

IRANIAN WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION:

THE BROADER STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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The Strategic Context

The fact that Iran denies it is seeking nuclear weapons means that it has never articulated either its reasons for acquiring such weapons or how they fit into the broader context of its national strategy. It is easy to speculate about Iran's reasons:

- The heritage of the Shah's ambitions, nuclear program, and search for nuclear weapons;
- The status and influence awarded to declared and undeclared members of the nuclear club;
- The need for contingency capabilities that Iran may never translate into the actual production and deployment of nuclear weapons.
- Iran's fear of the US, Israel, and "encirclement" by its neighbors;
- The fact Israel, India, and Pakistan are regional nuclear powers;
- Its ambition for regional hegemony;
- Fear of US and/or Israeli attacks and invasion;
- The leverage it can gain in putting political or military influence on its neighbors;
- The fact Iran suffered from Iraqi chemical weapons attacks during much of the Iran-Iraq War from 1980-1988 without any meaningful protest or action by the international community and found after the Gulf War in 1991 that Iraq had made a massive effort to develop biological and nuclear weapons.
- Its inability to match its neighbors' access to advanced conventional military weapons and technology from the US, Europe, and Russia;
- An aggressive, religion-driven political system and search to find ways to export its religious revolution and influence in the region, particularly in a "Shi'ite crescent" involving Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon;
- The threat posed by Sunni religious extremism and denial of the Islamic legitimacy of Shi'ite beliefs;
- The fact that acquiring nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, while expensive, is cheaper than a conventional arms race and will be partly paid for by the dual-use capabilities it obtains through paying for nuclear power; and,
- A mixed and uncertain opportunistic strategy that is both defensive and seeks to find ways to expand Iran's power and influence.

It is always possible to translate the statements of Iran's Supreme Leader and more political clerics, President and senior officials, military leaders, and senior officers in its military and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) into guesses about Iran's motives, nuclear strategy, and future nuclear force posture. A guess, however, is just a guess. All of the motives listed above are possible, and any expert can find aspects of Iran's statements, security policy, military doctrine, and history and actions that can be used to justify a given interpretation.

The fact remains that no one outside Iran's senior leadership can be sure, and even their actions may be driven as much by events and future opportunities, and the success of any Iranian program, as by their current plans. No one can totally discount the possibility that Iran will not pursue the development of nuclear forces or simply halt at developing the ability to rapidly deploy weapons in the future: the so-called breakout or "bomb in the basement" scenario.

An examination of Iran's overall military efforts does, however, help put Iran's *possible* programs in a broader strategic context. The fact that Iran is putting so much effort into developing ballistic missile systems which need warheads with weapons of mass destruction to be truly effective is analyzed in the following chapter. Iran also, however, faces major problems in modernizing its conventional military forces and the acquisition of nuclear forces would make it much harder for any Gulf or outside power to challenge its emerging strengths in asymmetric warfare or to attack or invade Iran.

Iran's Conventional and Asymmetric Forces

Iran has far weaker conventional forces in comparative terms than it had during the time of the Shah or the Iran-Iraq War. Nevertheless, it is slowly improving its conventional forces, is seeking to modernize its air fleet and air defenses, and is now the only regional military power that poses a serious conventional military threat to Saudi Arabia and Gulf stability. Iranian forces also conduct extensive military exercises and have sometimes confronted US and British naval and air forces in the Gulf.

Iran has growing capabilities for asymmetric warfare, including a large Naval Guards force, submarines, anti-ship missiles, and mine warfare capabilities. Iran's Al Quds force and intelligence services have supported insurgent movements in Iraq with training, weapons, and key components for improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Iran deals with outside terrorist groups and violent non-state actors. It actively supports Hezbollah in Lebanon and hard-line groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in attacking Israel. Iran is also well aware that Sunni and Shi'ite tensions are at an all-time high in the Islamic world, driven in part by neo-Salafist extremist and terrorist groups like Al Qa'ida.

Iran can pose a mixture of conventional and asymmetric threats. Iran's options include:¹

- Direct and indirect threats of using force. (I.e. Iranian efforts at proliferation)
- Use of irregular forces and asymmetric attacks.
- Proxy conflicts using terrorist or extremist movements or exploiting internal sectarian, ethnic, tribal, dynastic, regional tensions.
- Arms transfers, training in host country, use of covert elements like Quds force.
- Harassment and attrition through low level attacks, clashes, incidents.
- Limited, demonstrative attacks to increase risk, intimidation.
- Strikes at critical node or infrastructure.

These threats are also anything by theoretical, Iran and other powers have already posed them in tangible form:

- Iranian tanker war with Iraq
- Oil spills and floating mines in Gulf.
- Libyan "stealth" mining of Red Sea.
- Use of Quds force in Iraq.
- "Incidents" in pilgrimage in Makkah.
- Support of Shi'ite groups in Bahrain.
- Missile and space tests (future nuclear test?).

- Naval guard's seizure of British boat, confrontation with US Navy, exercises in Gulf.
- Development of limited "close the Gulf" capability.
- Flow of illegal's and smuggling across Yemeni border.

Iran has also greatly strengthened the asymmetric elements in its force structure, especially in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. The IRGC now has the following elements:²

- 125,000+ men and the ability to draw upon a manpower pool with an additional 1,000,000 Basij.
- A 20,000-man Naval Guards force, including 5,000 marines.
- This naval branch and other IRGC elements are armed with HY-3 CSS-C-3 Seersucker (6-12 launchers, 100 missiles, 95-100 km), and 10 Houdong missile patrol boats with C-802s (120 km), and 40+ Boghammers with ATGMs, recoilless rifles, and machine guns.
- Large-scale mine warfare capability using small craft and commercial boats.
- Bases in areas that pose an immediate threat to all shipping through the Gulf, including Bandar e-Abbas, Khorramshar, Larak, Abu Musa, Al Farsiyah, Halul, and Sirri.
- An air branch reported to fly UAVs and UCAVs, and controls Iran's strategic missile force. These forces include one Shahab SRBM brigade (300-500-700 km) with 12-18 launchers, and one Shahab-3 IRBM battalion (1,200-1,280 km) with 6 launchers and 4 missiles each.

While there are very real limits to Iran's asymmetric capabilities, it also has built up forces designed to attack shipping and other targets in the Gulf, and has repeatedly claimed that it has the capability to close the Gulf. The key Iranian assets and capabilities involved include:

- 3 Kilo (Type 877) and unknown number of midget (Qadr-SS-3) submarines; smart torpedoes, (anti-ship missiles?) and smart mine capability.
- •Use of 5 minelayers, amphibious ships, small craft, commercial boats.
- Attacks on tankers, shipping, offshore facilities by naval guards.
- Raids with 8 P-3MP/P-3F Orion MPA and combat aircraft with anti-ship missiles (C-801K (8-42 km), CSS-N-4, and others).
- Free-floating mines, smart and dumb mines, oil spills.
- Land-based, long-range anti-ship missiles based on land, islands (Seersucker HY-2, CSS-C-3), and ships (CSS-N-4, and others. Sunburn?).
- Forces whose exercises demonstrate the capability to raid or attack key export and infrastructure facilities.

Iran is developing a long-range missile force, and seems to be developing a range of weapons of mass destruction, Iran has never properly declared its holdings of chemical weapons, and the status of its biological weapons programs is unknown. Most important, the disclosures by the IAEA indicate that that Iran will continue to covertly seek nuclear weapons.

If Iran deploys chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons; it could deliver them using missile, fighter-bombers, or covert means of delivery means. It could use its Scuds and some types of antiship missiles to deliver such warheads relatively short distances. Its Shahab-3 missiles already can reach most all of the key targets in Gulf countries, including many Saudi cities on the Red Sea coast and in western Saudi Arabia, and Iran

is developing liquid and solid-fueled missiles with substantially greater range-payloads than the Shahab.

Iran's missile developments also have value as deterrents, weapons of intimidation, or warfighting systems -- even if they are not armed with weapons of mass destruction. Missile systems like Iran's Shahab-3s are probably too inaccurate, and have too limited a payload capacity, to be effective in delivering conventional weapons against critical targets. They could have only a major military impact—even against area targets—if they were armed with warheads carrying weapons of mass destruction. This does not mean, however, that conventionally armed missiles could not be used as terror weapons against area targets, or weapons of intimidation.

The Impact of Weak and Aging Conventional Forces

Iran is still heavily dependent on major conventional weapons systems that it acquired before the fall of the Shah, and which have never been fully updated since Iran lost access to US and European arms during 1979-1980. It has never had free access to Russia's modern arms, and much of its inventory consists of Chinese and North Korean systems or designs of limited effectiveness.

The Lingering Impact of Past Defeats

As **Figure 2.1** shows Iran could never compete with Iraq in either the quality or volume of its arms imports during the Iran-Iraq War. Eight years of combat ended in 1988 with massive Iraqi victories that deprived Iran of some 40–60 percent of its inventory of land force weapons and made Iraq the Gulf's preeminent military power. The Iraqi victories in the spring and summer of 1988 destroyed or captured between 40 and 60 percent of the Iranian armor inventory and up to 50 percent of Iran's armored personnel carrier (APC) artillery.³

Figure 2.1: The Iranian-Iraqi Arms Race during the Iran-Iraq War, 1981–1988

(In Millions of Current US Dollars)

<u>Supplier</u>	<u>New Arms Agreements</u>		<u>Actual Deliveries</u>	
	<u>Iran</u>	<u>Iraq</u>	<u>Iran</u>	<u>Iraq</u>
Soviet Union	240	20,650	370	21,370
China	3,970	5,520	2,750	4,380
All Other Communist	5,740	6,030	4,550	6,300
Total Communist	9,950	32,200	7,670	32,050
European Non-Communist	5,340	9,790	4,170	10,710
United States	*	**	*	**
All Other Non-Communist	1,410	5,260	1,970	3,900
Total Non-Communist	6,750	14,960	6,140	14,610
TOTAL	17,480	47,250	13,810	46,660

* Does not include covert U.S. arms sales during Iran Contra.

** Value less than \$50 million.

Source: Richard F. Grimmett, *Trends in Conventional Arms Transfers to the Third World by Major Supplier*, Washington, Congressional Research Service (CRS), CRS 89-434F, July 31, 1989.

Since 1990, Saudi Arabia and the other southern Gulf States—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—have each built up their military and security forces by making a massive collective military investment. Unlike Iran and Iraq, the military efforts of the southern Gulf States have also been carried out with the knowledge that the United States and its allies could provide power projection forces and that such protection would almost certainly be forthcoming because of the role the Gulf played in the world's oil exports and the fact it had more than 60 percent of the world proven oil reserves.

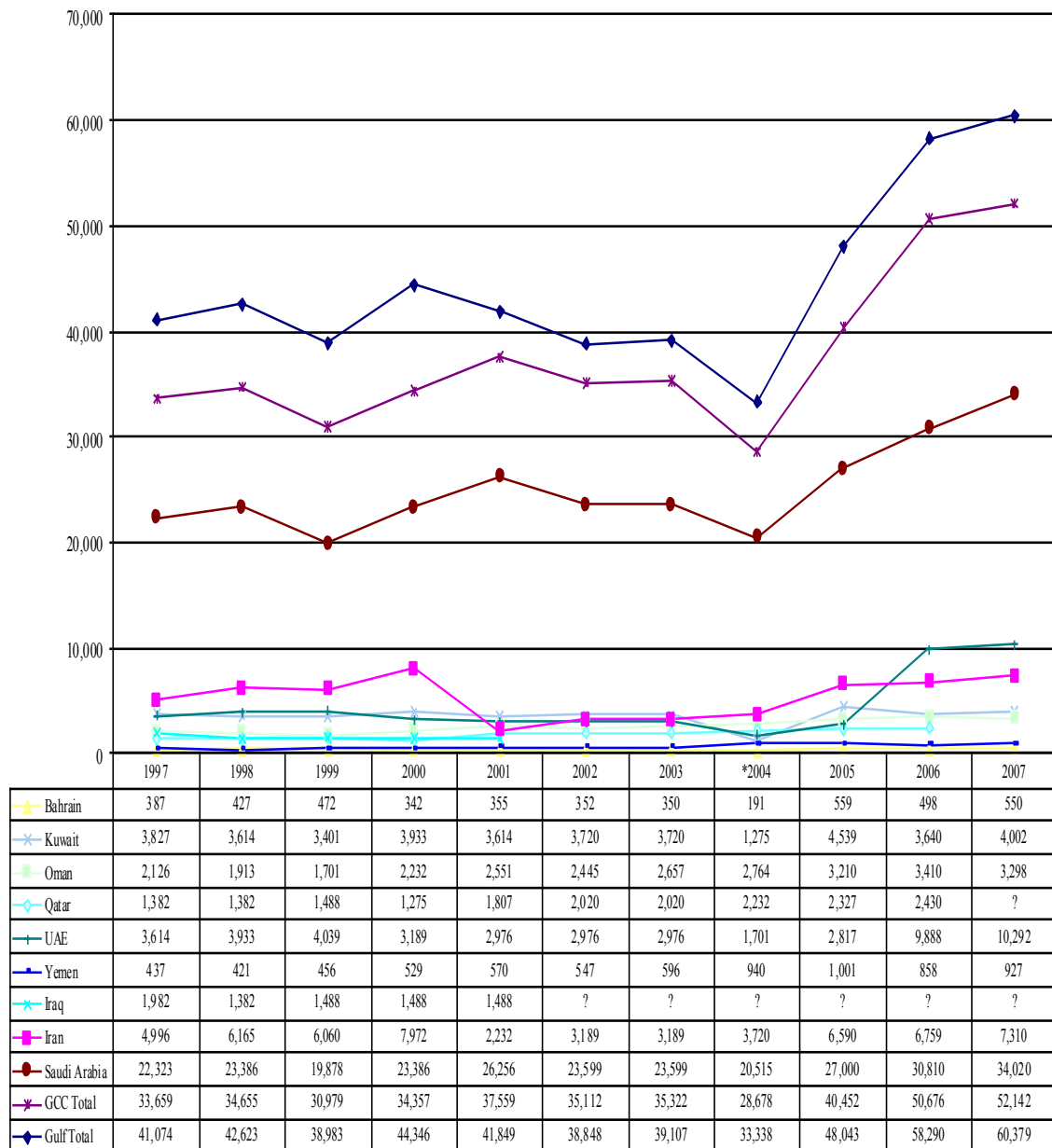
Resources: The Causes of Iranian Weakness

Both military expenditure and arms import data show that Iran cannot hope to keep pace with the Southern Gulf states in terms of resources, much less the even more advanced conventional forces the US, Britain, and France can deploy to the region. Saudi Arabia and the Southern Gulf states are spending far more on their military budgets and arms import than Iran or any potential threat. Much of this lead military spending and arms imports, however, was wasted because of the lack of unity, interoperability, and focus on supporting key missions in the ways necessary to create effective forces, deterrence, or balance warfighting capabilities.

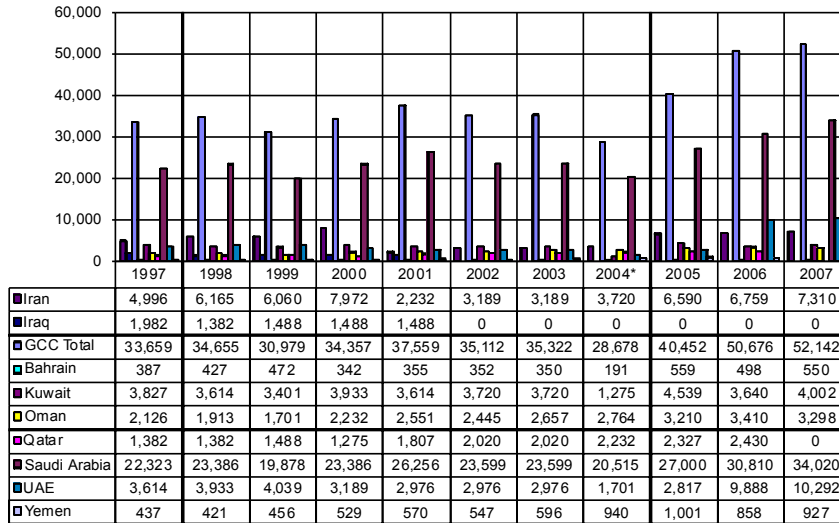
- **Figure 2.2** shows the shift in the nature of the shift in the resources devoted to the regional military build-up that began to emerge before the Iran's defeat in the Iran-Iraq War, and Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War, but which has accelerated ever since. The Southern Gulf leads the regional arms race that the Northern Gulf states began. Saudi Arabia has by far been the largest spender in the Gulf, although several small Southern Gulf states – notably the UAE, Kuwait and Oman – have been very large spenders in proportion to their size.
- **Figure 2.3** shows the comparison between Iran's military expenditures and those of its neighbors in more detail.
- **Figure 2.4** shows that the GCC lead in military spending has only imposed a either consistent or smaller burden as a percentage of GNP.
- **Figure 2.5** shows comparative Gulf arms agreements and deliveries from 1988 to 2008. The GCC states have a massive collective lead over Iran and any credible combination of neighboring states. For Iran, this was partly a matter of choice and partly a matter of economic weakness. For Iraq, it has been forced upon Iraq by a UN arms embargo from September 1990 to the fall of Saddam Hussein in March 2003, and by its massive defeat in the US-led invasion that drove Hussein from power.
- **Figure 2.6** shows just how large a lead the GCC states have over Iran, a lead compounded by the failure of many Iranian military manufacturing efforts and far better GCC country access to the most advanced US and European weapons and military technology.
- **Figure 2.7** shows that the US is the major arms supplier for most of the Gulf States, although major Western European suppliers have recently begun to plan an increasing role in supplying Saudi, Emirati and Omani armed forces. As mentioned earlier, Iraq is now mainly dependent upon US support to increase its force capabilities, and Iran is the sole primary recipient of arms supplies from Russia. Other Gulf States have chosen to include Russian arms imports as part of a broader force mix of systems from the US and Europe.

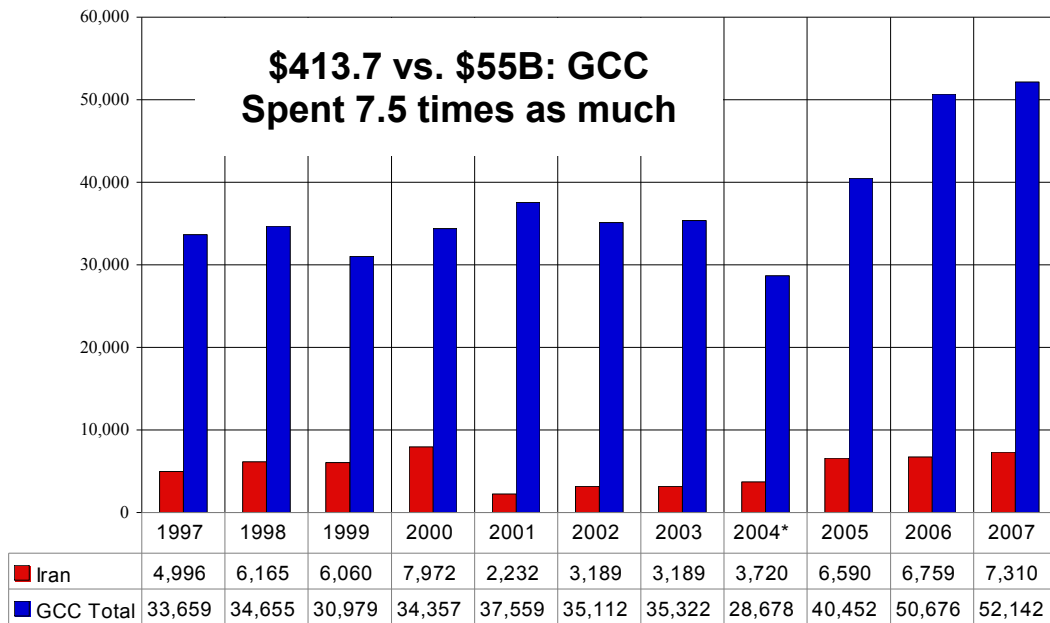
Figure 2.2: Southern Gulf Military Expenditures by Country: 1997-2007

(in Current \$US Millions)

Source: International Institute of Strategic Studies, Military Balance, various editions.

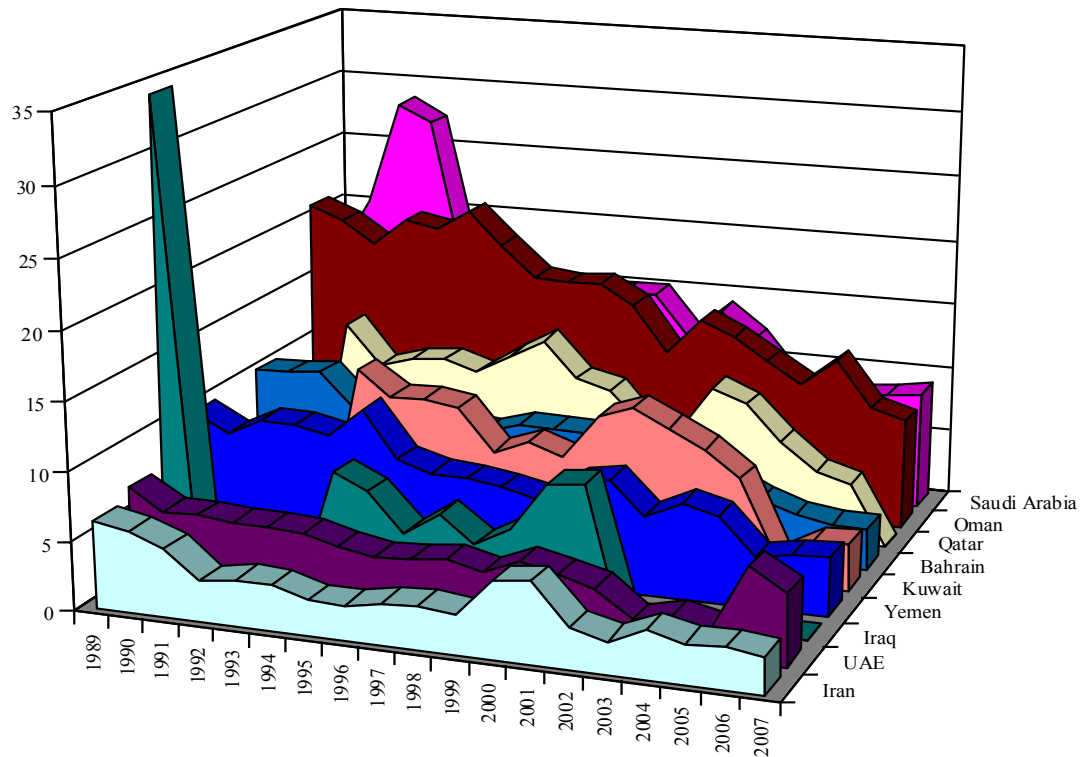
* The IISS did not report military expenditures for 2004. The number for 2004 represents the military budget, which does not include procurement costs.

