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| DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE | SUBJECT/TITLE | DATE | RESTRICTION |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. report | Persian Gulf, 32 ³³ p. Part. F97-003 #1 7/20/01 | 9/22/82 | P1 B3 |
| 2. report | Persian Gulf, 10p. Part u #2 7/20/01 | 2/2/82 | P1 B3 |
| 3. memo | Douglas Feith to William Clark via Norman Bailey re Persian Gulf/OPEC, 2p. R 5/8/00 NLS F97-003 #3 | 2/27/82 | P1 |
| 4. memo | William Clark to RR re Persian Gulf/OPEC, 2p. R 5/8/00 NLS F97-003 #4 | n.d. | P1 |
| 5. report | Persian Gulf, 38p. | 8/82 | P1 |

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File Folder PERSIAN GULF, 1982

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| ID | Doc Type | Document Description | No of Pages | Doc Date |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | REPORT | RE PERSIAN GULF | 25 ^{mvh 3/11/08} | 9/22/1982 |
| 2 | REPORT | RE PERSIAN GULF | 10 ^{mvh 3/11/08} ¹² | 2/2/1982 |

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PERSIAN GULF

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DEFENSE
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File

Intelligence Appraisal

USSR:

Military Options in the Persian Gulf (U)

22 SEPTEMBER 1982

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
NLS #1
By CA, NARA, Date 7/20/01

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Intelligence Appraisal

USSR: Military Options in the Persian Gulf (U)

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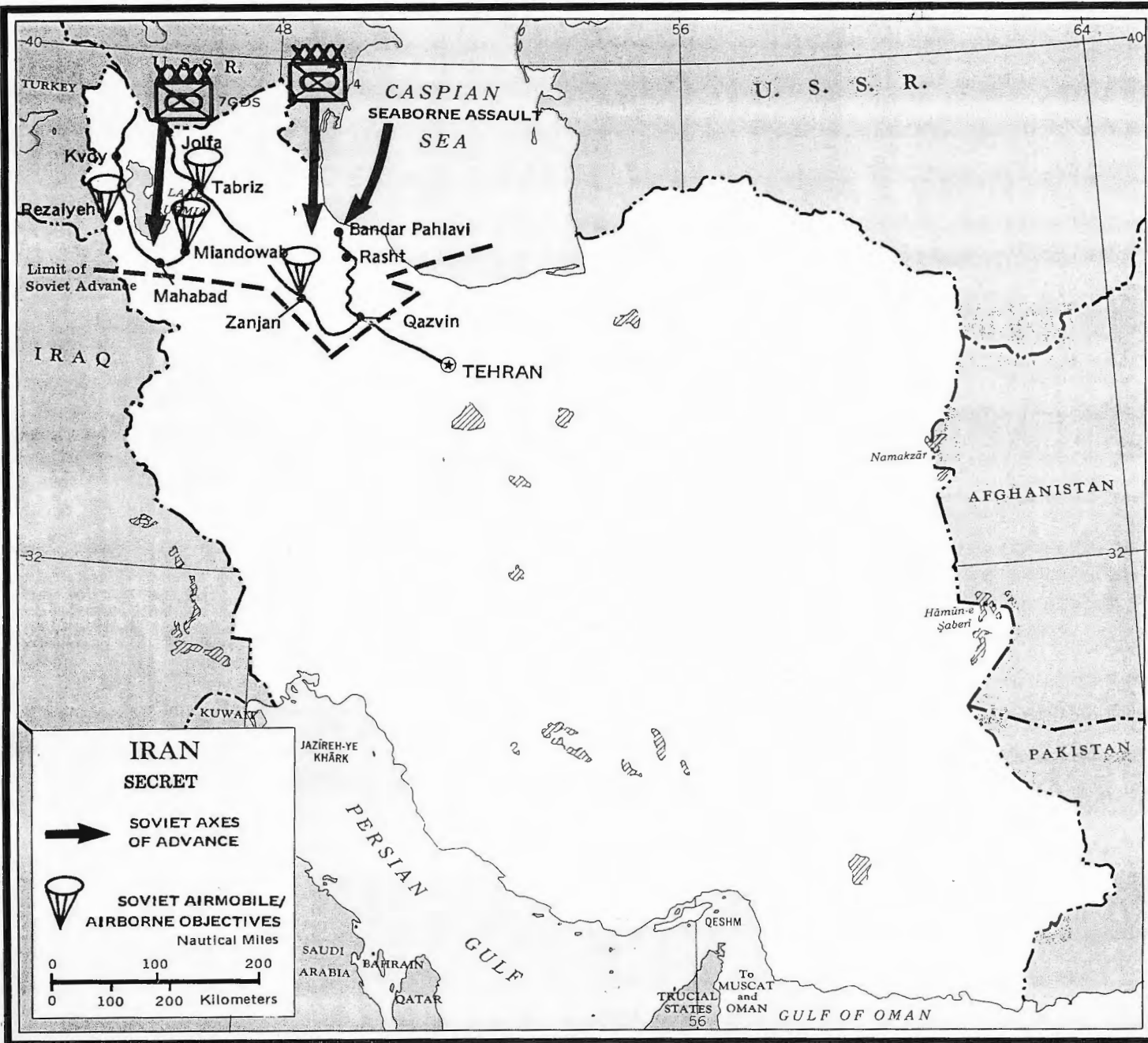
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CI-R-1-6/74



SOVIET INVASION OF AZERBAIJAN

Figure 1

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USSR: MILITARY OPTIONS IN THE PERSIAN GULF (U)

Summary

(S) Iran is considered to be a major geostrategic prize by the USSR, whose ultimate aim is to bring the country securely within the Soviet orbit. Since the fall of the Shah, Moscow has followed a two-track strategy to influence events in Iran. On the one hand, it is working to promote good bilateral relations and to encourage Tehran's continued anti-US orientation. On the other, it is bolstering pro-Soviet leftist forces in Iran and developing clandestine assets that could be used to exploit any opportunities to establish a pro-Soviet government in Tehran.

(S) The USSR is also developing a number of military options that could be used to achieve its objectives in the region. These include operations to seize the northwestern area of Azerbaijan that borders the USSR, airborne/airmobile assault operations to seize control of the Strait of Hormuz, a full-scale invasion of Iran, and a Soviet operation from Iran, through Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia to Oman.

(S) Hostilities against Iran could be accomplished without major reinforcement by Soviet forces based in the military districts (MDs) of Transcaucasus, North Caucasus, and Turkestan (including Afghanistan). An invasion of Azerbaijan could be mounted fairly quickly and could be completed in 2 to 3 weeks, even if Iranian forces were to resist. A full-scale invasion of the country would be more difficult and would require much greater preparation. Against no resistance at all, the Soviets could secure objectives on the Gulf in about 40 days. It is much more likely, however, that the Iranians would resist, in which case it would take the Soviets about 3 months to reach Khuzestan.

(S) An operation that included the southern littoral of the Gulf would be much more difficult and would require mobilization and major reinforcement from distant MDs. Such an undertaking would run a high risk of confrontation with the West.

(S) The use of routes through Iraq to facilitate an invasion of Iran is considered unlikely. Soviet forces can only reach Iraq through either Turkey or Iran. Ankara is a member of NATO, and there are no practical north-south routes through eastern Turkey. Routes from Iran to Iraq are such that movement of a large number of forces would be very difficult. Moreover, the added likelihood of Iraqi resistance would make this an unlikely Soviet option.

