

V. Phase Two: Iran Liberates Its Territory 1981-1982

5.0 The Situation at the Beginning of 1981

At the beginning of 1981, Iraq still held substantial gains along the Iranian border from a position roughly 40 kilometers north of Qasr e-Shirin to the outskirts of Abadan. While the only major Iranian city it had captured was Khorramshahr, Iraq still held a salient across the Karkeh River in the direction of Dezful, another broad salient in the direction of Ahwaz, and much of the Iranian territory south of Ahwaz west of the Karun River.

The war also had as yet produced relatively limited casualties. While any estimates are very uncertain, Iraq's killed and wounded were still probably only a little over 10,000, with the loss of some 200-300 armored vehicles and major artillery weapons and some 40-70 aircraft. Iran's losses probably were still less than 15,000, with the loss of roughly the same number of major weapons and aircraft. Iraq had a substantially higher number of POWs and equipment captures than Iran, but the numbers were small enough to have had little impact on the balance on each side.

At least in statistical terms, Iraq could still claim to be the victor. Nevertheless, Iraq's failure to take Abadan and the virtual stalemate in the war after November, 1981, left Iraq with few clear alternatives. It was apparent that Khomeini would not settle for a limited war or a limited peace. It was also apparent that the Iraqi invasion had aroused immense popular support for the war, if not the Khomeini regime, and that there was no chance of any popular uprising among the Arabs in Khuzistan. Finally, it was apparent that any major Iraqi advance could simply end in making the situation worse, unless Iraq could penetrate far deeper into Iran's oil centers than seemed likely. Taking another city simply meant more urban warfare, more massive commitments of troops, and more casualties.

This left Iraq with two military alternatives: Trying to use strategic bombing to force Iran to end the war, and creating sufficiently strong defenses of its conquests to be able to withstand any Iranian counterattacks. In retrospect, Iraq might have been successful if it had fully committed its air power in an attempt to destroy key aspects of Iran's infrastructure like its refineries and power plants, or even if it had used its land forces to destroy Iran's regular armored forces and deprive Iran of its capability for massive counterattack and invasion. At a minimum, Iraq should have mobilized and deployed enough manpower to fully occupy the areas in Iran it was trying to control, and shifted to area defense and defensive in depth.

In practice, however, Saddam Hussein does not seem to have fully understood the military problems Iraq now faced, or the dangers inherent in fighting a popular and highly ideological revolution. Iraq adopted a strategy of "guns and butter" in which it kept its forces on Iranian territory, but sought to minimize both the risk of military

casualties and any disruption of normal life. This strategy almost certainly reflected the belief or hope that internal events in Iran might still bring down Khomeini. Throughout 1981 and 1982, many senior Iraqi officials continued to believe that each new internal power struggle in Iran meant the end of Khomeini and peace. At the same time, Saddam Hussein and his colleagues seem to have feared that they would lose popular support for the war unless they did everything possible to reduce losses and convince the Iraqi people that they could have something approaching a normal life plus rising living standards and continuing economic development.

Iraq's senior decision makers also seem to have been more interested in self-justifying propaganda and internal politics than in creating realistic military options. Iraq was extremely slow to learn from its military mistakes. Rather than attempt to professionalize its army, and train it for maneuver and combined arms operations, Iraq tried to build up the Ba'ath Party-dominated Popular Army from a force of around 75,000 to 100,000 in the period just before the invasion to one of 150,000, with the goal of rapidly expanding it to 275,000 to 325,000.

For all his political skills, Saddam Hussein was never to show any particular military aptitude during any phase of the war, and only accepted serious military advice nearly half a decade later and after Iran had scored significant gains. For nearly a year, he concentrated on building up the Popular Army, making major equipment purchases, and providing the military equivalent of bread and circuses.

The early efforts put into the Popular Army were particularly ineffective, and Iraq put much of its effort into creating an force that was even more politicized than the regular forces. Popular Army units were given responsibility not only for rear area air defense and civil defense, but for providing the combat units to man part of the front. Low grade Popular Army "brigades" were rapidly created with officers whose own real qualification was party membership and loyalty to the regime.

Youth volunteers and women were assigned to paramilitary functions and a host of ceremonial duties, and the Iraqi Women's Organization was given the responsibility for creating a service Corps of some 250,000 women for duties ranging from nursing and civil defense to political education.

The Iraqi government also allowed frequent leaves and educational deferments, and did little to regroup and retrain its regular forces. Most of Iraq's best regular army units were kept in the forward area, and those units that were allowed to recover in the rear were not properly reorganized or given the retraining they needed. Little change was made in Iraq's command structure to either reward successful commanders or to give lower ranking officers and commanders more freedom of action.

While Iraq talked about improving the capability its air force, it did little other than attempt to accelerate deliveries of French fighters. Much to the frustration of its foreign friends and advisors, the air force refused to act on most of the advice it was given. Instead of intelligent self-criticism, it also tended to blame its weapons and equipment, and to adopt a posture of waiting for the delivery of the Mirage F-1s and

more advanced munitions it had on order. Iraq also continued to spend money as if it had never suffered the loss of much of its oil export capability. It spent billions on both the war and development, and spent far more rapidly than it earned.

Iran had problems of its own. It concentrated as much on the internal struggle between the secular and religious supporters of the revolution as it did on the war. The creation of the Iranian Supreme Defense Council (SDC) on October 13, 1980, simply created a new forum to air all the same differences over whether Iran should rely on the pre-revolutionary regular forces or the new revolutionary forces. While Bani-Sadr did manage to recreate some of the Iranian command structure, and a combined command in Khuzistan, this tended to deprive him of revolutionary legitimacy because of his growing ties to the Army, and the local Pasdaran commander in Khuzistan, the Hojatolislam Ali Hussein Khamenei, became a serious rival both in terms of his impact on regional command decisions and in terms of his overall impact on command as Khomeini's representative on the SDC.

The situation was made worse because the regular forces tended to husband their resources while trying to organize for counteroffensives, while the Pasdaran infantry were constantly at the front of the day-to-day fighting and took most of the casualties. The Pasdaran got virtually all the favorable coverage in the Iranian media, while the Mullahs began to accuse the regular forces of sacrificing the Pasdaran while protecting their own lives. The net result was that President Bani-Sadr increasingly came to rely on his role as commander-in-chief of the regular forces as a basis for power under conditions which cost him both religious and popular support.

While Iran succeeded in mobilizing enough regular and Pasdaran forces during November and December to turn its cities in the southeast into major defense points, to keep fighting in Abadan, and to provide an increasingly cohesive defense of the border area, the revolution turned from punishing the supporters of the Shah to feeding upon itself. By late December, this reached the point where Khomeini began to put serious pressure on Bani-Sadr and the regular forces to carry out some form of counter attack. This evidently led Bani-Sadr to approve the planning of such attacks around December 20, 1980, with the goal of attacking in early January.

5.1 Iran's First Counter-Offensives Fail

Iran, however, was not ready to launch major counterattacks. Iran's military forces not only were deeply divided between regular and revolutionary forces, they lacked anything approaching the strength necessary to overwhelm a major Iraqi force with sheer numbers. Most of the Pasdaran still had little experience in using combined arms and practically no experience with offensive operations. Although Iran was on the edge of ending its hostage crisis with the U.S., it had no immediate prospects of resupply, and much of its air force, helicopter forces, and heavy armor were already inoperable or had been lost in the war.

Iran's regular forces were still manned by the cadre of the men who had been trained under the Shah, but they had been severely purged. Because of the desertions and

upheavals at the time of the Shah's fall, more than half of the manpower of most units had been conscripted since the start of the revolution. Many armored units were not able to operate their equipment effectively, and the regular army had only limited capability to conduct combined arms operations.

These conditions did not deny Iran any hope of achieving limited tactical victories. Iraq's static deployments and tendency to remain dispersed in small garrisons or strong points, and to remain round bound during actual operations, gave Iran considerable opportunity to concentrate its forces and to achieve superiority in both numbers and tactical position along a limited part of the front. It is a long way, however, from limited counteroffensives and defensive victories to the ability to launch major attacks.

Bani-Sadr and the commanders of the regular forces attempted to deal with these problems by putting enough pressure on Iraq over the entire front to keep it from re-deploying its forces, while they concentrated much of Iran's armor along a single axis of attack.

Their diversionary attacks, however, did not succeed in pinning down Iraq's forces. They also did not have time to properly train and exercise many of the forces had to use. While Bani-Sadr later blamed the Mullahs for the failure of his offensive, the Iranian Army simply was not ready.

Even so, Iran attacked at four points along the front in early January, 1982. The first thrust began on January 6, near Qasr e-Shirin. Formations of Iranian mountain troops with an effective total strength of roughly one brigade attacked Iraqi forces covering the main highway between Baghdad and Tehran. In a pattern that was to become familiar later in the war, the Iranian troops began their attack at night and successfully infiltrated around the Iraqi positions, and were able to capture some Iraqi units. The battle then rapidly became a battle for each ridge and mountain position, however, and Iraq rushed up reinforcements and artillery. The end result was that Iran advanced about eight kilometers, but did not achieve any significant tactical advantage. Iran also had the equivalent of a battalion taken prisoner.

The second attack took advantage of the fact that Iraqi forces lacked the strength and direction to occupy all the heights around Mehran. Iranian forces again infiltrated into the area and took a limited amount of territory in the foothills above Mehran.

The third attack was more serious, and attempted to drive the forces in the Iraqi salient near Ahwaz far enough west of the city and the Karun River to put the city out of artillery range. While Iran used most of a mechanized division in this attack, and achieved initial tactical surprise, the terrain did not favor Iran. The Karun flows through the center of the city, the territory to the West of the city is relatively trafficable even in January, and the road net from the West is relatively good. Iraq was driven back several miles, but reconcentrated and held positions well within artillery range. The Iranian mechanized division took moderate to severe losses.