Figure 2.3: Gulf Military Spending, 1997–2008 (In Millions of Current US Dollars)**Gulf Military Spending by Country**

Iranian Spending versus Total Gulf Spending

4Source: IISS, Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.4: Comparative Military Expenditures of the Gulf Powers as a Percent of GNP - 1989-2007

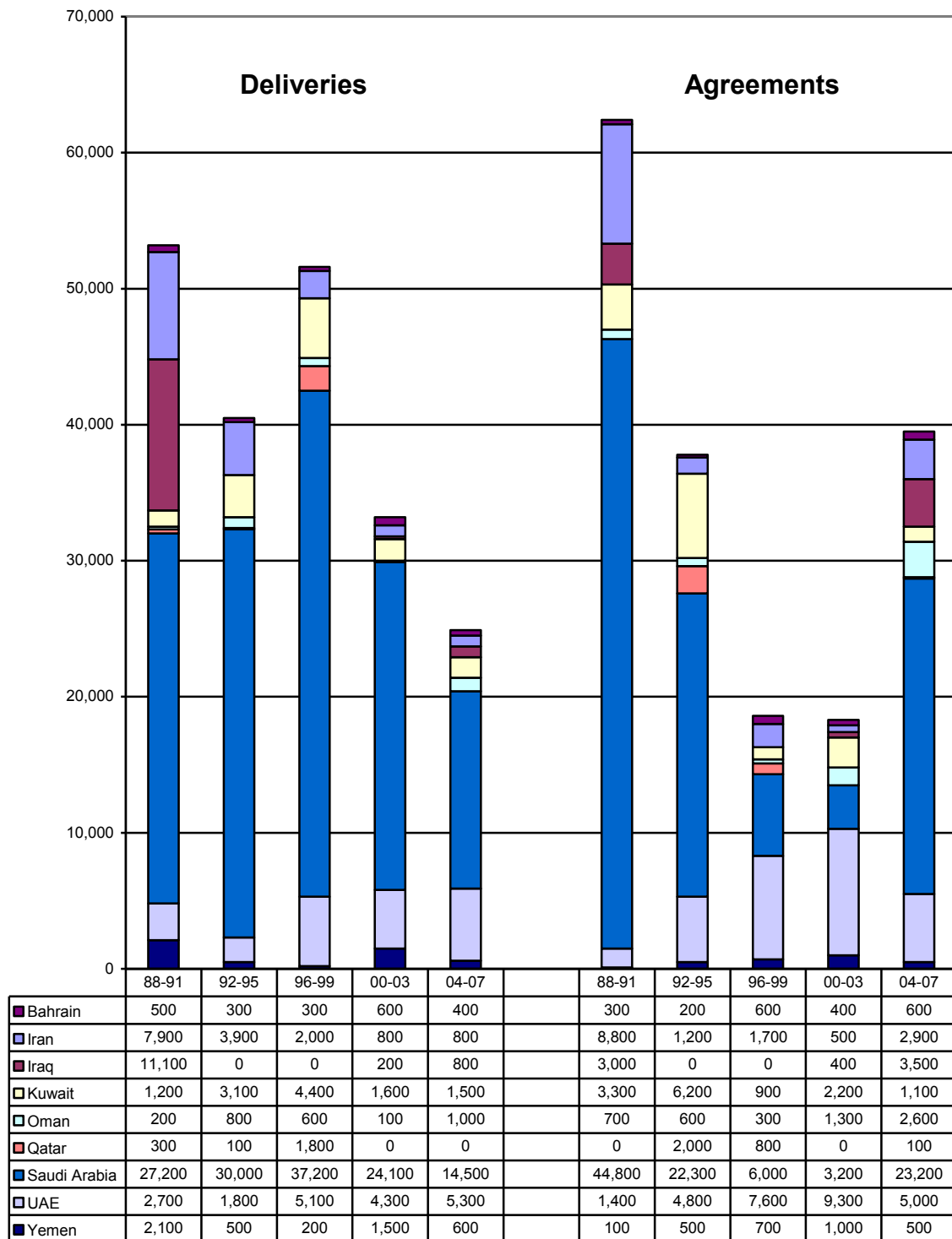


	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Iran	6.4	6	5	3	3.4	3.3	2.6	2.5	3	3.1	2.9	5.5	5.8	3	2.3	3.4	2.8	2.9	2.6
UAE	7.3	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.3	4.8	4.3	4.4	4.7	4.1	5.2	4.6	3.9	2	2.5	2	6.7	5.1
Iraq	34.3	-	-	-	-	8.3	7.1	4.3	6	4.1	5.5	9.1	9.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yemen	9.9	8.6	9.8	9.8	9.2	11.4	8	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.1	7.8	8.1	5.7	7	6.3	3.7	4.1	4.2
Kuwait	6.1	53.1	101.1	77.0	12.8	11	11.1	10.7	7.6	8.6	7.7	11.1	12	10.7	9.4	7.5	2	3.4	3.6
Bahrain	10.5	10.5	10.8	8.2	7.9	7.5	7.7	7.5	8.2	8.1	8.1	4.7	4.8	4	5.6	4.4	3.5	3.1	3
Qatar	-	-	13.2	10.2	10.9	11.1	10.4	11.9	13.3	10.6	10	7.3	7.2	10.9	9.9	7.3	5.2	4.5	-
Oman	21.1	20.1	18.4	20.5	20	21.5	19.1	16.8	16.6	16.7	15.3	11.9	14.5	13.5	11.9	10.2	12.3	8.9	8.2
Saudi Arabia	15.9	20.6	28.5	27.2	16.4	14.1	13.2	14.9	14.9	14.9	14.9	11.9	14	12	8.9	8.36	8.2	8.5	8.9

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from the IISS, Military Balance, various editions, ACDA, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1995, ACDA/GPO, Washington, 1996 and US State Department, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1999-2000, Bureau of Arms Control, Washington, 2001.

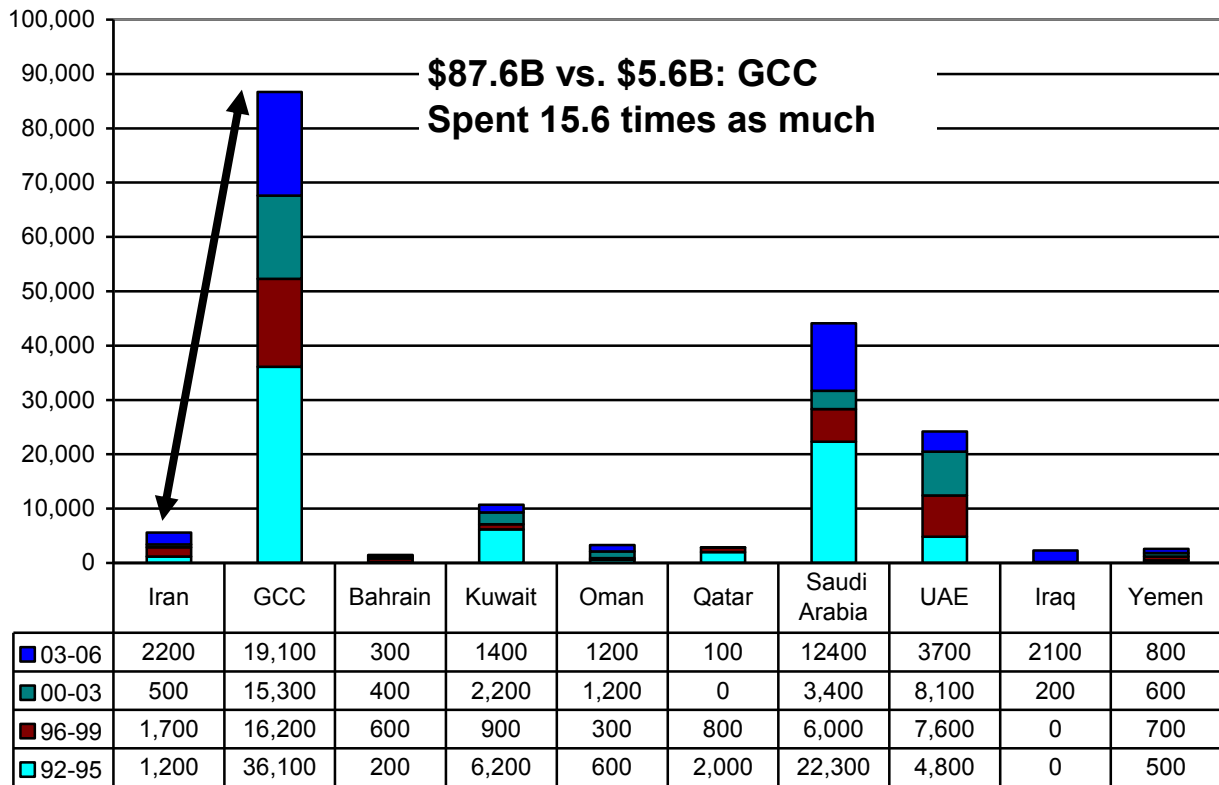
Figure 2.5: Gulf Arms Agreements and Deliveries by Country: 1988-2007

(in \$US Current Millions)



0 = Data less than \$50 million or nil. All data rounded to the nearest \$100 million.

Source: Richard F. Grimmett, Conventional Arms Transfers to the Developing Nations, Congressional Research Service, various editions.

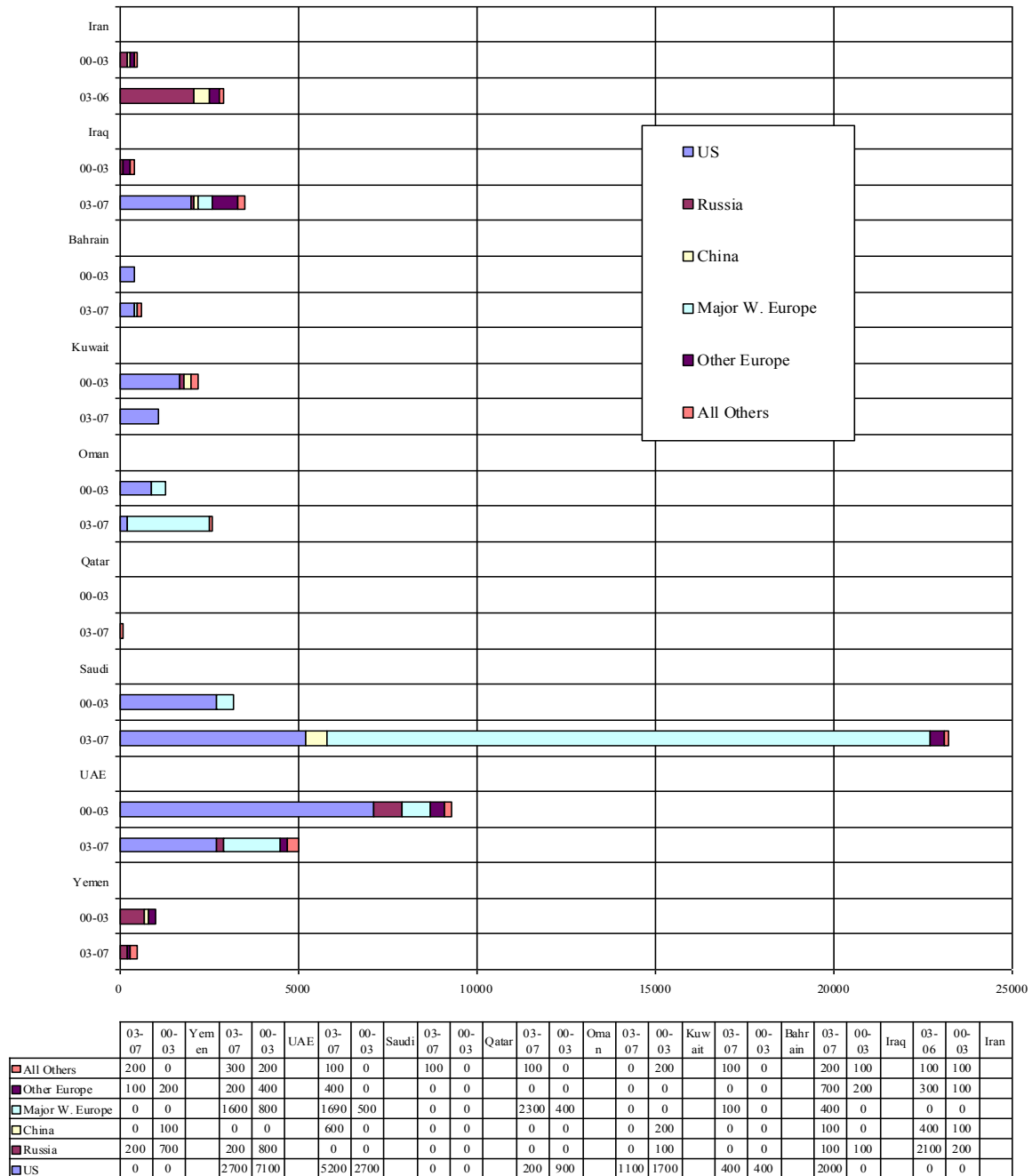
Figure 2.6: GCC versus Iranian New Arms Agreements

0 = Data less than \$50 million or nil. All data rounded to the nearest \$100 million.

Source: Richard F. Grimmett, Conventional Arms Transfers to the Developing Nations, Congressional Research Service, various editions.

Figure 2.7: Gulf New Arms Orders by Supplier Country: 1988-2006

(Arms Agreements in \$US Current Millions)



0 = less than \$50 million or nil, and all data rounded to the nearest \$100 million.

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman, CSIS, from Richard F. Grimmett, Conventional Arms Transfers to the Developing Nations, Congressional Research Service, various editions.

Iran and the Regional Conventional Balance

The impact of decades of inability to import the most advanced conventional weapons, the Iran-Iraq War, Iran's economic problems and lack of spending on military forces and arms imports is all too clear in the current military balance in the Gulf. This is true even if one only considers the balance in terms of regional forces, and ignores US, British and French power projection capabilities.

Iran has sought to create its own military industries, with some success. It has obtained some advanced weapons like the TOR-M short range surface-to-air missile and modern anti-tank guided weapons from Russia, and anti-ship missiles from China. Nevertheless, its efforts still do not offset the decay of much of its aging inventory of conventional weapons, or the wear of wartime operations and constant exercises. Iran is not an emerging hegemon. It is falling behind.

- **Figure 2.8** shows that Iran's military strength is limited in comparative terms, even if one ignores the operational readiness of much of its inventory and force quality.
- **Figure 2.9** shows the limits to Iran's total strength in armor, the key measure of land force conventional military strength.
- **Figure 2.10** focuses on the total number of main battle tanks, perhaps the most important single measure of maneuver warfare strength.
- **Figure 2.11** shows that Iran has even less strength if tank quality is considered, even including export versions of the T-72.
- **Figure 2.12** shows Iran's limited total air strength even if US aid capabilities are ignored and all partially operational Iranian aircraft are counted.
- **Figure 2.13** provides a similar snapshot comparison of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.
- **Figure 2.14** shows the lead nations like Saudi Arabia and the UAE have in advanced types of combat aircraft even if one ignores the power projection capabilities of US, British, and French air forces.
- **Figures 2.15 to 2.16** show the lead other states have in reconnaissance, air control and warning, and intelligence and other surveillance aircraft – again ignoring the power projection capabilities of US, British, and French air forces and their national satellite capabilities.
- **Figure 2.17** shows comparative land-based air defense assets. Iran's principal systems are all obsolete or obsolescent, and this table ignores US ability to deploy ship-borne air defense assets and land-based systems like the Patriot and THAAD.
- **Figure 2.18** shows total naval strength. The Iranian navy is large but virtually all of its large surface ships are worn and obsolete. Its strength lies largely in submarines, and smaller missile, mine warfare, and other craft best suited for asymmetric warfare.
- **Figure 2.19** shows that Iran's strength in anti-ship missile forces lays largely in smaller vessels.
- **Figure 2.20** shows Iran's strength in mine laying capability which is supplemented by the ability to lay mines with many small craft and fishing vessels, and which is not matched by Gulf, US, or British minesweeping capability.
- **Figure 2.21** shows comparative strength in naval helicopters and attack helicopters that could be used in missions in the Gulf. Large numbers of Iran's inventory are obsolescent and/or are not operational.

- **Figure 2.22** shows Iran's limited amphibious lift. It would have to rely on ferries and ships operating in a passive environment and with full access to ports for any large-scale operation.

Any summary quantitative overview cannot measure or portray all of the factors shaping the regional balance of conventional forces. These tables also scarcely mean that Iran is not a significant conventional power, or that it does not have the ability to defend its own territory in depth. At the same time, Iran is both scarcely a hegemon and its conventional forces leave it highly vulnerable to naval and air attack.

Figure 2.8: Gulf Military Forces, 2008

	<u>Iran</u>	<u>Iraq^a</u>	<u>Bahrain</u>	<u>Kuwait</u>	<u>Oman</u>	<u>Qatar</u>	<u>Saudi Arabia^{**}</u>	<u>UAE</u>	<u>Yemen</u>
Manpower									
Total Active	545,000	424,000	8,200	15,500	42,600	11,800	223,500	51,000	66,700
Regular	420,000	375,000	8,200	15,500	34,200	11,800	114,500	51,000	66,700
National Guard & Other	125,000	0	0	0	6,400	0	109,000	0	0
Reserve	350,000	650,000	0	23,700	0	0	0	0	0
Paramilitary	40,000	42,000+	11,160	7,100	4,400	0	15,500	0	71,200+
Army									
Total Manpower	540,000*	375,000	6,000	11,000	25,000	8,500	75,000	51,000	60,000
Active Army Manpower	350,000	375,000	6,000	11,000	25,000	8,500	75,000	51,000	60,000
Reserve	350,000	650,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Main Battle Tanks***	1,613+	2,200	180	368	117	30	910	471	790
Active Main Battle Tanks	1,613+	1,900	180	293	117	30	565	471	790
Active AIFV/RECCE, Lt. Tanks	725+	1,300	71	450	182	108	1,210	619(40)	345
Total APCs	640	2,400	235+	321	216	226	2,240	880	710
Active APCs	640	1,800	235+	281	216	226	2,240	880	240
ATGM Launchers	75	100+	15	118+	58	148	2,040+	305+	71
Self Propelled Artillery	310+	150	13	113	24	28	170	181	25
Towed Artillery	2,010+	1,900	26	0	108	12	238(180)	93	310
MRLs	876+	200	9	27	?	4	60	72+	294
Mortars	5,000	2,000+	21	78	101	45	400	155	502
SSM Launchers	42+	56	0	0	0	0	10+	6	28
Light SAM Launchers	some	1,100	78	60	54	0	1,000+	40+	800
AA Guns	1,700	6,000	27	12+	26	0	0	62	530
Air Force and Air Defense									
Air Force Manpower	37,000	20,000	1,500	2,500	5,000	2,100	20,000	4,500	3,000
Air Defense Manpower	15,000	17,000	0	0	0	0	4,000	0	2,000
Total Combat Capable Aircraft*****	281	316	39	61	48	18	343	172	91
Bombers	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fighter Ground Attack	186	130	21	39	52	12	155	155	30
Fighter/Interceptor	118	180	12	0	0	0	121	0	43
RECCE/FGA RECCE	6+	5	0	0	0	0	10	7	0
AEW C ⁴ I/BM	-	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
MR/MPA**	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OCU/COIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	5	0
Combat Capable Trainers	29	157	6	11	0	6	57	17	18
Transport Aircraft****	104+	12	4	4	21	6	45	23	18
Tanker Aircraft	0	2	0	0	0	0	15	0	0
Total Helicopters****	267	375	47	29	41	25	195	107+	20
Armed Helicopters****	60	100	24	16	0	19	39	40+	8
Other Helicopters****	107	275	23	13	41	6	156	67	12
Major SAM Launchers	205+	400	8	36	6+	-	224	some	some
Light SAM Launchers	some	1,100	-	some	40	75	1,649	-	some
AA Guns	some	6,000	-	some	26	-	1,220	-	-
Navy									
Total Naval Manpower	38,000*	2,000	700	2,000	4,200	1,800	15,500	2,500	1,700
Regular Navy	18,000	2,000	700	2,000	4,200	1,800	12,500	2,500	1,700
Naval Guards	20,000	0	-	500	0	0	0	0	0
Marines	2,600	-	-	-	-	-	3,000	-	0
Major Surface Combattants									
Missile	3	0	3	0	2	0	11	4	0
Other	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patrol Craft									
Missile	11	1	4	10	4	7	9	8	4

(Revolutionary Guards)	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	129	5	4	0	7	-	56	6	16
Revolutionary Guards (Boats)	40+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Submarines	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mine Vessels	5	3	0	0	0	0	7	2	6
Amphibious Ships	13	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Landing Craft	8	-	5	2	4	0	8	28	5
Support Ships	26	2	1	1	6	-	5	3	0
Naval Air	2,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Naval Aircraft									
Fixed Wing Combat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
MR/MPA	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armed Helicopters	10	0	0	0	0	0	27	14	0
SAR Helicopters	-	0	0	13	0	0	-	4	0
Mine Warfare Helicopters	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Helicopters	17	-	1	-	-	-	19	-	-

Notes:

Equipment in storage is shown in parentheses.

Air Force totals include all helicopters, including army operated weapons, and all heavy surface-to-air missile launchers.

a The Figures for Iraq are for March 2003, before the Iraq War.

* Iranian total includes roughly 120,000 Revolutionary Guard actives in land forces and 20,000 in naval forces.

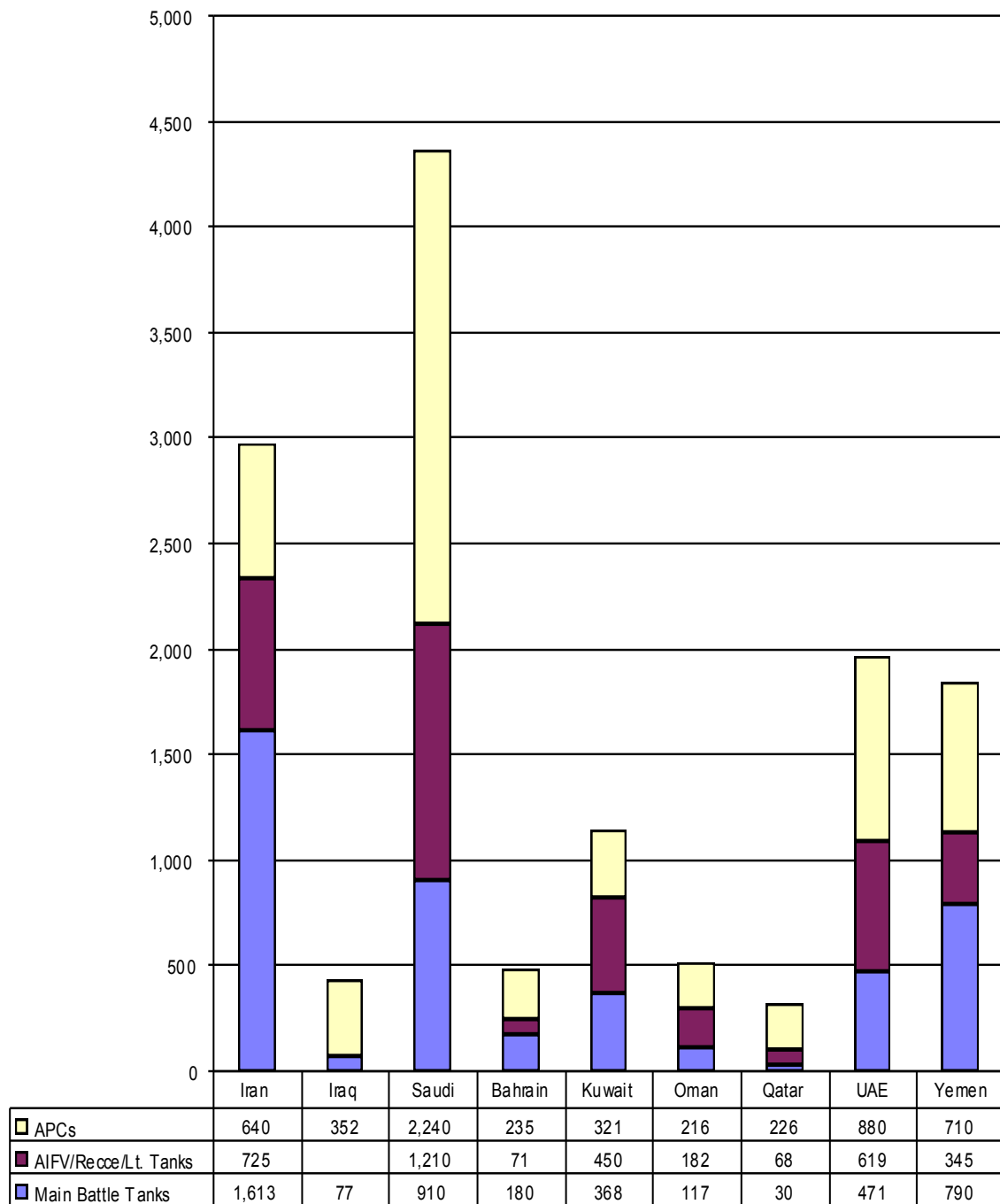
** Saudi Totals for reserve include National Guard Tribal Levies. The total for land forces includes active National Guard equipment. These additions total 1,117 AIFVs, 1,820(810) APCs, and 77 towed artillery weapons. As for the National Guard, some estimates put the manpower at 95,000–100,000.

