

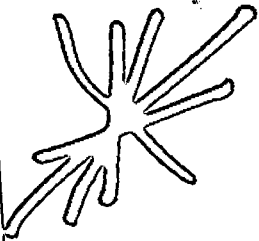
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REPORT OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYST
VISIT TO KUWAIT AND IRAQ
24 — 31 OCTOBER 1986

Published Under Authority of the
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Défense nationale

National Defence Headquarters
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1776-CIS (DDI)

20 November 1986


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1776-CIS (DDI)

20 November 1986

REPORT OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYST VISIT TO
KUWAIT AND IRAQ 24-31 OCTOBER 1986

BACKGROUND

1. (C) At the invitation of the Department of External Affairs an intelligence analyst from the Directorate of Defence Intelligence was dispatched to Iraq by way of Kuwait to conduct an on-site assessment of the IRAN/IRAQ War. Recently, there has been considerable speculation by both the media and the intelligence community on the likelihood of an impending Iranian "Final Offensive" and the ability of the Iraqi military to stop it. There has also been much written on the ability of Saddam Hussein to survive even a limited Iranian "tactical victory".

2. (C) Given the potentially grave consequences, to stability in the region, of an Iranian military victory it was felt that a visit by a military intelligence analyst would prove beneficial in providing a current assessment of the military situation in the Persian Gulf in general and Iran/Iraq in particular.

ITINERARY

3. (C) On 25-26 Oct 86 meetings were arranged by Canadian Embassy Kuwait with the following in Kuwait City:



4. (C) On 28-29 Oct meetings were arranged by Canadian Embassy Iraq with the following in Baghdad:



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[REDACTED]

5. (C) The day of the 27th of Oct was used to drive from Kuwait City to Baghdad by way of Basrah and Amarah see map (Annex A). This same route was used on the return trip on the 30th of Oct, and will be the battlefield for the next Iranian Offensive.

6. (C) Both in Kuwait and Baghdad informal discussions were held during various social functions with members of the Diplomatic communities (listed at Annex B).

THE IRANIAN OFFENSIVE

[REDACTED]

8. (S) The reasons given why Iran had failed to launch its offensive varied. Most attaches and diplomats felt that the Iranian leadership had yet to commit itself to a date and time. All felt that Iran had the capability to launch an offensive on a few days notice. Presently the Ayatollah Khomeini may be seriously ill; as a result the various factions within Iran appear to be jockeying for power. As long as there is turmoil within the Iranian hierarchy a decision to launch an offensive in the near future seems unlikely. If and when the more radical factions gain the upper hand it is probable they will press for an immediate "Final Offensive" to hopefully consolidate their power base with a great victory.

9. (S) The [REDACTED] in Baghdad felt that Iran would wait for the poor weather to launch its offensive. Although the rainy season would hinder logistics for the Iranians it would affect the Iraqis more in that it would:

- a. limit superior Iraqi airpower;
- b. through restricted mobility limit the effectiveness of Iraqi armour superiority; and
- c. reduce the effectiveness of Iraqi chemical weapons.

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10. (S) It is anticipated by both the military attaches in Baghdad and current DDI Intelligence assessments that the Iranian Offensive will be conducted in two phases. (see map Annex C)

- a. Phase I. Regular Iranian formations, now concentrated in the Mehran area, would attack with the aim of cutting both the Baghdad/Kirkuk Highway and the Baghdad/Amarah Highway. If these thrusts were successful Baghdad would be isolated from the North and South thus splitting the country. For Iraq to block these attacks it would undoubtedly be forced to commit much of its vital armour reserve, thus reducing its flexibility in dealing with any attacks Iran may launch elsewhere.
- b. Phase II. After possibly drawing away the greater part of Iraq's armour reserve, the main thrust would be made from the Hawizah Marsh and out of Al Faw. These attacks would be made with large numbers of highly motivated members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard supported by even greater numbers of Basij (poorly trained, but also highly motivated volunteers). Their aim would be to isolate Basrah (Iraq's second largest city) by taking Qurnah and cutting the road to Kuwait.

FORM OF NEXT OFFENSIVE

11. (S) Iran has been stockpiling large amounts of artillery ammunition and this is expected to be completed by the end of December. It is felt that any diversionary attacks from the Mehran area will be handily repulsed by the Iraqi armour reserve. The main Iranian thrusts out of both the Hawizah Marsh and Al Faw will be on terrain over which the Iranians have performed better than their Iraqi counterparts.

12. (S) If either or both of these main thrusts achieve local tactical surprise and achieve immediate success Iraqi morale could collapse and Iranian isolation of Basrah could be accomplished.

