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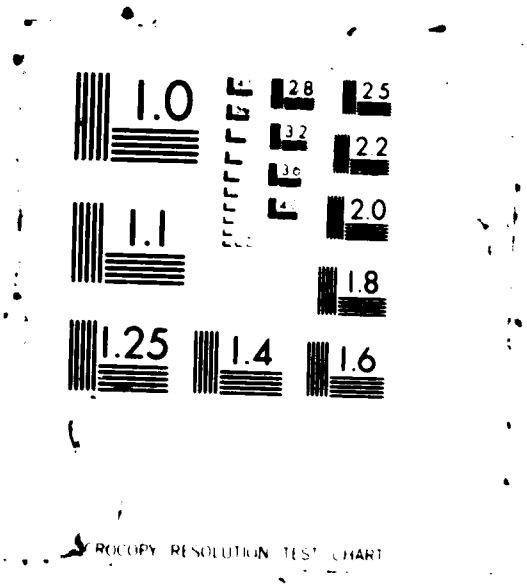
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RESEARCH REPORT

No. AU-AWC-86-165

AD-A177 902

IRAQ-IRAN WAR

(BACKGROUND, DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL RESPONSES)

By BRIGADIER GENERAL OSMAN A. EISA,
SUDAN AIR FORCE

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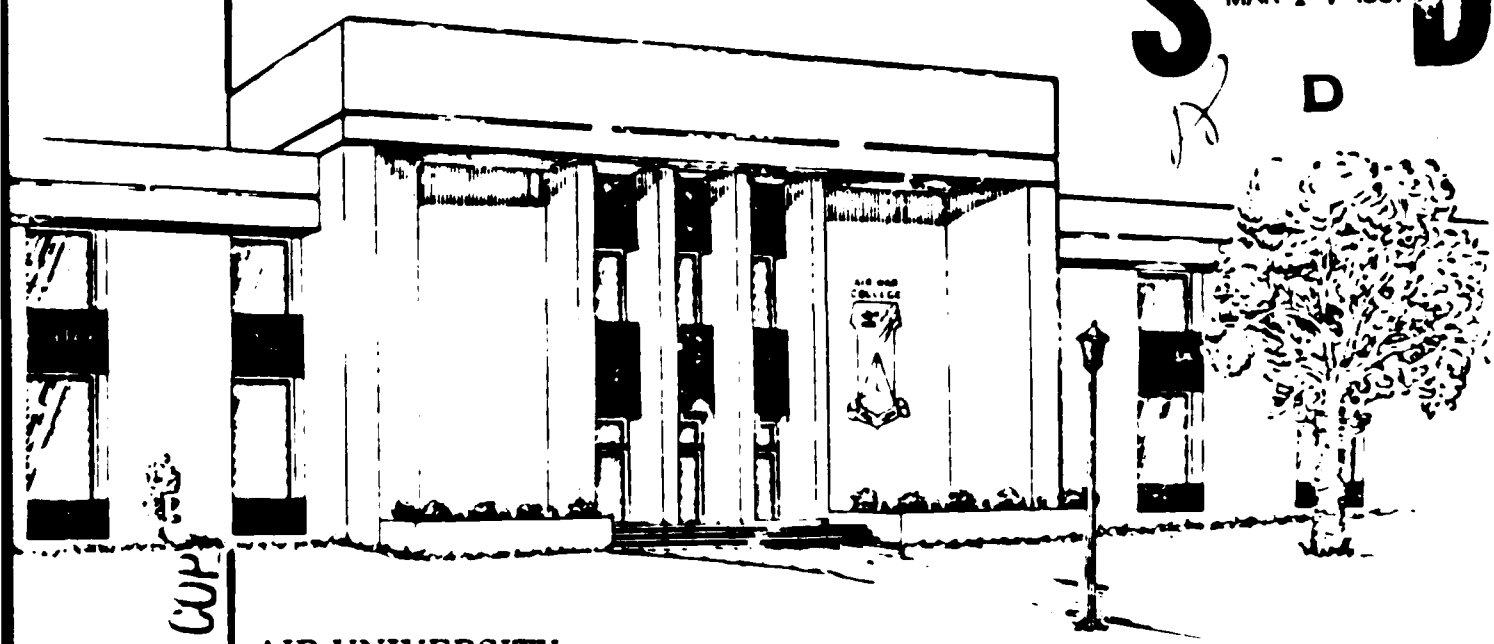