*** Total tanks include tanks in storage or conversion.

**** Includes navy, army, National Guard, and royal flights, but not paramilitary.

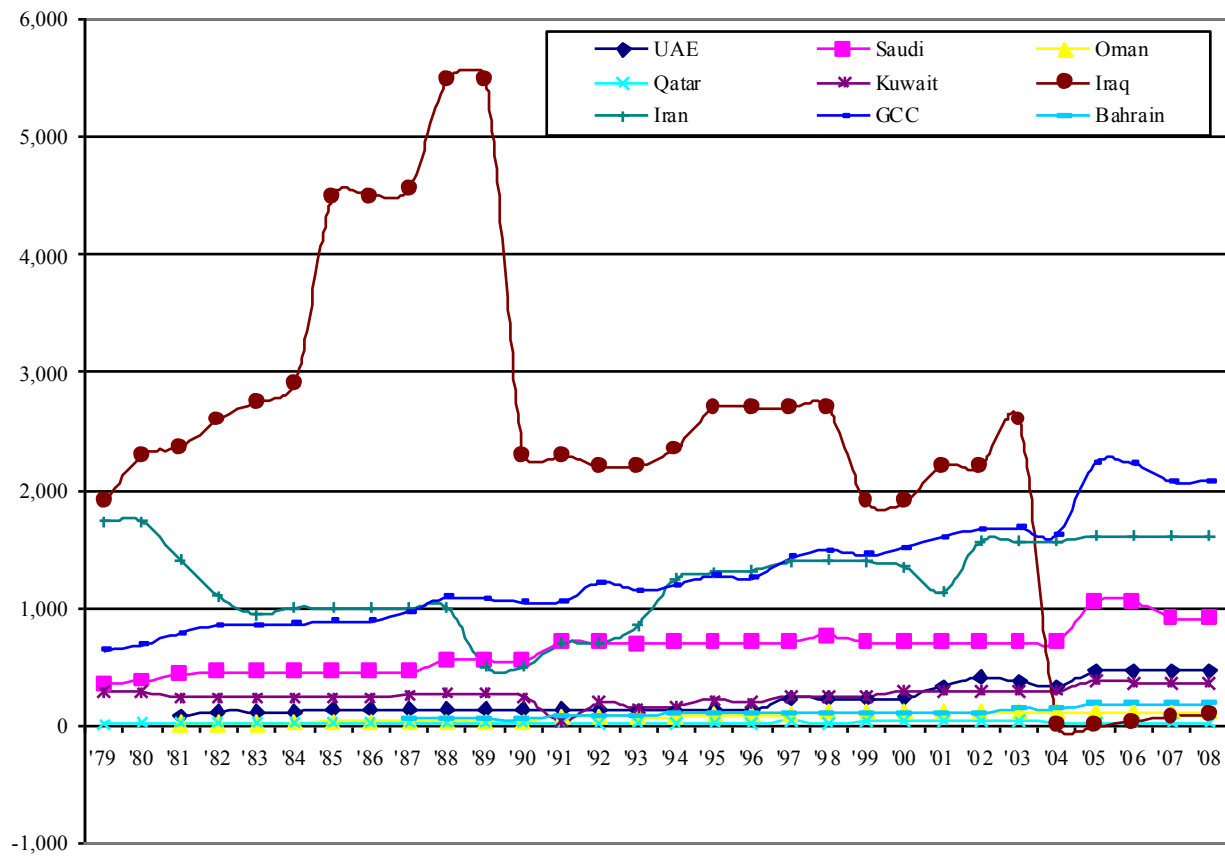
*****Totals do not include recce,FGA recce, AEW C⁴/BM, MR/MPA and OCU/COIN units.

Source: Adapted from interviews, International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *Military Balance, 2005-2006*; Jane's, *Sentinel Security Assessment, Periscope*; and Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance in the Middle East*.

Figure 2.9: Total Gulf Operational Armored Fighting Vehicles in 2008

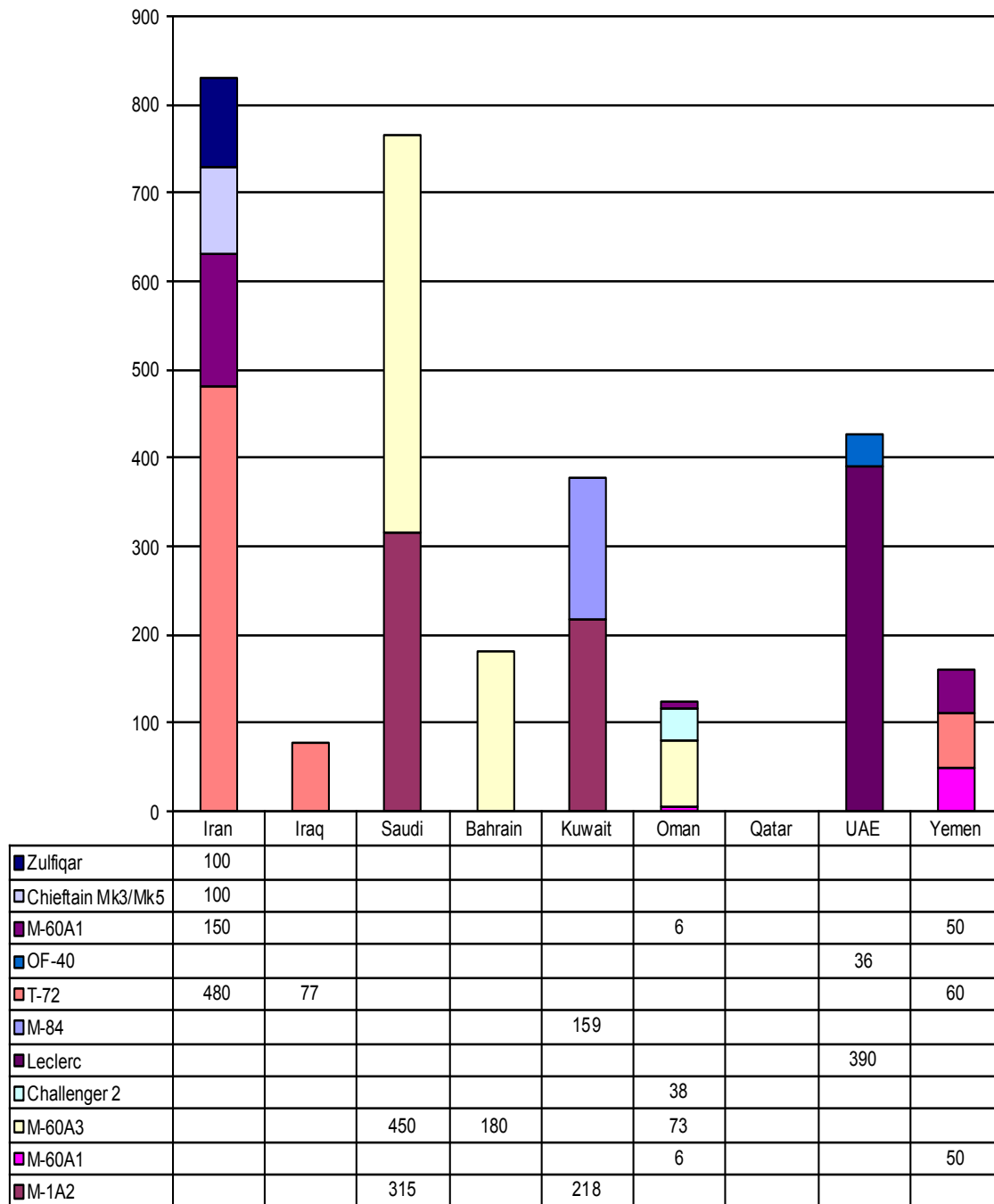
Source: Estimated by Anthony H. Cordesman using data from various editions of the IISS [The Military Balance](#) and Jane's [Sentinel](#).

Figure 2.10: Total Operational Main Battle Tanks in All Gulf Forces, 1979–2008



Note: Iranian totals include Revolutionary Guards, and Iraqi totals include Republican Guards and Special Republican Guards.

Source: Estimated using data from the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *Military Balance*, various editions.

Figure 2.11: Medium to High Quality Main Battle Tanks By Type in 2008

Source: Estimated by Anthony H. Cordesman using data from the IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.12: Total Operational Combat Aircraft in All Gulf Forces 1993-2008

(Does not include stored or unarmed electronic warfare, recce or trainer aircraft)

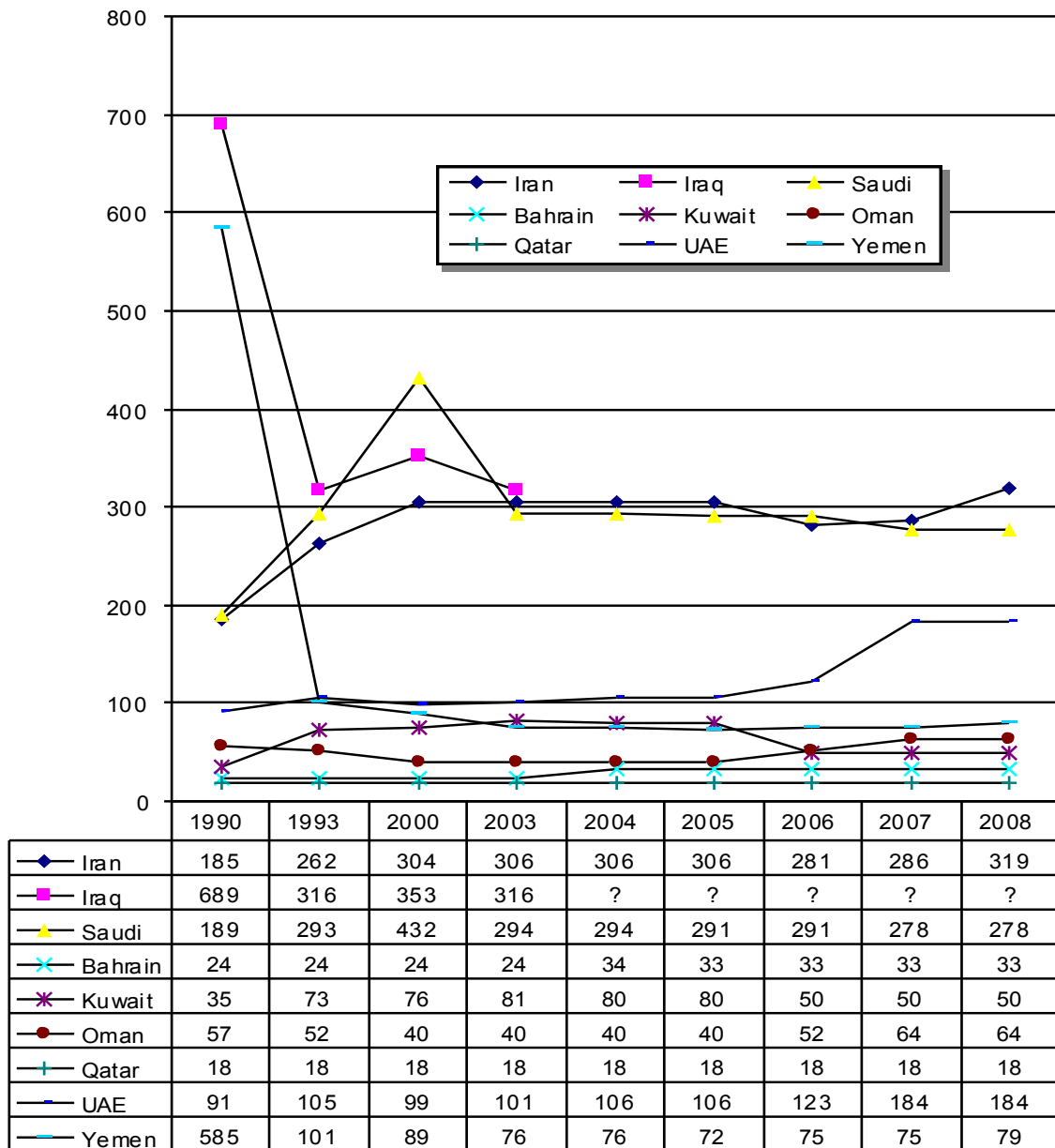
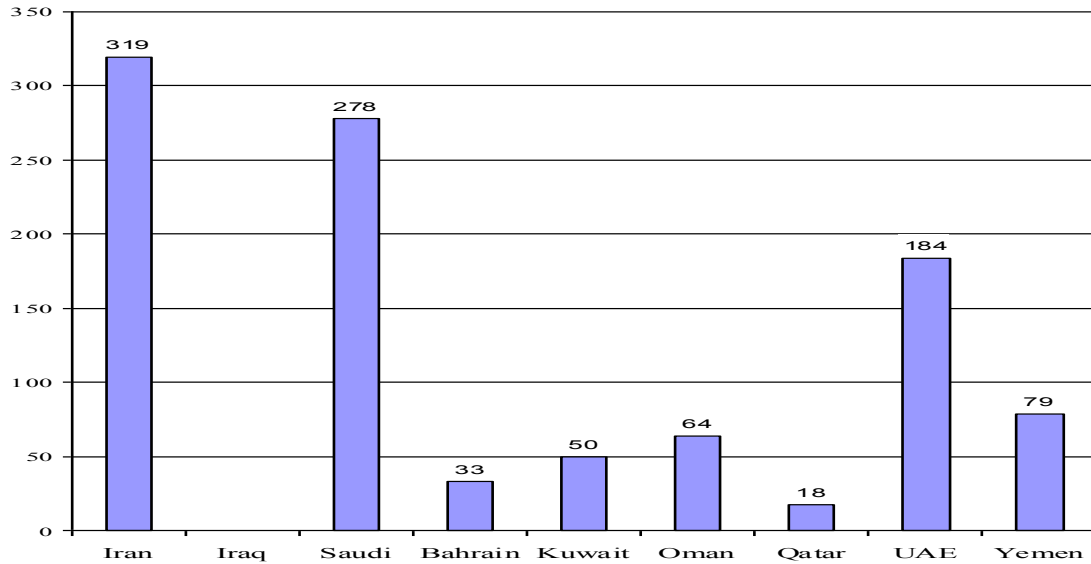
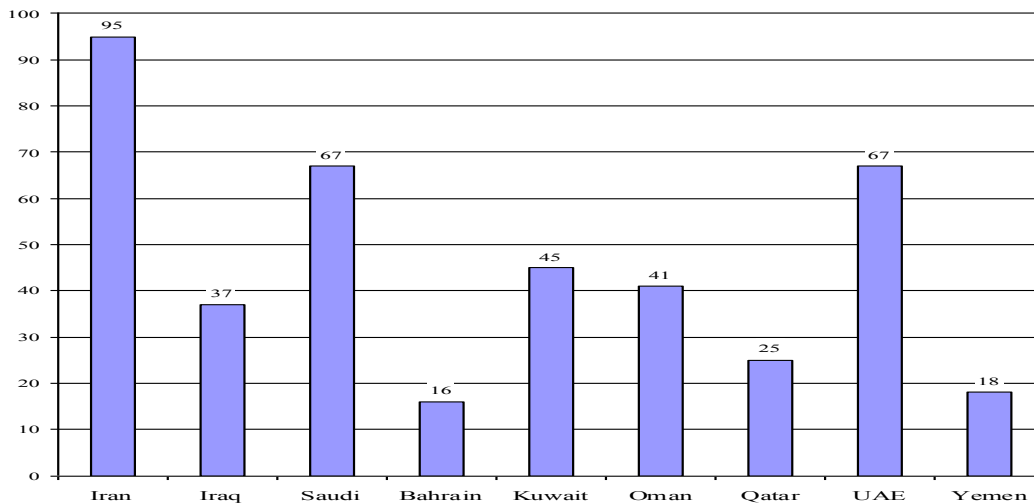
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from various sources and IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

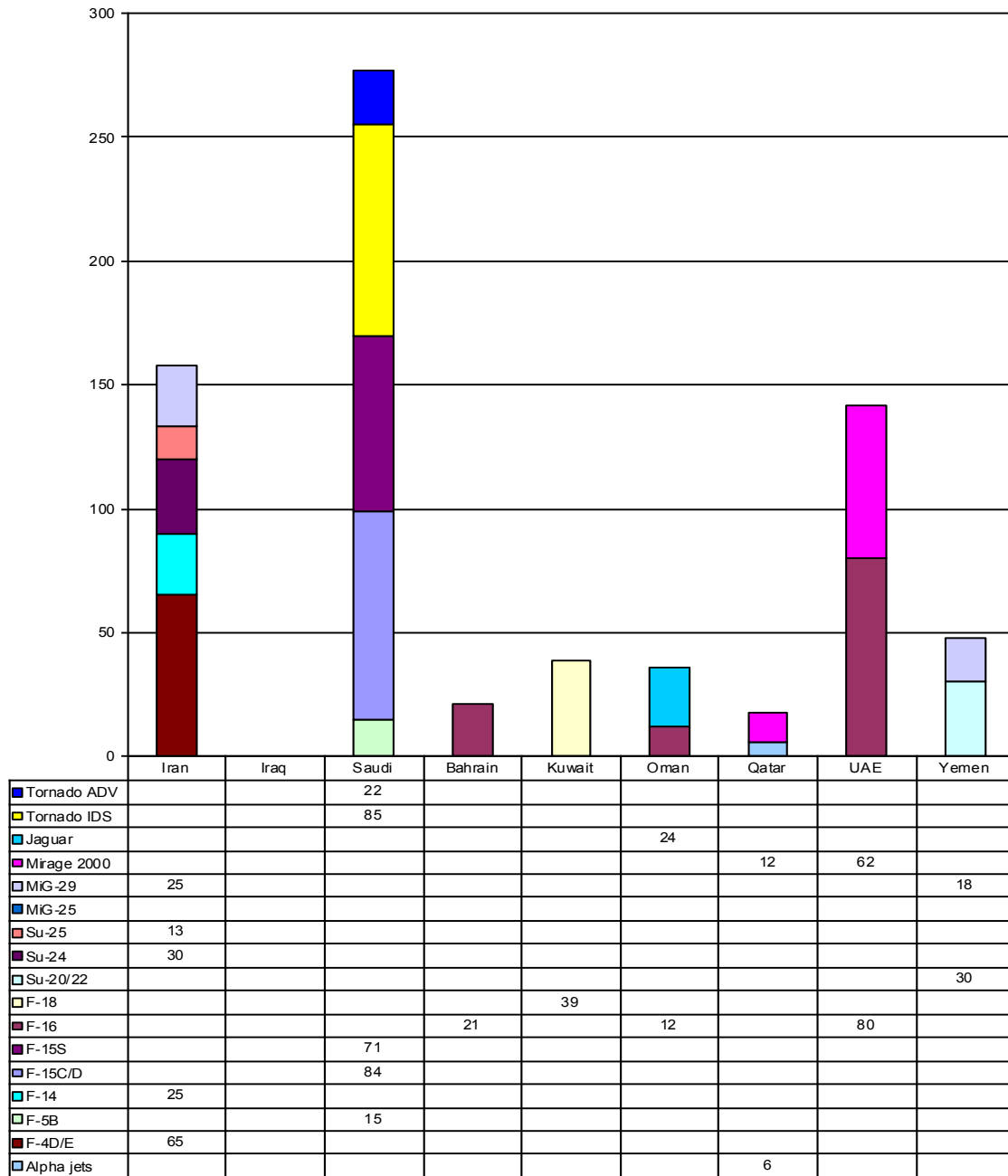
Figure 2.13: Total Operational Combat Aircraft in 2008**Fixed Wing Combat Aircraft****Armed and Attack Helicopters**

Note: Only armed or combat-capable fixed wing combat aircraft are counted, not other trainers or aircraft. Note: Yemen has an additional 5 MiG-29S/UB on order. Iraq totals are for March 2003, before the Iraq War.

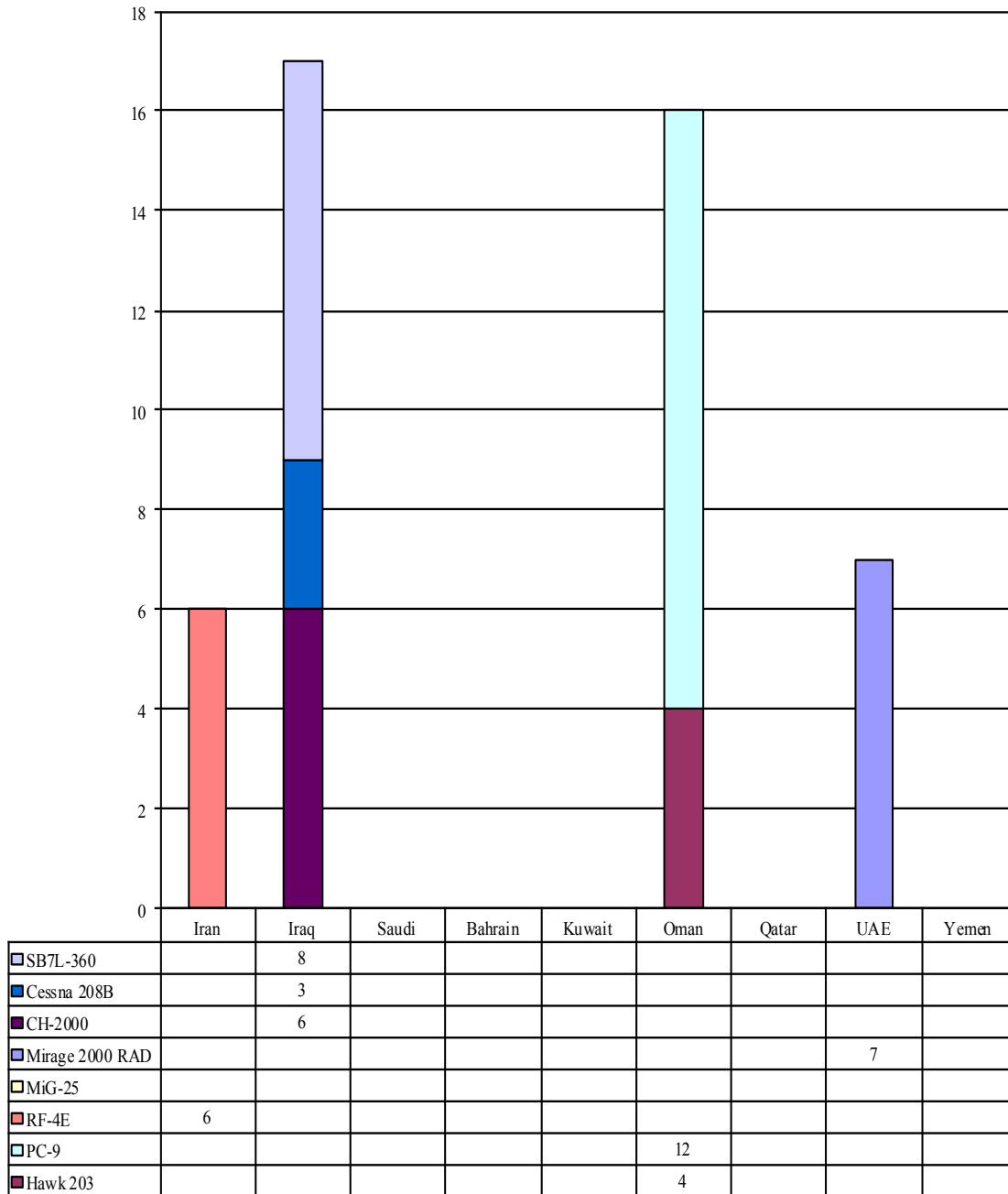
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.14: Gulf High and Medium Quality Fixed Wing Fighter, Fighter Attack, Attack, Strike, and Multi-Role Combat Aircraft By Type in 2008

(Totals do not include combat-capable recce but does include OCUs and Hawk combat-capable trainers)

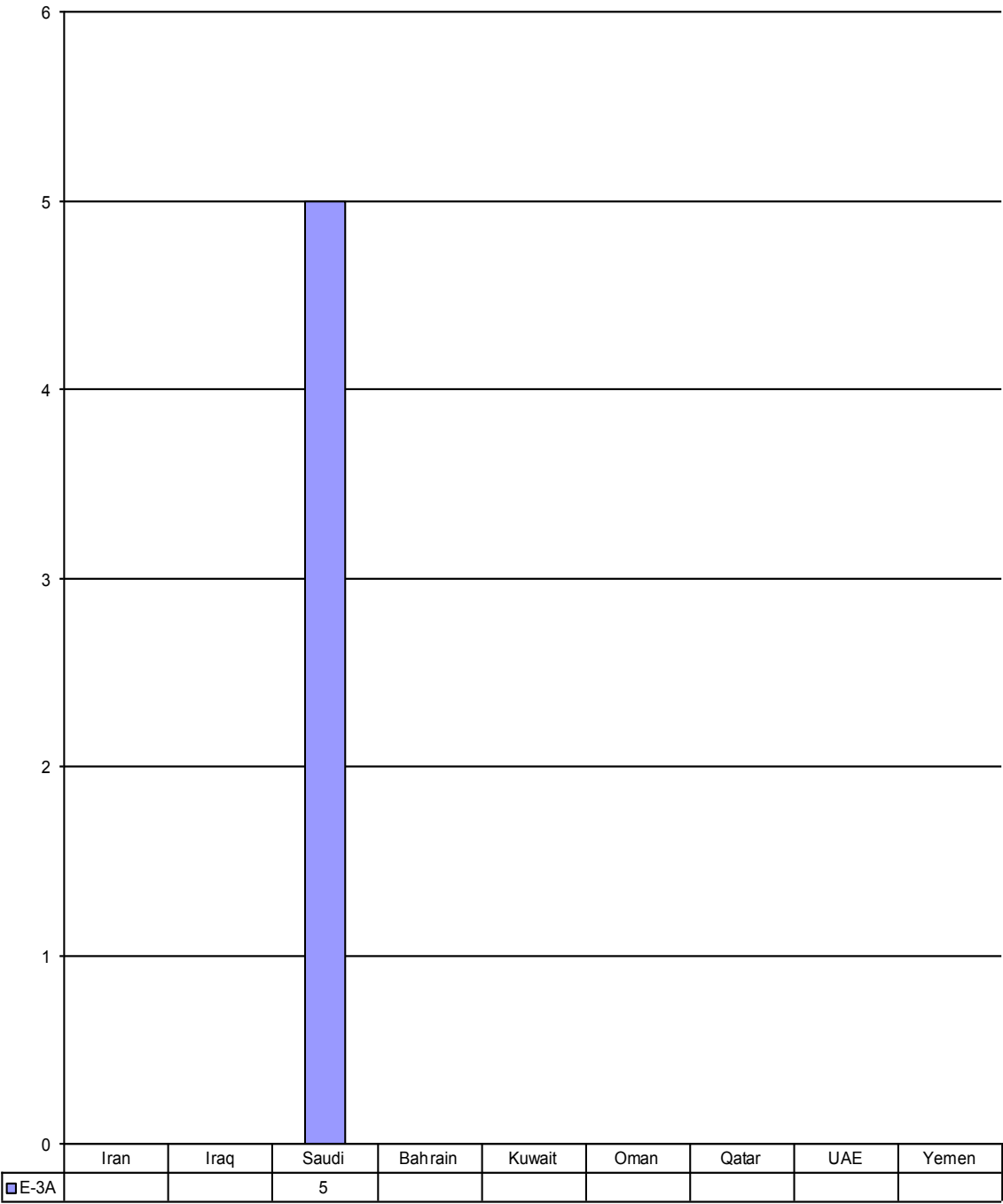


Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from various sources and IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.15: Gulf Reconnaissance Aircraft in 2008