The fourth attack was the main thrust of the Iranian offensive. It was designed to

relieve Abadan. It consisted of an armored thrust from the northeast that was to drive past Susangerd and Ahwaz and drive down the west bank of the Karun River and reach Abadan. At the same time, Abadan's defenders were supposed to drive north, put pressure on the Iraqi forces besieging the city, and ideally, link up with the Iranian armored column that was driving south. The force was formed of the Iranian 16th Armored Division at Kermanshah, and the 55th regular paratroop brigade.

The Iranian forces used in this fourth thrust were assembled east of the Karkheh River. They were substantially larger than the Iraqi forces in the area, which consisted largely of one regular armored division. The Iranian units had nearly 300 operational tanks but were short of artillery and mechanized infantry vehicles. They also lacked helicopter support and armored reconnaissance capability. It is unlikely, however, that the Iranian forces involved would have been sufficient under even the best conditions. Iran did not have the kind of 3:1 superiority necessary to assure victory, and may not have had even 2:1 superiority. The Iranian plan of attack depended on achieving almost total surprise in order to avoid a meeting engagement, and the distance the Iranian forces had to penetrate was so long that it virtually ensured that Iraq would have time to reinforce before Iranian armor could link up with the Iranian forces in Abadan.

The situation was made even worse because Iran attacked across the plains southeast of the Karkheh River in an area subject to seasonal flooding, and where only surfaced roads were trafficable to armor. This forced the Iranian force to assemble and start its movement in a way that was easily detected by Iraqi helicopters and aircraft, and the Iranian units then moved in a long column with the armor preceding the airborne unit.

The Iranian movement was slow, and this gave the Iraqi commander in the region time enough to position his armored division along the Iranian line of advance. Each brigade in the Iranian armored division advanced separately, and the first brigade ran into the Iraqi trap on January 6, 1981.

At this point, Iran's lack of reconnaissance proved fatal. The Iranian brigade tried to drive through the Iraqi defenses, and was hit from the front and both sides. When the Iranian brigade attempted to maneuver it became trapped in the mud. While some Iranian helicopters did appear in support, they were outnumbered by the Iraqi helicopters and had to operate in the open against Iraqi forces with much better anti-aircraft capability. The result was that the battle rapidly became a killing ground and Iraq lost most of the brigade.

If Iran had halted at this point, its losses would have become acceptable, but Iran did not stop its attack or attempt a different line of advance. Instead, the Iranian commander committed his second brigade against virtually the same Iraqi defenses the next day. By this time, Iraq had been able to reinforce with infantry equipped with anti-tank weapons, added artillery and some armor. This time the fighting was even worse. Not only did Iranian forces bog down even more in the mud, combat took place at very short ranges. Iraq was able to commit both its helicopters and some attack fighters, and Iran lost a number of helicopters trying to reply without achieving any military result.

The third Iranian brigade repeated the process on January 8, and did no better. The only difference was that it did succeed in breaking away from combat and retreated out of the Iraqi trap. The Iranian paratroop unit, which had never been committed, was then moved out of the battle and deployed to help defend Susangerd against the risk of a counterattack. As for the Iranian forces in Abadan, they did attempt several breakouts, but were defeated each time and suffered substantial losses.

The end effect of the Iranian attack on Susangerd was that the regular army lost more of one of its few combat ready armored divisions and a large amount of irreplaceable armor. While both sides took substantial losses, and Iraq had lost some 80-130 armored vehicles in what was often point-blank fighting, Iraq could recover most of its lost equipment and had access to relatively rapid resupply. Iran had lost between 140 and 215 tanks. To put these losses in perspective, Iran had a total of some 1,735 tanks when the Shah fell and something like 1,000 usable tanks at the start of 1981. The Iranian offensive had cost Iran between 15% and 20% of its heavy armor, and Iran had no way to replace either its U.S. M-60 or British Chieftain tanks. Iran had also lost at least 100 other armored vehicles, some heavy artillery, and several of its remaining helicopters.

The failure of Iran's first major counteroffensive had several significant effects. The first effect was to encourage Iraq to believe that a relatively static defense of its gains in Iran might work. Iraq had every reason to believe it had scored a major defensive victory. It was clear at the time, that both Iraq's leaders and many of its commanders felt that Iran's poor performance had demonstrated that Iraq's defense concepts were sound and that Iran could not attack successfully in the face of superior Iraqi firepower and air power.

The second effect was to undermine the remaining secular authority in Iran. President Bani-Sadr and the regular Iranian forces faced an immediate storm of political attacks from Iran's Mullahs which were as devastating in their end result as the Iraqi ambush. Prime Minister Rajai's public attacks became so virulent that Khomeini was forced to intervene. While this intervention quieted the Mullah's public comments, it did nothing to reduce their political activity and this activity increased in scale as it became apparent that Iran's losses had been so great that the regular army had virtually lost its ability to conduct a major Spring offensive.

The Third result was to further weaken the already damaged political and military credibility of the Iranian regular forces. The Mullahs' criticisms had many valid points. The Iranian attack was a poorly organized charge, rather than a balanced attack. Iran's armored forces, which had never performed well in offensive exercises under the Shah, had suffered an additional loss of effectiveness as the result of the revolution. There was no real military excuse for what happened near Susangerd except poor planning and incompetent command. The end result, however, was that the regular forces were treated as something of a second class force, and Iran ceased giving the proper emphasis to acquiring and training high technology forces and trying to build upon its past cadre of military professionals. Priority clearly shifted to the Pasdaran, and the regular army were never fought alone again in equal numbers. After January, 1981, virtually all Iranian military action was either dominated by the Pasdaran or involved joint Pasdaran and

regular army operations.

Finally, the triumph of the Mullahs meant that Iran gained little in military terms from returning its American hostages in January, 1981. While Iran did get some \$480 million dollars worth of military deliveries as a result of the settlement of the hostage crisis, it never got many key spare parts. The Mullahs' continuing hostility to both the U.S. and most European nations meant Iran never found a reliable or reasonably priced source of Western arms, and the priority given to equipping the Pasdaran meant that most regular forces were constantly in short supply of some key part or munition.

5.2 The Land Battle During February to September, 1981

There was little military action during February, 1981. Iraq did, however, briefly resume offensive action in March. Iraq had tried to counterattack the Iranian positions in the salient around Susangerd in January, immediately after it defeated Iran's armored attack, but gave up when it realized that these positions had been reinforced by a paratroop brigade. Iraq made a more serious attempt to capture the city of Susangerd during March 19-20 1981, but Iraqi forces did not make any real progress against steadily increasing strength of Iran's defenses. Iraq halted the attack when it met serious resistance and converted it to an artillery barrage. The failure of this Iraqi offensive against Susangerd had little strategic importance by itself, but it did represent the end of Iraq's efforts to win any major objectives in Iran and the high point of Iraq's conquests. (See Figure 5.1.)

FIGURE 5.1 (Old Figure 4.3)

MAXIMUM IRAQI GAINS DURING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

NOTES

1. "Disputed Area" is an area Iran ceded to Iraq under the 1975 accord, but did not turn over.
2. Show maximum line of advance.
3. Claimed by Iraq, but ceded to Iran under Algiers Accord.

During the rest of the spring, both sides did little more than spar across the front lines. Iran scored some minor gains in the Bazi Deraz heights near Qasr e-Shirin in April, and Iraq made minor gains near Dehloran in late May. Iran launched a major artillery barrage against Basra on June 15, which triggered sporadic firing across the front lines by both sides for the rest of the spring. In August, Iran also renewed its shelling of Faw. While Faw was now a desolate ghost town, Iran seems to have been attempting to attack a sheltered Iraqi command post and some radar and radio installations in the area.

The most dramatic action on either side occurred off the battlefield. The Mullah's battle against Bani-Sadr succeeded to the point that he lost much of his command authority in mid-March. Khomeini formally stripped Bani-Sadr of his status as commander-in-chief on June 11, and ordered his arrest on June 20. Bani-Sadr was forced to go underground and then flee the country, while Khomeini appointed a three man Presidential Council of Prime Minister Rajai, Majlis Speaker Rafsanjani, and the leader of the IRP, the Ayatollah Beheshti.

Khomeini appointed a new Minister of Defense, a new Chief of Staff, and a new head of the Air Force to ensure that any lingering loyalties to Bani-Sadr would not affect the loyalty of the regular forces. He made the commander of the Pasdaran forces at the front the chief military commander of all forces in the area. It is clear from Khomeini's statements at this time that he sought to keep the Mullahs from interfering in the management of the war, and that he hoped to keep the regular forces loyal enough to play a major role in the campaign against Iraq while the Pasdaran, Hezbollah, and Baseej helped him overcome his remaining domestic opposition.

This opposition was still significant. While Khomeini had quickly suppressed unrest in Azerbaijan in January, and the supporters of the Ayatollah Shariet-Madari -- perhaps the most senior and respected Shi'ite clergyman in Iran -- he faced a much more serious threat from the People's Mujahideen and other radical elements. The Mujahideen and a number of allied movements declared an open attack on Khomeini on June 20, 1981. They launched series of bombing incidents and assassination attempts directed against senior Khomeini officials, and this led the Khomeini government to ruthlessly hunt down and execute any Mujahideen supporters they could find.

The intensity of this struggle is indicated by the fact that the Iranian government admitted to more than 2,000 executions between June and September, 1981, and that outside experts felt the real number was over 3,300. It is also indicated by the fact that an explosion in the headquarters of the IRP killed 74 people on June 28, including Beheshti, 27 members of the Majlis, and 14 Ministers and Deputy Ministers. Further, Rajai -- who had been elected President of Iran on July 28, was killed in another major bombing incident on August 30, although with Mohammed Javad Bahonar, the new Prime Minister. While the Mujahideen were largely eliminated by arrests and some open street battles in September, the situation was so bad that some senior Iranian officials like Rafsanjani were reported to travel with an ambulance.

