

## **APPENDIX C**

### **WHAT WILL AN IRAQI ATTACK LOOK LIKE?**

The attack will be preceded by a deception operation involving false movements of headquarters and artillery units. The movements will be visible on the ground and will be confirmed by radio traffic, but the units will be reserves, instead of the actual forces that the Iraqis are going to commit. The deception will probably not attempt to create a new situation, but will reinforce some other action already in progress or act to reinforce some plausible course of action.

For example, in April 1988, both the President and the Defense Minister made highly publicized visits to the vicinity of an Iranian offensive in northern Kurdistan. Artillery units appeared to be moving north into the sector and several brigade radio nets were activated in the area. In fact, an overwhelming force was being assembled in the far south preparing for the recapture of the Al Faw peninsula.

Some disagree about the ground reconnaissance capability of the Iraqi special forces and commando units. One observer rates them as very competent, most other observers are silent on this capability. The essential fact is that Iraq possesses large numbers of reconnaissance-capable units. Aerial reconnaissance will not be very thorough nor aggressive. It is not known just how timely reports from this source are, but indicators suggest that it takes a long time to get aerial derived intelligence through the system to the users.

Ammunition will be stockpiled, including chemical munitions, but these activities may not be as visible as one would think in a desert environment. The signal indicating an impending operation is the clearing of hospitals and the

movement of medical units which tend to exercise poor OPSEC.

It will be possible for American forces to detect the movement of reserves, but the buildup will be of fairly short duration. If suitable areas can be located, the Iraqis prefer to rehearse extensively for offensive operations and in their final campaign did so on full scale mock-ups of their objective areas. The units moved directly from the training areas into assault positions only hours before launching the attack. Since this worked in the past, the Iraqis may well attempt to repeat this format in the future.

Aircraft will begin to stage forward along with supplies several days prior to D-Day. Helicopters may well not move until the last minute and some reserve units will likely move by helicopter. Air assaults were not often employed during the Iran-Iraq War, but were during the invasion of Kuwait. Changes in air defense posture will likely follow Soviet doctrine although there were no observations of this during the last war, since there was no significant air threat.

The attack will begin between midnight and 0300 hours with a strong preference for 0300. If chemical munitions are to be employed, timing will correspond to expected "lapse" conditions.

The attack will be preceded by a very heavy artillery preparation which will include the following:

- Conventional and chemical fires on command and control installations—nerve agent. (Look for fuel-air explosive use against bunkers.)
- Conventional and chemical fires on fire support positions—persistent agent, probably mustard (possible FAE target).

- Air attacks on logistics installations with persistent chemical agent and precision guided conventional munitions.
- Long-range multiple rocket fires, with conventional and chemical munitions for the purpose of isolating the battle area and interdicting the movement of reserves and supplies. The Iraqis have several 60+km multiple rocket launch systems bought from Brazil, as well as a substantial number of FROGS.
- A major effort to isolate the battle area with aircraft but not with helicopters.

The ground attack will be preceded by heavy artillery fires, which may include nonpersistent nerve agents, on the forward position. The use of chemicals in general may be restricted to response to U.S./Allied actions inside Iraq and Kuwait. In other words, Baghdad may choose not to use chemicals against U.S. forces unless desperate.

The attack will progress as the tactical situation dictates with objectives probably being geographic or topographic features. The destruction of the opposing force is usually seen as a function of these identifiable features.

Close air support will begin with the initiation of the advance. Attack helicopters will generally operate behind the FLOT in both an antiarmor and an area interdiction role.