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.16: Sensor, AWACS, C4I, EW and ELINT Aircraft in 2008



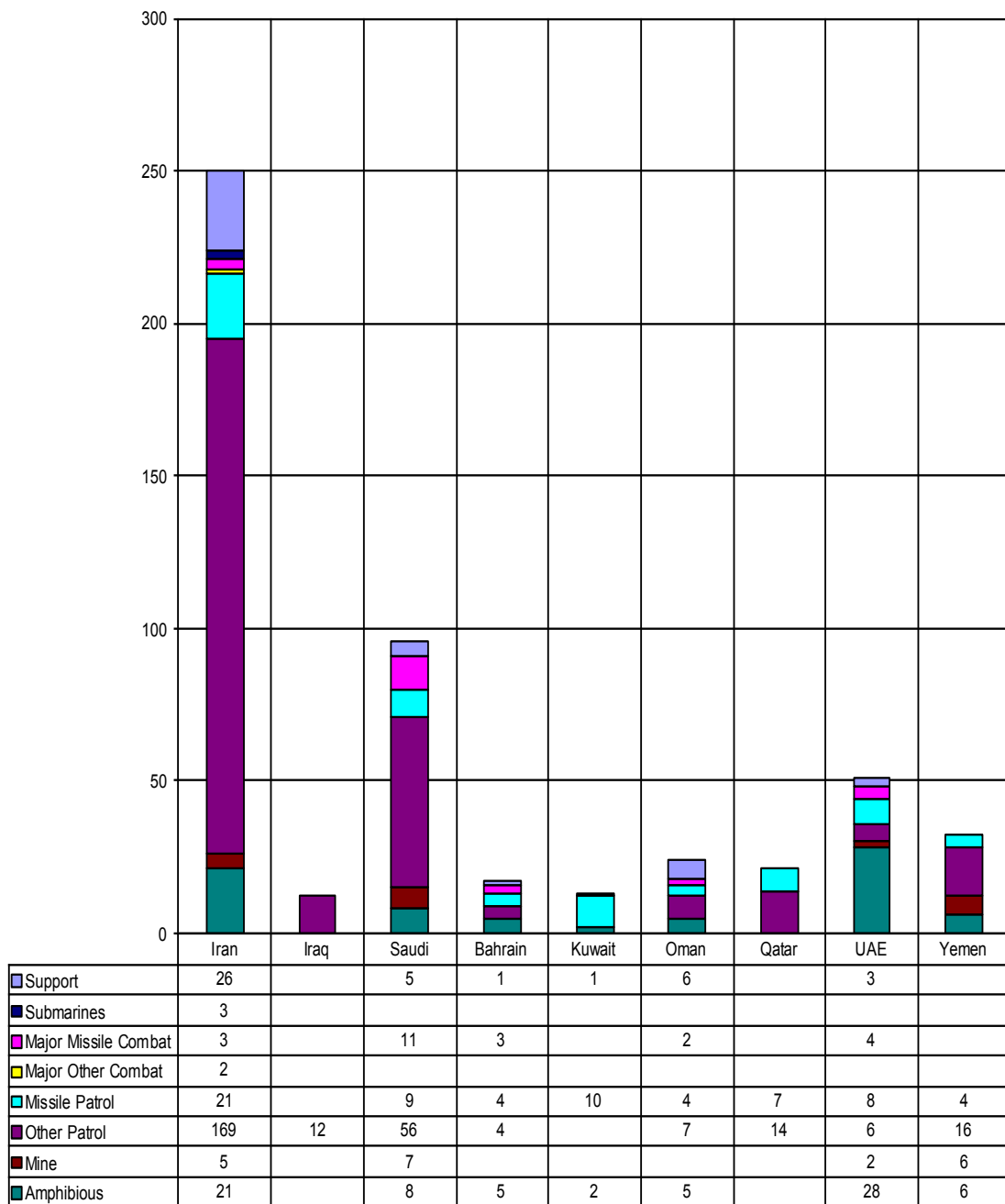
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.17: Gulf Land-Based Air Defense Systems in 2008

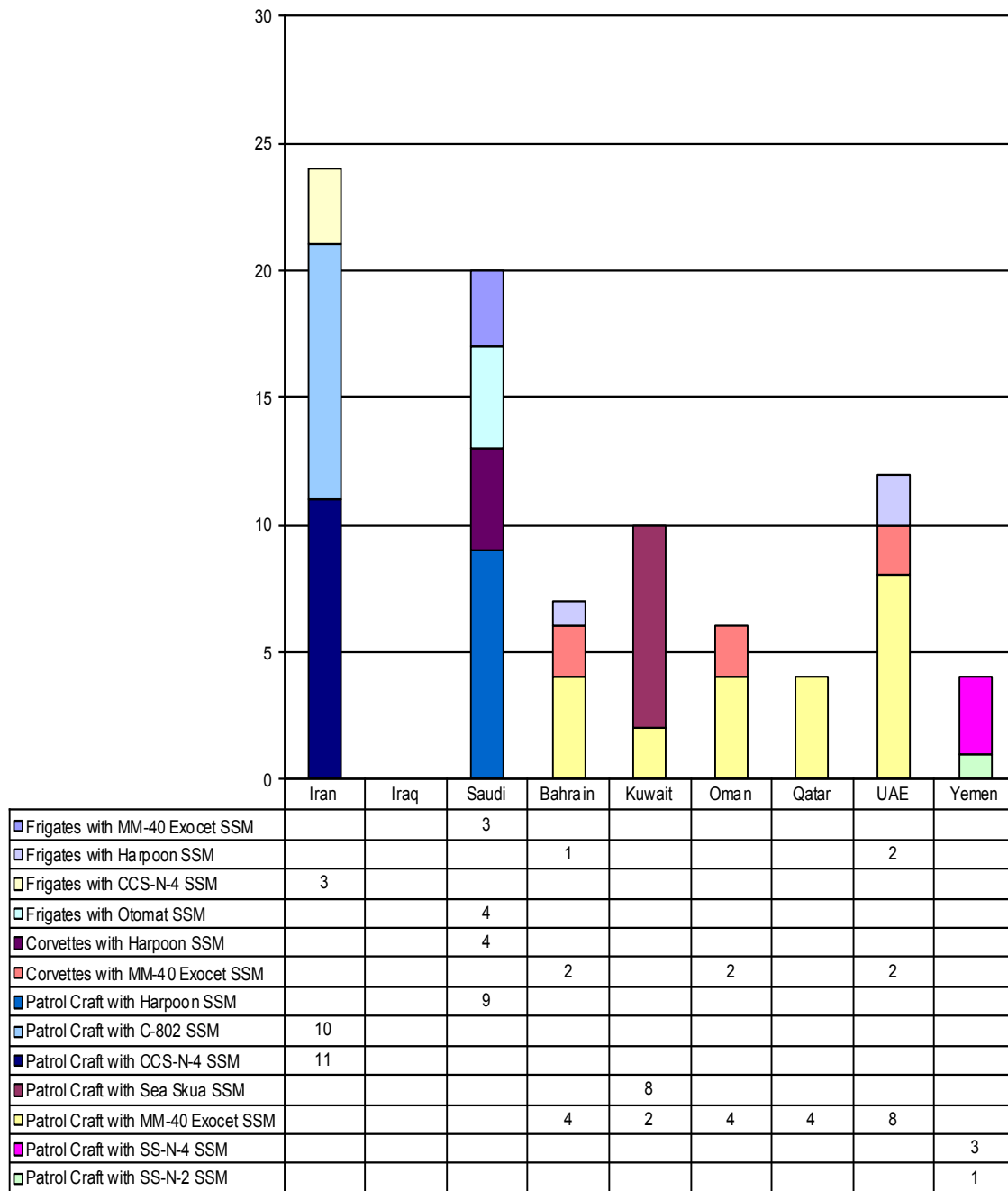
Country	Major SAM	Light SAM	AA Guns
Bahrain	8 I Hawk	60 RBS-70 18 FIM-92A Stinger 7 Crotale	26 guns 15 Oerlikon 35 mm 12 L/70 40 mm
Iran	16/150 I Hawk 3/10 SA-5 45 SA-2 Guideline	SA-7/14/16, HQ-7 29 SA-15 Some QW-1 Misaq 29 TOR-M1 Some HN-5 30 Rapier Some FM-80 (Ch Crotale) 15 Tigercat Some FIM-92A Stinger	1,700 Guns ZSU-23-4 23mm ZPU-2/4 23mm ZU-23 23mm M-1939 37mm S-60 57mm
Iraq	SA-2? SA-3? SA-6?	Roland 1,500 SA-7 850 (SA-8 Some SA-9 Some SA-13 Some SA-14, SA-16	6,000 Guns ZSU-23-4 23 mm, M-1939 37 mm, ZSU-57-2 SP, 57 mm 85 mm, 100 mm, 130 mm
Kuwait	4/24 I Hawk Phase III 5 Patriot PAC-2	6/12 Aspide 48 Starburst	12 Oerlikon 35mm
Oman	None	Blowpipe 2 Mistral SP 34 SA-7 6 Blindfire 20 Javelin 40 Rapier S713 Martello	26 guns 4 ZU-23-2 23 mm 10 GDF-005 Skyguard 35 mm 12 L-60 40 mm
Qatar	None	10 Blowpipe 12 FIM-92A Stinger 9 Roland II 24 Mistral 20 SA-7	?
Saudi Arabia	16/128 I Hawk 4-6/16-24 Patriot 17/141 Shahine Mobile 2-4/160 PAC-2 launchers 17 ANA/FPS-117 radar 73/68 Crotale/Shahine	40 Crotale 500 Stinger (ARMY) 500 Mistral (ADF) 500 FIM-43 Redeye (ARMY) 500 Redeye (ADF) 73-141 Shahine static 500 FIM-92A Stinger (ARMY) 400 FIM-92A Avenger (ADF)	1,220 guns 92 M-163 Vulcan 20 mm 30 N-167 Vulcan 20 mm (NG) 850 AMX-30SA 30 mm 128 GDF Oerlikon 35mm 150 L-70 40 mm (in store) 130 M-2 90 mm (NG)
UAE	2/3 I Hawk	20+ Blowpipe 20 Mistral Some Rapier Some Crotale Some RB-70 Some Javelin Some SA-18	62 guns 42 M-3VDA 20 mm SP 20 GCF-BM2 30 mm
Yemen	Some SA-2, 3, 6	Some 800 SA-7, 9, 13, 14	50 M-167 20mm 20 M-163 Vulcan SP 20mm 50 ZSU-23-4 SP 23 mm 100 ZSU-23-2 23 mm 150 M-1939 37 mm

120 S-60 57 mm
40 M-1939 KS-12 85 mm

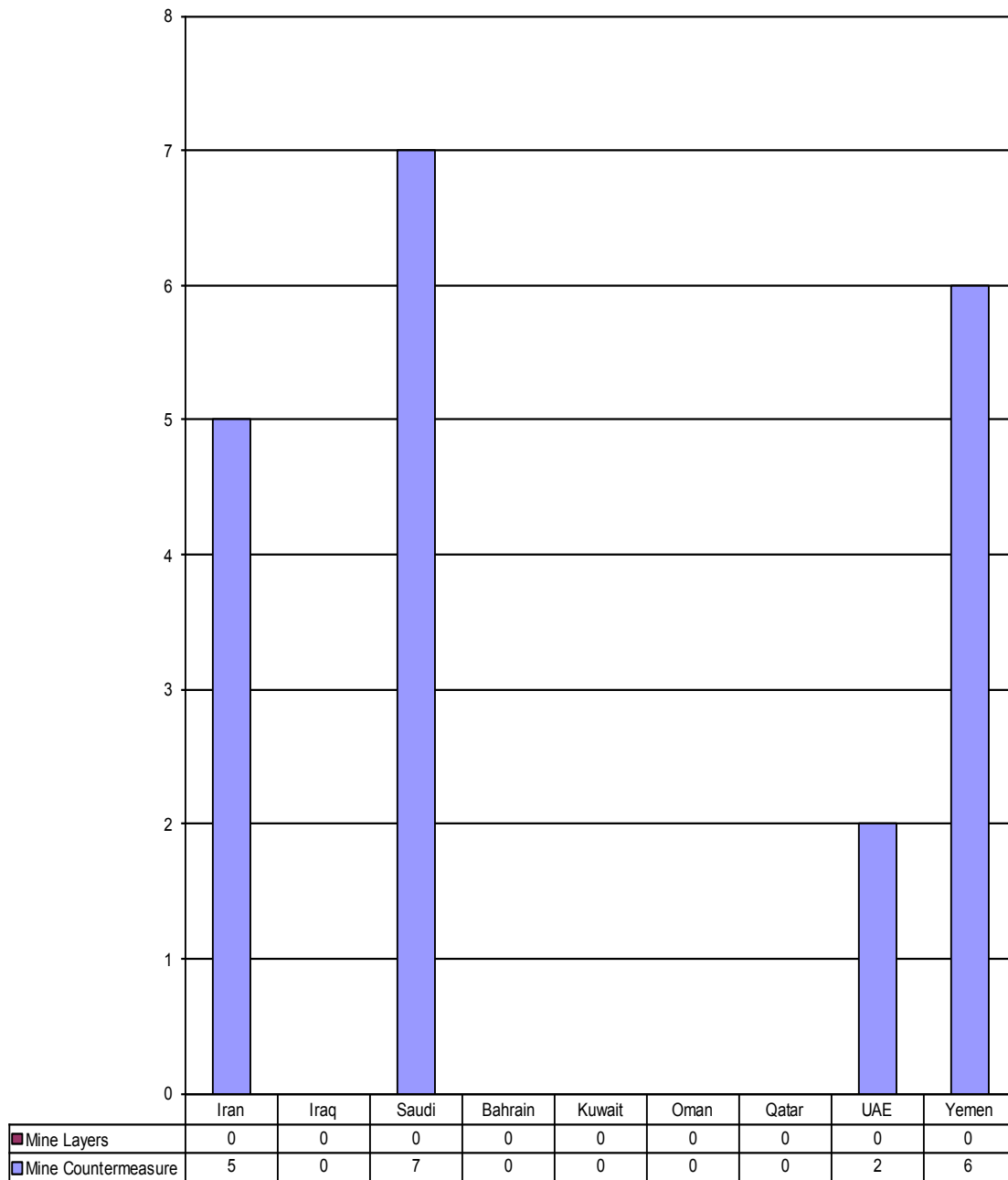
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, Periscope, JCSS, Middle East Military Balance, Jane's Sentinel and Jane's Defense Weekly. Some data adjusted or estimated by the author.

Figure 2.18: Gulf Naval Ships by Category in 2008

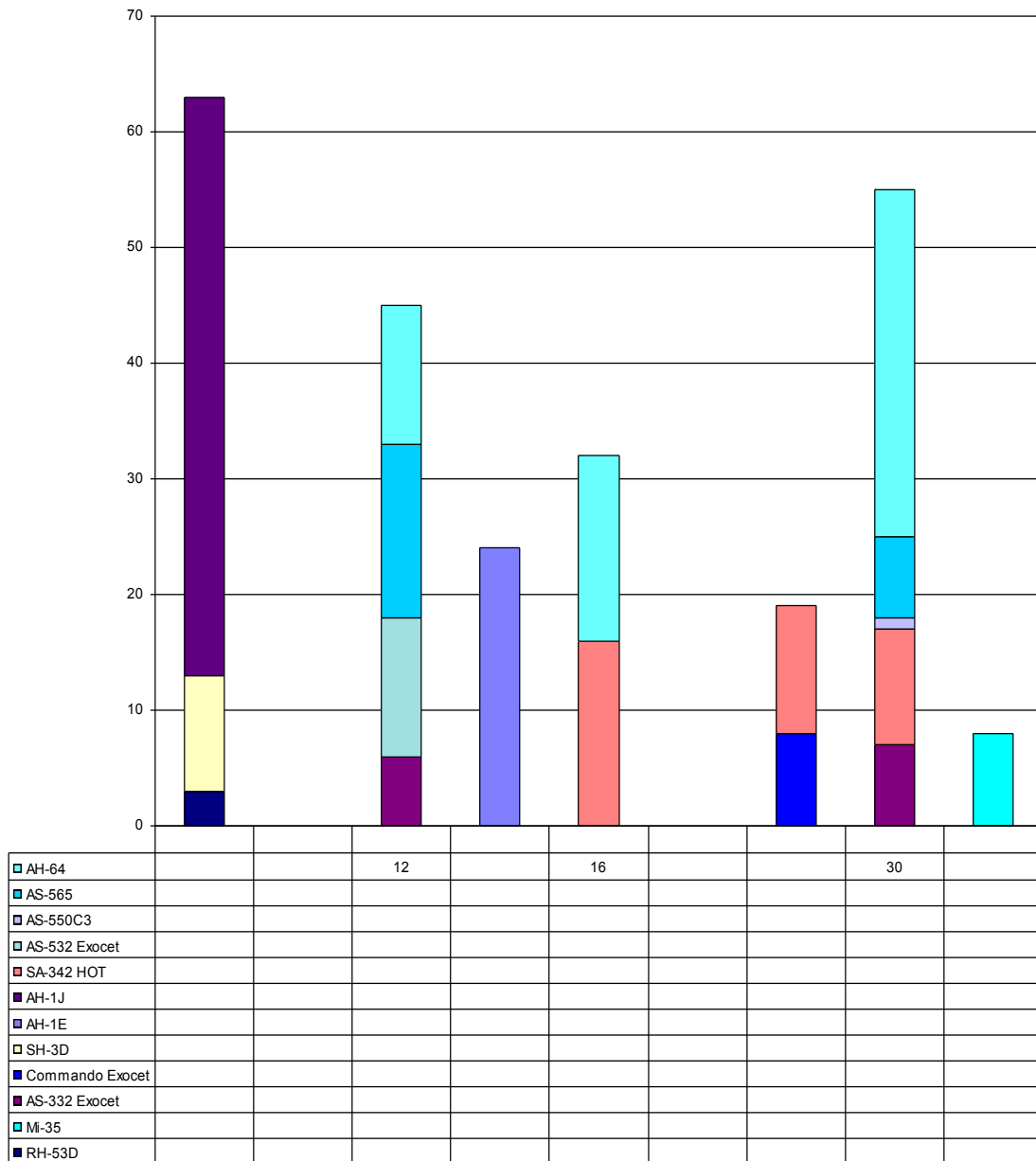
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.19: Gulf Warships with Anti-Ship Missiles in 2008

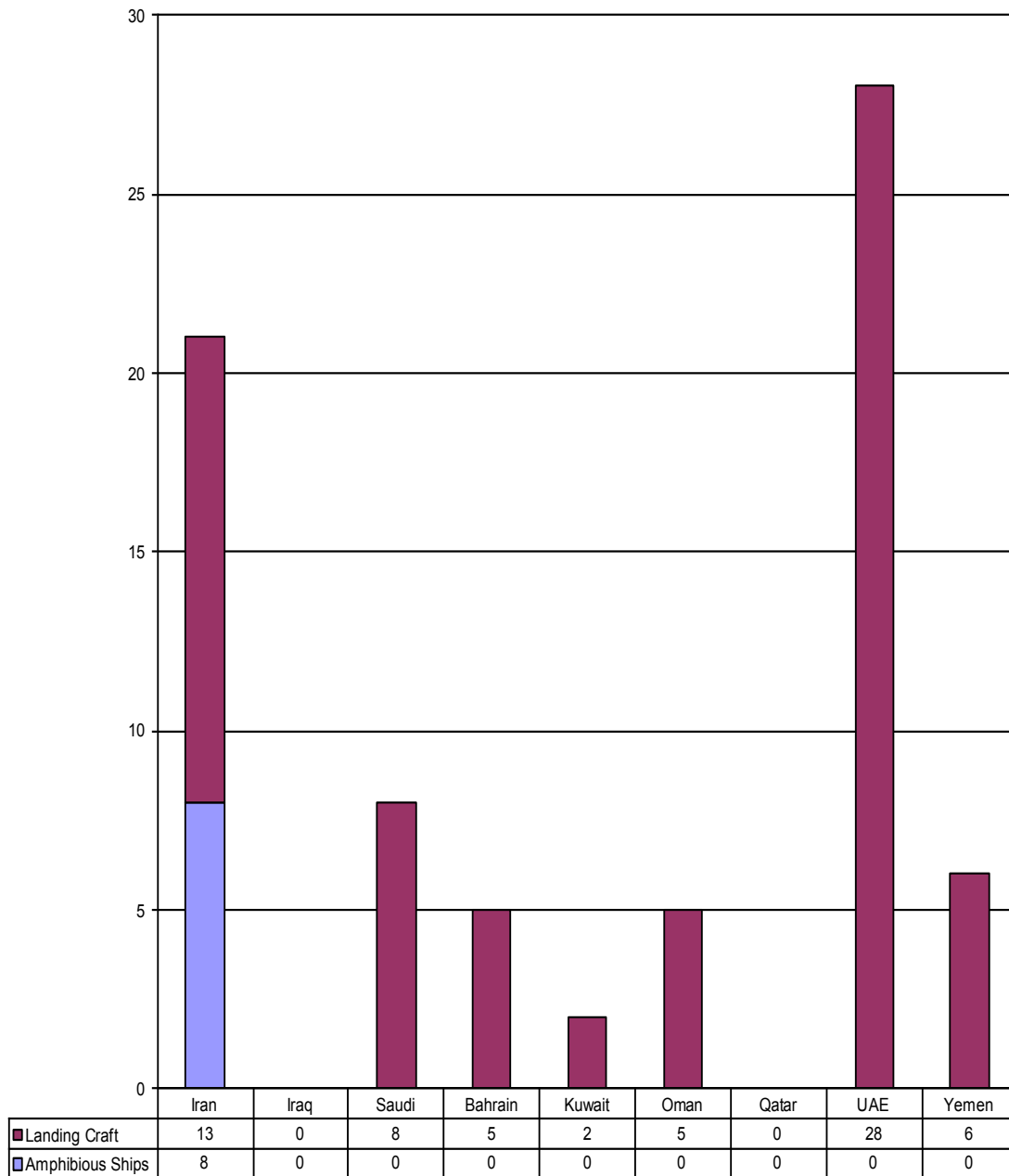
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions and material provided by US experts.

Figure 2.20: Gulf Mine Warfare Ships in 2008

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions and material provided by US experts.

Figure 2.21: Gulf Attack, Anti-Ship and ASW Helicopters in 2008

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions.

Figure 2.22: Gulf Amphibious Warfare Ships in 2008

Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from IISS, The Military Balance, various editions and material provided by US experts.

Iran's Options for Asymmetric Warfare

All of these trends in Iran's conventional forces help explain why Iranian military doctrine has put greater emphasis on the use of asymmetric warfare strategies as a means of deterrent and defensive posture against its neighbors and its Western adversary's since the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1989. They also illustrate the danger, however, of relying on such options without a decisive deterrent to US or Gulf escalation to the use of conventional air and missile attacks on Iran, or outright invasion.

Iran has found that asymmetrical tactics and strategy, including its Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) weapons programs, would be most beneficial to maintaining balance of power, and expanding its power and influence in the Middle East region. This strategy has also enabled the Iranian government and military to operate more covertly, both in terms of building capabilities for covert, proxy, and indirect warfare, and in developing a possible nuclear weapons program.

One major aspect of political and military strategy that asymmetrical warfare takes advantage of is that the effectiveness of a weapon system depends as much on its technical capabilities as on the doctrine of its engagement.⁴ Mere possession of better weapons has never been the only key to success, and perception of potential capabilities can have a great impact on success as well, both militarily and politically.

The most likely "conflicts" in the Middle East are not formal or conventional conflicts, but rather asymmetric wars and/or "wars of intimidation." Iran is currently in an advantageous position to fight these types of war. Iran has maintained its conventional forces since the end of the Iran-Iraq War, but at the same time it has been pursuing a new strategy for fighting present and future foes.

