BAGHDAD'S QUEST FOR STRATEGIC SURPRISE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IRAQ-IRAN WAR

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ABSTRACT

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by Michael John Muir

The Iranian Revolution, along with the regional designs pursued by the Iraqi governing elite, combined to determine the course of Iraqi-Iranian relations in the period from January of 1979 to September of 1980 which, although at the outset was marked by reciprocal pronouncements of cordiality and benevolent intentions, gradually deteriorated into a mutually acrimonious path that gave rise to what has become the bloodiest and longest-running war between two Third World states. The dual, interconnected aims of this thesis are to account for the decision of the Baath regime of Iraq to attempt to strategically surprise Iran--thereby realizing its war goals in a brief and decisive campaign--and, additionally, to outline the factors and conditions that contributed to Iran's vulnerability to a sudden invasion.

As a systemic theory, the theory dealing with the factors that can engender a ruling elite's impetus for

seeking strategic surprise, as well as the conditions that contribute to the established target nation's exposure to such an action, belongs to the grouping of macro-theories that address the forces which influence international relations. Common to all systemic international relations theories is the assumption that the conduct of one nation toward another is, more often than not, shaped by assorted, diverse variables. And, since the course of interstate relations varies on the basis of a nearly innumerable list of determinants, it follows that decisions for war--the least pleasant, albeit far from uncommon, mode of interaction among nations--also emanate from numerous causal factors. Proceeding from such reasoning, it is not empirically or methodologically unsound to posit that typically no single, overriding determinant actuates a decision to wage an effort to attain strategic surprise. The testing of this hypothesis is a major objective of this present study.

It is maintained that the Iraqi decision-maker's conclusion that war with Iran was necessary was shaped by a complex of factors. Chief among these, and one which is therefore given a central position in the thesis, is that which emphasizes the destabilizing effects of the Islamic revolutionary upheaval in Iran. More precisely, it is argued that a defensive desire to maintain the political status quo in Iraq, which was grounded on a rigid

secularism, played a significant role in fostering pressure for Baghdad to resort to the use of an overt military confrontation. In line with this argument, two major beliefs espoused by the Iraqi Baathists which, by and large, are attributes of the nature of the Iraqi polity, are cited: First, that the political dominance of Sunni Muslims, who constitute a minority of the Iraqi populace--the majority of which consists of Shia Muslims--must be preserved at all costs; second, that a reinvigoration of ethnic Kurdish aspirations for increased regional autonomy, due to the extreme economic importance of the region of Iraq they inhabit (the oil-rich north), must be forestalled. It is demonstrated that the Iranian Revolution portended a heightening of Shi'ite activism and Kurdish nationalism within Iraq.

Beyond strictly defensive inducements, it is maintained that Baghdad was also motivated by several enterprising goals. By and large, these ambitions were predicated upon the desire to gain control of long-coveted, economically important portions of Iranian territory, and, overall, were in consonance with the grand strategical imperative of establishing Iraqi hegemony over the Gulf region.

An analysis of the perceptions of opportunity underpinning the Baathists' search for strategic surprise constitutes another major aspect of this undertaking. In

short, it is herein argued that Baghdad was moved by perceived economic and military weakness hampering the Islamic Republic, as well as by the high degree of political friction that was spawned by the revolution. The overall accuracy of these perceptions is gauged.

An in-depth examination of the economic posture of revolutionary Iran, as well as the state of its defense forces and the nature of the political ambient holding sway there, constitutes another key topic. This discussion is conducted in the context of explaining Iran's inability to obtain strategic warning of Iraq's aggressive plans, and, to immediately blunt the inroad once it had been initiated.

Efforts are also made to present an overview of the international relations of Iraq and Iran, how this factor influenced Baghdad's motivations and opportunities and, equally importantly, Teheran's vulnerability to aggression from the west.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Definition and Purpose	1
Survey of Pertinent Literature	3
Methodology, Sources, and Organization	6
An Explanatory Overview: The Substance and Dynamics of Strategic Surprise	9
The Importance of Studying Strategic Surprise	31
CHAPTER II. IRAQ'S INCENTIVES: DEFENSIVE, OFFENSIVE, AND IDEOLOGICAL-CULTURAL	37
Defensive Inducements	37
Aggressive Motivations	48
Iraq's Propensity to Resort to Force Against Iran Due to Ideological and Ethnic-Cultural Disparity	57
Conclusion	65
CHAPTER III. IRAQ'S INCENTIVES: HISTORICAL, ELITE CONSENSUS AND THE LEVEL OF ACCURACY OF MOTIVATIONAL PERCEPTIONS	72
Predilection Arising from Historical Antagonism	73
Degree of Iraqi Elite Unity Regarding the Efficacy of Attempting a Strategic Surprise	87
Degree of Misperception in the Valuations Comprising the Iraqi Regime's Incentive Structure	92
Conclusion	95
CHAPTER IV. IRAQ'S PERCEPTIONS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR STRATEGICALLY SURPRISING REVOLUTIONARY IRAN	100
Perceptions of Opportunity Engendered by Quantitative and Qualitative Indices of Military Power	101

Opportunity Predicated upon Observations of Iranian Vulnerability Engendered by a Reduction of the Size of the Nation's Armed Forces, Economic Dislocation, and Internal Political Fragmentation 105
Opportunity Fostered by the Monocratic Nature of the Iraqi Political System 118
The Level of Inaccuracy Underlying the Baathists' Estimations of Opportunity: Failure to Discern Potential, Adverse Consequences Inherent in Seeking to Strategically Surprise Revolutionary Iran 121
Determinants Influencing the Timing of the Undertaking of the Surprise Onslaught 132
Conclusion 134

CHAPTER V. REVOLUTIONARY IRAN'S EXPOSURE TO STRATEGIC SURPRISE: MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL CAUSAL FACTORS 140

Vulnerability Arising from Transition in the Composition of the Military, Disadvantageous Positioning of Forces, and a Breakdown of Strategy and Defensive Planning 141
Exposure to Aggression Due to an Impaired Intelligence Capability and Iraqi Stratagem 149
Vulnerability Evoked by Domestic Political Disagreement 153
Conclusion 169

CHAPTER VI. REORIENTATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF IRAN AND IRAQ: BREAKDOWN OF THE INTERSTATE STATUS QUO IN THE GULF REGION AND THE EFFECTS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT UPON IRAN'S VULNERABILITY TO AN IRAQI STRIKE 175

The Conceptual Designs Undergirding the Iranian Islamicists' Foreign Policy: The Propagation of Traditionalist Shi'ism and the Rolling Back of Imperial Influence within the Muslim World 176
Change in Iraqi Foreign Policy: From Radicalism to Moderation 189
Conclusion 204

CHAPTER VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 209

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 219

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This thesis reflects the experience and knowledge of various people, for no one can realistically aspire to write a work of this nature unassisted by others. Accordingly, I would like to acknowledge the person who is in many respects responsible for this volume: Michael Wallace. Without the critical evaluation and advice, especially with regard to a proper framework of analysis for this topic, put forth by this academic, this work would be less organized and less extensive. Donald Munton also contributed to the completion of this project by devoting some of his valuable time to participate on the examining committee. I would also like to thank Paul Tennant for his assistance in surmounting a number of bureaucratic obstacles.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Definition and Purpose

In the early morning hours of 22 September 1980, six Iraqi army divisions launched a sudden, coordinated incursion into Iran; coinciding with the ground investment were numerous sorties by Iraqi combat aircraft. The outbreak of open warfare marked the culmination of a nineteen-month period of spiraling tension between Baghdad and Teheran, which had commenced in February of 1979 with the onset of the fundamentalist, Islamic-oriented revolution in Iran that toppled the monarchial regime of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. The Iraqi irruption, the thrust of which was directed at Iran's petroleum-rich, southwestern province of Khuzestan--the foundation of the Iranian economy--constitutes a recent example of an attempt by a state to realize a swift and decisive military victory over an adversary vis-à-vis strategic surprise.

The study of the phenomenon of strategic surprise, which General Carl Von Clausewitz once alluded to as a "peculiar and important chapter in the Art of War,"[1] has increased in recent years. Generally defined, strategic surprise entails an abrupt and forceful inroad that is

conducted with the paramount design of greatly diminishing the capability of the besieged state to muster a serious counterattack.[2] It is important to note that strategic surprise differs considerably from common tactical surprise; the former exceeds the latter, which occurs regularly during war, in terms of magnitude and the potential for destroying the warfighting capacity of the enemy. In addition, the ultimate ends inherent in seeking a strategic surprise are of a political, rather than a purely military, nature. Notable instances of strategic surprise in the past include the Japanese attack on Russian warships at Port Arthur, Manchuria in 1905; the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, which was codenamed Operation Barbarossa; the Japanese air attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941; the massive Chinese attack against the United Nation's expeditionary force during the Korean conflict; and more recently, the joint Egyptian-Syrian onslaught against Israel in 1973.

No methodical analysis of the Iraqi bid for strategic surprise has yet been undertaken by political scientists. This thesis endeavors to partially fill this void by examining Baghdad's decision-making for aggression and, more precisely, the nexus between the Iranian Revolution and Iraqi foreign policy. This chapter will cite the works within the bodies of literature on strategic surprise and strategic deception, the Iraq-Iran War, the

Iranian Revolution, and Iraq's political system, which are pertinent here. A review of the methodology used in this treatise, including the conceptual framework through which the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran War is to be analyzed, will also be undertaken. In addition, the nature of strategic surprise will be placed into a clearer perspective by a citing of the main causal factors which influence its occurrence. Finally, a brief discussion of the overall importance of strategic surprise for bilateral relations among nations and, more importantly, global security, will be put forth.

Survey of Pertinent Literature

Regarding works on strategic surprise, of foremost importance is Klauss Knorr and Patrick Morgan's Strategic Military Surprise: Incentives and Opportunities,[3] which contains an excellent, full accounting of the factors and pathologies that converge to effect strategic surprise. This treatise was of utmost utility for the present study in terms of affording a structural and theoretical avenue to follow in analyzing the Iraqi invasion of Iran. A tract of comparable worth for grasping the fundamental nature of strategic shock is Richard K. Betts' Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defence Planning.[4] A number of analyses focusing primarily on strategic deception, a basic root cause of strategic surprise, were also used for this thesis. Chief among these are the following: Donald C.

Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig's Strategic Military Deception,[5] which contains several essays that establish various analytical orientations for the study of the conditions, mainly on the part of the victim, which engender a failure to obtain strategic warning; Barton Whaley's Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War,[6] which entails a voluminous examination of the processes and exigencies associated with deception; and John Gooch and Amos Perlmutter's Military Deception and Strategic Surprise,[7] which is of use largely due to the brief treatments of past examples of deception.

To date, the amount of in-depth analytical treatment of the Iraq-Iran War that has been put forth, especially on the factors that influenced its onset, has been quite limited. A significant percentage of the scholarly undertakings on the origins of the war have come from a small number of analysts, with most of the work carried in various journals as brief articles. However, a number of excellent book-length examinations have been published. Included among these are Ali Hillal Dessouki's The Iran-Iraq War: Issues of Conflict and Prospects for Settlement,[8] which encompasses a number of analyses based on differing orientations; Nicola Firzli's The Iran-Iraq Conflict,[9] which examines the war from a European perspective; and, finally, Stephen R. Grummon's The Iran-Iraq War: Islam Embattled,[10] which focuses on the war from an Islamic standpoint.

Having cited the works on war causation in general, on strategic surprise and deception specifically, and on the war between Iraq and Iran, the discussion will now turn to the major analyses on the Iranian Revolution and the nature of the Iraqi body politic. A number of tracts on the Islamic revolution were of considerable utility in providing an insight into the political and societal upheaval that constituted the main catalyst to the mounting dissension between Iran and Iraq. Shaul Bakhash's The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution,[11] deals with the first four years of the revolution, and is useful as an in-depth source of background information on the clerical elite and the various opposition groups that vied with the Khomeinists for power in postrevolutionary Iran. A work of wider scope and an excellent overview of the ramifications of the Iranian Revolution upon the Persian Gulf region is Rouhollah K. Ramazani's Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East.[12]

Several works regarding the political atmosphere in contemporary Iraq have been written recently. As far as this thesis is concerned, one treatise of this description has been particularly beneficial: Timothy Niblock's In Iraq: The Contemporary State,[13] which comprises several essays on various aspects of Iraqi political affairs. Of further utility is Phebe Marr's The Modern History of Iraq,[14] and Faud Matar's Saddam Hussein: The Man, the Cause,

and the Future.[15] The former conveys a cognizance of the key influences shaping modern Iraqi society, while the latter illuminates the personal governance of Iraq's political strongman.

Methodology, Sources, and Organization

Contained within the vast body of literature on the causation of war are a plethora of theories which encompass a wide array of variant orientations. Joel Singer has established a number of standards which, in his opinion, should be adhered to in formulating a sound, conceptual framework for analyzing the outbreak of war. To Singer, due to the uncertain and sporadic nature of war as it transpires in different periods of time and in disparate geographical regions, theories that rest on a single or even a few overriding causal factors cannot provide a thorough explanation of its occurrence in general.[16] Overall, Singer champions the utilization of a comprehensive, multi-theoretical approach to conflict analysis, rather than a narrowly focused, monistic, or dyadic analytical bearing.

In light of the complexity of strategic surprise, which will be established further on in this chapter, an adherence to the guidelines put forth by Singer would seem mandatory for analyzing a particular instance of this phenomenon. Klauss Knorr and Patrick Morgan, two leading authorities on strategic surprise, share Singer's sentiment regarding the utility of multi-causal explanations for the

occurrence of war, and have demonstrated this concurrence by devising a viable framework for conducting case analyses of strategic shocks. Overall, by employing Knorr and Morgan's paradigm, a macroscopic and clear examination of the multitude of factors underpinning the Iraqi elite's decision to mount a strategic surprise, as well as the Iranian elite's failure to discern strategic warning, can be presented.

In terms of research data, I have utilized both primary and secondary sources. The primary assets for this thesis have been newspapers and a limited amount of government publications, including Iranian, Iraqi, Indian, and American. This scholar has made extensive use of The Iran Times, the Institute for Defense Analysis' News Review on West Asia (India), The New York Times, and The Christian Science Monitor. And, regarding government papers, the Middle East Asia Report of the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service has proven quite helpful. Due to the fact that the Iraq-Iran War has not yet formally come to a close, and because the envisioned international tribunal to investigate the origins of the conflict is yet to convene, access to official government documents of either belligerent is nonexistent, and it is quite likely that many years will pass before researchers are granted access to these valuable sources. Attempts to establish contacts with key Iraqi and Iranian officials have so far proven

unfruitful. An interview with Albolhasan Bani-Sadr, the former Iranian head of government, would have been especially helpful but, due to time and financial constraints, such an undertaking is not feasible for this study. By and large, the amount of primary information that I have been able to obtain has been somewhat limited. And, consequently, I have been relegated to rely more heavily on secondary resources. However, I believe that I have imbued the treatise with a copious level of facts gleaned from the original sources I have obtained, thus diminishing the level of indetermination engendered by an overreliance on secondary sources, and, by doing so, I have bolstered the accuracy of my findings.

The organization of the chapters that ensue reflects the structure of Knorr and Morgan's conceptual framework. The thesis is divided into four main sections. Chapters Two and Three describe Iraq's incentives for attacking Iran. Chapter Four entails an examination of the perceptions of opportunity for realizing strategic surprise that were entertained by the Iraqi elite. Chapter Five concentrates on the various factors which rendered Iran vulnerable to surprise attack. Chapter Six deals with the international relations--mainly the number and strength of allies--of Iran and Iraq, respectively. The final chapter then puts forth an overall summation of the thesis.

An Explanatory Overview: The Substance and Dynamics of Strategic Surprise

Having put forth a cursory definition of the phenomenon of strategic surprise, established the overall purpose of this thesis, briefly discussed the main literary works consulted, and outlined the methodology, types of sources employed, and organization of the essay, I believe that, for purposes of clarity and establishing a justification for designating the Iraqi attack as a bid for strategic surprise, a more broad and thorough explicatory treatment of the nature of strategic surprise, and those factors that influence its incidence, is in order. For organizational purposes, this narrative will proceed in accordance with the framework established by Knorr and Morgan.

An understanding of the principal motivations, whether they are of a defensive or aggressive nature, or a combination of the two, which comprise the impetus for a state's elite to undertake an effort to attain a strategic surprise, is of foremost importance.[17] In terms of the former, it is not uncommon for a nation's rulers to be actuated by a conclusion that the existing state of relations with the opposing nation constitutes a detriment to national security, and, accordingly, is simply unacceptable.[18] In such cases, the incentive for engaging in armed conflict stems largely from the bellicose demeanor of the adversary, and from a resultant belief that the cost

of refraining from undertaking direct action will greatly exceed the potential cost of initiating hostilities. Distinct from defensive inducements are aggressive actuations for surprise attack. The latter can arise from a number of elite aspirations and goals: territorial aggrandizement; the securing of valuable natural resources; and attaining a position of hegemony. It will be demonstrated that the Iraqi regime was animated by a strong combination of defensive and aggressive motivations.

The level of elite consensus regarding the necessity of resorting to force constitutes another major factor that must be examined in arriving at a sweeping grasp of the depth of the aggressor's inducements.[19] The crucial process of making decisions pertaining to the planned aggression is rendered less arduous by a high degree of unity among ranking governmental actors, and a shared conclusion that such drastic action is requisite. Insofar as this study is concerned, it will be argued that Baghdad's arrival at a decision to confront revolutionary Iran was facilitated by a high degree of coherence among the Baath elite.

Existing elite inclinations can serve to reinforce protective and venturesome inspirations. Such a propensity can stem from what Joel Singer has termed "historical memory."[20] In short, long-standing interstate rivalry can foment strong feelings of animosity within governing circles which, in turn, can increase predilection for aggression.

Of greater import, in terms of explaining a willingness to resort to force, is the extent of dissimilarity in the political, ethnic, and cultural values espoused by the government of the aggressor and those championed by the target state.

Proponents of the structural-functional school of thought posit that political decision-makers' paramount objective is the preservation of concurrence and relative tranquility within their respective polities,[21] and, accordingly, designate any disruption of these preferred conditions as constituting a casus belli. More precisely, when an elite perceives an internal threat to its governance, especially those engendered from abroad, a not atypical response is to direct the attention of the populace-at-large outward by vilifying the external source of unrest as a menace, and to engage the industry of the nation in a military conflict.[22] And, it should be noted that among the various causal factors that can give rise to such developments, revolutions stand supreme. Overall, it will be argued that the Iraqi inroad was, in partial terms, a reaction to overt Iranian disparaging of values held dear by the Baathists; the hostile position toward Baghdad adhered to by the fundamentalist clerical regime served to exacerbate the standing level of Iraqi-Iranian tension that had been fostered by the lengthy history of interstate strife.

An additional consideration, germane to an analysis of an attacking state's motivations, is the degree of precision inherent in its valuations regarding the necessity of attempting a strategic surprise. In other words, it is important to determine whether the aggressor was acting on the basis of carefully weighed appraisals, or alternatively, misestimations. By and large, it will be postulated that Baghdad overestimated the potential for the Iranian clerics to foment dissidence within Iraq.

In further attributing causality, beyond motivational factors, it is necessary to examine the depth of the perceptions of opportunity held by the leadership of the attacking state. It is important to note that an attempt by a nation to realize strategic surprise is rarely conducted in a capricious or spontaneous manner. Typically, a considerable amount of thought is given to the overall worth of utilizing a surprise attack as a means of attaining political and economic designs. An opportunity structure is generally predicated upon two main, related considerations: estimations by the inciting state's elite of the military capability at its disposal and the capacity to plan the attack in a highly secretive manner, thereby keeping the adversary unaware of aggressive intentions; and, an observance of the salient deficiencies that render the target vulnerable to attack.[23]

It is imperative that a state envisioning the mounting of a surprise attack possess an advanced capability in various military attributes, including communications and transportation, as well as leadership and tactics, which have been alternatively dubbed as "resources of surprise"[24] by Robert Axelrod, another leading analyst of strategic shock. Quite often, a nation's estimate of the degree of existing opportunity for attaining strategic surprise is grounded on a belief that its military forces, in many respects, are superior to those of the adversary. Qualitative and quantitative indices are of approximate relevance in arriving at an appraisal of the likelihood of executing a fruitful inroad. Of the former, combat experience, mobility, and military leadership are crucial. With respect to the latter, most notable are the number of army divisions, along with the extent of artillery and tank support. The adroitness of command has been singled out as a particularly important property. In his renowned treatise "On War," Clausewitz asserted that politic and decisive command of military forces, which Frederick the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte epitomized, constituted a paramount prerequisite for the achievement of surprise. More recently, inherent in General Nguyen Giap's successful investment of the French garrison at Dienbienphu was a demonstrable connection between the direction of the supreme commander over planning and execution and the outcome of the

effort.[25] It will be posited that the Iraqi regime was confident that the strength of the Iraqi military forces was sufficient to overrun Iran's defenses.

Of comparable importance to having an adequate military capability is the ability to conduct planning for the strike in a highly secretive manner, which necessitates restricting prior knowledge of aggressive ends to a small and cohesive unit of decision-makers. Equally important is a careful employment of deception, a practice referred to as "stratagem" by Clausewitz, which, basically, aims at preventing the leadership of the opposing state from discerning actual objectives.[26] The degree to which planning for a surprise attack can be conducted in secrecy is contingent upon the manner of governance that a particular state is under the sway of. The preservation of secrecy is less arduous within nations ruled by an authoritarian regime, and this can be largely attributed to the general absence of political participation by the populace-at-large and a resulting lack of public cognizance of the goals and actions of the elite.[27] Although secrecy and deception are both important for the realization of surprise, it is the latter that is most crucial. It will be argued that the cabalistic Baath elite's rigid control over Iraq's military forces enabled planning and preparation for the inroad to be conducted in a clandestine manner.

Deception has not always been ascribed the importance that it presently connotes. To Clausewitz, while the use of deception, which included such "tricks of agility"[28] as the positioning of forces in areas away from the intended avenue of onslaught, presented the potential for deluding the enemy, the practice concomitantly diminished the level of force available for the actual offensive, thereby raising the possibility of a failure to overwhelm the target's defenses. In addition, Clausewitz equated stratagem with gambling, a strategical ploy to be put to use mainly by one in command of forces demonstrably inferior to those of the opponent.[29] Moreover, because of the unacceptably high risk of debacle, Clausewitz advocated that such a subterfuge be resorted to only when other less hazardous courses of action were unavailing. Overall, due to a cognizance of the potential pitfalls inherent in relying on deception, Clausewitz was not a strong proponent of this ruse.

The limited utility of stratagem during eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe (the epoch that Clausewitz's writings focused upon), which was largely an inescapable result of the difficulty of concealing the movements of large contingents of infantry and cavalry, ended with the advent of the Second World War, which effected a rapid heightening of the function, as well as the frequency of use, of this pretext of warfare.[30] This rather sudden

development can be largely attributed to technological innovations in the engines of destruction so vital for the rapidity of onslaught needed to achieve surprise: the warplane and the tank. The numerous blitzkriegs orchestrated by Hitler, which entailed a devastatingly effective coordination of German ground and air forces, painfully stirred awareness of this actuality within various European capitals.

Coinciding with an increase in the usefulness of deception has been the contrivance of novel and increasingly complex methods of deceiving adversaries. In terms of the actual methods of deception, Barton Whaley, a top scholar of this accessory phenomenon of strategic surprise, has identified two principal options: an intentional augmentation of the level of uncertainty prevailing among the elite of the target state; and, alternatively, a drawing of the attention of the adversary toward a single and overriding, albeit false, threat.[31] These two options have been alternatively dubbed by Donald Daniel and Katherine Herbig, two other leading experts on deception, as "A-type" ("ambiguity"-heightening), and "M-type" ("misleading") deceptions.[32] A key argument of this thesis is that Baghdad made use of both aforementioned variants of deception.

In utilizing the former method, as a means of confusing a nemesis and concealing major objectives, a protagonist's leadership will often establish a wide range

of diverse objectives, a practice referred to by Whaley as the ruse of "alternative goals."[33] A reliance upon this method, when undertaken in a careful and well-planned manner, and in concert with the propagation of "noise" (irrelevant information), can yield significant benefits to the besieger. A notable example of an application of this type of stratagem was "Plan Bodyguard," which was used by the Allied Forces in preparation for the cross-channel investment of northern France, the principal aim of which was to increase the number of possible locations for the assault on the continent, thereby increasing Berlin's uncertainty and serving to maintain the deployment of large contingents of German forces far-afield from the Normandy coast.[34]

Beyond the use of deception to increase equivocation on the part of the victim state, there have been instances in the past where the aggressor has endeavored to diminish the transmission of nebulous information, and, alternatively, to rivet the focus of the government of the opponent upon discernible, although baseless, signals.[35] This track makes heavy use of disinformation. A celebrated example of this artifice was the effort undertaken by Germany's intelligence organizations, prior to the launching of "Operation Barbarossa" (the invasion of the Soviet Union), which succeeded in falsely convincing Josef Stalin that an overt ultimatum would be put forward by Berlin prior

to the actual undertaking of any military actions against the Soviet Union.[36] Overall, through a utilization of either method, or a combination of the two, an attacking state can significantly increase the likelihood of securing strategic shock.

In addition to citing the main forms of deception, it is of equal importance to define the more basic features of this act which, beyond the already mentioned practice of secrecy, include "camouflage," noise, and disinformation. Camouflage is related to secrecy, and the two ruses are referred to within the lexicon of military jargon as "cover."[37] Barton Whaley has identified two principal variations of cover: 1) "negative," which involves the concealment of troops and equipment; and 2) "positive," which consists of establishing concentrations of "dummy" forces and material.[38] An exclusive reliance upon cover would yield only minimal gains toward achieving deception, and, accordingly, must be complemented by other acts of artifice.

Confusion on the part of the enemy can be increased by putting forth a considerable volume of noise which, to reiterate, entails immaterial data, the primary function of which is to place a strain on the adversary's intelligence organizations.[39] Disinformation constitutes an additional means through which to block enemy cognizance of real objectives. Disinformation differs from noise mainly in

terms of pertinence; simply put, the purpose of the former is to put forth discernible intelligence signals, although of a fragmentary and misguiding nature, while the latter consists of wholly inconsequential signals.[40]

Disinformation can be sown vis-à-vis various methods. One means of disinforming an adversary is through diplomacy; by undertaking a renewal of diplomatic efforts, a state envisioning aggression can convince its target that it is bent on reaching a settlement regarding matters of interstate contention exclusively through pacific means.[41] Disinformation can also be spread through media. Quite often, the mainstream press will be used as a medium for transmitting misleading information; this is especially true of authoritarian and totalitarian states,[42] in which the government exerts an overriding control over the press. Finally, disinformation can be propagated by infiltrating an opponent's intelligence services with counterspies who, in turn, skew the adversary's perceptions by putting forward misguiding or mendacious reports.[43] In summing up, secrecy in planning and the ability to adroitly employ the various forms of deception represent crucial prerequisites for a bid at strategic surprise. Any attempt without these attributes stands little chance of success. And, toward establishing a justification of analyzing the Iraqi attack through the context of strategic surprise, it is important to note that Iraq, under the aegis of the dominant Baath party, had come

to epitomize an autocratic society, and, consequently, approximated the above mentioned attributes conducive to the realization of surprise.

In addition to estimations regarding its military capability, as well as its ability to plan the inroad in a furtive manner and to conduct a strong campaign of deception, observations of the salient shortcomings, which serve to heighten the target state's exposure to strategic surprise, constitute a further component of the protagonist's structure of opportunity. A widely accepted way of attaining strategic surprise is to attack in a manner that aims at exploiting the discerned "chinks in the armor" of the adversary.[44] Indications of an absence of effective and watchful governance, as well as weak military forces and inadequate defensive planning, can serve to convince the elite of the aggressor of the victim's vulnerability, thereby augmenting perceptions of opportunity. Unusual circumstances within an adversary can often produce an opportunity for strategic surprise.[45] Again, true revolutions, like the one that rocked Iran, can give rise to the above mentioned adverse conditions conducive to surprise attack. This thesis argues that the Baathists' opportunistic outlook regarding the feasibility of strategically surprising Iran was partially grounded on observations of a weakening of its military forces, a development that stemmed from the Islamic revolution.