The fall of Bani-Sadr also triggered a murderous new set of purges in the air force when it was discovered that Bani-Sadr had fled the country in an Iranian Air Force B-707 in

August. The Mullahs reacted by arresting many of the regular Iranian Air Force officers that Bani-Sadr had freed or allowed to return to the service at the start of the war. Something like half of all of Iran's remaining American trained pilots and aircrews were purged from the Air Force, and Iranian operational air strength dropped well below 100 aircraft. Virtually all training halted, all missions had to have approval from religious officials, and aircraft were given the minimal fuel needed for the mission. While Iran was able to acquire enough spare parts from various sources to keep some of its aircraft operational, it no longer had any advanced training capability. The Iranian Air Force suffered for the rest of the war from a lack of parts, advanced munitions, and new aircraft, but the quality of its pilots and aircrews never fully recovered from the effects of this purge.

5.3 The Limited Impact of Air Power in 1981

More generally, air power played only a limited role during most of the fighting in 1981. While Iraq and Iran committed fighters and armed helicopters to the battles in January, they did not commit large amounts of either kind of aircraft even during the most critical phase of the battle around Susangerd. Both sides continued to conserve their air power, and flew only a few missions whose impact had more symbolic or political than military value. Attacks against economic targets were rare and were largely restricted to the southern border region near the front. Iraq was obviously concerned with avoiding additional air combat losses and did little more than sporadically attack the Iranian refining, petrochemical and export facilities west of Abadan.

Iran had even more reason to conserve its aircraft. Its operational strength at the beginning of 1981 could not have exceeded 120-150 fighters. Iran's aircraft maintenance problems grew steadily more severe with time, and Iran rarely did more than launch a few strike sorties to act as a deterrent to Iraqi action. Iran's Air Force did manage to strike deep into Iraqi territory on 4 April, and destroyed 46 Iraqi warplanes at the Al-Walid air base (Iraq later claimed that Syria had provided air cover for the Iranian attack), but this was a rare exception. The only other major Iranian air activity during the period occurred as a result of what seems to have been intended as a warning to Kuwait to reduce its support of Iraq: Several Iranian F-4s overflew Kuwait on June 13, and Kuwait air defenses fired on the aircraft.

In fact, it was Israel that made the most important use of air power in the region during 1981. Eight Israeli F-16s, escorted by six F-15, flew a mission of over 1,000 miles and destroyed Iraq's reactors at Tuwaitha on June 28, 1981. While Israel was obviously attempting to keep Iraq from getting nuclear weapons for its own defensive reasons, it is at least possible that that Iraq might have been able to build one of two weapons before the end of the war if it had not been for this attack. As Iraq later use of chemical weapons showed, Iraq might have been willing to use such nuclear weapons against Iran.

5.4 The Conditions that Led to New Iranian Counteroffensives

In some ways, Iraq cannot be blamed for not being fully ready for a new series of Iranian offensives in the fall of 1981. It not only had scored a major defensive victory

against some of Iran's best regular army units at Susangerd, it knew that the Iranian Air Force was in severe trouble, and every day brought news of the struggle between the Iranian government and the Mujahideen. In many ways, Khomeini seemed even weaker than at the time of the Iraqi invasion and many senior Iraqis were firmly convinced during the summer of 1981 that the Iranian government was about to fall

Iraq also had the edge over Iran in both land weapons and resupply. While the USSR had not resumed major arms shipments, Iraq had been able to obtain virtually any French weapon it wanted. It had obtained several hundred tanks and other armored vehicles from Eastern Europe, and some 4,000 tons of munitions from President Sadat of Egypt. Iraq was still getting arms deliveries from North Korea and the PRC, support from Jordan, munitions from Eastern and Western Europe, and some weapons from Brazil.

Iraq had also used call ups of its reserves and the recruiting into its Popular Army to increase its active land strength to something approaching 450,000-550,000 men. Iraq had forcibly enlisted Egyptian and Sudanese workers for its armed forces, and had encourage large numbers of others to work in Iraq. This considerably eased its military manpower problems, while allowing it to keep its civil economy running.

Iraq's oil exports continued at a level of roughly 500,000 BPD. These exports included the flow of crude oil through Iraq's pipelines to Turkey and Syria, and shipments of oil products by truck to Jordan and Syria. While Syria had already shut its pipeline to Baniyas twice in an effort to blackmail Iraq into higher payments, it still shipped some 50,000 BPD. Iraq's the pipeline through Turkey only experienced brief interruptions because of minor sabotage. Iraq still had substantial hard currency reserves from its part exports, and Iraq's leaders remained confident enough to continue funding most of Iraq's highly expensive development plans and even issued a new 1981-1985 Five Year Plan.

The war also had so far produced relatively limited Iraqi casualties. While Western experts admitted they could not make accurate estimates, most felt that Iraq had only lost some 9,000-12,000 killed by the end of August, 1981, and some 16,000-23,000 wounded. In contrast, Iran had probably lost 14,000-18,000 dead and some 26,000 to 31,000 wounded.

Iraq had not suffered any loss of territory and the damage to Iraqi economic facilities was very limited and largely confined to the area around Basra and Faw. Virtually all of Khorramshahr and Abadan had been evacuated and non-Arabs had been driven out of the Iraqi occupied territory. There was no visible opposition to Saddam Hussein aside from some very rare bombings, and Iraq continued to expel any Shi'ites it felt had ties to Iran and these now totalled between 40,000 and 50,000.

Ironically, however, the state of political upheaval in Iran seems to have led Iraq to exaggerate Iran's vulnerability almost as much as it had a year earlier. Iran had suffered damage costing close to one hundred billion dollars, and had to deal with over a million refugees. Even so, Iran was able to export about twice as much oil as Iraq, and its volume of exports recovered steadily during 1981. Iran did have to cut back severely on all development activity and civil spending, and introduce some forms of rationing, but it

had sufficient funds to establish a major network of arms purchasing efforts which ranged from an official purchasing office in London to a host of covert and second and third party efforts.

North Korea, which had originally aligned itself with Iraq, became a major arms seller to Iran. The PRC began small arms shipments, while continuing to sell to Iraq. Many other Asian countries sold U.S. parts and munitions to Iran, including Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. A wide range of Western European munitions and light arms manufacturers -- including companies in Belgium, Britain, France, the FRG, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain -- began to sell arms to Iran. In spite of numerous denials, Britain supplied large numbers of parts for Iran's Chieftains, including new engines.

Israel continued covert arms shipments through a dealer network that used third parties in countries as diverse as Cyprus, Denmark, Norway, and the U.S.. Syria and Libya moved arms by sea and through Turkey, and Libya supplied considerable amounts of armor, including some 190 Soviet-made tanks. The USSR also shipped some parts to Iran for its Soviet-made APCs.

This mix of arms deals had serious limitations. Iran's purchasing efforts often led to fraud, and to the shipment of used or obsolete equipment, arms and munitions. Many of the Iranian personnel involved became corrupt. Iran could never obtain enough parts of enough kinds at the proper time to restore its U.S.-made and other Western heavy weapons, helicopters, and aircraft to anything like their pre-war readiness. Nevertheless, Iran was significantly better equipped in other ways by mid-1981 than it was at the beginning of the year. While was to experience constant problems in obtaining high technology equipment, and parts for its more sophisticated U.S. and British equipment for the rest of the war, it never again experienced critical shortfalls in artillery, munitions, small arms, manportable surface-to-air missiles and light anti-aircraft weapons, and variants of Soviet tanks and armored vehicles.

It also gradually was able to increase its own manufacturing capability, and made a substantial amount of its own small arms and munitions by the time the war ended in a cease-fire.

The struggle for power in Iran had also had some indirect military benefits. The fall of Bani-Sadr, and the new command arrangements for the regular forces, freed the army and Pasdaran to cooperate far more closely than in the past. The power struggles in Tehran had far less effect at the front, and the regular army was able to set up a regional command that could concentrate on assembling enough forces to be effective and which had both the time to plan and the freedom to choose its moment of attack.

While the army and Pasdaran continued to argue over whether the army should have a monopoly of heavy weapons and advanced technology, the Pasdaran at the front increasingly learned to cooperate with local army commanders and had their own problems with interference by the clergy. As a result, Khomeini approved a system that restricted the religious commissars in each unit to a role of advising and reporting on the

loyalty of these units, but which clearly deprived them of command authority.

Iran also was beginning to be able to take advantage of its larger population and potential superiority in manpower. By August, 1981, it had mobilized a total of several hundred thousand Revolutionary Guards.

The Pasdaran now had enough combat experience to have created a number of well-organized and effective combat units, and to develop a good cadre of officers and NCOs, although its forces still included large numbers of young untrained local volunteers (or Baseej). While Iran's regular forces had suffered significant losses both in combat and because of the revolution, they were still strong enough to both fight on their own and provide the Pasdaran with considerable support.

While the Pasdaran could not yet establish control over all of Iran, they had the power to control its Azerbaijanis and take the offensive against the KDPI forces occupying much of Iran's Kurdish areas. A combination of Pasdaran and regular forces launched a major offensive against the KDPI in September, 1981. While the KDPI remained in many areas, and continued to counterattack, Iranian government forces occupied most of the towns the KDPI had taken including Mahabad, Piranshah, Sanandaj, and Urimiyah.

Equally importantly, Iran began to conduct a territorial war in the south, while Iraq remained tied down to strong points and major lines of communication. Iraq still held about 14,000 square kilometers of Iranian territory -- mostly in Khuzistan -- but its forces in Iran were stretched relatively thin and over far too wide an area to occupy the countryside. While Iraq had built up an impressive network of roads, supply dumps, and strong points, its forces tended to remain in their defenses or confine their movement to roads and make extensive use of armor and helicopters.