Tehran focused its defense efforts on creating a force structure to pursue an asymmetric strategy which focuses more on the use of proxies to create greater regional instability and export its revolution, while at the same time it has pushed the limits in its missile programs, and pursued the research and development of chemical and biological agents as well as a suspect nuclear program; which together have the makings of a very dangerous and threatening weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program.

The Interaction between WMDs, Conventional Forces, and Forces for Asymmetrical Warfare

This is why any assessment of Iran's motives and capabilities must look beyond the previous assessments of the military balance. Whatever Iran's actual motives may be a combination of its emerging strengths in asymmetric warfare and nuclear-armed missile forces that can deter or limit conventional reprisals can do much to compensate for its lack of modern conventional forces.⁵

Iran can exploit a combination of carefully selected precision guided munitions systems, weapons of mass destruction, and the widening use of asymmetrical warfare strategies to make up for shortcomings in conventional warfighting capabilities. Its long-range missiles and WMD programs can both provide a powerful deterrent and support its asymmetric strategies. Asymmetric strategy is not based upon inflicting casualties on

enemies, but rather gaining support due to the casualties inflicted by your adversary. Jacques Baud writes that "despite every indication to the contrary, asymmetric strategies do not set themselves the objective to maximize violence, but to deliver a pain 'just sufficient' to provoke an 'over-reaction,' by playing on image and emotional impact."⁶

Asymmetric Warfare can also involve conflicts in which the resources of two belligerents differ in essence and in the struggle, interact and attempt to exploit each other's characteristic weaknesses. Such struggles often involve strategies and tactics of unconventional warfare, the "weaker" combatants attempting to use strategy to offset deficiencies in quantity or quality.⁷

For example, work by Michael Connell of the Center for Naval Analysis notes that the IRGC is developing such tactics in ways that could form a layered or "mosaic" defense with the army and air forces, where the IRGC kept up constant pressure on any advancing U.S. forces. He indicates that the IRGC has developed special stay behind units or "cells" that would include some 1,800 to 3,000 teams of three to four soldiers whose main mission would be to attack US lines of supply and communication, strike at elements in rear areas, and conduct ambushes of combat troops. This could include sending units forward into countries like Iraq and Afghanistan to attack US forces there, or encourage local forces to do so, and sending teams to raid or infiltrate the southern Gulf States friendly to the United States.⁸

At the same time, Connell notes that if the Iranian Army was defeated and an attacker like the United States moved into Iran's major cities, the IRGC, the Iranian Army, and Basij are now organized and trained to fight a much more dispersed war of attrition in which force elements would disperse and scatter, carrying out a constant series of attacks on US forces wherever they deployed as well as against US lines of communication and supply. Such elements would have great independence of action rather than relying on centralized command. The IRGC and the Iranian Army have clearly paid close attention to both the limited successes that Saddam's Fedayeen had against the US advance on Baghdad, and the far more successful efforts of Iraqi insurgents and militias in attacking U.S. and other Coalition forces following the fall of Baghdad.

One technique such forces organize and practice is using cities and built-up areas as defensive areas that provide concealment and opportunities for ambushes and for the use of swarming tactics, which forces an attacker to disperse large numbers of forces to try to clear and secure given neighborhoods. Connell indicates that some 2,500 Basij staged such an exercise in the Western suburbs of Tehran in February 2007. Once again, Iran can draw on the lessons of the fighting in Iraq. It also, however, employed such tactics with great success against Iraqi forces during the Iran-Iraq War, and it has closely studied the lessons of urban and built-up area fighting in Somalia and Lebanon.

Iran's Asymmetric Warfighting Capabilities (Real and Potential)

Iran's military doctrine changed drastically after the United Nations sponsored cease fire agreement went into effect on August 20, 1988 ending the eight year long Iran-Iraq War. Iran shifted its efforts in its balancing act with Iraq and hostility towards Israel. As has been shown earlier, Iran cut funding for building up and maintaining much of its

conventional military; and instead focused its efforts on CBRN R&D programs, counterintelligence, and supporting fundamentalist and terrorist groups throughout the region.

Iran has developed a different strategy for projecting power and influencing the regional balance. It is developing by influencing and seeking control over non-state actors and movements, potential, and the security forces and militias in Lebanon and Iraq. It is also seeking to exert power through the use of asymmetric warfare strategies.

The IRGC in Iran's Asymmetric Strategy

The IRGC is a product of the Iranian Revolution; which was initially established by Ayatollah Khomeini as a force to protect the order of the new Islamic Republic. The IRGC has since evolved into a major political, military, and economic force in Iran. The IRGC is said to be subordinate to the Supreme Leader, and answerable only to him, but the C⁴I of the IRGC is not completely clear.

The IRGC has several functions operates most of Iran's surface-to-surface missiles and is believed to have custody over potentially deployed nuclear weapons, most or all other chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons, and to operate Iran's nuclear-armed missile forces if they are deployed. It operates or controls much of Iran's military industries as well as dual-use and "civil" operations. As a result, the links between the IRGC and Iran's nuclear program have been so close that its leaders were singled out under the UN Security Council Resolutions passed on December 23, 2006, and March 24, 2007, and had their assets frozen.⁹

At the same time, the IRGC has large paramilitary forces that can be used for both conventional and asymmetric warfare. The IRGC (Pasdaran) has some 125,000 men in its force structure, and also has substantial capabilities for covert operations. This includes the Al Quds Force and other elements that operate covertly or openly overseas, working with Hezbollah of Lebanon, Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Shi'ites in Afghanistan. It was members of the IRGC that seized 15 British sailors and Marines, who seem to still have been in Iraqi waters, in March 2007.¹⁰

The IRGC has small elements equipped with armor and has the equivalent of conventional army units, and some units are trained for covert missions and asymmetric warfare, but most if its forces are lightly equipped infantry trained and equipped for internal security missions. These forces are reported to have between 120,000 and 130,000 men, but such totals are uncertain. They also include conscripts recruited from the same pool as regular army conscripts, and training and retention levels are low. The IRGC land forces also control the Basij (Mobilization of the Oppressed) and other paramilitary forces if they are mobilized for war.

This makes the IRGC the center of much of Iran's effort to develop asymmetric warfare tactics to counter a US invasion. Work by Michael Connell of the Center for Naval Analysis notes that the IRGC has been systematically equipping, organizing, and retraining its forces to fight decentralized partisan and guerrilla warfare.¹¹ This assessment of the IRGC has been echoed in more recent studies including one by Frederick W. Kagan, Kimberly Kagan, Danielle Pletka at the American Enterprise Institute;¹² another by Jahangir Arasli, at the George C. Marshall European Center For

Security Studies;¹³ as well as one by Fariborz Haghchenass at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies Policy¹⁴ among many others.

The IRGC has studied, and continues to learn from the US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Hezbollah's continued role in Israel and Lebanon. From the reporting of exercises that the IRGC has conducted, it can be assessed that the IRGC is continuing to develop a strategy that takes advantage of its potential enemies weaknesses posed by conventional warfighting doctrine and current counterinsurgency shortfalls.

It has strengthened the anti-tank and anti-helicopter weaponry of IRGC battalions and stressed independent battalion-sized operations that can fight with considerable independence even if Iran loses much of the coherence in its command, control, communications, and intelligence capabilities.¹⁵ Its exercises have included simulated attacks on US AH-64 attack helicopters with Iran's more modern man-portable surface-to-air missiles, using mines and using improvised explosive device (IED)-like systems to attack advancing armored forces.

The IRGC have attempted to develop and practice deception, concealment, and camouflage methods to reduce the effectiveness of U.S. and other modern imagery coverage, including dispersing into small teams and avoiding the use of uniformed personnel and military vehicles. While the credibility and effectiveness of such tactics are uncertain, the IRGC claims to be adopting tactics to avoid enemy radars and satellites. Both the IRGC and the army have also attempted to deal with U.S. signals and communications intelligence collection capabilities by making extensive use of buried fiber optics and secure communications and developing more secure ways to use the Internet and commercial landlines. Iran claims to be creating relatively advance secure communications systems, but its success is uncertain.¹⁶

A report by Jane's does estimate that the regular army will become more technologically advanced over time.¹⁷ This does not, however, mean an Iranian emphasis on conventional war. According to the Jane's report, the IRGC is to focus on "less traditional defense duties," such as enforcing border security, commanding the country's ballistic missile and potential weapons of mass destruction forces, and preparing for a closing of the Strait of Hormuz with military means.¹⁸

IRGC Air Force

The IRGC air force is believed to operate Iran's Shahab-3 intermediate-range ballistic missiles units may have had custody of its chemical weapons and any biological weapons. While the actual operational status of the Shahab-3 remains uncertain, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, announced in 2003 that Shahab-3 missiles had been delivered to the IRGC.¹⁹

It is not clear what combat formations exist within the IRGC, but the IRGC may operate Iran's ten EMB-312 Tucanos. It also seems to operate many of Iran's 45 PC-7 training aircraft, as well as some Pakistani-made trainers at a training school near Mushshak, but this school may be run by the regular air force. It has also claimed to manufacture gliders for use in unconventional warfare. These are unsuitable delivery platforms, but could at least carry a small number of weapons.²⁰

The IRGC could follow the path of Iraq in 1990 and create R&D programs to adapt modified aircraft drop tanks for biological agent spray operations. The Iraqi program attempted to create a tank that could be attached either to a piloted fighter or UAV guided by another piloted aircraft. The tank was designed to spray up to 2,000 liters of anthrax on target. The IRGC is certainly capable of duplicating this type of program at its current R&D levels and capabilities.

IRGC Naval Forces

From an Iranian military perspective asymmetric naval warfare employs available equipment, flexible tactics, superior morale, and the physical and geographical characteristics of the area of operation to defend vital economic resources, inflict losses unacceptable to the enemy, and ultimately destroy technologically superior enemy forces. More specifically, the asymmetric naval warfighter exploits enemy vulnerabilities through the use of “swarming” tactics by well-armed small boats and fast-attack craft, to mount surprise attacks at unexpected times and places.²¹ The terrain of the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman give Iran’s use of asymmetric forces a tactical advantage in harassing ships in the region, as well as in its greater defense strategy.

The roots of the IRGC Navy (IRGCN) can be traced back to 1984 as a support entity for amphibious operations in the southern marshlands of Iraq; and was officially established as an independent military entity in 1985. Despite initial setbacks in regards to equipment, manpower and adequate training, the IRGCN quickly became a serious threat during the Tanker War of 1987-1988 and quickly built up its tally of attacks on carefully identified oil tankers carrying Kuwaiti and Saudi oil, from thirty-seven during the first year of the Tanker War to more than ninety-six in 1987.²²

By the end of the war, the political leadership was convinced of the IRGC’s ability to defend Iranian shipping, control sea lines of communication, and even to cross the Persian Gulf and take the fight to the enemy, if necessary. As a result Iran identified the following requirements for its naval forces:²³

- Large numbers of anti-ship missiles on various types of launch platforms.
- Small fast-attack craft, heavily armed with rockets or anti-ship missiles.
- More fast mine-laying platforms.
- An enhanced subsurface warfare capability with various types of submarines and sensors.
- More small, mobile, hard-to-detect platforms, such as semi-submersibles and unmanned aerial vehicles.
- More specialized training.
- More customized or purpose-built high-tech equipment.
- Better communications and coordination between fighting units.
- More timely intelligence and effective counterintelligence/deception.
- Enhanced ability to disrupt the enemy’s command, control, communications, and intelligence capability.

- The importance of initiative, and the avoidance of frontal engagements with large U.S. naval surface warfare elements.
- Means to mitigate the vulnerability of even small naval units to air and missile attack.

To operate effectively, unconventional naval warfighters and logistical support units need secure bases, staging areas, and routes to and from their areas of operation. There are more than ten large and sixty small ports and harbors along Iran's southern coastline, in addition to the many scattered fishing and sailing villages and towns, all of which offer excellent hiding places for small surface combatants.²⁴ The IRGC has numerous staging areas in such places and has organized its Basij militia among the local inhabitants to undertake support operations.²⁵

The IRGC was put in charge of defending Iran's Persian Gulf coast in September 2008 and is operational in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and could potentially operate elsewhere if given suitable sealift or facilities.²⁶ The IRGC has a naval branch consists of approximately 20,000 men, including marine units of around 5,000 men. Such a force could deliver conventional weapons, bombs, mines, and CBRN weapons into ports and oil and desalination facilities. No common fleet structure has been identified, but the basic pattern seems to be small "naval guerrilla" formations. "Boghammar"-type patrol craft and coastal missile battery sites were under IRGC control.

Iran's unconventional naval warfare force consists of six elements: surface vessels, midget and unconventional submarines, missiles and rockets, naval mines, aviation, and military industries.²⁷ Iran uses these elements in its national defense strategy, but they can also be used in an asymmetric strategy to harass and disrupt shipping lanes.

The naval branch has bases and contingency facilities in the Gulf, many near key shipping channels and some near the Strait of Hormuz. These include facilities at Al-Farsiya, Halul (an oil platform), Sirri, Abu Musa, Bandaer-e Abbas, Khorramshahr, and Larak. Iran recently started constructing new naval bases along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman for an impenetrable line of defense.

On October 27, 2008, Iran opened a new naval base at Jask, located at the southern mouth of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint for Persian Gulf oil. Iran's Deputy Army Commander Brigadier General Abdolrahim Moussavi announced that the new naval base at Jask would serve as an "impenetrable naval barrier" against Iran's potential adversaries. Moussavi stressed Iran's commitment to expanding its strategic reach, arguing that, "In the past, our military had to brace itself for countering regional enemies. This is while today we are faced with extra-regional threats."²⁸

Iran also upgraded a naval base at Assalouyeh in Iran's southern Bushehr province. This base is the fourth in a string of IRGC bases along the waterway that will extend from Bandar Abbas to Pasa Bandar near the Pakistan border, as part of what IRGC's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Morteza Saffari says is the "new mission of the navy to establish an impenetrable line of defense at the entrance to the Sea of Oman."²⁹

The IRGC controls Iran's coastal defense forces, including naval guns and an HY-2 Seersucker land-based anti-ship missile unit deployed in five to seven sites along the Gulf coast. Iran has repeatedly warned that in case of any attack by either the US or Israel, it

would target 32 American bases in the Middle East and close the strategic Strait of Hormuz, and report by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy released in September 2008, says that in the two decades since the Iran-Iraq War, the Islamic Republic has excelled in naval capabilities and is able to wage unique asymmetric warfare against larger naval forces.³⁰

Its forces can carry out extensive raids against Gulf shipping, carry out regular amphibious exercises with the land branch of the IRGC against objectives like the islands in the Gulf, and could conduct raids against Saudi Arabia or other countries on the southern Gulf coast. They give Iran a major capability for asymmetric warfare. The Guards also seem to work closely with Iranian intelligence and appear to be represented unofficially in some embassies, Iranian businesses and purchasing offices, and other foreign fronts.

In January 2008, Iranian speedboats belonging to the IRGC became involved in an incident with the US Navy near the Straits of Hormuz. Again in late April 2008 a US-flagged cargo ship contracted by the U.S. Navy was harassed by two small boats in the Persian Gulf and subsequently fired warning shots at the ships.

The IRGC naval forces have at least 40 light patrol boats, 10 Houdong guided missile patrol boats armed with C-802 anti-ship missiles, and a battery of HY-2 Seersucker land-based anti-ship missiles. Some of these systems could be modified to carry a small CBRN weapon, but hardly are optimal delivery platforms because of their limited-range payload and sensor/guidance platforms unsuited for the mission.

An Iranian version of the C-802 was in fact used by Hezbollah against an Israeli Saar 5-class missile boat during the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006. This same weaponry could be used by the IRGC against the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf.

Iran has a history of harassing and even confronting US forces in the Persian Gulf going back to 1987 during the "Tanker Wars," when Iran mined sea lanes in the area and a US frigate, the USS Samuel B. Roberts, was almost blown in half. The US delivered an overwhelming retaliatory strike against the Iranian Navy and the IRGC.

Iran could launch a coordinated attack involving explosives-laden remote-controlled boats, swarming speedboats, semi-submersible torpedo boats, FACs, kamikaze UAVs, midget and attack submarines, and shore-based anti-ship missile and artillery fire, all concentrated on a U.S.-escorted convoy or surface action group transiting the Strait of Hormuz, and barrages of rockets with cluster warheads could be used to suppress enemy defensive fire and carrier air operations.³¹

The IRGC could also construct or purchase self-propelled, self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) vessels from South American narcotraffickers. In a paper by US Navy Captain Wade F. Wilkenson, he reports that, "in dozens of secret, makeshift shipyards scattered throughout the lowlands of South America, narcotraffickers have been building SPSS vessels in record numbers. Designed to ferry illicit drugs from Colombia to staging points in Central America and Mexico, the SPSS vessels may seem yet another in a long string of innovative methods drug traffickers use to sneak past law enforcement." Due to "the craft's ability to evade detection, capacity to carry tons of any type of cargo thousands of miles,"³² it could very well be assessed that SPSS vessels

could very well have greater national security implications and could be an effective asymmetrical naval warfare weapon.

In his report Captain Wilkenson goes on to describe these SPSS vessels as follows:³³

“SPSS vessels vary in design and construction but share common characteristics. Size and capacity range from 10 to 25 meters in length and 3 to 15 metric tons of cargo space. Generally made from wood framing and fiberglass, some designs include steel hull construction for better seaworthiness and durability. Although typically ballasted with tons of lead, concrete, or rock, newer versions provide means to change draft under way. By filling fuel tanks with seawater as they empty, they maintain a steady, ultra-low profile that make them nearly impossible to spot by eye at any distance over one nautical mile.

Range of an SPSS is about 1,500 miles, but some store enough fuel to travel twice that distance. A small conning tower allows a wave-top view for steering. Piping redirects diesel engine exhaust back toward the boat's wake to lower the infrared signature. Equipped with GPS, SPSS vessels navigate independently without need for external communication. They can cruise faster than eight knots but tend to operate at slower speeds to minimize wake detection. Such technological enhancements and tactics make the SPSS increasingly complex and better capable of defying surveillance and detection.”

The IRGC could easily adapt this technology for its needs, which would create a stealthy addition to its asymmetric arsenal, which it could use in its own trafficking operations or as an added capability in harassing and hindering shipping operations in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. These vessels could also pose a serious threat to US naval operations in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, taking advantage of known vulnerabilities in the US Navy's capabilities to react to these types of threats.

The IRGC Intelligence Branch

As part of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, the roughly 2,000 staff members of its intelligence force are a largely politicized force with a political mission. According to Jane's, their conformity and loyalty to the regime are unquestionable.³⁴

The main task of the IRGC Intelligence Branch is to gather intelligence in the Muslim world. As far as domestic security is concerned, the organization targets the enemies of the Islamic Revolution and also participates in their prosecution and trials.³⁵ In addition, it works closely with the IRGC's Qods Corps, which also operates covertly outside Iran.

Proxy and Covert CBRN Operations

As has been touched upon earlier, the IRGC plays a major role in Iran's military industries. Its lead role in Iran's efforts to acquire SSMs and WMDs gives it growing experience with advanced military technology. As a result, the IRGC is believed to be the branch of Iran's forces that plays the largest role in Iran's military industries.³⁶ It also operates all of Iran's Scuds, controls most of its chemical and biological weapons, and provides the military leadership for missile production and the production of all weapons of mass destruction.

The IRGC is a powerful economic force, controlling key elements of Iraq's defense industry. It seems to operate part of Iran's covert trading network, a system established after the fall of the Shah to buy arms and military parts through various cover and false flag organizations. It is not clear; however, how much of this network is controlled by the IRGC versus the Ministry of Defense (MoD). For example, the same UN resolution

dealing with Iran's nuclear proliferation listed a wide range of entities where the role of the IRGC is often unclear.³⁷

The IRGC has become a leading contracting organization, bidding for other contracts including at least some oil and gas projects. Like most Iranian entities associated with government projects, it is reported to get many contracts out of favoritism and/or without competitive bidding. It is believed to now be as corrupt as civil entities and religious foundations like the Bunyods.³⁸

The IRGC has a complex structure that includes both political and military units. It has separate organizational elements for its land, naval, and air units, which include both military and paramilitary units. The Basij and the tribal units of the Pasdaran are subordinated to its land unit command, although the commander of the Basij often seems to report directly to the Commander-in-Chief and Minister of the Pasdaran and through him to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The IRGC has close ties to the foreign operations branch of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), particularly through the IRGC's Qods force. The Ministry of Intelligence and Security was established in 1983 and has an extensive network of offices in Iranian embassies. It is often difficult to separate the activities of the IRGC, the Vezarat-e Ettela'at va Amniat-e Keshvar, and the Foreign Ministry, and many seem to be integrated operations managed by a ministerial committee called the "Special Operations Council" that includes the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, President, Minister of Intelligence and Security, and other members of the Supreme Council for National Defense.³⁹

Other elements of the IRGC can support proxy or covert use of CBRN weapons. They run some training camps inside Iran for outside "volunteers." Some IRGC still seem to be deployed in Lebanon and actively involved in training and arming Hezbollah, other anti-Israeli groups, and other elements.⁴⁰ The IRGC has been responsible for major arms shipments to Hezbollah, including large numbers of AT-3 anti-tank guided missiles, long-range rockets, and some Iranian-made Mohajer unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).⁴¹

Iran exported thousands of 122-mm rockets and Fajr-4 and Fajr-5 long-range rockets to Hezbollah in Lebanon, including the Arash with a range of 21–29 kilometers. These reports give the Fajr-5 a range of 75 kilometers with a payload of 200 kilograms. Iran seems to have sent such arms to Hezbollah and some various Palestinian movements, including some shiploads of arms to the Palestinian Authority.⁴²

It has provided arms, training, and military technology to Shi'ite militias in Iraq and may have provided such support to Sunni Islamist extremists as well, which led to attacks on U.S. and Coalition forces. These transfers have included relatively advanced shaped charge and triggering components, which have sharply increased the lethality of militia and insurgent attacks using IEDs on U.S. and Coalition armor. There were also growing indicators that similar training, weapons, and other aid were being provided to Shi'ite forces and Taliban elements in Afghanistan in 2007.

Military Exercises

Iran also sends signals about its use of asymmetric warfare through its military parades and exercises. Tehran also uses such exercises, in part, as a display of force in order to

look as if it is taking a harder stand against Western influence and as a distraction from its controversial nuclear activities. One example was in July 2008 when, Tehran took a seemingly cooperative stance urging the Western powers to continue their negotiating efforts within the IAEA; while at the same time embarked on a bold and confrontational major naval exercise in the Persian Gulf.

The five day Iranian naval exercise, dubbed "Exercise Stake Net", was carried out in the Straits of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman, where an assortment of new weapons were brought into play. Media coverage of the exercise was rather unprecedented, leaving the impression that the Islamic regime intended to send a strong message to the West, especially the United States and Israel, that they must think twice before deciding to pass a harsh resolution against Iran in the Security Council or threaten the survival of Tehran's Islamic regime.

One important aspect of the exercise was the almost total absence of the regular Iranian navy, whose functions are more oriented towards the classical tasks of sea denial and power projection ashore in the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz. This may well reflect Iran understands that the Iranian navy would not be able to sustain combat capability in a purely classical naval engagement. That was the case in the late 1980s where Iranian navy lost some of its warships in an unequal interface with the American units during the Tanker Wars.

This experience led Iranian defense planners to devise new tactics with limited but effective light and fast units for hit and run operations in the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman. The strategy follows the classical guerilla warfare doctrine; which emphasizes the strategy that when two unequal opponents face each other, the best way for the weak side is to resort to a war of attrition and asymmetric tactics. In the enclosed narrow and rather shallow waters of the Persian Gulf, this tactic can be very decisive against larger units and can deny the enemy from effective deployment, sea lines of communication and power projection.

The IRGC often claims to conduct very large exercises, sometimes with 100,000 men or more. The exact size of such exercises is unclear, but they are often a small fraction of IRGC claims. With the exception of a limited number of more elite elements, training is limited and largely suitable for internal security purposes. Most forces would require substantial refresher training to act in any mission other than static infantry defense and using asymmetric warfare tactics like hit and-run operations or swarming elements of forces when an invader appears vulnerable.

Iran has other ways of sending signals. One example came after the 2008 US Presidential elections. On November 12, 2008 Iran launched yet another new type of long-range ballistic missile with the by-now-customary mixture of fanfare, hype, self-congratulation and threats. The Iranians dubbed the missile launched on Nov. 12 "Sajeel," but its general layout was indistinguishable from the description of the "Ashura," which was flight-tested about one year ago, apparently without success.

The launch of the Sajeel/Ashura displayed Tehran's continued commitment to its missile programs in an effort to possess a missile program with a global reach. This display can also be viewed as another example Tehran's intention to destabilize the Gulf region with its ever advancing missile capabilities and ambiguous nuclear program.

