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IRAQ

The Military Buildup



| | 1973 | 1980 | 1985 | COMMENTS |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|------------------------|---|
| TOTAL MANPOWER | 170,000 | 450,000 ¹ | 1,000,000 ¹ | ¹ Includes: Reservists & Members of the "Popular Army" |
| CORPS HEADQUARTERS | — | 3 | 7 | |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF DIVISIONS | 6 | 12 | ± 40 | |
| ARMORED DIVISIONS | 2 | 4 | 6 | |
| MECHANIZED DIVISIONS | — | 2 | 3 | |
| INFANTRY DIVISIONS | 4 | 6 | ± 30 | |
| SPECIAL FORCES BRIGADES | | 5 | at least 6 | |
| TANKS | 1100 | 3000 | 5000 ² | ² T-72, T-62, T-55, T-54 among others |
| APCs | 1200 | 2500 | 3500 ³ | ³ BMP-1, BTR-50/60, MT-LB |
| ARTILLERY PIECES | 1000 | 2000 | 3500 ⁴ | ⁴ Includes: 122mm, 130mm, 155mm |
| ANTI-TANK MISSILE LAUNCHERS | — | — | 1600 ⁵ | ⁵ Includes: SNAPPER, SAGHUR, MILAN, TOW, HOT |
| SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE LAUNCHERS | — | 24 Frog-7 12 Scud | 24 Frog-7 12 Scud | |
| TANK TRANSPORTERS | 200 | 1000 | 2800 | |
| FIGHTER & BOMBER AIRCRAFT | 250 | 500 | 600 ⁶ | ⁶ MIG-23, MIG-21, MIG-23, Mirage F-1, Sukhoi 20/7 |
| HELICOPTERS | 80 | 320 | 430 ⁷ | ⁷ Mi-24, GAZELLE, ALOUETTE III, PUMA, BO-105 |
| TRAINING & TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT | 30 | 110 | 175 | |
| GROUND TO AIR MISSILE BATTERIES | 8 | 70 | 200 ⁸ | ⁸ Includes: SA-2, SA-3 |
| MISSILE BOATS | 4 | 14 | 10 ⁹ | ⁹ Includes: QSA-1, QSA-11 |
| TORPEDO BOATS | — | 12 | 7-10 | |
| LANDING CRAFT | — | 3 | 3 | |
| PATROL BOATS & MINESWEEPERS | — | 25 | 36 | |

IRAQ UPDATE

Iraq in 1986 is totally dominated by her war with Iran. After five and a half years of fighting, with no end to the conflict in sight, Iraqi strategy, actions and international maneuverings are overwhelmingly influenced by the war, to the point that Iraq has had to alter her attitudes and actions, at least on the surface.

Helmets of fallen Iranian soldiers – an epitaph to waste.

Gamma – Fr Locho



The War

The war, and its concomitant effects, are crucial to any understanding of Iraq today. The *casus belli* of the conflict might center around the control of the strategic Shatt al-Arab waterway and the oilfields in the region, but the rivalry and animosity between Iraq and Iran extends back to the seventh century when the Arabs conquered Persia and destroyed its flourishing culture.

Recent tensions between the two states, however, have focused on the Shatt al-Arab river, the Kurdish rebellion, and mutual attempts to undermine the other's regime.

The Algiers accords, signed by the two nations in 1975, were to have settled several crucial issues, such as the division of sovereignty over the Shatt, and the return of territory to Iraq. In addition, the Shah of Iran agreed to cease supporting Iraq's Kurdish rebels and he received in return control over half the Shatt.

Baghdad, however, came to regard the agreement as a capitulation, made in a moment of weakness; a view reinforced by Iran, which did not adhere to its crucial points.

The downfall of the Shah in 1979, and the subsequent purging of the Iranian army convinced Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein that the time had come to change the *status quo* in the area and to rectify the Algiers agreements to Iraq's advantage, and in so doing make Iraq a power in the Gulf region. A further aim was to wipe out the threat that the Khomeini regime posed to the Iraqi Ba'ath government.

Baghdad also wanted to restore Iraqi rights along the Shatt al-Arab river, which is Iraq's sole outlet to the Persian Gulf, and which, under the terms of the Algiers accord, was to be divided equally between the two states, although in reality Iran controlled all traffic on the river.

On the operational level, Iraq intended to gain control of several border zones which were under Iranian control in defiance of the Algiers agreement, which stipulated that they were to be returned to Iraqi sovereignty. (Some of these zones had in fact been used as bases from which to shell Iraqi territory in the weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of the war.)

Finally, Iraq wanted to gain control over the Khuzestan area, by delivering a blow against the Iranian army, which would weaken and possibly even topple the Teheran regime.

All this would be both a clear demonstration of Iraqi power and a turning point towards the restoration of Iraqi hegemony over the Persian Gulf. By choosing Khuzestan as

the area from which to launch his war, Saddam Hussein hoped that the region's ethnic Arab majority would rebel against the non-Arab Teheran government. Accordingly, in September 1980, the Iraqi army attacked along a 600 km front stretching from Qasr esh-Shirin to Khorramshahr.

After a month, Iraqi troops managed to make extensive advances into Iran, but they had yet to achieve the objectives they had set for themselves, in particular the capture of the east bank of the Shatt. Despite this, these early conquests, including the 100 km penetration into Iran, were to remain the pinnacle of Iraq's military achievements in the war, especially since the onset of winter forced Iraq to change her strategy and to consolidate her gains, thus passing the initiative to Iran.

Hussein's plan had in fact backfired. Not only did the Khuzestan Arabs remain loyal to Khomeini, but the invasion also unleashed a wave of anti-Iraqi hostility in Iran. The Ayatollah's followers considered Iraq, with its secular leftist Ba'ath regime, an ideal target for the export of the Islamic Revolution.

Following the first unsuccessful attacks, Iraq was forced into a defensive position, and this situation prevailed until September 1981. Thereafter the initiative on the battlefield passed gradually to Iran, which launched an offensive, the aim of which was the liberation of the territory conquered by Iraq at the beginning of the war. Although the Iranians encountered heavy Iraqi resistance and suffered considerable losses, they did succeed in ejecting the Iraqis from some of the territories they had occupied.

