up a "Supreme Defense Council" to coordinate operations.

Counter-Offensive

By the Spring of 1981, the Iranians had become strong enough to launch a series of successful attacks, particularly in the south. In May, the Iraqi's were driven from the Allah Akbar heights near Susangard by a combined Army/Pasdaran assault. Then, following another lull of approximately four months, Iran launched "Operation Thamin al-A'imma" in Abadan. This attack caught the Iraqi's by surprise and, between September 27th and 29th, two Iranian infantry divisions along with support from Pasdaran, tanks, and artillery units, drove an Iraqi armored division across the Karun River, breaking the siege of Abadan! Iran ended the year with its biggest offensive yet. "Operation Jerusalem Way" lasted a week and resulted in heavy casualties to both sides. When it ended, the Iranians had recaptured Bostan and forced Iraqi lines back a considerable distance.

These offensives proved that Iran could now plan, coordinate, and execute large, complex operations. The capture of Bostan had also increased Iraq's logistic problems by cutting the Amara road. Iraq would now have to use a much longer route to run supplies to its forward units. On a darker note, these offensives included the first examples of a new Iranian tactic. For the first time (with considerable success) Iran employed the "Human-Wave" assaults that would later dominate the war. Things began to quiet in November with the arrival of the first heavy winter rains and the front once more became static.

The most dramatic result of the 1981 Summer campaign had been the first signs of a weakening in Iraq's resolve. In March 1982, Iraq declared its willingness to withdraw from Iranian territory in return for their agreement to open diplomatic negotiations. When Iran ignored this offer, Iraq launched a series of spoiling attacks to throw the next Iranian offensive off balance. These succeeded only in delaying the Iranians. The first offensive of 1982, "Operation Undeniable Victory", involved 120,000 troops on both sides. The Iranians committed four divisions totaling 50,000 men and 30,000 Pasdaran. The Iraqi defenders consisted of two armored and one

mechanized division. True "Combined Arms" tactics were in evidence in both Iranian and Iraqi forces for the first time, including close air support by both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

The offensive opened with a surprise night attack by Iranian armor backed up by "human-wave" assaults. The Iraqi's attempted an armored counter-attack, which was repulsed. In the third and most important phase of the action, two Iraqi divisions were enveloped and suffered humiliating casualties, including the capture of 15,000 to 20,000 Iraqi soldiers. To make matters worse, the Syrians closed their borders to Iraqi trade, cutting \$5 Billion from Iraq's oil revenues. Saddam Hussein, now desperate, once again declared that he would withdraw from Iran if this would lead to a settlement. Iran remained unimpressed.

In a second offensive, "Operation Jerusalem", Iran launched a three-pronged attack aimed at driving Iraq completely out of Khuzestan. The Iranians had now become skillful at combining regular army and Pasdaran troops in flexible battle plans. They succeeded in clearing the Ahvaz-Susangard area and crossed the Karun River near Taheri and Haloub. This threatened to cut off the Iraqi's around Khorramshahr, forcing them to shift south. Iraq even launched a major thrust near Khorramshahr, but this failed to stop the expected Iranian attack there. On May 20th, 70,000 Iranians began an all-out assault on the city. Saddam decided he could not afford to lose the 40,000 men deployed there and hastily withdrew. Not all the Iraqi's escaped and 12,000 prisoners were taken by the Iranians as well as large quantities of military hardware. On May 25th, Khorramshahr was liberated.

Counter-Invasion

Saddam realized that he was now facing what he had been trying to avoid since the beginning. The Iranians were poised to invade Iraq! On June 20th, he announced his withdrawal from Iran, using the Israeli invasion of Lebanon as an excuse. Flushed with success, Iran vowed to overthrow Saddam and the Ba'th regime and collect \$150 Billion in reparations. On July 13th, the Iranians launched "Operation Ramadan" aimed at Basra. To their surprise, the offensive collapsed in the face of a well-entrenched Iraqi defense!