Discussion

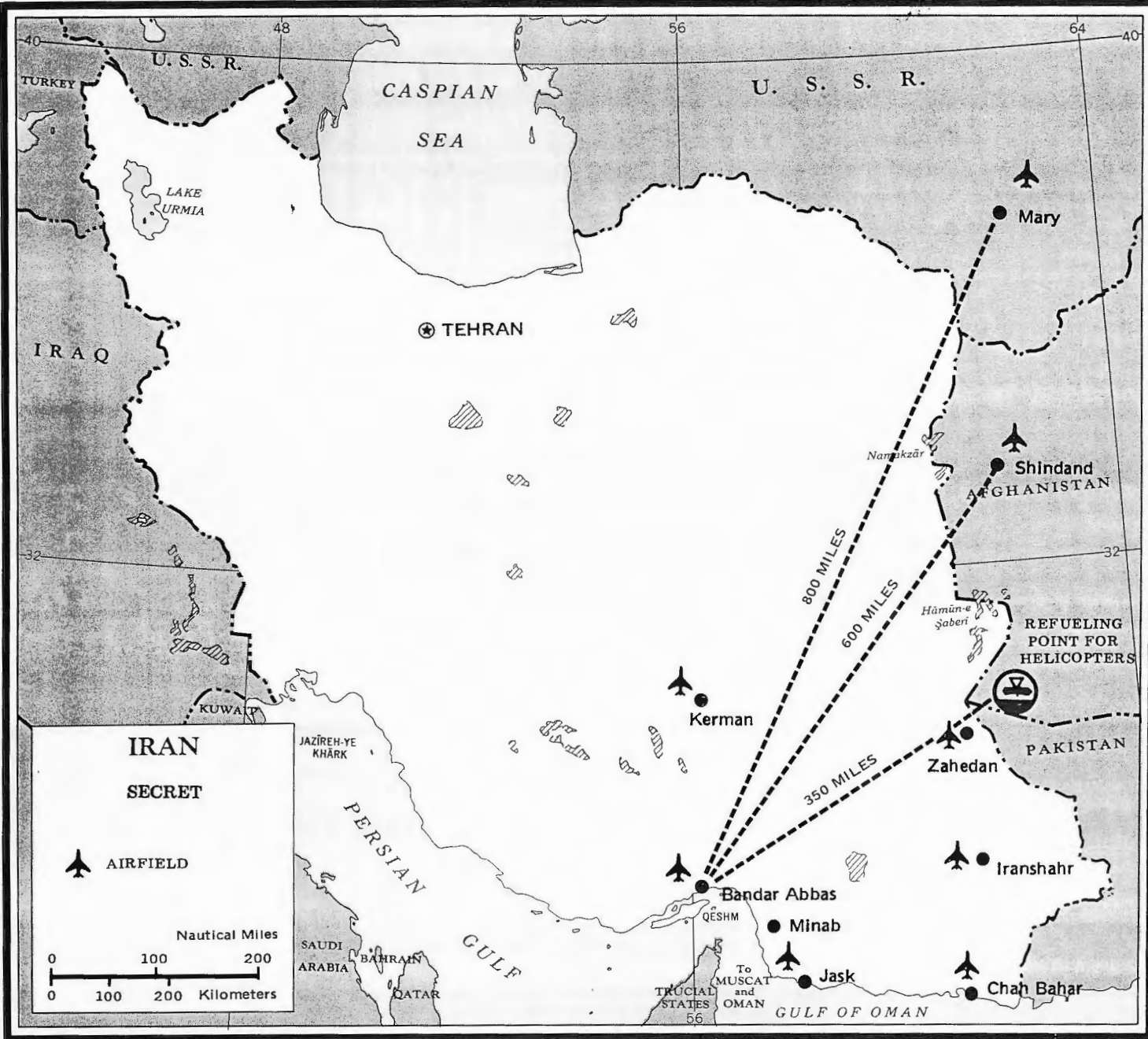
Soviet Invasion of Iran

(S) The conditions in which the USSR might invade Iran are as follows:

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SOVIET SEIZURE OF BANDAR ABBAS



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AIRFIELD

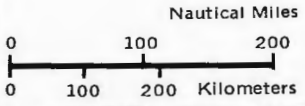


Figure 2

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- Invitation by Iran to counter a real or perceived threat from US forces;
- A request for Soviet assistance by the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) in an attempt to seize political power;
- Political disintegration of the Iranian Government; or
- A premeditated, unilateral invasion.

~~(S)~~ An invasion of Azerbaijan would probably include the provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Gilan, and Zanjan. This would enable the Soviets to make use of the Caspian Sea port of Bandar Anzeli, secure routes through the Elburz Mountains, and be in a position to threaten Tehran. A possible concept of operations is shown in figure 1. The invasion force could include one airborne division and an airmobile assault brigade, at least eight air regiments, and VTA support. Up to two motorized rifle battalions could be sealifted to make an amphibious assault on Bandar Anzeli.

~~(S)~~ The Soviets might be prepared to move into Azerbaijan with a less well-prepared force than they would use for a full-scale invasion. In that event, the time required for force generation would only be about 1 week. Against weak Iranian resistance, they could complete the mission in 7 to 10 days. Against strong Iranian resistance, they would require up to 3 weeks to conclude the operation, although they could still reach their objectives in the less-difficult terrain of east Azerbaijan in about 10 days.

~~(S)~~ The force required would still be fairly large; it would be composed of about five to seven divisions, which would come from the Transcaucasus MD. Although Iranian regular forces opposing them would be about two divisions, the Soviets could face determined opposition from Revolutionary Guards. Furthermore, the region includes some large cities -- Tabriz (population 600,000) and Rasht (population 200,000). Soviet forces would be required to secure and hold these cities. The Soviets might also face opposition from some of the estimated 20,000 Kurdish guerrillas operating in the tribal regions. Other troops would be needed for securing Soviet lines of communication that would pass through extremely difficult terrain and be vulnerable to guerrilla attacks.

Seizure of Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar

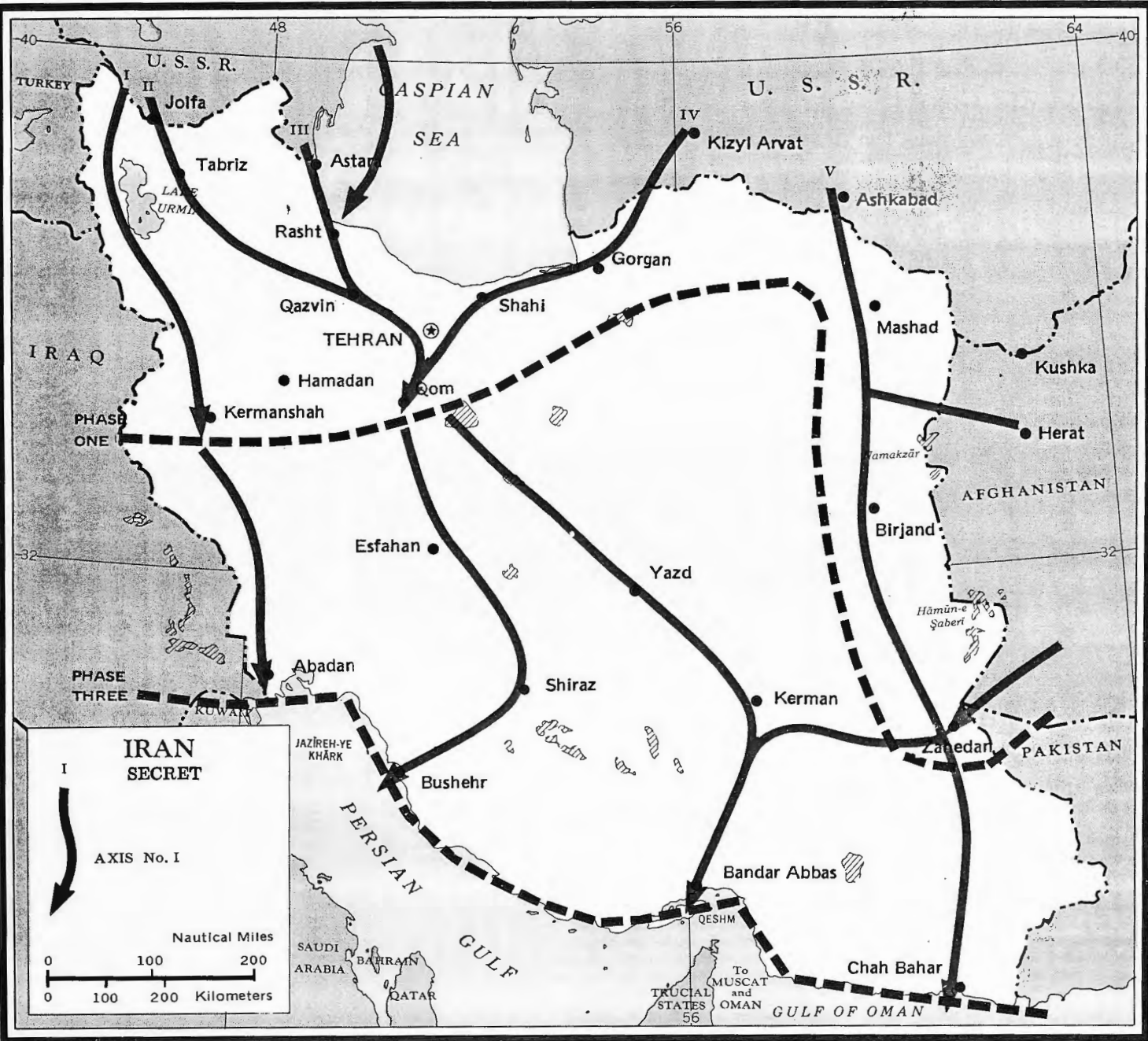
~~(S)~~ The Soviets have the capability to launch an air assault to capture Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar, from which they could dominate the Strait of Hormuz (figure 2). The practicalities of such an operation, however, make it an unlikely option in isolation. The USSR would probably consider it workable only in the context of a full invasion of Iran.