By this time Saddam Hussein realized that all was not going as planned, and he began searching for a dignified way to end the war. As usual, Arab hostility towards Israel provided a possible solution to inter-Arab difficulties. The Peace for Galilee operation, launched by Israel in June 1982 gave Hussein his excuse to exit with dignity. He called for a united Arab effort against the Zionist enemy, and as a first step announced a unilateral withdrawal from all occupied Iranian territory. Iran, however, refused to cooperate and would not alter her hard line conditions for ending hostilities.

After rejecting Baghdad's proposals, Iran launched a series of unsuccessful assaults into Iraqi territory. Nine broad-based attacks, aimed at conquering vast Iraqi territories and causing the collapse of the Hussein regime, were launched between July 1982 and February 1984. These attacks were for the most part directed against the Shi'ite-populated south and Kurdish north, in the hope that these populations would rebel against the Suni government in Baghdad. Iraq's Shi'ites, who are approximately half the population, did not rise up. They proved as a whole that their primary allegiance is to Iraq, and that their Shi'ite identity is secondary.

Having successfully repulsed the Iranian attacks, Iraq turned in March 1984, to assaulting economic and civilian targets, the main aim being to strike blows against the Iranian economic base and thus force Iran to the negotiating table.

Thus, for example Iraq's attempts since August 1985, to destroy Iran's oil terminal on Kharj Island, an action Iraq often threatened to carry out unless Teheran agreed to come to the negotiating table. So far, however, the Iraqi attacks have been less than successful, since the Iraqi Air Force seems unable to carry out Saddam Hussein's threat.



More precise have been the Iraqi attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, although the effects have been negligible. Exocet missiles, fired from Iraqi Mirage jets at defenseless targets forced a significant if temporary decline in oil exports, especially during May-June 1984 and later, when foreign tankers refused to approach the combat zone. Iran has countered this threat, at least since 1985, by leasing tankers to shuttle the crude oil out to Serri Island, 560 km south in the Gulf, out of the range of Iraqi aircraft. The oil is then transferred to the customers' ships. Although to date two of these leased tankers have been sunk, and four others have been damaged, Iranian oil exports have actually increased since May 1984.

Iraq also launched attacks on civilian population centers inside Iran, employing for this purpose both surface-to-surface Scud missiles and artillery fire. Iran responded by shelling border towns, especially Basra, and with limited aerial attacks.

Both sides sustained heavy losses and much damage, beyond their power to absorb. The Iraqi assaults especially caused some bitterness inside Iran, and demonstrations calling for an end to the war took place in a number of Iranian cities.

After five and a half years, the war is in a stalemate, since neither side is capable of decisive action on the battlefield. Iraq is pursuing a policy of intensifying her economic warfare against Iran, while Iran has adopted a strategy of limited attacks.

Teheran has rejected the calls for an end to the fighting which are emanating from Baghdad. Iraqi demands include a withdrawal by both armies to the international border, a full prisoner exchange, mutual respect for the other's sovereignty, and an Iranian renunciation of claims to total sovereignty over the Shatt.

One of the reasons Iraq began the war was to change the Algiers accords. She is now prepared to accept them as a basis for opening negotiations. Iran for her part continues to insist, as she has done all along, on the resignation of what she calls "the heretic Hussein," and the dissolution of the Iraqi Ba'ath party. She is also demanding millions of dollars in war reparations from Iraq.

Both sides have suffered substantial losses in the conflict. Although numerically Iran has suffered more casualties, Iraq, whose population of about fifteen and a half million is approximately one fourth that of Iran, has felt its losses more keenly. It is reasonable to assume that virtually every family in Iraq has been affected.

So far Iraqi casualties total approximately 80,000 dead, 170,000 wounded and 60,000 prisoners of war. Iranian losses are more than 230,000 dead, 400,000 injured and only 10,000 prisoners of war.



Iranian children POWs

Gamma - Fr Locho

Despite Iraq's quantitative advantage, both sides have suffered more or less equal losses to their order of battle. Iraq has lost approximately 1700 tanks, 1000 APCs, and 350 planes and helicopters, while Iran has lost 1500 tanks, 800 APCs, and 300 aircraft. Iran is more seriously affected by these losses. While Iraq has little major trouble in replenishing her arsenal, the only markets open to Iran are those of her allies, Libya and Syria, and countries like North Korea.

So long as the present regimes are in power in Baghdad and Teheran, it can be assumed that the conflict will continue. The question, then, is what effects the conflict has on Iraq, and how the Iraqi regime is coping with them.

The Military Buildup

Since the Ba'ath Party took over government in 1968, and especially since the 1973 Yom Kippur war, the Iraqi leadership has embarked on a program of strengthening its armed forces. Iraq would like to become the leading power in the Gulf area, and a strong army is one means of achieving this ambition. In the seven years between the 1973 war and the outbreak of the conflict with Iran, the Iraqi army

doubled in size. The war with Iran gave a new impetus and urgency to the military buildup. (Saddam Hussein also aspires to nuclear weapons, and steps in this direction have been taken by Baghdad.)

In 1973, the Iraqi army consisted of 6 divisions; in September 1980, at the war's outbreak, there were 12 divisions with approximately 150,000 combat personnel. At present, the Iraqi army consists of approximately 40 divisions, or one million soldiers. This is more than the total number of divisions in all the Arab front-line states, and more than four times the size of the Syrian army.

In 1980, Iraqi military commanders possessed limited combat experience. Since then they have gained experience, have been able to reevaluate their tactics, and improve coordination between the various branches of the armed forces. The Iraqi army has also acquired proficiency in the use of chemical weapons, and in the rapid deployment of forces along the 1180 km front.

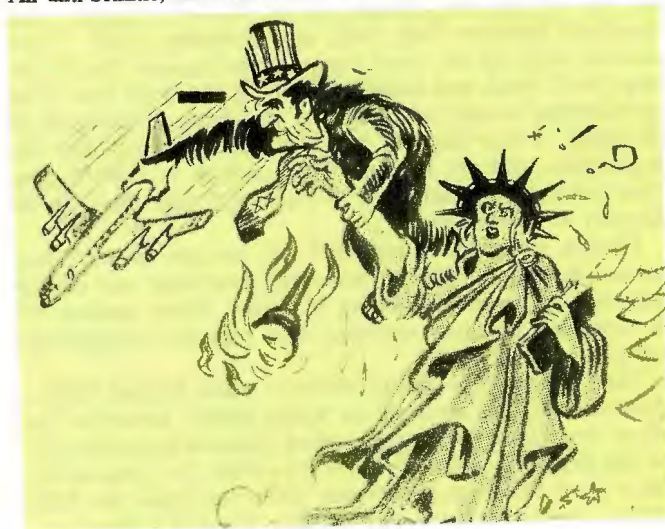
After being forced onto the defensive early in the war, in order to maintain their territorial integrity against Iranian attacks, the Iraqis were forced to draw on their resources. An Iraqi military buildup began, which concentrated on a number of areas: The Ground and Air Forces; arms procurement (especially quality materiel from Eastern Bloc and Western countries), mobilization of reservists, and an extension of the periods of conscription.