Saddam Hussein may be many things, but he is not a fool. As early as the Autumn of 1981, he realized that the war with Iran might turn against him, and made his preparations accordingly. By 1983 the Iraqi army had grown from twelve to twenty divisions, totaling some 475,000 men. In addition to this expansion, he also ordered the construction of an extensive defense system including fortifications, earthen walls, and other obstacles along his eastern frontier, and placed the bulk of his forces behind these obstacles. During the Summer of 1982, the Iranians hurled 100,000 men at Basra, but failed to break through and were repulsed with heavy casualties. These included an entire division rendered helpless by the first Iraqi use of (non-lethal) toxic gas. The Iranians then turned toward Baghdad in October with "Operation Muslim Ibn Aqil" and "Operation Muharram" in November. Both offensives used the now familiar Iranian pattern of unsupported "human-wave" assaults. These resulted in appalling casualties but failed to achieve much. The successful tactics of the previous year had degenerated into unimaginative and uncoordinated efforts. Iran had used up its reserves of experienced soldiers and modern weapons and now relied on poorly trained and equipped Pasdaran and Basij units. Diversionary maneuvers, flanking moves, and deception had been replaced by sterile and costly massed frontal attacks with predictable results.

The whole complexion of the war had been reversed. Iran now sought decisive victories in the field, while Iraq struck deep into the Iranian rear with punishing air attacks on Kharg Island and oil tankers making their way to and from Iranian ports. The pattern had become set with Iran mounting five more offensives in different sectors, all of which were repulsed with frightful losses. The Iraqi's, for their part, were satisfied to hold the line with little interest in offensive actions of their own except for air raids against the Iranian oil trade. Aside from some small successes in the north, the Iranian 1983 offensives had come to nothing. But unlike earlier campaigns, these were not followed by a prolonged lull in the fighting. The Iranian leadership continued to believe that a decisive blow would break the will of the Ba'th regime and produce victory. This meant more offensives.

Iraq sought to forestall these and convince the Iranian people of the futility of their efforts by the aerial bombardment of eleven Iranian cities. An ultimatum was issued and one week later, on February 7th, the first shots of what became known as the "War of the Cities" were fired. This campaign failed in that it neither prevented, nor even delayed the next Iranian offensive, which struck like a sledgehammer on February 14th, 1984. With over half a million men engaged on both sides, this two-stage offensive turned out to be the biggest engagement of the war. Phase one, operations "Dawn V and Dawn VI", involved an advance along a one hundred mile front aimed at cutting communications between Baghdad and Basra. After a week of heavy fighting, the advance was still fifteen miles short of the Baghdad-Basra road. Phase two, "Operation Khaybar" lasted twenty-four days and consisted of a further series of thrusts in the direction of Basra. It too failed to achieve its objectives and resulted in the deaths of over 20,000 Iranians. Once again, it was Pasdaran and Basij units using "human-wave" assaults that predominated with the army playing only a minor role. This led many observers to assume that the "final" offensive was yet to come. It wasn't.

The "Tanker" War

This phase of the war, which lasted from February 1984 to the end of that year, was characterized by little action on the battlefield. Although interesting from both a military and political standpoint, it has little bearing on this study. Suffice it to say that Iraq hoped to escalate the war by expanding it into the Persian Gulf and threatening Western oil supplies. They believed they could draw other states, especially the U.S., into the fighting. Although President Reagan dispatched a naval task force, with 2,000 Marines aboard, to the area, the Iranian response did not live up to Iraq's expectations. Iran did not attempt to block the Strait of Hormuz as it had threatened to do and, on the contrary, behaved in a very circumspect manner. Although Iran's ability to export oil was severely reduced, further weakening their economy, the "Tanker War" failed to force Western intervention. The war went on.

Stalemate Again

The land war heated up again in October 1984, when Iran launched yet another offensive on the central front. This did not turn out to be the "final push" Western observers had been waiting for since the previous March. It was small by comparison and had a limited objective. It was aimed at recapturing the Meinak Heights, a piece of Iranian land Iraq had grabbed in the first days of the war and had not withdrawn from. The advance was on a twelve-mile front and involved mainly Pasdaran and Basij troops. It was successful, but an Iraqi counter-attack retook most of the ground for a net gain of only a few square miles.