13. (S) Surprise will be the key to Iranian success. Iran, by keeping its forces mobilized and ready to move on short

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notice, has kept everyone guessing as to when and where its offensive will be. Iranian offensives in the past have lasted only a few days due to logistic shortages. However the latest projections indicate that Iran is stockpiling sufficient resources to permit high intensity operations for 7 to 10 days. (This alone would surprise and keep the Iraqis off balance).

14. (S) The key to success or failure lies with the individual Iraqi soldier, whose morale has dropped alarmingly over the past year. If he holds, Iraq stands. Iran is hoping that by breaking Iraqi morale they will achieve their aim.

TIMING OF NEXT OFFENSIVE

15. (S) All attaches felt that it would be impossible to predict the timing of the next offensive with any degree of accuracy. Iran's economy is in serious condition due to the increasingly effective Iraqi air strikes on its oil refining and exporting infrastructure. Most diplomats and attaches felt that Iran would be unable to carry out the war on a major scale by the summer of 87, therefore all felt it had to come in the next few months.

16. (S) January appears to be the most logical time frame to launch a major offensive. The weather would be ideal for the Iranians and politically very opportune. On 28 January 1987 Kuwait will be hosting the "Islamic Summit". The leaders of most Islamic countries are expected to attend. Iran could use a fresh victory to drive home their point of its Islamic Revolution at this conference. A point to note is that the artillery barrages in Al Faw can be heard clearly in Kuwait City.

SURVIVAL OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

17. (S) With a general collapse of Iraqi forces in the south coupled with the isolation of Basrah, Iran hopes that Saddam Hussein will be ousted. If Iran does achieve success on the battlefield, there is a possibility, though unlikely, that a coup by the military, might take place. Iran feels that if it can inflict a major military setback on Iraq this will force a change of power in Baghdad to a regime that will end the conflict on Iranian terms.

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GENERAL POINTS ON THE WAR

18. (S) The Soldier. All attaches were in agreement that the Iranian was a better fighter than the Iraqi. The key advantage, they felt, was the fanatical motivation of both the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Basij. Their ability to press on despite casualties and ability to endure hardships made them superior to the albeit better equipped and trained Iraqi.

19. (S) Iraqi Air Power. Generally it is felt that there are two air forces in Iraq, an East Bloc one (Soviet equipped) and a Western one (Mirage). The major problems with the East Bloc air force (which is mainly ground support and air defence) were maintenance and very poor doctrine. They are ordered to carry out their tasks under very restricted conditions, such as flying high and fast. It is now felt that these conditions will not change as Iraq fears the bolder use of its air force will result in unacceptable casualties. The Mirage force has now become more effective, due first, to a political decision to fully commit this force and second, the use of the AS-30 laser guided missile. This missile gives the Iraqi pilots the ability to carry out accurate strikes out of range of effective Iranian air defences. It is believed that French technicians from Dassault are maintaining Iraq's Mirage F-1s to a level where they are capable of carrying out the number of missions needed to cripple Iran's economy.

20. (S) The Iraqi Army. All attaches felt that though the Iraqis have a well-equipped army, it has serious problems. The army is plagued with morale problems, and there is a great deal of "political interference". Many bad decisions based on politics have been made, resulting in needless losses on the battlefield. The Iraqis have problems maintaining and properly employing their more sophisticated equipment such as the T-72 tank.

THE PERSIAN GULF

21. (C) During the visit there was a great deal of concern expressed by all over increased Iranian attacks on neutral shipping.

22. (C) Iran has threatened to close the Gulf to all shipping if Iraqi air attacks persist against its oil exporting facilities.

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In October, Iraqi air strikes cut Iranian export and refining capability drastically. Iran hopes that by threatening the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) with attacks against their shipping they in turn will place pressure on Iraq to limit its strikes on Iranian economic targets (perhaps by reducing financial assistance). Currently it is estimated that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia provide Iraq with financial aid in the sum of 10 billion US dollars a year.

23. (S) If, in the future, Iraqi air strikes increase and seriously threaten Iran's economy, Iran may well increase its attacks on Gulf shipping and attempt to close the Straits of Hormuz. Iran now possesses the means to carry out this threat using a recently acquired PRC missile system. This system, the CSSC-2 gives Iran the ability to seriously damage or sink vessels transiting the Straits of Hormuz (see Annex D)

24. (S) To date, Iran has used its navy to implement a partial, but ineffective, blockade of the Gulf. This blockade has taken the form of boarding suspect vessels and confiscating war material scheduled for delivery to Iraq. Currently elements of the U.S. Navy are placed in the Gulf to hinder Iranian attacks on merchant shipping. Iranian aircraft and naval vessels are under strict orders to avoid approaching US Naval vessels. Many air attacks and boardings have been prevented due to the presence of these US warships.