Most of Iraq's divisions are infantry, and operate within a corps framework. There are currently seven such corps, deployed along the front. Six of the forty divisions are armored. Iraq now possesses over 5000 operational tanks, including T-72s, the most advanced Soviet model, and T-62s. The rest of her armored forces are of comparable quality.

At the outbreak of the war, Iraq had 2500 APCs; she now has 3500. Her artillery pieces, which numbered 2000 when the war broke out, now number 3500 and are supplied by such diverse countries as France, Austria, Brazil and South Africa.

Iraq's arsenal of ground-to-ground missiles, which was brought into prominence by the war, consists of Frog 7, and especially Scud missiles. It was the latter which were used in a massive attack on Iranian population centers, causing

*"In the name of Liberty they abuse the sky to hijack civilian planes".
An anti-Semitic, anti-American caricature from an Iraqi daily.*





Burning oil depot

Gamma - Fr Locho

heavy casualties.

The Iraqi Air Force is now equipped with many new, quality Soviet aircraft, such as the MiG 23 and the MiG 25, and also with the French Mirage F-1. Iraq has also increased the number of attack helicopters at her disposal, receiving supplies from the USSR (Mi-24), France (Gazelle) and other European countries (BO 105). There has also been a significant growth in the quantity of ground-to-air missile batteries, from both Eastern and Western suppliers. There are reports by the foreign media that Iraq has procured Exocet anti-ship guided missiles, while other reports have it that Iraq has a large stock of cluster bombs.

The Iraqi armed forces also include members of the 'Popular Army,' a civilian volunteer militia whose aim is to safeguard the Ba'ath regime. Since the beginning of the war, tens of thousands of these volunteers have been integrated into the regular army, and serve for several months at the front.

One serious aspect of Iraq's military buildup is her use of chemical weaponry. The first proof of such use came in March 1984, when chemical weapons were used while blocking an Iranian attack on the Southern Front. According to the available evidence, which is in part based on a UN Commission of Enquiry, Iraq used nerve gas, mustard gas, sarin and tabun. Iranian casualties were over 1000 dead and injured. One year later Iraq used the gas again, once again while blocking an Iranian attack. This time there were 5000 casualties.

According to reports in the foreign media, the gases are manufactured at an Iraqi insecticide plant. There are two possible ways of delivering the gas: by means of a 250 kg bomb dropped from an airplane, or by regular artillery shells. To date Iraq has not made wide use of this weapon, possibly out of fear of an Iranian retaliation.

Since the outbreak of the war, the Iraqi army has improved in several fields, possibly due to the activities and influence of the Combat Improvement Administration, which, as reported in the Arab media, is a body set up to conduct research on the war, and whose representatives are attached to each army unit. The army is also acquiring logistical experience, which could be exploited were Iraq ever to move troops to the Israel front.

It is nonetheless difficult to judge just how effective the Iraqi Army really is. One way of doing so, perhaps, is by judging the Iraqi Air Force, which enjoys complete superiority in the air, but has been unable or unwilling to exploit this advantage. Between August and December 1985, for example, the Iraqi Air Force launched 60 raids on Kharj Island, yet still was unable to cripple Iran's oil production.

The Iraqi army's inability to win a decisive victory on the battlefield leads one to conclude that her ground forces are not very effective against the Iranians. On the other hand, the fact that the Iraqi army now numbers tens of combat-experienced divisions cannot be discounted. Nor can one easily dismiss the Iraqi arsenal of both Western and Eastern weapons systems.

Effects of the War

One third of Iraq's labor force has been mobilized in the war effort against Iran, and the war has seriously affected Iraq's economy. Iraqi foreign currency reserves, which before the war amounted to hundreds of billions of dollars, now stand at around five billion. Whole sectors of the economy are virtually paralyzed, and nearly one million Egyptian workers have had to be 'imported.'



Islam at war
Gamma Fr. Lochon

Once financially independent, Iraq is now heavily reliant on the Gulf States for economic aid, and is believed to have received between 30 and 50 billion dollars. The Gulf States are, however, slowing down their aid. There have been unconfirmed reports that some of the money is finding its way into the bank accounts of several of the regime's leaders.

In any event, the Gulf States are caught in a bind. While it is in their interest to see the war prolonged, they are also aware of the danger of the conflict-spreading to include other states in the region. Iraq, furthermore, has announced that she is keeping track of who is supplying aid and who is not. She has stated that after the war she will 'get even'. Moreover, it is conceivable that following the cessation of hostilities Iraq will once again return to the radicalism which characterized her actions before September 1980, and some of the Gulf States are likely to become targets of this radicalism.

Before the war, Iraq was the leader of the radical entente. The war, however, has forced Iraq to feign moderation, at least in her public pronouncements abroad.

Iraq was once an ally of Syria and Libya; these two countries have now allied themselves with Khomeini, leaving Hussein no better option than to seek the support of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, two countries which in the past were the subject of Iraqi criticism and scorn, because of their monarchical forms of government. Iraq, which initiated the Arab isolation of Egypt following the Camp David accords, has sought a rapprochement with Cairo, and has even renewed diplomatic ties with the United States, while at the same time becoming less friendly with the Soviet Union.

This apparent moderation, it should be stressed, is surely nothing more than a façade, reflecting Iraq's desperation and need for support and allies rather than a basic change in ideology.

Iraq the 'Moderate'

Iraq would like to be seen as a 'moderate' Arab country in order to receive aid from countries hostile to the radical Iranian regime, and to this end has been issuing 'moderate' statements. These utterances, however, are for public consumption abroad, and are not matched by the pronouncements and points of view which appear in Iraq's government-run media.