Following the identification and examination of the perceptions underpinning the attacking state's opportunity structure for surprising the target state, the next sequential step is to determine the degree of accuracy of the former's valuations regarding the ramifications that could stem from the incursion. Central to this task is a determination of whether the evaluations regarding the likely outcome held by the aggressor's leadership were grounded on an in-depth analysis of factually accurate information or on inadequately weighed assumptions. Miscalculations of a strategic nature which, for example, can include an erroneous appraisal of the resolve of the victim to repel the inroad,[46] can give rise to horrific consequences. A principal argument of this thesis will be that Baghdad based several key calculations on shallow evidence and that the wide discrepancy between envisioned results and the actual course that the war has taken can be largely attributed to this strategic shortcoming.

Timing is an additional, important factor that must be considered in gauging the overall opportunity for realizing surprise. Quite often, onslaughts have been executed at a certain hour and on a specific date in order to catch an adversary offguard. In the past, there have been several instances in which the protagonist has chosen to strike when the victim was observing a national holiday or a day of religious worship for a significant percentage

of the populace.[47] The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which was undertaken on a Sunday morning, and the 1973 Egyptian-Syrian inroad into Israeli occupied territory, the launching of which coincided with the onset of the important Yom Kippur religious holiday, stand as stark testaments to the benefits that can accrue to the attacker, as well as the debilitating losses that can be imposed on the target state, by observing this practice. In addition, seasonal shifts in weather conditions, which affect the physical and psychological homeostasis of man, can also be exploited by an aggressor.[48] An example of this strategic tactic would be to strike prior to the onset of winter, when concern regarding the possibility of aggression of the part of the target's elite would likely be minimal. It is here argued that the timing of the Iraqi attack (late September) reflected this assumption.

Beyond taking advantage of the aforementioned temporal and climatic factors, elite decision-making, regarding when to initiate the attack, is further influenced by the various quantitative and qualitative advantages at its disposal which, to reiterate, include state-of-the-art armaments, espionage, and counterespionage agents, as well as a general defensive unpreparedness within the target state. The major dilemma faced by the protagonist's leaders, in this respect, is whether to employ assets of this nature as they obtain them or to delay their

utilization until an optimal level of benefit can be realized.[49] At first glance, choosing from among the two options does not appear problematic. However, in opting for the latter rather than the former which, in most instances stems from the conclusion that the potential for gain is greater, the aggressor jettisons the certainty of immediate gain and must bear the attendant costs for preserving the means.[50]

Noteworthy examples of resolving the above quandary include the decision by Cairo and Damascus to refrain from employing advanced batteries of anti-aircraft missiles secretly obtained from Moscow prior to the launching of the surprise attack upon Israel in 1973, which, although resulting in the loss of a number of warplanes in dogfights with the Israeli air force in the weeks preceding the incursion, enabled Egypt and Syria to inflict considerable shock upon counterattacking Israeli aircraft once the actual inroad had been initiated, thus rendering the cost of preserving this asset wholly worthwhile.[51] With regard to the case study at hand, it will be maintained that Baghdad's decision to attack in late September of 1980 was partially based on the conclusion that the anarchial conditions within postrevolutionary Iran would not prevail indefinitely and, consequently, that it would be to Iraq's advantage to take action before the clerical regime had the opportunity to

consolidate its political ascendancy and to rebuild the nation's armed forces.

Two final objectives germane to analyzing a state's opportunity structure are: first, an identification of the developments, had they arisen, that would have likely compelled the aggressor to abandon the plans for aggression; and second, a determination of whether or not the state envisioning the surprise attack discerned any indications that the victim had an opportunity to obtain prior knowledge of the inroad. Unanticipated developments, such as a routine rotation of troops, the acquisition of new weapon systems, or a stabilization of political affairs, can dash or diminish opportunity for realizing surprise. With regard to Iraq, I argue that only the emergence of a secular regime in Iran, one willing to maintain strong ties with the West, would have probably persuaded Iraq to cancel the incursion, and that Baghdad was not dissuaded from attacking by observations that Teheran was likely to obtain advanced warning.

Having put the cardinal factors that shape an assailing state's inducement and opportunity structures into perspective, the discussion will now further address the shortcomings and conditions that give rise to the victim nation's exposure to sudden aggression. In similarity to the aggressor's opportunities, the size and strength of the besieged nation's defense forces constitutes an initial

determinant to be evaluated in explaining vulnerability. It will be maintained that the overhauling of the armed forces, which was mainly undertaken in consonance with the spirit of the Islamic revolution, had an enervating effect, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, upon the deterrent value of the Iranian military machine.

In addition to an attenuation of basic dimensions of military force, an impairment of the ability of the target state to discern external threats can redouble its exposure to attack. Failure to obtain warning can stem from cognitive, organizational, and political hindrances. The cognitive barriers encountered by professional analysts in routine intelligence monitoring, as Charles Lindblom has clearly established, stem from two principal, largely inescapable actualities: the circumscribed extent of the human intellect as well as limitations regarding ready data.[52] With regard to the former, operational dysfunctions in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence can arise when those charged with this crucial task are confronted with an overtaxing volume of information that must be classified as either germane signals or immaterial noise.[53] And, such a condition can lead to an increase in the amount of time needed to thoroughly analyze data, thereby decreasing the possibility of obtaining strategic warning.

A failure to recognize threat can also arise when analysts make inferences regarding the designs of an adversary based on equivocal information, a dangerous practice that can result in intelligence analyses that convey to policy-makers an elementary depiction of what is, in actuality, a highly intricate and volatile situation.[54] It is in such situations that personal biases can enter into the equation, effecting a further skewing of the accuracy of analysis. Indeed, there exists a demonstrable linkage between the level of equivocation facing intelligence professionals and the degree to which they act on the basis of their individual prejudgments.[55] To sum up, intelligence failures on the part of career analysts can be produced by the following conditions: an inundation of data, which can consist of noise put forth by the protagonist; a paucity of revealing information, which often stems from highly secretive planning; and tendentious analysis.

Common bias among political elites can also heighten exposure to attack. Charles Lindblom, a leading scholar on organizational theory, maintains that one of the more important problems inherent in the process of governmental decision-making is that individuals involved in the formation of policy routinely choose options that reflect personal ideals and estimations.[56] A notable example of such a cognitive omission, which had profoundly grave consequences for the target state, was Stalin's rejection of

intelligence signals that indicated a looming German onslaught, a decision based on his personal conviction that Hitler was a rational actor and, accordingly, would not undertake so irrational an act as an irruption of the Soviet Union. In addition to individual elite bias, the phenomenon of "groupthink," which is mainly peculiar to regimes under the sway of close-knit elites that discourage any deviations in thought from the championed doctrine,[57] can pose additional problems for the preservation of national security. It will be demonstrated that "groupthink" among the clerical zealots who came to power in Iran was a major contributing factor underlying the failure to gain advanced warning of the Iraqi incursion.

Problems regarding threat detection are very often engendered by the intricate, hierarchial composition of governmental institutions charged with the task of safeguarding national security. Given the complexity and sensitivity of intelligence operations, national security organizations usually comprise a myriad of departments and offices assigned highly specific tasks. And, more often than not, intraoffice and intraorganizational dissemination of information is strictly limited, a structural condition often alluded to as "compartmentation."[58] Additionally, competition over limited resources and prerogatives between different bureaus, as well as state organizations, further diminishes cooperation and the sharing of data. For

example, the intense rivalry and the resultant dearth of coordination between U.S. security agencies, both civilian and military, contributed heavily to the Pearl Harbor debacle. The fact that the conveyance of a formal warning of impending attack to on-site commanders in Hawaii coincided with the actual arrival of Japanese torpedo-bomber aircraft stands as a sobering demonstration of the potential consequences that can result from intrabureau friction. Regarding the main focus of this study, specifically the factors that heightened Iran's exposure to a surprise Iraqi attack, it will be posited that Teheran's failure to recognize and effectively react to warning signals can be largely attributed to the political strife between governmental organizations founded during the monarchial epoch and to those established after the onset of the revolution. Overall, cognitive and organizational obstacles constituted, in large part, the causation of revolutionary Iran's intelligence shortcomings.

After citing the key inadequacies regarding the victim's military forces and establishing the various factors that contributed to the failure of its intelligence services to obtain strategic warning, the next germane objectives are the following: to discern whether or not the aggressor benefitted from the presence of supporters within the target state; to identify and examine unique vulnerabilities; and, to determine the level of the

aggressor's cognizance of the aggregate vulnerabilities of the target state. With regard to the Iraq-Iran case, it will be argued that agents working within the Islamic Republic, on behalf of the conservative Iranian exile community residing within Iraq, provided useful information to Baghdad regarding Iran's shortcomings. In addition, it will be held that because of the already-mentioned breakdown of normative behavior among elite policy-makers and the standard operating procedures adhered to by military and governmental organizations, the Islamic Republic's exposure was further increased. Finally, it will be demonstrated that the Iraqi elite was fully aware of postrevolutionary Iran's "window of vulnerability."

A final variable to be analyzed regarding vulnerability is whether any officials within the besieged state had openly expressed a belief that aggression was likely and, if so, why no precautionary action was undertaken. I posit that a number of secular Iranian officials, principally President Bani-Sadr, openly maintained on numerous occasions that the Iraqi attack was pending but, due to intense political feuding with the reactionary clerics, little importance was attached to his monitions.

Once the inducement structure and the perceptions of opportunity that animated the attacking state are elucidated, and the causal factors underpinning the target

state's exposure to attack are identified, the last remaining component of the equation to be worked out is the state of relations between the aggressor, the victim, and third states, and how this influenced the former's incentives and opportunities, as well as the latter's exposure to shock. In short, it is postulated that the Islamic Republic followed a confrontational foreign policy, which was largely grounded on the overriding design of spreading an affinity for revolutionary Shi'ite Islam throughout the Persian Gulf region and beyond. And, accordingly, by September of 1980, Iran was internationally isolated and lacked strong allies.

Regarding Iraq on this score, it will be demonstrated that the Baathists, who were once viewed as one of the more radical, anti-Western Arab regimes, significantly improved relations with conservative Arab nations and the West during the period between January 1979 and September 1980 and, as a result, was emboldened by a number of de facto allies and a sound base of logistical support. Overall, it is herein argued that the Iranian Revolution effected a profound alteration of the Gulf balance of power which, concomitantly, afforded Baghdad, or more accurately, Saddam Hussein, a significant opportunity to establish Iraq as the regional hegemon, a role that had long been played by monarchial Iran, but which the clerical elite of the Islamic Republic was bent on terminating.

The Importance of Studying Strategic Surprise

Indeed, strategic surprise, as clearly evidenced by the description in the preceding section, constitutes a complex phenomenon for study. Beyond their salience for the aggressor and target state, efforts to realize strategic shock can produce far-ranging ramifications for third nations. The ill-fated outcome of the Iraqi adventure, which has served to increase rather than diminish the level of threat to the security of all Gulf Arab states, should not be construed as unusual. In several notable past instances, namely the German attack on the Soviet Union and the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor, elite expectations of avoiding a protracted and costly conflict did not obtain. For example, the Pearl Harbor episode set in motion a series of events that resulted in the smashing of Japanese hegemony over vast areas of eastern and southeastern Asia, the culmination of which was marked by the ghastly atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the advent of American imperialism in the region, a development most acutely felt by Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

In recent years, the central importance of strategic surprise in American nuclear warfare strategy has become increasingly prominent. This development has been clearly evidenced by the development of extremely accurate and highly destructive weapon systems, including the Stealth (B-2) bomber, the Trident II submarine-launched ballistic

missile (SLBM), which employs the advanced Mk-500 warhead, and the Seawolf nuclear attack submarine. In addition, various confrontational machinations, particularly the use of A-6 attack aircraft, based on the Aleutian island of Adak, to conduct regular mock bombing sorties against the large Soviet naval installation at Petropavlosk, have become increasingly commonplace during the tenure of the truculent Reagan administration. Moreover, the concomitant movement away from an adherence to the concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD), along with its significant deterrent value, toward the realization of an inherently dangerous first-strike, offensive posture, has heightened the wariness of the Soviet Union and raised the danger of a misreading of signals at the Kremlin which, ultimately, could trigger an accidental nuclear exchange. Overall, the increasingly precarious posture of the Soviet Union, and all the grave, potential consequences this development carries, clearly manifests the importance of studying the phenomenon of strategic surprise.

CHAPTER I NOTES

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CHAPTER II

IRAQ'S INCENTIVES: DEFENSIVE, OFFENSIVE, AND IDEOLOGICAL-CULTURAL

In early January of 1980, which marked the end of monarchial governance in Iran, relations between Baghdad and Teheran were not of a strained nature. This mainly pacific relationship was largely based on the covenant, signed by the two states in 1975, which resolved the long-standing, major sources of interstate friction. However, this status quo began to break down with the inception of the Iranian Revolution. This chapter studies the effects of the revolution in Iran upon Iraqi-Iranian ties and how this shift gave rise to certain aspects of the Baathists' structure of motivations for seeking a strategic surprise. For this purpose, the initial part of this examination establishes Baghdad's defensive actuations for attacking Iran. This will be followed by an analysis of Iraq's enterprising ambitions. Finally, the ideological, ethnic, and cultural factors partially constituting Baghdad's inclination for aggression against Iran are studied.

Defensive Inducements

Identifying defensive motivational factors represents a logical point of initiation for evaluating a

regime's impetus for undertaking a surprise attack. With regard to the Iraq-Iran case, it was the social and political unrest in the latter that evoked increasing uncertainty and fear among the elite of the former. Initially, the Iraqi Government reacted to the Iranian Revolution with guarded optimism; praise was extended to the Iranian masses in their successful bid to topple the dictatorship of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. And, it was asserted that Baghdad would remain aloof from entanglement in domestic Iranian affairs. For example, in February of 1979, during an interview with the Iraqi magazine Alif Ba, Saddam Hussein, the nation's acknowledged political strongman, maintained that Iraq harbored no designs of attempting to influence the course of events in Iran, and that the Baath regime was willing to accept "whatever the Iranian people decide."[1] However, from the outset, Saddam Hussein cautioned that a preservation of normal ties between Baghdad and the revolutionary Iranian regime would be contingent upon the latter's refraining from meddling in internal Iraqi matters. The hope of the ruling Baath party that the revolution would not adversely affect relations between the two states soon faded as it became readily apparent that the de jure government headed by the centrist Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, which was genuinely desirous of cordial relations with surrounding Muslim nations, lacked a solid base of popular support, and that a coterie of

zealous Shi'ite clerics under the aegis of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who championed radical Islamic values, were fast emerging as the de facto locus of power.

The Shi'ite extremists who came to hold sway in revolutionary Iran believed that they were obligated to attempt to foster a burgeoning of traditional Islamic sentiment throughout the Muslim world. Iraq, due to its geographical proximity and sizable population of Shi'ite adherents, was looked upon as a point of departure for the pan-Islamic crusade. Furthermore, it was the position of Khomeini, which was based upon personal observations made while living in exile in the Iraqi city of Najaf, that the Baath elite enjoyed only a marginal base of popular support,[2] and, consequently, the Islamic revolution would serve as a catalyst to an analogous political and social perturbation in Iraq. Shortly after deposing the Shah, the Iranian churchmen commenced a campaign to undermine political stability within Iraq, which included the affording of assistance to elements averse to the Baathists' dominance, namely Shi'ite fundamentalists and ethnic Kurdish irredentists, as well as the dissemination of anti-Baath propaganda.

Compounding Baghdad's apprehension was the outward enthusiasm for the victorious revolutionary struggle against the oppressive Shah, as expressed by the minority of Iraqi Shias who espoused fundamental Islamic values, a significant

percentage of whom were supporters of the Islamic Call [al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah], a Shi'ite activist organization opposed to the ideological imperatives observed by the Baathists, particularly the relegating of Islam to a strictly apolitical societal role. The Islamic Call was under the direction of Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, who was encouraged by the revolutionary tumult in Iran to intensify his organization's anti-Baath campaign. To the further dismay of the Baath elite, two additional Shi'ite traditionalist groups emerged in Iraq at this juncture: the Muslim Warriors [al-Mujahidin], led by Sayyed abd-ul-Aziz al-Hakim, and the Organization for Islamic Action [Munazzamat al-Amal al-Islami], which was under the command of Muhammad Taqi al-Mudarrisi.

The Baath leadership was determined to forestall a spilling-over of reactionary Islamic fervor and, in line with this end, during the first few months following the abrupt end of monarchial rule in Iran, Baghdad sent into exile a number of clerics who had openly demonstrated an affinity for traditional Shi'ism. Most of the expelled churchmen took up residence in the Iranian holy center of Qom where they began to put forth bitter condemnations of Baath governance, a development that served to further fuel the rising tension between Iraq and Iran. During an interview held in Qom on 22 June 1979, Ayatollah Mohammad al-Husayni, one of Iraq's most respected clerics, charged

that the repressive leaning of the Baath regime was the fundamental factor underlying the growing signs of unrest among segments of Iraq's Shi'ite populace. Shirazi further held that some "fifty thousand Iraqis are languishing in prison and are subject to the most savage torture," and that "there is not a single free paper in Iraq."[3]

In response to the Baathists' expulsions of ranking clerical authorities, the Islamic Call, along with the Organization for Islamic Action and the Muslim Warriors, initiated an urban warfare campaign, with an emphasis on sabotaging important military and industrial sites and on staging armed attacks against high government officials. The most daring of the actions undertaken by operatives of the various Shi'ite activist groups included an unsuccessful attempt to damage Iraq's main naval yard at Basra and an abortive effort to assassinate Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on 1 April 1980, while he was delivering an address at the Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad. The would-be assassin, who was wounded and captured, was identified as Samir Mir Gholam, an Iranian immigrant who had recently obtained Iraqi citizenship.[4] Shortly afterward, the Government officially disclosed that Gholam was an agent of the Islamic Call and intimated that Teheran was extending support to the movement.

Iraqi authorities put forward further evidence of the Iranian clerics' complicity in abetting anti-Baath

subversives in late May, when Salah Al-Ali, a diplomat attached to Iraq's mission to the United Nations, made available to the General Assembly copies of a confession extracted from Abdul Ameor Hameed al-Mansouri, a captured member of the Islamic Call, who had revealed during interrogation that the Khomeinists' attempts to promote dissension within Iraq included the affording of financial assistance and weaponry to the Islamic Call and allowing agents of the organization to cross the Iranian frontier unimpeded.[5]

An additional source of anxiety for Baghdad was the support of the Islamic revolution openly professed by Ayatollah Sayyid al-Sadr, Iraq's cardinal Shi'ite churchman. To Ayatollah al-Sadr, the Islamic Republic (the official designation of the revolutionary Iranian polity) constituted a model of an ideal Islamic political system,[6] and he further dismayed the Baathists by frequently maintaining that he envisioned the establishment of a comparable political system in Iraq, in which he, as the nation's foremost cleric, would serve as both head-of-state and head-of-government. The laudations of Ayatollah al-Sadr were well received in Qom, where the clerical leadership began to allude to him as the "Khomeini of Iraq."[7] Not unexpectedly, Ayatollah al-Sadr's championing of revolutionary Islam resulted in a direct confrontation with Saddam Hussein, who conveyed his intent of precluding an incitement of

traditional Shi'ism to the spiritual leader vis-à-vis a personal letter sent in May of 1979, in which he admonished that "I shall not allow the Iranian experiment to be repeated in Iraq and Ayatollah al-Sadr to become Imam Sadr."[8]

The Baathists opted to counter the destabilizing machinations undertaken by the radical Islamic groups with a heavy hand. The outbreak of violent attacks upon Iraqi statesmen, allegedly carried out by Iranian-backed operatives, provided the Iraqi elite with defensible grounds to crack down on Shi'ite activists and to assail the involvement of the clerical Iranian regime. Following the abortive assassination attempt on Tariq Aziz, Saddam Hussein moved to diminish the perceived threat to internal stability posed by the presence of large numbers of Iranian scholars studying at the scores of Islamic community centers located in the southeastern Shi'ite holy centers of Karbala, Kadhimain, Najaf, Kufa, and Basra. These Iranians were looked upon as a potential fifth column that could foment Shi'ite fanaticism. Saddam Hussein moved to counter this perceived threat by forcibly deporting some forty thousand of these "undesirables." This development evoked an outpouring of bitter anti-Baath recriminations from Teheran and Qom and effected a considerable heightening of tension between Iraq and Iran. In an attempt to limit domestic and international opposition to the forced expulsions, Iraqi

diplomats argued before the General Assembly that the Islamic Republic's charges that the deportations were part of a general anti-Shi'ite campaign being waged by Baghdad were groundless; they further insisted that the Government had ousted only those who had "committed blatant acts of terrorism at the instigation and with the full support of the Iranian regime."[9]

In addition to the large-scale expulsions of Iranian Shias, the Baathists sought to further offset the menace to the internal status quo, portended by an outburst of orthodox Shi'ism, by jailing and executing a number of top clergymen, including Ayatollah al-Sadr, who was put to death in late April of 1980 after being found culpable of colluding with the Khomeinists in a plot to undermine stability within Iraq. The untimely demise of an esteemed co-religionist, whom Khomeini had established a close relationship with during his long period of exile in Iraq, deeply distressed the Iranian spiritual leader.[10] In addition, Baghdad's repression of pro-traditionalist churchmen was deplored by the Islamic Republic's ministerial leaders, who charged that al-Sadr's execution constituted conclusive evidence of Saddam Hussein's ruthless bent to "obliterate the popular Islamic revolution."[11] Moreover, Ayatollah Seyyed Shahaboddin Mar'ashi Najafi, another powerful Iranian ecclesiastic, admonished that the "unmanly acts" perpetrated by the Baathists would draw the "wrath of

God and anger the Muslim nation."[12] Overall, the Iraqi governing elite was considerably alarmed by the Khomeinists' choleric protestations, which were construed as a portent of future aggression.

The Iranian Revolution, beyond bringing to power a group of Islamicists who assumed an increasingly threatening leaning toward Baghdad, further strengthened the Baath regime's defensive motivations for aggression by effecting a resumption of the insurgency by ethnic Kurdish guerrillas in northern Iraq, a development viewed as constituting a significant threat to national security. Iraq's Kurdish denizens had long struggled to realize limited autonomy from Baghdad; however, the area which they have traditionally inhabited is rich in petroleum and natural gas deposits and, accordingly, the Baathists have been adamant in insisting that central control over the northern territory is vital to the nation's economy. With the breakdown in order among Iranian frontier guards following the Shah's downfall, thousands of Kurdish insurgents, who had been living in refugee settlements within Iran since the mid-1970s, were afforded free reign to resume incursions into Iraq. By July of 1979, reinfiltration of Kurdish combatants had increased to an alarming level and this development prompted the Iraqi Government to make repeated demands, which were largely ignored, that Teheran initiate immediate action to tighten security along the common frontier.

Beyond allowing Kurdish guerrillas to conduct cross-border raids unhindered, the Iranian clerical regime extended direct financial and logistical support to the insurgents. A number of Iraqi Kurdish groups benefitted from Iranian aid: the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), alternatively known as the Peshmerga, which was under the command of Idriss and Massoud Barzani, and which had a significant percentage of its five thousand fighters stationed at Karaj, a military compound in proximity to Teheran; the Kurdish Patriotic Union (KPU), commanded by Jalal Talabani; and the Kurdish Socialist Party (KSP), which was led by Rasoul Memendeh.[13] By June of 1980, an estimated 100,000 firearms had been smuggled into northern Iraq and, by this juncture, Kurdish combatants operating from sanctuaries on the Iranian side of the border were conducting frequent armed forays. The Baath elite responded to the escalating violence in the Kurdish region by commencing a large-scale counterinsurgency drive, which included bombing sorties against a number of northwestern Iranian villages believed to be transit points for Kurdish guerrillas. The Iraqi air attacks were vehemently denounced by both lay and clerical authorities in Iran and contributed to a further escalation in interstate tension.

By mid-1980, a number of ranking Baath officials had concluded that the Iranian clerics' disposition to support Shi'ite zealots and Kurdish insurgents within Iraq

indicated that they harbored designs of future aggression. This conviction was reinforced by a number of overt calls made by Iranian officials for the Iraqi populace to depose the Government. On 27 April, the Islamic Republic's leadership put forth spurious reports of a successful insurrection in Iraq. A stalwart Khomeiniite pundit, Foreign Minister Sadegh Qotzbadeh, who was in Damascus at this time, declared "it makes me very happy to announce the news that I have just received: there has been a military coup in Iraq; Saddam Hussein and his regime can go to hell."[14] Qotzbadeh's aggressive enunciation was followed by an open calling from Khomeini for Iraq's armed forces, the ranks of which consisted predominately of Shias, to mount a rebellion and depose the Baathists.[15]

Overall, underlying the Iraqi elite's defensive incentive structure for resorting to military force was a desire to secure control over the frontier with Iran, which was held to be necessary to mitigate the vulnerability of Iraq to direct aggression by the Islamic Republic. The Baathists sought to justify the inroad against revolutionary Iran on defensive grounds by asserting during a number of emergency meetings of the United Nation's Security Council that the revolutionary government had failed to adequately monitor its border with Iraq, and that this lapse of frontier security had facilitated an onset of unrest in the southeast and an outbreak of bloody fighting in northern

Iraq. On 24 September, two days after the initiation of open warfare, Iraqi delegates to the United Nations defended Baghdad's decision to invade Iran by charging that Teheran's "indiscriminate actions against the interests of Iraq," had necessitated a defensive action.[16] Clearly, the evidence put forward in this section indicates that the Baathists did have a basis for concern regarding the Iranian Revolution, and that this concern gave rise to defensive inducements for a strategic surprise. However, as will be demonstrated in the succeeding discussion, motivations for surprise attack are seldom of a solely defensive nature.

Aggressive Motivations

The first section of this chapter elucidated Baghdad's defensive impetus for attacking the Islamic Republic. However, the Baathists' incentive structure for going to war with Iran was not wholly grounded upon defensive considerations; in identifying the Iraqi elite's motives for aggression, a citing of various venturesome objectives, particularly those entertained by Saddam Hussein, is of central importance. To Saddam Hussein, who strongly emulates Gamal Abdel Nasser, the late charismatic Egyptian leader widely revered in the Arab world for his brazen challenge of Western control over the vital Suez Canal in 1956, the onset of the Iranian Revolution constituted an opportunity to realize a long-standing

ambition: to attain a position of leadership among eastern Arab states.

By 1979, Iraq was in a suitable position to assume a guiding role among the Gulf Arab nations, as well as within the Arab world at large. In addition to possessing a sizable and educated middle class, the nation's gross national product, largely due to significant increases in petroleum prices, had risen to an impressive thirty-one billion dollars, and real per capita income had increased to 2,450 dollars per annum, one of the highest in the Near East.[17] By and large, the Iraqi chief believed that his hegemonic aspirations could be furthered vis-à-vis an acquisition of the following Iranian held territory: the southwestern region of Khuzestan; Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, three islands situated in the strategically important Straits of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf and the northern Arabian Sea; and the Shatt al-Arab estuary, which is formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and which empties into the northern Persian Gulf.

It was the position of Saddam Hussein that control over Khuzestan, particularly the oil-rich provinces of Ilam and Kermanshah, the location of a number of developed port facilities for transshipping petroleum products, including Abadan, Khorramshahr, and Bandar-e-Shahpur, would greatly bolster Iraq's economic posture. Iraq, in stark contrast to

Iran, is in a geographically disadvantageous position in that it has a coastline of only some fifty miles along the Gulf, and this brief stretch of shoreline between the Fao Peninsula and Umm Qasr, due to shallow depths, is of little utility in terms of port facilities.[18] Consequently, Baghdad has been limited to relying primarily on Basra, which is located some one hundred miles up the Shatt al-Arab, as the nation's principal port.

Securing an expanded Gulf coastline was viewed by the Iraqi elite as a way of diminishing the necessity of relying on overland petroleum conduits through Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey. In this way, the capacity to export petroleum, the nation's chief source of revenue, would be less contingent upon the state-of-relations with the regimes governing the territory through which the oil was transshipped, and less vulnerable to vicissitudes in political conditions within the host countries. The outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1976 had necessitated a shutdown of Iraq's pipeline through that country while, during the late 1970s, tense relations with the rival Baath regime in Damascus resulted in a diminution of the flow of petroleum through the Iraqi-Syrian conduit.[19] In addition, the northern pipeline through Turkey to ports on the Mediterranean was exposed to sabotage by Kurdish separatists. Overall, underlying the Baathists' enterprising inducement structure for laying siege to Iran,

was the chief design of securing a strong capacity to export petroleum. The realization of this objective was deemed to be essential if Iraq was to gain a position of regional leadership, and Baghdad believed that establishing dominion over Khuzestan's lengthy coastline through a surprise military inroad would net the nation such a desired capability.