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IRAQ-IRAN WAR
(Background, Development and Regional Responses)

by

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Brigadier General, Sudan Air Force

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Lt Col Harry Johnson

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

March 1986

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Iran-Iraq War (Background, development and regional responses)

AUTHOR: Brigadier General Ahmed Eisa Osman, IOSO

The Iran-Iraq war which brokeout in September, 1980 had caused both antagonist heavy economic damages and posed severe casualties on both sides. All mediation efforts have failed to bring the war to an end because neither side felt compelled to make concessions to produce a negotiated agreement, this is because the political risk that either regime ran if it obtained less than "total victory" was considered more threatening than continuing the war.

The war convinced the Gulf states to cooperate closely and remain very cohesive against any Iranian aggression, and the role of Saudi Arabia in the political, military and security affairs of the Gulf will be enhanced. Terrified from an Iranian total victory, however, the Gulf Cooperation Council remains supporting Iran and enhancing the capability of the Gezeira Shield, a combined Gulf Cooperation Council force formed in the late 1983.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brigadier Osman was born in Sudan in 1941. He joined the Sudanese military college in 1961. He graduated as an air navigator from the Air Navigation School of the Royal Air Force (United Kingdom) in 1964. He received military aviation training in the Soviet Union in 1969. Brigadier Osman accomplished a combined course at the College of Air Warfare of India in 1977. In 1982 he completed Air Command and Staff Course in the Air Warfare Studies institute of Egypt. Brigadier Osman is a graduate of the Air War College (United States Air Force), class of 1986.

IRAN-IRAQ WAR
(Background, Development and Gulf Countries Responses)

1. INTRODUCTION:

The public attention was first alerted at the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war because it was assumed that the flow of oil through the Persian Gulf would be endangered. It was also assumed that Iraq qould win the war fairly easily, that the regime of Khomeini would fall rapidly, and that Iran would be fractured into several parts. When this failed to occur, attention shifted elsewhere, contrary to all expectations, Iran, not Iraq, was winning, and there was alarm over what that might mean to the stability of the region. However the Iraq-Iran war which began in September 1980, has claimed up to an estimated over one million killed or wounded and has resulted in tens of thousands of prisioners on both sides. It has also cost billions of dollars and has ruined the economies of both countries. (1)

The general and territorial seeds of the conflict were layed well in the past, during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, but the Iraq-Iran war did not start primarily because of historical or geographic disputes. This war is largely ideological, which makes it particularly difficult to terminate. The war aims of both sides are not primarily military, the goal is the destruction of each others political

regime. In this both sides adhere to their own clearly defined logic.

The war is being fought in one of the worlds most critical geopolitical arenas. While it still remains a regional conflict and is only indirectly related to the superpowers cold war, it contains the potential danger of involving the entire Gulf area. Such an occurrence could be disastrous to the region as well as the rest of the world. An overwhelming Iraq; victory could support the spread of Saddam Hussein's Baathist Arab socialism throughout the region, precipitate an internal crisis in Iran, and at least strongly influence the more moderate Arab state's leadership in the Gulf area. Likewise, the fanatic ideological dimensions of an Iranian victory would be particularly destabilizing. Khomeini would be able to increase the effectiveness of his efforts to topple all the moderate Arab regimes on the Persian Gulf, control the flow and price of Gulf oil and possibly induce the Soviet Union to move into Iran, thereby precipitating Superpower conflict.

At the outset of the conflict, the moderate Arab states recognized that the destabilizing thrust from Iran was more imminent and dangerous than that from Iraq. Hence they placed themselves with varying degrees of enthusiasm, on the side of Iraq. (2) Yet Iraq's potential threat was

sufficiently well recognized that they did not rush into the fray. Instead they let Baghdad carry the main burden of the struggle.