Moderation, Iraqi style, is usually expressed either by Saddam Hussein or by Foreign minister Aziz; their moderate statements are never quoted in the Iraqi media. Furthermore, statements which may be interpreted as moderate are usually issued at a time when Iraq requires aid or support. Thus, Iraq could support the declarations from the Arab summit at Fez which indirectly called for negotiations with Israel. Similarly, when Iraq restored ties with the United States in November 1984, Foreign Minister Aziz announced that Iraq did not see herself as "being directly involved in the Arab-Israel conflict."

Yet the Iraqi media consistently publish scathing anti-American and anti-Israel articles. Israel is depicted as a Zionist forward base for imperialism in the region. (*Jumhuriya*, 4 Nov 1985)

To a certain degree the Iraqi 'moderation' has succeeded. For example, the U.S. removed Iraq of its list of nations which support terrorism, a somewhat strange decision in view of the fact that Iraq is very much involved with Palestinian terror and has close links with terror leader Abu Ibrahim. Terror chieftan Abu Nidal was an Iraqi protégé before moving to Libya, and Abu Tayeb, head of the PLO's Force 17, is a regular visitor to Baghdad.

Following the Achille Lauro hijacking, Abul 'Abbas, accused by the US of masterminding the affair, went to Iraq,

where an Iraqi official was quoted as saying that he would "be welcome to stay." 'Abbas, of course, travels on an Iraqi diplomatic passport.

Many terrorist training camps are located on Iraqi soil, and several terror attacks have originated there: in October 1985, for example, Italian police arrested two Arabs who had arrived in Rome from Iraq, carrying a suitcase-bomb for use in Italy.

In addition to the PLO, members of the Japanese Red Army, the German Beider-Meinhof gang, and the Irish Republican Army have also received training in Iraq.

The Iraqi Threat to Israel

Her public moderation notwithstanding, Iraq has not altered her basic enmity towards Israel.

Iraq is the only Arab country to have actively participated in all the wars against Israel (with the exception of the Peace for Galilee Campaign), and has never been a party to any signed agreement with Jerusalem, be it an armistice or a ceasefire.

In the 1973 October war, Iraq sent three divisions – almost half her army – to fight against Israel on the Syrian front. The Iraqi force included 600 tanks and 700 APCs, and changed the balance of forces on that front.

Nor is Israel mentioned in the Iraqi press. Usually the references are to the "Zionist enemy" or to the "Zionist entity." A major breakthrough, if that is the word, came in an interview with U.S. Congressman Stephen Solarz in August 1982, when Iraq made the seemingly moderate statement that "the existence of an independent Palestinian nation, and the existence of a state of security for the Israelis, is essential." Closer analysis, however, reveals that security for the Israelis is not the same thing as security for the State of Israel.

Anti-Zionism is a prominent feature in the Iraqi media. In January 1982, *Ath-Thaura* stated that "once Iraq has won the war, the Zionist entity will cease to exist," and as recently as 16 December, 1985, Foreign Minister Aziz was quoted in *al-Dustur* as saying that "Iraq's real struggle (was) against the Zionist conquest." (It is interesting to note that both Saddam Hussein and Khomeini refer to each other as 'Zionists,' the term being for them the ultimate insult.)

Another permanent theme in the Iraqi press is that Israel is enjoying the war between Iraq and Iran, and a series of press articles focused on alleged connections between Israel, Iran and South Africa, and warned of the dangers of Zionist penetration in Africa.

It is not inconceivable that Iraqi jets could take off from an airbase in the H-3 area, near the Jordanian border, and fly over Jordanian airspace on their way to bomb Israeli population centers.

Despite Syria's current support for Iran, according to a report which appeared on 28 April 1983 in the Kuwaiti *al-Anba* Iraq wanted to send two brigades to fight against Israel in Beirut, but was refused permission by Syria.

The possibility of Iraq sending an expeditionary force and/or aid to Jordan is another matter entirely, and one which is far more serious, given that Amman and Baghdad are now allies. A network of roads from Iraq to Jordan has recently been completed, and it is known that Iraq has 2800 tank transporters.

Furthermore, it is logical to assume that Iraq, which fought in Jordan in 1948, "reserves" the Samaritan front (i.e. the northern part of the Administered Territories) as her own. Precise Iraqi actions depend of course on the exact Arab constellation facing Israel at the time such action is contemplated.

However, so long as she is fighting the war against Iran, Iraq cannot play a significant part in any war against Israel.

Owing to the rapid growth of the Iraqi army, some of the newer divisions are not on the same level as their counterparts. In addition, it is more than likely that after the war soldiers from these newer, less experienced divisions will be demobilized and will return to their civilian jobs in order to try to get the economy working again. However, the Iraqi army which remains mobilized will still be a large one.

The fact remains that Iraq does pose a threat. Even with much of her army demobilized, Iraq will still be able to deploy sufficient land and air forces of a higher quality than before the war. If the Iraqi qualitative threat is not particularly great, there remains a definite quantitative threat which, while neither overpowering nor immediate, does exist.

Compiled by Jeff Abramowitz, Jacqueline Hahn, and Jerry Cheslow, from a series of briefings given by officers of the Intelligence Branch of the IDF.

As this article was going to press, the Iranians launched their recent offensive.

Gamma Fr. Guenet



SIMULATORS AND TRAINERS IN THE GROUND FORCES

by Dov Gilor

The use of military simulation is as ancient as warfare itself. Generals of antiquity used dirt drawings to represent the tactical situation and to describe the coming battle to their officers. Today, battle simulation methods have been revolutionized thanks to modern electronic technology and space-age miniaturization. This same technology applied to modern weapon systems has also irrevocably changed the ways wars are prepared for and fought.

The dilemma of the military today is that while sophisticated and modern weaponry requires massive training programs, budgetary constraints in the IDF and many other armies prohibit the firing of even a single ten thousand dollar missile during training exercises. Yet the tactical risk involved in launching a missile ineffectively during battle is extremely high and may result in unacceptable casualties. It is even more dangerous when battle commanders are inexperienced and inadequately trained to properly deploy and coordinate artillery, tanks, air, land and sea forces usually involved in a modern battle.