~~(S)~~ If the Soviets had complete air superiority, they could deploy an entire airborne division and sustain the division through airlift. But the Soviets cannot be sure of establishing and maintaining air superiority. Soviet fighter aircraft operating from the Soviet Union and Afghanistan do not have the combat range to

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SOVIET INVASION OF IRAN - UNOPPOSED

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ACTIONS

PHASE ONE - ADVANCE TO LINE KERMANSHAH-HAMADAN-QOM-MASHAD-ZAHEDAN-15

PHASE TWO - LOGISTIC BUILDUP AND FORWARD DEPLOYMENT OF TACTICAL AIR

PHASE THREE - ADVANCE TO PERSIAN GULF AND THE GULF OF OMAN

DAYS

0 - 10

40

Figure 3
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IRAN SECRET

AXIS No. I

Nautical Miles
0 100 200

Kilometers
0 100 200

effectively patrol the airspace over the Strait of Hormuz. In such an operation, Soviet planners would have to estimate the possibility of US air interdiction. American aircraft operating from carriers, or possibly from bases in the Middle East, would be a major threat to such an operation.

~~(S)~~ A heliborne assault from the southwest corner of Afghanistan would face the same problems of sustainability in the face of a US air threat. Furthermore, there is no logistic base in southwest Afghanistan from which Soviet helicopters could operate. Even if there were such a base, the helicopters would be flying at close to maximum range and would need refueling as soon as they reached Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar.

Full Invasion of Iran - Unopposed

Mission of Soviet Forces

~~(S)~~ The military objectives of a full invasion of Iran would include the seizure and control of key communications centers, such as Tehran, and of transportation assets, such as railheads, road junctions, airfields, and seaports on the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. Moscow would also strive to install a client government in Tehran.

Concept of Operations

~~(S)~~ Against no opposition from Iranian forces, the Soviets could conduct an invasion of Iran in three phases, reaching objectives on the Gulf in about 40 days (figure 3). They would require a force of about 20 to 24 divisions.

~~(S)~~ In Phase I, they could advance to the Kermashah-Hamadan-Qom-Zahedan line in about 15 days. In Phase II, they would conduct a logistic buildup which, it is estimated, would call for another 15 days. In Phase III, they would advance to objectives on the Gulf; this would take about 10 days.

Force Structure

~~(S)~~ The invasion force would be structured to suppress Iranian resistance, secure key objectives, and to counter US forces that might be deployed to the area.

~~(S)~~ In the MDs near Iran, the USSR could muster 29 divisions (figures 4 and 5), a force large enough to invade Iran, and simultaneously to secure Afghanistan and the Soviet border with Turkey. It would require approximately 35 to 40 days to adequately prepare these troops for offensive operations. The forces would probably be organized into two fronts, comprising six armies, reinforced by a special-purpose brigade, an airmobile assault brigade, and at least one airborne division. The equivalent of nine transport/attack helicopter regiments would be available.

~~(S)~~ Front aviation strength available in the region totals some 570 fixed-wing aircraft. In addition, it is estimated that three strategic bombing regiments equipped with BADGER and BACKFIRE aircraft, and 10 to 11 transport regiments equipped with CUB, CANDID, and COCK would be allocated to the operation.

SOVIET MANEUVER ELEMENTS - NORTH CAUCASUS, TRANSCAUCASUS MILITARY DISTRICTS

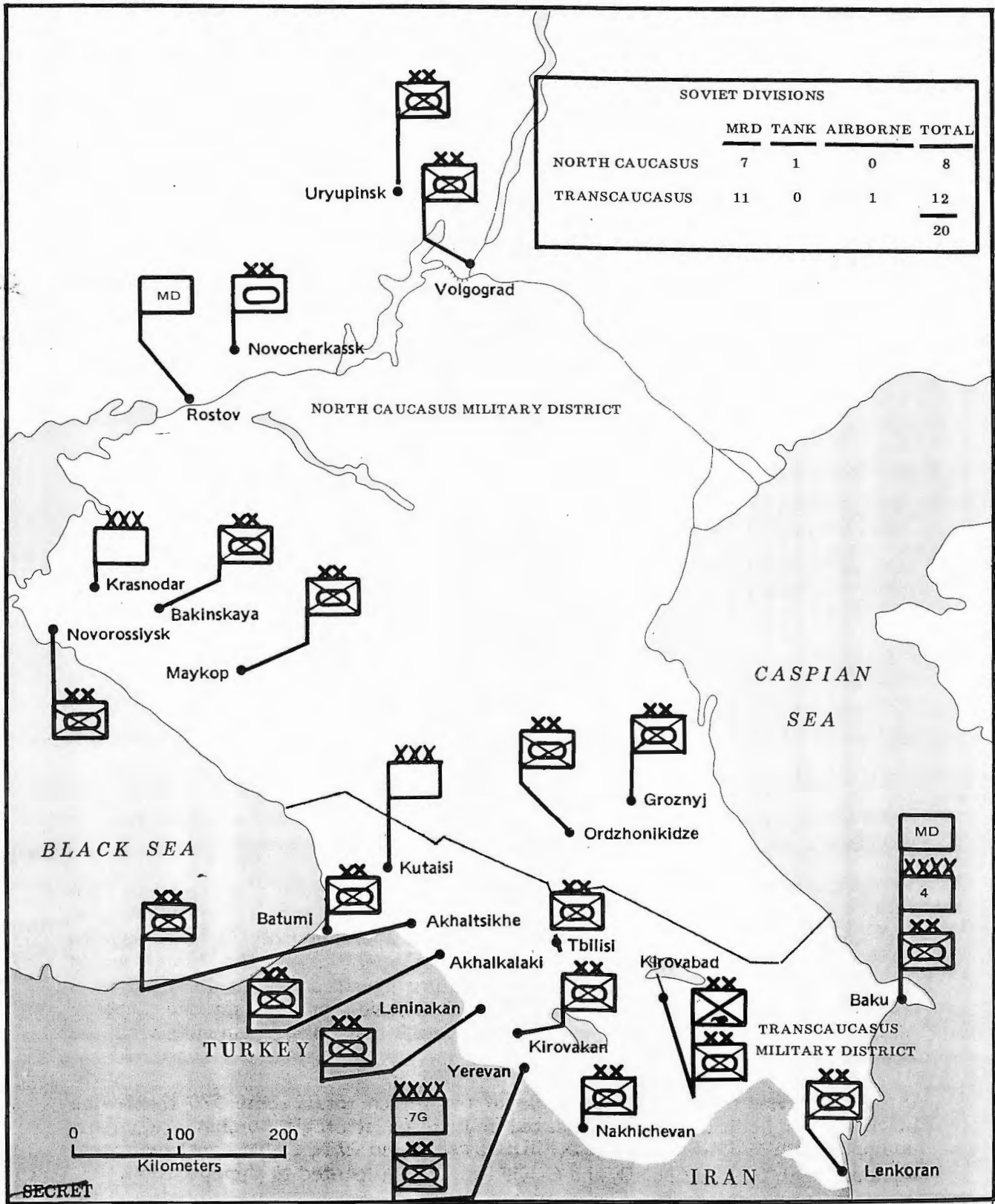


Figure 4

~~(S)~~ Soviet naval forces in the area include the Caspian Sea Flotilla and the Indian Ocean Squadron. The former has the capacity to transport two motorized rifle battalions in a single lift. Commercial shipping on the Caspian Sea could also be employed to sealift troops to a secure port.

~~(S)~~ The Indian Ocean Squadron could not directly support an invasion of Iran in the face of US opposition, but the squadron could attack American surface ships en route to Iran. The greatest threat would be the Soviet submarines armed with cruise missiles.

Employment of Airborne Troops

~~(S)~~ Airborne employment is difficult to predict. Missions could range from the occupation of critical airfields and key terrain to the seizure of such important communications centers as Tehran or Zahedan. The governing factors affecting employment are the range of transport and tactical aircraft required to give cover to airborne elements and the time between deployment of airborne forces and link-up by main forces.

~~(S)~~ Total assets of military transport aircraft (VTA) are 378 An-12/CUBs, 166 Il-76T/CANDIDs, and 57 An-22/COCKs. These assets are sufficient to airlift one airborne division and sustain it through airlift. However, it is assessed that initially the Soviets would be unlikely to deploy large airborne forces more than 800 km from bases in the USSR or in Afghanistan, because this distance would exceed the operational radii of the CUB and also of tactical aircraft, such as the MiG-23/FLOGGER. Furthermore, unless ground link-up by main forces was possible within 3 to 5 days, the invaders would be forced to commit extensive air assets in a hostile air environment just to sustain their airborne troops.