In the last week of January 1985, Iraq finally went over to the attack. For a long time the Iraqi's confidence in their training and equipment had been on the rise. Iran had shown little stomach for big offensives lately, and they decided to demonstrate their superiority with an attack whose aim was to convince the Iranians that they could hit them when and where they chose. They hoped to keep Iran off balance and nervous about concentrating too much force in any one sector, leaving others vulnerable. It was only a marginal success and did not deter Iran from executing a further offensive toward Basra in March; "Operation Badr". This turned out to

be a smaller scale version of the attack a year earlier, involving about 100,000 men and was also aimed at cutting the road between Basra and Baghdad. What was different was the tactics used.

Iran had abandoned the "human wave" and reverted to conventional operations, carried out under the command of military professionals. The Imams in Tehran had finally realized the futility of unsupported infantry assaults and, in addition, had become aware that war-weariness had replaced religious zeal throughout the armed forces. Throughout 1984, they had taken the unruly and poorly disciplined Pasdaran mobs, and drilled them into real military units, capable of working hand-in-hand with the army. The effort had paid off. The Iraqi's had still thrown them back, largely through the extensive use of chemical weapons, but casualties had been equally serious on both sides. Iraqi self-confidence was showing signs of fragility. Saddam reacted by starting a second "War of the Cities", attacking Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahin, Bushehr and twenty-six other population centers. Iran responded in kind. Things settled down after about ten days. Once again, both sides were exhausted, and the fighting reverted to small scale raids and bombardments. Strategic bombing started up again, especially around Kharg Island. Iran could no longer resist these attacks since its air force was now almost non-existent. There was nothing else to do but prepare for one more offensive.

The Faw Peninsula

"Operation Dawn VIII", which began on the 9th of February 1986, looked to be just another bloodbath in a long series of such, but it turned out to be Iran's greatest success since their first big counter-attacks far back in 1981. It began with an attack toward Basra, which was easily repulsed. But this was only a diversion, designed to cater to Iraq's obsession with defending that city. It succeeded in causing them to shift reserves north, away from the real objective. The Iranians also took advantage of bad weather to cross the Shatt-al-Arab Waterway undetected. The Iraqi defenses collapsed and the port city of Faw fell after less than twenty-four hours of fighting. Next, the Iranians tried to exploit this success by breaking out of Faw on February 13th, but the Iraqi's rushed to close the breach and the attack was checked. Had they succeeded in this follow-up, the Iranians would have cut Iraq off from the Persian Gulf and Iranian troops would be standing on the Kuwaiti border! A veritable shock wave went through the Gulf States as well as the rest of the Arab world. Yet another Iranian attack, "Operation Dawn IX" followed closely on the heels of the victory at Faw on February 25th. This attack was up in the Kurdish mountains and came within just a few miles of Sulaymaniyah.

But the panic died down as Iranian hopes for a decisive victory faded. Once more exhausted, both sides again became bogged down in static fighting. Iraq succeeded in driving the Iranians back in the north and to contain their gains in the south, but they could not drive them out of the Faw Peninsula. This was an important psychological victory for Iran and a crippling blow to Iraqi morale and Saddam's Ba'ath Party. After four bloody years of desperate attacks, Iran now had a significant foothold on Iraqi territory and was determined to milk this for all it was worth for both morale and propaganda purposes. Saddam's much publicized offensive in mid-May, grabbed Mehran and he offered to exchange this for Faw. The Iranians ignored him and took Mehran back again in early July.

The war was now six years old and Iran was once again talking about a "final blow" to break Saddam's regime. Once again, Iraq responded with heavy air raids on Iranian cities and a daring long-range raid on the oil terminal of Sirri Island over 150 miles from the Strait of Hormuz. These failed to deter Iran any more than earlier air attacks had. On September 1st, "Operation Karbala II" took place in the north and "Operation Karbala III" two days later in the south. Neither of these had any serious effect.

Endgame

By 1987, the military equation began to swing in favor of Iraq once again. Saddam had obtained additional arms from France and the Soviet Union, which considerably improved his military position. He also improved relations with several Western countries, notably the United States. In 1987, the United States agreed to "reflag" 11 Kuwaiti tankers and escort them through the international waters of the Strait of Hormuz. Britain and France also escorted tankers carrying their own flags. This action allowed Iraq to export oil in exchange for vital supplies. Despite the "accidental" attack on the U.S. destroyer "Stark", the United States supported Iraq, both diplomatically and militarily.