Iraq still did not build up defenses in depth, and significant gaps existed between the deployments of major Iraqi units. Iraq also failed to correct its command problems. As time went on, Iraq tended to layer new cycles of command approval over the normal chain of command and to micro-manage the war from Baghdad. It also made reconnaissance the exception, rather than the rule.

5.4 Iran's Counteroffensives Began to Succeed

There was little fighting during July and August, although Iran did make its first charge on August 12 that Iraq had used poison gas against Iranian troops. This charge may have been correct. Iran was experimenting with gas warfare at this time and Iranian forces had begun a series of small attacks and patrols all along the Iraqi lines. There is little indication, however, that Iraq made extensive use of poison gas at this time.

It was during this period that Iran began to systematically plan for the relief of Abadan. Iran began to build up considerable regular Army and Pasdaran forces in Khuzistan, and to the east of the Kharkheh River. Iran also conducted a quiet campaign to convince Iraq that it was considering plans for an attack across the border and to cut the

road to Basra. This Iranian effort seems to have been successful. Iraq did little to reinforce its forces in Iran, and kept its reserves to the rear on Iraqi soil.

On September 2, 1981, Iran launched its second major counteroffensive or "Thamil ul' Aïmma" attack. This attack, however, had none of the elements of a reckless cavalry charge that characterized Bani-Sadr's offensive in January. A combined arms force of some 30,000-40,000 men attacked on a wide front across the Kharkheh River and towards the main road linking Basra to the North.

Regular Army forces supported by Pasdaran Infantry moved forward with full artillery support and a mix of small tank units supported by other armored vehicles. This force convinced Iraq that it was Basra that was under attack and it did not reinforce the 50,000-60,000 men it had in the area around Khorramshahr and Abadan.

For reasons that are still unclear, the Iranians were able to quietly move a force of around 15,000 to 20,000 men down the east side of the Karun River without arousing any major Iraqi action. By this time they had up to 9,000 regular troops, and 4,000 to 6,000 Pasdaran in Abadan.

The result was that Iran acquired a considerable superiority over the five Iraqi brigades that formed the eastern part of the Iraqi forces besieging Abadan, and which were deployed across the Bahmanshir River. The Iraqi forces do not seem to have properly patrolled or conducted reconnaissance to their north and their rear, and did not detect the Iranian movement until Iranian forces actually attacked them on September 26. The Iranian forces in Abadan then joined the attack, and this put all of the Iraqi forces south and east of the Karun River under considerable pressure.

In theory, Iraq had roughly as many troops in the area as Iran and control of the bridges to the northern part of Abadan Island and the east bank of the Bahmanshir River. In practice, Iraqi forces fought hard, but did not receive effective reinforcement or artillery and air support, although Iraq had some 150-200 major artillery pieces within range. Iranian forces were also able to infiltrate through the gaps in the Iraqi positions at night and fought far more aggressively at night. The end result was that the Iraqi forces began to take heavy losses and some elements became isolated. This seems to have driven their command into a panic and what started as a tactical withdrawal became a rout. The Iraqi troops abandoned their armor and heavy equipment and either retreated across the one pontoon brigade in the area or used small boats and rafts.

By September 29, Iraq had been forced back across the Karun River. Iraq had lost 40-100 tanks, some 200 armored vehicles and artillery weapons, and at least several thousand men. Some estimates go up to 8,000 casualties on both sides, but these seem to be far too high, and the true losses may have been only half that number. In any case, Iran had relieved Abadan, and fully secured its road network from Ahwaz to Abadan. This removed the Iraqi threat to Bandar e-Mahshahr and Bander e-Khomeini, and Iranian forces continued to slowly press forward. While Iraq continued to hold part of Khorramshahr, the city had lost most of its strategic value because Iran rapidly consolidated its position and Iraq could not counterattack without taking massive

casualties.

Iran succeeded in attacking an equal or superior Iraqi force without any major offensive use of tanks, with almost no air support, and with only token support by attack helicopters. It succeeded for several reasons:

- The lack of effective Iraqi preparation and quick reaction.
- Iraq was not willing to take the losses necessary to be successful. o Iranian preparation for the attack had been left largely to regular officers believed to be fully loyal to the regime, and the fighting was done by a combination of well prepared regular forces stiffened by direct support from Pasdaran units subordinated to the regular army command.
- Iranian forces moved slowly and cohesively. Iran did not expose its forces to counterattack or allow them to move into Iraqi positions which were well-defended enough to become killing grounds.
- Iran adapted combined arms techniques to fit its circumstances. It emphasis infantry combat. It used artillery barrages to prepare the area and then committed infantry in frontal and flanking assaults. Tanks and artillery then provided fire support as needed. In contrast, Iraqi commanders were vulnerable because they remained relatively static and lacked any central concentration of forces to counterattack.

In short, the Iranian victory at Abadan provides another illustration of the fact that apparent superiority in armor and air power can be meaningless. It also provides an important warning to the West. Even though Western forces would probably be far more effective in using their air power and combined arms than Iraq, they might encounter similar problems because their increase effectiveness would be counterbalanced by the fact they could find it politically impossible to absorb the kind of losses that would result from a similar attack in a low level conflict.

It is unclear how Iran planned to follow up its success, but an accident then intervened which seems to have disrupted Iranian operations for at least several weeks. On September 30, the major commanders responsible for Iran's victory were killed in a C-130 crash on their way from the front to Tehran. Those killed included the Minister of Defense, Chief of Staff, Army Chief of Staff and the regional commander of the Pasdaran. While the political and military impact of this accident is difficult to estimate, it suddenly deprived Iran of the leaders that had shown that the regular forces and Pasdaran could fight effectively as a combined force and under professional military leadership.

In any case, major offensive action halted during October and most of November. Iraq and Iran did conduct a number of minor actions along the front, but these did little more than make minor adjustments in position. Even so, the impact of Iran's success was revealed by the fact that Saddam Hussein proposed a one-month cease-fire in early

November, to coincide with Ramadan. Iran rejected Hussein's offer, and made it clear that it would not compromise with Iraq or end the war as long as Saddam Hussein was in power.

Serious fighting resumed in late November. On November 29, a mixed force of roughly 10,000-14,000 Pasdaran and regular Iranian troops attacked an Iraqi strong point and logistic center near Bustan in the Susangerd Salient, on the main road west of Susangerd. The attack was called the Tariq al-Quds or Tarigh ol-Qods offensive.

It was designed to liberate Bustan, capture the Jazzebeh gorge and cut the Iraqi line, reach the border and the edge of the Hur el-Azim marshes, and recapture up to 200 square kilometers of Iranian territory. The attack achieved some degree of surprise because the rains had come and the terrain occurred at a time when armored movement and any form of reconnaissance was difficult.

The attack was confused, however, because Pasdaran attacked without waiting for either a regular army artillery barrage or support. The end result was a human wave attack that closed on the Iraqi force and led to hand to hand fighting that lasted for over a day. The result was a victory in the sense that Iranian forces took Bustan, and Iraq lost up to 1,000 soldiers killed and 500 prisoners of war. Iran took even heavier casualties than Iraq, however, and Iraqi forces were able to retreat up the road in relatively good order and create a new defense position east of Susangerd.

Even so, Saddam Hussein reacted by removing and demoting some of the commanders involved, and Iraq charged that Iran had committed atrocities and had killed several hundred Iraqi POWs. The battle did not really change the tactical situation, but it may have helped convince some Pasdaran commanders and Mullahs that the Pasdaran could win through direct assault and ideological fervor, and did not need complex battle plans and regular army support.

The next Iranian attack came near Qasr e-Shirin and lasted from December 12 to December 16, 1981. It was called the Al Fajr (Rising of the Dawn) attack, and was the first of a series of offensives that the central government in Tehran gave a formal name in an attempt to give Iran's attack more public and propaganda impact. This attack was much more orderly than the attack on Bustan, and was organized and led by the regular forces. While estimates differ of the strength of the Iranian forces involved, they seem to have been the equivalent of some 10,000 men or three brigades.

The Iranian forces took advantage of bad weather and rain to achieve tactical surprise and hit Iraqi forces that were not alert and which reacted slowly. The battle went on for nearly a week, and Iraq again failed to react quickly and effectively, and to counterattack and commit artillery and air power in a timely manner. The end result was that Iran retook about 100 square miles of the land around Qasr e-Shirin.

5.5 Other Developments During 1981

There was virtually no significant naval and strategic bombing activity during

1981. Sea power had virtually no impact on the war at all. The Iraqi Navy remained in port, and the only Iraqi naval development was to reach a formal agreement for the Italian ships it had informally agreed to order before the war began. The contract, however, implied that Iraq would not receive the ships until the fighting was over. The Iranian Navy did conduct patrols and interrogated ships it felt might be carrying contraband. It seized a Kuwaiti survey ship, and a Danish freighter it thought was carrying arms to Iraq, but Iran let both ships go. Iran was careful to avoid provoking either its Southern Gulf neighbors or the West. It had become highly dependent on transshipment from the UAE, and was dependent on both oil exports and two to four billion dollars worth of food imports through the Gulf for its survival.

Neither side had any great incentive to launch air attacks against civilian and economic targets. Both sides felt their respective air capabilities were too weak to prevent reprisals, and Iraq almost certainly felt it would find it easier to deal with Iran if Khomeini fell if it kept such action to a minimum. Iran did, however, follow-up its first military incursion into Kuwait air space in June, 1981, with an actual attack. On October 1, three Iranian F-4s bombed the Kuwaiti oil installation at Umm al-Aish and Kuwait recalled its ambassador from Iran. The Iranian attack, was part of a broader pattern of Iranian political activity in the Gulf. That same month, Iran seems to have directed the first major uprising by Iranian pilgrims to the Haj in Saudi Arabia.