Employment of Special Purpose Forces (SPETSNAZ)

~~(S)~~ At least one SPETSNAZ brigade would be available for an invasion. It comprises about 100 teams of between 5 and 12 men who would carry out reconnaissance and sabotage missions. They would normally operate 3 to 5 days ahead of the main advance, and their priority targets would include Iranian C³ facilities, air defense systems, and airfields.

~~(S)~~ The SPETSNAZ teams would also report on the condition of key terrain features along axes of advance and any actions by Iranian forces to secure key terrain or to destroy bridges and tunnels in advance of Soviet troops. They might also assist in the control of government in Tehran, possibly by eliminating opposition political figures, as they did in Kabul during the invasion of Afghanistan.

Rates of Advance

~~(S)~~ The Soviets would attempt to maintain high rates of advance, but they would be severely constricted and impeded by the rugged terrain and inadequate road net. Normally, two to three routes of advance are allocated to a division and three to five to an army. In Iran, an entire Soviet army of three or four divisions

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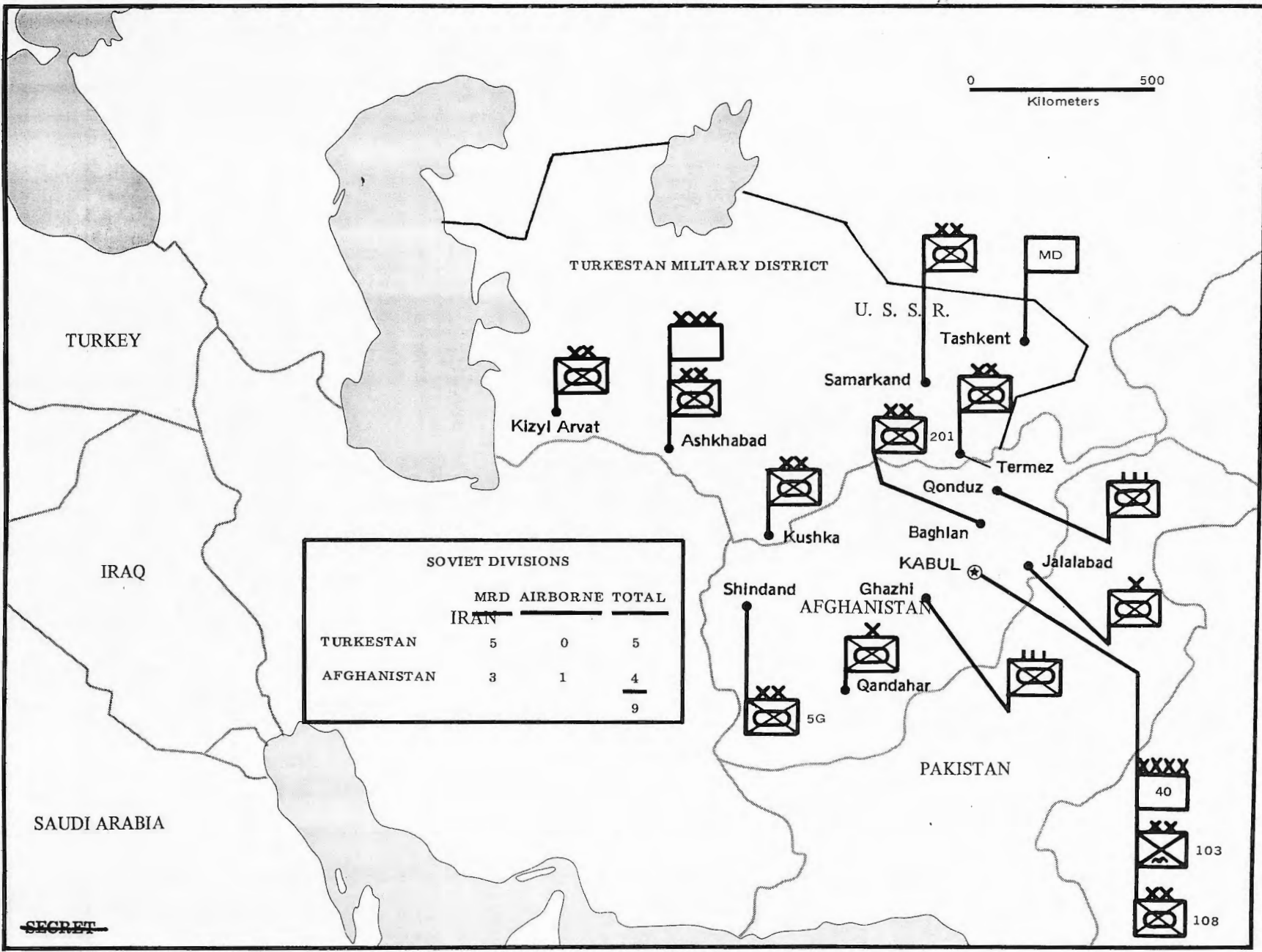


Figure 5
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would only have one major axis of advance. Although there are some lateral and secondary roads, the Soviets would only have five major axes through Iran during the first phase of operations.

(S) Along these axes, it is estimated the lead motorized rifle regiment in a division-size march order could maintain a rate of advance of at least 150 km per day. The 12.5 k/h reflects Soviet planning data for a column of tracked and wheeled vehicles traveling on a road with steep gradients. Although they could sprint at somewhat faster rates, they could not sustain this effort over several days. Moreover, tracked vehicles would quickly degrade the bituminous surface, forcing the advancing columns to operate at lower speeds, even on the better roads. The rate of advance may vary considerably over different segments of the Iranian road net, but there are too many variables to accurately predict these differences.

(S) As the Soviets advance through Iran, their forces would become attenuated. A motorized rifle division with augmentation by motor transport and engineer elements would require approximately 300 km of road just to maintain a minimal tactical distance between elements at the head of the column and administrative intervals in the main body. Advancing at an average rate of 150 km a day, a Soviet division would need at least 2 days to close an objective.

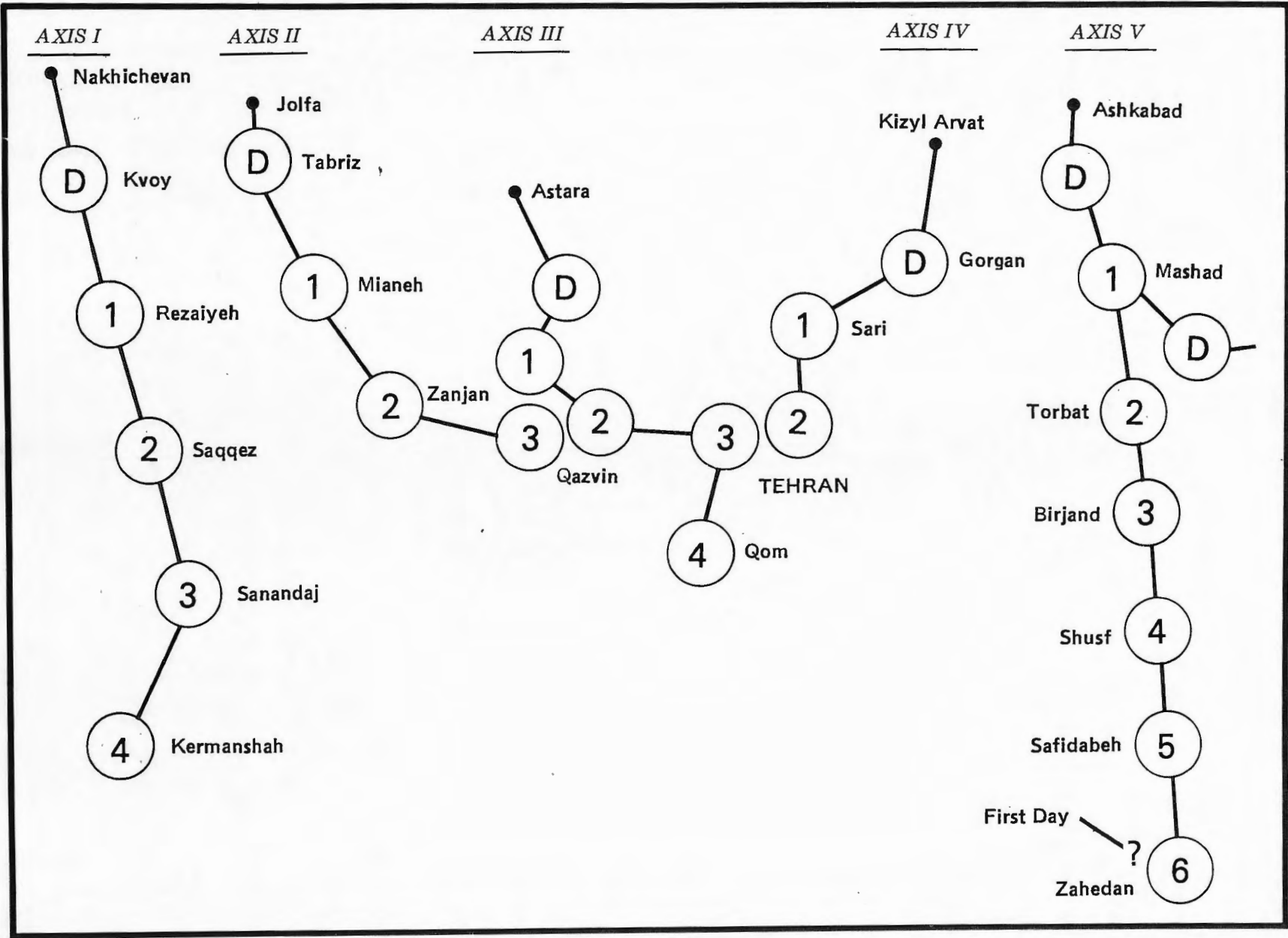
(S) In summary, in an unopposed invasion of Iran, the daily progress of Soviet operations could be as shown in figures 6 and 7. Lead elements could reach their Phase One objectives by day 6, but it would require an additional 8 days to close forces. It is estimated that at least 11 divisions would be needed in Phase One to assure control.