The Elbit TANGA

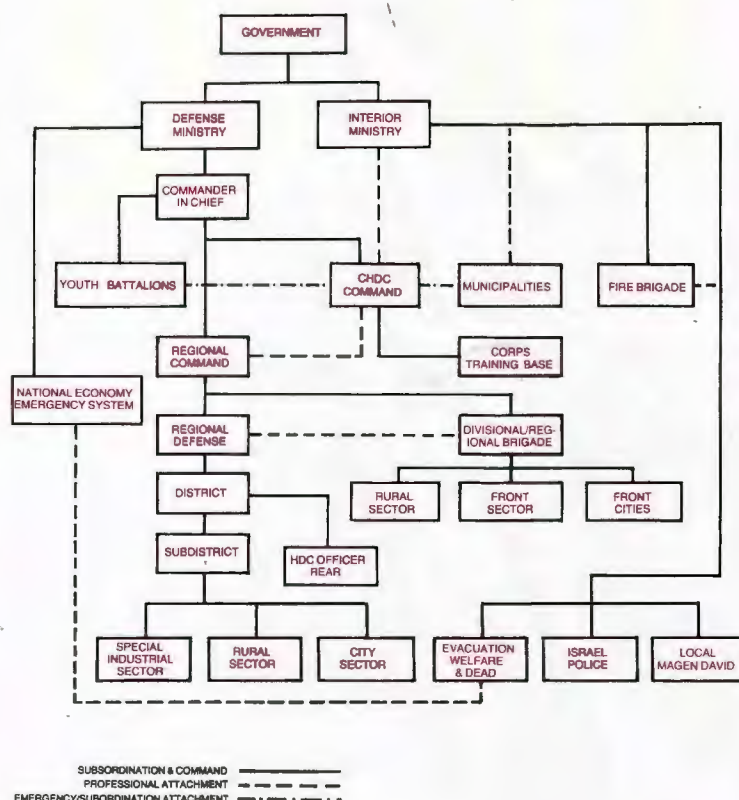
Training Future Officers

The lessons of the Mexico quake are being studied and applied by the instructors at the CHDC training center. The CHDC officer course lasts for six weeks, and includes not only military topics, but also instruction in the world-wide utilization of rescue equipment. A scale model makes it possible to study tactical problems posed by the deployment of the various units, population evacuation, food distribution, maintenance of public order, etc.

At the same time, the CHDC is on the look-out for new technologies and new techniques. It is in constant contact with specialists from Israel's various universities, in particular from the Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

The CHDC is thus a unique body, which brings together civilian and military elements, fulfills defense missions, keeps public order, ensures the survival of the population in times of war and peace, and prepares for a test that to date Israel has not had to experience: a large scale attack aimed at her population centers. As a result, the CHDC keeps a close watch on the latest developments in the Middle East theater of operations.

The author is a professional journalist and senior press officer in the IDF Spokesman's Reserve Unit



NBC protection for mother and infant



Scale models of Israeli towns and cities help CHDC officers to solve tactical problems of deployment and evacuation
IDF Spokesman-Danav Reinhold

Iran

Iraq's battle for arms

AS THE GULF WAR enters its eighth year in mid-September, Iraq has become the world's biggest single market for arms. Weighed down by an estimated \$50 billion foreign debt, a sizeable proportion of which has been eaten up by the military, Iraq is fighting a losing battle in trying to strike a balance between rising defence spending and falling oil prices.

The Washington-based Arms Control and Disarmament Agency said recently that Iraq imported about \$24 billion worth of military equipment during 1981-1985, making it the world's number one arms importer.

In reaching the top of the pile, the Iraqis have displaced the traditionally biggest buyer

By Thalif Deen

of arms, Saudi Arabia, into second place. The Saudis purchased a total of only about \$15 billion in weapons.

The Iran-Iraq war has also accelerated the arms race in the Gulf, with military spending spiralling in the conservative, pro-Western countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

But Iraq is still way ahead of its rivals, and according to ACDA, has been buying almost four times as much as Iran. Iran's estimated arms purchases during 1981-1985 came to only \$6.4 billion.

Currently, Iraq's biggest single problem is to meet an ever-widening gap between its oil income and its military expenditure. Iraq's oil export earnings, which peaked at \$26 billion in pre-war 1980, has plummeted to a post-war \$9 billion. The Iraqis, however, are anticipating only about \$8 billion in oil income this year.

At the same time, Iraq's military budget has been going up from \$4.7 billion in 1981 to an estimated \$12.8 billion in 1985. The projected figure for 1987 is even higher. The Iraqis now spend more than \$1 billion per month on a war that shows no signs of

waning.

The Paris-based *Le Monde* has estimated that since the Gulf War, French arms sales to Iraq may be in the region of about \$5.6 billion, plus an additional \$4.7 billion on civilian and commercial contracts. France has been forced to reschedule its debts to give the Iraqis much-needed breathing space.

As a result of the mounting debts, the French Government has been forced to ensure the military survival of the Iraqis against the Iranians. If Iraq loses the war, there is a strong possibility that France may have to write off its debts.

French President Francois Mitterrand was once quoted as saying that French assistance was really aimed at keeping Iraq from losing the war.

Since 1977, France has contracted to sell a total of 113 Mirage F-1 fighters to Iraq. The final batch of 29 F-1s was ordered in September 1985 at a cost of more than \$500 million, a part of which was paid for with crude oil.

In November 1983 France loaned five Super Etendard fighters armed with Exocet missiles. The fighters, which reportedly were used by Iraq against oil tankers in the Gulf, were returned to France in September 1985.

As the second largest arms supplier to Iraq, France has also provided the Iraqis with helicopters, missiles, military vehicles and artillery. The French have supplied more than 100 Exocet AM39 air-to-surface missiles and at least 200 AS30 laser-guided missiles jointly manufactured by Aérospatiale and Thomson-CSF.

Soviet Union

However, the biggest single arms supplier to Iraq is the Soviet Union, which since 1981 has provided more than \$8 billion worth of weapons. In its annual study *Soviet Military Power*, the Pentagon said early this year that while maintaining official neutrality in the Gulf War, the Soviet Union provides extensive military assistance to Iraq, and at the same time, continues efforts to gain

leverage in Iran.

In early 1987, the Soviets delivered a squadron of 24 MiG-29 Fulcrums to the Iraqis. Considered the most advanced fighter in the Soviet arsenal, the MiG-29 has been provided to only two other non-Warsaw Pact nations, namely Syria and India.