All of these examples can be viewed as part of Iran's psychological warfare strategy, which is just one component of its overall strategy. By displaying both its real and virtual military (e.g. naval) fighting capabilities through electronic, printed and network media, and through endless official statements, Iran tends to achieve the following politico-diplomatic and propaganda ends (4Ds):⁴³

- **Defiance** (to maintain a course of resistance, targeting primarily the Western political will and system).
- **Deception** (on the real state of Iranian warfighting capabilities, targeting the Western military establishments).
- **Deterrence** (with the IRI military "might", targeting Western public opinion, delivered through the media).
- **Demonstration** (of the outreach of its own power, targeting the Iranian people and the Moslem world).

The latest example of use of Iran's naval exercises as part of its asymmetric warfare efforts came on 2 December 2008 when the Iranian navy began a six day naval exercise dubbed "Unity 87" in the Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz. The four-stage exercise will involve destroyers, missile boats, submarines, helicopters, fighters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).⁴⁴

"Over 60 combat vessels will take part in the exercise, codenamed "Unity 87", in the Gulf of Oman," Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said going on to state that, "the goal of the exercise is to improve the combat readiness of the Iranian navy to counter potential external threats and to test modern weaponry developed by the Iranian defense industry," adding that it was also designed to "enhance the country's deterrence capability."⁴⁵

The week prior to the exercise, Sayyari said that "All the movements of the enemy in Oman Sea, Persian Gulf and Hormuz Strait are under control and the enemy will never dare to enter Iran's waters." Sayyari also confirmed the delivery of two new domestically-built missile boats, Kalat (Fortress) and Derafsh (Flag), as well as a Ghadir-class light submarine to the Iranian navy. Iran has launched a domestic weapons procurement campaign aimed at improving its defense capabilities and has announced the development of 109 types of advanced military equipment over the past two years.⁴⁶

On 3 December 2008 Tehran announced the successful completion of the first stage of the exercises, which included exercises focusing on psychological warfare and the deployment of combat units in operations.⁴⁷ Later that day the second stage of the exercise was announced as being successfully completed as well. "During Stage 2 of the Unity-87 exercise, destroyers, submarines, fighter jets, and unmanned aerial vehicles rehearsed the detection and effective engagement of aggressive forces," Deputy Navy Commander Adm. Qasem Rostamabadi said.⁴⁸

On 6 December 2008 the Iranian Navy test-fired a new surface-to-surface missile from a warship as part of exercises along a strategic shipping route. "The Nasr-2 was fired from a warship and hit its target at a distance of 30 km (19 miles) and destroyed it," Iranian state run radio reported.⁴⁹ The size and breadth of the exercise, coupled with the remarks leading up to the exercises and public status reports throughout, are in line with the

asymmetric strategy Iran continues to pursue, and the threatening nature of the naval missile launch further adds to regional tensions while Iran continues to pursue its controversial nuclear program and threatens to close the Strait of Hormuz.

*The IRGC Commander's Asymmetric Strategy*⁵⁰

IRGC commander Mohammad Ali Aziz Jafari has extensive military experience and proven organizational skills. He is considered a proven tactician and is credited with the development of effective intelligence warfare strategies. He has emphasized asymmetrical warfare and developing Iran's ballistic missile capabilities throughout his military career. A *Rooz* article from September 4, 2007 explained that "asymmetrical warfare" refers to "attacks in enemy territory based on dispersed commando strikes rather than on traditional warfare [between two armies]."

Jafari held several senior positions in the IRGC, including head of operations at the joint headquarters and deputy commander of the ground forces. In 1992, he was appointed commander of the ground forces, a position he held for 13 years. One of the tasks he carried out in this capacity was "to study and assess the strengths and weaknesses of America [as reflected] in its attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq."⁵¹ In 2005, he was appointed by Khamenei to head the Strategic Research Center of the Revolutionary Guards intelligence service.⁵²

A *Rooz* article published on September 3, 2007 stated that Jafari is not as close to the political centers of power as his predecessor Safavi, and that he focuses on military, rather than political, affairs. However, he is closely associated with Expediency Council Secretary-General and former IRGC commander Mohsen Rezai.

In speeches he has given since his appointment, Jafari has outlined the strategy he means to promote as IRGC commander, reiterating his commitment to developing Iran's ballistic missile capabilities and the asymmetrical warfare capacities of the IRGC:⁵³

The IRGC is closely monitoring the enemy's movements in the region... We discern even their most minor movements... The IRGC's excellent defensive and ballistic [missile] capabilities [constitute] one of our present advantages, and we aim to attain superiority [in this area]... Informed response to threats, developing independent capabilities and preserving Iran's strength - these are among the goals of the IRGC...

Asymmetrical warfare... is [our] strategy for dealing with the considerable capabilities of the enemy. A prominent example of this kind of warfare was [the tactics employed by Hizbullah during] the Lebanon war in 2006... Since the enemy has considerable technological abilities, and since we are still at a disadvantage in comparison, despite the progress we have made in the area of equipment, [our only] way to confront [the enemy] successfully is to adopt the strategy [of asymmetric warfare] and to employ various methods of this kind."⁵⁴

Jafari added that "the Revolutionary Guards [Corps] will invest efforts in strengthening its asymmetrical warfare capabilities, with the aim of successfully confronting the enemies."⁵⁵ On another occasion, Jafari stated: "After September 11, [2001], all [IRGC] forces changed their [mode of] operation, placing emphasis on attaining combat readiness. The first step [towards achieving] this goal was to develop [a strategy] of asymmetrical warfare and to hold maneuvers [in order to practice it]."⁵⁶

Jafari has said in the past that, in the case of a confrontation with the West, Iran will be willing to employ the organizations under its influence. In a January 2005 speech to

intelligence commanders from the Basij and IRGC, Jafari - then commander of the ground forces - stated: "In addition to its own capabilities, Iran also has excellent deterrence capabilities outside its [own borders], and if necessary it will utilize them."⁵⁷

IRGC Quds Force

The IRGC has a large intelligence operation and unconventional warfare component. Roughly 5,000 of the men in the IRGC are assigned to the unconventional warfare mission. The IRGC has the equivalent of one Special Forces division, plus additional smaller formations, and these forces are given special priority in terms of training and equipment. In addition, the IRGC has a special Quds force that plays a major role in giving Iran the ability to conduct unconventional warfare overseas using various foreign movements as proxies.⁵⁸

The budget for the Quds forces is a classified budget directly controlled by Khamenei, and is not reflected in the Iranian general budget. It operates primarily outside Iran's borders, although it has bases inside and outside of Iran. The Quds troops are divided into specific groups or "corps" for each country or area in which they operate. There are Directorates for Iraq; Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan; Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula; Asian countries of the former Soviet Union, Western Nations (Europe and North America) and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, and Morocco).⁵⁹

The Quds has offices or "sections" in many Iranian embassies, which are closed to most embassy staff. It is not clear whether these are integrated with Iranian intelligence operations, or that the ambassador in such embassies has control of, or detailed knowledge of, operations by the Quds staff. However, there are indications that most operations are coordinated between the IRGC and offices within the Iranian Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). There are separate operational organizations in Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, and several North African countries. There also indications that such elements may have participated in the bombings of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992, and the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires in 1994 -- although Iran has strongly denied this.⁶⁰

In January 2007, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) decided to place all Iranian operations in Iraq under the command of the Quds forces. At the same time, the SNSC decided to increase the personnel strength of the Quds to 15,000.⁶¹

The al Quds forces have supported nonstate actors in many foreign countries. These include Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Shi'ites in Afghanistan. Links to Sunni extremist groups like Al Qa'ida have been reported, but never convincingly confirmed.

Many U.S. experts believe that the Quds forces have provided significant transfers of weapons to Shi'ite (and perhaps some Sunni) elements in Iraq. These may include the shaped charge components used in some IEDs in Iraq and the more advanced components used in explosively formed projectiles, including the weapon assembly, copper slugs, radio links used to activate such devices, and the infrared triggering mechanisms. These devices are very similar to those used in Lebanon, and some seem to

operate on the same radio frequencies. Shaped charge weapons first began to appear in Iraq in August 2003, but became a serious threat in 2005.⁶²

On January 11, 2007, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency stated in a testimony before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that the Quds force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had the lead for its transnational terrorist activities, in conjunction with Lebanese Hezbollah and Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS).⁶³ Other sources believe that the primary mission of the Quds has been to support Shi'ite movements and militias, and such aid and weapons transfers seem to have increased significantly in the spring of 2007.

The Quds are also believed to play a continuing role in training, arming, and funding Hezbollah in Lebanon and to have begun to support Shi'ite militia and Taliban activities in Afghanistan. Experts disagree on the scale of such activity, how much it has provided support to Sunni Islamist extremist groups rather than Shi'ite groups, and over the level of cooperation in rebuilding Hezbollah forces in Lebanon since the cease-fire in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.

The debates focus on the scale of such activity and the extent to which it has been formally controlled and authorized by the Supreme Leader and the President, however, and not over whether some level of activity has been authorized.

The exact relationship between the Quds, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad is even more speculative. Some Iranian arms shipments have clearly been directed at aiding anti-peace and anti-Israeli elements in the Gaza Strip. There is some evidence of aid in training, weapons, and funding to hostile Palestinian elements in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Open sources do not, however, provide a clear picture of the scale of such activity.

Some reports indicate that the budget for the Quds force is a classified budget directly controlled by the Supreme Leader Khamenei and is not reflected in the Iranian general budget.⁶⁴ The active elements of the Quds service operate primarily outside Iran's borders, although it has bases inside and outside of Iran. The Quds troops are divided into specific groups or "corps" for each country or area in which they operate. There are Directorates for Iraq; Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan; Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula; Asian countries of the former Soviet Union, Western nations (Europe and North America), and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, and Morocco).

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The Quds seems to control many of Iran's training camps for unconventional warfare, extremists, and terrorists in Iran and countries like the Sudan and Lebanon. In Sudan, the Quds are believed to run a training camp of unspecified nature in Sudan. It has at least four major training facilities in Iran. The Al Quds have a main training center at Imam Ali University that is based in the Sa'dabad Palace in Northern Tehran. Troops are trained to carry out military and terrorist operations and are indoctrinated in ideology.

There are other training camps in the Qom, Tabriz, and Mashhad governorates and in Lebanon and the Sudan. These include the Al Nasr camp for training Iraqi Shi'ites and Iraqi and Turkish Kurds in northwest Iran and a camp near Mashhad for training Afghan and Tajik revolutionaries.

The Quds seems to help operate the Manzariyah training center near Qom, which recruits from foreign students in the religious seminary and which seems to have trained some Bahraini extremists. Some foreigners are reported to have received training in demolition and sabotage at an IRGC facility near Isfahan, in airport infiltration at a facility near Mashad and Shiraz, and in underwater warfare at an IRGC facility at Bandar Abbas.⁶⁶

On January 11, 2007, the U.S. military in Iraq detained five men accused of providing funds and equipment to Iraqi insurgents. According to U.S. military sources, these men had connections to the Quds.⁶⁷ On January 20, 2007, gunmen dressed as U.S. soldiers entered the Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Karbala and killed and wounded several U.S. servicemen. According to some sources, including U.S. military intelligence, the gunmen were members of the Quds. The sophisticated planning and execution of this attack made it unlikely that any Iraqi group was involved in it.⁶⁸

General David H. Petraeus, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, stressed the growing role of the Quds force and IRGC in testimony to Congress in April 2007. He noted that the United States had found Quds operatives in Iraq and seized computers with hard drives that included a 22-page document that had details on the planning, approval process, and conduct of an attack that killed five U.S. soldiers in Karbala. Petraeus noted that;⁶⁹

"They were provided substantial funding, training on Iranian soil, advanced explosive munitions and technologies as well as run-of-the-mill arms and ammunition...in some cases advice and in some cases even a degree of direction...Our sense is that these records were kept so that they could be handed in to whoever it is that is financing them...And again, there's no question...that Iranian financing is taking place through the Quds force of the Iranian Republican Guards Corps."

Israeli defense experts continue to state that they believe the IRGC and Quds force not only played a major role in training and equipping Hezbollah, but may have assisted it during the Israeli-Hezbollah War in 2006. Israeli intelligence officers claim to have found command and control centers, and a missile and rocket fire-control center, in Lebanon that was of Iranian design. They feel the Quds force played a major role in the Hezbollah anti-ship missile attack on an Israeli Navy Sa'ar-class missile patrol boat and that Iranians and Syrians supported Hezbollah with intelligence from facilities in Syria during the fighting.

Iranian Paramilitary, Security, and Intelligence Forces

Iran has not faced a meaningful threat from terrorism since the isolation of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO) forces based in Iraq following the fall

of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, and the MEK had long be little more than an ineffective Rajavi cult before Saddam's fall.⁷⁰

While Iran does show concern over any outside source of criticism or opposition, and conducts covert foreign political and intelligence operations against such groups and movements, its internal security forces focus on countering political opposition. Since 1990, Iran has maintained the same force structure, and its key agencies have not changed since the early years of the Revolution.

The U.S. Department of State described the role of Iran's internal security apparatus as follows:⁷¹

Several agencies share responsibility for law enforcement and maintaining order, including the ministry of intelligence and security, the law enforcement forces under the interior ministry, and the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps]. A paramilitary volunteer force known as the Basij and various informal groups known as the Ansar-e Hezbollah (Helpers of the Party of God) aligned with extreme conservative members of the leadership and acted as vigilantes. The size of the Basij is disputed, with officials citing anywhere from 11 to 20 million, and a recent Western study claiming there were 90 thousand active members and up to 300 thousand reservists. Civilian authorities did not maintain fully effective control of the security forces. The regular and paramilitary security forces both committed numerous, serious human rights abuses. According to HRW [Human Rights Watch] since 2000 the government's use of plainclothes security agents to intimidate political critics became more institutionalized. They were increasingly armed, violent, and well equipped, and they engaged in assault, theft, and illegal seizures and detentions.

Iran maintains an extensive network of internal security and intelligence services. The main parts of the domestic security apparatus are made up of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the Basij Resistance Force, the intelligence unit of the IRGC, and the law enforcement forces within the Ministry of Interior that largely are responsible for providing police and border control. The leadership of each of these organizations appears to be fragmented and dispersed among several, often competing, political factions. Public information on all Iranian security and intelligence forces is extremely limited and subject to political manipulation.

The IRGC has control over several other organizations or parts thereof. All security organizations without exception report to the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), as the highest body in the political chain of command. The phenomenon of the fragmented leadership of the security organizations is reflected in their relationship to the SNSC as different security organizations maintain special ties to certain elements of the SNSC.

Other state organizations, most notably the police services, exert varying control over internal security. As with virtually all other organizations, the IRGC is believed to have considerable leverage over these services.⁷² The effectiveness of the internal security organizations is unclear and the political will to use them is hard to predict. After local unrest in the Iranian province of Baluchistan in May 2006, police were unable to seize control of the situation against regional tribal forces.⁷³

Iran's Baji Resistance Force

The Basij is a popular reserve and paramilitary force of about 90,000 men, with an active and reserve strength of up to 300,000 and a mobilization capacity of nearly 1,000,000 men, mostly manned by elderly men, youth, and volunteers who have completed their

military service. The Baji Force is organized in a regional, decentralized command structure and has up to 740 regional “battalions” of approximately 300-350 soldiers, each of which is organized into three to four subunits. It maintains a relatively small active-duty staff of 90,000 and relies on mobilization in the case of any contingency.⁷⁴ The Basij was put under command of the IRGC on January 1, 1981.

Iran’s Baji Force performs broader functions than simply serving as a reserve for the IRGC, as discussed earlier. The IRGC oversaw the creation of a people’s militia, a volunteer group it named the Basij Resistance Force – which means Mobilization of the Oppressed – in 1980. The Basij derives its legitimization from Article 151 of the Iranian Constitution, which calls upon the government to fulfill its duty according to the Quran to provide all citizens with the means to defend themselves.

The Baji’s mission has increasingly been broadened to providing reserves and small combat elements for the IRGC in defending against a US invasion. It would serve as a mobilization base for the IRGC, as well as provide cadres and small units for independent action against invading forces. It would also serve as a “stay behind” force and attack isolated U.S. units and rear areas. According to Connell, the IRGC has formed a wartime mobilization plan for the IRGC called the “Mo’in Plan,” where Basij battalions would be integrated into the IRGC in wartime as part of the IRGC regional defense structure.⁷⁵

According to one source, about 20,000 Basij forces were organized in four brigades during the Great Prophet II military exercise in November 2006. According to an IRGC general, during the Great Prophet II exercise 172 battalions of the Basij Resistance Force were employed with the primary mission of guarding “public alleyways and other urban areas.”⁷⁶

The IRGC maintains tight control over the leadership of the Basij and imposes strict Islamic rules on its members. Recent comments by Iranian leaders indicate that the mission of the Basij is shifting away from traditional territorial defense to “defending against Iranian security threats.” Furthermore, there are reports of an increased interest in improving the Basij under the leadership of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.⁷⁷

It is far from clear how effective the Basij would really be in such missions. Similar forces have been created in a number of countries, including Iraq. In many cases, they have not materialized as a meaningful resistance force. Iran does, however, have extensive experience in creating and using such forces dating back to the Iran-Iraq War, and the fighting in Iraq since 2003 has shown that small cadres of activists using IEDs, car bombs, and suicide bombs can have a major political and military impact.

Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security

The Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), or Vezarat-e Ettela’ at va Aminat-e Keshvar (VEVAK), was installed following the Revolution to replace the now-disbanded National Organization for Intelligence and Security (SAVAK), which in return was created under the leadership of U.S. and Israeli officers in 1957. SAVAK fell victim to political leadership struggles with the intelligence service of the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq War. A compromise solution resulted in the creation of MOIS in 1984.

The MOISs major tasks include intelligence about the Middle East and Central Asia and domestic intelligence and monitoring of clerical and government officials⁷⁸ as well as work on preventing conspiracies against the Islamic republic.⁷⁹

There is an ongoing debate within Iran's political system over limiting parliamentary control over MOIS, indicating that the control over MOIS can be used as a powerful political instrument. Recently, there were efforts in Iran to extract the counterintelligence unit of MOIS and make it a separate entity. This proposal seems to be favored by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and some hard-line legislators.⁸⁰

Until recently, the organization has remained under very limited public disclosure. In the 1990s, Ministry personnel were accused of killing political dissidents in Iran. Ensuing investigations have been covered up systematically. Apparently, MOIS has a comparatively large budget at its disposal and operates under the broader guidance of Ali Khamenei.⁸¹

Iran's Ministry of Interior

Iran also has 45,000–60,000 men in the Ministry of Interior (MoI) serving as police and border guards, with light utility vehicles, light patrol aircraft (Cessna 185/310s and AB-205s and AB-206s), 90 coastal patrol craft, and 40 harbor patrol craft. The rest of Iran's paramilitary and internal security forces seem to have relatively little capability in any form of warfighting mission.⁸²

The exact role of Iran's MoI and its forces in covert and asymmetric operations is unclear. Open source information regarding its structure and forces is limited. The same is true of other organization in Iran's internal security apparatus. The Ansar-e Hezbollah is a paramilitary force that has gained questionable notoriety. It remains unclear to what extent they are attached to government bodies. Reportedly, the political right in government has repeatedly made use of them to fight and intimidate liberal forces in society. The Ansar-e Hezbollah's military level of training appears to be poor.⁸³

Tehran's Proxy and Terrorist Assets

As stated earlier, the IRGC is suspected of training and arming several paramilitary, terrorist, and proxy forces including its Al Quds Force and other elements that operate covertly or openly overseas; such as working with Hezbollah of Lebanon, Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Shi'ites in Afghanistan, to name a few.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Ministry of Intelligence and Security have been implicated in the planning of and support for terrorist acts and continued to exhort a variety of groups that use terrorism to pursue their goals.

Iran has maintained a high-profile role in encouraging anti-Israeli activity, both rhetorically and operationally, while denying any involvement in such activity. Supreme Leader Khamenei praised Palestinian resistance operations. Matching this rhetoric with action, Iran provided Hezbollah and Palestinian resistance and liberation organization's – such as Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command – a with funding, safe haven, training, and weapons. Iran hosted a conference in August 2003 on the Palestinian intifada, at which an Iranian

official suggested that the continued success of the Palestinian resistance depended on suicide operations.

Iran has pursued a variety of policies in Iraq aimed at securing Tehran's interests. Iran has indicated support for the Iraqi Governing Council and promised to help Iraqi reconstruction, while running covert insurgent operations throughout the country and supporting domestic Shi'ite paramilitary forces, such as Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

The London Times in September 2005 identified at least a dozen active Islamic groups with ties to Tehran. Eight were singled out as having considerable cross-border influence:⁸⁴

- **Badr Brigades:** A Shi'ite militia force of 12,000 trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and blamed for a number of killings of Sunni Muslims. They are thought to control several cities in southern Iraq.
- **Islamic Dawaa Party:** A Shi'ite party that has strong links to Iran. Its leader, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the present Prime Minister, has vowed to improve ties between the two neighbors.
- **Mahdi Army:** Received arms and volunteers from Iran during its battle against US and British troops last year. The group's commander in Basra, Ahmed al-Fartusi, was arrested by British forces in mid-September 2005.
- **Mujahideen for Islamic Revolution in Iraq:** A Tehran-backed militia blamed for the murder of six British Royal Military Police soldiers in Majar el-Kabir in 2003.
- **Thar Allah (Vengeance of God):** An Iranian-backed terror group blamed for killing former members of the ruling Ba'ath party and enforcing strict Islamic law.
- **Jamaat al-Fudalah (Group of the Virtuous):** A Paramilitary group that imposes Islamic rules on Shia areas and has attacked shops selling alcohol and music.
- **Al-Fadilah (Morality):** A Secret political movement financed by Iran. It is thought to have many members among provincial officials.
- **Al-Quawaid al-Islamiya (Islamic Bases):** An Iranian-backed Islamic movement that uses force to impose Islamic law.

Hezbollah

The Hezbollah was originally formed in 1982 by Iranian seminarians, Its links to Tehran have strengthened as it has grown into a semi-autonomous power of its own. Hezbollah has become a sophisticated political military-social organization, a key player in the Lebanese government, a dominant force in southern Lebanon, a potent militia, a trainer for regional terror groups, and an exporter of terror; all owing a great deal to Hezbollah's ties with Tehran.

Hezbollah is an important Iranian instrument over which Tehran exerts significant influence. According to former Hezbollah secretary general Sheik Subhi Al-Tufeili (who broke with Iran and Hezbollah), "Hezbollah is a tool, and it is an integral part of the Iranian intelligence apparatus. . . . Iran is the main nerve in the activity today in Lebanon. All Hezbollah activity [is financed] by Iranian funds. Syria has an important role, but Iran is the main and primary support of [the Lebanese opposition]."⁸⁵ Iranian officials agree: Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, one of the founders of Hezbollah, former Iranian ambassador to Syria and Lebanon, and former Iranian interior minister, has said that "Hezbollah is part

of the Iranian rulership; Hezbollah is a central component of the Iranian military and security establishment; the ties between Iran and Hezbollah are far greater than those between a revolutionary regime with a revolutionary party or organization outside its borders.”⁸⁶

More recently, Hezbollah’s second-in-command, Sheik Naim al Qassem, explained in an interview on Iranian television that Hezbollah yields to Iranian authority for all military issues, including suicide bombings, rocket launches, and other terrorist operations. Qassem references “‘al-wali al-faqih’ (the ruling jurisprudent), a title formerly used by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and presently used by his successor, leader Ali Khamenei . . . to describe Hezbollah’s source of authority.”⁸⁷

There is little doubt that Hezbollah has recovered from any setbacks suffered in its 2006 confrontation with Israel. Hezbollah has been able to rearm and regroup, and Iran has been an important part of that recovery.

In a February 2007 interview, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah openly stated that Iran is supplying his group.⁸⁸ Weapons shipments come by land, sea, and air from Iran, often via Damascus. Shipments are frequent and large. For example, Israel’s Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center reported that at least nine times between December 2003 and January 2004, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force “used Iranian and Syrian cargo planes flying humanitarian aid in to the earthquake victims . . . in Southeastern Iran . . . to take large quantities of weapons for Hezbollah on their return flights.” with monetary aid and weapons.⁸⁹

Iran has gone from supplying small arms, short-range missiles and training to providing more sophisticated long-range missiles and other higher-end weaponry destined to escalate tensions between Lebanon and Israel.⁹⁰ In mid-2004, IRGC officers reportedly unloaded 220 missiles with a 250–350-kilometer range for Hezbollah at an airfield near Damascus; and according to calculations reported by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), between 1992 and 2005, Hezbollah received approximately 11,500 missiles and rockets; four hundred short- and medium-range pieces of artillery; and Aresh, Nuri, and Hadid rockets and transporters/launchers from Iran.⁹¹ In 2005, Iran sent Hezbollah a shipment of large Uqab missiles with 333-millimeter warheads and an enormous supply of SA-7 and C-802 missiles, two of which were used in an attack on an Israeli ship.⁹²

During Hezbollah’s summer 2006 war with Israel, Iran resupplied the group’s depleted weapons stocks. In July of that year, secret IRGC airlifts from bases in Bandar Abbas transported supplies for Hezbollah to the Dumeir Syrian military airfield near Homs;⁹³ and the following month, Iran sent more advanced surface-to-air missiles, including Strela-2/2M, Strela-3, Igla-1E, and the Mithaq-1. The same missiles were reported to have been used to target Israeli helicopters.⁹⁴

Hezbollah’s performance during the 2006 war showed how effective Iranian support could be. Hezbollah fighters had benefited from serious, in-depth training from IRGC at rear training facilities in Syria and Iran, as well as on the ground in Lebanon. Hezbollah also reportedly had hundreds of Iranian engineers who, with North Korean experts brought into Lebanon by Iranian diplomats, built a twenty-five kilometer underground

tunnel to move fighters. The IRGC also aided in the construction of underground storerooms in the Bekaa Valley to hold missiles and ammunition.⁹⁵

It seems evident that recent events have increased Hezbollah's dependence on Iran even further. Both Hezbollah's loss of weapons and fighters in the conflict with Israel and the resulting damage to its reputation and position within Lebanon weakened Hezbollah's burgeoning independence and made it more reliant upon Iran.