Initially, the Baathists attempted to use pacific means to compel the Islamic Republic to cede control over the coveted territories. With regard to Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, Saddam Hussein made wide capital of the fact that the Shah had illegally annexed the islands, which had been under the control of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in 1971 through an armed occupation. And, the Iraqi leader called on Teheran to demonstrate the sincerity of its pledge to jettison the aggressive foreign policy followed by the deposed Pahlavi administration by relinquishing rule over the islands to the UAE. By and large, the allure of establishing mastery over the islands was predicated on their strategic and economic value; to the Baathists, the islands represented an excellent base from which to control the high volume of commercial shipping traffic through Hormuz and to conduct exploration and drilling for petroleum deposits in the northern Arabian Sea. Baghdad believed that the design of securing Iraqi sway over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs would be

further advanced toward fruition if one of the conservative littoral nations, which the Baathists looked upon as relatively weak and easy to influence, exercised determination over the disputed islands. In line with this reasoning, the Iraqi Government proposed to Iranian officials that a Palestinian group, namely the principal Al-Fatah faction headed by Yasir Arafat, assume temporary control over the islands as a prelude to a reestablishment of governance by the United Arab Emirates.

At first, there were some indications that the revolutionary authorities might accede to Baghdad's overtures regarding the islands. However, there soon proved to be little actual enthusiasm in Qom toward surrendering strategically important territory. Irrespective of a strong, pro-Palestinian leaning, the idea of assigning Arafat a pivotal role as a transitional administrator over the islands was rejected by the clerical leadership on the grounds that control over the territory by the United Arab Emirates, whose conservative emirs maintained strong relations with the West, would constitute a potential threat to Iran's ability to export oil. In addition, a number of pro-Khomeini officials, principally Sadegh Qotzbadeh, attempted to defend the clerics' decision to retain dominion over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs through a marshalling of pan-Islamic rhetoric; an often repeated assertion was that the three islands were "neither Iranian

nor Arab, but it is for Iran a universal unification of the Islamic world and that every part of Islamic land belongs to all Muslims, and that the land of Islam belongs to Allah."[20] Moreover, the Khomeinists further demonstrated their aversion toward Iraq's efforts to wrest control over the islands from Iran on 13 June 1979, when Teheran Radio carried an Arabic broadcast in which Baghdad was admonished against "playing with fire," and which advised the Baathists that it would be more politic to abandon visions of territorial aggrandizement and to concentrate on diminishing the "injustice and discrimination it is practicing within Iraq."[21] Such rebuffs were not well received in Baghdad.

When efforts to persuade Teheran to relinquish Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, vis-à-vis a nonbelligerent avenue, proved unfruitful, the Baathists assumed a more aggressive, insistent approach, charging that the Islamic Republic's refusal to part with the islands constituted conclusive evidence that the revolutionary regime's assertion that the hegemonic actions of the Shah were being abandoned was merely a rhetorical facade. By early December of 1979, the Iraqi regime was giving serious consideration to attempting to forcibly seize the islands. However, secrecy surrounding the planning of the forced annexation was compromised, prompting Yasir Arafat to rush to the Iraqi capital in a successful bid to dissuade Saddam

Hussein from undertaking the envisioned attack. Iraq attempted a final effort to realize its enterprising designs through diplomatic channels in early April of 1980, when United Nation's Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim was implored to call for an immediate end of the Iranian occupation. However, this initiative, similar to scores of previous ones, failed to elicit a positive response from the Islamic Republic.

From this juncture onward, Baghdad's efforts to effect an Iranian withdrawal from the islands became increasingly bellicose. The two feuding nations moved closer to the brink of open warfare on 6 April, when the Baathists demanded that all Iranian forces be withdrawn from Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs within twenty-four hours. The Islamic Republic's response to the Iraqi arrogation, which stirred incredulity in Qom and Teheran, was put forth by President Albohassan Bani-Sadr, who announced that, as a means of demonstrating Iranian resolve to preserve suzerainty over the islands, the revolutionary army and navy would soon conduct coordinated exercises in the area.[22] Overall, establishing control over the three islands was one of the more discernible enterprising objectives that actuated the Iraqi incursion.

Baghdad's campaign to achieve ascendancy over the Shatt al-Arab was conducted in a manner analogous to the bid to acquire Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs: a

reliance upon bloodless methods at the outset gradually gave way to belligerence. In October of 1979, Hussein Muslim Hassan, the Baath regime's chief envoy to Lebanon, served to reinvigorate the long-standing interstate quarrel over the Shatt al-Arab by maintaining that Baghdad was unhappy with the status quo regarding control over navigation along the waterway. The immediate aim of the Baathists was to jettison the 1975 Algiers Accord, which they insisted had been concluded under pressure exerted by the Shah, and which was unbalanced in that it afforded Iran a favorable position regarding the delineation of the estuary. At this point, Tariq Aziz formally requested the holding of a new round of direct bilateral negotiations in order to hammer out a more equitable covenant. However, the revolutionary regime declined to participate in a parley regarding the Shatt al-Arab, and the intransigent refusal of Iranian officials to engage in diplomacy served to rapidly exhaust the patience of Saddam Hussein, who, by mid-1980, was becoming increasingly forward in his impositions, which included an extension by the Islamic Republic of unconditional "recognition" of Iraqi mastery over the entire length of the contested waterway.[23]

Evidence of Baghdad's growing impatience came in early September, when Iraqi troops moved to forcibly annex a three-hundred-square-kilometer enclave of Iranian-held territory along the central sector of the frontier in

proximity to Qasr-e-Shirin, which Baghdad charged was to have been ceded to Iraq in accordance with the Algiers agreement. The Iraqi aggression was met with strong protest from Iranian clerical and secular authorities. For example, on 16 September, Sadegh Qotzbadeh maintained that the Algiers covenant contained no provisions relating to the return of territory and that, accordingly, Baghdad's charges of Iranian noncompliance with treaty obligations were baseless.[24] On the following day, 17 September, five days prior to the initiation of the invasion, the Baath regime announced that Iraq was forgoing compliance with the Algiers treaty and maintained that "the Shatt al-Arab is totally Iraqi and totally Arab."[25] In addition, Baghdad declared that all commercial vessels traversing the estuary would now be required to display the Iraqi flag.[26]

Shortly after moving to occupy the disputed territory and unilaterally rejecting the Algiers agreement, Said Bafi, the charge d'affaires of the Iraqi mission at the United Nations, in an effort to establish a justification for the provocative actions, conveyed a letter to the Security Council from Foreign Minister Saadoun Hammadi, in which it was held:

> The Iraqi Government now finds itself obliged to exercise its legitimate right to self-defense in sovereignty and to recover its territories by force, considering that the Iranian Government has barred the way to all legally recognized ways to resolve the issues emanating from its obligations.[27]

Overall, by mid-1980, the Iraqi governing elite had arrived at the conclusion that determination over the disputed territories could not be gained through pacific means and cognizance of this actuality, along with the menace portended by the Islamic revolution, engendered a strong motivation for launching a surprise attack.

Iraq's Propensity to Resort to Force Against Iran Due to Ideological and Ethnic-Cultural Disparity

There is much more to an aggressor nation's motivations for attempting a strategic surprise than defensive and offensive objectives. Existing predilections for aggression, which can be fostered by a number of factors, can strengthen an impulsion for a sudden attack. In illuminating the predisposition of a governing elite to seek a strategic surprise, an analysis of the divergence between the ideological and ethnic-cultural imperatives espoused by the protagonist and those championed by the target state is of significant import. The wide ideological and cultural gulf separating the temporal-oriented Baath regime and the fundamentalist Shi'ite elite that came to the fore in revolutionary Iran, constituted a principal determinant underlying Baghdad's decision to resort to force. The Baathists' animosity toward the Khomeinists can be partially attributed to the variance between Arab nationalism and socialism, the two cardinal concepts which constitute the foundation of Baath ideology

and pan-Islamic traditionalism, the paramount ideological tenet championed by the Iranian churchmen.[28]

The inception of the Iranian Revolution and the attendant toppling of the "Peacock Throne" effected a profound alteration of the state's political atmosphere, resulting in the emergence of a new ruling elite which adhered to an ideological orientation varying considerably from that espoused by the deposed Shah. Iran shifted from a state emphasizing nationalism to one stressing Islam; the ideology espoused by Khomeini and other leading clerics, including Ayatollah Muhammad-Javad Bahonar, Ayatollah Hasan Qomi-Tabatabai, and Ayatollah Sadeq Ruhani, was based on Ithna ashari Shia Islam. The concept of the "Imamate" constitutes a notable aspect of this puritanical sect, which originated in northern India. Devout followers of orthodox Shi'ism believe that no truly legitimate rule can be realized until the reappearance of Mohammad al-Mahdis, the "Twelfth Imam" (successor to the Prophet Mohammad and representative of God on earth), who expired in 847 A.D., and who is due to return at the end of time.[29] An important corollary to the belief in the Imamate is the idea of velayat-e faqih [governance by supreme cleric], which vests in Khomeini, as the nation's premier churchman, the responsibility of guiding the Islamic community until the return of Mohammad al-Mahdis.[30]

In attendance with this belief in the sublime nature of clerical rule, the Islamic traditionalists aimed at abrogating the division between secular and ministerial realms. To Khomeini and his zealous supporters, a separation of church and state was inimical to fundamental Shi'ite canon. In one of his major works, "Islamic Government," Khomeini held that only the "irreligious" and "imperialists" utilize the "slogan of the separation of religion and politics" as a means of precluding the establishment of a truly equitable society predicated on Islam.[31] The Khomeiniite regime, in an effort to lend legitimacy to the design of abolishing the partition of society into worldly and spiritual domains, frequently asserted that the Prophet Mohammad had been both the ecclesiastical leader and the head jurist in the city of Medina.[32] Overall, it is important to note that the Khomeinists' rejection of secular forms of government was unequivocal; disdain for lay rule largely emanated from the unwavering belief that God represented the only true source of sovereignty.

The Iraqi elite's position regarding the relationship between church and state was wholly contrary to that held by the Khomeinists. The Baathists were averse to clericalism and had long endeavored to separate Islam and the calling forth of incorporeal authority from Iraq's political system; accordingly, the specter of a burgeoning

of traditionalist Islamic sentiment among the Shi'ite majority in southeastern Iraq, manifestations of which had occasionally transpired since the onset of Baath rule, was looked upon in wholly negative terms.[33] The Baathists' apprehension regarding the political upheaval in Iran stemmed from a recognition that the Shah's downfall represented the first time within the Near East that a secular regime had been toppled by a popular revolutionary movement with a strong undercurrent of Islamic fundamentalism. Baghdad feared that the pan-Islamic ideals propounded by the Khomeinists would effect a dissemination of puritanical Shi'ite zeal, and that such a development would incite confessional strife between the ruling Sunni minority and the nation's Shias.

Traditionally, although Shias constitute a slight majority of the Iraqi populace--approximately fifty-five percent--they have been relegated to the periphery of the nation's economic and political affairs by the dominant Sunni Muslim minority. The Baathists were bent on maintaining this unequal relationship and had long endeavored to draw the attention of the Shia masses away from the imbalance between Sunni and Shi'ite adherents within the upper echelons of the Government and the nation's military command by placing a heavy emphasis upon Arab nationalism,[34] and by intentionally downplaying the importance of religion. In addition, in terms of external

political aspirations, a bolstering of Arab unity has long been at the apex of the Baathists' agenda. More precisely, since the inception of Baath rule in 1968, the direction of Iraqi foreign policy has been predicated on the principal end of consolidating solidarity among Arab nations, which is in line with the ultimate vision of establishing a single, pan-Arab state with a political system grounded on socialism.

A number of lay and ecclesiastical authorities within the Islamic Republic served to further reinforce the predisposition of the Baath elite to engage in warfare by denouncing the concept of Arab nationalism as an obstruction to the realization of a pan-Islamic state.[35] On one occasion, Ibrahim Yazdi, the Iranian foreign minister, remarked that the revolutionary ideology espoused by the clerical leadership represented a viable, alternative paradigm to Arab nationalism.[36] In addition, Khomeini emerged as an outspoken critic of the Iraqi political system; to Khomeini, Baathist governance, with its emphasis on preserving a rigid division between temporal and pastoral spheres, was anathema to the basic tenets of the Koran and was, therefore, devoid of legitimacy. Moreover, Khomeini believed that Islamic traditionalism would rapidly spread throughout the Near East, thereby obviating the appeal of Arab nationalism. Overall, the Iranian cleric's impugning of Arab nationalism engendered considerable resentment in

Baghdad; Saddam Hussein publicly charged that the straining of Iraqi-Iranian relations had partially emanated from the latter's disparaging of Arab nationalism during an address delivered on 4 November 1980:

> We are Iraqis, and we are part of the Arab nation . . . . . We will not accept anybody coming everyday with a new path that aims at dividing Iraq and dividing the Arab nation.[37]

Beyond the divergence in political values, the Baathists' predisposition for going to war with Iran was also partly shaped by ethno-cultural disparity. Iranian claims of racial superiority have long been a source of resentment among Iraqis, as well as other eastern Arabs, and the Baathists believed that this indignation, although at that juncture it was largely dormant, could easily be rekindled and used to whip up domestic opposition toward the Khomeinists. The Iraqi elite believed that an interjection of ethnic and cultural variables into the imbroglio between Baghdad and Teheran would be of further utility in that it would serve to draw the attention of the Iraqi populace away from the real source of aversion toward the Islamic Republic, which was largely the radical Islamic goals pursued by the clerical leadership. Toward this end, ranking Baath officials began to frequently allude to the cultural and Semitic-Aryan ethnic divisions separating Arabs and Persians. By and large, in order to heighten domestic support for the planned inroad against the Islamic Republic, Baghdad strived to foster an image among Iraqis of the

heightening animosity between Iraq and Iran as constituting the latest outbreak of the millennial ethnic strife, which commenced in the seventh century, when marauding Arab forces introduced Islam into the region to the east of the Zagros Mountains, which now encompasse modern Iran.[38]

In further consonance with the objectives of portraying the straining of Iraqi-Iranian relations as emerging from ethnic-cultural variance, and of diminishing public attention toward the extreme divergence in the positions subscribed to by the respective governing elites regarding the proper relationship between church and state, the Baathists sought to generate an image of the Islamic Republic's leaders as adhering to a racist and chauvinistic bearing and to convince the Iraqi people that Arabs were superior to Iranians in that the former had played a far more important historical role in the development of Islam. The impetus behind the efforts to arouse anti-Iranian sentiment largely stemmed from the Iraqi Government's cognizance that it could not afford to depict the conflict with Iran as a secular-clerical clash, for such an image would have fostered disaffection toward Baath governance among Iraq's Shias. To forestall such a development, the Baath elite endeavored to propagate a perception of the brand of Islam championed by the Khomeinists as being heretical. For example, in announcing the severing of diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic, Saddam Hussein

charged that the Khomeiniite regime was "non-Islamic," and that the "Koran was written in Arabic and God destined the Arabs [not the Iranians] to play a vanguard role in Islam."[39]

To reinforce the image of the revolutionary clerical regime as one pursuing ends predicated on a racist orientation, Baghdad extended invitations to leaders of various Iranian ethnic minorities to attend a rally in June of 1979, during which they illuminated the plight of their people under the governance of the Khomeinists. In addition, in announcing his decision to suspend compliance with the Algiers treaty, Saddam Hussein again alluded to the clerical elite's "bigoted penchant," holding that the Khomeinists were merely using an "invocation of religion as a mask to cover buried resentment for the Arabs."[40] Moreover, shortly after launching the incursion, which was designated by Iraqi officials as "Saddam's Qadissiya," an allusion to the 637 A.D. military confrontation in which an Arab army routed the Sassanian Persians, the Iraqi chief delivered an emotional speech, rife with anti-Iranian invective, in which it was maintained that for centuries, while Arabs had struggled to improve the quality of life within the Near East through scientific and cultural advancement, the truculent Persians, who had traditionally acted as "invaders" and "aggressors," consistently stymied such progress.[41] The Baathists' efforts in this respect

were largely successful, for by September of 1980, the public mood in Iraq was discernibly anti-Iranian.

In sum, the Baathists' reaction to the indications that affinity for traditionalist Islam was on the rise in the Shi'ite quarters of southeastern Iraq, which was directly attributed to the Iranian Revolution, can be ascribed to a structural-functionalist impetus; more precisely, a desire to maintain internal order[42] which, in specific terms, entailed avoiding a significant increase in confessional disagreement between the ruling minority of Sunni Muslims and the majority Shias. Overall, there was a clear nexus between Baghdad's ideological and ethnic-cultural predisposition for aggression against the Islamic Republic and the perceived domestic destabilization portended by the Iranian Revolution.

Conclusion

In recapitulating the main features of Baghdad's incentive structure identified in the preceding analysis, one of the more manifest and theoretically important inferences that can be posited is that the Baathists were driven to attempt to strategically surprise revolutionary Iran by both defensive and enterprising inducements. In more specific terms, the Iraqi elite's motivations for mounting an incursion into Iran encompassed a protective impulse to ward off the Khomeinists' efforts to incite Shi'ite aspirations for a more equitable share of the

nation's political power equation, as well as the Kurdish minority's desire to realize regional self-governance; and, an adventurous ambition, which largely stemmed from Saddam Hussein's geopolitical aspirations, to gain control of economically important sections of Iranian territory.

In terms of defensive actuations, the Baath elite looked upon the potential of a major flare-up of the Kurdish insurgency as a far more serious and immediate threat to the existing order than that represented by a heightening of Shi'ite activism. The legitimacy of Baath rule is largely grounded on the ability to afford the nation's denizens a wide array of economic services and goods, which is made possible by revenue generated by petroleum sales. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic's efforts to bolster the Kurdish guerrillas, who aimed at establishing limited autonomy over the northern region of the country, including the vital Kirkuk-Mosul oil fields, was construed by the Baath elite as a direct challenge to their governance, and throughout their tenure, the Baathists have demonstrated little disinclination to use force to preserve the political status quo in Iraq.

Beyond countering the threats emanating from the Khomeinists' reactionary, expansionist agenda, Baghdad's decision to stage an invasion can be attributed to a desire to advance Iraq's geopolitical posture, an end which the Baathists believed could be greatly furthered by depriving

Iran of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, the Khuzestani oil fields and coast, as well as control over the Shatt al-Arab. The paramount impetus behind Baghdad's desire to acquire tracts of economically important territory was the intense longing of Saddam Hussein to assume a hegemonic role in the Gulf. Overall, a substantial degree of accountability for the outbreak of the war can be ascribed to the Iraqi leader's vainglorious ambitions.

An additional observation which stems from the foregoing examination and which influenced the Baathists' set of inducements was the predilection for warfare engendered by political and ethnic-cultural values. Of utmost importance, in terms of explaining Baghdad's propensity to initiate a war with revolutionary Iran, was the variance in elite ideological imperatives. In short, proceeding from the fact that, since its inception as a political organization, the Baath party has rigidly adhered to a secular ideology based on Arab solidarity and socialism, it is not difficult to grasp the basis of the group's aversion toward the Khomeinists' principal design of spreading traditionalist, pan-Islamic fervor throughout all Muslim states.

CHAPTER II NOTES

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CHAPTER III

IRAQ'S INCENTIVES: HISTORICAL, ELITE CONSENSUS, AND THE LEVEL OF ACCURACY OF MOTIVATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

The initial section of the previous chapter mainly focused on the underlying importance of the defensive inducements that goaded the Baathists into attempting to inflict a strategic shock upon revolutionary Iran. The second section examined Baghdad's incentive structure from the alternative perspective of enterprising motivations. The third section then demonstrated that incentives for aggression can be reinforced by predispositional impulses stemming from ideological, ethnic, and cultural origins. The initial component of this chapter endeavors to outline the various historical antecedents that further predisposed Baghdad to resort to military force against Iran. The second part of this chapter will establish the level of agreement among ranking Baathists regarding the envisioned inroad and how this factor influenced Iraq's incentive structure in general. Finally, this chapter will appraise the degree of accuracy underpinning Baghdad's inspirational reflections regarding the necessity and utility of undertaking a surprise attack against Teheran.

Predilection Arising from Historical Antagonism

A long history of strained relations can serve to reinforce the disposition of a state's elite to initiate a surprise onslaught against an adversary. Two major factors stand out among the various sources of historical antipathy between Baghdad and Teheran: the latter's efforts to effect instability in the former through an engendering of Shi'ite-Sunni animosity, as well as an encouragement of Iraqi Kurds to continue their campaign to realize partial independence; and, a vying for regional mastery, which was largely manifested by the struggle for control over the disputed territories and efforts to gain influence over the Gulf Arab nations.

The inconsequential level of political power wielded by Iraqi Shias, which the Baath regime endeavored to diminish even further, can be traced to antecedents that predate the formal establishment of Iraq as a modern state. Throughout the entire epoch of Turkish dominion over the territory, formerly known as Mesopotamia, which lasted from approximately the mid-sixteenth century until 1918, when the Ottoman Empire was divided up by the victors of the Great War, Sunni Muslims exercised mastery over local political affairs.[1] The disparate political relationship remained unaffected by independence. In 1933, The Iraqi monarch, King Faisal I, openly acknowledged the disproportionate degree of power held by the nation's Sunnis, while President

Abd al-Salam, who ruled from 1963 to 1966, was an unabashed champion of Sunni political supremacy.[2]

Dismay stemming from their relative powerlessness has culminated in a number of bids undertaken by the Shi'ite masses to break the Sunni minority's dominance in recent history, albeit all have been largely unsuccessful. Organized Shi'ite militancy came to the fore in 1960 when a number of high clerics, including Ayatollah al-Sadr, founded the Islamic Call, the ranks of which comprised a significant percentage of the former members of the Association of Ulama [Jam'iyat Ulama al-Din], an initial Shi'ite organization established in 1958.[3] The Islamic Call's cadre was quick to establish an informal nexus with the Pahlavi regime, which was quite generous in proffering assistance to the movement in its struggle to realize the paramount end of exacting greater access to political power from Baghdad. It is important to note that the Shah was not motivated by a benevolent concern for the welfare of Iraq's Shias but, rather, by a desire of securing his position as regional hegemon, an end which he believed could be furthered by promoting political instability within the Gulf states, particularly in Iraq.

The Shah's reasoning was predicated upon the premise that nations with deep political, religious, and ethnic divisions would find it difficult to muster a strong challenge to external influence. From 1968 to 1975, the

Iranian monarch focused on exploiting the discontent toward Baath governance in Iraq's southeastern Shi'ite holy centers, which was heightened by the severe drought gripping the area during this period.[4] By 1974, scores of the Shah's agents had infiltrated southern Iraq and were working directly with the Islamic Call in propagating anti-Baath propaganda. It was at this juncture, during several Shi'ite holidays, that the first direct clashes between Shi'ite extremists and state security forces transpired. The Baathists responded with a wave of repression throughout southeastern Iraq, which included the execution of five ranking officials of the Islamic Call. Overall, the end result of Teheran's involvement in the swelling of Shi'ite activism in the mid-1970s was to solidify the Baath elite's anti-Iranian orientation which, in turn, strengthened the propensity for aggression.

Beyond Teheran's support for opposition Shi'ite groups, the Baathists' predilection for using military force can also be partially ascribed to the substantial Iranian assistance accorded to Iraqi Kurdish organizations in recent history. Kurdish unrest is not a recent phenomenon peculiar to Iraq. In fact, ethnic Kurds have been engaged in a struggle for an independent state in the Near East for several hundred years. The fundamental aspiration of Kurdish separatists was briefly realized following the cessation of the First World War: the 1920 Treaty of

Sevres, one of a multitude of post-war covenants concluded at Versailles, established an autonomous Kurdistan. However, the Sevres accord was superceded in 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne, which resulted in the dismantling of Kurdistan, with sections of the short-lived nation coming under the control of Syria, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Iran, and Iraq.[5] At this point, analogous to their ethnic brethren in surrounding states, Iraq's Kurdish minority organized armed groups which commenced a campaign to wrest autonomy from the central government.

Initially, due to a general lack of organization and to the rather low intensity of the activity of its forces, the Kurdish insurgents evoked little concern in Baghdad. However, in 1943, the Kurdish movement in Iraq was significantly strengthened when two political groups, the Rizgary and Hewa parties, began to cooperate with Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani, a widely venerated cleric who commanded considerable support among Iraqi Kurds. The greater coaction of Kurdish organizations served to stir alarm among Iraqi officials and was redoubled in 1946 when the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which gradually emerged as the Kurds' principal political organization, was founded.

With the deposal of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958, the KDP was hopeful that the revolutionary regime would grant autonomy to Iraq's Kurds. However, initial, sanguine expectations soon faded as the new government, led by

General Abd al-Karim Qasim, indicated that it was averse to the affording of any substantive concessions to the Kurds. In September of 1958, the revolutionary leadership sparked a new round of fighting by ordering the shelling of Kurdish strongholds in northern Iraq, including the base of Mulla al-Barzani who, from this juncture onward, came to be regarded as the spiritual guide of the Kurdish resistance. Baghdad's aversion toward negotiating with the Kurds waned as the insurgency intensified during the early 1960s, and in June of 1966, an accord was concluded with the KDP which granted the Kurds significant freedom to govern local political and economic affairs. However, the central regime's adherence to the stipulations of the agreement proved inconstant and, consequently, the guerrilla campaign, which had been briefly suspended, was resumed. It was at this time that the Shah entered the fray by transporting sizable amounts of weaponry and material, the bulk of which was provided by Washington and Tel Aviv, to the Kurdish combatants.

When the Baathists assumed power in 1968, additional efforts to pacify the Kurdish populace were undertaken. Following lengthy negotiations, which were commenced in January of 1970, President al-Bakr and Kurdish representatives concluded a new covenant on 11 March 1970, which stipulated that a Kurd would hold the office of vice-president, and that greater access to higher posts in the

government, the military, and institutions of higher learning would be extended to the Kurds.[6] But again, consensus regarding interpretation of various sections of the agreement proved elusive and, consequently, heavy combat in the north was soon underway again. By 1975, Kurdish forces were engaging in frequent, large-scale clashes with government troops, and the guerrilla conflict was proving increasingly costly for the Baath regime, necessitating the expenditure of a significant percentage of Iraq's GNP on defense, while effecting an attendant drop in industrial and agricultural output.[7] To further compound Baghdad's woes, by this juncture, the Shah was granting Kurdish insurgents direct Iranian military support, which included air strikes and artillery barrages against Iraqi troops.

The actual involvement of Iranian forces in the Kurdish insurgency portended an outbreak of war with Iran and the specter of such a development, due to the wide superiority of the Shah's military machine, was most discomfiting to the Baathists. Accordingly, toward the end of forestalling the onset of a military conflict between Iraq and Iran, the Baath elite agreed to partake in bilateral negotiations brokered by President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria, which culminated in the conclusion of the Algiers agreement, a key provision of which called for a termination of Teheran's abetting Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas. Overall, though the Baath regime was able to

rapidly quell the insurgency following the withdrawal of Iranian aid, the great expense of the Shah's meddling in Iraq's internal affairs served to deepen the predisposition to utilize force as a means of averting Iranian-sponsored subversion in the future.

In addition to the Iranian monarch's efforts to shore up the position of Shi'ite activists and Kurdish militants, the struggle between Baghdad and Teheran for regional supremacy constituted an additional factor underlying the Baathists' historical propensity to go to war with Iran. The Baath elite's hegemonic aspirations did not originate with the demise of the Pahlavi dynasty. Rather, Saddam Hussein and other ranking Baathists had long entertained designs of territorial aggrandizement which, in addition to the primary goal of securing ascendancy over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, Khuzestan and the Shatt al-Arab, included the annexation of the Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warbah. The recent history of Iraqi-Iranian hegemonic wrangling took a more intense turn as the British vacated their Near Eastern dominions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Due to the more conservative orientation of the Iranian monarchy, Teheran was afforded crucial Western support, including assistance in establishing a powerful military capability, and was therefore in an advantageous position to establish paramountcy over the Persian Gulf region. As a result,

Baghdad was forced to limit its campaign for regional leadership to strictly clandestine, and largely ineffectual, efforts to instigate political destabilization in the littoral sheikdoms.