Following an estimated \$2.5 billion arms deal with the Soviets in 1984, the Iraqis have taken delivery of unspecified quantities of the sophisticated Su-25 Frogfoot ground-attack aircraft. Iraq reportedly is the first country to acquire this aircraft outside the Warsaw Pact.

As a long-time Soviet ally in the Middle East, Iraq has been the beneficiary of large-scale Soviet military assistance. Since 1972, the two countries have been linked politically and militarily by a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation.

Caught in the throes of a financial crisis, the Iraqis have been increasingly turning to the Soviets for arms because of the easy payment terms and the low interest loans offered by Moscow.

In May, for example, there were reports that Iraq was negotiating an estimated \$3 billion deal with France for the purchase of 60 Mirage 2000 fighters, with an additional \$3 billion worth of helicopters and radars. The Soviets apparently outsmarted the French with better terms and little or no cash payments on a similar arms deal.

Currently, the Iraqis may owe as much as between \$8 billion and \$10 billion in military debts to the Soviets. However, unlike France, the Soviet Union also has a heavy political investment in Iraq. Being a steadfast ally, the Soviets have no intention of losing the Iraqis to the Western world.

Iraq's other sources for arms include Italy, China, West Germany, Brazil, Eastern Europe and Egypt. But with oil production and oil earnings continuing to shrink because of a never-ending war, the Iraqis will be compelled to increase their dependency both on Soviet generosity and Soviet-made weapons.

ARMS NETWORK...CONTINUED

plosives division of Gechem SA, Belgium's largest powder maker, known in the industry as PRB.

"He was introduced to us as wealthy and important," says a PRB executive, Lucien Pary. A year later, Mr. Schmitz came back with firm orders in hand, and PRB says it didn't question the origin of the business. "He came out with contracts for Greece-European countries and clients that we knew," says Mr. Pary.

Mr. Schmitz observes that munitions makers seldom ask questions. "Normally, they are selling to countries they are allowed to sell to. But you never discuss it with them. They want to know who is the direct buyer, and that is all. But in their own mind, they must know where the demand comes from."

PRB pulled out of the deal with Mr. Schmitz only when it noticed telex messages suggesting that Bank Melli Iran was handling the payments. PRB immediately got cold feet, Mr. Pary says. "Before, we didn't have any proof" that the transaction was with Iran, he adds. Consequently, in the summer of 1985, PRB bought its way out of the contract for \$250,000. The Belgian parliament is investigating PRB for a possible breach of arms-trading laws, but the company denies that it did anything wrong.

For Mr. Schmitz, losing suppliers was almost routine, but he developed wide-ranging contacts that kept his supply network running. Order books seized from Scandinavian Commodity by Swedish authorities show that he constantly shuffled his suppliers and their products, partly to expedite the flow of materiel to Iran.

The continual shifting was made easier by the close ties among explosives makers. European dealers have found that the best way to organize the flow of munitions to Iran is through cooperation. The powder makers are a close-knit group that has met regularly since 1977 under the auspices of the Paris-based European Association for the Study of Safety Problems in the Production of Propellant Powder, an organization that is long on name and big on secrecy. Its telephone number is unlisted, and its membership list isn't available.

Munitions salesmen who have attended meetings of the association say that the group's original purpose of discussing mutual safety concerns has long been eclipsed by business cooperation. Over the past five years, the meetings have evolved into dis-

cussions of how to parcel out and price the huge orders flowing into Europe from Iran.

By sharing the business among themselves, the explosives makers have avoided disruptive increases in their production capacity and taken advantage of Western nations' liberal rules about arms trading among themselves. The association's activities prompted Swedish authorities to begin an inquiry in May to determine whether the group is an illegal cartel, and the European Community's antitrust directorate is also looking into the matter.

Munitions makers defend the system. "You get a large order, and you can't fill it—you've got other customers, other obligations," explains PRB's Mr. Pary. "So you send out telexes to ask who else can help you fill it. It happens every day. There's nothing so unusual about it."

Tirrena's president, Vittorio Amadasi, speaking about the portion of his company's contract for artillery powder that it filled before the order was suspended, says, "We imported it legally. We paid customs and we shipped it out along with products from other European suppliers."

In part because of evidence uncovered by the Swedish customs department, investigations of illicit arms or munitions sales to Iran now have been started in at least a dozen countries. Many of those in Europe center on deals that Mr. Schmitz arranged or was involved with. In Sweden, both Mr. Schmitz and Mats Lundberg, a Nobel official, have been formally charged with violating export laws, and each faces up to six years in prison. Both deny that they are guilty of any crimes.

In Belgium, customs and police investigators are looking at a number of PRB transactions, although the company also denies wrongdoing. Dutch prosecutors are considering a case against Muiden Chemie, on which the company won't comment.

But selling to Iran has become a matter of survival for much of Europe's arms industry. Hit by falling oil revenues and balance-of-payments difficulties, Europe's traditional arms markets in the Mideast, Africa and Latin America are drying up. The giant French arms industry, for example, which employs some 300,000 people and had revenue last year of about \$16.5 billion, is considering layoffs in the face of

lower export orders.

"The golden age of the arms industry is drawing to a close," one French parliamentary report said.

In Belgium, PRB last year registered a loss on continuing operations of about three billion Belgian francs (\$79.7 million). And arms dealers in other countries say jobs and other economic factors have become important considerations when they decide which contracts they will sign.

"We are business people," says PRB's Mr. Pary. "The governments are going to have to decide whether or not they want an arms industry. We can't continue to work like this."

But for government officials in countries where the arms industry is about as popular as the gulf war, the arms trade is presenting an overwhelming management problem. Andre Bourgeois, a member of the Belgian House of Representatives who is the president of a special investigation into the Belgian role in shipments, says he has little idea where it all will lead. "All we have discovered so far is that we've got plenty of bureaucrats," he says, "but not much coordination among the various administrations that are trying to regulate the arms trade."

But it is clear that this is an industry with close connections to national sovereignty and foreign policy, jobs and national defense. And for the people who work in the industry every day, the ever-changing restrictions against them are too much to deal with.

Belgium's Zeebrugge port, which is used for transport of much of Europe's legitimate arms trade, is also the focus of some of the illegitimate trade. There, whether the boats are loaded with arms for U.S. barracks in West Germany or on their way from France to Iran, it is all in a day's work.