(S) Phase Two would involve an estimated 15 days to carry out the following tasks:

- Forward deploy tactical aircraft;
- Establish logistic infrastructure;
- Resupply deployed units;
- Establish stocks for second-echelon forces;
- Reconnoiter Phase Three objectives; and
- Forward deploy second-echelon forces.

(S) Phase Three could begin about day 31. Objectives on the Gulf and the Indian Ocean could be reached by day 37, and closure of units could be completed by day 40. At this time, Soviet forces estimated at 10 divisions organized into three armies would occupy southern Iran. They would have sufficient supplies to sustain combat for at least 2 weeks, but their capacity to continue resupply would depend on very long supply lines.

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Figure 6

Full Invasion of Iran - Opposed

- ~~(U)~~ It is assessed that if the USSR did invade Iran, national forces would resist, imposing significant delays on the Soviets, and making the operation costly and difficult for them.
- ~~(C)~~ The span of delay Iranian forces could impose would be dependent on both their will to resist and their military capability to do so. The war with Iraq shows they have the will to fight in order to prevent their territory from being invaded. Although at the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1979, the Iraqis were considered to be relatively much stronger, better equipped, and better prepared, the Iranians have demonstrated they are capable of initially incurring territorial losses and yet retain the resiliency to reconstitute and regroup their forces, change to an offensive strategy, and defeat the Iraqis. Iran, moreover, was able to achieve this despite international political isolation and enormous problems of weapons procurement and equipment maintenance. Beyond their own border, however, Iran's military performance has been less impressive.
- ~~(S)~~ Iran has also demonstrated it is prepared to take on the Soviets. Last April, Soviet forces attacked a Mujahideen stronghold on Iranian soil just across the Afghanistan border north of Zahedan. Tehran dispatched fighter aircraft to the area, which crossed into Afghan air space, engaged Soviet fighter aircraft, and strafed Soviet and Afghan ground units.

Iranian Forces

- ~~(S)~~ The main Iranian forces that could confront the Soviets would be composed of regular troops and Revolutionary Guards. Additionally, there would be less organized resistance from the Gendarmerie (about 30,000 strong) and from armed popular resistance.
- ~~(S)~~ In an invasion, neither the Gendarmerie nor other irregular resistance forces are considered capable of exerting the type of resistance that would delay Soviet main forces. However, they would be able to carry out frequent guerrilla attacks, particularly against Soviet logistic elements.
- ~~(S)~~ Neither the Iranian Air Force nor the Navy would be significant factors in contributing to delaying an invading force. The Air Force consists of approximately 95 combat-ready fighter-bombers plus a number of reconnaissance, transport, and utility aircraft. It can be assumed the Soviets would easily achieve total air superiority against the Iranians from the outset of hostilities.
- ~~(S)~~ The Iranian Navy could pose a slight threat to the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron in the event it entered Gulf waters, or a somewhat more significant threat if, for example, the Iranians were able to mine the entrance to the Gulf at the Strait of Hormuz.
- ~~(S)~~ The strength of Iran's regular Army is an estimated 170,000. It comprises four armored and four infantry divisions and a minimum of six separate brigades. In the event of an invasion, the Army would be reinforced by large numbers of Revolutionary Guards, who have an estimated strength of 120,000 personnel. The

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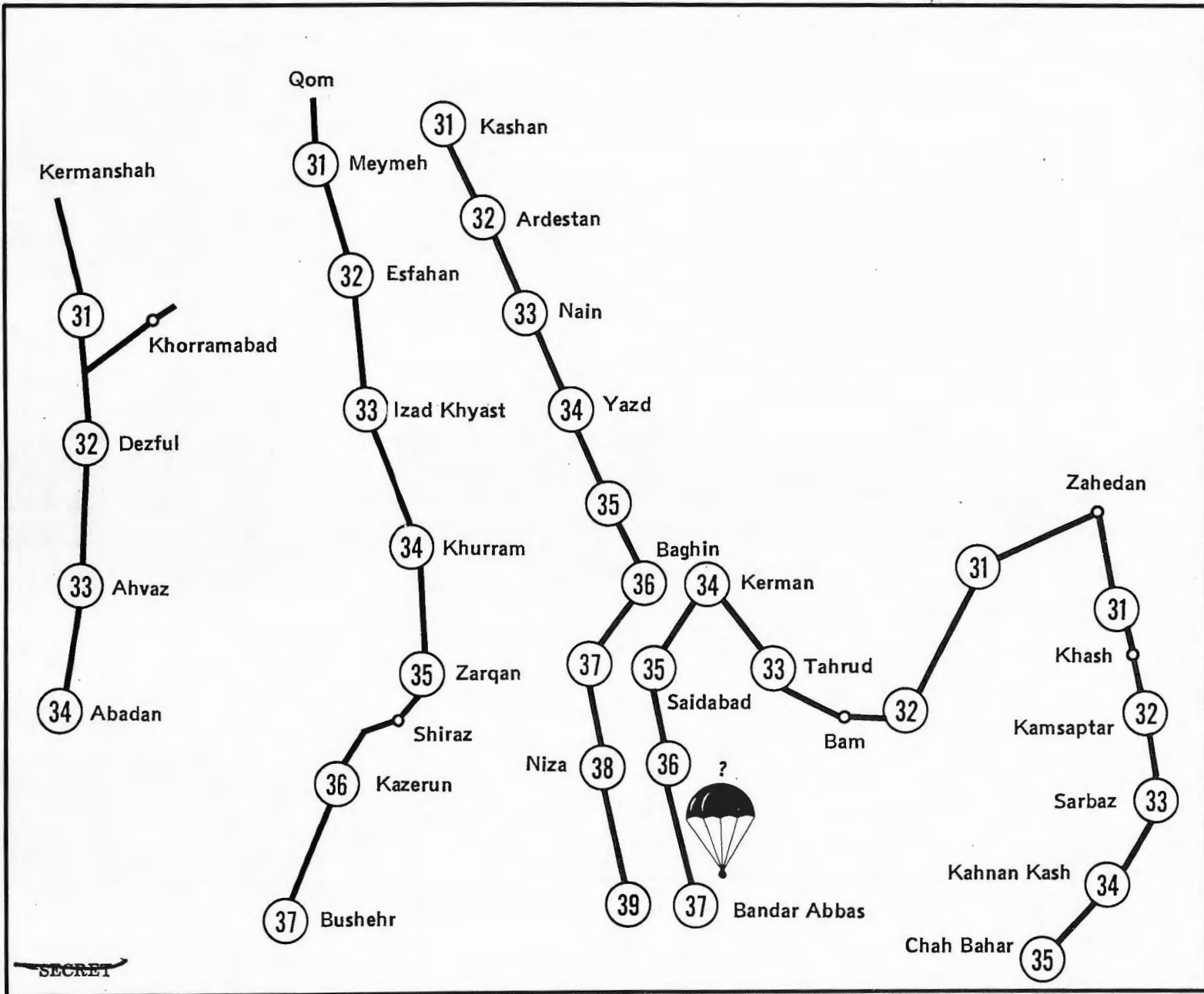


Figure 7
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regular Army and the Revolutionary Guards are the only forces considered capable of delaying a Soviet advance. In the war with Iraq, it is believed that at least 200,000 Revolutionary Guards were raised countrywide. Therefore, it should be noted that against the Soviets, the figure of 120,000 is a minimum estimate.