On July 20, 1987, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 598. This urged Iraq and Iran to accept a cease-fire, withdraw their forces to internationally recognized boundaries, and settle their frontier disputes by negotiations held under the auspices of the United Nations. Once again, the international community was ignored by both sides and military operations in the gulf resumed. Iraq soon recaptured the Faw peninsula and the districts of Salamcha and Majnun, and it became clear that Iran's military position in the gulf had become untenable. Fearing an internal uprising over their failure to produce victory, Iranian religious/political leaders impressed on Khomeini the necessity of accepting the cease-fire in order to save the regime from collapse. Iran formally declared its acceptance of Resolution 598 on August 20th, 1988. Implementation of this resolution was another matter. Iraq demanded a full exchange of prisoners as the first step, while Iran insisted that withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iran should precede the exchange of prisoners. It was not until 1990 that both Iraq and Iran finally agreed to settle their differences on the basis of the 1975 agreement and carry out the terms of UN Resolution 598.

Lessons

The Iran-Iraq war may be best remembered as a "delicate balance of incompetence" (Lawrence Freedman). Both sides, at one time or another, failed to apply most of the classic principles of warfare. On the other hand, there are as many important lessons to be gleaned from this war as from any other, as well as many myths, which should be exposed. First and foremost, there is the impact of revolutionary zeal on the part of the Iranian "Pasdaran" and "Basij" units. Their willingness to suffer appalling casualties has been viewed as a major factor in all Iranian successes. The facts do not support this. It was not Pasdaran determination but the limits of Iraq's own objectives that halted their early offensives. The Pasdaran were truly effective only in the street fighting in Khorramshahr and Abadan. Regular troops occupying the same sort of built-up terrain could have achieved similar, if not better, results. Iraq committed a serious operational error in these cities by committing the wrong types of troops to their capture. Then there was the relative success of Iranian human-wave attacks in 1981 and 1982. Close study shows that these were incorporated into a comprehensive, combined arms plan, carried out under professional military leadership. When this leadership was cast aside in mid-1982 and the army began to rely on frontal assaults carried out without the slightest cooperation between arms, Iran failed to achieve anything and suffered massive casualties.

It can be shown that early Iraqi success stemmed from an organized and coherent strategy. This advantage was thrown away when Iraq surrendered the initiative to Iran and never truly regained it. When Saddam Hussein halted his invasion and dug static defenses while his army was still at the peak of its success, he virtually guaranteed his own failure in the long run. Iraq should have avoided the war completely or adopted a general war strategy from the beginning. Saddam pursued limited objectives and assumed

that his enemy, a fanatically revolutionary regime, would accept defeat gracefully. When put it in those words, his folly in underestimating his enemy's determination and capacity for self-sacrifice becomes patently obvious. The war also pointed out the necessity in modern warfare for an attacker to overcome the inherent advantage of defensive firepower by the skillful use of concentration, maneuver, and striking power. Battlefield success on both sides was generally achieved against retreating or badly prepared forces. When faced with well-prepared defenders, almost every attack resulted in a humiliating and costly defeat.

Finally, both sides seemed to have given little attention to the use of air power in what has become a traditional ground-support role, especially when on the offensive. The fact that this didn't hinder early Iraqi advances owes more to the weakness of the Iranians than to any strength on the part of the Iraqis. There was almost no ground-air co-operation in the war whatsoever, little up-to-date intelligence, and pilots on both sides were reluctant to operate at low altitude. Overall, heavy pre-war investments in expensive and hard to maintain high-tech aircraft showed little payoff on the battlefield. However, attack helicopters were used to considerable advantage by both sides. Less than three weeks into the war Iran delayed a major Iraqi offensive in Khuzestan by employing 250 Huey "Cobra's" in an anti-tank role. On the other side, Iraq made full use of its Mi-24 "Hind" gunships as flying artillery throughout the war.

Conclusion

The Iran-Iraq war was conceived as a limited campaign and became the longest and bloodiest war between third-world nations since WWII. It is hard to imagine a more futile exercise of power. Iran has still not recovered from the destruction and loss of life caused by the war, or the people's loss of confidence in a regime that proved so incompetent and callous toward their sacrifices. All wars are tragic and wasteful. this one was astoundingly so.