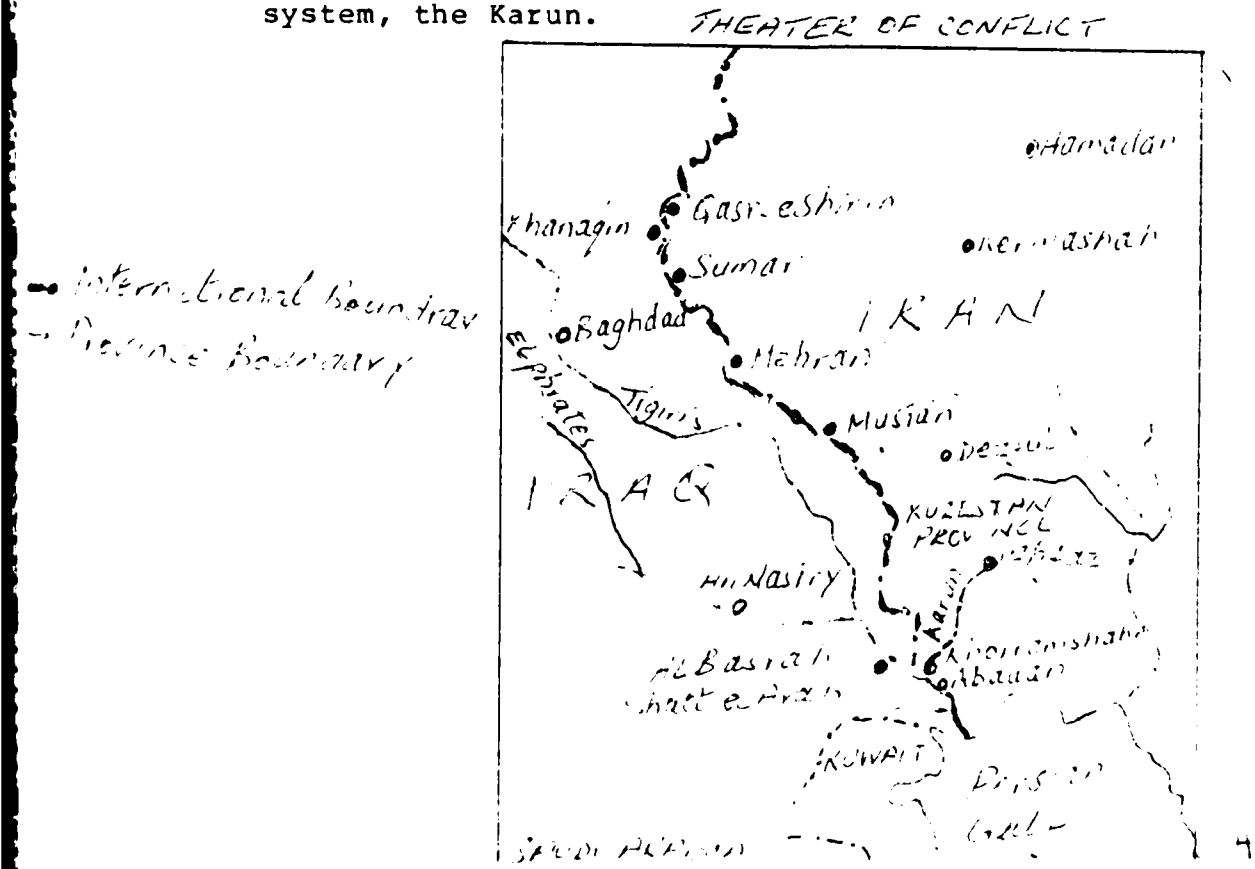
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Although the two antagonists are in theory united by an ecumenical Islamic civilization, nevertheless, political and cultural tensions have continued to be the hallmark of their relations. Underlying the political tension and rivalry is a clash of what might be termed cultural nationalism. Very broadly speaking, the Persian heartland is dominated by descendants of Indo-Europeans Tribes who speak Farsi (Persian), an Indo-European language. Iraq on the other hand is composed primarily (although by no means exclusively) of Semitic people who speak Arabic, a Semitic language. Islam has also had a tendency to divide the two countries rather than acting as a unifying force. For approximately four and a half centuries, Iran has been the bastion of the Shiite branch of Islam, while Iraq's political elites have oriented that country toward Sunni Islam although Shiites actually makeup a majority of Iraq's population.