(S) Iranian ground forces are equipped with a wide range of Soviet, US, West European, and even North Korean equipment, ranging from British Chieftain and North Korean tanks, to a sizable inventory of TOW and Dragon missiles. In the war with Iraq, however, great emphasis on the infantry -- well equipped with antiarmor weapons -- has provided their success, and it is probable any defense against the Soviets would also be based on this doctrine.

Assessment of Delay Capability

(S) Following the war with Iraq, it is assessed that there will be a gradual return of Iranian forces to their prewar locations (figure 8). Iran would continue to maintain a force of at least two divisions along its western border with Iraq.

(S) In the event of a full-scale Soviet invasion, the slowness and inefficiency of the Iranian logistic system to move large numbers of forces over vast areas in difficult terrain could preclude Iranian troops from deploying more than short distances from their garrisons. The Iranians would have to fight the Soviets as the latter advance along their axes, rather than deploying to much more advantageous forward positions. But, as will be shown, the difficulties of terrain cut both ways.

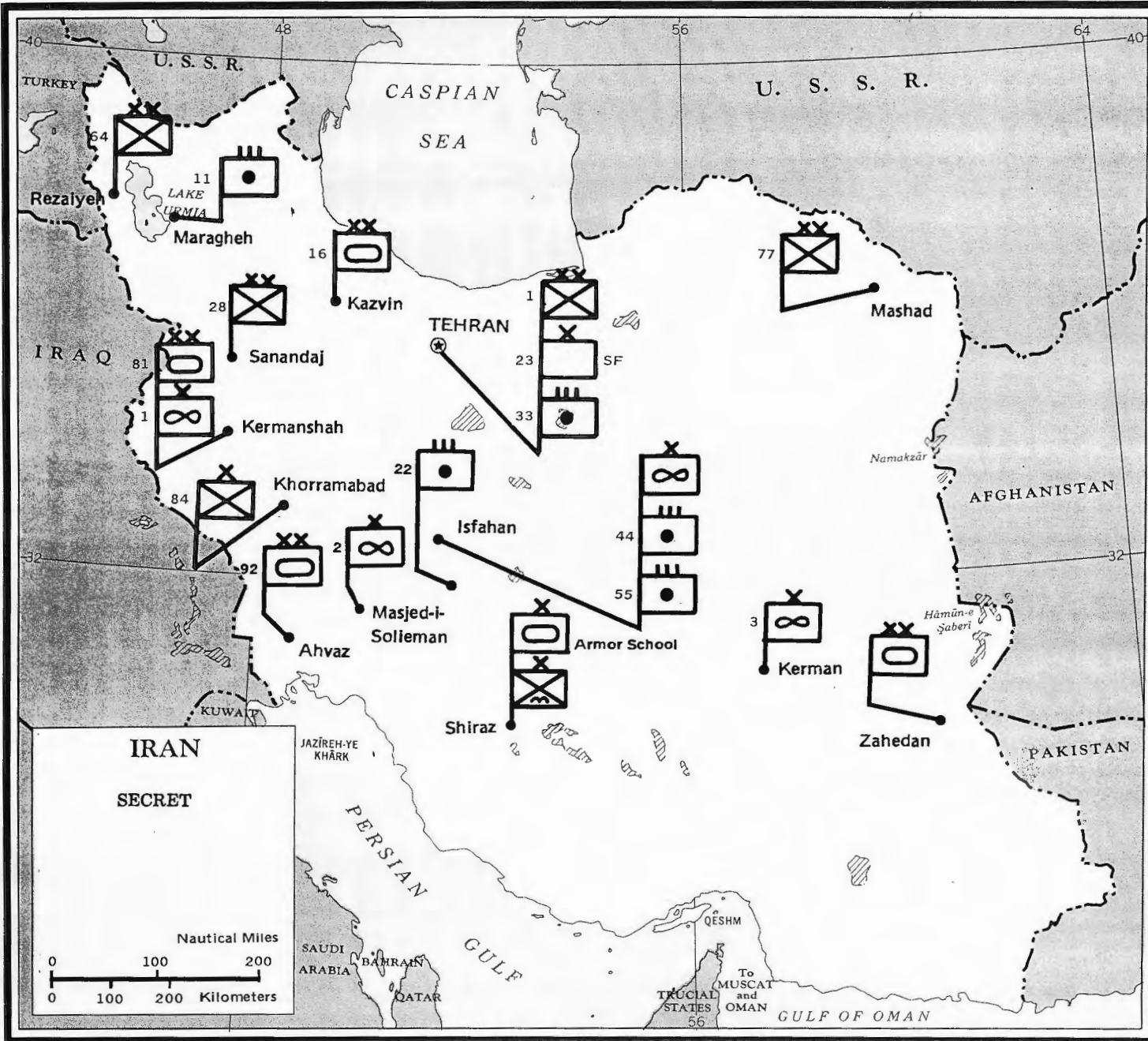
(S) The Soviets might be able to neutralize most of the Iranian national command system infrastructure. This could lead to a situation where the defenders would be largely uncoordinated -- another factor that could force Iranian formations to fight where they stand. Therefore, in assessing the delay capability of the Iranians, only the delay time-frame that a brigade-size formation -- either regular or Revolutionary Guards -- could impose on Soviet forces has been quantified.

(S) It is assessed that a regular brigade could effect a 48- to 72-hour delay on the Soviets, after which it would no longer be considered capable of organized resistance. On the same basis, a Revolutionary Guard brigade is given a 1- or 2-day delay capability.

(S) The rationale in assessing this delay is as follows. When Soviet forces advancing along an axis encounter an Iranian brigade-size formation, they could not -- in the Iranian terrain -- adopt their standard tactic of deploying from the line of march and attack the opposition. The effect of terrain in restricting and constricting Soviet actions cannot be overstressed. Its effect would be largely to neutralize the overall Soviet advantage in force levels and act as a force multiplier for the Iranians.

(S) To continue their advance, the invaders would have to destroy and physically dislodge Iranian troops blocking their axis. It would not be sufficient simply to break through, because this would not succeed in opening a main supply route along which the main force must be sustained.

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IRANIAN FORCES - PRE WAR LOCATIONS

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Figure 8

IRAN

SECRET

Nautical Miles
0 100 200

Kilometers
0 100 200

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(S) Should Soviet troops encounter an Iranian brigade-size element along their axes, it would take them a minimum of 24 hours to coordinate and to carry out the following actions:

- Reconnaissance;
- Plan of Maneuver;
- Deployment;
- Fire support;
- Close air support.

(U) Prior to attacking a position defended by brigade-size forces, a Soviet commander would need to conduct a thorough reconnaissance. This would normally take in excess of 24 hours. The results would then have to be assessed and incorporated into the commander's plan, which would take time to formulate, translate into orders, and pass to the troops designated to execute the plan.

(U) Soviet divisions would be spread out in single file along lines of communication, each division often extending over 300 km. They would have to be moved forward to a position from which they could mount a coordinated attack. In this terrain, it could take 48 hours to close one Soviet division. Soviet doctrine dictates that any attack of this scale would be carried out with massive artillery support. This would call for extensive redeployment of artillery assets, most of which would be strung out well behind lead elements. Time would also be required for coordination with close air support assets, to redeploy them if necessary, to identify targets, and to incorporate them into the overall plan.