Iran also supported a coup attempt in Bahrain. On December 16, 1981, Bahrain announced it had suppressed a Shi'ite coup attempt by a group that included local, Saudi, Iranian, and other Shi'ites. It blamed the Iranian clergyman, Hojatolislam Hadi al Mudoros, for sponsoring the coup, and expelled an Iranian diplomat, Hassan Zadeh, for complicity in arms smuggling. While Bahrain probably exaggerated the role of Iran in supporting this coup attempt, in order to help disguise its internal political divisions, the Iranian role was real enough to show that Iran may have sought to use subversion to reduce the willingness of the Southern Gulf states to support Iraq.

Iran was reacting to several factors in launching these attacks on Southern Gulf states. The six southern Gulf states -- Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE -- had created a new organization called the Gulf Cooperation Council on February 4, 1981. This idea had been talked about for years, but it had clearly come into being in large part because of the fear of the member states that the Iran-Iraq War might escalate, and because Iran's attempts to export its revolution. It also had become clear that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were doing more than simply provide Iraq with political support. Kuwait had gradually become a major transshipment point for Iraq, and both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had begun to provide Iraq with significant loans.

Iran's actions, however, did more to provoke the southern Gulf states than deter them, and followed the pattern Iranian diplomacy and military action set throughout the war. Probably for ideological reasons, Iran never seems to have fully realized the need to secure external allies and to minimize the opposition of other states. It attempted to use its revolution as a means of punishing other states, and intimidation to change their behavior. Iran, however, could not make the threat of subversion or military action credible enough to achieve its goals through these means. The end result was to isolate

Iran, and Iran suffered severely as a result.

As for other political developments, the U.S., U.K., and Soviet Union kept small naval forces in the Gulf, and the U.S. made active use of the surveillance capabilities of its ELF-1 AWACS force in Saudi Arabia, but external powers did not play any active role except to support a round of peace settlements. Olaf Palme continued to at least keep the option of a UN cease-fire alive, and visited Tehran and Baghdad in June, although without any real success. Various bilateral, Arab, and Islamic efforts continued with equally little impact, and Saddam Hussein repeated a series of peace offers. These include a Ramadan cease-fire for July 3 to August 1, 1981, a cease-fire for Murrum, and an offer to settle the war in December in return for Iranian recognition of Iraq's rights and borders. Khomeini continued to reject all these offers and to insist on Saddam Hussein's removal from power, reparations, and substantial territorial adjustments and concessions at the price for peace.

5.6 Iraqi Counterattacks Fail and New Iranian Offensives Liberate Khuzistan and Khorramshahr

The winter of 1981 brought a temporary halt to Iran's offensives, although Iranian forces continued to put sporadic pressure on Iraqi positions in scattered parts of the front. Iraq did begin to improve its infantry forces, and began to select Republican Guard and other regular units for special urban warfare and assault training. By and large, however, it still did not see Iran's offensives as a major threat. In fact, Iraq reacted by launching a series of counterattacks that seemed designed more to restore Iraqi prestige than serve any tactical or strategic purpose.

The first attacks occurred on January 5 and 6, 1982. Iraqi forces attacked the now virtually ruined town of Gilan Gharb, which was located southeast of Qasr e-Shirin and on a road junction south of the main highway from Baghdad to Tehran. The town was only lightly defended and Iraq took the position. Iraq also secured some minor defensive positions in the foothills south of Naft e-Shah.

Iraq launched a more major attack on February 5, 1982. It attempted to recapture Bustan. Iraq conducted an artillery barrage and sent a mixed force of armor and infantry against the city from positions at Sableh southeast of Susangerd. Although Saddam Hussein had given the attack considerable priority, and the battle lasted until February 8, the Pasdaran continued to hold the town and Iraq was forced to withdraw. Part of the problem was the terrain. Iraq could not use its armor off-road effectively because of mud and flooding. Although Iraq tried night attacks and heavier barrages in a second attack on February 13-15, and in late March, all three attacks failed. This led Saddam Hussein to carry out further purges and demotions of the Iraqi commanders involved.

Iran spent its time building up its forces in the area near Dezful and northeast of Khorramshahr. Once again, Iraq's presentation was slow and methodical, and showed considerable care. It became clear that new attacks would begin in the spring. The Iraqis prepared to defend against an Iranian offensive that they correctly predicted would begin during the Iranian holiday of Noroz, but they did not expect the scale of attack that

occurred.

By the beginning of February, the Iraqi forces assigned to defend Iraq's positions in Iran had a strength of eight regular divisions, plus Popular Army forces and independent support formations. Seven of these divisions, and some 65,000-80,000 men were on Iranian soil. The Iraqis had organized these forces into what came to be called the 4th Corps. The key formations were three divisions holding the area around Khorramshahr and the three to four more division equivalents holding the entire front northwest of the Karun River from Khorramshahr to Susangerd.

The Iraqi force defending the area from Dehloran and Shush south towards Ahwaz included two armored and one mechanized division, and up to eight independent brigades. A number of Popular Army brigades were sandwiched between the regular Iraqi divisions in the forward area, but Iraq's forces were still about two to three divisions short of the forces necessary to create a cohesive defense of such a broad front. Another Iraqi division, and several brigade equivalents, were in reserve to guard the eastern road from Basra to Baghdad and secure the logistic centers in the rear.

Iran put its forces for the attack on the Iranian positions in Khuzistan under the command of General Said Shirazi, the new Chief of Army Staff. He had a total force of between 100,000 and 110,000 men. About one third of this force consisted of regular Iranian Army troops, and the rest was split between trained and experienced Pasdaran and untrained and poorly armed Baseej. The regular Iranian Army forces included at least two full divisions. The revolutionary forces included ten to thirteen Pasdaran brigades which included large numbers of Baseej.

5.6.1 Iran's Fath ul-Mobin or Fathol-Mobin Offensive in Northern Khuzistan

Iran launched its "Fath ul-Mobin" offensive to liberate Khuzistan before dawn on March 22, 1982. It attacked to the West of Shush and Dezful. The objective of the offensive was to prepare the way for a final push to recapture the rest of Khuzistan, to eliminate the threat to Dezful, and to deny Iraq the ability to observe Iranian air movements from radars on the mountains above the town.

Iran attacked when the terrain was trafficable on foot, but still wet enough to limit Iraq armor and vehicles largely to road movement, and attacked over a front nearly 60 kilometers long. Rather than attack at a few points, Iran sent 120,000 to 200,000 regular troops, Revolutionary Guards, and Baseej militia against six points in the Iraqi lines to the area north and south of the main Iraqi concentrations defending the plain above Khorramshahr.

The Iranian forces which attacked on March 22 were led by the Pasdaran, which struck in two main thrusts to the north and south of the main Iraqi positions, and hit at weak points and the gaps between regular Iraqi units in echelons of roughly 1,000 men. The Pasdaran were supported by the Baseej and attacked as waves of combatants, many armed with shoulder-held rocket launchers, which advanced at intervals of 200 to 500

meters. The first waves would often be decimated, but the following waves then often overran the now exhausted Iraqi positions.

After a morning of intense fighting, Iran's mass assaults drained Iraq's forward deployed ammunition supplies and eventually overpowered the Iraqi defenses in a number of areas. Iran had made Iraq's newly formed Popular Army units a particular target. They were generally easy to identify because of their special unit numbers, and many of the Popular Army forces broke in the face of human wave attacks -- leaving the regular Iraqi army units exposed.

During March 23 to March 28, Iran exploited its initial victory by using the Pasdaran to keep Iraq's forces in place, while its regular army divisions advanced around two of Iraq's divisions in the area. This Iranian tactic was especially effective because Iraq had put too many of its combat forces forward, and virtually dug them into dispersed positions. Its armor virtually never counter-attacked even the most exposed and unsupported Pasdaran and Iranian regular forces. Iraq did not provide for defense in depth, did not have sufficient forces ready for a counterattack, and held too few reserves too far in the rear.

Saddam Hussein had given orders that no Iraqi units were to withdraw from their forward positions. The Iraqi commanders on the scene lacked the authority to redeploy the forward troops or reserves. The Iraqi regular army failed to properly commit its reserves to halt the resulting Iranian breakthroughs for nearly four critical days, and then committed them piecemeal in brigade strength, rather than in a coherent counterattack.

This Iraqi failure to properly commit its reserves was partly the result of insufficient forces, the need to keep forces in defense, and the fact that the road system west of the Karun River and the electrified railway between Khorramshahr and Ahwaz did not permit easy or rapid movement. It also, however, was the result of the fact that Saddam Hussein and the senior command in Baghdad only allowed the withdrawal of forward units, and the commitment of the reserves, after Iraq had already begun to suffer from serious Iranian breakthroughs.

The end result was that Iraq reinforced with too little and too late. Iraqi forces also had to shift from fighting in prepared defensive positions to fighting in "meeting engagements" in which Iraq's dependence on major lines of communication gave Iran the ability to predict Iraqi movements, exploit the rest of the terrain, and achieve superior concentration of force..

Iran made mistakes of its own. The Pasdaran either did not wait for the regular artillery support that was planned or did not receive it. Iran only used tanks as direct fire artillery, and Pasdaran units often pursued local success, rather than drove forward around the north and south of the Iraqi formations. Nevertheless, Iraq moved so slowly that the advancing Iranian forces were able to envelop nearly half of the Iraqi 4th Corps.