Repeated political clashes between the two countries have occured. The modern history of these conflicts began with the Ottoman-Sajivid rivalries in the sixteenth century (3). These rivalries continued into the eighteenth century

and were most vividly manifested by Nadir Shah's seige of Mosul and Baghdad in 1734 and Karim Khan Zand's capture of Basra in 1774. Although tension and border skirmishes continued into the nineteenth century, the situation became more stable under the prodding of Great Britain, and joint survey teams were commissioned to democrate the border. Contemporary rivalries have continued to involve localized territorial and border issues. In the twentieth century, the most dramatic problem has been centered around the issue of sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab river. The Shatt is approximately 130 miles in length and is formed by the joining of the Tigiris and Euphrates rivers. For the last 55 miles of its journey to the Persian Gulf the Shatt forms the border between Iraq and Iran. Approximately 45 miles north of the mouth of the Shatt it is joined by Iran's most important river system, the Karun.

THEATER OF CONFLICT



The Shatt and the region around it have strategic and economic importance for both countries, but particularly for Iraq. The Shatt is Iraqs' principal maritime window on the world. Basra will remain Iraq's preeminent port and the Shatt will therefore remain Iraq's major economic artery for an indefinite period of time. From the Iraqi point of view, hostile hands are always potentially around the country's throat. Iraq believes that its most important economic and, hence, strategic assets are unprotected because Iraq lacks strategic territorial depth. (4)

Iran, too, has important economic interests on the Shatt. For decades its most important port has been Khorramshahr, which lies at the confluence of the Shatt and Karun rivers and which also serves the Southern railhead for the Trans-Iranian railway system. Although the Shatt has an obvious economic importance for Iran, the river does not present the country with the same strategic vulnerabilities that it does Iraq. Iran's major petroleum export facilities are not in the immediate area, and Iran has other usuable Persian Gulf ports.

The growth of commerce in the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the discovery of oil in Khuzistan in 1908 dramatically increased the pressure for a more precise delineation of the boundary. In 1913, a

series of negotiations produced the Constantinople Accord. (5) These negotiations drew the boundary at the low water mark of the eastern (Iranian) shore line. Iran remained dissatisfied with the outcome of the 1913 accords and a new treaty was negotiated in 1937 that modified the boundary line around Abadan. In that area, the border was drawn according to the thalweg principle. The rest of the border, however remained along the low water mark of the eastern shore in accordance with the provision of the 1913 accord. In 1975, yet another treaty was negotiated that adopted the thalweg principle as the basis for demarcating the entire Shatt al Arab border. It is the treaty that Saddam Hussein declared null and void just prior to Iraq invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE CURRENT CONFLICT:

The Iranian Revolution was probably the single most important event paving the way for the war. In rapid order Iran was transformed from "an island of stability" into a caldron of chaos and turmoil following the Shah's collapse, the decimation of much of the high level officer corps in the military and police, and the emergence of a vicious power struggle among the victorious revolutionaries. The revolution had four important spin-offs for Iraq. First, it contained an inherent danger for the Baathi regime. A revoluntionary ideology quickly emerged that, in its foreign policy

dimension, is clearly revisionist. Specifically, Iran has vigorously condemned and encouraged the overthrow of secular political leaders such as Saddam Hussein. These ideological currents could not be lightly ignored by the Baathis, because a majority of Iraq's population are Shiite--although admittedly Arab Shiite. Nevertheless, one Shiite revolution could encourage another. The seizure of the American Embassy and the subsequent triumph of the radicals over the moderates in Iran probably convinced Baghdad that such foreign policy predispositions would not be brought under control.

Second, the growing chaos that occurred in Iran during 1979 and 1980 probably created the impression in Baghdad that Iran was weak and vulnerable. Surveying the Iranian scene in the months preceeding the war, Baghdad believed Iran was incapable of defending its interests and was isolated diplomatically, particularly in the Gulf region and also from its major arms patron, the United States. The balance of power appeared to have shifted decisively in Iraq's favor. In addition to that Saddam Hussein, who was Iraq's chief 1975 Treaty negotiator, considered the treaty a personal humiliation, and had negotiated it only under pressure. So, along with the fear of the revolution, this factor encouraged him to act and take the opportunity to revise the results of the 1975 Treaty, which had been negotiated under the auspices

of the Algerians.

Third, the Camp David accords provided a catalyst that helped lay the ground work leading to the outbreak of hostilities. When Egypt signed the accords, it forfeited its leadership role in the Arab world. Saddam Hussein, who eagerly sought to fill the leadership vaccum left by the Egyptian defection, seized the initiative by sponsoring the Baghdad Summits. Although the Summits were notable achievements, by the fall of 1980 Saddam had yet to orchestrate successfully an event or series of events that would validate beyond all doubt his bid to be the Arab world's chief spokesman (6). In other words, Saddam had not yet an event similar to the 1955 seizure of Suez Canal that would catapult him to the forefront of Arab leadership.