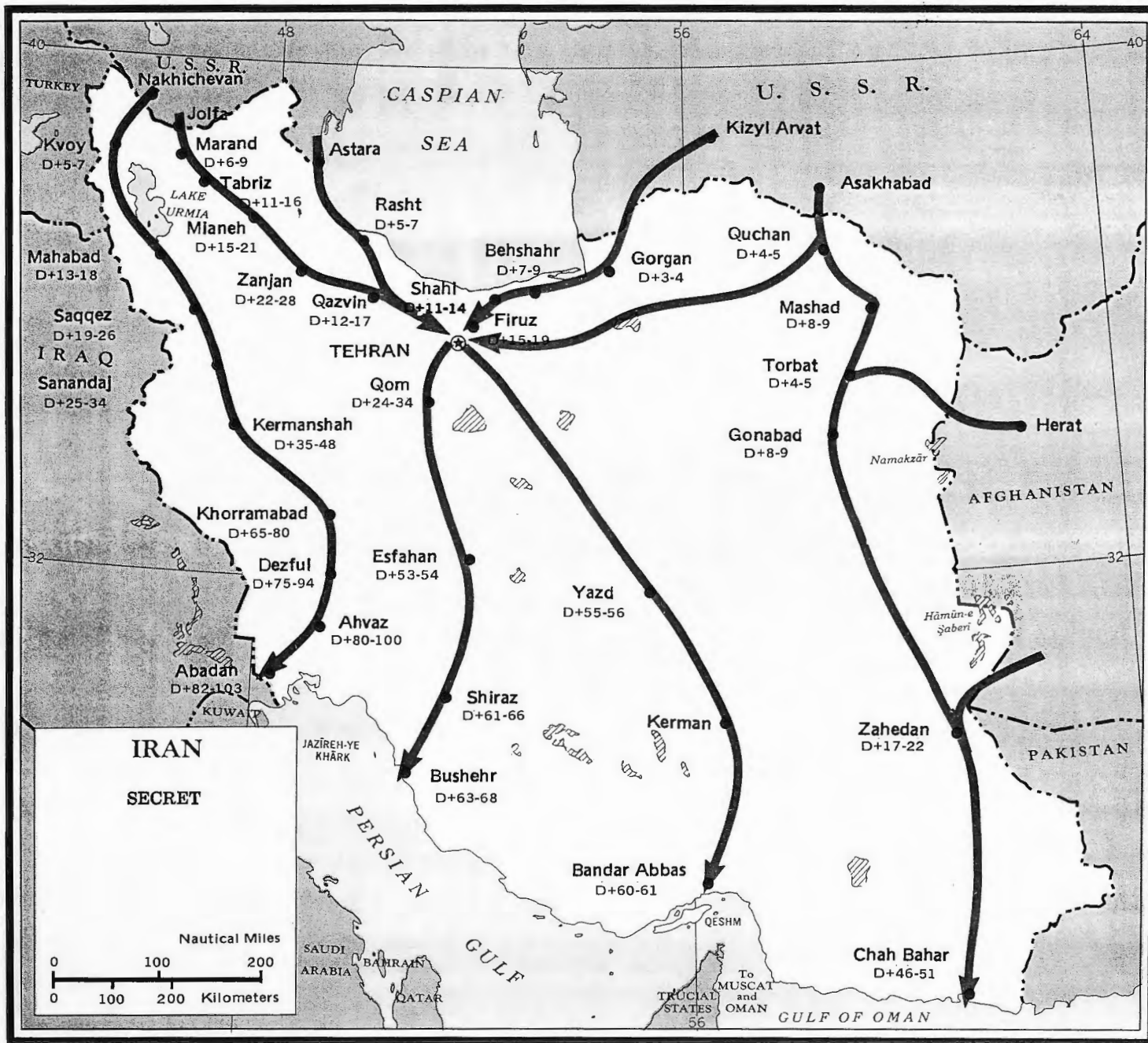
(C) Having completed the above actions, it is assessed that it would take a further 24 to 48 hours to fight through and dislodge the opposition, giving a total delay -- per brigade position -- of 48 to 72 hours. Against a Revolutionary Guards brigade, the Soviets are given the capability to accomplish all of this 24 hours faster.

(C) Each time the Soviets encountered and defeated an Iranian brigade and achieved control of the terrain to open the axis, they would have to carry out a number of subsequent actions before they could continue the advance. Thus, the following actions would require a further 48 hours of preparation:

- Casualty evacuation;
- Further redeployment, possibly including the changeover of lead units/formations;
- Logistic resupply.

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SOVIET INVASION OF IRAN - OPPOSED BY IRANIAN FORCES

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Figure 9

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IRAN
SECRET

Nautical Miles
0 100 200

Kilometers
0 100 200

(C) This process would have to be carried out each time the Soviet forces encountered Iranian brigade-size opposition and is the basis of the calculations of overall delay along each invasion axis.

(S) Research of actions during the Iran-Iraq war confirms this assessment. For example, on 26 and 27 September 1981 an Iraqi armored division was traversing a valley basin 50 km west of Dezful. An Iranian composite force, comprising one tank company, one mechanized infantry company, and one SP M-109 artillery battery, was deployed along a ridge line controlling access to a mountain pass at an elevation of 610 feet that dominated the valley basin. This small force was able to delay the Iraqis' advance by 36 hours.

(S) In late September and early October 1981, the Iraqi 1st Mechanized Infantry Division was attacking the Doselak heights, west of Dezful. An Iranian composite force comprising two tank companies, one mechanized infantry company, and an artillery battalion, controlling access to a pass at an elevation of 160 meters, imposed a delay of 3 to 4 days. This terrain is relatively easy for an attacking force when compared with the terrain in northwest, northeast, and southeast Iran, where going is much more difficult, routes are much fewer, and mountain passes and choke points are often at elevations in excess of 1,500 meters.

(S) The combined effect of these delays on the Soviet advance to objectives on the Gulf would be as shown in figure 9. The rate of advance along different axes would vary according to the level of opposition. Analysis indicates the Soviets would reach key objectives as follows:

- Tehran D+20 to D+30
- Esfahan D+53 to D+54
- Zahedan D+17 to D+22
- Chah Bahar D+46 to D+51
- Bandar Abbas D+60 to D+61
- Bushehr D+63 to D+65
- Abadan D+82 to D+103

The Iraq Option

(S) Because of the enormous difficulties that would confront the Soviets along the western axis, the question arises as to whether they would use routes through Iraq. Although there are some advantages to this option, it is considered unlikely for several reasons.

(S) First, access to Iraq is only possible either by way of Turkey or Iran (figure 10). As Turkey is a member of NATO, it is considered unlikely Moscow would wish to risk general war by invading that country, except in the event of open hostilities with NATO. There are no military advantages to be gained. Furthermore, there are no practical north-south routes through eastern Turkey to Iraq.



Figure 10

~~(S)~~ There are only three established routes from Iran to Iraq -- Khaneh to Irbil, Dezh Shahpur to Kirkuk, and Kermanshah to Khanaqin. The Khaneh-Irbil route becomes available after traveling 432 km through Iran, the Dezh Shahpur-Kirkuk route after 720 km, and the Kermanshah-Khanaqin route after 896 km.

~~(S)~~ All three routes traverse very difficult mountainous terrain. They are characterized by no by-pass passes at elevations in excess of 5,000 feet, numerous bridges, very steep gradients with successions of hairpin bends, sheer drops, and occasional tunnels. The two northern routes are only 4.5 meters wide and are only gravel-surfaced. No off-road movement is possible along most of their lengths. The Kermanshah-Khanaqin road is bituminous surfaced and is 6 to 7 meters wide. It is the only artery that could take the sustained traffic necessary for the Soviets to move forces in excess of a regiment from Iran into Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Even so, the difficulties they would face in opening and maintaining a main supply route along this road are enormous, and these would be compounded by the likelihood of Iraqi resistance. The Iraqis have 12 army divisions, large numbers of paramilitary forces, and approximately 300 combat aircraft. They would be able to concentrate a major proportion of these assets against Soviet ingress routes. To accomplish their objectives the Soviets would have to fight a war simultaneously with Iran and Iraq, for which they do not have the available forces close to the Iranian border.

~~(S)~~ Before reentering Iran in the region of Khuzestan, Soviet troops would have to travel approximately 1,200 km (which would include moving through the Iraqi capital of Baghdad). Reentry into the area of Khuzestan is highly predictable because the routes there are also quite limited. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers effectively channel any forces moving from west to east or vice versa. Cross-country movement is very limited because of the many tributaries of the Tigris and Euphrates and smaller rivers. In many areas, the terrain is flooded for most of the year and is subject to inundation.

~~(S)~~ Because of these factors, it is probable Soviet forces would confine themselves to Iranian lines of communication.

Outlook

~~(U)~~ Nonetheless, the gains of a successful invasion of Iran are great. More than any other country in the region, Iran dominates the Persian Gulf. If it were to fall within the Soviet orbit, the USSR would gain a dominant position on the Gulf, and it would then be able to exercise considerable political and military leverage in the Middle East. As a result, the Soviets could threaten the flow of oil to the West, to Japan, and to the Third World.

~~(S)~~ The USSR will continue to develop and refine its military plans for operations against Iran, in the event the need -- or the opportunity -- for direct military intervention should arise.

~~(S)~~ A significant improvement in the Soviets' capability to conduct operations in the eastern section of Iran could be achieved by improving the logistic infrastructure in southwest Afghanistan. This would involve construction and improvement of roads and airfields and the establishment of storage depots.