With the successes that Hezbollah has seen in Lebanon, both politically and militarily, Tehran has shown every sign of drawing on the Lebanon-Hezbollah model to undermine the Middle East's other vulnerable regimes.

Tehran's Influence in Iraq

Iran continues to play a major role in the security and political situation in Iraq, and continues to take an aggressive approach in trying to shape Iraq's political future and security position in the Gulf. Some experts believed that Tehran had abandoned their efforts to export their "Shi'ite revolution" to the Gulf, but this view has changed since the invasion of Iraq. Officials across the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, have expressed reservation over the right of Iraqi Sunnis, Kurdish and Shi'ite dominance over the Iraqi government, and a new "strategic" Shi'ite alliance between Iran and Iraq.

Less than a week after the war started, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld referred to the "unhelpful" presence of small numbers of Iranian-backed Iraqi forces, and a few days later he said hundreds of combatants from the Badr Corps were operating in Iraq and that more were waiting in Iran⁹⁶ and added that, "The Badr Corps is trained, equipped, and directed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, and we will hold the Iranian government responsible for their actions and will view Badr Corps activity inside Iraq as unhelpful. Armed Badr Corps members found in Iraq will have to be treated as combatants." A month later Rumsfeld reiterated his previous statement saying that, "There is no question but that the government of Iran has encouraged people to go into the country [Iraq] and that they have people in the country attempting to influence the country."⁹⁷

Jordan's King Abdullah has claimed that more than 1 million Iranians have moved into Iraq to influence the Iraqi election. The Iranians, King Abdullah argued, have been trying to build pro-Iranian attitudes in Iraq by providing salaries to the unemployed. The King has also said that the IRGC are helping the militant groups fighting the US in Iraq, and warned in an interview with the *Washington Post* of a "Shi'ite Crescent" forming between Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. He was quoted as saying:⁹⁸

It is in Iran's vested interest to have an Islamic republic of Iraq.

If Iraq goes Islamic republic, then, yes, we've opened ourselves to a whole set of new problems that will not be limited to the borders of Iraq. I'm looking at the glass half-full, and let's hope that's not the case. But strategic planners around the world have got to be aware that is a possibility.

Even Saudi Arabia is not immune from this. It would be a major problem. And then that would propel the possibility of a Shi'ite-Sunni conflict even more, as you're taking it out of the borders of Iraq.

Former interim Iraqi President, Ghazi Al-Yawar, a Sunni, stated that, "Unfortunately, time is proving, and the situation is proving, beyond any doubt that Iran has very obvious

interference in our business -- a lot of money, a lot of intelligence activities and almost interfering daily in business and many [provincial] governates, especially in the southeast side of Iraq.”⁹⁹

A number of experts believe that Tehran-backed militias have infiltrated Iraqi security forces. In September 2005, Iraq’s National Security Adviser, Mouwafak al-Rubaie, admitted that insurgents had penetrated Iraqi police forces in many parts of the country, but refused to speculate about the extent of the infiltration.¹⁰⁰

In addition, both the US and British ministers of defense have complained that Iran is actively supporting various militias in Iraq, has supplied advanced triggering and motion detector systems for IEDS, and is using elements of the al-Quds force to train death squads and militias.¹⁰¹ Work by Nawaf Obaid and the Saudi National Security Assessment Project (SNSAP), stated that:¹⁰²

Iran is insinuating itself into Iraq. The first is through the activities of the al-Quds Forces, the special command division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC). The second approach is by funding and arming Shi’ite militias, the most prominent of which is the SCIRI’s 25,000-strong armed wing, the Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development. Senior members of the Badr Organization and the al-Quds Forces have a closely coordinated relationship. Intelligence reports have indicated that Iranian officers are directing operations under cover in units of the Badr Organization. The Mahdi Army also receives important Iranian assistance, but on a much smaller scale.

The IRGC Commander is General Yahya Rahim-Safavi and the Deputy Commander is General Mohammad Bager Zulgadr. The al-Quds Forces Commander is General Qassem Soleimani. Generals Zulgadr and Soleimani are two most senior officers responsible for Iran’s large covert program in Iraq and have a direct link to the Office of the Leader. Additionally, intelligence estimates have identified four other IRGC generals and nine IRGC colonels that are directly responsible for covert operations in Iraq.

The al-Quds Forces mainly functions as a large intelligence operation skilled in the art of unconventional warfare. Current intelligence estimates puts the strength of the force at 5,000. Most of these are highly trained officers. Within the al-Quds Forces, there is a small unit usually referred to as the “Special Quds Force” which consists of the finest case officers and operatives.

The senior officers attached to this unit conduct foreign covert unconventional operations using various foreign national movements as proxies. The forces operate mainly outside Iranian territory, but maintain numerous training bases inside Iran as well. Al-Quds international operations are divided into geographic areas of influence and various corps. The most important and largest cover Iraq, Saudi Arabia (and the Arabian Peninsula), and Syria / Lebanon. The smaller corps cover Afghanistan, Pakistan/India, Turkey, the Muslim Republics of the former Soviet Union, Europe / North America, and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, and Morocco).

The goal of Iran is to infiltrate all Iraq-based militias by providing training and support to their members. For example, al-Sadr’s estimated 10,000-strong Mahdi Army, which gets logistical and financial support from al-Quds, also receives training in IIRCG camps in Iran. Moreover, nearly all of the troops in the Badr

Organizations were trained in these camps as well. In addition, most senior officers acquired their skills in specialized camps under the control of the al-Quds Forces. Intelligence estimates that al-Quds currently operates six major training facilities in Iran, with the main facility located adjacent to Imam Ali University in Northern Tehran. The other most important training camps are located in the Qom, Tabriz, and Mashhad governorates. There are also two similar facilities operating on the Syrian-Lebanese border.

According to a senior general in the Iraqi Defense Ministry and a critic of Iran, the Iranians have set up the most sophisticated intelligence-gathering network in the country, to the extent that they have infiltrated "every major Iraqi ministry and security service." There is also an intelligence directorate that has been set up within the Revolutionary Guard that is under the command of the al-Quds Forces devoted exclusively to monitoring the movements of US and Allied forces in Iraq.

Many members of the newly created police and Iraqi forces are controlled by Shi'ite officers who, in some form or another, previously belonged to SCIRI or other groups affiliated with Iran. Recent intelligence indicates that IRGC officers are currently operating in Iraq in certain Shi'ite militias and actual army and police units. The degree of penetration of these organizations is difficult to assess, and it is virtually impossible to distinguish between Iraqi Shi'ite militias and police units, both of which are profoundly influenced by Iran, and in some cases are under Iranian control.

Iranian manipulation has filtered down to street level as well. Ordinary police and military officers now have a stronger allegiance to the Badr Organization or the Mahdi Army than to their own units. And of course, these organizations are deeply connected to Iran. According to the head of intelligence of an allied country that borders Iraq, "the Iranians have not just pulled off an infiltration, in certain regions in Baghdad and Basra, it's been a complete takeover."

Tehran continues to use its security and intelligence forces to destabilize the political situation in Iraq. Iran's political objectives in Iraq remain obscure and partly contradictory. Tehran has stated repeatedly that it supports stability in Iraq. At the same time, several organizations with ties to the Iranian security apparatus are suspected of actively driving a wedge between rivaling factions in Iraq. The IRGC and its subordinate organizations, appear to be the most important entities involved in assisting terrorist groups in neighboring Iraq.

Shortly after the fall of Saddam Hussein, individuals with ties to the IRGC may have attempted to infiltrate southern Iraq, and elements of the Iranian Government have helped members of Ansar al-Islam transit and find safe haven in Iran. In a Friday Prayers sermon in Tehran in May 2003, Guardian Council member Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati publicly encouraged Iraqis to follow the Palestinian model and participate in suicide operations against Coalition forces in Iraq.

By mid-2004 there was an ongoing program in Iran to recruit volunteers for martyrdom operations in Iraq. It is organized by the Headquarters for Tribute to the Martyrs of the Global Islamic Movement. The Headquarters for Tribute to the Martyrs of the Global Islamic Movement, which is affiliated with the IRGC, began enrollment of volunteer suicide bombers in May 2004. Registration forms for suicide bombers are available all over Tehran, and the government does not seem to be trying to halt this phenomenon. By mid-2005 the effort had reportedly culled 40,000 volunteers to undergo special training to become suicide bombers for serving the Palestinian cause against the Israeli occupation.

A number of high-ranking individuals defended the registration of suicide bombers. At a late summer 2004 ceremony in the southern Iranian city of Bushehr organized by the Headquarters for Tribute to the Martyrs of the Global Islamic Movement, parliamentarian Shokrollah Atarzadeh registered as a martyrdom volunteer. Hussein Shariatmadari, the Supreme Leader's representative at the Kayhan Institute, said Iranians must be ready to use "martyrdom-seeking operations." He said Israel is vulnerable and added, "You don't know that the wish of martyrdom-seekers is to send the Israelis to hell. You don't know what a fury and vengeance burns in the hearts of each and every Muslim when they see you destroy the houses of Muslims over their heads or when you commit genocide."

Shariatmadari asked, "Why should they be in peace and security in European cities while the people of Iraq, Palestine, and other Muslim countries have no security?"¹⁰³

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has also defended the practice. According to a state radio report, he said during a May 2002 speech that "It is the zenith of honor for a man, a young person, boy or girl, to be prepared to sacrifice his life in order to serve the interests of his nation and his religion. This is the zenith of courage and bravery.... martyrdom-seeking operations demonstrate the pinnacle of a nation's honor." In a May 2003 sermon in Tehran, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said that the Iraqi people "have no option but to resort to Intifada and martyrdom-seeking operations. That is the only solution. They are learning from the Palestinian experience."¹⁰⁴

Reporting from various sources indicate an increasing Iranian involvement and influence in Iraq especially by the Hezbollah Brigades. US troops have reported that they have captured more than 30 suspects that US military says are sponsored by Iran in the month of November in 2008.¹⁰⁵

Tehran's Influence in Afghanistan

Tehran is also play a significant role in Afghanistan's security and political situation. Iranian involvement is less noticeable in Afghanistan, but open source reporting on the political and security situation has been lacking on the whole. Even with the lack of reporting on Afghanistan Iranian involvement has still been substantial, especially considering Tehran's history of animosity toward some of the groups it is now supporting; most notably the Taliban elements that continue to conduct insurgent operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Reporting suggests that in 2007, Iran offered economic, social, and cultural assistance to Afghanistan; pressured Kabul over Afghan refugees and migrant workers in Iran; lent limited military support to the Taliban and possibly other insurgent groups; tried to develop a deep bilateral relationship between Tehran and Kabul; attempted to create a gap between Kabul and the West; and possibly tried to destabilize the government of Hamid Karzai.¹⁰⁶ On 17 April 2007, then-chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace announced that US forces "have intercepted weapons in Afghanistan headed for the Taliban that were made in Iran," and went on to say that, "We know that there are munitions that were made in Iran that are in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we know that the Quds force works for the IRGC. We then surmise from that one or two thing. Either the leadership in the country knows what their armed forces are doing, or they don't. And in either case that's a problem."¹⁰⁷

The following day, when asked about the weapons shipments seized by General Pace, Brigadier General Joseph Votel, deputy commanding general for operations of Combined Joint Task Force-82 (CJTF-82) said that, "I don't know all the particulars of those finds. I'm not sure I really have the visibility to address that particular problem. . . . Being in Regional Command East, you know, our focus is more over on the Pakistan border, so we certainly don't see [any] direct influence from Iran. . . . Right now it's not having an impact here in Regional Command East."¹⁰⁸

The command and control structure between coalition forces in Afghanistan have created a number of problems for intelligence gathering and operations. In case of Iranian

influence, this lack of communication between regional commands in Afghanistan downplays the amount of Iranian influence, making these individual cases seem insignificant by themselves, and therefore can be assessed as one reason for the lack of reporting on Iranian involvement and influence in Afghanistan.

The shipment seized near Kandahar included mortars and plastic explosives. The shipment was later reported as including, “RPG-7 launchers, light guns, and explosive devises,” and that, “the arms bore the distinct hallmarks of Iran,” by ISAF spokeswoman Lieutenant Colonel Maria Carl.¹⁰⁹

On 5 June 2007 ISAF commander, General Daniel McNeill announced that coalition forces had intercepted two more weapons shipments that bore Iranian Hallmarks, saying that:¹¹⁰

“We have intercepted at least two convoys that have contained munitions or weapons. Some of those munitions and weapons clearly of— are Iranian origin. . . . We do have two events in which we have recovered explosively formed penetrators [EFP]. . . . In one case, it was not highly sophisticated in terms of giving it a technology-type measurement; in the other case, it was fairly sophisticated. In both cases, they had characteristics of EFPs that I had read about that have been found and indeed used in Iraq and are said to have originated from Iran. . . . We intercepted those convoys. . . inside of Afghanistan. We intercepted them out west. In the case of one of them, there were mortar rounds that were clearly of Iranian origin. There were also explosives, plastic explosives, packaged to make it look like U.S.-made C-4, which is an up-scale version of plastic explosives. It’s my understanding that similar types of explosives have been found in Iraq, and once again, the information says they originate from Iran. . . . The convoys were intercepted inside of the Afghan border with Iran—in one case, well inside; in the other case, inside.”

On 13 June 2008 Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns made a much bolder reference to the Iranian governments involvement in supplying the Taliban with weapons saying that, “There’s irrefutable evidence the Iranians are now” transferring arms to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. He added, “It’s certainly coming from the government of Iran. It’s coming from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps command, which is a basic unit of the Iranian government.”¹¹¹

Later that day Secretary of Defense Robert Gates downplayed the link of the Iranian government in insurgent activities in Afghanistan, but did not alleviate them of responsibility completely saying that:¹¹²

“I have seen additional analysis in the interval that makes it pretty clear there’s a fairly substantial flow of weapons. I would say, I haven’t seen any intelligence specifically to the effect—to this effect, but I would say, given the quantities that we’re seeing, it is difficult to believe that it’s associated with smuggling or the drug business or that it’s taking place without the knowledge of the Iranian government. . . . My impression is that the weapons are intended for the Taliban. I don’t know that we have seen any evidence of Qods Force in Afghanistan.”

But weapons shipments are not the only types of support that Iranian entities have been implicated in supply insurgents in Afghanistan. *Pajhwok Afghan News* reported that, “The government of Iran has converted the military camps of former mujahedeen into training camps for the opponents of the current Afghan government,” according to an anonymous member of parliament (MP) from Heart. The *Pajhwok* report went on to say that;¹¹³

[The anonymous MP] [q]uoting residents of Herat and Farah provinces, who had freshly returned from the neighboring country, said the former mujahedeen training camps in Turbat Jam, Birjand, Taibat and Haji Abad areas had now been converted into training camps for Taliban.”

He said People who had returned from Iran claimed that high ranking Taliban were also freely visiting those “training facilities.”

He added Yahya Khurdturk, a former commander of Islamic Movement of Sheikh Asif Mohsini and currently a member of the Islamic United Front of Ustad Akbari, leader of the Shi’a community, had also got training along with his colleagues at . . . those camps.

The MP said Yahya was directly linked to the Revolutionary Guards known as Sipah-i- Pasdaran [the IRGC]. . . .

Ahmad Behzad, another MP from Heart province, said: “We have information that Sepahi Qudus (sacred force) [the Quds Force], a wing of the Pasdaran, is organizing and equipping opposition inside Afghanistan as well as train[ing] them at the centers in Iran.” He termed the alleged training facilities for Taliban as an open intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by the neighboring country.

“We have information that such centers are existing not only in the border areas, but also in remote provinces.”

Claims like these continue to come out of the reporting by news and intelligence agencies in Afghanistan, as well as Afghani government officials and ranking coalition commanders in the AO.¹¹⁴

Iran has gained considerable influence in the western provinces of Afghanistan with infrastructure programs and providing services to the people in these provinces; which the Afghan government has not been able to provide. On the surface this type of influence seem harmless and in many cases as supporting the humanitarian mission in Afghanistan and the nation building efforts of the coalition forces in support of the Afghan government. However, if one looks at the bigger picture of Iranian involvement it can be assessed that insurgent forces, which have some kind of Iranian support, are a part of the problem in creating regional security. By attacking security forces and aid workers that are trying to provide services the Iranian government can come in to fill the voids that are created by the insecurity created by insurgent groups in the western provinces, thereby increasing their role in the region and their influence over this portion of the population.

Nuclear Weapons and Long-Range Missiles as Part of Iran’s Asymmetric Strategy

The effectiveness of all of these Iranian assets depends heavily on Iran’s ability to use them, or the threat of their use, without provoking conventional wars and attacks. There are no definitive ways to tie Iran’s possible nuclear weapons programs and missile programs to Iran’s defense and deterrence strategy for using asymmetric forces. It is clear, however, that the acquisition of longer-range missiles and the possibility of the acquisition of nuclear warheads help Iran to bolster defense for itself while adhering to an evolving and expanding offensive asymmetric warfare strategy.

If one looks for a coherent rationale behind an Iran’s behavior and possible acquisition of nuclear weapons, adopting a strategy of combining ambiguity regarding its nuclear and missile programs intentions and capabilities with forces for asymmetric and covert

warfare already gives Iran more freedom of movement in regards to low level conflict through its proxies as well as in its diplomatic dealings.

The following chapters strongly indicate that Tehran has devised a strategy of misperception, deception, denial, concealment, cooperation, compliance, and ambiguity in dealing with its missile and WMD programs. It also seems to have learned from the mistakes and success of Iraq and North Korea.

Iraq's strategy was one of complete denial and concealment which led to greater suspicion of Iraqi ambitions and capabilities. This in turn led to a full military invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. The Iranian regime does not want to suffer the same fate as its neighbor.

North Korea was much more open about their nuclear programs. The openness regarding Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs created increasing security issues, both regionally and internationally. Due to the unwillingness of the international community act militarily, especially with the lack of intelligence on North Korean nuclear and military infrastructure; leading to a strategy that cut North Korea off from the rest of the international community. As the recent global economic crisis has shown, Iran cannot afford to be cut off from the international community, but at the same time the global community cannot afford to exclude Iran's vast energy resources from the global market.

With the encroachment of Western forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, and Iran's GCC neighbor's Iran cannot afford acting too threatening, thus inviting preventive or preemptive strikes. In order to keep its enemies at bay, while continuing to pursue its WMD ambitions; Iran has developed a strategy that relies on ambiguity, coupled with just the right amount of misperception, denial, deception, compliance, and concealment. Tehran allows inspectors to see just enough to keep the international community scratching their heads as to what Tehran's true intentions and capabilities are.

The invasion of Iraq under the pretense of finding and destroying Saddam's WMD's is another situation Tehran has used to its advantage. The perception of the U.S. government using faulty intelligence to sell the war to the American citizens and its allies has hinder future military operations short of a smoking gun. Iranian officials have also used the faulty intelligence leading to Operation Iraqi Freedom to discredit any intelligence collected that may support claims of any operational Iranian WMD programs.

Iranian officials often make very public statements addressing the accusations by the international community, from its ties to terrorist organization and insurgent groups, to its suspected WMD programs and intentions. It is clear that Iranian officials have paid close attention to the role of the media in influencing Western policy and manipulating public policy, and have used the lessons they have learned to smokescreen its developing nuclear program.

The statements made by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, or other Islamic religious figures, can often be viewed as false or misleading statements, and should be taken with a grain of salt. Ayatollah Khomeini repeatedly spoke of the necessity to engage in *taqiya*¹¹⁵ – which is the religiously sanctioned dissimulation meant to lull an enemy – and often practiced *taqiya* in public and diplomatic statements.

The ambiguity surrounding Iran's nuclear and other suspected WMD programs makes taking action against Iran all the more difficult. Some actors have become more and more hesitant about any type of action; whether it is sanctions, a strategy of deterrence or containment, and especially any sort of military action.

Iran might be much weaker than its adversaries in conventional military terms, but in asymmetric warfare, a weaker force does not need traditional military victory over the enemy, it needs only to outlast its enemy. Iran is able to generate and project real strategic threats and create operational and tactical challenges through its asymmetric strategy, by taking advantage of its real, potential, and perceived capabilities. The asymmetric capabilities that Tehran has at its disposal pose a serious threat to the regional balance and create new regional and international security concerns.

Appendix A: Key Acronyms

AAA	- Anti-Aircraft Artillery
AEOI	- Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
AO	- Area of Operations
APC	-Armored Personnel Carrier
AVLIS	- Atomic Vapor Laser Isotope Separation
BHRC	- Benefication and Hydrometallurgical Center
BNPP	- Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant
BW	- Biological Weapons/Warfare
CAIC	- Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Corporation
CBRN	- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear warheads
CBW	- Chemical and Biological Weapons
CEP	- Circular Error Probable
CIA	- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CJTF	- Combined Joint Task Force
CSL	- Comprehensive Separation Laboratory
CSP	- Conference of States Parties
CW	- Chemical Weapons/Warfare
CWC	- Chemical Weapons Convention
CWD	- Chemical Demilitarization Conference
DG	- Director General
DHS	- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DIA	- U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency
DIV	- Design Information Verification
EBW	- Exploding Bridgewire
EIA	- U.S. Energy Information Agency
EMP	- Electromagnetic Pulse
ERI	- Education Research Institute
FEP	- Fuel Enrichment Plant
FMP	- Fuel Manufacturing Plant
FSU	- Former Soviet Union
GA	- Tabun (Chemical nerve agent)

GB	- Sarin (Chemical nerve agent)
GLONAS	- Global Navigation Satellite System
GPS	- Global Positioning System
IAEA	- International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	- Iranian Air Force
IAIO	- Iranian Aerospace Industries Organization
IAP	- Institute of Applied Physics
IED	- Improvised Explosive Device
IISS	- International Institute for Strategic Studies
IOC	- Initial Operating Capability
IR-40	- Iran Nuclear Research
IRBM	- Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
IRGC	- Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps
IRGCAF	- Iranian Revolution Guards Corps Air Force
IS&R	- Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
<i>Isp</i>	- Specific Impulse
JHL	- Jabr Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Laboratory
Kgf	- Kilogram-force
KM	- Kimia Maadan Company
LOW	- Launch-on-warning
LRICBM	- Limited Range Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
LSL	- Laser Spectroscopy Laboratory
LUA	- Launch-under attack
MEK	- Mujahedeen-e-Khalq
MIX	- Molybdenum, Iodine, Xenon Radioisotope Production Facility Reactor
MLIS	- Molecular Isotope Separation
MOIS	- Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security
MP	- Member of Parliament
MRBM	- Medium Range Ballistic Missile
MTRC	- Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	- Nuclear Biological Chemical
NCRI	- National Council of Resistance of Iran

NGO	- Nongovernmental organization
NIOC	- National Iranian Oil Company
NPT	- Non Proliferation Treaty
NTI	- Nuclear Threat Initiative
OB	- Order of Battle
ODNI	- U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence
OPCW	- Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PFEP	- Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant
PHRC	- Physics Research Center
PIT	- Physical Inventory Taking
PLC	- Programmable Logic Control
PPE	- Personal Protective Equipment
PRC	- Peoples Republic of China
R&D	- Research and Development
RPG	- Rocket Propelled Grenade
SAVAK	- Iranian National Organization for Intelligence and Security (disbanded)
SHIG	- Shahid Hemat Industrial Group
SLBM	- Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
SNSC	- Iran's Supreme National Security Council
SRBM	- Short Range Ballistic Missile
SUT	- Sharif University of Technology
SWU	- Separative Work Units
TEL	- Transporter-Erector-Launcher
TERCOM	- Terrain Contour Matching
TNRC	- Tehran Nuclear Research Center
TRR	- Tehran Research Reactor
UAV	- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UCAV	- Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles
UCF	- Uranium Conversion Facility
UO2	- Uranium Dioxide
UF4	- Uranium Tetrafluoride
UF6	- Uranium Hexafluoride
VEVAK	- Vezarat-e Ettela' at va Aminat-e Keshvar (disbanded)

WHO	- World Health Organization
WME	- Weapons of Mass Expenditure
WMM	- Weapons of Mass Media
WMP	- Weapons of Mass Panic
YRPC	- Yazd Radiation Processing Center
ZKA	- German Customs Office of Criminal Investigations

¹ For two excellent and complementary looks at such options see Fariborz Haghshenass, "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare," Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), Policy Focus 87, September 2008; and Jahangir Arasli, "Obsolete Weapons, Unconventional Tactics, and Martyrdom Zeal," George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series, No. 10, April 2007.