Finally, the regional, political and diplomatic positions of the superpowers may have affected the Iraqi decision to go to war. The United States was preoccupied with the hostages crisis and would not support the Khomeini regime, and the Soviet Union was bogged down in Afghanistan. Moreover, the U.S. reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan virtually guaranteed that the two superpowers would not work together to impose a ceasefire on the two conflicting parties in favor of the status quo.

Combined, these factors created the atmosphere in

which the decision was made to invade Iran. Saddam thought he would achieve quick victory, and a fatal blow would be delivered to the Khomeini regime. The collapse of the regime, which would follow as a matter of course, would eliminate a movement abhorred by all the region. Thus, Iraq would emerge as the paramount protector of the Arabian Peninsula states, the Gulf preeminent military force, and the defender of the Arab homeland. The three islands occupied by Iran in 1971 would be returned to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the course of negotiations, and the Arabs of Khuzistan in Iran might be liberated or given much greater autonomy within Iran (7). On a wider scale, Saddam, having found his "Suez Canal" could emerge as the leader of the Arab cause against Isreal.

4. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS:

After September 22, 1980 events moved quickly and the fighting escalated to full-scale hostilities. Iraq outlined initial war aims by demanding that Iran:

a. Recognize Iraq's legitimate and sovereign rights over its land and waters (that is, the Shatt al Arab)

b. Refrain from interfering in Iraq's (and other regional states) internal affairs.

c. Adhere to the principal of good neighborly relations and (d) return to the United Arab Emirates the Iranian occupied islands in the Persian Gulf.

Iraq initial war plan was as simple as the classic seige tactics of ancient Mesopotamia. It was to destroy Iran's oil resources, refineries and transportation routes, and by cutting these off from the rest of the country to put the political regime in Tehran in a vise from which neither it nor the Iranian people could break free. The war opened with a three-front Iraqi invasion of Iran: In the south, Iraq moved into Khuzistan; in the central sector, Iraqi forces occupied a belt of territory from Qasr-e Shirin and Sar-e Pol-e Zohab in the north to Mehran in the south. In the far north, another front was opened along the border area opposite Sulaymaniyah (8). The Kuzistan front has been the scene of the majority of the more important offensives and counteroffensives.

On the other hand the Iranians had a sliding scale of demands. At a minimum Iraq would have to end its aggression. Iraq would also have to acknowledge its war guilt and pay reparations. But Iranian objectives go deeper. According to Khomeini "the war against Iran is a war against Islam, it is a war against the Koran, it is a war against the prophet of God." The Iranian purpose of the war, therefore, was to facilitate the overthrow of the Baathi regime.

The initial Iraqi assault pushed 50 miles into Iran within a few days. However, the Iraqi army quickly bogged

down as Iranian resistance developed and Iraq's mostly raw draftees began to feel the effects of Iran's numerically superior, zealous "raw manpower" which was not demoralized as Baghdad had expected. Also, Iranian aircraft were effectively protected by the Shah's reinforced concrete shelters; the bombed runways were repaired within hours and Iran was able to fly limited counter attack sorties by the second day of the war. Nevertheless, within a week, 30,000 Iraqi soldiers were in Iran's Khuzistan province and near their major objectives of Khorramshar and Abadan. In the face of rapidly building Iranian resistance, Iraq finally took Khorramshar on 10 November after suffering 6,000 casualties, but could not take Abadan. Meanwhile, on 7 November Iran successfully cut Baghdad's oil exports by coordinated attacks on Iraqi oil facilities. With the capture of Khorramshar, the Iraqi army lost momentum. While both sides participated in a prolonged artillery duel (the "phony war") Iran established a defensive line and rebuilt its arsenal while Iraq mustered over 100,000 additional troops.