London's decision to recall British troops stationed on Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs was welcomed by the opportunistic Shah, who, in line with regional designs, moved quickly to establish Iranian control over the islands. Initially, Teheran attempted to goad the United Arab Emirates, which had been designated as the administrator over the islands by the British, into relinquishing sovereignty peacefully. In pursuance of this goal, the Shah sought to establish a legitimate basis for his interest in the territory by asserting that Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs had been under Persian dominion prior to their seizure by the Arabs during the nineteenth century and that control of the islands was imperative for Iran's security.[8]

On 29 November 1971, the Shah's objective was partially realized when Teheran concluded an accord regarding the status of Abu Musa with the Sheik of Sharjah, one of the principalities that comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The agreement stipulated that Iranian forces would exercise control over a portion of Abu Musa, while Sharjah would hold sway over the remaining section of the island, and that all funds generated by the sale of petroleum extracted from the island and adjoining waters

would be equally divided between Iran and Sharjah.[9] However, while agreement was easily reached over Abu Musa, the emir of Ras al-Khaimah, another city-state within the UAE, resisted Iran's overtures regarding the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, which prompted the Shah to order Iranian forces to occupy the islands on 30 November.

Baath officials immediately put forth bitter condemnations of the Shah's aggressive action. And, on Iraqi insistence, a meeting of the United Nation's Security Council was convened in early December, during which it was pointed out that from 1750 until 1866, the islands had been under the jurisdiction of Ras al-Khaima and that from 1866 to 1971, Ras al-Khaima had shared nominal rulership over the three islands with Sharjah. Proceeding from these observations, Baghdad argued that there was no validity to Teheran's claims of a historical right to the territory. In addition, Iranian diplomats failed to convince the Security Council that any legal, legitimate basis existed for the seizure of the islands and, as a result, resolutions were carried which called for an unconditional Iranian withdrawal. However, the Shah decided to simply ignore the United Nation's judgments, and this prompted the Iraqi elite to take retaliatory measures, which included the expulsion of some sixty thousand Iranian nationals and the severance of diplomatic relations with Teheran. This bitter experience convinced Baath officials that Iran was not

interested in equitably resolving conflicts through diplomatic channels, and this conclusion gave rise to the attendant belief in Baghdad that force, rather than diplomacy, constituted the most viable medium for settling issues of contention with Teheran.

A pursuit of dominion over Khuzestan represents another important feature of the struggle for regional supremacy that Baghdad and Teheran have been engaged in during recent history. The Khuzestani populace, which is approximately eighty percent Arabic speaking, was under the subjugation of Constantinople until 1924, at which point Iran was assigned control over the region by the League of Nations. Iraq challenged Iran's acquisition of Khuzestan from the outset. Following the elimination of monarchial rule in 1958, the revolutionary regime wasted little time in demonstrating its interest in annexing Khuzestan by holding that Iraq had a legitimate territorial claim to Abadan.[10] It was at this juncture that Baghdad began to attempt to foster unrest in Khuzestan by arousing Arab nationalist sentiment. This was largely attempted by proffering aid to Arab irredentists organized under the Front for the Liberation of Khuzestan. Further evidence of Baghdad's aspiration to secure control of Khuzestan came in 1969 when the Iraqi Ministry of Information published a tractate entitled "The History of Arabistan [Khuzestan]," in which it was argued that since Iran's gaining of control over the

territory, the Arabs residing there had been subjected to "tyrannical" rule and "racial discrimination" by Teheran.[11] However, beyond further straining relations between Baghdad and Teheran, the Baathists' efforts did little to advance the objective of establishing Iraqi control over Khuzestan. Overall, shortly after coming to power, the Baath elite came to realize that there was no real likelihood of annexing Khuzestan as long as the powerful Pahlavi regime remained in power. But with the onset of the Iranian Revolution, the Baathists were well predisposed to mount a renewal of efforts to gain control over this prized territory.

Friction over the delineation of segments of the common frontier, particularly that consisting of the Shatt al-Arab, has been an additional, enduring source of interstate tension over the last several hundred years. Between 1520 and 1975, ten separate accords regarding the waterway were concluded.[12] Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, as well as during the first two decades of this century, Teheran struggled with the Porte to gain ascendancy over the Shatt al-Arab. Iran's monarchial rulers, throughout this epoch, consistently argued that, due to the fact that sixty percent of the Shatt al-Arab's water emanated from a number of Iranian rivers, Teheran was entitled to mastery over the estuary. Nonetheless, this position failed to elicit a favorable response from the Ottoman Sultanate.

In 1908, substantial petroleum deposits were discovered in Khuzestan and this development served to greatly heighten the importance of exerting control over the Shatt al-Arab. In 1913, Iran and the Ottoman Empire, along with Russia and Great Britain, which were vying to establish influence in the region, concluded the Constantinople Protocol, a key provision of which established a commission to arrive at a new settlement regarding the demarcation of the waterway. Shortly afterward, Ottoman and British envoys signed the London Declaration, which extended dominion over the Shatt al-Arab to Constantinople. The Iranian monarchy was opposed to the terms of the London Declaration and when Iraq was afforded limited autonomy in 1920, Teheran insisted that a formal recognition of Iraqi independence would be contingent upon Baghdad's willingness to renegotiate the delineation of the Shatt al-Arab. The imposing of this linkage was not well received in Baghdad, and when officials of the newly founded state announced that they intended to continue observance of the provisions of the 1913 accord and to retain the mandate over the waterway that had originally been granted to the Porte, Iran responded by terminating compliance with the London Declaration altogether, claiming that acceptance of the treaty had been forced by the British.[13] Teheran's discarding of the London Declaration, on the grounds that the accord had been concluded under

compulsion, established an important precedent of unilateral abrogation of interstate covenants between Iraq and Iran.

Rising Iranian disaffection toward Iraq's upper hand over the Shatt al-Arab resulted in the onset of aggression; throughout the 1920s, sporadic, armed clashes transpired between Iranian naval forces and the constabulary attached to the Basra Port Authority.[14] By the 1930s, the contest for control over the economically important river had come to constitute a salient feature of Iraqi-Iranian relations. At this juncture, Reza Shah began to challenge Baghdad's supremacy over the Shatt al-Arab before the League of Nations, maintaining that the estuary should be divided in accordance with the thalweg principle,[15] a provision of international law which holds that when two nations are divided by a waterway, the frontier will follow the mid-channel line. Teheran realized a minor concession with the conclusion of a new treaty in 1937 which, although it preserved Iraqi control over most of the Shatt al-Arab, stipulated that the waterway would be demarcated along the thalweg in proximity to the Iranian ports of Abadan and Khorramshahr.

The signing of the 1937 agreement ushered in a period of relative tranquility between Iraq and Iran, which endured until the late 1960s when Reza Shah's successor, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, became increasingly vexed over the 1937 pact, which he held to be in contravention of

international statute regarding interstate frontiers.[16] In addition, it was charged that Iraq had long been in noncompliance with various provisions of the treaty, principally those that established cooperation in the upkeep of the channel and the equal distribution of funds generated by usage levies exacted from commercial shipping. More precisely, the Shah openly accused Iraqi authorities of improperly using an excessive percentage of the collected revenue to improve Iraq's infrastructure rather than to maintain the Shatt al-Arab. The Pahlavi regime seized upon the alleged Iraqi infractions to advance an immediate, principal objective: the demarcation of the entire length of the waterway along the thalweg. However, the Baathists demonstrated an uncompromising unwillingness to accede to the Shah's demands and, in response, Iran opted to jettison adherence to the 1937 border pact. This event, which effected a regeneration of dormant ill-will between Baghdad and Teheran, marked the second occasion on which an Iranian ruler had unilaterally ceased observance of a major entente. And, it is not unreasonable to hold that Baghdad's scrapping of the Algiers accord in September of 1980 was likely influenced by a cognizance of Teheran's cavalier penchant for illegally suspending compliance with major ententes in the past.

Tension between Iraq and Iran rapidly mounted in the following years as the Shah placed increasing reliance upon

the use of force as a means of compelling the Baathists to abandon their efforts to maintain Iraqi sway over the Shatt al-Arab. As mentioned previously, a notable aspect of the Shah's campaign to weaken Baghdad's resolve against partaking in a new diplomatic conference regarding the frontier dispute, was the bestowing of indirect, and later direct, aid to Iraqi Shi'ite activist organizations and Kurdish separatists. By 1975, the cost of Iranian assistance to these elements had reached an intolerable level to the Baathists, who concluded that there was no alternative but to bow to the Shah's territorial objectives. Accordingly, at the annual OPEC summit in March, the Algiers agreement, the provisions of which were clearly preferential to Iran, was hastily concluded. The loss of mastery over the valuable estuary, coupled with Teheran's abetting of Baath opposition groups, imparted in most high-ranking Iraqi officials, particularly Saddam Hussein, an intense loathing of the Shah which, in turn, gave rise to a strong historical, predispositional basis for resorting to an incursion.

Degree of Iraqi Elite Unity Regarding the Efficacy of Attempting a Strategic Surprise

A nexus can be discerned between the strength of inducements for resorting to a surprise attack and the level of unanimity regarding the wisdom of such an undertaking prevalent among the aggressor's key governmental

actors. A strong incentive structure for carrying out a surprise inroad is more likely to arise in a state ruled by a powerful, ideologically united elite, and in which there exists a minimal level of bureaucratic obstacles to hamper the attainment of concurrence regarding the need of resorting to force. Over the last twenty years, the Iraqi polity has been under the near exclusive predomination of the narrowly based Baath elite, a significant percentage of the ranks of which beckon from the small Sunni village of Takrit, which is located in northwestern Iraq. From nearly the commencement of their tenure in 1968, the Baathists' governance has been predicated upon an intense cult of personality evolving around Saddam Hussein, which has come to be frequently alluded to as "Saddamism."

Saddam Hussein joined the Baath party at age twenty and in 1968, upon the Baathists coming to power, his political career took off when he was granted an influential position in the regime of President al-Bakr. Within a year of joining the Government, Hussein had advanced to the post of vice-chairman of the revolutionary Command Council,[17] the nation's most important governmental body. Saddam Hussein realized de facto determination over Iraq's political system in 1976, when President al-Bakr suffered a heart attack. From this point onward, Hussein endeavored feverishly to secure his position, and when he succeeded the ailing al-Bakr as de jure head-of-government on 16 July 1979, he had

already amassed an extraordinary concentration of political power vis-à-vis the acquisition of a number of important government, party, and military posts, including the following: secretary-general of the Baath party; chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council; commander-in-chief of Iraq's armed forces; and, prime minister.

Since coming to power, the Baathists have demonstrated an authoritarian leaning and have consistently endeavored to hamper the establishment of an ideologically pluralistic polity. In addition, the political atmosphere in Iraq became increasingly dictatorial with the ascendancy of Saddam Hussein, who came to demonstrate a totalitarian bearing approximating that of Stalin. The Iraqi despot effectively deterred open expressions of opposition to Baath political dominance by relying upon an effective and ubiquitous police force, euphemistically known as "Public Security" [Al-Mukhabarat], which was under the command of Barazan Ibrahim, a close confidant of Hussein, and which was afforded carte blanche to use violence in suppressing dissidence. By and large, since the onset of Baath rule, Iraq's populace has been denied basic civil liberties, particularly the right of free speech; the necessity of obtaining a permit to own a common typewriter constitutes conclusive evidence of the Baathists' repressive orientation.[18]

Immediately prior to the "retirement" of President al-Bakr, Saddam Hussein sacked Mohye Abdel Hussein, the secretary-general of the Revolutionary Command Council, who, it is important to note, was one of the few Shias holding a high government post in Iraq. This move was met with strong protest by al-Bakr, and this unwelcome reaction constituted the main impetus underlying Hussein's decision to quietly compel the widely respected president to resign his office. Furthermore, at this juncture, Hussein launched a campaign to oust the minority of ranking government and party officials who had expressed reservations regarding his aggressive designs of attacking revolutionary Iran and of establishing Iraq as a regional power. The Machiavellian Hussein opted to use the subterfuge of alleged, seditious conspiracy to purge perceived opponents of his objectives.

In mid-August, following summary trials conducted by hastily assembled, extraordinary tribunals, twenty-one alleged conspirators were found culpable of anti-government intrigue and were promptly executed; in addition, scores of other officials were sentenced to lengthy terms in jail. Chief among those put to death at this juncture was Adnan Hussein, the senior Shi'ite adherent within the regime, who held the posts of deputy prime minister and secretary of the Revolutionary Command Council. Adnan Hussein was succeeded by the hard-line Colonel Tareq Hamed al-Abdullah, an inveterate proponent of Saddam Hussein's hegemonic

aspirations. Overall, in consonance with the counsel of Machiavelli, Saddam Hussein eliminated the remaining vestiges of factional division within the upper echelons of the Baath governing elite with one violent purge.

By the time Saddam Hussein ascended to the presidency in mid-1979, the Baath party, the ranks of which had burgeoned to approximately one million members out of a total population of some twelve million, had become, unequivocally, the central institution of state and society in Iraq. Advancement within the political hierarchy, as well as the securing of personal wealth, was contingent upon a demonstration of unwavering support for the Baathist agenda. Simply put, only ardent Baath loyalists could realistically aspire to attain a position of political or financial eminence within Iraq. And, at this point, almost all important government posts were held by Baathists, resulting in a monopolization of political power by the party that made it almost indistinguishable from the Government. By and large, by mid-1980, the Baath elite, over which Saddam Hussein exercised ultimate authority, was able to conduct the final preparations for the envisioned effort to inflict a strategic surprise upon Khomeini's Iran, unhindered by intraregime opposition. This attribute stands as an important aspect of Baghdad's inducement structure.

Degree of Misperception in the Valuations Comprising the Iraqi Regime's Incentive Structure

The objective of the final section of this chapter is to gauge the level of accuracy of the estimations underlying Baghdad's motivations for undertaking a surprise military attack. Such an undertaking is of significant importance, for in doing so, the overall wisdom, or dearth of, behind the decision to resort to warfare can be determined which, in turn, can be of utility in proffering prescription against the outbreak of future conflicts. The principal error underlying the Baath regime's impetus to invade the Islamic Republic was an imprecise assessment of the extent of immediate threat posed by the Iranian Revolution to stability within Iraq. More precisely, the Baathists overestimated the potential for the Khomeinists to foster a burgeoning of Islamic fundamentalism in the southeastern region of the country.

With regard to the perceived threat of political destabilization represented by the Islamic Call and the Muslim Warriors, the Baathists erred by failing to clearly discern the limited extent of the affinity between these Shi'ite organizations and the Iranian churchmen. Although at the outset, the Islamic Call had been hopeful that the Islamic revolution would effect a major improvement of the lot of Iran's peasant masses which, in turn, might effect a similar, popular upheaval in Iraq and other surrounding

Muslim states, the increasingly despotic demeanor of the Khomeinists, along with rapidly escalating economic dislocation, served to diminish the organization's pro-Khomeini zeal. Irrespective of their espousal of a traditional Islamic lifestyle, it was the position of the Islamic Call that the Iranian clerics' attempts to base the Islamic Republic's political system and economy on antiquated, puritanical Shi'ite precepts was nonsensical and constituted the principal causal factor underlying the faltering of the revolution. Particularly troubling to ranking officials of the Islamic Call, including Murtada al-Askari, who was one of the founding members of the group, was the concept of rule by chief cleric.[19] Overall, the observations of the Khomeinists' shortcomings served to reinforce the belief that attempting to implement a wholly theocratic system of government in a developing state was untenable, and the Islamic Call's cadre became increasingly unreserved in their denunciations of the ruling Iranian clergy. And, there is little evidence to suggest that Baghdad gave ample consideration to the downturn in the relations between the Islamic Call and the Khomeiniite regime when estimating the likelihood of a surge of Shi'ite traditionalism in Iraq.

Beyond the ranks of the militant Shi'ite movements, and among the majority of Iraq's Shias, the prospect of attaching a more important, societal role to Islam stirred

little enthusiasm, and this unreceptivity largely stemmed from the generous level of social spending by the central government. Since coming to power, the Baathists, through the establishment of an extensive and viable social system, which has afforded the populace numerous privileges and amenities, including subsidized food, health care, housing, and education, as well as providing a high level of employment, have successfully mollified the Shi'ite majority. In addition, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, Saddam Hussein undertook measures to further placate the nation's Shias, which consisted mainly of the construction of mosques and religious shrines and the holding of numerous ceremonies in commemoration of Shi'ite holy days. Baghdad's efforts served to bolster the popular image of Hussein, while earning the respect and support of Shaikh Ali al-Saghir and Shaikh Ali Kashif al-Ghita, two preeminent churchmen based in Najaf.[20] Again, this factor was largely overlooked by the Baathists.

The stark contrast between the lot of Iraqi and Iranian Shias constituted a major factor underlying the generally low level of appeal for traditional Shi'ism within Iraq. Simply put, the former were not subjected to the squalid existence of the latter. By and large, the adverse ramifications upon the relationship between the Sunni-dominated Baath regime and the Shi'ite majority, which stemmed from the anti-Baath campaign conducted by the

Khomeinists, were negligible.[21] Beyond sporadic demonstrations in support of the Islamic revolution, which occurred throughout 1979 and 1980 in various Shi'ite holy centers in southeastern Iraq, the efforts by the Iranian zealots to foster large-scale unrest among Iraq's Shias were largely unsuccessful. In overall terms, the Baathists' incentive for attempting a strategic surprise against revolutionary Iran that stemmed from aversion to Shi'ite reaction, was largely grounded on misperception and overreaction.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the examination of Iraq's inducements for undertaking a surprise attack against the Islamic Republic. In the initial section it was argued that a predisposition for aggression stemming from a long history of bitter wrangling with Iran constituted an important component of the Baathists' incentive structure. Two major elements underlying the history of interstate friction between Iraq and Iran were identified: Teheran's open support for Iraqi Kurds and Shias in their struggle against the Baathists' monopolization of political power; and, Baghdad and Teheran's quest for regional supremacy. Proceeding from these observations, it can be generally posited that, although a history of strained relations between an aggressor and a target state is not an automatic catalyst to the onset of war, such a condition can augment

the former's incentives to attempt to strategically surprise the latter.

An additional, major point raised in Chapter Three was that the Baath elite enjoyed a high level of consensus regarding the necessity of militarily confronting revolutionary Iran. The disincentives militating against carrying out a surprise attack, and conversely, the extent of assent in Baghdad for doing so, were strongly influenced by the nation's political ambient. More clearly, the monocratic nature of the Iraqi polity served to mitigate disinclinations regarding the planned inroad while reinforcing concordance among the ruling elite for embarking on such an adventure. A nexus between the strength and unanimity of the central regime and the likelihood to mount a bid for strategic surprise can be inferred. Overall, similar to Hitler, immediately prior to commencing Operation Barbarossa, Saddam Hussein exercised absolute control over military and political power and was not inhibited by opposing sources of authority.

Lastly, with respect to the degree to which the Baath elite's appraisals and calculations were predicated on precise valuations, rather than overestimations and miscomprehension, it is not unreasonable to maintain that, overall, the conclusion reached by Baghdad that the various inducements and predispositions combined to constitute a strong incentive structure to undertake a military campaign

was based on a largely factual assessment. However, one notable error in the Baathists' considerations was identified: the belief that the Islamic revolution would foster an augmentation of Shi'ite fundamentalist zeal. By and large, the Iraqi leadership failed to attach sufficient importance to the venerable maxim that revolutions are not simple commodities easily "exported" from one state to another. Realistically, there was no real, imminent danger that Iraq's Shias would respond to Khomeini's frequent invocations by rising up and sweeping the Baathists from power and, on this score, Baghdad overreacted.

CHAPTER III NOTES

[1]Daniel Pipes, "A Border Adrift: Origins of the Conflict," in The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts, ed. Shirin Tahir-Kheli and Shaheen Ayubi (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), p. 9.

[2]Hanna Batatu, "Shi'i Organizations in Iraq: Al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah and al-Mujahidin," in Shi'ism and Social Protest, ed. Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 189.

[3]Ibid., p. 191.

[4]Ibid., p. 194.

[5]Sa'ad N. Jawad, "The Kurdish Problem in Iraq," in The Integration of Modern Iraq, ed. Abbas Kelidar (London: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1979), p. 171.

[6]Sharif M. Shuja, "Islamic Revolution in Iran and Its Impact on Iraq," Islamic Studies: Journal of the Islamic Research Institute 3 (Autumn 1980):219.

[7]Claudia Wright, "Iraq--New Power in the Middle East," Foreign Affairs 2 (Winter 1979-1980):261.

[8]Shuja, p. 222.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Pipes, p. 18.

[11]Richard W. Bulliet, "Time, Perceptions, and Conflict Resolution," in The Iran-Iraq War: Old Conflicts, New Weapons, ed. Thomas Naff (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1985), p. 71.

[12]Ibid., p. 73.

[13]Pipes, p. 17.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Shuja, p. 224.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Claudia Wright, "Behind Iraq's Bold Bid," The New York Times Magazine, 26 October 1980, p. 111.

[18]Eqbal Ahmad, "War of the Rentier States," Khamsin: Journal of the Revolutionary Socialists of the Middle East 12 (September 1986):49.

[19]Batatu, p. 191.

[20]Ibid., p. 196.

[21]Godfrey Jansen, "Dawn Eight Shakes the Gulf," Middle East International 269 (February 1986):3.

CHAPTER IV

IRAQ'S PERCEPTIONS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR STRATEGICALLY SURPRISING REVOLUTIONARY IRAN

The foregoing analysis of Baghdad's incentive structure as one principal element actuating its sudden onslaught against the Islamic Republic demonstrates the complexity of decision-making for mounting an effort at strategic surprise. The overriding objective of this chapter is to examine the observations of opportunity that animated the Baathists' conclusion that a surprise sally against Khomeini's Iran was feasible.

This inquiry will be conducted on the basis of the following course. First, the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity based on observations of quantitative and qualitative aspects of Iraq's military fighting and command capability, as well as the capacity to maintain secrecy and employ deception, are examined. Second, Baghdad's perceived opportunities effected by a waning of Iranian military power, as well as by economic dislocation and political strife, are discussed. Third, a further analysis of the authoritarian and unpluralistic nature of the Iraqi polity will be presented in order to show that the Baath regime's level of opportunity was not diminished by friction with

opposition political groups. Fourth, as the shortcomings in Baghdad's motivational perceptions were outlined in the preceding chapter, it is appropriate that the errors inherent in the Baathists' opportunistic valuations be identified in this chapter. And last, the major factors which influenced the timing of the inroad are analyzed.

Perceptions of Opportunity Engendered by Quantitative and Qualitative Indices of Military Power

In the Baathists' calculus of the degree of opportunity for attaining their defensive and aggressive objectives through a surprise attack, considerable importance was attached to quantitative indicators of military power, principally the total number of Iraqi combatants and armored support vehicles, as well as the number of combat aircraft. Furthermore, the highly centralized nature of the Iraqi military command, over which the Baath elite exerted supreme authority, served to reinforce Baghdad's confidence that the requisite level of secrecy needed to avert the affording of advanced warning of the impending attack to the Islamic Republic's leadership could be maintained.

In January of 1978, there was a considerable quantitative disparity between the regular Iraqi and Iranian armies; the former's comprised some 160,000 combatants, while the latter's numbered approximately 285,000. However, there was a rough parity in terms of the number of the

following types of armaments: nineteen hundred tanks for Iraq, compared to 1,875 for Iran; in terms of artillery pieces, Iraq had acquired 930 while Iran possessed 1,532; and, by this juncture, Iraq had amassed a fleet of fifteen hundred armored combat vehicles, while Iran's complement comprised 825.[1]

In an effort to diminish Iran's superiority in conventional ground forces, during the nineteen-month period between the Shah's downfall and the outbreak of war, the Baathists increased the number of active duty troops in the Iraqi army to 200,000, while acquiring an additional nine hundred tanks, including Soviet T-62s, T-72s, and the French AMX-30. In addition, Iraq took delivery of eight hundred more armored fighting vehicles, including advanced Spanish and French models, as well as one hundred artillery pieces of various calibre.[2]

Beyond expanding the ranks of the regular army, Baghdad further bolstered Iraq's ground forces in this period by modernizing the weaponry and training of the People's Army, a force comprising some 250,000 militia men organized into local units. By and large, based on observations of the narrowing of the Islamic Republic's quantitative advantage in ground forces, Saddam Hussein was confident that Iraq possessed an adequate infantry and armored capability to launch a successful inroad.

In terms of air power, by mid-1980, Iraq had acquired 339 warplanes, which were divided into three interceptor squadrons, two bomber squadrons, and twelve fighter-bomber wings.[3] Iraq's complement of combat aircraft largely consisted of Soviet-manufactured models, including the MIG-23, TU-22, and SU-7B. But beginning in 1977, Iraq began to purchase more advanced French aircraft, mainly Delta-2000s and the F-1 Mirage equipped with state-of-the-art Matra Super-530 missiles. In addition to fixed-wing aircraft, the Baathists had assembled a sizable fleet of some 286 combat helicopters which, in addition to the powerful Soviet MI-8s and MI-24s, included French Alouette IIIs and Super Frelons, as well as British Pumas and Gazelles. Overall, Baghdad was certain that the Iraqi air force was powerful enough to overwhelm Iranian air defenses in an unanticipated strike.

Beyond citing the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity which rested upon basic categories of military power, it is of equal importance to discuss Iraq's capability to conduct planning and preparations for the incursion into Iran in secrecy, as well as the ability to adroitly use deception. Baghdad's prowess, with regard to these important attributes, can be mainly attributed to the fact that the nation's military command was under the nearly exclusive sway of Saddam Hussein and a few trustworthy cohorts. Hussein exercised ultimate control over Iraq's

military forces through his position as commander-in-chief, and through his mastery over the Revolutionary Command Council, the ranks of which included the senior officers of the army, air force, and navy.[4] Moreover, the upper echelon of the Iraqi military command was staffed by a cohesive clique of ranking officers who, like Saddam Hussein, beckoned from the northern village of Takrit, and who demonstrated unqualified loyalty to the Iraqi leader.[5]

In line with the objective of cementing Baathist supremacy over the armed forces, active involvement in political affairs by both officers and enlisted men had been officially proscribed with a decree promulgated by the Revolutionary Command Council. In essence, this edict rendered any Iraqi citizen who had been a member of any political organization other than the Baath Party since 1968 ineligible for military service,[6] and observance of this statute was strictly enforced with transgressions punishable by death. Accordingly, by mid-1980, the Baath elite was able to make the necessary preparations for the conquest of revolutionary Iran, uninhibited by objections from professional military commanders. In short, by significantly diminishing the number of participants directly involved in the planning of the onslaught, the Baathists were able to preserve rigid secrecy and this bolstered Iraq's opportunity for realizing strategic surprise.

In addition to maintaining a high level of secrecy, the Baath elite was also in a suitable position to practice deception, mainly through the dissemination of disinformation vis-à-vis the media, which is under rigid state control. With regard to printed information, specifically newspapers, since 1967, the Press and Printing Organization, the membership of which consists exclusively of government appointees, and the Ministry of Culture and Guidance have controlled the printing of Iraq's four daily news publications. Likewise, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) is also under the direct control of Baghdad. And, the Iraqi Broadcasting and Television Establishment oversees the content of all radio and television broadcasts. Proceeding from these observations, it can be induced that the Baathists had free reign to use the nation's media sources as a medium through which to disinform revolutionary Iran, thus adding to the opportunity for attaining strategic shock.

Opportunity Predicated upon Observations of Iranian Vulnerability Engendered by a Reduction of the Size of the Nation's Armed Forces, Economic Dislocation, and Internal Political Fragmentation

Besides identifying the important quantitative and qualitative capabilities at the disposal of the Baathists, a study of Iraq's opportunity structure must also address the perceived, major deficiencies which rendered the Islamic Republic vulnerable to a strategic surprise. A major

consideration underlying Baghdad's sense of opportunity was the sharp trimming of the ranks of the various branches of the Iranian military following the onset of the revolution. Upon coming to power, the clerical regime set about to greatly diminish the size of the large and powerful military establishment founded by the Shah. The impetus for this design was grounded on two principal factors: a fear of counterrevolutionary machinations by the armed forces and a desire to greatly reduce defense expenditures. Indeed, the Pahlavi regime's obsession with the acquisition of expensive, technically advanced armaments, along with an attendant lack of regard for the financial plight of Iran's peasant masses, greatly contributed to the heightening of revolutionary fervor during the 1970s. For example, in the period from 1972 to 1978, Teheran outlayed approximately ten billion dollars for military hardware which, to Khomeini, represented a reprehensible squandering of national wealth that was "poisonous to the freedom of Iran."[7] Moreover, the Khomeinists' bent on weakening the military machine assembled by the Shah partially stemmed from a cognizance of the role of the armed forces in bloodily repressing the aspirations of the Iranian people.