Both sides used fighters and helicopter gunships, but with little real effectiveness. While Iranian aircraft did attempt to attack Iraq's lines of supply and stockpiles, the

number of sorties involved was so low that the Iranian aircraft probably had more effect on morale by showing Iran was still in the sky than it did on the battle. Iraq flew up to 150 fighter sorties per day, but committed its sorties too late to be effective in most tactical situations, and often against the wrong targets. Iraq also tended to use its armed helicopters more as flying artillery than as an instrument of maneuver, and they too had little tactical effect.

The location of Iran's offensive in Northern Khuzistan is shown in Figure 5.4, as well as that of Iran's other efforts to regain its territory in 1982. This time, however, Iran's offensive resulted in more than a point on the map changing hands. In roughly a week, the Iranian line had advanced roughly 40 kilometers from positions east of the Karkheh River around Dezful to the Iranian side of the Hawizeh Marshes, and within less than 15 kilometers of the Iraqi border in some areas. By April 3, Iranian communiques boasted that Iranian forces were consolidating their victories in the Ein Kosh (Duflak) region and Neshard West of Dezful. They stated that Iran was pursuing Iraq forces near Saleh Abad, Sunar, Gilan e-Gahreb, and Pol e-Sar e-Zahab.

Both sides suffered heavy casualties in this battle. The Iranians destroyed major elements of at least one Iraqi mechanized division and armored division, and large numbers of Popular Army units.

Iran lost well over 5,000 dead and over 7,000 wounded. Total Iraqi casualties and POWs may have reached more than 14,000 to 15,000. Iraq lost something on the order of 400 to 500 major armored vehicles, and some 200 artillery weapons. Iraq also lost a substantial portion of its munitions and supplies, although large reserves still existed in the rear.

Western journalists reported that many of the Iraqi POWs simply surrendered, in spite of orders to "fight to the death," and that few showed signs of combat stress or battle fatigue. Many of the Iraqi POWs, however, came from the new Popular Army forces rather than the regular Army. The Iraqi army was not defeated because of any major disaffection for the Ba'ath regime or because of any lack of Iraqi courage and patriotism. When Iraq removed many of the inexperienced political leaders from command positions in the Popular Army as a result of its defeat, and stiffened the units with experienced officers, these problems largely disappeared.

Some sources indicate that Saddam Hussein gave his commanders more freedom of action as a result of Iraq's defeats and the regular forces were purged of some of their less effective officers and commanders. Unfortunately, if such changes did occur, they had only a very limited effect. Saddam Hussein retained central authority over virtually every major and tactical decision. Iraq also failed to begin to make broader military reforms. Nearly four more years were to elapse before Iraq's leadership was to fully accept the need to retrain and restructure Iraq's military forces and to properly emphasize professionalism in the form of counter attack capability, improved maneuver capability, and increased autonomy for field commanders.

5.6.2 Syria Deprives Iraq of Much of its Oil Export Capability

While Iran took several weeks to shift from its effort to free the Karun River plain to an offensive designed to liberate Khorramshahr and the rest of southern Iran, it soon scored a victory of another kind. (See Figure 5.5) As has been discussed earlier, the destruction of Iraq's oil facilities in the Gulf had left it dependent on two pipelines to the West. The first pipeline, through Turkey, was sabotaged occasionally, but was relatively secure. The second pipeline went through an increasingly hostile Syria.

During March, 1982, Iran carried out a political offensive that was as successful as its military one. Iran negotiated a complex 10 year agreement with Syria that bartered Syrian agricultural products for oil. The agreement gave Syria 174,000 BPD of oil to operate its refineries. A significant amount of this oil was free and the rest was provided at subsidized prices. The end result was that Syria quietly accumulated 1.5 million barrels worth of Iraqi oil at the Syrian terminal of Baniyas. It then closed its borders with Iraq on April 8, 1982, on the grounds that Iraq had been supporting the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Damascus cut off the flow of Iraqi oil exports to the terminal at Baniyas on April 10, and seized all the Iraqi oil in storage.

The Syrian cutoff deprived Iraq of the use of a pipeline with up to 300,000 BPD capacity. Coupled to the loss of its Gulf terminals at the start of the war, this reduced Iraqi oil exports from several million barrels a day at the start of the war, and 900,000 BPD before the Syrian cut-off, to about 600,000 barrels per day. Iraq became totally dependent on its one remaining pipeline through Turkey.

Although the Turkish pipeline had a maximum capacity of some 900,000 BPD, it was operating at less than maximum capacity at the time of the Syrian cutoff. Kurdish and Iranian agents also sabotaged the Turkish pipeline during 1982, and diverted its flow into the Ceyhan River. While the pipeline was back in operation within a week, Iraq was unable to increase its exports to anything close to 1 MMBD for some time. As a result, Syria's action reduced Iraq's expected export earnings by some \$5 billion annually. Iraq had already had to cancel its new five year development plan early in 1982, because of the cost of the war. This new loss of revenue meant that Iraq's oil earnings no longer even covered the monthly cost of the war, which was in excess of \$1 billion a month.

In contrast, Iran brought its exports up to around 2 MMBD, and had revenues of nearly \$2 billion a month. It also had been able to repair all of its refineries except the one at Abadan, and no longer had to ration petrol or heating oil. The war and revolution had halted Iranian economic development and much of Iran's economic activity, there was growing inflation, and many goods could only be readily obtained on the black market. Nevertheless, Iran was more than able to finance the war.

FIGURE 4.4

IRAN-IRAQ: IRAN RECOVERS KHUZISTAN

FIGURE 4.5

IRAQ'S VULNERABLE OIL ROUTES

Fortunately for Iraq, its Arab allies provided more support in response. More Egyptian and Sudanese "volunteers" were recruited for the Iraqi Army from the hundreds of thousands of Egyptian and Sudanese workers in Iraq. Egypt agreed to sell Iraq \$1.5 billion worth of war materials, small arms, ammunition, and Egyptian-made anti-tank rockets, in late March. Jordan offered to send troops to the front. More importantly, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia began to provide Iraq with massive financial aid to compensate for its loss of oil revenue and declining reserves of foreign exchange, and began to sell up to 300,000 barrels per day of some of their oil for Iraq on the basis it would be repaid through exchanges after the war. As a result, Iraq began to receive flows of outside aid which reached a total of around \$35.0 billion by early 1988.

5.6.3 Iran's Quds or Bait al-Muqdas

(Jerusalem) Offensive Liberates Khorramshahr

Iraq's reaction to its defeats at Abadan and its loss of most of northern Khuzistan was to attempt to fortify Khorramshahr and to create sufficiently strong defenses of the routes to Khorramshahr to ensure that it could not be flanked and cut off from the West.

This defense was a matter of considerable urgency. Iraq was shielded in part from the effects of its losses in Northern Khuzistan by the fact the border area consisted largely of Hawizeh marshes, which extended north of Susangerd in Iran and to the edge of Al Amarah and Al Halfayah in Iraq. The terrain leading towards Basra, however, was relatively dry, and while the Shatt al-Arab and a number of other water barriers and smaller marshes provide natural defenses, Iraq was still vulnerable to the loss of its territory northeast of the Shatt if it lost Khorramshahr.

Iraq deployed the equivalent of roughly eight divisions, and 70,000-90,000 men for the forward defense of the area, although many of the Iraqi formations involved had suffered as a result of its defeat in Khuzistan. Roughly three of these divisions were deployed to Khorramshahr and the access route to the Iraq border and the Shatt al-Arab. While Iraq had built up a number of roads in the area, this force depended on a single major road and military bridge across the Shatt.

The Khorramshahr area was fortified with arcs of earth barriers with bunkers, observation points, and fire posts. Fire zones were created by leveling buildings and vegetation. Barbed wire and minefields provided further reinforcements, and artillery fire points and large supply depots were created in the rear. Another defensive wall was built in the city with the Shatt to its back, and fire zones were leveled near the bridges to the south to prevent any attack from Abadan.

Two armored divisions, one mechanized division, and some eight Popular Army brigades defended the rest of Iraq's remaining positions on Iranian soil. These extended along the Karun River east of the electric railway from Khorramshahr to Ahwaz to roughly Isgah e-Ahu, and then turned northwest towards the border along a line passing through points near Huzgan and Jarayeh.

Iraq's strategy remained one of static warfare. Iraq concentrated on fixed defense positions. It dug in all its forces, including much of its armor and artillery. This deprived Iraq's armor of its ability to maneuver and concentrate, and meant that Iraqi forces had to defend against frontal assaults. Iraq also still lacked the force numbers to hold the amount of territory in its remaining positions north of Khorramshahr, particularly because only its regular forces were generally effective in combat. It meant that Iran could continue to attack Iraq's defenses piecemeal without Iraq attempting major counterattacks or maneuver.

Further, Khorramshahr was allowed to become a strategic objective for political reasons, and was given far more value than it deserved in military terms. While the city was a natural defense point, it also was relatively isolated from Iraqi territory, and Iraq could not fully clear the approaches to the city. Creating a citadel again deprived its armor of any major advantage in terms of maneuver and counterattack, and force Iraq to disperse its forces around a relatively large perimeter. Like all fortress, the use of a ring defense also created a potential trap. While such defenses made it difficult for Iranian forces to get in, they also made it difficult for Iraqi forces to get out.

As for Iran, it now had well over 150,000 men in the area surrounding Iraq's positions at Khorramshahr and in southern Khuzistan. Its forces included several regular army divisions, large numbers of Pasdaran and Baseej, and large amounts of regular army artillery and support equipment. The Iranian force remained under the titular command of the Army chief of staff. Although the Pasdaran and regular forces remained divided in many ways, Iran had the advantage of the momentum of revolutionary fervor and two victories, and was fighting for the liberation of its territory.

Iran attacked in three major thrusts. The first was to the north along the access routes to the Iraqi held town of Hoveyzeh, about 12 miles west of Susangerd. The second was against the former Iranian fortress garrison of Haim, and the major rail and road net from Khorramshahr to Ahwaz. The third thrust came later and was directed against Khorramshahr itself.