Iran began a series of counter attacks in January 1981. During the next spring, Iran launched a multi-divisional thrust along a 45 mile front against disorganized Iraqi forces. By September 1982 the Iranians had forced the demoralized Iraqi army back to the approximate

original staging area from where Iraq began the war. During the offensive, the Iranian used human wave attacks, including old men and boys, against Iraqi defensive positions, and virtually destroyed most of the Iraqi divisions. Throughout 1983, both sides continued to pound each other in their war of attrition. By early 1984 Iran had over 500,000 soldiers at the front and was within 100 miles of Baghdad before Iraq succeeded in halting the advance. In September 1984, Iraq was at low point, Saddam attempts at a negotiated settlement were rebuked by Khomeini. Baghdad was beginning to perceive that it was fighting an unwinable and yet unending war.

Both Iran and Iraq have been able to replace and, in case of Iraq, improve their weapons stockpiles lost as a result of the war. (9) The Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Warsaw Pact, Egypt and France supplied arms to Iraq. On the other hand Iran major suppliers have been Isreal, China and U.S. equipments from South Korea, Vietnam and several West European--based dealers. (10) Illegal channels have also been reported to supply weapons directly from the United States.

Despite the military material advantage that Iraq has over Iran, Baghdad has not been victorious. Iraq's battlefield tactics have been characterized as being severely flawed, and its superior weapons have not yet been able to overcome the nearly three to one population advantage of Iran.

By September 1985, one estimate placed Iranian losses possibly as high as 650,000 killed in combat with an additional 600,000 to 700,000 seriously wounded, while Iraq has lost an estimated 80,000 to 90,000 killed and from 180,000 to 200,000 wounded. Meanwhile, Iran has continued to be generally on the attack for the past three years. And although an Iranian military victory appears somewhat remote at the present time, Iraq could still make a major mistake on the battlefield which could cause it to loose the war. In addition, Saddam regime could conceivably be overthrown by internal dissidents or a successful Iranian terrorist attack, and a pro-Iranian Shiite administration could succeed him.

The Iran-Iraq war has provided Israel with some respite in its confrontation with the Arabs. The war has moved Iraq's attention away from its western border and greatly curtailed Baghdad support to the Isreali front. As a result, Israel has supported the continuation of the Gulf war and has even provided aid to Iran. However a clear victory by either side is not in Israel's favor, considering Kohmeini desire to participate in a military confrontation with Israel.

As the Iran-Iraq war is still going with varying degrees of intensity and causing mutual economic damage, it is not easy to predict the outcome of this prolonged conflict. At the same time mediation attempts by some countries had

failed and presumably will fail to bring the war to a close.

THE WAR AND THE GULF STATES

5. GENERAL RESPONSES:

The most immediate problem confronting the Peninsula states, once full scale hostilities began, was whether to assume a quasi-neutralist position or openly support Iraq--support for Iran being out of the question. The decision had several implications. Certainly the Peninsula states wanted to see Khomeini regime weakened, if not undermined. But a quick Iraq victory would leave Baghdad the dominant political and military power in the Gulf. Failure to have enthusiastically supported the Iraqi effort from the start could incur the warth of a now powerful Baghdad. On the other hand, if Iran did not collaspe, it might retaliate against the Gulf states. The decision about how to respond was made even more difficult once it became obvious that the Iranian air force was operational and prepared to strike at oil targets.

At this juncture, Iran complained about the Peninsula states moral support of Iraq. On September 22 and 23 Iran expanded its warning. In a series of communiques, the Peninsula governments (specifically the UAE and some Shaykdoms) were warned not to aid Iraq by making available their harbor or airport facilities. Moreover, "Iran reserved

the right to respond if they did so."

Not unexpectedly, the Gulf states hedged their bets. They took action to support Iraq. Iraqi air force planes were given safe haven at airfields throughout the region. In addition Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman, may have flirted with the idea of helping to support an Iraqi--organized seizure of the three Iranian occupied islands in the Gulf. However, as it became clearer that the war was settling down into a drawnout affair, statements from foreign ministries and high government officials in the Peninsula states tended to stress two general points: First, they were concerned that two Muslim nations were at war with each other. Second, they urged both parties to find a quick, peaceful solution to the conflict. A third and fourth point were often made as well: namely that the war diverted attention away from the struggle against Israel, and the war might permit the superpowers to intervene in the region.