In consonance with the shift in Teheran's military policy, the revolutionary Minister of Defense, Admiral Ahmad Madani, held on 7 March 1979, that the Islamic Republic was jettisoning the monarchial regime's emphasis on "possessing

the most advanced weapons and biggest bases."[8] Shortly afterward, Prime Minister Bazargan announced that the new national budget incorporated a sixty percent reduction in defense spending. And, on 9 August, it was disclosed that orders for approximately nine billion dollars worth of U.S. manufactured armaments and munitions were being cancelled. Accompanying this decision was the expulsion of some ten thousand American military advisers and technicians, which served to engender severe problems in operating and maintaining the vast array of complicated weapon systems purchased during the Shah's tenure.[9] These developments were welcomed in Baghdad and contributed to the Baathists' growing confidence in the feasibility of an incursion against Iran. With regard to the individual branches of the military, the Iranian army bore the brunt of the Khomeinists' wrath; in March of 1979, the revolutionary regime announced that the number of army troops would be reduced from 285,000 to 100,000. Beyond troop level reductions, the army's capability was further enfeebled by an inadequate level of technical expertise and a shortage of vital spare parts for its intricate weaponry. For example, within a short period of time, a significant percentage of Iran's complement of British Chieftain tanks was in varying states of disrepair, while the army's fleet of combat helicopters, which numbered 650 in January of 1978, had

fallen to an operational level of approximately fifteen percent.[10]

By September of 1980, Iraq's 200,000-man-strong army was facing a numerically inferior Iranian army, the ranks of which had actually been reduced to 150,000 combatants supported by approximately 850 functioning tanks, five hundred artillery pieces, and 850 armored fighting vehicles.[11] Overall, in strictly quantitative terms, the Iraqi army had come to wield a notable advantage over the army of the Islamic Republic, and this factor weighed heavily in the Baathists' estimations of opportunity.

Beyond the army, the operational readiness of the Iranian air force was also undermined. It has been estimated that in the initial months following the deposal of the Pahlavi regime, some twenty thousand air men deserted. The adverse ramifications of this development upon Iranian air power were further compounded by a grounding of a portion of the nation's American-produced F-4, F-5, and F-14 fighter aircraft, which largely arose due to a breakdown in the maintenance system. And, the difficulty and great expense in properly upkeeping such complex aircraft led Teheran to attempt to sell a number of these warplanes. On 3 August 1979, Foreign Minister Ebrahim Yazdi announced that the Islamic Republic was ready to consider serious offers to purchase its fleet of F-14s,

which were deemed to be wholly superfluous for the nation's actual defense requirements.

In mid-1980, Iraqi military intelligence analysts were estimating that less than two hundred of Iran's warplanes were ready to engage in combat.[12] Baghdad viewed the impairment of the formidable air force established by the Shah in positive terms. In short, proceeding from a cognizance of the various problems hampering the Islamic Republic's air capability, the Baath elite concluded that in executing the invasion, Iraqi ground forces would encounter only light resistance from Iranian warplanes.

A waning of Iranian naval power further heightened the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity. Shortly after coming to power, the Khomeiniite regime ordered the halt in construction of the large naval yard at Chah Bahar, a decision that was in line with the stated policy end of abandoning the hegemonical role played by the Pahlavi administration. In addition, Iran's flotilla of warships was beset by support problems; on 1 December 1979, the Kuwaiti newspaper, Al Waton, maintained that the Islamic Republic's navy had "lost half its operational capability."[13] Baghdad was further encouraged by the inability of many Iranian naval vessels, due to mechanical breakdown, to complete large-scale exercises conducted in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and northern Arabian Sea in April of 1980. By and large, Saddam Hussein perceived the

lackluster performance of the Iranian naval forces as signifying a lessening of the difficulty in forcibly establishing Iraqi dominion over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, one of the primary designs to be realized vis-à-vis the surprise attack.

Besides calculations regarding the lapse in Iran's military capability, the Iraqi leadership's opportunity structure for realizing strategic surprise was reinforced by observations of the severe economic dislocation which developed in the Islamic Republic. A number of economic problems that had originated during the Shah's reign became more acute following the onset of the revolution. For example, the national level of unemployment, which had stood at approximately twenty-five percent of the Iranian labor force in January of 1978, burgeoned to a crippling forty-five percent by January of 1980.[14] The upsurge in unemployment was mainly effected by the following developments: the sudden halting of numerous, large-scale construction projects initiated by the Shah; the cancellation of numerous defense contracts; and a drop in petroleum production. By October of 1979, demonstrations in protest of the rising level of unemployment were occurring on a regular basis.

The designs of the clerical regime regarding the restructuring of the economy contributed heavily to the spiraling dislocation. Khomeini championed a number of

populistic economic ideas, including a major redistribution of wealth, as well as an establishment of strict limitations on the ownership of private property, both of which were in line with the imperative of improving the quality of life for Iran's indigent masses.[15] Central to the cleric's revolutionary economic agenda was an application of the Shi'ite principle of defending the "downtrodden" [mustaz'afeen] which, according to Khomeini, necessitated an elimination of the squalid manner of existence brooked by Iranian peasants who, during the final years of the monarchial epoch, had been alluded to by the elite as "thirty million donkeys."[16]

Toward realizing the objective of establishing a more equitable economic system, the clerical regime initiated a program to nationalize key industrial and financial enterprises. It was the position of the churchmen that the lack of infrastructural development and pandemic poverty within Iran could be mainly ascribed to the former royalist regime's willingness to allow Western powers, principally the United States and Great Britain, to exploit the nation's resources.

In his "Islamic Government," Khomeini maintained that the West was determined to capitalize on Iran's minerals and petroleum, and that it was endeavoring to "turn our country into a market for their goods."[17] To the revolutionary authorities, nationalization constituted the

soundest prescription with which to remedy Iran's economic overdependence on the West. The petroleum industry was the first to come under state control and, in June of 1979, all banks were nationalized. The Khomeinists evidenced their determination to establish central control over traditionally exploitative industries by including a nationalization clause in the new constitution of the Islamic Republic, which was ratified through a national referendum conducted on 14 December 1979:

> With the approval of Parliament certain sectors of industry, commerce, and agriculture that are being managed against the public interest may be nationalized.[18]

Similar to the negative Western reaction to the efforts of the popular regime of Mohammed Mossadeq to diminish external control over Iran's natural resources, particularly petroleum and natural gas, in the early 1950s, the Khomeiniite government's nationalization plans elicited strong protest in Washington, Tokyo, and various western European capitals, and was met with a number of retaliatory measures, including punitive sanctions, which served to further complicate Teheran's efforts toward economic reconstruction and development.

The United States led the international effort to economically punish revolutionary Iran. An embargo on the purchase of Iranian petroleum products was imposed by Washington in mid-1979 and, by mid-1980, a number of other industrialized powers, including Japan, Great Britain, and

West Germany, had also suspended oil imports from the Islamic Republic. In addition to boycotting Iranian oil, Washington, partly as a response to the overrunning of the American Embassy in Teheran and the seizure of a number of diplomats by students loyal to Khomeini, attached some eight billion dollars of Iranian assets deposited in American banks. A number of other nations adopted similar measures; on 25 June 1980, Foreign Minister Qotzbadeh disclosed that the amount of Iranian capital garnished abroad stood at approximately twelve billion dollars.[19] In addition, by mid-1980, foreign investment in Iran had decreased by a staggering eighty-seven percent.[20] Coinciding with this event was a near complete cessation of Western credit and, as a result, investment in new industrial ventures dropped by nearly eighty-eight percent, which amounted to a virtual halt of industrial growth.

The various punitive economic measures applied by the West had a particularly disruptive effect upon Iran's oil industry, the nation's most important source of income. For example, the number of barrels of oil exported from Iran's largest transshipment facility at Kharq Island had dropped to a mere 500,000 per day by May of 1980, which constituted a stark contrast to pre-revolution days when some 2.5 million barrels were loaded there on a daily basis. Overall, in the period from January 1979 to May 1980, the Islamic Republic's total daily petroleum production rate

plummeted from five million to under one million barrels.[21] The revolutionary regime attempted to offset the loss of revenue effected by the diminution in the daily exportation level by breaking with the standard set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and unilaterally raising the price of a barrel of crude oil. However, the rise in the cost of an Iranian barrel of oil failed to yield Teheran any substantial financial advantages, for this decision prompted additional nations to look beyond Iran for alternative sources of petroleum. By and large, observations of the mounting economic problems in the Islamic Republic, especially those affecting the oil industry, led the Baath elite to believe that loss of Khuzestan would greatly weaken the Khomeiniite regime. And, this conclusion served to bolster the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity for attaining their enterprising objectives through a surprise attack focused on southwestern Iran.

A cognizance of the political dissension fostered by the multitude of ideologically disparate organizations opposed to the values espoused by the extremist, pro-clerical Islamic Republican Party (IRP), which was headed by Ayatollah Mohammed Behesti, constituted a further aspect of the Baathists' opportunity structure. These opposition groups included the following: the Iran Freedom Front, which was led by Prime Minister Bazargan and which advocated a political system founded on a blending of

various positive features of Islamic doctrine and modern democratic principle;[22] the National Front, alternatively known as the "Union for the National Front Force," which was a coalition of various secular factions that believed the fundamentalist churchmen were moving the nation "toward a new form of fascism;"[23] the National Democratic Front, which supported the establishment of a system of government that would safeguard basic civil liberties and effect an improvement in the living conditions for Iran's peasantry;[24] the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, led by Nure-Din Kianuri which, albeit at the outset of the revolution had extended support to Khomeini and his colleagues, was gradually disillusioned by the cleric's anti-Soviet bearing; the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which was averse to the Persian nationalism extolled by the ministerial government; and, lastly, a number of Arab nationalist groups based in Khuzestan.

From the Baath elite's standpoint, the dissension that came to the fore in Khuzestan between the clerical authorities and the ethnic Arab indigenous, which largely stemmed from the latter's struggle to secure limited, regional autonomy from Teheran, constituted the most important of the various cleavages prevailing in revolutionary Iran. Accordingly, Baghdad sought to exacerbate the strife between the Khomeinists and the Khuzestani Arabs. Pursuant to this end, which was predicated on the premise that a Khuzestan torn by internal

upheaval would render the task of conducting a successful, surprise inroad far less arduous, the Baathists attempted to incite anti-Khomeini sentiment in the region through the use of propagandistic radio broadcasts entitled the "Voice of the Masses,"[25] and by extending support to a number of guerrilla groups operating there.

The two principal irredentist organizations which benefitted from Iraqi assistance were the Al-Ahwaz Liberation Front and the "Arabistan" Front. In the summer of 1979, Baghdad began to offer the Khuzestani guerrillas insurgency training at a base within proximity to Basra.[26] Similar to Iraqi Kurds operating from bases in northwestern Iran, Khuzestani Arab fighters were able, with Iraqi assistance, to carry out cross-frontier attacks upon military bases and petroleum processing facilities. The Baath regime believed that in return for proffering a considerable level of aid to the insurgents in their bid for local self-governance, the Khuzestani populace would welcome and support an Iraqi incursion that aimed at ending Teheran's control over the region and at deposing the traditionalist clerical regime. The Baathists' conviction on this score led to the conclusion that only two army divisions would be needed to overrun Iranian defenses and secure control over Khuzestan.

The Iraqi elite's belief that the churchmen exercised only a tenuous control over revolutionary Iran was

further reinforced by the perceptions of a number of important Iranian exiles who had taken up residence in Baghdad. The anti-clerical expatriates organized the National Iranian Resistance Movement. The movement's political affairs were guided by Shahpur Bakhtiar, who had briefly served as prime minister prior to the Shah's fall, and Lieutenant General Gholam Reza Oveissi, who had served as the military administrator of Teheran during the Pahlavi era, assumed control over military matters.[27] To the delight of the Baathists, Bakhtiar regularly denounced Khomeini's ability to lead Iran; on one occasion, the former premier charged that Khomeini was "an out of date, narrow-minded dictator who can only destroy and does not know how to construct."[28]

The Baath government, in an effort to assist the Iranian resistance in its anti-Khomeini campaign, afforded the counterrevolutionaries led by Bakhtiar and Oveissi the use of several Iraqi military bases, as well as a large amount of weaponry. In addition, Baghdad allowed the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to establish a radio station on Iraqi soil for the dissident forces, which was dubbed the "Free Voice of Iran"[29] and which was utilized to beam anti-clerical propaganda into the Islamic Republic.

In June of 1979, General Oveissi circulated a report in which it was maintained that some 150,000 Iranian troops stood ready to support a foreign incursion that aimed at

ousting the Khomeinists from power.[30] Oveissi's estimation of the degree of counterrevolutionary sentiment within the ranks of the Iranian military was well received by the Baathists. Moreover, by July of 1980, Bakhtiar was openly insisting that the Khomeiniite regime was near collapse. In short, Baghdad held the expatriate's valuations regarding the number of Iranians who would lend direct support to an Iraqi bid to forcibly topple the clerical government to be highly credible which, in turn, contributed to the conviction that a considerable opportunity existed for attaining both defensive and offensive objectives vis-à-vis a surprise attack.

Opportunity Fostered by the Monocratic Nature of the Iraqi Political System

Analogous to arriving at a lucid, in-depth grasp of Baghdad's incentive framework, a citing of the influence of the absolutist orientation of Baath governance, along with the attendant paucity of strong political opposition organizations, is comparably essential in understanding the complex opportunity structure underlying Iraq's decision to risk a bid for strategic surprise. Overall, this section will demonstrate the degree to which the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity for strategically surprising revolutionary Iran were affected by the nature of the domestic political equation.

Beyond purging the upper ranks of the Baath administration of all officials who expressed apprehension regarding the envisioned onslaught against Iran, Saddam Hussein, shortly after the Khomeinists came to power, launched a concerted effort to eliminate all opposing political groups and to firmly establish Iraq as a one-party polity under the unequivocal mastery of the Baathists. The Iraqi despot pursued this end with a ruthless bent. An immediate objective of Hussein's monocratic agenda was to dismantle the National Progressive Peoples Front, a loose coalition formed in May of 1973 comprising the Baathists and various other political organizations, mainly the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP),[31] which was the only other Iraqi party that wielded a consequential level of support.

The Iraqi Communist Party, due to its conflicting positions regarding a number of important domestic issues, principally, the Kurdish imbroglio, and because of its long-standing efforts to break the Baathists' upper hand over Iraq's political system, was looked upon by Saddam Hussein and his associates with odium. And, accordingly, a number of measures were initiated in mid-1979 to undermine the organization, beginning in April with a thirty-day suspension of the printing and distribution of Tariq al-Shaab, the Iraqi Communist newspaper. Shortly afterward, the Baathists brought the favored stratagem of purported conspiracy into play against the ICP; a number of the

movement's top cadre were detained on charges of attempting to establish party "cells" within the ranks of the nation's armed forces, which was held to be in line with the Communist's ultimate design of toppling the Government.

As a means of further fabricating a semblance of a legitimate pretext for the wave of repression against the ICP, which included the meting out of death sentences and lengthy terms of incarceration to those ranking party officials implicated in the thwarted "plot" to stir unrest within the military, the Baathists charged that the leadership of the ICP was colluding with "Zionists and Israel,"[32] the supreme nemeses of Arab nationalists, in an effort to promote political dissension throughout Iraq. In addition, in February of 1980, the Voice of the Students [Sauut al-Taleb], a periodical with a discernible pro-Baath leaning, charged that the ICP had established links with the British Communist Party and Israeli diplomats posted in London. In short, by propagating an image of the ICP as acting in concert with the "Zionist entity," an avowed threat to Iraq as well as to the Arab nation in general, the Baath elite was able to persecute the party without fear of adverse public reaction.

Repeated open assertions by the ICP's leaders that the Baathists' charges were without foundation failed to deter Saddam Hussein from realizing his objective of ending active opposition by the Communists. By the eve of the

commencement of the war, the leadership of the ICP, due to Baath orchestrated excesses, had been compelled to abandon efforts to openly participate in the political process and to adopt an underground form of opposition against the Baath autocracy. Overall, by driving the Communist movement underground, the Baathists succeeded in effectively eliminating the last remaining vestige of notable political opposition and, as a result, Saddam Hussein and his associates' perceptions of opportunity for carrying out a successful armed campaign were not diminished by concern for a compromising of secrecy or resistance by rival political groups.

The Level of Inaccuracy Underlying the Baathists' Estimations of Opportunity: Failure to Discern Potential, Adverse Consequences Inherent in Seeking to Strategically Surprise Revolutionary Iran

To this point, the analysis of this chapter has been directed toward the major aspects of the Baathists' opportunity structure; however, similar to arriving at a comprehensive understanding of the protagonist's incentives, it is necessary to evaluate the degree to which perceptions of opportunity for attaining goals through aggression were based on reasonably accurate observations. Clearly, the Baath regime's opportunity structure entailed a number of faulty judgments regarding the likely, short-term and long-term ramifications that would emerge from the attack on the Islamic Republic. Basically, Baghdad

proceeded from numerous inaccurate calculations regarding the following factors: the actual prowess of the Islamic Republic's military forces; the military and economic vulnerability of Iraq to armed Iranian counterattacks; the overall difficulty and assorted complexities inherent in carrying out a bid to seize control of Khuzestan; and the nature of the political atmosphere within revolutionary Iran.

First and foremost, from a military perspective, the Iraqi regime erred by committing an inadequate number of ground troops to the opening thrust into Iran. Albeit initially, the invading Iraqi forces did realize a significant degree of surprise and, subsequently, were able to make major advances against only light resistance, particularly in Khuzestan, which was defended by a single, understrength army division,[33] the resolve of Iranian troops to rally and initiate intense counterattacks was not grasped by the Baathists. By and large, an overemphasis was placed by Iraqi strategists upon the diminution in the size of the Iranian army. This foible of strategic import can be largely attributed to the failure to foresee the ferocious, martial elan which various irregular Iranian forces, principally the Revolutionary Guards [Pasdaran], would display in repelling an Iraqi incursion.

In addition, in the tumult that was spawned by the onset of the revolution, many military compounds were looted

of weapons and ammunition, which were utilized to form a number of local militia units assigned the principal mission of defending the revolution. When combined, the various revolutionary defense groups amounted to a formidable, largely unanticipated obstacle to the Baathists' immediate designs, mainly the rapid overrunning of Khuzestan. The zeal of the irregular Iranian forces to engage in bloody urban warfare served to prevent Iraqi troops from securing control over the major metropolitan centers of the region, namely Ahwaz, Abadan, and Khorramshahr. The estimated cost, in terms of Iraqi casualties, in attempting to lay siege to Khuzestan's cities, was deemed to be prohibitive by Baghdad and, as a result, only a few months after the initiation of the conflict, the Iraqi offensive was stalled.

Beyond failing to arrive at a precise appraisal of the capability of Iranian ground forces to mount strong resistance, the Baath elite did not afford adequate consideration to a number of qualitative shortcomings hampering Iraqi infantry forces, the most important of which was a dearth of actual combat experience against a foreign adversary.[34] By and large, the Iraqi army had not demonstrated a notable prowess in prior military engagements; Iraqi troops played only a minor role in the 1948-1949 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. And, in a clash with the Israeli army on the Golan Heights during the brief

conflict of October 1973, the bulk of Iraq's Soviet-supplied tank corps was destroyed in a matter of hours.[35]

This routing abroad was followed by an extreme difficulty in quelling the Kurdish insurgency at home. A rigid adherence to Soviet military doctrine without the holding of regular maneuvers constitutes one plausible explanation for the limited battle effectiveness of Iraqi troops.[36] In short, by not considering the lackluster performance of Iraqi infantry and armored forces in past engagements, Baghdad overlooked an important determining factor when arriving at its estimations regarding the likelihood of successfully invading Khuzestan.

Parallelling the imprecise rating of Iraqi and Iranian ground forces, the Baathists also misjudged the competence of the Iraqi air force, as well as the vulnerability of Iraq to counterstrikes by Iranian warplanes. The Iraqi military command counted on taking a number of Iranian air bases by surprise, thereby significantly reducing the capacity of Teheran to launch air counterattacks. However, the Iraqi air force proved wholly inadequate for this task. It is important to note that in September of 1980, Iraqi pilots were still undergoing familiarization training with the recently acquired French Mirage and Delta 2000 aircraft, and these advanced warplanes were unavailable for use in the crucial, initial days of the war. As a result, Baghdad was relegated to rely exclusively

on various models of Soviet-produced aircraft, which lacked the essential range capacity and highly accurate weapon systems needed to effectively strike military and industrial targets deep within the Islamic Republic.[37]

Irrespective of the undertaking of numerous sorties by Iraqi warplanes against Iranian targets during the first week of the conflict, the Islamic Republic sustained only minor damage. Air strikes against the petroleum processing plants at Isfahan and Tabriz effected only a temporary disruption of production, while the Teheran, Kharq Island, and Shiraz facilities remained largely unscathed.[38] In addition, although Iraqi aircraft were able to arrive over a number of western Iranian air fields undetected, few Iranian warplanes were destroyed. The poor execution of the Iraqi air attacks can be largely attributed to the absence of an effective capability to gather accurate, up-to-date military intelligence regarding selected targets, as well as the limited quality of Soviet air combat training. Simply put, Iraqi pilots were incapable of conducting high-precision, low-level air strikes.[39]

The Baath leadership also erred by not discerning the high level of Iraq's exposure to counteraggression by Iranian air power. Contrary to Baghdad's original expectations, Teheran rapidly responded to the inroad by ordering a series of highly destructive sorties. Iraqi military installations, petroleum processing, transshipment

facilities, and economically vital infrastructural sites bore the brunt of the Iranian reprisals. In the opening weeks of the war, Iranian F-4 and F-5 fighter-bombers wreaked havoc on the following targets: military bases in proximity to Baghdad and Basra; the oil fields and pipelines in the Mosul-Kirkuk area; the huge oil refinery at Basra; the Mina, Khor, and al-Bakr petroleum loading plants;[40] and a number of important dams along the Zab River. Following the Iranian retaliation, Iraq was left with only one remaining loading terminal on the Gulf coast, and this was located on the vulnerable Fao Peninsula, in proximity to the Kuwaiti frontier. By and large, within a brief period of time, Iraq's capacity to export petroleum was significantly diminished which, consequently, effected a substantial revenue loss. This development proved to be only one of many unforeseen, adverse ramifications stemming from the Baathists' ill-fated adventure.

Baghdad's erroneous calculations regarding Iranian air power, along with the concurrent extent of Iraq's vulnerability to a retributory air blitz, can be largely attributed to the overemphasis placed upon observations of the reduction, due to a weakened maintenance capability, of the number of flightworthy Iranian warplanes, as well as to an overlooking of the marginal quality of the Iraqi air defense network. In qualitative terms, irrespective of the fact that only approximately fifty percent of the Iranian

complement of state-of-the-art combat aircraft were in a condition of operational readiness in September of 1980, this amounted to a superior force compared to Iraq's largely Soviet-equipped air force.[41]

In addition, Iran's highly-skilled, Israeli and American trained pilots were able to evade Iraq's radar detection system and batteries of technically mediocre, Soviet surface-to-air (SAM) missiles by conducting low-level sorties.[42] Overall, the Baath leadership vested excessive confidence in the evaluations of a number of Western military analysts and Iranian exiles regarding the enervation of the Iranian air force. No independent, in-depth study of the actual degree of breakdown of the Islamic Republic's air capability effected by the revolution was undertaken by Baghdad, and this key omission constituted the major factor behind the unanticipation of massive Iranian air counterattacks.

The Iraqi elite's perceptions of opportunity were also under the sway of incorrect analysis of the degree of naval power at the disposal of the Islamic Republic and the attendant threat of interdiction of Iraq's petroleum outlets on the Gulf. In short, Baghdad committed a major strategic error in failing to accord adequate consideration to the qualitative and quantitative disparity between the small Iraqi navy, which comprised only four thousand sailors and the thirty thousand man-strong Iranian navy.

By and large, Iraq lacked a strong naval capability; the Baath leadership was cognizant that the nation's small flotilla of six patrol boats and twelve missile attack boats, which were routinely breaking down due to mechanical dysfunctions,[43] did not constitute a formidable defense against seaborne onslaughts. And, while a large naval installation had been established at Umm Qasr, the base was in close proximity to Iranian territory and could only be reached through the confined Khawr Abd Allah waterway, which runs between the Iraqi mainland and a number of Kuwaiti islands.

In addition, the port at Fao, along with the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab were within striking distance of Iranian forces positioned on Abadan Island.[44] Moreover, the Iraqi air force was untrained in flying sorties against enemy naval vessels.[45] Finally, the Iraqi elite did not attach importance to the fact that, irrespective of maintenance problems, Iran was able to deploy several of its powerful destroyers and frigates. Paradoxically, these various capability shortcomings and accompanying vulnerabilities were dismissed as inconsequential by the Baathists. This anomaly can be largely ascribed to Baghdad's mistaken belief that its war plans would be rapidly realized in a campaign of short duration and, accordingly, the importance of the Islamic Republic's naval forces would be negated.

Beyond strictly military considerations, as was previously mentioned, the Iraqi regime's opportunity structure was also partially grounded upon an anticipation of support from Khuzestan's Arab minority and various political groups averse to the clerics' ideological imperatives. On the face of it, Iraqi expectations on this score were predicated on the following incorrect premise: that a successful incursion and the seizure of Khuzestan, which would be abetted by Arab insurgents, would serve to diminish the popular support of the Khomeinists while effecting a concomitant bolstering of secular groups within Iran which, ultimately, would result in the emergence of a centrist, lay government that would pose no threat to the standing political order in Iraq. However, regardless of widespread discontent, the Khuzestani Arabs were not inclined to embrace a foreign invasion force. And, in spite of the existence of a number of countervailing ideological elements, political power within revolutionary Iran was dominated by the Shi'ite churchmen, who wielded widespread, grass-roots support. In short, the Baathists failed to recognize the extent of the unifying influence of national identification among the Khuzestani Arabs and Islamic zeal among the Iranian peasant masses.

Baghdad did not thoroughly consider various ethnic, religio-cultural and historical factors in assuming that an irruption of Khuzestan would be met with significant backing

by the region's indigenous. To the contrary, the Arab minority readily joined in the effort to roll back the Iraqi inroad. In many respects, Baghdad's allusion to Khuzestan as "Arabistan" appears quite paradoxical when the ethnic composition of the local populace is considered. In light of the fact that ethnic Arabs comprised only approximately two-fifths of the nearly 3.5 million inhabitants of Khuzestan, which constituted a mere three percent of the Iranian population as a whole,[46] the expectation of an outpouring of strong support for Iraqi invasion forces seems groundless.

Furthermore, in assuming that the Iranian Arabs would rise up in support of the incursion, the Iraqi leadership failed to note an important fact: the Arab minority of Khuzestan consisted predominately of Shia Muslims who did not espouse the ardent Arab nationalism championed by the Sunni-dominated Baath regime.[47] The specter of "autonomy" under Iraqi dominion was not relished by the Khuzestani Arabs. Accordingly, direct Iraqi assistance in realizing their local objectives, mainly, limited self-rule and a greater percentage of the revenue generated by petroleum sales, was not sought after. And although a percentage of Khuzestani Arabs are descendants of nomadic tribesmen who immigrated to southwestern Iran from traditional homelands in eastern Iraq, a number of successive Iranian monarchs, beginning with Reza Shah,

brought about the "Persianization" of the Arab minority through various measures, including replacing Arabic with Persian as the medium of instruction in regional schools and forced relocations.[48] As a result, by 1980, apart from several extremist guerrilla groups, which commanded narrow followings, there was little Arab nationalist sentiment within Khuzestan.