25. (S) If Iran were to close the Straits, the United States would be placed in an awkward position. Under Carter doctrine (which the Reagan administration has accepted) the United States would guarantee free and navigable passage for all neutral vessels using the Straits of Hormuz. The United States would hope for a request from the GCC to re-open the Straits, but this would not be quick in coming due to a paralytic fear of Iran in the Gulf. The United States would thus be forced to use naval power to re-open the Straits with likely public condemnation by the Islamic world.

CONSEQUENCES OF AN IRANIAN VICTORY

26. (S) If an Islamic style government dedicated to spreading Islamic fundamentalism were installed in Iraq the GCC would likely out of fear fall into line. Jordan and Syria would

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be the next targets for subversion by this Islamic style government and could possibly become future battlefields.

27. (S) Iran dominating the Gulf would be in a position to dictate oil quotas at OPEC meetings and OPEC would then become an Iranian forum. Iran in the past has expressed its desire to see lower OPEC production with higher prices and fixed quotas.

VALUE OF VISIT

28. (C) The value of such visits simply cannot be over estimated. To see the ground on which the conflict is being waged and to consult with those who have invaluable personal military and political insight into the region, increases the analyst's ability to place himself at the scene. There is no better way to see the importance of the Qurnah Bridge than to be on it while being covered by dozens of AAA systems, and in the distance to see the Hawizah Marsh and the Iranian lines.



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ANNEX A

TO: IR 1175-CIS(DDI)



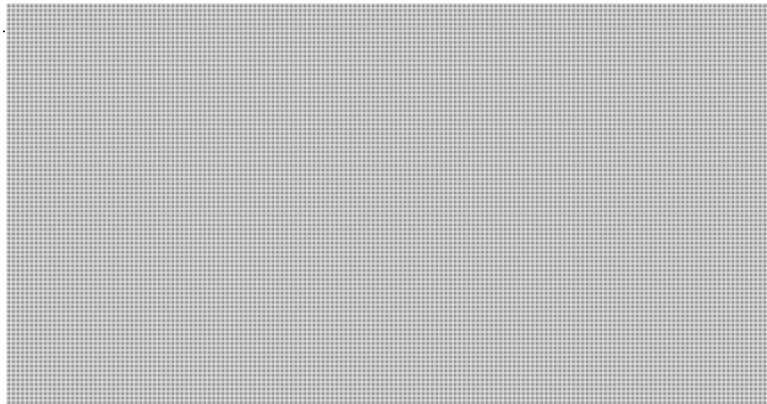
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ANNEX B
TO: 1175-CIS (DDI)
DATED: December 1986