FOREIGN WEAPONS

107mm Type 63, 155mm GHN-45, Type 59 - CH; 120mm Soltam M65, 155mm Soltam M71 - IS; 105mm M56 - IT; Centurion, Chieftan, Fox - UK; 75mm M116 "Pack" Howitzer, 81mm M29, 81mm M125, 105mm M101, 106mm M40 RcR, 4.2" M84, 155mm M109, 175mm M107, 203mm M110, M47, M48, M60, M113, M577, M901 - US; All other foreign weapons - RU

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

MECHANIZED DIVISION: 1979+

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 25, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 40%

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Infantry Company: | 3xTL3 Infantry(A)/Personnel Carrier, 1x81mm M29 Mortar(1+)/Personnel Carrier |
| Support Company: | 1x120mm Soltam M65(3) Mortar/Truck, 3x106mm M40 RcR/Jeep, 1xZPU-23/2 |
| Engineer Company: | 3xTL3 Engineer/Truck |
| Tank Company: | 3xM47 <u>or</u> M60A1 |
| Recon Company: | 4xScorpion/75 <u>or</u> Scorpion/90 |
| Anti-Aircraft Battery: | 1xZSU-57/2 <u>or</u> ZSU-23/4 |
| Infantry Battalion: | 1xTL3 Infantry(A) HQ/Personnel Carrier, 3xInfantry Company, 1xSupport Company, 1xFox[R] |
| Armored Battalion: | 1xM47 HQ <u>or</u> M60A1 HQ, 3xTank Company |
| Artillery Battalion: | 3x155mm M-109(3) |
| Mechanized Brigade: | 1xTL3 Infantry(A) GHQ/M577, 2xInfantry Battalion, 1xArmored Battalion, 1xArtillery Battalion, 1xEngineer Company, 1xRecon Company, 1xAnti-Aircraft Battery |

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Anti-Tank Company: | 3xM901/TOWI |
| Anti-Aircraft Battalion: | 3xIHAWK (Off Map) |
| Artillery Battalion: | 3x155mm M109A1(3) |
| Artillery Battalion: | 3x175mm M107(3), 1x203mm M110 |
| Artillery Battalion: | 3x130mm M-46(3)/Truck |
| Multiple Rocket Battalion: | 3x122mm BM-21(12) |
| Attack Helicopter Squadron: | 6xAH-1G "Cobra", 3xOH-58A |
| Assault Helicopter Squadron: | 4xBell-214 (UH-1 "Huey") |
| Transport Helicopter Squadron: | 8xCH-47 |

- Notes:
- 1) One stand in each Infantry Battalion may contain an attached "SA-7" team(MP).
 - 2) Each mechanized division contained two mechanized brigades.
 - 3) Personnel Carriers may be BTR-50's, BTR-60's, or BMP-1's
 - 4) Iranian BMP-1's were not equipped with ATGM's.
 - 5) After 1981, tank companies may be reduced from three to two tank stands.
 - 6) No stand may have a functional "Tech Level" higher than "Tech Level 2", regardless of its listed "Tech Level".
 - 7) Iranian forces "Generation" may be increased to "Generation III" after 1994, if desired.

ARMORED DIVISION: 1979+

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 25, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 35%

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Mechanized Company: | 3xTL3 Infantry(A)/M113A1, 1x81mm M125(2) |
| Support Company: | 1x4.2" M84 Mortar(3)/Truck, 3x106mm M40 RcR/Jeep, 1xZPU-23/2, 1xFox[R] |
| Engineer Company: | 3xTL3 Engineer/Truck, 1xChieftan AVLB |
| Tank Company: | 3xM60A1 <u>or</u> Chieftan Mk5 <u>or</u> M48A2 |
| Recon Company: | 4xScorpion/75 <u>or</u> Scorpion/90 |
| <u>OR:</u> | 2xBMP-1, 2xScorpion/75 |

Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1xZSU-57/2 or ZSU-23/4

Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL3 Infantry(A) HQ/M-113, 3xMechanized Company, 1xSupport Company

Armored Battalion: 1xChieftan Mk5 HQ, 3xTank Company

Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M109A1(3)