6. THE SPECIAL PROBLEM OF KUWAIT:

Although the small Gulf shaykhdoms have generally been able to avoid being drawn deeply into the war, the war has nevertheless illuminated some of the potential vulnerabilities to which these small shaykhdoms might be subject. In particular, the war has shown that Kuwait's geostrategic importance has mixed blessings. Traditionally, Kuwait's

security policy has consisted of a series of balances; domestic policies have had to account for the large number of non-Kuwaitis resident in the country, many of whom are Palestinians. At the regional level, Kuwait has sought to remain on good terms with all the Arab leader through generous aid donations. By doing so, Kuwait has sought to assure that all the Arab states have a vested interests in its continued existence, thus hopefully forestalling Iraqi adventurism. Finally, Kuwait has sought to balance its superpower relationships by maintaining diplomatic relations with both Washington and Moscow. The balances are delicate and often subject to conditions beyond Kuwait control. At the regional level, the traditional military balance between Iraq and Iran has provided the basis for Kuwait's policy of containing Iraq. The Shah was committed to maintaining the status quo, and, as long as the balance remained, Iraq was not in a position seriously to pressure. The balance of power between Iraq and Iran, however, was a relationship over which the Kuwaitis have virtually no control.

The war has buffeted Kuwait "between Iraq and a hard place." Even if it wanted to, Kuwait would have difficulty resisting Iraqi demand for access to port facilities and land transit rights. At the same time, Kuwait has not been able to defend itself against the limited Iranian military attacks.

The war has also made clear to Iran some important geostrategic realities. At a minimum, it has raised again the contentious issue of control over the Kuwaiti Islands of Bubiyan and Warbah, which dominate the entrance to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. Saddam has, several times, asserted Iraq's interests in gaining some kind of control over these islands. The war has demonstrated the importance of a coastline for Iraq. The Iranian navy has been able to bottle up Iraq easily, in part because of the limited Iraqi coastline (about 50 km long). The war, graphically, demonstrated to Iraq the importance of Kuwait. Although an overt Iraq, seizure of Kuwait is unlikely, eventually Iraq may try to establish special relationship with Kuwait.

7. THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE):

The advent of the war also witnessed renewed Iraqi efforts to become more involved in a dispute over islands between Iran and UAE, although the latter has sought to prevent Iraq from becoming involved. The islands, Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs are located at the western end of the Strait of Hormuz. Ras al-Khaymah and Sharjah claim the islands, which were occupied by Shah's troops in December 1971.

When the war broke out, Iraq suggested that one of its war aims was to liberate the three islands. The UAE

soft-peddled the island issue, however. It failed to comment publicly on the self-proclaimed Iraqi goal and did not encourage Iraq to pursue its aim either military or in the negotiation process. In response Iraq pressed the issue from time to time, apparently hoping to generate a positive response from UAE. Finally, in early December 1981, the UAE declared that it intended to raise the island question in the United Nations and ask that body to examine the entire problem. The UAE's UN representative indicated that the UAE wanted to maintain good relations with Iran, but insisted on restoring the UAE's sovereignty of the neighboring states. Finally, he expressed the UAE's willingness to netotiate "with Iranian government to put an end to the problem." By selecting the UN, UAE could respond to Iraq's criticism that the UAE had failed to push the island issue and could avoid bringing Iraq directly into the dispute. The UAE message was clear as to which countries were parties to the dispute--the UAE and Iran.

8. SAUDI ARABIA:

The attitude of Saudia Arabia was crucial in determining the posturing and policies of most of the Peninsula states toward the war. In general, the small Peninsula states would follow the broad outlines of the Saudi lead. Although Saudi policy was difficult to determine with

precision, apparently within several days of the war Riyadh decided that it would remain officially neutral. The ambiguous nature of King Khalid's phone call to Saddam was indicative of this position. Specifically, Saudi Arabia would not openly support or sanction Iraq's war aims and goals. At the same time, however, the Saudis quietly provided Iraq with various types and amounts of material aid. (11)

The Saudi policy thus had a somewhat ambivalent equality to it: Riyadh would be neutral, yet aid Iraq. To fashion such a policy was one matter, however, to implement it and assure its success was quite another. In fact, the Saudis did not have the necessary resources available to them to make the policy workable. Saudi air defences, for example, were not capable of effectively detecting or neutralizing the Iranian air force should Iran decide to attack Saudi oil fields. And it is within this context the decision was probably taken to invite the United States to send four Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) planes. The AWACS provided the underpinning for the Saudi neutrality, they allowed the Saudis to put some teeth into their policy. Iran would be deterred from attacking the Saudi oil fields, not only because Iranian aircraft could be tracked before they even left their fields, but also because the mere presence of U.S. planes in Saudi airspace increased the risk of attack for