² For a detailed analysis of the capabilities of Iranian naval forces, see For two excellent detailed looks at such options see Fariborz Haghshenass, "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare," Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), Policy Focus 87, September 2008, pp. 12-25.

³ "Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988," Global Security, available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm> 01/03/2005.

⁴ Raphaël Baeriswyl, "Use and Perception of Violence: A Girardian Approach to Asymmetric Warfare," *Anthropoetics - The Journal of Generative Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2007 / Winter 2008), January 31, 2008.

⁵ For another perspective on this issue, see Jahangir Arasli, "Obsolete Weapons, Unconventional Tactics, and Martyrdom Zeal," George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series, No. 10, April 2007, especially Parts I and II.

⁶ Jacques Baud, *La Guerre asymétrique ou la défaite du vainqueur*, Editions du Rocher, Monaco 2003.

⁷ Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, Spring 2004.

⁸ Michael Connell, "The Influence of the Iraq Crisis on Iranian Warfighting Doctrine and Strategy," CNA Corporation, Alexandria, April 2007; *Keyhan*, February 20, 2007, p. 14.

⁹ UNSC Resolution 1737 (2006) 23 Dec 2008, available at: http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/laealiran/unsc_res1737-2006.pdf.

Persons involved in the ballistic missile programme

- Gen Hosein Salimi, Commander of the Air Force, IRGC (Pasdaran)

Persons involved in both the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes

- Maj Gen Yahya Rahim Safavi, Commander, IRGC (Pasdaran)

¹⁰ Michalel Slackman, "Seizure of Britons Underlines Iran's Political Split," New York Times, April 4, 2007, p. 5; Sarah Lyall, "Iran Sets Free 15 Britons Seized at Sea in March," New York Times, April 5, 2007.

¹¹ Michael Connell, "The Influence of the Iraq Crisis on Iranian Warfighting Doctrine and Strategy," CNA Corporation,

Alexandria, April 2007; Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network, Network 1. 18:34 GMT, March 9, 2005

¹² Frederick W. Kagan, Kimberly Kagan, Danielle Pletka, "Iranian Influence in the Levant, Iran, and Afghanistan, The American Enterprise Institute, February 2008.

¹³ Jahangir Arasli, "Obsolete Weapons, Unconventional Tactics, and Martyrdom Zeal: How Iran Would Apply its Asymmetric Warfare Doctrine in a Future Conflict," George C. Marshall European Center For Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series No. 10, April 2007.

¹⁴ Fariborz Haghchenass, "Iran's Asymmetrical Naval Warfare," The Washington Institute for Near East Studies Policy Focus #87, September 2008.

¹⁵ Michael Connell, "The Influence of the Iraq Crisis on Iranian Warfighting Doctrine and Strategy," CNA Corporation,

Alexandria, April 2007; Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network, Network 1. 18:34 GMT, March 9, 2005.

¹⁶ Iran has said that experts at its Hossein and Sharif Universities are working on an "impenetrable intranet communications network." Connell indicates that Iran claims such a system was fielded during the Eqtedar exercises in February 2007. *Baztab*, web edition, February 20, 2007.

¹⁷ Jane's World Armies, *Iran*, October 26, 2006.

¹⁸ Jane's World Armies, *Iran*, October 26, 2006.

¹⁹ "Iran Enhances Existing Weaponry by Optimizing Shahab-3 Ballistic Missile," Jane's Missiles and Rockets, January 20, 2004.

²⁰ Reuters, June 12, 1996, 17:33.

²¹ Eshkboos Danekar, "Janghay-e Gheyre Classic dar Khalij-e Fars" [Unconventional wars in the Persian Gulf], in the proceedings of an event held at the Political and International Studies Bureau's Persian Gulf Studies Center, April 1988, Tehran (Tehran: Iranian Foreign Ministry, 1989), p. 272. Danekar was an Islamic Republic of Iran Navy captain and naval district commander during the Iran-Iraq War.

²² "A Brief Look at the Unconventional Warfare at Sea" [in Persian], *Faslnameye Tarikhe Jang* [History of war quarterly] 2, no. 6 (Winter 1992) (IRGC War Studies Center).

²³ Fariborz Haghchenass, "Iran's Asymmetrical Naval Warfare," The Washington Institute for Near East Studies Policy Focus #87, September 2008.

²⁴ Hossein Alaee, "How the IRGC Navy Was Formed" (Persian interview), in Madjid Mokhtari (ed.), *Iran-Iraq War Strategic Issues* (Tehran: IRGC War Studies Center, 2002), p. 136.

²⁵ Fariborz Haghchenass, "Iran's Asymmetrical Naval Warfare," The Washington Institute for Near East Studies Policy Focus #87, September 2008.

²⁶ "Iran Opens fourth Naval Base in Persian Gulf," *Fars News Agency*, 18 November 2008, available at: <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8708281695>.

²⁷ Fariborz Haghchenass, "Iran's Asymmetrical Naval Warfare," The Washington Institute for Near East Studies Policy Focus #87, September 2008.

²⁸ "Iran building naval bases along Sea of Oman coast," *www.news.cn*, October 30, 2008, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/30/content_10281436.htm.

²⁹ "Iran Opens fourth Naval Base in Persian Gulf" Payvand News, from *Fars News Agency*, November 19, 2008, available at: <http://www.payvand.com/news/08/nov/1182.html>.

³⁰ Fariborz Haghshenass "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2008, available at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=298>.

³¹ Fariborz Haghshenass "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2008, available at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=298>.

³² Captain Wade F. Wilkenson, U.S. Navy, "A New Underwater Threat," Proceedings, Military.com, 14 October 2008, available at: <http://www.military.com/forums/0,15240,177265,00.html>.

³³ Captain Wade F. Wilkenson, U.S. Navy, "A New Underwater Threat," Proceedings, Military.com, 14 October 2008, available at: <http://www.military.com/forums/0,15240,177265,00.html>.

³⁴ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *The Gulf States: Armed Forces, Iran*, October 21, 2005.

³⁵ Globalsecurity.org, *Qods (Jerusalem) Force Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC - Pasdaran-e Inqilab)*, available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/iran/qods.htm>.

³⁶ For typical reporting by officers of the IRGC on this issue, see the comments of its acting commander in chief, Brigadier General Seyyed Rahim Safavi, speaking to reporters during IRGC week (December 20-26, 1995). FBIS-NES-95-250, December 25, 1995, IRNA 1406 GMT.

³⁷ UNSCR 1747, United Nations S/RES/1747 (2007), Adopted by the Security Council at its 5647th meeting on 24 March 2007.

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- * Ammunition and Metallurgy Industries Group (AMIG) (aka Ammunition Industries Group) (AMIG controls 7th of Tir, which is designated under resolution 1737 (2006) for its role in Iran's centrifuge programme. AMIG is in turn owned and controlled by the Defence Industries Organisation (DIO), which is designated under resolution 1737 (2006))
 - * Esfahan Nuclear Fuel Research and Production Centre (NFRPC) and Esfahan Nuclear Technology Centre (ENTC) (Parts of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran's (AEOI) Nuclear Fuel Production and Procurement Company, which is involved in enrichment-related activities. AEOI is designated under resolution 1737 (2006))
 - * Kavoshyar Company (Subsidiary company of AEOI, which has sought glass fibres, vacuum chamber furnaces and laboratory equipment for Iran's nuclear programme)
 - * Parchin Chemical Industries (Branch of DIO, which produces ammunition, explosives, as well as solid propellants for rockets and missiles)
 - * Karaj Nuclear Research Centre (Part of AEOI's research division)
 - * Novin Energy Company (aka Pars Novin) (Operates within AEOI and has transferred funds on behalf of AEOI to entities associated with Iran's nuclear programme)
 - * Cruise Missile Industry Group (aka Naval Defence Missile Industry Group)
 - * (Production and development of cruise missiles. Responsible for naval missiles including cruise missiles)
 - * Bank Sepah and Bank Sepah International (Bank Sepah provides support for the Aerospace Industries Organisation (AIO) and subordinates, including Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG) and Shahid Bagheri Industrial Group (SBIG), both of which were designated under resolution 1737 (2006))
 - * Sanam Industrial Group (subordinate to AIO, which has purchased equipment on AIO's behalf for the missile programme)
 - * Ya Mahdi Industries Group (subordinate to AIO, which is involved in international purchases of missile equipment) Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps entities

³⁸ Chris Hedges, "Islamic-Hard Liners Said to Gain Ground in Iran," *The New York Times*, 3 August 1994, available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0DE7DE1231F930A3575BC0A962958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>

³⁹ See Time, March 21, 1994, pp. 50-54, November 11, 1996, pp. 78-82. Also see The Washington Post, November 21, 1993, p. A-1, August 22, 1994, p. A-17; October 28, 1994, p. A-17, November 27, 1994, p. A-30, April 11, 1997, p. A-1, April 14, 1997, p. A-1; The Los Angeles Times, November 3, 1994, pp. A-1, A-12; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, April 17, 1997, 11:02; Reuters, April 16, 1997, BC cycle, April 17, 1997, BC cycle; The European, April 17, 1997, p. 13; The Guardian, October 30, 1993, p. 13, August 24, 1996, p. 16 April 16, 1997, p. 10; The New York Times, April 11, 1997, p. A1; Associated Press, April 14, 1997, 18:37. Jane's Defense Weekly, June 5, 1996, p. 15; Agence France Press, April 15, 1997, 15:13; BBC, April 14, 1997, ME/D2892/MED; Deutscher Depeschen via ADN, April 12, 1997, 0743; The Washington Times, April 11, 1997, p. A22.

⁴⁰ Riad Kahwaji and Barbara Opall-Rome, "Hizbollah: Iran's Battle Lab," *Defense News*, December 13, 2004, pp. 1 & 6.

⁴¹ Amir Taheir, "The Mullah's Playground," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 7, 2004, p. A10.

⁴² The estimates of such holdings of rockets are now in the thousands, but the numbers are very uncertain. Dollar estimates of what are significant arms shipments are little more than analytic rubbish, based on cost methods that border on the absurd, but significant shipments are known to have taken place.

⁴³ Jahangir Arasli, "Obsolete Weapons, Unconventional Tactics, and Martyrdom Zeal: How Iran Would Apply its Asymmetric Warfare Doctrine in a Future Conflict," George C. Marshall European Center For Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series No. 10, April 2007.

⁴⁴ "Iran Starts Large-Scale Naval Drills" *Fars News Agency*, 2 December 2008, available at: <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8709121583>.

⁴⁵ "Iran holds naval war games in strategic waterway," *International Herald Tribune*, Reuters, 2 December 2008, available at: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/reuters/2008/12/02/africa/OUKWD-UK-IRAN-WARGAMES.php>.

⁴⁶ "Iran Starts Large-Scale Naval Drills" *Fars News Agency*, 2 December 2008, available at: <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8709121583>.

⁴⁷ Iran Early Bird Newsletter, 3 December 2008, available at: <http://www.kayhannews.ir/Detail.aspx?cid=1148>.

⁴⁸ "Iran holds second stage of naval drills in Gulf of Oman," Russian News and Information Agency, Novosti, 3 December 2008, available at: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20081203/118671711.html>.

⁴⁹ "Iran tests new missile from warship: reports," *Rueters*, Iran Focus, 7 December 2008, available at: <http://www.iranfocus.com/en/iran-general/iran-tests-new-missile-from-warship-reports-16812.html>.

⁵⁰ No one officer or Iranian official can provide a clear perspective on the range of Iranian views. For a good summary of quotes from a variety of Iranian sources, see Jahangir Arasli, "Obsolete Weapons, Unconventional Tactics, and Martyrdom Zeal," George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series, No. 10, April 2007, pp. 39-45.

⁵¹ Rooz (Iran), September 3, 2007.

⁵² Sharq (Iran), August 21, 2005; Baztab (Iran), September 1, 2007; Sobh-e Sadeq (Iran), September 10, 2007.

⁵³ All primary sources translated by MEMRI in Special Dispatch Series - No. 1716 article, "New IRGC Commander: Asymmetrical Warfare Is Our Strategy for Dealing with Enemy's Considerable Capabilities; We Aspire to Ballistic Missile Superiority," September 19, 2007; translated statements available at: <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP171607>.

⁵⁴ Mehr (Iran), September 3, 2007.

⁵⁵ Tehran Times (Iran), September 5, 2007.

⁵⁶ Rooz (Iran), September 3, 2007.

⁵⁷ Aftab (Iran), January 21, 2005.

⁵⁸ Much of the information relating to the Quds is highly uncertain. See the article from the Jordanian publication Al-Hadath in FBIS-NES-96-108, May 27, 1996, p. 9, and in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, FBISNES- 96-110, June 5, 1996, pp. 1,4; A J Venter, "Iran Still Exporting Terrorism," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November, 1997, pp. 511-516.

⁵⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid Al-Rodhan, "The Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Iran," CSIS Burke Chair in Strategy, 28 June 2006.

⁶⁰ *The New York Times*, May 17, 1998, p. A-15; *The Washington Times*, May 17, 1998, p. A-13; *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1998, p. A-29.

⁶¹ IntelligenceOnline.com, Tehran targets Mediterranean, March 10, 2006.

⁶² Michael Gordon and Scott Shane, "Iran Supplied Weapons in Iraq," *New York Times*, March 26, 2007.

⁶³ Michael D. Maples, "Threat Assessment," Statement of Michael D. Maples Director, Defense Intelligence Agency U.S. Army before the Committee on Senate Select Intelligence, January 11, 2007.

⁶⁴ David Ignatius, "At the Tip of Iran's Spear," *Washington Post*, 8 June 2008, B07, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/06/AR2008060603152_pf.html; Yaniv Berman, "Iran's al-Quds octopus spreads its arms," 28 October 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1225036820918&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>.

⁶⁵ *The New York Times*, May 17, 1998, p. A-15; *The Washington Times*, May 17, 1998, p. A-13; *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1998, p. A-29.

⁶⁶ A J Venter, "Iran Still Exporting Terrorism," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November, 1997, pp. 511-516.

⁶⁷ Defense Department Documents and Publications, Coalition Targets Iranian Influence in Northern Iraq, January 14, 2007.

⁶⁸ Stephen Kaufman, "Bush says Iranian group certainly providing weapons in Iraq, February 14, 2007, available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=February&x=20070214171942esnamfuak0.7028467>.

⁶⁹ Bill Gertz, "US General Calls Al Qaeda 'Public Enemy No. 1' in Iraq," *Washington Times*, April 27, 2007, p. 4.

⁷⁰ The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO) have a wide range of names and cover groups. They include the National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI), National Council of Resistance (NCR), National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), and Muslim Iranian Student's Society. The United States, which lists National Council of Resistance of Iran as a terrorist organization, closed the NCRI's Washington office in 2003.

The 2007 edition of the US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism, which were released on April 30, 2008, list the MEK as a terrorist organization and describes it as follows (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2007/103714.htm>):

Mujahadin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) a.k.a. MKO; Mujahadin-e Khalq (Iranian government name for group); Muslim Iranian Students' Society; National Council of Resistance (NCR); Organization of the People's Holy Warriors of Iran; The National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA); The People's Mujahadin Organization of Iran (PMOI); National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI); Sazeman-e Mujahadin-e Khalq-e Iran

Description: The Mujahadin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) advocates the violent overthrow of the Iranian regime and was responsible for the assassination of several U.S. military personnel and civilians in the 1970s. The MEK's armed wing is known as the National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA). In December 2006, the European Court of Justice ruled to overturn the designation of the MEK as a terrorist organization but was not supported by the Council of the European Union (EU).

The MEK emerged in the 1960s as one of the more violent political movements opposed to the Pahlavi dynasty and its close relationship with the United States. MEK ideology has gone through several iterations and blends elements of Marxism,

Islam, and feminism. The group has planned and executed terrorist operations against the Iranian regime for nearly three decades from its European and Iraqi bases of operations. Additionally, it has expanded its fundraising base, further developed its paramilitary skills, and aggressively worked to expand its European ranks. In addition to its terrorist credentials, the MEK has also displayed cult-like characteristics.

Upon entry into the group, new members are indoctrinated in MEK ideology and revisionist Iranian history. Members are also required to undertake a vow of "eternal divorce" and participate in weekly "ideological cleansings." Additionally, children are reportedly separated from parents at a young age. MEK leader Maryam Rajavi has established a "cult of personality." She claims to emulate the Prophet Muhammad and is viewed by members as the "Iranian President in exile."

Activities: The group's worldwide campaign against the Iranian government uses propaganda and terrorism to achieve its objectives and has been supported by reprehensible regimes, including that of Saddam Hussein. During the 1970s, the MEK assassinated several U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilians working on defense projects in Tehran and supported the violent takeover in 1979 of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

In 1981, MEK leadership attempted to overthrow the newly installed Islamic regime; Iranian security forces subsequently initiated a crackdown on the group. The MEK instigated a bombing campaign, including an attack against the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Prime Minister's office, which killed some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei, and Prime Minister Mohammad-Javad Bahonar. These attacks resulted in a popular uprising against the MEK and an expanded Iranian government crackdown which forced MEK leaders to flee to France. For five years, the MEK continued to wage its terrorist campaign from its Paris headquarters. Expelled by France in 1986, MEK leaders turned to Saddam Hussein's regime for basing, financial support, and training. Near the end of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, Baghdad armed the MEK with heavy military equipment and deployed thousands of MEK fighters in suicidal, mass wave attacks against Iranian forces.

The MEK's relationship with the former Iraqi regime continued through the 1990s. In 1991, the group reportedly assisted the Iraqi Republican Guard's bloody crackdown on Iraqi Shia and Kurds who rose up against Saddam Hussein's regime. In April 1992, the MEK conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations in 13 countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas. In April 1999, the MEK targeted key Iranian military officers and assassinated the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, Brigadier General Ali Sayyad Shirazi.

In April 2000, the MEK attempted to assassinate the commander of the Nasr Headquarters, Tehran's interagency board responsible for coordinating policies on Iraq. The pace of anti-Iranian operations increased during "Operation Great Bahman" in February 2000, when the group launched a dozen attacks against Iran. One attack included a mortar attack against a major Iranian leadership complex in Tehran that housed the offices of the Supreme Leader and the President. In 2000 and 2001, the MEK was involved in regular mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids against Iranian military and law enforcement personnel, as well as government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border. Also in 2001, the FBI arrested seven Iranians in the United States who funneled \$400,000 to an MEK-affiliated organization in the UAE, which used the funds to purchase weapons. Following an initial Coalition bombardment of the MEK's facilities in Iraq at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, MEK leadership negotiated a cease-fire with Coalition Forces and voluntarily surrendered their heavy-arms to Coalition control. Since 2003, roughly 3,400 MEK members have been encamped at Ashraf in Iraq, under the protection of Coalition Forces.

In 2003, French authorities arrested 160 MEK members at operational bases they believed the MEK was using to coordinate financing and planning for terrorist attacks. Upon the arrest of MEK leader Maryam Rajavi, MEK members took to Paris' streets and engaged in self-immolation. French authorities eventually released Rajavi. Although currently in hiding, Rajavi has made "motivational" appearances via video-satellite to MEK-sponsored conferences across the globe.

According to evidence which became available after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the MEK received millions of dollars in Oil-for-Food program subsidies from Saddam Hussein from 1999 through 2003. In addition to discovering 13 lists of recipients of such vouchers on which the MEK appeared, evidence linking the MEK to the former Iraqi regime includes lists, as well as video footage of Saddam Hussein handing over suitcases of money to known MEK leaders, and video of MEK operatives receiving training from the Iraqi military.

Strength: Estimates place MEK's worldwide membership at between 5,000 and 10,000 members, with large pockets in Paris and other major European capitals. In Iraq, roughly 3,400 MEK members are gathered under Coalition protection at Camp Ashraf, the MEK's main compound north of Baghdad, where they have been treated as "protected persons" consistent with provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This status does not affect the group's members outside of Camp Ashraf or the MEK's designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

As a condition of the 2003 cease-fire agreement, the MEK relinquished more than 2,000 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy artillery. A significant number of MEK personnel have voluntarily left Ashraf, and an additional several hundred individuals have renounced ties to the MEK and been voluntarily repatriated to Iran.

Location/Area of Operation: The MEK maintains its main headquarters in Paris and has concentrations of members across Europe, in addition to the large concentration of MEK located at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. The MEK's global support structure remains in place, with associates and supporters scattered throughout Europe and North America. Operations target Iranian regime elements across the globe, including in Europe and Iran. MEK's political arm, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), has a global support network with active lobbying and propaganda efforts in major Western capitals. NCRI also has a well-developed media communications strategy.

External Aid: Before Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2003, the MEK received all of its military assistance and most of its financial support from Saddam Hussein. The fall of Saddam's regime has led MEK increasingly to rely on front organizations to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities.

According to work by Global Security (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/mek.htm>), they had a range of bases in Iraq, which were supported by Saddam Hussein's regime. These bases were located at:

- Camp Ashraf, the MEK military headquarters, is about 100 kilometers west of the Iranian border and 100 kilometers north of Baghdad near Khalis
- Camp Anzali near the town of Jalawla [Jalula] (120-130 km (70-80 miles) northeast of Baghdad and about 40-60 km (20-35 miles) from the border with Iran)
- Camp Faezeh in Kut
- Camp Habib in Basra
- Camp Hodayoun in Al-Amarah
- Camp Bonyad Alavi near the city of Miqdadiyah in Mansourieh [about 65 miles northeast of Baghdad]

These bases were surrendered to V Corps of the US Army on May 10, 2003. Coalition forces took control over some 2,139 tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery pieces, air defense artillery pieces and miscellaneous vehicles formerly in the possession of the Mujahedin-E Khalq (MEK) forces. The 4th Infantry Division also reported they have destroyed most of the MEK munitions and caches. The voluntary, peaceful resolution of this process by the MEK and the Coalition significantly contributed to the Coalition's mission to establish a safe and secure environment for the people of Iraq. Some 3,400-4,000 MEK forces were disarmed and detained. Those now held at Camp Ashraf are "protected persons" under Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This prevented extradition or forced repatriation to Iran as long as the United States maintained control. Their status following the implementation of the US-Iraq strategic agreement and SOFA is unclear.

Also see Holly Fletcher, "Mujahadeen-e-Khalq (MEK) (aka People's Mujahedin of Iran or PMOI)," Backgrounder, Council on Foreign Relations, Updated April 18, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9158/>. Her analysis provides a summary list of MEK attacks:

MEK terrorism has declined since late 2001. Incidents linked to the group include:

- the series of mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids during 2000 and 2001 against Iranian government buildings; one of these killed Iran's chief of staff;
- the 2000 mortar attack on President Mohammed Khatami's palace in Tehran;
- the February 2000 "Operation Great Bahman," during which MEK launched twelve attacks against Iran;
- the 1999 assassination of the deputy chief of Iran's armed forces general staff, Ali Sayyad Shirazi;
- the 1998 assassination of the director of Iran's prison system, Asadollah Lajevardi;
- the 1992 near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and institutions in thirteen countries;
- Saddam Hussein's suppression of the 1991 Iraqi Shiite and Kurdish uprisings;
- the 1981 bombing of the offices of the Islamic Republic Party and of Premier Mohammad-Javad Bahonar, which killed some seventy high-ranking Iranian officials, including President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei and Bahonar;
- the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran by Iranian revolutionaries;
- the killings of U.S. military personnel and civilians working on defense projects in Tehran in the 1970s.

⁷¹ U.S. Department of States, "Iran," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2005, available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61688.htm>.

⁷² Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *The Gulf States: Armed Forces, Iran*, October 21, 2005.

⁷³ Alex Vatanka and Fatemeh Aman, "The making of an insurgency in Iran's Baluchistan province", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 1, 2006.

⁷⁴ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *The Gulf States: Armed Forces, Iran*, October 21, 2005.

⁷⁵ Connell, "The Influence of the Iraq Crisis on Iranian Warfighting Doctrine and Strategy," CNA, April 2007, p. 4; Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network 1, 18:34 GMT, March 9, 2005,

⁷⁶ BBC Monitoring Middle East, Iran's Guard commander comments on Tehran's missile power, November 13, 2006.

- ⁷⁷ Globalsecurity.org, *Niruyeh Moghavemat Basij Mobilisation Resistance Force*, available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/iran/basij.htm>.
- ⁷⁸ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *The Gulf States: Armed Forces, Iran*, October 21, 2005.
- ⁷⁹ Byman, Daniel, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold D. Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*, (Washington D.C.: RAND, 2006), 32.
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