Regarding the anticipated level of support for the anti-Khomeini campaign among the entire population, Baghdad attached undue importance to the mere existence of political organizations averse to the ideological stripe favored by the traditionalist churchmen and further erred by not considering the volatile nature of the revolutionary upheaval. The inherent danger in launching an attack upon a state experiencing the socio-political trauma of a true revolution escaped the Baathists, who failed to realize that the unmitigated rage of the Iranian populace, which had prompted the once powerful Shah to flee, could readily be directed outward toward Iraq. Far from bringing out a sudden burgeoning of discontent toward clerical governance, the Iraqi inroad galvanized the Khomeiniite regime's position by providing an external menace with which to channel the attention and energy of the Iranian people who, contrary to Baghdad's presumptions, proved bent on vigorously challenging any counterrevolutionary intrusions.[49] Overall, proceeding from the extensive

evidence presented in this section, it can be accurately maintained that the Baathists' perceptions of opportunity for strategically shocking Iran encompassed a number of strategic oversights. This factor constitutes an important explanation for the unanticipated outcome of the surprise attack.

Determinants Influencing the Timing of the Undertaking of the Surprise Onslaught

The factors which conditioned the Baath regime's decision-making regarding when to initiate the attack constitutes the final variable to be analyzed in this chapter. Planning for the incursion into the Islamic Republic commenced in August of 1979, shortly after Saddam Hussein forced President Bakr to step down,[50] and a hastening of the preparations transpired in early 1980. With regard to actual timing, Baghdad aimed at exploiting seasonal weather shifts to its advantage. More precisely, Baath strategists concluded that by commencing the inroad and occupying Khuzestan prior to the beginning of the long, cold winter in northern Iran, a significant percentage of the Iranian populace would be denied access to adequate supplies of home heating and cooking fuel, and that the extreme discomfort generated by such a development, along with numerous, already existent hardships stemming from the revolution, would hasten a heightening of disaffection toward the Khomeinists.[51] In addition, it was decided that

the Iranian governing elite would not expect a major attack focused on the southwestern region of the country on the eve of the onset of the annual rainy season and attendant flooding there, which usually takes place in November. Accordingly, it was assumed that by executing the onslaught in early autumn, a significant degree of surprise would be attained.

The Iraqi regime's decision to embark on the conquest of Iran in September of 1980 was also influenced by perceptions that the clerical government was beginning to make headway in its program of revamping the nation's military forces along revolutionary lines. In March of 1980, a number of representatives of the Islamic Republic traveled to London to conduct a parley regarding the renegotiation of some orders for armaments and spare parts that had previously been cancelled; of particular concern to Baghdad was Teheran's effort to acquire badly needed equipment for Iran's large complement of British tanks.[52] In addition, in mid-1980, the Baathists observed that the number of Iranian troops stationed along the common frontier was being gradually increased. Overall, Iraq opted to strike at a time that would afford an optimum level of surprise and before its perceived military advantages dissipated. And, although the anticipated swelling of anti-clerical sentiment did not obtain, it can be surmised that, given the fact that Khuzestan and other key stretches of the

Iranian border with Iraq were lightly defended in September of 1980, the Baathists' careful planning regarding the timing of the onslaught added to the considerable degree of initial surprise visited upon revolutionary Iran.

Conclusion

Chapter Four demonstrated that, similar to the inducements for aggression, the Baath elite's opportunity structure rested upon a number of complex, interrelated factors. It was argued that the Baathists' sense of opportunity for realizing strategic surprise stemmed from perceptions of various military power advantages wielded by Iraq, as well as from a belief that, beyond a reduction in size, the morale and effectiveness of Iran's armed forces had also declined. In addition, it was held that Baghdad was further encouraged by the economic problems and political unrest which came to the fore in revolutionary Iran. Moreover, it was noted that the authoritarian nature of Baath governance served to bolster the opportunity for effectively employing a surprise attack. And, questions were raised regarding the overall accuracy of the Baathists' opportunistic calculations. Finally, it was argued that the decision regarding the date of the initiation of the attack was not arrived at in a sudden and whimsical manner but, alternatively, was the end result of a considerable level of utility-oriented deliberations conducted by the Iraqi elite.

Central to Baghdad's opportunity structure was an observation of a fundamental shift in the military balance between Iraq and Iran. The Iraqi leadership was convinced that the enervation and general breakdown in order gripping Iran's conventional defense forces accorded ample opportunity to overrun and annex the long-treasured Khuzestan region. The Baathists' analysis was wholly predicated upon quantitative indices of military power, largely the ratio of tanks, aircraft, and individual combatants possessed by Iraq and Iran.

However, the overreliance on the numerical imbalance, in terms of various types of armaments, stands as one of the cardinal flaws underlying the Baath elite's estimations of opportunity. By overemphasizing the importance of the approximate edge in basic, conventional armed forces, Baghdad overlooked a number of significant intangibles, including the unmitigated ferocity demonstrated by bands of irregular Iranian combatants, as well as the constraining limitations of the actual experience and prowess of the Iraqi military machine in executing the incursion and defending against Iranian counteraggression.

Baghdad was greatly mistaken in believing that an incursion would evoke a groundswelling of anti-clerical sentiment which, in turn, would culminate in the deposal of the Khomeiniite cabal and the ascendancy of a less unsavory ruling elite. The myopia of the Baathists in this respect

can be principally ascribed to a failure to discern that the mobilization of the Iranian populace for the revolutionary drive against the royalist regime had been largely effected through local mosques and, as a result, the plethora of secular opposition groups did not command wide followings.

Moreover, in mid-1980, regardless of a considerable degree of economic duress, the masses in Iran demonstrated no tactile signals that thoughts of ousting the Khomeinists were being entertained. In short, although the Iranian elite was caught offguard by the Iraqi irruption, the undertaking of which would have likely been jettisoned only if a moderate, secular Iranian elite had come to the fore on its own volition, the antithesis of a brief, fruitful inroad occurred: the inception of a seemingly interminable, total war between Iraq and Iran that came to seriously threaten the long-term continuation of Baath governance.

CHAPTER IV NOTES

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CHAPTER V

REVOLUTIONARY IRAN'S EXPOSURE TO STRATEGIC SURPRISE: MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL CAUSAL FACTORS

The overriding emphasis of the preceding three chapters was placed upon illuminating the Iraqi elite's inducements and perceptions of opportunity for attaining strategic surprise. Toward providing a fuller picture of the case at hand, the analysis will now shift to a more in-depth focus on the conditions that rendered Iran susceptible to surprise attack. The initial section of this chapter further delves into the assorted developments and problems that contributed to the diminution of the capability of Iran's military forces to rapidly repel an incursion. The second section addresses the breakdown of Iran's intelligence services and how this development weakened the capability to gauge the objectives of adversaries, including Iraq. And, the third section entails a thorough examination of the high level of political division that developed in revolutionary Iran and how this factor detracted the attention of the de jure and de facto elites away from external affairs.

Vulnerability Arising from Transition in the Composition of the Military, Disadvantageous Positioning of Forces, and a Breakdown of Strategy and Defensive Planning

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Khomeinists' determination to fundamentally restructure the nation's military forces, an end which the secular government partially supported, stemmed from the extreme level of brutality demonstrated by the armed forces in the vain effort to suppress popular demonstrations against the Shah's oppressive governance, along with a concern that stalwart champions of monarchial rule within the military might attempt to organize counterrevolutionary efforts. To forestall the occurrence of such an unwelcome development, a number of reform measures were initiated. In general, the ultimate objective of the dominant clerical elite was to abolish the wide societal division between the military and the common masses, a condition that had been fostered by the royalist regime. Alternatively, the military was to be transformed into popular forces that would adhere to the paramount purpose of safeguarding the welfare of the Iranian populace. Khomeini elucidated his sentiment regarding the appropriate function of the military, with regard to society as a whole, during a meeting with representatives of the army's second infantry division in April of 1979:

> The army belongs to us and we belong to the army. The army and the nation are not two different things . . . . . the army is an Islamic army.[1]

In defense of the position that a revamping of the Iranian army was absolutely essential, Mostafa Chamran, who was accorded the cabinet portfolio of defense minister, remarked in early 1979 that "this army was built and created in the satanical era," and accordingly, had to be significantly altered to correspond to the imperatives of the revolutionary regime.[2] In fact, at this juncture, Chamran revealed that, initially, serious consideration had been given to disbanding the regular army altogether, but that this possibility had been jettisoned due to the belief that the army could be of utility in maintaining internal order. As an alternative, Qom and Teheran decided to work toward establishing an army that would vigorously defend the revolution.

In terms of a paradigm on which to predicate the modified regular army of the Islamic Republic, the revolutionary regime adopted that of the Red Russian Army, which had been guided by a core of ideologically dedicated non-commissioned officers. Consonant with the Bolshevik experience, Teheran aimed at bridging the wide gulf between officers and enlisted men. Manifestations of this concomitant end included the cancellation of various special privileges enjoyed by commissioned officers as well as requiring all ranking officers to demonstrate unqualified support for "Iran's independence," and the "Islamic Revolution."[3]

However, Khomeini and his lieutenants were not satisfied with mere pledges of allegiance to the revolution; it was their belief that a purging of the senior officer corps would also be necessary in order to mitigate the danger of counterrevolution. The smashing of the deposed Shah's military command was initiated on 12 February 1979 with the assassinations of General Bakrot Jafarian, the military commander of Khuzestan, and General Abdul-Ali Badre'i, head of Iran's ground forces. On 1 October 1979, Defense Minister Chamran held that the ouster of ranking officers would be conducted in an "Islamic and revolutionary nature."[4] Shortly afterward, the criteria to be used in concluding which officers would be cashiered was elucidated: in short, any officer who had participated in, or sanctioned the torture and murder of political dissidents, or who had pilfered state funds, was to be punished.

In late 1979, manifestations of discontent and opposition toward the Khomeiniite regime's visions vis-à-vis the military began to surface. The clerical elite was bent on demonstrating that seditious outbursts by armed forces personnel would be hastily quashed in a harsh manner. An opportunity to do so arose in early January of 1980, when a plot engineered by a group of mid-level officers, who aimed at seizing control of Teheran and Qom, was revealed.[5] All of the conspirators were found culpable of high treason by

revolutionary tribunals in hurriedly conducted proceedings and were summarily executed. Overall, such incidents provided the Khomeinists with grounds to accelerate the purges, the magnitude of which was evidenced on 11 February, when Major-General Mohammad Hadi Shadmehr, who had recently succeeded General Gharani as chief-of-staff, announced that some four thousand men had been forcibly ousted from the armed forces since the onset of the revolution, and that the sacking of an additional 3,500 was envisioned.[6]

On 19 February, Khomeini, in a largely unanticipated move, informally delegated his authority as supreme commander to President Bani-Sadr. Khomeini held that the rationale behind this decision was based on the belief that a "centralization" of command and control would hasten the process of placing the armed forces on an Islamic orientation. However, this development failed to boost the sagging morale of the regular military groups or to effect a diminution of the paralyzing confusion within the military command structure that stemmed from the purges. The latter quandary was exacerbated considerably by the abortive effort undertaken by an American commando team to rescue the hostages in Teheran, which transpired in April; it was the churchmen's contention that the failure of the navy and air force to detect and thwart this intrusion represented a gross dereliction of their basic mission of safeguarding

Iranian territory and, accordingly, a further high-level purge was executed.[7]

Although he desired to instill a semblance of order and to assuage the uncertainty within the ranks, Bani-Sadr, irrespective of Khomeini's gesture of according him nominal control over the armed forces, encountered stiff opposition from a number of clerical extremists serving on the Supreme National Defense Council, which functioned as a military oversight body. Consequently, the pattern of attempted uprisings and subsequent purges continued. On 23 May, a mutinous effort mounted by a shadowy group within the army, known as the "Army of Iranian Freedom Seekers," was crushed by loyalist troops.[8] And, on 13 July, it was announced that a much more serious, widespread rebellion, code-named "Red Alert," which involved troops at garrisons in Hamadan, Ahvaz, and Teheran, had been put down. In the wake of this incident some five hundred insurrectionists were arrested.[9]

Khomeini was taken aback by the scope of the July rebellion and, in response, he extended his personal sanction to the adoption of a harder line toward the regular military as a means of forestalling any further episodes of this nature. A number of high Islamic jurists accommodated the supreme cleric by meting out 140 death sentences to those convicted of direct involvement. In addition, at this point, Khomeini demonstrated his unhappiness with the lack of effectiveness and the languid pace of the drive to

overhaul the regular military when he informed the head of the national gendarmerie, Zahir Nezod, that:

> I want a strong independent army free of any contaminations. Purge this army of any contaminations and build an Islamic army, and then the nation will place it in its heart.[10]

Overall, by September of 1980, some twelve thousand Iranian military personnel had been forcibly expelled. Of these, ten thousand came from the army, while the other two thousand were navy and air force servicemen.[11] Moreover, a significant percentage of those sacked were mid-level and senior officers, resulting in a virtual breakdown of the command establishments of all three regular branches of the military which, in turn, inhibited the devising and implementation of a viable plan of national defense for the Islamic Republic. Unquestionably, this condition significantly added to the nation's exposure to strategic surprise.

The capability of revolutionary Iran to militarily respond to external aggression in an effective and timely manner was also considerably weakened by the heated institutional rivalry and mutual suspicion between the regular branches of the military and the revolutionary forces, particularly that between the army and the Revolutionary Guards. Indeed, Khomeini's chief impetus for organizing the Revolutionary Guards, the formal establishment of which was declared by the Imam on 5 May 1979, stemmed from his personal belief, shared by his

clerical colleagues, that a reduction of the ranks of the military groupings developed by the toppled regal government, as well as the placing of watchdog, revolutionary committees within individual units of the regular military, would not suffice in providing an adequate level of protection against the possibility of a military-inspired coup d'etat.[12]

One of the basic tasks assigned to the Pasdaran by the clerical elite was to act as a counterweight to the regular army. This was in consonance with the force's cardinal mission, which was clearly spelled out in its founding charter, of safeguarding the Islamic revolution from challenges by both domestic and foreign counterrevolutionary reactionaries. Initially, the Revolutionary Guards were placed under the guidance of a Command Council which was staffed exclusively by a number of ultraistic churchmen headed by Ayatollah Hasan Lahuti, a long-standing confidant of Khomeini. Beyond establishing a command structure wholly aloof from the regular army and the Government, the Khomeinists endeavored to eliminate the Revolutionary Guards' dependency upon the army for armaments and munitions. Toward this end, a considerable amount of material was forcefully acquisitioned from the army, and separate bases and magazines were established for the Pasdaran. From its inception, the Revolutionary Guards evoked acrimonious, and at times violent, opposition from

the Iranian army. By and large, the vying between the army and the Revolutionary Guards for control over the vast stockpile of military hardware amassed by the Shah served to diminish cooperation in the crucial task of monitoring threats from abroad and warding off foreign intrusions.

Beyond the adverse effects upon morale and effectiveness fostered by the rather chaotic, postrevolutionary overhaul of the armed forces conducted by the Khomeinists, a citing of the deployment of troops within Iran in late 1980 is indispensable for arriving at a thorough understanding of the nation's exposure to the precipitant Iraqi attack on Khuzestan. Unrest among ethnic minorities in a number of peripheral provinces resulted in an unusual concentration of combatants, particularly in the northwestern Kurdish region. Additionally, due to a fear that Moscow might attempt to grab portions of northern Iran, Teheran was prompted to significantly augment the number of troops stationed along the Soviet frontier in the area adjacent to Turkmenistan and the Transcaucasian area west of the Caspian Sea.

The desire for quelling the domestic ethnic uprisings, as well as deterring a Soviet intrusion, necessitated a rotation of troops away from the common frontier with Iraq. And, although a sizable contingent of Revolutionary Guards, along with units of the regular army, were sent to confront Iraqi forces and counter-

revolutionaries in proximity to the central border hamlets of Karand Gharb, Eslamabad, and Sar-e Pol-e Zahab, in July of 1980,[13] at the time of the Iraqi irruption in September, only three attenuated army divisions were positioned near the approximately 750-mile-long Iranian-Iraqi frontier: in the north, one infantry division was based at Sanadej; one armored division was deployed in Kermanshah, which straddles the central segment of the border; and, an additional armored division was stationed in Khuzestan near Ahvaz.[14] The paucity of combatants in the vicinity of the border with Iraq can also be partially explained in terms of the Khomeinists' fear that royalist agents, with Iraqi assistance, would be able to infiltrate the ranks of Iranian defense units and foment counterrevolutionary sentiment.[15] The foregoing examination demonstrates that the thesis positing the shakeup of the Iranian military as an explanation for the vulnerability of the Islamic Republic to aggression is not inaccurate. The next section will examine how this vulnerability was heightened by shortcomings in intelligence gathering.

Exposure to Aggression Due to an Impaired Intelligence Capability and Iraqi Stratagem

Iran's vulnerability to surprise attack can also be partially ascribed to the enervation of the quality of its intelligence network. During the year-and-a-half period following the revolution's onset, along with the profound

revamping of the structure and fundamental mission of Iran's defense forces, the nation's existing intelligence gathering organizations were disbanded and replaced with a number of new, revolutionary groupings, which included the following: the Da'ere Siyasi Ideologik [Political Ideological Circle], which was assigned the chief task of fostering an affinity for traditional Islamic zeal among Iranian military personnel; the Gorough Zarb [Strike Group], which acted as a constabulary within the armed forces; and the Anjumani-i-Islam [Islamic Society], which was founded to detect and stamp out counterrevolutionary dissidence within the military.[16]

Basically, the focus of the fledgling intelligence groups was placed on checking internal subversion. Consequently, Iranian intelligence afforded an inadequate level of attention to observing and analyzing the actions and designs of surrounding Arab states. This factor stands out as a key explanation for the Iraqi elite's ability to realize a significant degree of initial shock. In hindsight, the Khomeinists' belief that the revolutionary intelligence agencies, along with the Pasdaran, constituted ample security against both internal and external threats to the revolution, appears rather impolitic in light of the fact that the latter was not vigorously monitored.

Moreover, in explaining the relatively high degree of surprise attained by invading Iraqi forces, the Iranian

clerical elite's failure to recognize the existence of Baghdad's enterprising designs, as well as its strong defensive motivations for a sudden, preemptive onslaught, is of considerable import. More precisely, Teheran erred by not perceiving the extent to which the Baath regime viewed direct military action against the Islamic Republic as an economic and political imperative. The Baathists' intense, and highly discernible loathing of the ideology propounded by the Khomeinists, and the subsequent fear that the Islamic revolution would negatively affect the political environment within Iraq, could have served as a monition of the high likelihood of Iraqi aggression. Overall, the Khomeinists' failure to take into consideration this readily apparent indicator of a possible attack remains paradoxical.

In addition to an inadequate military and political intelligence capability, the Islamic Republic's exposure to shock was further heightened by Iraqi deception. Initially, a notable component of the deception campaign waged by the Baathists was to repeatedly dismiss the likelihood of an Iraqi onslaught on the grounds that Baghdad was altogether averse to an armed conflict with a "brother" Islamic state. This position was first enunciated by Tariq Aziz in December of 1979, when he charged that for Iraq "it would be impossible to launch an offensive against a Muslim neighbor."[17] Furthermore, the Baath elite sought to conceal its aggressive designs by putting forth numerous open

pledges that Iraq was truly desirous of pacific relations with Iran. For instance, on 10 September, the Foreign Ministry released an official statement which held that Baghdad did not seek war with Teheran, and that it did not aim at aggrandizing any Iranian territory.[18]

Later, when friction between the two traditionally feuding states began to rise, particularly over territorial disputes, Baath officials adopted a more convincing ploy of asserting that, irrespective of frontier clashes, Baghdad did not anticipate the outbreak of an actual war with the Islamic Republic.[19] In fact, it appears that the Baath elite began to deliberately magnify the importance of the territorial issue as a causal factor underlying the burgeoning of interstate tension. This stratagem was chiefly employed to cover up the Baathists' seminal objective: the forced downfall of the Khomeiniite regime. In more specific terms, Baghdad sought to focus attention on the dispute over the Qasr-e-Shirin salient, which it claimed was to have been ceded to Iraq in compliance with the Algiers agreement.

A corollary objective of focusing attention on the central sector of the common frontier was to detract the clerics' regard away from Khuzestan, the forced annexation of which, to reiterate, Baghdad believed would effect the deposal of the ministerial elite. In consonance with this design, during the four-month period preceding the main

thrust into Khuzestan, Iraqi forces began to stage attacks on various Iranian towns along the central frontier region, including Dehloran, Mehran, and Nasrabad. In addition, on 31 May 1980, Iraqi aircraft and tanks launched a coordinated attack against various points within Iran's border province of Kermanshah.[20] And, in late August, Iraq initiated a sudden increase in the number of troops in the Qasr-e-Shirin area, a development that precluded an outright military occupation of the tract and a declaration from Baghdad that a portion of Iraqi territory, which had long been under illegal, forced Iranian control, had, at last, been "liberated." Overall, Baghdad aimed at convincing Iranian officials that its territorial ambitions were primarily limited to Qasr-e-Shirin and, in light of the fact that no timely, concerted effort was undertaken to solidify defense forces in Khuzestan, this subterfuge appears to have been largely successful. In summing up, based on the foregoing evidence, it can be inferred that a combination of faulty intelligence analysis and various efforts at deception undertaken by Baghdad significantly furthered Teheran's inability to realize strategic warning of the looming Iraqi inroad.

Vulnerability Evoked by Domestic Political Disagreement

Having discussed the extent to which military and intelligence shortcomings added to Iran's vulnerability to

strategic surprise, the analysis will now turn to the debilitating effects that political and ethnic divisions had upon the national security of the Islamic Republic, the final variable to be examined in this chapter. Earlier, I examined aspects of this condition in connection with Baghdad's perceptions of opportunity. At this juncture, I will analyze the rising internal fragmentation closely, for this factor is crucial in grasping the exposure of Iran to aggression.

It is of foremost importance in this regard to note that, in the initial months following Pahlavi's departure, the ideological gulf between the lay and divine elements that had cooperated in the revolutionary effort widened perceptibly. At the outset, Khomeini insisted that various political groups would be allowed to freely disseminate their ideas, "for in Islam there has been a tradition of tolerance."[21] However, the professed leniency toward political pluralism was merely a deception used by the Khomeinists to forestall the emergence of any major schisms within the revolutionary movement prior to the overthrowing of the monarchy; but, once this overriding, immediate end was attained, the "willingness" of the Islamic zealots to brook the propounding of countervailing ideologies soon proved illusory. In contrast to their initial position, the churchmen soon initiated a campaign to consolidate their dominance over Iran and to effect a diminution of the power

of secular political parties. By and large, Khomeini believed that only a wholly pastoral polity could remedy the dual, long-suffered encumbrances of Western imperial exploitation of Iran's natural resources and violent repression of the masses by the central government.

In consonance with their aim of establishing a theocratic system of government, the Shi'ite traditionalists instituted several extraordinary Islamic organizations that came to openly challenge temporal parties. A main revolutionary grouping was the cabalistic Revolutionary Council, which consisted of a handful of esteemed Islamic scholars who had organized under the guidance of Khomeini in January of 1978. The Revolutionary Council emerged as an opposing, de facto center of political power to the de jure Bazargan regime. In addition to the obstructive actions of this central clerical institution, the Government's efforts to restore internal order were hampered at the regional and grassroots level by revolutionary committees, which were accorded unqualified support by Khomeini. The quandary encountered by Bazargan was further compounded by the formation of armed bands that were attached to each revolutionary committee and, which, demonstrated a propensity for various extra-legal machinations, including the making of arbitrary arrests and the confiscation of private property.[22]

Proponents of lay rule became increasingly vexed by the Khomeinists' monocratic intentions. And, manifestations of their mounting frustration included the resignation in April of 1979 of Foreign Minister Karim Sanjabi, who cited the clerical clique's obstruction of the political process, which he denounced as the principal impediment to the realization of democracy, as the basis for his abdication. Shortly afterward, Prime Minister Bazargan demonstrated his personal displeasure toward the interference by the extra-legal, pro-Khomeini groupings by charging that the internal political situation was tantamount to a "government with one hundred chiefs."[23] However, rather than effecting any substantial improvement in the tense domestic political environment, the above actions and charges served to encourage the churchmen to step up their efforts to mar the image of the secularists. For example, on 15 September, the Bazargan regime was assailed for failing to make any significant headway in improving the lot of Iran's masses. The Premier responded by holding that he lacked the requisite power to effect any substantive change, alluding to his regime as "a knife without a blade."[24]

A further illustration of the Islamicists' determination to rid the nation of temporalists came on 19 September, when Khomeini, while addressing military personnel at an air base in Isfahan, admonished that "all opponents of his Islamic rule would be destroyed."[25] The

Government was largely unable to effectively respond to overt threats of this nature. And, the coup de grace for Bazargan's tenure occurred on 4 November, when the U.S. Embassy was occupied by pro-clerical zealots. Bazargan immediately indicated that he was unwilling to brook this brazen transgression of international law; following a futile effort to secure the release of the Americans, the Prime Minister resigned on 6 November, a move which portended the waning of the power of the lay opposition.

Bazargan was succeeded as head-of-government by Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, who emerged as the victor in the Islamic Republic's initial presidential elections held on 25 January 1980. Bani-Sadr, who had studied theology and law at the University of Teheran during the late 1950s, played an active role in the anti-monarchial movement as a member of the National Front.[26] The ideology espoused by Bani-Sadr comprised a considerable Islamic bearing, tempered by an aversion to authoritarianism; his vision of an ideal polity was one guided by an observance of Shi'ism, without a concentration of political power in a central authority.[27] To Bani-Sadr, a diffusion of power through a network of local mosques would serve as a viable bulwark against the emergence of an autocratic government.

However, the idea of decentralization of authority was not well received in Qom. This was readily discerned by Bani-Sadr who, similar to his predecessor, began to

demonstrate reservations regarding the wisdom of the Khomeinists' political designs shortly after he assumed office. Bani-Sadr's skepticism, along with a voicing of opposition, brought about the onset of a further round of friction between the de jure and de facto elites. The ongoing impasse over the detainment of the American diplomats proved to be particularly problematic for the relations between the President and the churchmen; the former's open and repeated condemnations of the holding of the hostages evoked the ire of a number of powerful clerics. Irrespective of the Khomeinists' unhappiness, Bani-Sadr became increasingly critical of the student captors who, on one occasion, he denounced as "dictators who have created a government within a government."[28]

Two attempts by the President to gain the release of the hostages were dashed by Khomeini's intervention in the imbroglio on behalf of the students: on 10 March, Khomeini announced that envoys from the United Nations, who had come to Iran to hold interviews with the hostages, with the consent of Bani-Sadr, would have to publicly acknowledge the extent of the involvement of the United States in the repression carried out by the Pahlavi regime before seeing the captives; and, on 7 April, the Imam decided, contrary to the President's wishes, that the Americans would remain under the control of the students until the convening of the yet-to-be-elected national legislature.[29] Overall, the

hostage affair emerged as a serious challenge to the authority of the Government, and served to diminish the standing of Bani-Sadr within the Islamic Republic.

Following the open clash between Teheran and Qom over the fate of the American detainees, a heightening of sectarian wrangling occurred as Khomeini intensified his efforts to purge officials opposed to his program of grounding the body politic on a rigid Islamic foundation. In pursuance of this end, the supreme churchmen demanded that Bani-Sadr dismiss all members of his administration who demonstrated "insufficient zeal for the Islamic Republic."[30] However, the President did not believe that it was incumbent upon him to comply with such overbearing impositions put forth by the clerical leadership. And, not surprisingly, by this juncture, the Islamic Republican Party, the main political organization established by the fundamentalists, was conspiring to unseat the Government. On 20 June, a plot to depose Bani-Sadr, designed by Hasan Ayat, a member of the Central Committee of the Islamic Republican Party, was exposed.

The discovery of the Islamic Republican Party-inspired intrigue underscored the depth of the rift between the moderates who favored a clearly defined demarcation between worldly and spiritual affairs and the Shi'ite radicals. A further reduction of Bani-Sadr's already circumscribed power occurred on 20 July, when Khomeini, in a

dictatorial gesture, announced that, due to the incapability of the President to correct various internal problems, control over the Government would be devolved to Parliament. This action served to exacerbate the chaotic atmosphere in the Islamic Republic, for the clerical majority that held sway over the Parliament had little experience in political administration or economic affairs.

