

# 1979-1988, Iraq: Supporting Saddam's War

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*Press for Conversion!*

## 1979

To encourage Iraq to invade Iran, the Carter administration gave Iraq exaggerated reports of Iran's weakness.<sup>1</sup>

## 1980

**22 September:** Iraq invaded Iran.

**30 September:** Four U.S. AWACS electronic surveillance aircraft were deployed to Saudi Arabia.

**Mid-October:** About 60 U.S., UK, French and Australian warships were in the region to prevent potential Iranian interference with oil traffic through the Straits of Hormuz.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. opposed UN actions to condemn Iraq's invasion of Iran. The U.S. removed Iraq from its list of nations supporting terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

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## 1982

The CIA was implicated in a various plots to assassinate Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>4</sup>

## 1983

**18 September:** Iran threatened to block oil exports from the Persian Gulf.

**10 October:** A Carrier Battle Group arrived in the northern Arabian Sea and remained through the new year.<sup>2</sup>

**December 19-20:** Donald Rumsfeld, then an aide to President Reagan, met Saddam Hussein in Baghdad to improve U.S.-Iraqi relations.<sup>5</sup>

## 1984

**5 June:** Saudi warplanes, aided by intelligence from a U.S. AWACS aircraft and fueled by a U.S. KC-10 aircraft, shot down two Iranian warplanes over the Persian Gulf.<sup>6</sup>

**November:** The U.S. restored diplomatic relations with Iraq.<sup>6</sup>

## 1986

The CIA gave Iraq intelligence data from satellites to help them assess the effects of bombing runs against Iran.<sup>8</sup>

**12 January:** Iran boarded a U.S. merchant ship. This led to closer U.S. Navy escort of such vessels.



Donald Rumsfeld meeting U.S. ally, Iraqi President Hussein (Dec. 1983)

**12 May:** A U.S. destroyer deterred an Iranian Navy attempt to board another U.S. merchant ship.<sup>21</sup>

## 1987

The U.S. tilted toward Iraq diplomatically by supporting UN resolutions condemning Iran and demanding that it accept a cease-fire.<sup>1</sup>

**17 May:** An Iraqi Exocet missile hit a U.S. frigate, killing 37 sailors.<sup>9</sup> The Reagan administration accepted Iraq's apology for this error but the president still blamed Iran.<sup>1</sup>

**21 July:** "The Tanker War" begun. The U.S. stepped up direct military presence by organizing a "Rapid Deployment Force," increasing its naval presence and pre-positioning equipment and supplies in the region.<sup>11</sup> Code-named "Operation Earnest Will" the U.S. reflagged [and escorted] Kuwaiti oil tankers using a 42-warship armada to deter shelling by Iran.<sup>10</sup>

U.S. Navy operations in the Persian Gulf were perhaps the most involved since the Vietnam War.<sup>2</sup>

**22 July:** The U.S. tanker Bridgeton was struck a mine.

**21 September:** U.S. forces captured an Iranian vessel laying mines.

**6 October:** The U.S. destroyed of three small Iranian military boats.

**19 October:** The U.S. destroyed an Iranian oil drilling platform.<sup>2</sup>

## 1988

**March 16:** Iraq used poison gas on the Kurdish village of Halabja in northern Iraq, killing over 5,000 civilians. The UN General Assembly voted to condemn this act. Only three governments voted in opposition: U.S., UK and Israel.<sup>12</sup>

**14 April:** A U.S. warship hit a mine.

**18 April:** The U.S. retaliated against two Iranian oil platforms. This led to a naval battle and many Iranian ships were damaged or sunk.

**3 July:** During a surface engagement, the U.S.S. "Vin-cennes" shot down an Iranian passenger aircraft, killing all 290 passengers and crew.<sup>2</sup> George Bush was quoted in *Newsweek*: "I will never apologise for the United States of America. I don't care what the facts are."<sup>13</sup> The International Court of Justice (Hague) found in favor of Iran's suit to obtain damages for the victims, but the U.S. did not recognize the court's authority.<sup>12</sup>

**20 August:** A UN-sponsored cease-fire ended the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>2</sup>

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