Iran. Thus, the war could be contained. Saudi Arabia continues to pursue a policy of selective support for Iraq. Saudis provide Iraq with crucial material support in several areas. (12)

9. THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL:

The war also acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), although the Council certainly did not spring into existence simply because of the war. It was during the two to three years preceding the 1980 war that the Peninsula states gradually came to realize that some type of regional organization was needed. The Iranian revolution, the mosque incident in Mecca, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan encouraged such thinking. The outbreak of Iran-Iraq war, however, amplified the already existing concerns. The Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and UAE) pushed ahead with council project and in early February 1981, the council was officially announced. The Council has subsequently added defense related issues to its agenda. Council members have also accelerated their efforts to coordinate internal security policies and have become increasingly concerned about Iran's intention to export its revolution. The Iraq-Iran war and the thwarted Iranian attempt to rationale for the GCC to work closely together and urge the existence of a joint defense strategy.

All the GCC states would feel quite threatened if either Iran or Iraq would emerge a clear victor, but especially if non-Arab Iran were to win the war, because of Khomeini's demands that all Arab governments in the region are illegitimate and should be replaced. At least dissident activities by Iranian supported Shiites could be expected throughout the region.

In February/March, 1986 when the confrontation between Iraq and Iran reescalated and Iran captured the Iraqi Island Fao, the GCC held a meeting at the foreign ministers level. The GCC denounced the Iranian aggression and invasion of Fao Island. A high GCC official stated that if the deterrence and negotiation policy adopted by the GCC states proved to be ineffective, the GCC states may find themselves compelled to employ force. He also stated that the Gezeira Shield (GCC combined military force formed in 1983) will be mobilized to meet any threats that might be posed on the area. (13

10. CONCLUSION:

Iraq-Iran war remains unlike previous wars between the antagonist's Arab-Persian predecessors because of its worldwide implications and dangers. The war has already demonstrated its potential to curtail Gulf oil shipments vital to the west, if expanded, it could easily involve other regional government in the conflict and provide the catalyst

for a military confrontation between the the two Superpowers. If Iraq gained decisive victory it would try to attain hegemony in the region. Saddam would, very much, like to see himself the head of Arab world, at least in the region. If he were to win his personal, harsh form of Baathist Arab Socialism would tend to undermine the Gulfs Traditional, moderate Arab government. Saddam regional hegemony could place the Baathists in control of Gulf countries policies. On the other hand an Iranian victory led by the fanatic Shiite Khomeini and his fundamentalist Mullah would probably prove to be a worse situation. Khomeini definition of victory includes the replacement of Iraq's Baathist government with an Iranian -style fundamentalist Shiite theocracy. Iran could then be joined by the newly formed, pro-Iranian Shiite government in Iraq to facilitate the promise of Khomeini to overthrow all the remaining traditional Sunni governments along the Persian Gulf.

However, the war convinced the Gulf states to cooperate closely and remain very cohesive against any Iranian aggression, and the role of Saudi Arabia in the political, military and security affairs of the Gulf will be enhanced. The continuation of this conflict, however, is not the only factor influencing this development, because there is Peninsula-wide concern about Iran's oft stated goal of

exporting revolution. The process of Saudi enhancement is already underway. Iraq has become increasingly dependent on Saudi Arabia for financial support Saudi Arabia, with Kuwait support, pushed through the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council and signed a series of bilateral security agreements with Gulf shaykdoms. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia had kept augmenting its armed forces and increasing its strike capability to meet any future threat. The latest $7 billion worth of arms procurements from United Kingdom, including Tornado and Hawk aircraft is an evidence.

Although several mediation efforts have been initiated by the United Nations, PLO, Islamic Conference, and Nonaligned movements; these efforts foundered because neither side felt compelled to make concession to produce a negotiated agreement. This is because the political risk that either regime ran if it obtained less than "total victory" was considered more threatening than continuing the war. Under these circumstances, serious negotiations could occur only when one side achieved strategic victory and was in a position to enforce a settlement or when both sides decided that a continuation of the war was more costly than a settlement.

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