Further friction between the Islamic Republican Party and Bani-Sadr arose over the selection of a replacement for former Prime Minister Bazargan. In their eagerness to secure the appointment of a fundamentalist-oriented premier, the cadre of the Islamic Republican Party demonstrated a scorn for constitutionalism by maintaining that Parliament, rather than Bani-Sadr, should select the prime minister. However, the designation of the head-of-state was one of the clearly enumerated prerogatives accorded to the head-of-government by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic and, irrespective of the Imam's extra-legal transfer of power to the legislature, Bani-Sadr attempted to exercise his powers as President, naming Under-Secretary of Interior Mostafa Mir Salim, a proven champion of the rule of law, as his nominee for premier.[31] But, Bani-Sadr was unable to muster the requisite support to realize the confirmation of Salim and, on 11 August, it was announced that Parliament had alternatively selected

Mohammad Ali Rojai, a proponent of the Khomeiniite agenda, to assume the office of prime minister.

Following the unsuccessful bid by Bani-Sadr to block the installation of a clerical fanatic as prime minister, he then endeavored to prevent Rojai from staffing the Cabinet with ministers of his ideological stripe, an effort which further increased political instability. On 9 September, Bani-Sadr admonished that he would reject all prospective cabinet members who were "part of the minority group bent on despotism and fomenting suspicion."[32] Bani-Sadr's remonstrations, which were grounded on the position that an unqualified subservience to the dictates of Khomeini was antithetical to the realization of a democratic and progressive polity, evoked an outpouring of countercharges by a number of the Imam's devout supporters; for example, shortly after assuming office, Prime Minister Rojai charged that no elected official had the right to impugn the clerical leadership. In addition, Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani conveyed the sentiment of his colleagues toward the President's burgeoning opposition by asserting that "after the revolution we cannot tolerate a liberal governing our country in such a way that the revolution is destroyed . . . . . or deflected from Islam."[33]

By and large, the Islamic traditionalists regarded Khomeini, because of his position as the nation's paramount ecclesiastic, as beyond reproach and looked upon criticism

of him, particularly by laymen, as tantamount to treason. Accordingly, by this point, the friction between Bani-Sadr and the Islamic Republican Party had become quite pronounced, and the ongoing bickering between the lay and clerical camps had exhausted Khomeini's patience. On 13 September, the Imam implored the de jure leadership to terminate political infighting with the Islamic Republican Party and to channel its efforts toward addressing the major problems hampering postrevolutionary reconstruction and development. Khomeini also directed some harsh criticism toward Premier Rojai: "you have neither put the economy in order nor established security, but rather fought with one another in violation of Islamic morality and law."[34] In short, as the foregoing discussion has demonstrated, by mid-1980, the de jure and de facto centers of authority were locked in a struggle to shape the direction of domestic political and economic policy and, as a result, vigilance for external threats to national security was minimal.

In addition to the secular-clerical division, the vulnerability of Iran to an incursion can also be partially attributed to Teheran and Qom's preoccupation with unrest among minority ethnic groups in outlying regions of the country. Beyond the majority Persians, modern Iran encompasses a veritable mosaic of ethno-linguistic groups, including Afshars, Arabs, Azeris, Bakhtiaris, Baluchis, Basseris, Fars, Kurds, Lors, Shahseven, Turkomans, Turks,

Qashqais, and Zabolis. And aside from the already mentioned tumult in Khuzestan, which was largely fomented by the Khomeinists' obstinate refusal to accede to the demands of regional activists for control over local political and economic affairs, tension between the lay and clerical elites and ethnic minorities also arose in other areas of Iran, most notably in Kurdistan.

The policy of the Pahlavi regime had been focused on integrating the peripheral ethnic minorities into the mainstream of Iranian society; ergo, any initiatives toward the granting of limited autonomy to outlying provinces were vehemently opposed by the Shah.[35] The incipience of the revolution brought about a reinvigoration of this long-standing, suppressed aspiration among a number of ethnic minorities. However, similar to the royalists, although for different reasons, the Khomeinists were averse to the idea of affording limited self-governance to Iran's ethnic groups. The clerical regime's aversion toward such a development emanated from the belief that the establishment of a theocracy would be hampered by an accentuation of ethno-linguistic divisions.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of Iran along ethnic lines ran counter to one of the fundamental slogans championed by the churchmen: "itihad mubarazeeb va piroozi" [unity, struggle, and victory].[36] In short, to the Khomeinists, a heightening of emphasis on ethnicity

portended an attendant detracting of attention away from Shi'ism and, accordingly, such a development was held to be anathema. In fact, on one occasion, Khomeini remarked that "as far as Islam is concerned, there is no question of Kurds, Fars, Baluchi, Arab, Lor, or Turkoman."[37] With regard to de jure authorities, the Bazargan administration shared the clerics' repulsion toward ethnic factions and, as the initial expectations of regional autonomy faded, Iran's ethnic minorities became restive. Of central importance, regarding the herein argument that internal disturbances rendered Iran open to an invasion, is a citing of the disquietude that emerged in Iranian Kurdistan.

A series of events that culminated in direct, armed clashes between revolutionary forces loyal to Khomeini and Kurdish nationalist guerrillas were set in motion in early 1979. Iran's Kurds, who inhabit the northwestern region of the country, numbered approximately two million in 1979. The Kurds had briefly realized sovereignty over regional affairs in the past: prior to withdrawing from Iran at the close of the Second World War, Soviet occupation forces founded the autonomous Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. However, upon regaining the throne, the Shah immediately dispatched troops to restore central control over the region. At this point, the Kurds commenced a guerrilla campaign which endured until 1967, when it was crushed by the monarchial regime. But, with the Shah's ouster and the

waning of the strength of internal security forces, the Kurds wasted little time in resuming efforts to secure limited independence. And, when it became apparent that neither the Government nor the Khomeinists were in favor of granting partial self-governance to ethnic groups, the Kurds elected to reinitiate the insurgency.

The Kurdish rebels, collectively known as the "Peshmerga," comprised members of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which was led by Abdulrahman Qassemloo, as well as the Maoist Komeleh Party and the Fedayeen. Beyond demands for a formal recognition of local economic and political self-determination, as well as respect for cultural and language distinctions, additional sources of tension between the Islamic traditionalists and the Kurdish insurgents included the latter's leftist orientation and the fact that the majority of Iranian Kurds were Sunni Muslims.[38] The importance of the latter factor was predicated on the clerics' steadfast insistence that fundamental Shi'ism constituted the foremost sect of Islam and their denunciation of other factions of the religion as heretical.

Initially, Qom attempted to undermine the Kurdish uprising through use of the subterfuge of divide and conquer. In consonance with this design, the Khomeinists accorded support to the less zealously nationalistic Sheik Ahmad Muftizadah, the leading cleric in Sanadaj, the

provincial capital of Kurdistan. However, this stratagem foundered due to the shallow level of Muftizadah's influence among the Kurdish activists. Following the abortive attempt to foster divisions within the Kurdish movement, the Islamic traditionalists opened a direct dialogue with Qassemloo and Sheik Ezzedin Hossaini, the cardinal Kurdish churchman, who beckoned from Mahabad, a city in proximity to the Iraqi frontier.

It was Hosseini's position that an extension of local sovereignty to Iran's ethnic minorities was an imperative prerequisite for the realization of domestic stability. Toward this end, the Kurds attempted to engender a feeling of solidarity among the nation's ethnic groups. In August of 1979, leaders of the Arab, Turkoman, Turkish, and Kurdish minorities convened in Mahabad and concluded a joint program for partial autonomy. The various participants in the parley called upon Bazargan and Khomeini to grant approval to the establishment of "autonomous regions" that would be governed by "regional parliaments."[39] However, those who took part in the Mahabad summit concurred that matters relating to foreign policy and defense should remain under the purview of Teheran.

Irrespective of the putting forth of such clear qualifications, no positive response to the minorities' requests was forthcoming from either the Government or the Khomeinists. To the contrary, the clerical elite opted to

deal with the Kurdish and other ethnic activists with force. Beyond issuing a number of punitory decrees, which included an outright proscribing of the KDP, which Khomeini disparagingly alluded to as the "devil's party,"[40] large numbers of Revolutionary Guards were dispatched to Kurdistan. In addition, a division of the regular army was sent to engage the Peshmerga. Shortly after arriving in the region, these forces opened major drives against guerrilla strongholds in proximity to the northwestern towns of Marivan and Piranshar.

A sharp escalation of the fighting in Kurdistan occurred in the fall of 1979; during October, Kurdish rebels seized control of Mahabad, killing approximately sixty Revolutionary Guards in the process. At this point, bowing to pressure from various lay organizations, the Government undertook an effort to arrange a cease-fire by sending Defense Minister Mostafa Chamran, Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian, and Planning and Budget Minister Ezzatollah Sahabi to meet with emissaries of the KDP. However, similar to previous bids at negotiating a termination of hostilities, this latest round of dialogue also proved fruitless.

Following the discontinuation of the talks, which the Kurds attributed to obstinacy on the part of the clerical zealots, the KDP issued an ultimatum: all Revolutionary Guards and regular army troops were to be

withdrawn from Kurdistan by 9 December. Teheran and Qom simply balked at this arrogation and, as a result, the fighting continued to escalate. By this point, the Kurdish leadership had arrived at the conclusion that the dominant clerical elite was bent on establishing an authoritarian political system and that regional autonomy would remain unattainable as long as the Khomeinists held power. Sheik Hosseini epitomized the popular sentiment prevailing in Kurdistan when he declared on 5 December, that the "fanatic men of religion would gradually disappear and that a free government would emerge."[41] Notwithstanding this optimistic outlook, at this time there was no indication that the power of the churchmen was abating; to the contrary, the Khomeiniite elite was fast consolidating its mastery over Iran.

In early 1980, regular army units and Revolutionary Guards stepped up their efforts to smash the insurgency. Following an intense, bloody clash on 3 February, Peshmerga combatants were driven out of the northern town of Kamyaran. Sheik Hosseini responded to the heightening of the conflict's intensity by charging that the clerics were bent on fomenting "war in Kurdistan" and by calling for the institution of a "state of general mobilization and defensive readiness" among Kurdish forces.[42] During early April, Kurdish representatives maintained that indiscriminate artillery bombardment by government forces of

the towns of Sanadaj and Saqqez resulted in the deaths of some fifty civilians, with the wounding of an additional three hundred. And, on 24 April, the "Kurdish Society," a public affairs organization based in Teheran, called on the United Nations and the International Red Cross to extend immediate assistance to the "stricken Kurdish people."[43] By this juncture, the Government, which was headed by Bani-Sadr, had grown weary of the fighting and, on 26 April, the President ordered government troops to avoid further confrontations with Kurdish combatants; however, Bani-Sadr did not wield any effective control over the Pasdaran and, consequently, he was largely powerless to effect a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities in Kurdistan. Overall, the flaring of tension within the northern Kurdish provinces and in other peripheral regions constituted a major dilemma for the Government which, along with the intense rivalry with the clerical extremists in Qom, served to hamper Bani-Sadr's efforts to undertake effective measures to safeguard Iran from external threats.

Conclusion

In summing up the main points raised in this chapter, it can be accurately postulated that revolutionary Iran's attenuated ability to deter external aggression stemmed from internal tumult. First and foremost, the weakening of the readiness of Iranian military forces, as well as the largely inefficient intelligence gathering

capability at the disposal of Teheran, stand as principal causal factors underlying the vulnerability to the Iraqi surprise attack. The nearly wholesale purges of the military command and the liquidation of the intelligence apparatus established during the royalist epoch, which constituted manifestations of the Khomeinists' fundamental objectives of revolutionizing the armed forces and of forestalling the mounting of counterrevolutionary bids from that quarter, served to jeopardize national security. Overall, the downside of the churchmen's designs of overhauling the nation's defense and intelligence forces was that, while eliminating an internal threat to the postrevolutionary state, the western frontier with Iraq was left largely undefended and there was no central authority to oversee the collection and effective analysis of intelligence pertaining to the ends of surrounding states which, in turn, engendered a serious, external threat: an Iraqi invasion.

Moreover, as extensively outlined in this chapter, the volatile nature of the postrevolutionary polity served to keep the attention of elites, both secular and clerical, affixed on domestic affairs. Beyond the political infighting between those who desired a political system predicated on a clear division of worldly and spiritual realms and those who were violently averse to a separation of church and state, Iran was torn by a myriad of other

ideological elements bent on realizing their revolutionary aspirations. Chief among these groups were autonomy seeking ethnic minorities. The considerable dissension engendered by these conflicting groups, which the reactionary clerics sought to eliminate, resulted in a considerable degree of internal confusion which, in turn, diminished the level of attention accorded to external matters by the revolutionary regime. And, although Bani-Sadr was concerned with the possibility of an incursion, his attempts to shore up Iran's defenses were impeded by the Khomeinists. Overall, the high degree of political fragmentation stands as a major explanation for the nation's lack of defensive preparedness.

CHAPTER V NOTES

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CHAPTER VI

REORIENTATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF IRAN AND IRAQ: BREAKDOWN OF THE INTERSTATE STATUS QUO IN THE GULF REGION AND THE EFFECTS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT UPON IRAN'S VULNERABILITY TO AN IRAQI STRIKE

The Islamic revolution effected a profound alteration in the power relationship between Iran and the various Gulf Arab states. The principal objective of this chapter is to examine the nexus between the shift in revolutionary Iran's external affairs agenda and its attendant affect on Iraqi foreign policy. An effort is herein made to demonstrate that the shake-up of the regional status quo effected a heightening of Iraq's resolve to undertake a bid at strategic surprise. The initial section of this chapter entails an examination of various aspects of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, including the overt hostility toward the littoral monarchies, the championing of the Palestinian Arabs and their struggle against Israeli oppression, as well as the bitter opposition to imperial influence, both American and Soviet, in the Near East. The main end of this analysis will be to establish the basis for postrevolutionary Iran's growing international isolation.

The second section consists of a discussion of the Baath elite's efforts to exploit the increasing disapprobation toward the Khomeiniite regime in order to realize a long-standing design: the attainment of hegemony over the Gulf nations. It will be shown that in line with this end, following the onset of the Iranian Revolution, the moderating shift in Iraq's foreign policy was redoubled, and that this sudden change afforded Baghdad a strong base of external support for its attempt to roll back Khomeini's revolutionary Shi'ism.

The Conceptual Designs Undergirding the Iranian Islamicists' Foreign Policy: The Propagation of Traditionalist Shi'ism and the Rolling Back of Imperial Influence within the Muslim World

Similar to the domestic political equation, the revolution set in motion a major shift in the orientation of Iranian foreign policy. Initially, those exercising sway over the secular regime in Teheran advocated substantive, although not radical, change in Iran's external affairs priorities. Immediately following the Shah's exodus, in January of 1979, Prime Minister Bakhtiar, in an effort to bolster his sagging support within the revolutionary movement by appearing as a champion of anti-imperialism and non-alignment, ordered the formal severing of diplomatic relations with Israel and South Africa.

Upon assuming power, Mehdi Bazargan was quick to demonstrate a determination to continue the revamping of

foreign policy initiated by the ephemeral Bakhtiar administration. Central to this change was an observance of what Foreign Minister Ebrahim Yazdi once alluded to as "positive neutrality."[1] Basically, the aim underlying the adopting of this principle, which was in consonance with the desire of improving relations with the Arab states of the Gulf and beyond, was to signal that the dependent relationship between Iran and the West, particularly the United States, was no longer tenable. This was evidenced on 3 April 1980, when the Government announced that Iran would no longer serve as "policeman of the Persian Gulf on behalf of Western interests. A further development in line with this objective came in August when Teheran announced its withdrawal from the Group for Regional Cooperation and Development, which also included Turkey and Pakistan, both of which maintained a strong military relationship with Washington.

Overall, Bazargan's intention was not to completely isolate Iran from the West but, rather, to diminish the power of Washington and London to shape the direction of Iran's foreign policy. Simply put, no longer would the West be allowed to benefit from the excesses permitted during the Shah's tenure. Nonetheless, Bazargan was first and foremost a pragmatist, and he was cognizant that stable relations with the industrialized powers had to be maintained if plans for restructuring and continuing the development of Iran's

economy were to be realized. Accordingly, any measures which portended retaliatory responses by the West were vigorously opposed by the Government. However, as the secularists' limited power over domestic matters waned, there also occurred a diminution of their power to direct foreign policy which, as the churchmen tightened their control over the revolutionary polity, assumed an increasingly radical leaning.

The foreign policy ends pursued by the moderate secularists contrasted considerably with those championed by the clerical elite, which were predicated upon an adherence to Shi'ite moral and ethical precepts.[2] Of these, the fostering of pan-Islamic unity, with the ultimate vision being the establishment of a single Islamic state comprising all Muslims, from Mauritania to Brunei, was of paramount importance. Inspired by this lofty design, the Khomeinists believed that it was incumbent on Iran to spread the Islamic revolution to other Muslim states. Indicative of this sentiment was a pronouncement put forth by Khomeini in April of 1980: "Iran is the country of God and our brothers in other lands must come along with us."[3] Through such an ideal society, the clerical elite aspired to supplant exploitation and oppression with a traditionalist Islamic lifestyle throughout the Muslim realm. The frequent allusion to Khomeini as the "leader of the oppressed of the

world"[4] aptly reflected this widely held position among senior churchmen.

Inherent in the Khomeinists' pan-Islamic objectives was a belief that perceived social, political, and economic problems faced by many Muslim states, such as sexual license, dictatorial governance, as well as usury and poverty, could be largely attributed to imperialist domination and the championing of alien, mainly Western, ideas by ruling elites. It was this weighty and highly discernible external influence that the Islamicists sought to eradicate. In pursuance of this end, Qom used a classification scheme that divided states into two contrary categories: those that represented a "house of Islam" [dar al-Islam] and those states that typified a "house of war" [dar al-harb].[5] Based on this rather dogmatic scheme, the clerical elite sought to strengthen relations with the few Arab nations deemed to qualify as the former, namely South Yemen, Libya, and Syria, while harshly denouncing the multitude of states that fell into the latter category.

Following a period of heightened diplomatic contact, it was announced on 23 April 1980 that formal relations were being established between the Islamic Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. And on 25 May, Radio Teheran announced that the Revolutionary Council had decided to send an ambassador to Tripoli. However, the clerics' principal interest was in establishing a strong alliance

with Syria, which was partly based on its geographical proximity to Iraq and a cognizance of the heated rivalry between the Baath regime headed by Hafez al-Asad and its ideological rival in Baghdad. On 22 April 1980, Foreign Minister Qotzbadeh concluded a state visit to Damascus with the endorsement of a joint Iranian-Syrian communique stating that the warming of relations between Teheran and Damascus was based on a "common belief in the principles of Islam."[6] Regardless of such rhetorical assertions, the Iranian-Syrian rapprochement was based less on ideological common ground than on mutual perceptions of utility; both regimes could cooperate in challenging a shared nemesis: Saddam Hussein. This was made apparent by Prime Minister Rojai who, on 11 September, asserted that strong Iranian-Syrian relations constituted an obstacle to the "blood-thirsty Iraqi Baathist regime."[7]

While endeavoring to strengthen ties with Aden, Tripoli, and Damascus, the only Arab capitals to openly proffer support to the Islamic Republic, the Khomeinists engaged in a campaign of denunciation aimed at various Muslim states judged to be disrespectful of the "spirit of Allah." The royalist nations of the Gulf were viewed as culpable of this transgression. Furthermore, the clerical regime's orientation toward the governing elites of the littoral states was strongly tempered by a deep aversion

toward the trappings of imperialism prevalent in these states.

More precisely, at the heart of the opposition toward these regimes was the concept of absolutist monarchy, which the churchmen held as inimical to traditionalist Islam. The rejection of secular monarchy stemmed from the conviction that ultimate sovereignty over man was the exclusive province of Allah. Accordingly, the monarchies of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, as well as those further afield from the Gulf, such as Jordan and Morocco, were denounced as illegitimate bands of "Kafirs" [infidels].[8] And, in keeping with the Shi'ite concept of "takfir,"[9] which legitimizes the utilization of "holy war" [jihad] against states that are not governed in accordance with Islamic doctrine, Qom seized upon the alleged lack of legitimacy wielded by the royalist regimes as a justification for advocating their forced deposals. In short, with regard to establishing the root cause of the aversion toward Iran among a majority of the ruling elites of Near Eastern states, it is important to note that many ranking Iranian churchmen, through an emphatic voicing of their beliefs on the necessity of modifying the region's social, political, and economic structures, served to foster alarm in the Gulf and beyond. For example, on 27 May 1980, Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali referred to the Persian Gulf as the "Islamic Gulf."[10]

Beyond relations with the Gulf nations, the clerical elite also made a dramatic break with the policy followed by the monarchial regime regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute, one of the central strategic issues in the Near East. During the Shah's tenure, close relations were maintained between Teheran and Tel Aviv. However, Khomeini and his colleagues, who looked upon Israel as a pariah nation, had long harbored a bitter loathing of this relationship and were bent on bringing it to a complete termination. The Khomeinists' animus toward the Israelis largely stemmed from the latter's vigorous, and frequently violent, championing of Zionism, the main ideological driving force behind the state of Israel, the key design of which is the realization of a "greater Israel," or more precisely, a haven for Jews encompassing territory now under the control of Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The Israelis' chauvinistic "dream" is clearly antithetical to the Iranian churchmen's pan-Islamic objectives. This sentiment, which approximates anti-Semitism, was made plain by Khomeini in a section of his "Islamic Government":

> From the very beginning, the historical movement of Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems . . . . . this activity continues down to the present.[11]

In consonance with the anti-Zionist bent, Qom began to call upon Tel Aviv to relinquish all Arab territory seized since the 1967 war.[12]

A natural concomitant of the Islamic Republic's anti-Israeli orientation was the proffering of support to the Palestinians, the Arab people who, unequivocally, have borne the brunt of the suffering engendered by American-financed Zionist expansionism in the Levant. A concern for the plight of the Palestinians among the Khomeinists dates back to well before the overthrowing of the Shah; by the early 1970s, the leadership of the revolutionary movement had established a nexus with various hard-line Palestinian groups, principally the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), led by Dr. George Habash.[13] Further demonstrative of the churchmen's strong pro-Palestinian leaning was the fact that Yasir Arafat, the chairman of the mainstream Al-Fatah grouping of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), was the first ranking foreign dignitary to conduct an official state visit to the Islamic Republic. In addition, the PLO was accorded the privilege of opening a diplomatic mission in the former Israeli Embassy in Teheran.[14]

In line with Qom's anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian posture, efforts were undertaken to ostracize Egypt, long regarded as the leading Arab power, for its conclusion of the bilateral Camp David peace agreement with Israel. To the Khomeinists, Cairo's negotiations with Tel Aviv constituted a wanton disregard for Muslim unity, as well as a fawning gesture aimed at currying favor with the United

States, the sponsor of the Egyptian-Israeli parley that produced the accord. On 30 April 1979, relations between Teheran and Cairo were formally broken and the clerical elite implored all other Muslim nations to do likewise. To add insult to injury, on 1 October, Deputy Prime Minister Sadegh Tabatabai denounced President Anwar Sadat as an "agent of world imperialism."[15] By and large, the clerics' anti-Egyptian campaign afforded no real advantage to revolutionary Iran, but merely served to add another regime to the growing list of Teheran's Arab adversaries.

Having demonstrated that the foreign policy priorities adopted by the zealous churchmen brought about the isolation of the Islamic Republic in the Gulf, and in the Near East in general, a development that contrasted significantly with the position of Iran during the Shah's tenure when Teheran exerted considerable influence over regional affairs, the analysis will now shift to the fluctuation in the relations between Iran and the superpowers and their allies, and how this development deprived Teheran of valuable sources of external support that could be utilized to deter aggression by its adversaries.

As already mentioned in this volume, an attendant aspect of the Khomeinists' pan-Islamic crusade was an intense loathing of imperial powers, especially the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective Communist

and Capitalist ideologies which, it was held in Qom, represented a barrier to the realization of a new order within the Muslim world in tune with fundamentalist Islam.[16] Khomeini's description of the relationship between Iran and the Soviet Union and the United States, as analogous to that between a "lamb and a wolf,"[17] underscored the cleric's enmity toward Moscow and Washington, and gave rise to the popular slogan "na sharq na gharb" [neither East nor West]. This anti-Eastern and anti-Western emotion, which rapidly emerged as a cornerstone of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, was clearly articulated by Khomeini on 28 May 1980, when, during an address to the inaugural session of the new Parliament, he asserted that the conducting of Iran's external affairs would take no consideration of the global political division between East and West.

Of the two superpowers, the clerical elite looked upon the United States as the arch nemesis of the Islamic Republic. On one occasion, Khomeini charged that for decades Washington had, in violation of national sovereignty, exercised an overriding mastery over all facets of Iranians' existence: social, cultural, economic, political, and military. The casting-off of this long-brooked, onerous intrusion into Iranian affairs was accorded paramount priority by Qom. A number of impolitic machinations on the part of the United States, on the eve of the outbreak of the revolution, provided further grounds for

the churchmen to assail Washington. Notable among these various incidents was the appointment in April of 1978, of Walter L. Cutler as the new head of the American diplomatic mission in Teheran. The selection of Cutler, a career foreign service officer who had previously served as ambassador to Zaire, a nation with a deplorable human rights record and, under the aegis of the notorious President Mobutu Sese Seko, a long history of cooperation with American and South African intelligence forces in attempting to roll back revolutionary movements in southern Africa, was cited by the Khomeinists as a reflection of the oppressive and violent nature of American imperialism and, accordingly, was vigorously denounced.

Following the Shah's departure, the clerical regime made wide capital of past American transgressions as a means of adding credibility to the charge that Washington constituted the most serious, direct threat to the Islamic revolution. Moreover, the Khomeinists sought to ward off any further meddling in Iranian affairs by the United States by putting forth frequent admonitions; for instance, a particularly bellicose warning came on 28 April 1980 when Foreign Minister Qotzbadeh held that Iranian forces would "blow up the strait of Hormuz and burn the entire Gulf" in retaliation for any counterrevolutionary actions mounted by Washington. The level of American scorn toward Iran, already at a high pitch due to the embassy storming, was

heightened even further by these overt threats of violence, which also served to render Washington's efforts to internationally isolate the Islamic Republic less arduous.

As with the United States, Qom was equally determined to maintain equidistance from the Soviet Union. The impetus behind this intention, apart from the aversion of imperial chauvinism, was also tempered by the Khomeinists' cognizance of Moscow's religious repression of Muslims within their central Asian republics. More precisely, to the clerics, the efforts of the state to discourage open manifestations of reverence for Islam in that region of the Soviet Union constituted conclusive evidence of the gross incompatibility between Communism, with its cardinal emphasis upon secularism and the relegating of religion to a strictly private, inconsequential societal role, and a traditionalist Islamic lifestyle. Such reasoning was inherent in the following dictum put forth by Khomeini on 21 March 1980: "we are fighting against international communism just as we are fighting the Western world."[18] Observations of this nature figured heavily in the cleric's determination to check Moscow's influence among Muslim states.

The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan provided the Khomeiniite regime with a further occasion to condemn Moscow. On 29 December 1979, Foreign Minister Qotzbadeh conveyed an official protest to Moscow in which he held that

Iran's Islamic authorities regarded the Soviet intrusion into Afghani affairs as a serious affront to the interests of all Muslims. A worsening of the acrimonious relations between Teheran and Moscow came in early 1980 when the clerical elite began to intimate that the Islamic Republic might resort to the use of force as a means of eliminating the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, as well as to hamper Moscow's efforts to gain influence among the Gulf Arab states. For example, on 21 January, Qotzbadeh asserted that Iranian assistance to the Afghan resistance would be forthcoming unless Moscow carried out a prompt withdrawal of its occupation forces. And, on the following day, Radio Iran announced that clerical officials in Qom were holding discussions regarding the possible establishment of a regional defense regime, the principal design of which would be to forestall Soviet penetration into the Gulf. These developments were quite disenchanting to the Russians. Overall, with the advent of the Soviet adventure in Afghanistan, the prospect of the realization of mutual cooperation between Moscow and Teheran, largely because of the Khomeiniite regime's ideological imperatives, was made even more remote.

In short, based on the above discussion, it can be accurately asserted that the aggressive foreign policy machinations of the clerics served to alienate a number of governments, including the Gulf monarchies, conservative

regimes in the Arab realm at large, as well as both superpowers and their various allies. The end result of this development was the isolation of the Islamic Republic. By and large, irrespective of cordial ties with Syria, Libya, and South Yemen, in late 1980, Teheran was bereft of strong allies which could be called upon to render assistance to safeguard national security from external threats. The following section will address Iraq's efforts to exploit Iran's growing isolation as a means of augmenting foreign support for the planned bid to strategically surprise the revolutionary state.