"It's got to come from somewhere," says Andre Braet, the president of Transammo NV, a company that specializes in loading explosive cargos in Zeebrugge. "The rest is hypocrisy."

ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO THIS STORY WERE
E.S. BROWNING IN PARIS,
JOHN CARR IN ATHENS,
LAURA COLBY IN ROME,
MICHAEL T. KINNICUTT IN MILAN
AND MAGARET STUDER IN ZURICH

TODAY IN CONGRESS

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SENATE

Meets at 10 a.m.

Committees:

Commerce, Science and

Transportation—9:30 a.m. Open.

Business meeting to consider pending

business. 253 Russell Office Building.

Environment and Public Works—9 a.m.

Open. Environmental protection subc. On

legislation to amend the Clean Air Act. 406

Dirksen Office Building.

Foreign Relations—10 a.m. Open.

Legislation relating to U.S. involvement in

the Persian Gulf. 419 DOB.

Foreign Relations—3 p.m. Closed.

Western Hemisphere and Peace Corps

subc. On Costa Rican peace initiative.

S-116 Capitol.

Governmental Affairs—9:30 a.m. Open.

Nucl. Prot. and Safety Act. 342 DOB.

Indian Affairs—2 p.m. Open. Mark up

pending legislation. 485 ROB.

Judiciary—10 a.m. Open. Constitution

subc. Handgun legislation. 226 DOB.

Democratic Policy—Noon. Closed.

Luncheon meeting. S-211 Cap.

Republican Policy—12:30 p.m. Closed.

Luncheon meeting. President Reagan will

attend. S-207 Cap.

HOUSE

Meets at noon.

Committees:

Agriculture—10 a.m. Open. Dept. oper.,

res. and foreign agri. subc. Hearing to

review the role of local govts. in the

regulation of pesticides. 1300 Longworth

House Office Building.

Education and Labor—9 a.m. Open.

Health and safety subc. Oversight hrng. on

the Mine Safety and Health Act. 2257

Rayburn House Office Building.

Energy and Commerce—9:30 a.m. Open.

Transport., tourism and hazard mat'ls.

subc. Hrng. to investigate the falsification

of drug testing results at DOT and to review

DOT's drug and alcohol testing program for

railroad employees. 2322 RHOB.

Energy and Commerce—10 a.m. Open.

Full comte. Mark up Medicare Catastrophic

Protection Act 87 and NPR Elk Hills

propane/butane sales. 2123 RHOB.

Foreign Affairs—10 a.m. Closed. Full

comte. Hrng. on the military situation in the

Persian Gulf. Defense Secretary Caspar

Weinberger. 2172 RHOB.

Foreign Affairs—1 p.m. Open. Intl. econ.

pol. and trade subc. Joint meeting with

Africa subc. Oversight hrng. on the

implementation of the comprehensive

anti-apartheid law of 1986 and an

assessment of recent South Africa political

and economic develop. 2172 RHOB.

Government Operations—9:30 a.m.

Open. Intergov'l. rel. and human res. subc.

Business meeting to consider draft report.

Conference room adjacent to 2154 RHOB.

Government Operations—10 a.m. Open.

Full comte. Business meeting to consider

draft investigative reports. 2154 RHOB.

House Administration—10 a.m. Open.

Elections subc. Hrng. on campaign finance

reform. 1302 LHOB.

Interior and Insular Affairs—10 a.m.

Open. Natl. parks and pub. land subc.

Mark-up to amend boundaries of Stones

River Nat. Battlefield, Tenn. 2359B RHOB.

Judiciary—9 a.m. Open. Immig., refugees

and Intl. law subc. Mark-up to provide GAO

invest. and report on conditions of

displaced Salvadorans and Nicaraguans and

naturalization amends. of 1987. B-352

RHOB.

Judiciary—2:30 p.m. Open. Criminal

justice subc. Oversight hrng. on sentencing

guidelines. 2237 RHOB.

Rules—10:30 a.m. Open. Full comte.

Hrng. on Dept. of Justice auth. act for

FY88, Coast Guard auth. 87 and building

and construction industry labor law

amends. 87. H-313 Capitol.

Small Business—9:30 a.m. Open. Full

comte. Hrng. on health insurance coverage

for small business. 2359A RHOB.

Ways and Means—1 p.m. Open. Health

subc. Mark up legis. providing for coverage

of outpatient prescription drugs under

Medicare. 1129 LHOB.

SUPERPOWER...CONTINUED

U.N. as a panacea for world problems, of bringing an end to the era of power politics, he could be forgiven because the U.N. did not yet exist.

Forty years later, one cannot be forgiven. What exactly do Pell, Dukakis and the Democrats have in mind? Perhaps they think of the U.N. as some independent world actor. Jeane Kirkpatrick, who spent some time there, had a crisper view. She called it a "Turkish bath" where the Third World can let off steam, denounce the West, air resentments and demand transfers of wealth. Its principal achievement is to generate a billion pages of paper every year. This U.N. is not even able to field peace-keeping forces in precisely the areas, like the Sinai, where they are most needed. When Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty that effectively ended the possibility of a major war in the Middle East, the U.N. called its peace-keepers home, since this was not a peace that it approved. The U.S. had to field a makeshift substitute force. This U.N. is hardly capable of any action. It is certainly not going to do the West's dirty work in the Persian Gulf.

What about the Security Council? If Pell really wants the Security Council to protect the gulf, what he means is for the U.S., Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union to act together. But this is absurd. China, for example, is supplying Iran with the very missiles it would use to target any peacekeeping flotilla. And even if united action were possible, it would not be desirable. What the "U.N. route" really means, after all the disguises are removed, is that the U.S. should act in the gulf only with the permission not just of allies but also of the Soviet Union. This amounts to ending Western control of the gulf, which the British maintained for a century and which the United States has been keeping for the past 15 years, and turning it over to a joint partnership with the Soviet Union. Because of what? Because in an accidental attack one Iraqi plane hit one American ship that was asleep in a war zone.

To invite the Soviets to share the responsibility, and thus the



rewards, of controlling the Persian Gulf would amount to the most astonishing voluntary abdication of a Western position in the postwar world. At least when the British ran out on their responsibilities in the gulf in 1971, they turned it over to an ally. But now Pell and others would like to offer the Soviets, who have been lusting for the gulf since Romanov days, a share of it. Gratis.