Armored Brigade: 1xTL3 Infantry(A) GHQ/M577, 1xMechanized Battalion, 2xArmored Battalion, 1xArtillery Battalion, 1xEngineer Company, 1xRecon Company, 1xAnti-Aircraft Battery

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Anti-Tank Company: 3xM901/TOWI

Anti-Aircraft Battalion: 3xIHAWK (Off Map)

Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M109A1(3)

Artillery Battalion: 3x175mm M107(3), 1x203mm M110

Artillery Battalion: 3x130mm M-46(3)/Truck

Multiple Rocket Battalion: 3x122mm BM-21(12)

Attack Helicopter Squadron: 6xAH-1G "Cobra", 3xOH-58A

Assault Helicopter Squadron: 4xBell-214 (UH-1 "Huey")

Transport Helicopter Squadron: 8xCH-47

- Notes:
- 1) One stand in each Infantry Battalion may contain an attached "SA-7" team(MP).
 - 2) Each armored division contained two armored brigades.
 - 3) M113's may be replaced by BTR-50's at your discretion.
 - 4) Iranian BMP-1's were not equipped with ATGM's.
 - 5) After 1981, tank companies may be reduced from three to two tank stands.
 - 6) No stand may have a functional "Tech Level" higher than "Tech Level 2", regardless of its listed "Tech Level".
 - 7) Iranian forces "Generation" may be increased to "Generation III" after 1994, if desired.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD "PASDARAN" BRIGADE AND DIVISION: 1980-1990

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 20, Class: Militia, Base Determination Factor: 60%

Infantry Company: 4xTL2 Infantry(A)/M113A1, 1-2xTL2 Infantry Support

Tank Company: 1-3xT-55 or Type 59

Infantry Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(A) HQ, 3xInfantry Company

Armored Battalion: 3xTank Company

Pasdaran Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(A) GHQ, 3xInfantry Battalion

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Engineer Company: 1-2xTL2 Engineer Infantry/Truck

Recon Company: 2-5xUtility Car/LMG

Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1x37mm M39/Truck or ZU-23/2/Truck

Ind. Brigade Support: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Anti-Tank Battery: 1x85mm D48(3)/Truck or 1x106mm M40 RcR/Jeep

"Pack" Artillery Battalion: 3x105mm M56(2)/Truck or 3x75mm M116(3)/Pack Mules

Division Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Mortar Battalion: 3x120mm M43 Mortar(3)/Truck

Artillery Battalion: 3x122mm D30(3)/Truck or 3x105mm M101(3)/Truck

Multiple Rocket Battery: 1x107mm/Type63(12)

- Notes:
- 1) One Pasdaran division in eight may contain an attached armored battalion.
 - 2) Independent brigades included commando, Paratroop, or volunteer "Martyrs".
 - 3) When using "Human Wave" tactics, the "Base Determination Factor" of Pasdaran units is raised to 80%.
 - 4) Transport May be provided as needed at double point cost. This may be anything from buses to BTR's.
 - 5) "Pack" artillery was used almost exclusively in the mountainous "Northern" sector.
 - 6) No stand may have a functional "Tech Level" higher than "Tech Level 2", regardless of its listed "Tech Level".
 - 7) "Army" armored and Mechanized battalions may be attached to "Pasdaran" formations. These battalions will suffer a +3 penalty on all "Cohesion" die-rolls. They are also reduced to "Generation II".
 - 8) No stand may have a functional "Tech Level" higher than "Tech Level 2", regardless of its listed "Tech Level".

MECHANIZED DIVISION: 1984+

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 30, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 40%

Mechanized Company: 3xTL3 Infantry(A)/Personnel Carrier, 1x81mm M29 Mortar(1)/Personnel Carrier

Support Company: 1x120mm M43 Mortar(3)/Truck, 3x106mm M40 RcR/Jeep

Engineer Company: 2-3xTL3 Engineer Infantry/Personnel Carrier

Tank Company: 2-3xM47 or M60A1 or Chieftan Mk5 or M48A2
 Recon Company: 2xBMP-1, 2xScorpion/90
 Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1xZSU-57/2 or ZSU-23/4

Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL3 Infantry(A) HQ/Personnel Carrier, 3xMechanized Company, 1xSupport Company
 Armored Battalion: 3xTank Company
 Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M-09(3)