The first thrust began early on the morning of April 30. Like most Iranian attacks, Iranian forces closed on the Iraqi positions at night to limit the threat from airpower and artillery. Pasdaran forces thrust west from Shush towards the northern part of the Iraqi positions and the Baghdad-Basra road. The Pasdaran force totalled 35,000-40,000 and attacked an Iraqi armored division which had Popular Army support.

The Iraqi force fought well, and if it had maneuvered, it might have been able to defeat the attack. Instead, the Iraqi forces remained dug-in and on the defensive. As a result, Iran's human wave attacks led very heavy Iranian casualties, but still allowed Iran to eventually penetrate and overrun the Iraqi forces. According to some reports, Iraqi airborne troops also were dropped behind the Iraqi forces along the Karun River that same afternoon to create disruption in the rear. It is not clear whether this attack occurred or what effect it had.

On May 1, 1982, another Pasdaran formation attacked westwards across the Karun River

at a point near the place where Iraqi forces going the opposite direction had crossed in 1980, during Iraq's attempt to surround Abadan. Once again, Iraq was slow to react and the Iranian forces rapidly secured their crossing. They erected a series of pontoon brigades across the Karun, and Iran was able to move the equivalent of several divisions across the river. Iraqi forces failed to counterattack until May 3 and 4, and these counterattacks failed. Iran was able to launch another major series of attacks on May 6. Bitter fighting then took place around Hoveyzeh and Hamid. The Iraqi forces, however, lacked sufficient force to counterattack successfully, and tended to counterattack up too narrow an axis of advance. After several days of fierce fighting, Iran took Hamid and forced Iraq to abandon Joyfer. Iran then retook Hoveyzeh (Howeyziyeh) in the north. Iraqi forces began to collapse on a broad front as their attempts to use firepower alone to counter the Iranian attacks failed to stop repeated human waves of Iranian attackers. Iran also made an unusually effective use of helicopters during this battle, and even launched some diversionary helicopter attacks on the Iraqi town of Fuka and an Iraqi command post at the border town of Chalamcheh (Shalamcheh).

Within a week, Iran had regained a 30 kilometer-wide slice of its territory from Istgah e-Husseiniya in the north to a point about ten miles north of Khorramshahr. The Iranian advance also left the Iraqi forces in the northeast part of Iraq's position with Iranian forces to the east and marshes to the West, and the Iranian drive south threatened to cut them off from Khorramshahr.

On May 9, Iran launched the last phase of the battle. Iranian forces cut the road through Hamid, which was on a raised dike, and which was the key to defending the area. As a result, Saddam Hussein ordered them to retreat south on May 10 to positions ten to fifteen kilometers north of Khorramshahr. The retreating Iraqi formations were now down to the equivalent of about five to seven brigades, however, and had taken heavy losses. They also had to retreat too quickly to move many of their dug in tanks, artillery weapons, supplies and support equipment, and lost as many as 100 tanks, some 150 other armored vehicles of all types, and 50-100 major artillery weapons. As a result, the Iraqi forces were deprived of much of their effectiveness by the time they reached their new positions.

Iran spent the next ten days deploying its forces to attack the Iraqi position at Khorramshahr, while Iraq spent the time frantically attempting to improve the fortifications in the city. By this time, however, Khorramshahr had become more of a trap for Iraq than a fortress. Iraqi troops often fought well, but they lacked the reserves and depth to fully secure the city from being surrounded by Iran. This created a situation where Iran could trap up to two Iraqi division equivalents in the city or force them to ferry across the Shatt and abandon much of their supplies and equipment.

It took more than ten days of hard fighting, but on May 21, a Pasdaran division overran one of the Iraqi divisions defending the one major Iraqi supply road into Khorramshahr. The Iraqi division collapsed under the pressure of Iran's human wave attacks, and abandoned much of its equipment. The other Iraqi forces lacked the strength and will to counterattack effectively, and Iran was able to cut off Khorramshahr from Iraq.

Iran's final push to recover Khorramshahr began on the morning of May 22. Roughly 70,000 Iranians moved against the 35,000 Iraqi troops, some 15,000-22,000 of which were now trapped in the city. The Iraqi forces outside the city had taken so many losses that they now remained relatively static and could not counterattack effectively from the West. The Iraqi forces in Khorramshahr lacked the strength to hold their entire defensive perimeter against a force of roughly eight Pasdaran brigade equivalents.

While the Iraqi forces in Khorramshahr initially inflicted extremely heavy casualties on the Pasdaran, the Pasdaran were able to saturate and overrun the Iraqi defensive positions. Once the Pasdaran broke through Iraq's defensive lines, they immediately presented severe problems for the Iraqi defenders. The Iraqi troops were forced out of their defensive strong points and had to fight street by street. While there were Iraqi artillery fire points in the city and substantial amounts of artillery across the Shatt al-Arab to the West, it was difficult to bring this fire to bear in an urban area with any effectiveness.

Iraq did commit up to 100 fighters per day, but usually too late to have maximum tactical effect, and in individual concentrations that were too small against any given target to be highly effective. The Iranian targets generally consisted of infantry and any given Iraqi sortie could only achieve a limited number of kills under the best conditions. Iraqi pilots had no night warfare capability. They could not find significant targets most of the time, and could not deliver their weapons the moment Iranian forces closed with Iraqi troops. Iran also flew some fighter and helicopter sorties, but in relatively limited numbers. No significant air-to-air combat took place, although both Iraq and Iran seem to have lost fighters in such encounters.

While the Iraqi forces did manage to regroup behind their defensive wall inside the city on May 23, they already had taken substantial losses and had lost many of their weapons and equipment. Further, the moment the Pasdaran were able to breach any part of the defensive wall, the Iraqis were forced to fight on an equal basis against much larger and far more fanatic Pasdaran infantry. The end result was that the Iraqi forces involved began to collapse. While sporadic fighting continued until May 24, and roughly 30-40% of the Iraqi troops were able to retreat across the Shatt al-Arab by abandoning their equipment, Iran took nearly 12,000 prisoners. For once, Iran may have been correct when it said it had destroyed two Iraqi mechanized brigades and two border brigades.

Iran also scored some additional successes in dealing with its Kurdish insurgents in the north. After scattered fighting throughout the winter, regular army forces and Pasdaran forces launched a major offensive against the KDPI in April. This broke up the KDPI's own efforts at an offensive, but the fighting remained inconclusive. Ghassemlou launched an unsuccessful offensive in June, and Iranian forces slowly drove the KDPI forces back.

Iran's final major offensive action of 1982 was less successful. It occurred on May 28, when Iranian forces attacked Iraqi forces in the north in the sector from Qasr e-Shirin to Sumar, in an attempt to open up an attack route that would allow Iran to recapture its lost territory in that region. Reinforced Pasdaran forces attempted to attack strong held Iraqi positions in the mountains. The attack was conducted with little surprise as a frontal

assault against strongly held Iraq positions, and was repulsed. Iraq launched a smaller attack in the area on August 8, with a single unsupported attacking wave of Pasdaran, but this attack was quickly halted with the loss of much of the Pasdaran force.

5.7 The End of Phase Two of the War

Iran's recapture of Khorramshahr effectively brought an end to both the 1981-1982 campaign season, and the phase of the war in during which Iran concentrated primarily on recapturing its lost territory. While Iran was to fighting many other battles in the border area that began against Iraqi positions that were still on Iranian soil, these offensives were almost all a preliminary phase in what was intended to be an invasion.

This change in the war was clear in both military and political terms. Iraq's small defensive successes in the north in May, 1982, did little to compensate it for its massive losses elsewhere. Almost from beginning to end of Iran's spring 1982 offensives, Iraq had attempted to defend in a way which either required far more forces than Iraq had available, or which deprived Iraq of the advantages of its superiority in armor and artillery the moment its major defensive lines were penetrated.

From March 22 to May 24 -- a period of almost exactly two months -- Iraq gave up some 5,500 square kilometers of captured territory, suffered as many as 30,000 to 50,000 killed and wounded, and lost up to 25,000 prisoners. Iraq also lost up to 200 hundred tanks, as many as 300-400 other armored vehicles, several hundred artillery weapons, and vast amounts of supplies. While Iraq might have been driven out of most of its gains in Iran in any case, it paid an immense price for its lack of military professionalism, its ability to conduct effective maneuver warfare, and its cumbersome and politicized structure of command and control.

Saddam Hussein was also forced to admit his attempt to force Iran to peace by holding Iraqi territory had failed. On June 9, 1982 he ordered all Iraqi forces to observe a unilateral cease-fire. On June 10, he ordered all Iraqi forces to withdraw from Iranian territory, supposedly to reinforce the PLO and Syrian forces in Lebanon against the Israel invasion that had begun on June 6.

Iraq desperately sought help in new efforts at peace negotiations. Iran, however, rejected new peace efforts by the Islamic Conference Organization and Olaf Palme of the UN in March, an Algerian peace effort in May, a GCC peace initiative in early June, a new UN cease-fire attempt in mid June 12, and private Soviet and Egyptian peace initiatives.

Khomeini personally made it clear that he would only agree to a settlement that involved Saddam Hussein's ouster.

The most that Saddam Hussein could do was to change his explanation of Iraq's withdrawal on June 20, to a statement that he was withdrawing from Iranian territory to remove any reason for prolonging the war. Saddam Hussein also acted on his statement that Iraq would make withdrawals. During the month between June 20 and July 20th, Iran

gave up most of its forward positions in Iran, although it kept some 500 square kilometers of Iranian territory shielding the approaches to Baghdad, and in other key defense positions along the border.