LIST OF DIPLOMATS AND ATTACHES
ENCOUNTERED AT SOCIAL FUNCTIONS
IN KUWAIT AND IRAQ

1. The following were encountered at social functions in Kuwait and informal discussions held:



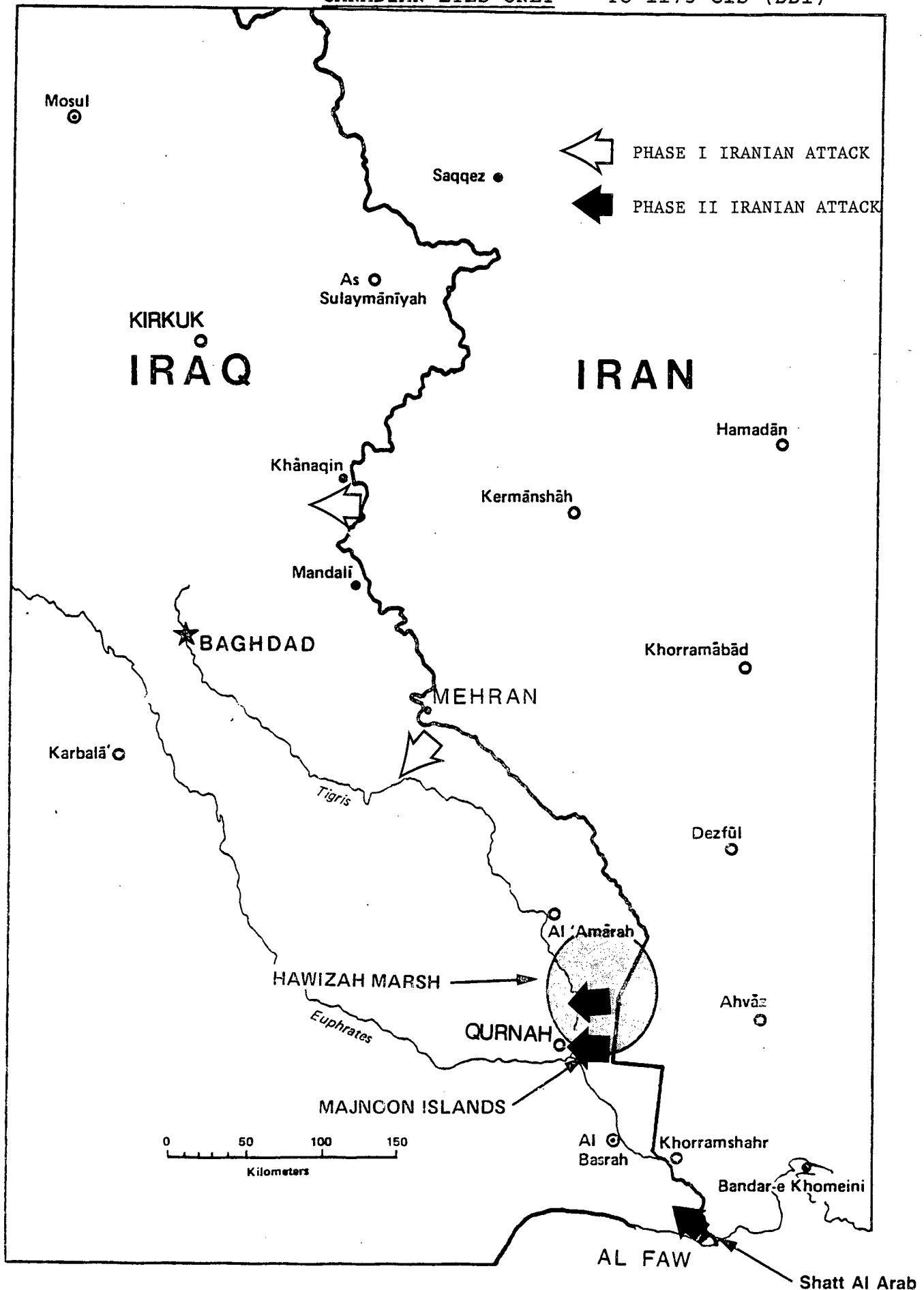
2. (C) The following were encountered at social functions in Baghdad and informal discussions held:



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ANNEX C
TO 1175-CIS (DDI)



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PERSIAN GULF

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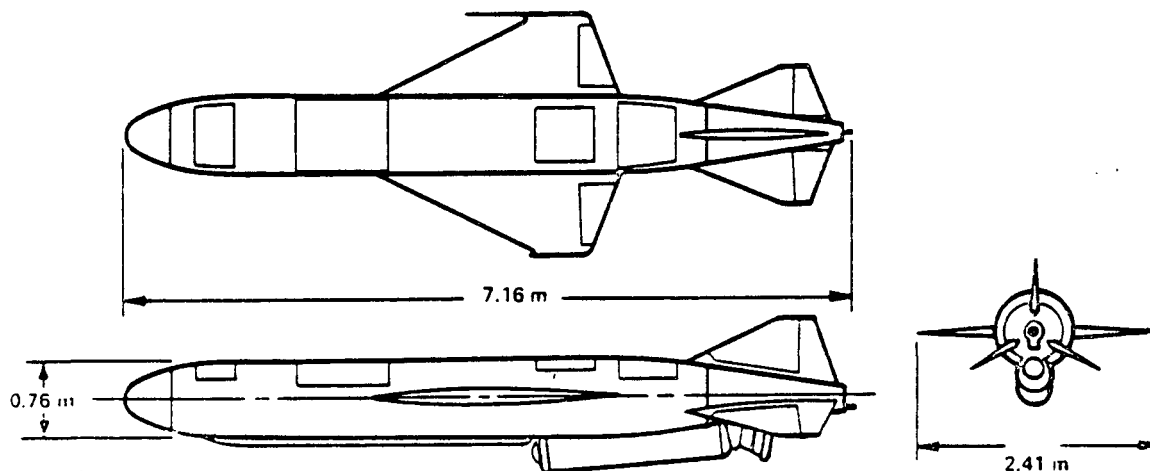
ANNEX D
TO IR 1175-CIS (DDI)

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**Table VIII. (U) CSSC-2 CRUISE MISSILE
ESTIMATED PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS**

Maximum range (km)	85
Minimum range (km)	8
Homing head range (km)	9-15
Cruise speed	Mach 0.9
Cruise altitude (m)	90-300
Propulsion	Liquid rocket sustainer Solid rocket booster
Guidance	
Launch/climb	Preprogrammed autopilot
Midcourse	Preprogrammed autopilot
Terminal	Active radar or IR
Reaction time	Unk
Refire time	Unk
Hit probability (single shot)	70%

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Figure 14. (U) CSSC-2 Estimated External Configuration

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