

September 23, 1986

Annual Report of the Situation in the Iran-Iraq War

Citation:

"Annual Report of the Situation in the Iran-Iraq War", September 23, 1986, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BStU, ZA, HA I, 13758. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/114459>

Summary:

In the latter half of 1986, the East German Military Attache in Baghdad reports on how the Iran-Iraq War has progressed and where it is going. During the war so far, Iraq's greatest source of imports has been, by far, from the Soviet Union. However, nations like France and Egypt has also been quite helpful.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

[Ministry for National Defense]
[GDR Military Attache in Baghdad]

23 September 1986
No. 93/86

Annual Report

The military-political, military, military-technological and intelligence situation in both the country of deployment and in the region is shaped by the Middle East conflict in general and the conflict between Iraq and Iran going on for now six years in particular.

In military-political terms the Iraqi leadership prefers a peaceful solution of the conflict acceptable to the Iraqi regime, without jeopardizing the substance of the regime and the position of Iraq in the region. Those efforts, which among else became apparent in the proposals for a peaceful solution issued by the Iraqi President on 2 August 1986, however, continue to fail due to rejection by the Iranian side. The conflict increasingly influences the military-political situation in the Gulf region. Through the escalation of fighting in the Gulf area from both sides the danger of an internationalization of the conflict is growing permanently; also the danger of direct military intervention by the United States and its allies in the Gulf region under the pretext of guaranteeing the security of the Gulf states, in particular of Kuwait.

In military terms the Iraqi leadership continued its efforts to develop and strengthen its military potential. After it realized that the conflict cannot be ended in short term, the armed forces of the Republic of Iraq were expanded with urgency. However, Iraq did not succeed to stop the tilt of the still existing military balance towards Iran - what has become apparent since 1985. Among other things, this tilt was evident in the Iraqi defeats in the operations of Fao and Mehran, as well as through the Iranian missile attacks on Baghdad.

In terms of military technology the Iraqi leadership directed its efforts towards the further perfection of its equipments, in particular with regard to the air force, and towards guaranteeing supplies for the armed forces pertaining to tanks, artillery and ammunition to continue combat operations, to have replacements for losses and to equip newly formed armed units and combat divisions.

This was evident in the Iraqi air attacks on Sirri and Lavan, the use of surface-to-air missiles Armat and AS 30 L, and the introduction of the Brazilian rocket launcher system Astros.

The main sources of arms imports for Iraq are still the Soviet Union (about 80 percent), France, Brazil, the People's Republic of China, and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

However, it becomes increasingly difficult for Iraq to obtain arms and equipments needed due to its financial situation caused by a decrease in oil prices (in 1986 revenues from oil exports amounted only to about 6 to 7 billion U.S. dollars instead of about 15 billion). As a result, the level of supply with tanks, for instance, is only between 70 to 80 percent of what is actually needed.

This conflict lasting since 1980, and the growing repressive measures of the regime,

have a grave impact on working with or recruiting sources. Opportunities to get in touch with local citizens, in particular with members of the armed forces, are severely limited. Also, the willingness of local citizens to get in touch with foreigners has shrunk drastically. For fear of repressive measures or of being sent to the front, the many times tightened rules for contacts with foreigners are observed ever more strictly. The surveillance system for the population and counter-propaganda have increased as well. Still, the growing war fatigue and increasing criticism of the regime's policies offer certain opportunities to establish contacts.

Conclusions:

Through official contacts one can gather information mainly on military policy, the development of armed forces, the domestic situation in Iraq and about military and military-political situation developments in the region. Yet such information is in need to become more precise and to get deepened based on unofficial contacts.

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Obtaining information on plans, intentions, and activities of USA and NATO is only possible from unofficial sources.

The targets ordered [for infiltration by the GDR Ministry of National Defense] were appropriate. The farthest penetration was achieved in case of the target "PLO". With regard to targets "Defense Ministry" and "military sport" there has not been achieved anything yet beyond official contacts.

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It would be helpful for further intelligence work to lift this separation and order only the "Defense Ministry" as a target. "Military sport" is just a side issue which could be used as a vehicle to penetrate the Defense Ministry.