Neither Saddam Hussein's statements, or Iraq's withdrawals from some of its positions in Iran, did anything to move the situation towards peace. Iran expressed its willingness to negotiate, but various Iranian leaders issued terms which included restoration of the 1975 treaty borders, removal of Saddam Hussein from power, repatriation of over 100,000 Iraqis expelled by Baghdad, the payment of over \$100 billion in war reparations, and acceptance of war guilt by Iraq, and a new regime in Iraq.

Iran's victories and demands had put Saddam Hussein in a very different position from the leader of the Arab world that he had hoped to become when he invaded Iran. He was now forced to turn to virtually every moderate Arab state for support. He also was finally forced to abandon his plans to host the summit meeting of Non-Aligned Nations in September, 1982. Iraq had poured nearly half a billion dollars into the construction of hotels, meeting halls, monuments, and new roads in order to be ready to host this meeting, which was to make Saddam Hussein Chairman of the movement for three years. Its cancellation must have been as bitter a blow as having to become a virtual supplicant in seeking aid from the Southern Gulf states and Egypt.

Saddam Hussein also seems to have faced unrest within the government and Iraqi armed forces. On June 23, 1982, Saddam Hussein dismissed his Revolutionary Command Council and reappointed a smaller one of nine, rather than seventeen members. The Ba'ath Party Council was cut in size, and Saddam Hussein also purged part of the Cabinet and senior officer corps. He shot twelve of his generals for the performance in the battle, and then his Minister of Health for suggesting he should temporarily step down from power. This move helped suppress the opposition within the Ba'ath regime, and helped secure the Ba'ath government against internal threats.

At the same time, the Ba'ath regime was careful to court to people. It kept up the supply of consumer goods and services, and the payments to those who had lost a father or son in the war. It began to actively court the Shi'ites in the south and put even more emphasis on Iraqi nationalism and Arab consciousness in its propaganda. Funds suddenly were poured into development projects in the south and to the shrines at Najaf and Karbala.

Equally importantly, Iraq began to regroup its forces for defense. It began to establish strong defensive lines along the entire border area that was now threatened by Iran, with major defenses along the entire Basra to Baghdad road from Basra to Al Amarah and west of the Hawizeh marshes. Work began on creating water barriers to help defend the south, and Iraq urgently sought military supplies from throughout the Arab world.

As for Iran, it had achieved a major victory and had captured enough Iraqi equipment to begin organizing and train some new armored units to use such equipment near Shiraz. Iran also, however, had suffered over 110,000 casualties, with up to 60,000

dead. Some estimates even put Iran's dead at 90,000. A state of civil war still existed between Khomeini's supporters and the Mujahideen and Tehran was still the scene of a constant cycle of bombing attempts and executions. Khomeini's supporters began to arrest senior members of the Tudeh Party in June, as any form of Marxism came to be scene as a potential threat against the revolution.

This civil fighting affected Iran's military capabilities at the front as well. While Khomeini again called for unity within the armed forces on April 18, 1982, and seems to have sought improved relations between the Pasdaran and the regular forces, the situation actually grew worse. Iran's former Foreign Minister Sadeq Ghotbzadeh was arrested for plotting the assassination of Khomeini on April 9. Shortly after Khomeini's unity speech, he made a televised confession that implicated the regular armed forces in his "plot". While it is impossible to determine how real Ghotbzadeh's confession was, the government announced in mid-August that at least 70 officers in the regular forces had been shot for supporting him.

The government also announced another coup attempt by Colonel Azar Dakham on June 27.

These internal developments discredited the regular forces in spite of Iran's recent victories against Iraq. Further, both the media and the Mullahs gave most of the credit to the Pasdaran and Basesej, and to the value of martyrdom and human wave attacks. Iran began to conduct its military operations under conditions where it was harder and harder for military professionals to take the lead in planning and operations. Primary attention was given to building up the Pasdaran and the government paid less and less attention to the need for armor and mechanized forces.

4.7.3 The Situation Outside Iraq and Iran

Although Iran's new successes caused considerable concern throughout the southern Gulf and the Arab world, the West still showed relatively little concern with the fighting. The U.S. and Britain did become concerned with the potential risk that Iran might now attack Iraq and even conquer it, but did little more than show new concern about the flow of arms to Iran. Most Western analysts still did not view the situation with sufficient concern to see the change in the fighting as presenting new strategic problems for the West.

Part of the reason for this attitude was that there was little strategic bombing and little action at sea. Iraq did launch air raids against Kharg Island and Shiraz on May 20, but these were flown as single sets of attacks, and did only limited damage. They seem to have been intended largely as an effort to push Iran towards a ceasefire, and had little effect on either Iranian or outside perceptions. There was virtually no activity at sea until June, 1982, when Iraq began to conduct sporadic air strikes against Iranian ships going to Bandar e-Khomeini, and seems to have put new mines in the Iranian waters in the Gulf around the channels to Abadan, the Khor e-Musa, and the Khor e-Ghazlan.

Activity in the rest of the Gulf was also relatively quiet, although both Bahrain

and Kuwait had new indicators of Iranian support for militant Shi'ite radicals in those two countries. The new Gulf Cooperation Council, which had agreed to form a joint military command in late March, did little more than make its brief attempt to help both sides reach a ceasefire. There was no major new Western or Soviet military activity.

Footnotes

The analysis of Phase Two is based heavily on the author's trips to the region and interviews of Iraqi and Iranian officers and officials, plus his prior writing for the Armed Forces Journal International (Especially "The Lessons of the Iran-Iraq War", Parts I and II, April and June, 1982) and in the Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability, Boulder, Westview, 1984. It also draws heavily upon the work of Colonel W.O. Staudenmaier, U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute; Edgar O'Ballance, The Gulf War, London, Brassey's, 1988; Nikola B. Schahgaldian, The Iranian Military Under The Islamic Republic, Santa Monica, Rand R-3473-USDP, 1987; Sepher Zabhi, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War, London, Routledge, 1988; Keith McLauchlan and George Joffe, The Gulf War, Special Report 176, London, Economist Press, 1984, Keith McLauchlan and George Joffe, Iran and Iraq: The Next Five Years, Special Report 1083, London, Economist Press, 1987 and various working papers for the International Institute of Strategic Studies, Royal United Services Institute.

Iraq only claimed 4,500 Iranian killed and 11,500 wounded at the beginning of 1981. Iraq also, however, made ridiculous claims to have cost Iran more than 400 combat aircraft, 500 tanks, and 18 major combat ships. As for Iran, it is interesting to note that it claimed 25,000 Iraqi casualties, and the destruction of over 4,000 tanks and other armored weapons, and over 500 artillery weapons. Iran won the "war of lies" in 1980, if little else.

Many of these brigades only had the strength of one or two battalions.

Sepher Zabih, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War, London, Routledge, 1988, p. 172.

For a detailed description, see Edgar O'Ballance, The Gulf War, London, Brassey's, 1988, pp. 61-64.

Some sources indicate that the Iranian force was cut off from the rear when the Iraqi air force cut the bridges behind it. It is unclear that the Iraqi Air Force had any such impact. See Sepehr Zabih, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War, pp. 172-173.

Author's estimate based on the total strengths shown in the IISS Military Balance.

One of the grimmer jokes in Teheran at the time was that Rafsanjani had the wrong vehicle behind him, and really needed to be followed by a hearse.

Red Cross figures in January 1982 showed that there were about 28,400 Iraqi POWs and 5,300 Iranian POWs.

This estimate may be high. Some sources only indicate about 120,000.

Up to two-thirds of the total force may have consisted of revolutionary forces. See Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, pp. 174-175.

The reader should be aware that any such estimates are even more uncertain than most of the statistics available on the war.

Zabih, *The Iranian Military*, p. 176.

Iranian sources claimed that Iraq lost 100 tanks, 70 APCs, 19 artillery pieces, 70 anti-aircraft guns, and large quantities of ammunition -- including many boxes indicating they had come from Saudi Arabia. They claimed that between 80,000 and 100,000 Iranian troops (two-thirds of which were Pasdaran and Baseej) were involved against a force of six Iraqi brigades. Casualty rates are put as high as 30%. See Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, pp. 176-175.

Guardian (December 17, 1981) and Financial Times (January 5, 1982).

See Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, p. 177.

Some sources cite the Iraqi 10th armored division, the 11th Special Mission Brigade, the 96th Infantry Brigade, and the 60th Armored Brigade. It is unclear that these unit designations are correct.

Iran claimed that it captured 150 tanks, 670 other armored vehicles, 150 152mm artillery weapons, and 165 182mm artillery weapons. It claimed that there were 75,000 Iraqi casualties, and 15,450 prisoners of war, of which 200 were officers and four were generals. It claimed to have recaptured 1,500 square miles of territory. See Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, p. 177.

Also called the Beytol-Moghaddas offensive.

Khomeini renamed Khorramshahr as Khuninshahr, or the "city of blood", in honor of Iran's losses during this phase of the war.

For a detailed description, see Edgar O'Ballance, *The Gulf War*, London, Brassey's, 1988, pp. 82-84.

Iran claimed the total operation gave Iran some 19,000 Iraqi POWs, 105 tanks, 56 armored vehicles, large numbers of small arms, and stocks of some 300,000 mines and 11,000 "bombs". See Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, pp. 178-179; and Edgar O'Ballance, *The Gulf War*, London, Brassey's, 1988, p. 85.

The Algerian peace initiative ended on May 3, 1982 when the Algerian Foreign

Minister's aircraft crashed while flying from Turkey to Iran. Iranians have suggested Iraq was responsible. Others have suggested some anti-peace faction in Iran. The facts remain unclear.

Ghotbzadeh was executed on September 10, 1982. The Ayatollah Shariet-Madari was implicated in the plot and died while still under house arrest on April 3, 1986.

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The Iran-Iraq War - Chapter V

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