Mechanized Brigade: 1xTL3 Infantry(A) GHQ/M577, 3xMechanized Battalion, 1xEngineer Company, 1xRecon Company, 1xAnti-Aircraft Battery
 Armored Brigade: 1xTL3 Infantry(A) GHQ/M577, 2xArmored Battalion, 1xEngineer Company, 1xRecon Company, 1xAnti-Aircraft Battery

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)
 Anti-Tank Company: 3xM901/TOWI
 Anti-Aircraft Battalion: 3xZSU-57/2 or ZSU-23/4
 Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm "Soltam" M71(3)/Truck or 155mm GHN-45(3)/Truck
 Artillery Battalion: 3x130mm M-46(3)/Truck
 Multiple Rocket Battery: 1x122mm BM-21(12)

- Notes:
- 1) One stand in each Infantry Battalion may contain an attached "SA-7" team(MP).
 - 2) Each mechanized division contained two mechanized brigades and one armored brigade.
 - 3) Personnel Carriers may be BTR-50's, BTR-60's, M113A1's, or BMP-1's
 - 4) Iranian BMP-1's were not equipped with ATGM's.
 - 5) One or two Pasdaran battalions may be added. They may have truck transport and may use "Human Wave" tactics.
 - 6) Chinese "Norinco" GHN-45's and Israeli "Soltam" M71's were purchased in 1986.
 - 7) No stand may have a functional "Tech Level" higher than "Tech Level 2", regardless of its listed "Tech Level".
 - 8) Iranian forces "Generation" may be increased to "Generation III" after 1994, if desired.

TACTICAL NOTES

The Iran-Iraq war (1979-1990) is the unrecognized "gem" of modern "Micro-Armour" wargaming. It has everything a gamer could wish for in a campaign. Here we have a war that begins in classic "Blitzkrieg" fashion with thousands of armored vehicles maneuvering over an area encompassing a half-million square miles. The following figures illustrate the numbers of tanks and other equipment the Iraqis could bring to the battlefield:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|-------|
| | 1980 | / | 1985 |
| Tanks - | 2,750 | / | 2,900 |
| Other AFV's - | 2,500 | / | 3,000 |
| Artillery - | 800 | / | 3,500 |
| Combat Aircraft - | 332 | / | 500 |
| Helicopters - | 276 | / | 270 |

By comparison, the Iranians possessed the following, of which approximately half were operational:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|-------|
| Tanks - | 1,735 | / | 1,000 |
| Other AFV's - | 2,250 | / | 1,060 |
| Artillery - | 1,000 | / | 1,000 |
| Combat Aircraft - | 445 | / | 80 |
| Helicopters - | 720 | / | 350 |

You can build any sort of scenario for the Iran-Iraq War that you like within the historical limits of the conflict. The area of action runs from high mountain passes to featureless plains. Meeting engagements by armored columns, human-wave assaults, street-fighting, helicopter attacks, river crossings under fire, etc. are all possible. Both sides get to attack. Both must defend. It's all here! It's a conflict that should be hauntingly familiar to those of you who enjoyed gaming the "Eastern Front" in WWII. Many of the same factors apply. Many of the same difficulties must be overcome. We highly recommend this theater of conflict for the wide range of weapons available, the wide range of exciting combat actions that can be simulated, and the historic military significance of the event itself.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Iran's Islamic regime celebrated its 18th year in power in 1997 by taking some steps toward constitutional legitimacy. On May 23 of that year, the comparative moderate, Mohammad Khatami was elected president in a "surprise" landslide against outraged conservative factions. Voter turnout stood at the huge figure of 91%, with 69% of these in favor of Khatami. The popular mood was obviously for political change and a rejection of the Muslim "hard-liners". Iranian voters, especially women and young men, had shown their contempt for Iran's medieval Islamic dress code and governmental constraints on economic growth. Others hoped that Khatami and his liberals would implement reforms that might lead to economic stability. The clear mandate given to the new president also pointed to a desire on the part of Iranians for the formation of political parties and greater civil rights.