Change in Iraqi Foreign Policy: From Radicalism to Moderation

The Islamic revolution acted as a catalyst to the slowly evolving direction of Baghdad's external affairs designs. From the mid-1970s, the Baath elite had been gradually shifting the orientation of Iraqi foreign policy from a radical leaning predicated upon adherence to doctrinaire Arab nationalism and socialism, anti-Zionism, and a defending of the Palestinian cause, as well as opposition to Arab states with strong links to the West, toward a more moderate, pragmatic policy conducive to the realization of regional ambitions. The moderation of Iraqi foreign policy became increasingly discernible following the 1978 summit of Arab heads-of-government in Baghdad.[19] From

this point onward, ties between Iraq and conservative Arab regimes improved steadily.

Following the Shah's downfall, Baghdad's movement toward the conservative Arab fold was further hastened. The intensification of this trend can be attributed to perceptions of increased opportunity: in February of 1979, a secret, somewhat cryptic memo was distributed among ranking Baathists which stated, in part, that "the lake of oil seems to be on the brink of a volcano."[20] More clearly, to the Iraqi elite, the considerable apprehension among the royalist Gulf states regarding the specter of a spilling-over of revolutionary, fundamentalist Shi'ism could be exploited to forge a new regional power relationship, with Iraq at the helm. In consonance with this design, Baath officials, beginning in early 1979, embarked on a campaign to heighten perceptions in the various Gulf capitals of the Khomeiniite regime as a menace to regional stability. Also, by vilifying the clerical regime, the Baathists were hopeful of avoiding the stigma that could stem from appearing as the principal instigator of the rising tension between Baghdad and Teheran. And, in this way, an optimum level of support among the Arab monarchies would obtain.

A salient feature of the Baathists' campaign to sow distrust and fear of revolutionary Iran was the charge that, in terms of foreign policy, the clerical regime was bent on pursuing regional ends, albeit in a more aggressive manner,

similar to those adhered to by the domineering Pahlavi regime. More precisely, toward the goal of fostering support for the planned attack against Iran, Baghdad engaged in an effort to convince the Gulf states that the Islamic Republic differed little from monarchial Iran in terms of foreign policy objectives: territorial aggrandizement and regional hegemony, based on a strong undercurrent of anti-Arab sentiment, continued to constitute the foundation of Teheran's external affairs agenda.

In line with the above design, the Baath elite maintained that, irrespective of revolutionary rhetoric regarding the necessity of establishing greater solidarity among Muslims as a means of countering Western influence, the Islamic Republic remained the world's foremost exporter of petroleum products to the United States and, that in continuing to support imperial interests, revolutionary Iran constituted the chief obstacle to the attainment of a single pan-Arab state.[21] Open condemnations of the clerical regime on this score were put forth by Iraqi officials with increasing frequency; for example, in late June of 1979, Tahir Tawfiq, a senior member of the Baath Party Regional Command, denounced the foreign policy ends advocated by the Khomeinists as "aggressive" and "racist" and maintained that they were antithetical to the interests of the "Arab nation."[22] And, on one occasion, Saddam Hussein openly attacked Khomeini by referring to him as a "turbaned Shah"

who, like Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, was bent on furthering Iranian influence in the Gulf.

The Baathists seized upon the violent unrest in Khuzestan in order to lend substance to the charge that the revolutionary regime espoused a strong racist leaning. Vis-à-vis this subterfuge, Baghdad was able to couch its enterprising territorial ambitions in defensive terms: the protection of Arab territory from Persian encroachment. Indicative of the Baath elite's effort to foster an image of Iraq as a champion of Arab interests was the assertion, which implicitly alluded to Iran, made by Tariq Aziz in December of 1979:

> Palestine is not the only occupied Arab land, and no occupier of Arab land can be a friend of the Arabs.[23]

Beyond drawing attention to the Khuzestan imbroglio, as a further means of bolstering Iraq's image as benefactor to the Gulf Arab states, Baghdad also made wide capital out of the Islamic Republic's decision against ceding control over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs to the United Arab Emirates, an effort which elicited an extension of open support from Sheik Saqr bin Muhammad al-Qassami, the emir of Ras al-Khaimah.[24] By and large, Iran's uncompromising position toward the aspirations of the Khuzestani activists, which engendered a considerable amount of violence, as well as its intransigence toward relinquishing control over what was widely perceived in Gulf capitals as Arab territory, allowed Baghdad the luxury of branding Teheran as an

aggressor while subsequently building a base of support for advancing Iraq's own hegemonistic plans.

Iraq carried out its new, self-appointed role as defender of the Gulf Arab realm with increasing zeal and determination. Shortly after the Shah was overthrown, the Baath regime sent its minister of defense to the various capitals of the littoral states with assurances that Baghdad would provide assistance to counter any threat posed by revolutionary Iran.[25] Moreover, beginning in September of 1979, the Baathists began to warn that Iraq would not brook any machinations of the Islamic Republic that were designed to incite dissidence within the conservative Arab states of the Gulf region.[26]

The Baathists' efforts to curry favor within the Arab realm were made easier by the fact that, similar to Iraq, various conservative Arab regimes did have a basis for concern regarding the Islamic revolution, particularly the monarchial elites governing the littoral states which, beyond geographical proximity to Iran, were rendered vulnerable to a destabilizing outbreak of traditionalist Shi'ism by their ethnic and religious fabrics. For example, the Kuwaiti populace, which was governed by a royalist regime under the exclusive sway of Sunni Muslims, comprised a significant number of Shias, a high percentage of whom were ethnic Persians.[27] This vulnerability was manifested by the Kuwaiti monarchy's sensitivity toward the clerical

regime's determination to foster similar revolutionary upheavals throughout the region. To the delight of Baghdad, the Kuwaiti regime became increasingly open in denouncing the aggressive pronouncements put forth by various Iranian clerics, on one occasion admonishing that if the Khomeinists' "imperial mentality" did not soon abate, Kuwait would join with other Gulf nations in directly challenging Iran's territorial claim to Khuzestan.[28]

The Baathists took special pains to normalize ties with Saudi Arabia, one of the more powerful Arab states. In February of 1979, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, the Iraqi interior minister, led a delegation to Riyadh, which resulted in the conclusion of an Iraqi-Saudi frontier security agreement. The Saudi elite's impetus for concluding a joint defense pact with Iraq largely emanated from increasingly discernible manifestations of unrest among the nation's Shias. By October of 1979, troops had been positioned in various Saudi holy centers to deter the outbreak of disturbances. However, in November, Islamic militants forcibly occupied the Grand Mosque of Mecca for a two-week period, which ended with a bloody storming. This violent episode served to increase Riyadh's aversion toward the Iranian clerical elite, which was believed to have encouraged the occupation of the mosque.

Baghdad's efforts to build a base of support among conservative Arab regimes was not limited to the Gulf

monarchies. Iraqi diplomatic relations with Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia warmed considerably in the period between the onset of the revolution and the initiation of the invasion. By mid-1979, the Baath regime was lavishing praise on King Hussein, and this constituted a stark contrast from the year before when Baghdad routinely denounced the Jordanian monarch as an "imperialist tool."[29] The rapprochement between Iraq and Morocco was hastened by Baghdad's decision to support Rabat's control over the Western Sahara and its efforts to quell the insurgency being conducted by the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the armed wing of the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro]. And, with regard to Tunisia, the Baathists sought to placate President Habib Bourquiba by openly denouncing the decision of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi to reinforce troop levels along the Libyan-Tunisian frontier. Overall, beyond the above-mentioned conciliatory gestures, the principal causal factor underlying the willingness of Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia to seek stronger ties with Iraq was the common affinity for secular governance and an attendant aversion toward Islamic fanaticism. It was cognizance of this actuality that animated the shift in Iraqi policy toward these states.

Beyond establishing a broad base of support for the pending clash with the Islamic Republic within the Arab realm, the Baathists developed sources of support further

afield from the Near East by modifying Iraqi foreign policy with regard to superpower identification. Following the onset of the Islamic revolution, Baghdad intensified efforts to move away from the Soviet orbit, a process that had been set in motion in the mid-1970s, and to establish warmer ties with the West. This shift in a major dimension of Iraq's external affairs stemmed from a pragmatic basis; by and large, the Baathists were cognizant that without Western sanction, particularly from London and Washington, the ultimate arbiters of the Gulf power equation, a bid for regional hegemony was untenable. More precisely, the Baath elite was aware that the British and the Americans, given their history of entanglement in Gulf affairs, would not allow a Soviet dependency to assume a position of leadership in the region. This realization spurred the Baath elite's efforts to distance Iraq from Moscow and its Eastern bloc allies.

The loosening of the Iraqi nexus with the Soviet Union and various eastern European nations, at the core of which was the 1972 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow, was accelerated with the Shah's downfall. However, the Baath regime was careful to avoid the appearance of rushing to embrace the West in an opportunistic bid for regional power, for such an image would have likely stirred suspicion among the monarchial elites of the littoral states. Accordingly, the cooling of relations with Moscow

was conducted in a rather gradual, subtle manner. Occasional, pro-Soviet pronouncements continued to be put forth by Baghdad. By and large, the objective of the Baathists was not to completely alienate the Soviets but, rather, to signal that Iraq's drive for regional dominance, which was contingent on a realization of Western support, would not be hampered by a too close identification with the East.

However, the slow, quiet drift away from Moscow was disrupted by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which provided the Baathists with a pretext to accelerate the process of decoupling Iraq from the Communist realm. Official condemnation of the Soviet aggression was immediately conveyed by Baghdad: on 6 January 1980, during a speech commemorating the fifty-ninth anniversary of the establishment of the Iraqi army, Saddam Hussein denounced Moscow's decision to intervene directly in the tumult in Afghanistan as a "dangerous development" that constituted a further blow to regional stability.[30] Beyond the lodging of protests, the Baath elite decided, as a further punitory measure, to reduce the level of oil exported to the Soviet Union by fifty percent, from 340,000 to 170,000 barrels per day.[31]

Overall, although Iraqi-Soviet relations were weakened considerably, as evidenced by the Baath elite's consideration of jettisoning the friendship and cooperation

pact in February of 1980, an open line of communication was maintained between Baghdad and Moscow, especially regarding Iraq's aggressive designs toward Iran. This can be attributed to the Baathists' recognition that, albeit the West, particularly the United States, exerted greater influence over the Gulf than the East, the Soviet Union, in keeping with centuries of Russian meddling in Iran, was keenly interested in the region's affairs, particularly the flow of petroleum. Accordingly, Baghdad concluded that Moscow's acquiescence for any foray into Iran had to be secured. Simply put, Iraq could not afford to undertake any actions that could evoke a direct Soviet challenge.

Toward realizing assurances from the Russians that such a response would not be forthcoming, Tariq Aziz traveled to Moscow in late September of 1980, ostensibly to give the Brezhnev regime a final briefing regarding the planned Iraqi incursion.[32] And, it can be adduced from the fact that the invasion was executed shortly thereafter, no serious Soviet objections to the Baathists' goals were raised at this juncture. Moscow's lack of reservations regarding an Iraqi irruption that aimed at deposing the Iranian clerical regime, which can be largely attributed to a concern that Islamic fundamentalism might spread to the predominately Muslim-populated Soviet republics of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, served to bolster both the

Baathists' incentives and perceptions of opportunity for aggression against the Islamic Republic.

As already mentioned, the Iraqi shift away from the Soviet Union was a concomitant of the movement toward the West. By and large, the Baathists looked upon Iraq's vast petroleum reserves as a viable medium which could be utilized to entice the West into affording support to Baghdad's bid to fill the regional power void engendered by the revolution in Iran. Accordingly, when the flow of Iranian crude was interrupted, largely as a result of sanctions imposed by Western powers in response to the hostage impasse, the Baath leadership wasted little time in offering to increase oil exports to various European states and Japan, which had previously received a significant percentage of their petroleum supplies from Teheran. The volume of trade between Iraq and these states also increased considerably.

Of significant import, in terms of solidifying Iraq's confidence to actively pursue its bid for Gulf supremacy, and to assume a leadership role among Arab states in general, was the strengthening of economic cooperation between Baghdad and Paris. In particular, the French became actively involved in Iraq's efforts to construct a nuclear power station. The Baath regime believed that the establishment of a viable nuclear power system would greatly heighten respect of Iraq throughout the Arab world.

Moreover, the vast French armaments industry offered the Baathists a source for acquiring state-of-the-art weapon systems for strengthening Iraq's military capability.

London also demonstrated a willingness to explore the possibility of improving ties with the Baath government. In July of 1979, the British dispatched Lord Carrington, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Baghdad to parley with ranking Iraqi officials regarding means of increasing British-Iraqi cooperation. And, in February of 1980, Saadoun Hammadi, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, declared during an interview with Al-Thawra, the official forum of the Baathists, that economic, technical and cultural pacts were being concluded with various other western European states, including West Germany and Belgium. Bonn and Brussels, as well as Tokyo, were also assured that Baghdad stood ready to meet their requirements for petroleum. In short, the increase in economic cooperation with western Europe and Japan, including greater access to the markets of these powerful states, contributed to the Baath elite's perception that it had established an adequate level of external support for properly executing the conflict with Iran.

Lastly, in terms of explaining the willingness of the Iraqis to engage the Islamic republic, a citing of the accelerated, albeit quiet, rapprochement between Baghdad and Washington, is of central importance. Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Iraq were severed

following the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, a development which stemmed from Washington's carte blanche support of Tel Aviv's Zionist visions. However, not unexpectedly, the impasse on the diplomatic front did not prevent the continuation of trade relations between the two states, the volume of which increased steadily from the mid- to late 1970s. The increase in cooperation in the economic sphere was accompanied by a gradual softening of Washington's perception of Saddam Hussein as an autocrat who took his cue from Moscow.[33] Interestingly, it was not until the demise of the Pahlavi dynasty that Washington began to court the Baath regime in earnest.

In early 1979, a number of Iraqi officials, including Foreign Minister Hammadi, began to intimate that although no significant shift in Baghdad's orientation toward the United States had transpired, it was not believed that diplomatic relations would "remain forever broken."[34] The Baathists vaguely qualified the meaning of such pronouncements by openly cautioning that no improvement in Iraqi-American ties would obtain unless Washington considerably altered its policy toward the Near East. However, in actual terms, the imposition of such linkage amounted to a mere rhetorical facade through which to avoid alarming potential Arab allies, particularly the littoral states, which were convinced that Washington, stung by the loss of its foremost ally in the region, was bent on

reasserting its leverage over the Gulf and, that in quest of this end, the United States would likely serve to further destabilize peace in the region. The need to allay such concerns constituted the impetus behind Iraq's open call for major changes in American policy toward the Arab world. Overall, at the center of the melioration of Iraqi-American relations was the former's perceptions of utility, in terms of realizing regional designs, inherent in such a development. This was clearly evidenced by Saddam Hussein when, in February, he publicly asserted that Baghdad would be willing to reestablish diplomatic relations with Washington only if this would effect a furthering of pan-Arabism and unspecified "Iraqi national interests."[35]

The conducting of increasingly frequent, largely behind-the-scenes contacts between American and Iraqi officials was facilitated by diplomatic missions of third nations, particularly the Belgian Embassy in Baghdad and the Indian Embassy in Washington. On 10 April, Edward Peck, the senior officer attached to the American interests section at the Belgian mission, was extended an invitation to attend an official government function; this event marked the highest diplomatic contact between the United States and Iraq in a number of years.[36] A further indication that the United States was interested in employing Iraq as a means of attempting to roll back the Islamic revolution came in early February of 1980 when, according to The Wall Street Journal,

Zbigenew Brzezinski, an assistant for national security affairs under President Jimmy Carter, undertook a clandestine "28-hour visit" to Baghdad, where he held discussions with Iraqi officials, including Saddam Hussein and Michel Aflaq, a leading Baath ideologue, regarding details of a "security alliance" between Washington and Baghdad.[37]

Such secretive contacts were consonant with official pronouncements put forth by the U.S. State Department which, beginning in approximately mid-1980, began to assert that conditions within the Gulf region had made it "important" for the United States to reestablish formal diplomatic ties with Iraq. And, in terms of incentives for securing Baghdad's support for the American line toward the Gulf and the Islamic revolution, the State Department authorized the sale of powerful gas turbine engines manufactured by General Electric, which were to be installed in naval vessels under construction in Italy, and a number of Boeing 727 and 747 transport aircraft. By and large, Washington was determined to signal to the Baath regime that considerable benefits would accompany Iraq's willingness to participate in the effort to contain the Iranian Revolution and to thereby forestall any disruptions of the economic status quo in the Gulf, which had allowed the West to reap considerable profit. This crucial source of support reinforced both the

Baathists' incentive and opportunity structures and cemented their resolve to undertake a bid at strategic surprise.

Conclusion

Two major inferences can be drawn from the foregoing discussion. First and foremost, the maverick nature of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy ideals, which included a profound disdain for the various secular monarchies within the Arab world, strong support for the Palestinians' drive for an independent state, and a concomitant, intense opposition toward Zionism, served to greatly diminish the number of Near Eastern states that would proffer aid to revolutionary Iran in the event that its national security was directly jeopardized by an external foe. Furthermore, the breakdown of the Teheran-Washington axis, as well as the attendant overt hostility toward Moscow displayed by the Khomeinists, made the likelihood of either superpower coming to the rescue of the Islamic Republic even more remote.

Secondly, the advantages accruing from the isolation of revolutionary Iran were considerable and--most important of all--they served to bolster existing Iraqi incentives and opportunities for conducting a short and decisive inroad. Close to home, the long-standing enmity between the Baath regime and the Gulf monarchies dissipated rapidly after the downfall of the Shah. Thus, the Baathists were granted access to the immense financial resources of these states, a development which added to Baghdad's confidence that it

would prevail over Teheran and Qom. And, vis-à-vis the quiet, moderate shift in their stance regarding the East-West division, the Baathists were able to enlist the much more valuable support of the latter, while averting a complete alienation of the former. All in all, this change worked to the benefit of Iraq.

CHAPTER VI NOTES

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

My desire to examine the Iraqi bid at strategic surprise was induced by several factors. The recency of this particular subject is first and foremost among these. While many renowned analysts of the conditions that engender interstate war acknowledge the importance of strategic surprise, no detailed work, to my knowledge, on the motivations and designs undergirding Baghdad's quest for strategic surprise--or postrevolutionary Iran's vulnerability to a sudden strike--had been undertaken prior to the initiation of this project. Second is Knorr and Morgan's model for case studies, which provided the conceptual tool for pulling together the multivariate threads of applicable, empirical data into a comprehensible, analytical pattern. This chapter entails a consideration of some of the more common aspects of strategic surprise elucidated in this tract. Rather than put forth a cursory summary of the Iraq-Iran case, I will attempt, by drawing parallels with earlier, noted instances of strategic surprise, to shed further light on general phenomena associated with strategic surprise.

A grand theoretical conclusion of this thesis is that the outbreak of the recently ended Iran-Iraq war can be attributed to a mutually reinforcing misestimation and shortcoming: the expectation in Baghdad that principal territorial and political designs could be realized through a surprise attack upon Khuzestan--thereby avoiding a protracted, costly war--and the failure of key Iranian political actors, both in Teheran and Qom, to gain strategic warning of the planned Iraqi inroad. The former miscalculation heightened the willingness of the Iraqi elite to resort to a use of military force to resolve the political and territorial friction with Iran, while the latter failure prevented Iranian political elites, both secular and clerical, from undertaking effective countermeasures to ward off an Iraqi attack upon the important southwestern provinces.

A considerable portion of this volume entailed a treatment of these two interacting faults; this analysis facilitated an explanation of the hostile interactions between the Iraqi and Iranian regimes which culminated in the initiation of the Iran-Iraq war. However, a highly conclusive examination of the Iraqi campaign to strategically surprise revolutionary Iran will only be possible if and when pertinent documents of each belligerent (e.g., personal memoirs of key officials, intelligence evaluations, and diplomatic cables) become available for

scholarly scrutiny. Given the paucity of conclusive evidence, along with a heavy reliance upon transcripts of speeches and newspaper articles, the analysis contained within this thesis can only be accurately described as somewhat speculative. But while the hypotheses propounded in this thesis have not been documented to a conclusive degree, I have demonstrated a consistency between the findings I have put forth and the evidence contained within this work.

A principal finding of this study is that strategic surprise constitutes a complex phenomenon for study. Indeed, the occurrence of strategic surprise is influenced by a myriad of factors. The Iraq-Iran case, similar to several celebrated instances of strategic surprise in the past, involved a complex causation.

In this study, a number of significant observations relate to the complex array of distinct but interacting levels of causality that typically actuate a governing elite's search for strategic surprise. In this volume, the examination of these factors, which include those of a historical, political, ideological, economic, and geostrategical nature, has been largely conducted vis-à-vis exposition.

In terms of the basis for an attacking state's motivations for attempting a strategic surprise, the ruling elite's visions of national security, or the more nebulous

term of "national interests," are often crucial. Irrespective of the concern of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the attendant specter of a "spilling over" of traditional Islamic zeal, it appears that geopolitical considerations were far more important in prompting the Baathists to strike at Iran.

Correlations can be discerned between the Iraqi experience and several earlier efforts to obtain strategic surprise. For example, the imperial Japanese elite believed that for Japan to rise to the station of major global power, access to the natural resources of southeast Asia was imperative. The United States and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain, due to their armed presence in the region, stood as major obstacles to Japan's bid for hegemony. It was the removal of these obstacles which constituted the impetus for the surprise attacks upon American forces in Hawaii and upon British forces on the Malay Peninsula. It was borne out in this study that, similar to the goals which animated Tokyo's militaristic agenda in the early 1940s, Baghdad's incentive structure rested upon a number of offensive designs: chief among these were aggrandizement of economically important segments of Iranian territory. This geopolitical impulse was grounded on the Baath elite's cardinal strategic design: the establishment of Iraqi hegemony over the Gulf, an end paralleled by Baghdad's desire to play a leading role, in the Egyptian tradition,

among Arab nations. Overall, a quest for hegemony constituted the paramount determinant underlying the Baath regime's incentives; and on this score, the Iraqi campaign to strategically surprise Iran shared similarities with Germany's effort to strategically surprise the Soviet Union. Although this observed similarity does not constitute grounds to infer a universally valid maxim on the phenomenon of strategic surprise, it is not unreasonable to maintain that hegemonic aspirations are not an uncommon motivation for strategically surprising an adversary.

An additional major conclusion of this essay is that the overriding fixation on attaining their aggressive territorial goals blinded the Baathists to the danger that such an undertaking could go profoundly awry. In short, Baghdad failed to determine that the Iranian clerical regime would resort to a total war to defend Iranian territory. Moreover, Iraq's leadership erred in not taking a more cautionary approach to the Iranian Revolution. An in-depth examination was not necessary in order to grasp the fact that the revolution had widespread support at the grassroots level and that the Khomeinists could readily mobilize the energy of the masses to confront an intrusion. In addition, Baghdad should have thought of Khomeini's fiery resolve. Given the Imam's avowal of spreading the revolution, the Baath regime should have realized that an incursion into the Islamic Republic would constitute a challenge which Khomeini

would respond to with optimum zeal and determination. Saddam Hussein's shortcoming on this score somewhat reflects Hitler's failure to recognize the resolve of the dictatorial Stalin to defend Soviet territory.

A considerable portion of this thesis was devoted to examining the failure of the target state to gain strategic warning of the aggressor's designs and to undertake defensive countermeasures. In explaining failures to realize strategic warning, a number of key reasons have been cited. First and foremost are the quantitative and qualitative nature of warning signals available to the target state. Accurate threat perception and the attendant realization of strategic warning is no small feat. I have attempted to establish that Iran's disadvantageous position on this score stemmed partly from the authoritarian nature of its Iraqi adversary. Similar to several regimes which have successfully orchestrated strategic surprises in the past, most notably imperial Japan and National Socialist Germany, the Baathists were able to operate in an environment nearly wholly aloof from the normative constraints of public scrutiny that hold sway in democratic political systems. More precisely, the capability of the Iranian intelligence community to effectively monitor Iraqi plans, already marred by the revolutionary upheaval, was even further complicated by the highly cryptic behavior of the autocratic Baath cabal. The important general lesson to

be drawn from this is not that states governed by authoritarian regimes will always succeed in strategically surprising an adversary, but, rather, that a target state will find the task of obtaining strategic warning more arduous when facing an autocratic, as opposed to a democratic, opponent. This was one of the difficult problems encountered by Stalin in gauging Hitler's designs.

However, it would be inaccurate to conclude that no potential warning signals were available to the Iranian elite. Irrespective of the secretive demeanor of the Baathists, there were innumerable Iraqi machinations that could have belied a hostile intent to careful Iranian observers. For example, Baghdad's frequent and open pronouncements of dissatisfaction with efforts to reach a diplomatic compromise on territorial disputes should have alerted Iranian officials to the possibility that Iraq would attempt to use force to effect a resolution. The failure to respond to such outward manifestations by undertaking effective defensive countermeasures is not unprecedented: warning indicators of likely enemy aggression were also available to American and Soviet leaders on the eve of the Pearl Harbor disaster and the launching of Operation Barbarossa. By and large, it is safe to conclude that, given the lack of defensive preparation underway in Khuzestan in September of 1980, Iranian decision-makers had failed to determine the date, hour, and location of the

planned Iraqi attack. Again, the Iranian elite's shortcomings on this score somewhat reflected the misfortune of other regimes in the past. For example, irrespective of a general cognizance within the American intelligence community that the Japanese would mount an attack in December of 1941, no single analyst expressed a belief that an attack directed at Pearl Harbor would be launched on a Sunday morning. Overall, such historical analogies demonstrate commonalities regarding elite failures to obtain strategic warning. Proceeding from these shared experiences, the paramountcy of the correlation between effective, timely intelligence gathering and analysis and the warding off of surprise attacks becomes readily apparent.

With further regard to intelligence problems, this study established that internal political divisions can also significantly contribute to failures to obtain strategic warning of a planned attack. Simply put, power struggles among political elites diminish the level of attention accorded to potential threats, thereby granting an adversary a greater opportunity to realize strategic surprise. The logic underlying this premise rests upon the basic conclusion that a divided house is more easily conquered than a united house.

Through an in-depth examination of the numerous political divisions that obtained in revolutionary Iran, the

contribution of this condition to the failure of Teheran to foresee the looming Iraqi incursion was established. The most discernible impression drawn from this examination is that the vying for supremacy between the de jure, secular elite and the clerical elite--which wielded considerable de facto power--resulted in an attendant breakdown of cooperation in the intelligence process. The more powerful clerics, largely due to their disdain and mistrust of the secularists, attached little importance to the intelligence estimates that were put forth by the impaired intelligence groups directed by the Bazargan and Bani-Sadr regimes. On this score, the most important lesson to be drawn from this example is that a high level of elite cooperation is necessary for the effective carrying-out of the all-important task of gathering and analyzing intelligence data on an adversary's objectives.

Lastly, proceeding from an observance of the recent trends in superpower military acquisition, especially that of the United States, it is possible to put forth a few points regarding the future importance of strategic surprise to global security. In short, as the rapidity and lethality of the American nuclear arsenal continues to mount, thereby increasingly approximating a real counterforce capability, there will occur an increase in pressure upon the Kremlin to place even greater emphasis upon planning for a massive, preemptive nuclear strike against the United States.

Indeed, preemption has long been a cardinal tenet of Soviet strategic nuclear doctrine. It is not difficult to imagine how the current American emphasis upon attaining an ability to decapitate the Soviet command and control structure with a surprise onslaught utilizing a potent, deadly mix of sea-launched cruise missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and low-level, supersonic bomber sorties, serves to undermine the deterrent value of the central concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD). The major, concomitant ramification stemming from a movement away from MAD is an ever- heightening destabilization in the strategic balance between the superpower rivals. The growing Soviet exposure to an American strategic surprise raises the specter of an accidental nuclear war. In terms of prescription, arms control negotiations should aim at instituting sound confidence-building measures (CBMs). The focus of CBMs should be to diminish destabilizing counterforce trends, such as the Soviet and American practice of stationing missile submarines in proximity to each other's territory, and to reemphasize an adherence to the concept of MAD.

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