But the Democrats are not alone. Among the others warming to this idea is Howard Baker. "It's a unique arrangement that the Kuwaitis chose to invite both the United States and the Soviet Union to share the responsibility for assuring the passage of oil tankers to the Persian Gulf," he offered. "That's a real first... I think it is clearly not a bad thing." If this was an off-the-cuff remark, it shows an amazing lack of seriousness by the vaunted new Administration team. And if

what Baker enunciated was a decided change in American policy, it constitutes a far-reaching and gratuitous American capitulation.

Have the Democrats or the Administration thought through the implications of a "U.N. action" or of cooperation with the Soviets? One suspects they have. Congress is obsessed that the Persian Gulf may be a new Gulf of Tonkin. The Administration is obsessed that it may be a new Lebanon. Everybody is looking for a way out.

But if the United States is not going to defend its allies and interests in the Persian Gulf, then where? The gulf is the one area declared by the last Democratic President to be such a vital American interest that he pledged—this is the Carter Doctrine—American military action, if necessary, to secure the gulf.

Those advocating retreat, in its various camouflages, ought not to be debating whether our defense budget should be \$303 billion or \$289 billion. Thirty billion ought to be quite enough to maintain all that their foreign policy would require: a few nuclear missiles and a Coast Guard to patrol the Florida Keys.

—By Charles Krauthammer

One way to arms-control unity: Twist allied arms

PIERRE HASSNER on why U.S. shouldn't shrug off criticisms

■ "When two elephants fight, the grass gets trampled," an Asian proverb says. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, has added: "When two elephants make love, the grass gets trampled, too." The Third World aphorisms apply sharply today to the love-hate relationship of the superpowers and their approach to Europe.

They apply most sharply to the debate over arms control. Americans are puzzled and irritated by the Europeans, accusing them of never being satisfied and of not knowing what they want.

Europeans fear either collision or collusion between Washington and Moscow and worry about American recklessness in pursuit of either the cold war or détente. Both sides may have a point.

If not schizophrenic, Europeans are at least ambivalent on three basic issues: The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil, relations with the Soviet Union and the firmness of American leadership. On all three, Americans would do better to seek the cause of Europe's anxieties than to shrug them off as evidence of Euro-neutralism. Americans now say, for example, that Western Europe first resisted the deployment of U.S. missiles and now resists their removal. The Americans overlook a simple but essential fact: It is not the Europeans who have changed their minds; it is the Americans who have changed sides between two opposing European camps. From 1981 to 1983, it was the peace movement—the German Greens Party, German and British Socialist parties and a large body of public opinion—that opposed deployment of U.S. Pershing 2 and cruise missiles. These groups now support withdrawal of the missiles, which the U.S. and Soviet Union are moving toward, as well as a denuclearized zone in Central Europe. It was the governments of Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand that, at political risk, supported missile deployment. Rightly or wrongly, these leaders believed—and still believe—that European security requires the presence of American missiles, preferably those that can reach Soviet territory.

Today, with the shifting American position, the Reagan administration's allies on arms control thus are those who have opposed the American presence in Europe and attacked all American administrations, particularly the present one. America's traditional allies are now the most worried, critical or reluctant. The change of alignments should be of special concern to Americans because it is in great part a product of U.S.

vacillations—sometimes within the same administration—that are wider than those of the Europeans.

Reversing the argument

The Reagan administration rejected the Geneva "walk in the woods" formula for arms control, developed by its own negotiator in 1982, because it insisted that Pershing 2s were indispensable. It was deeply suspicious of European proposals for compromise. Now it has turned, claiming that Europe's special security needs can be met by F-111 fighter planes, which it once said could not penetrate Soviet defenses, and battlefield nuclear weapons, which it once deemed destabilizing.

President Reagan administered a deeper shock with his Star Wars speech in March, 1983, and its condemnation of nuclear deterrence. It came just as West European governments were enjoying their hard-won victory in favor of nuclear deployments. The last straw and the ultimate shock came from the Reykjavik summit last October, which raised the prospect of abolishing all nuclear missiles within 10 years and was accompanied by Secretary of State George Shultz's paean to the superiority of conventional deterrence. Europeans could not have been more shocked if the Pope had appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's to proclaim that he did not believe in God, then corrected himself the next day to say that he was only converting to Islam.

Not many Europeans share President Reagan's belief in the possibility of making nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," let alone abolishing them altogether. But the prospect of removing nuclear weapons from Europe—the objective of the Soviet Union and the

peace movement—is less unrealistic. American enthusiasm for non-nuclear response to Soviet attack, and for making Europe the first showplace of arms control, seems to indicate that stripping Central Europe of nuclear arms is not anathema to the United States. The question is whether the approach is compatible with NATO's strategy of flexible response—that is, the ability to go nuclear to prevent defeat—and, in the long run, with the presence of American troops in Europe. It clearly is not compatible with present doctrine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as official American warnings against the arguments of the European left paradoxically continue to point out. **Who keeps the peace?**

Europeans have their own differences and ambivalence about arms control. Their internal contradictions limit their coherence in the debate. But many share the sense that the presence of the superpowers and their nuclear weapons must have something to do with the current unprecedented period of European peace and prosperity. There is also a widespread feeling that balances of conventional power, even if technically attainable, are no more capable of keeping the peace now than they were in 1914 or 1939. Hence the conviction that the greatest danger of nuclear war could come precisely when the Continent seemed safe for a conventional war. Hence the gamble on nuclear deterrence.

The Europeans want to be protected militarily by the United States, but at the same time they want to be politically independent from it. Europeans do not doubt the basic American commitment to the Continent. But they feel that Washington's increasing emphasis on conventional weapons means that European nations and their territories are less and less equated with the U.S. itself—to be protected by nuclear deterrence—and more and more regarded like distant allies such as South Korea.

Gorbachev's domino proposals

Both West German and French understanding of European security interests in arms control appears superior to current American arguments. Impatient Americans claim simultaneously that the "double-zero option" on intermediate-range weapons is important as a first step in verifiable arms reduction and that it does not change the European situation, since many U.S. weapons would remain to protect the Continent. Both arguments may be true in the short run. They are incompatible in the long run.

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