In this they were to be disappointed. All reforms were stubbornly resisted by the deeply entrenched religious hierarchy. Ali Akbar Nategh-Nouri, Khatami's main rival in the presidential election, remained speaker of the Majlis (parliament), and Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khameni remained Iran's "shadow" dictator. The election of Khatami had no effect on the real instruments of power, such as the Council of Guardians or the Expediency Council. In spite of the fact that the conservatives never won more than 96 of 270 seats available in the Majlis, their word is still law in Iran.

Postscript

At the time of this writing, Iran is in the midst of a series of major political upheavals. In July of 2002, more than thirty members of the Khatami government were arrested and sentenced to terms of up to ten years behind bars for the crime of "Endangering the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran". In other words, they had the temerity to disagree with Khameni and his clique. Khameni stated, "We have reached the conclusion that not just relations, but any negotiation, with America is against the nation's interests." Later, he was quoted as saying, "They (the various parties in Iran) must carry out the leader's decisions without discussion." He was targeting "...Those traitors who speak in public about resuming relations with the United States."

Finally, In a statement to the press on July 26th, 2002, Khameni made the following pronouncement; "I consider myself the final arbiter of what is right and proper in this republic. If the government or the people are in error, it is my duty to chastise them..." No one could describe the current situation in Iran in clearer terms than that!

2002 IRANIAN ARSENAL

Vehicles: Several "Zulfiqar", 50xM60A1, 100xChieftan Mk 5, 100xT-62, 200xT-72/T-72S, SomeT-72M1Z, 350xT-72Z, 50xScorpion, 200xBMP-1, 200xM113A1, 320xBTR-40/-50/-60/-152, Various EE-9, Cascevel, Ferret, Fox, and M-8 "Greyhound" Armored Cars

AT Weapons: 200x75mm M20 RcR, 200x106mm M40 RcR, 100x57mm M18 RcR, 90+ENTAC, 1,000xSS-11/12, 30xDragon, 130xTOW, 100+AT-4, 450xRPG-7, 200xRPG-22, 55x3.5" M20 "Bazooka"

Artillery: 1,800xTowed 75mm, 85mm Artillery, 150x105mm M-101, 200x122mm D-30, 800x130mm M-46, Towed 155mm M-114, 150x155mm M-109, 30x175mm M-107, 20x203mm M-110, 55x122mm 2S1, Self-Propelled 122mm "Thunder 1" and 155mm "Thunder 2", 50xTowed 155mm GHN-45 and G-5, 240mm "Fadjir-3" and 333mm "Fadjir-5" MRL, 64x122mm BM-21 MRL, 900x81mm Mortars, 100x4.2" Mortars, 700x120mm Mortars

SSM: 300+SCUD-B, 60xSCUD-C

Anti-Aircraft: 1,800xTowed (23mm, 35mm, 40mm, 57mm, 85mm) AA Guns, 100xSP ZSU-57/2, Some ZSU-23/4, I-HAWK, SA-7, and some "Stinger" AAGM, 200xStatic "Rapier"

Combat Aircraft: Fixed Wing: 15xMiG-29, 25xSu-24, 25xF-14, 50xF-5E/F, 40xF-4D/E, 20xF-6(MiG-19), 40xF-7 (MiG-21)

Helicopter: 12xAH-1J "Cobra", 21xMi-17, 6xAB-205, 72xAB-206, 5xAB-212, 64xCH-47, 22xBell 214C, Some Mi-8

Small Arms: 9mm "Uzi", Baretta, and H&K MP-5 Submachineguns, 7.62mm G3, 7.62mm AKM, and 5.56mm M-16 Assault Rifles, 7.62mm MG1A1, 7.62mm FN-MAG, 12.7mm "Browning" M2, and DShK Machineguns, 40mm M-79 and 30mm AGS-17 Grenade Launchers

- Notes:
- 1) The T-72S is a locally manufactured T-72G.
 - 2) The "Zulfiqar" is reported to have begun mass production, but the exact status of this program is uncertain.
 - 3) Thirty additional Mi-17's are on order.
 - 4) The "Thunder 1" and "Thunder 2" are locally manufactured SP artillery systems, just now entering service.
 - 5) There is a new "Light" fighter aircraft, the "Azarakash" now entering production. It is a derivative of the F-5 "Tiger".
 - 6) The serviceability of any American built weapons is questionable.

POINTS OF CONTACT

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