~~(S)~~ Although Soviet forces opposite Iran have a limited capability to act on short notice, they would not undertake a full-scale invasion of that country without significant preparation. Military planners in Moscow probably realize that any operations against Iran would very likely encounter Iranian opposition and involve the possibility of escalation to a confrontation with Western forces. (Classified by multiple sources; declassify on OADR)

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File
Persian
Gulf

Special Defense Intelligence Estimate

Prospects for the Persian Gulf (U)

FEBRUARY 1982

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
NLS F07-003 #2
By CHS, NARA, Date 7/20/01

NOFORN
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SPECIAL DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PROSPECTS FOR THE PERSIAN GULF (U)

This estimate has been coordinated with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, HQ, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, HQ U.S. Air Force; and the Director of Intelligence, HQ, U.S. Marine Corps. All concur in the estimate as written.

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DDE-2200-142-82

2 February 1982

Classified by Multiple Sources
Review on 2 February 2002

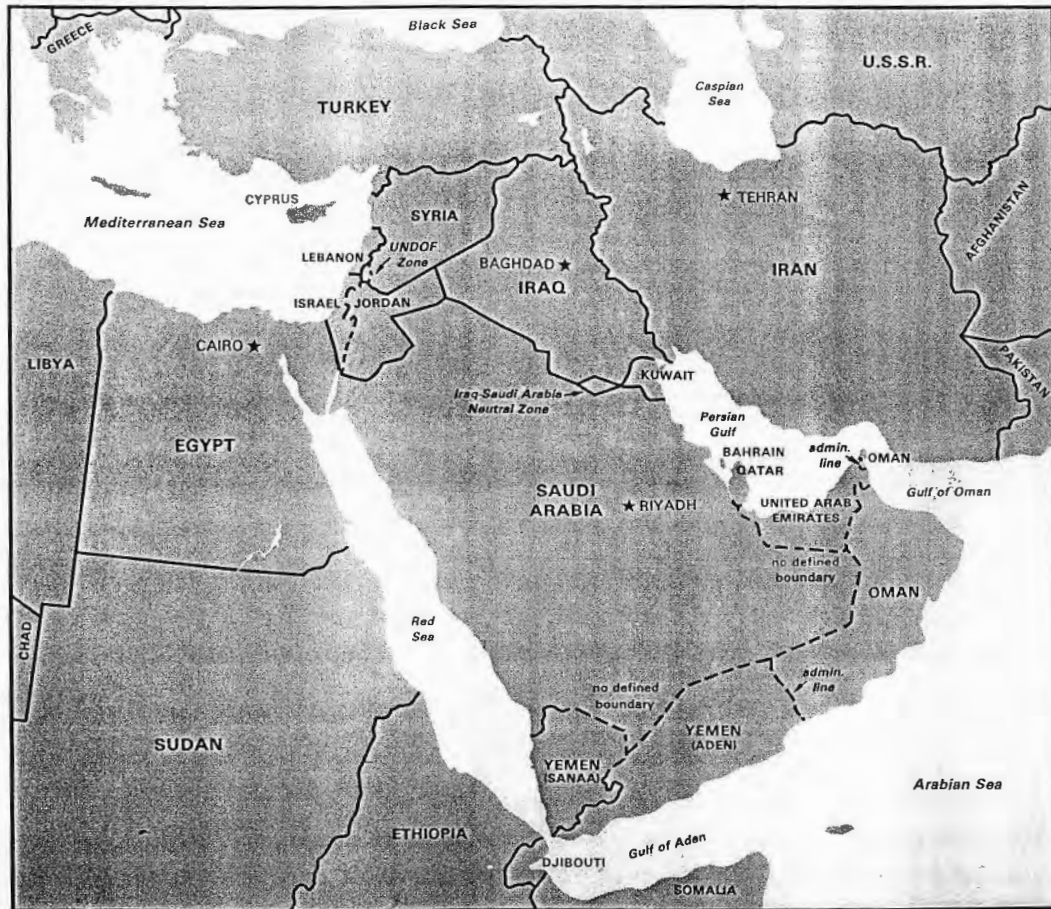
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

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Prospects for the Persian Gulf (U)

(C/NOFORN) This estimate assesses the evolving security situation in the Persian Gulf in terms of intraregional rivalries, the internal stability of regimes in the area, the prospects for increased Soviet and U.S. influence in the region, and the outlook for the world oil market in view of the Iran-Iraq war.

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PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS

A. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The Iran-Iraq war will continue to consume the energies of the two strongest Gulf States and provide the conservative Gulf States, led by Saudi Arabia, maneuvering room to attempt to develop a joint security mechanism within the Gulf Cooperation Council. This mechanism will leave much to be desired, and in the end these states will have to rely on outside assistance to meet major external security threats.

B. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Most states in the region have effective security services that will likely contain internal challenges to their regimes; however externally supported subversion will provide a significant challenge.

C. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ In Iraq, the war will be increasingly unpopular and will likely stimulate challenges to the regime, but President Saddam Hussein is a master of intrigue and should survive. Iraq, however, will likely channel its attentions inward. Moscow will attempt to maintain its client-patron relationship, which is diminishing, but will clandestinely encourage opposition to the regime.

D. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The ruling Iranian Islamic Republican Party will likely maintain its control of government but will probably begin to rely on the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and become increasingly susceptible to infiltration.

E. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Iran will be the principal focus of Soviet attention in the Gulf. Continued domestic instability will increasingly offer opportunities for Soviet exploitation. The Soviets will likely attempt to advance their interests in Iran working through Iranian collaborators. They will prefer to achieve their ends without using military force but will employ it as a last resort and if requested.

F. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Closer US relations with traditionalist Gulf States will be inhibited by their perception of US support for Israel and their belief that the United States is not always discreet in handling sensitive issues, such as regional security. Nevertheless, the United States will be relied upon to counter the Soviet threat. The conservative states will be receptive to certain US actions, such as providing low key assistance to efforts by these states in establishing a joint security system. There will also be openings for improved relations with Iraq. Prospects for improvements in Iranian attitudes toward the United States appear dim under existing circumstances.

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DISCUSSION

~~(U)~~ Internal Stability

1. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Iran is the only country in the Persian Gulf area currently experiencing substantial internal instability. Domestic instability, diplomatic isolation and the need for military assistance in Iran will continue in the near term, offering opportunities for Soviet exploitation. The militant Shia governing group, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), will likely be able to maintain its control of the government apparatus by using summary police-state repression against domestic opposition, focusing public attention on the patriotic struggle against Iraq, and by keeping the Army on the battlefield and out of the political equation. In this process, however, the IRP would become increasingly reliant on the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party for administrative and technical expertise as well as increasingly susceptible to infiltration and cooption by this relatively small but tightly organized and capable Marxist party.

2. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Iraq remains firmly in the grasp of the repressive and security conscious Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi regime, however, will find itself in a dilemma. The war with Iran is increasingly unpopular, particularly with the military, since the current Iraqi defensive strategy is proving costly and exposing forces to Iranian assault. Renewing offensive operations would be difficult to sustain and would likely lead to even more costly and damaging results. Meeting Iranian demands for total withdrawal would be seen as an insult to national honor. Saddam Hussein is seen as responsible for the war, and the results are eroding his prestige. It is likely that the war will continue to be costly in terms of lives and resources, and stimulate coup-plotting or assassination attempts from within his principal support base--The Baath Party, the Army, or the security services. Saddam is shrewd and a master at intrigue, which should give him a good chance to survive internal challenges, but he will become increasingly preoccupied with internal security matters. To combat flagging domestic morale, the Iraqis will portray the war as an Arab struggle against the common Persian enemy to discredit the "Islamic pretensions" of the Iranians and gain more support from other Arab states to counter recent Iraqi setbacks.

3. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The conservative Gulf States, led by Saudi Arabia, are all expected to remain relatively stable. These governments are vulnerable, however, to charges of poor economic management and corruption, and of severely restricting participation in economic and particularly political decisionmaking. Pressures will build to open the system to the growing number of aspiring educated youth, especially to those who have seen the opportunities available to their Western colleagues. The modernization that is taking place will raise fears among conservative elements that traditional ways and religious values are being compromised. These governments are sensitive to the countervailing forces for modernization and tradition, and--despite the family base of these regimes--they govern in a benevolent way. Wealth derived from the petroleum industries provides even the poorest of these states with an economic cushion that has greatly reduced the appeal of subversive elements, and the security services of all these states are capable of controlling dissidents; however, externally supported subversion will provide a significant challenge. Aside from external challenges, these states are unlikely to undergo internal upheavals for at least the next few years. The assassination of a major political figure would likely not alter this prognosis,

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except possibly in the case of Oman owing to the lack of a designated heir apparent.

~~(U)~~ Intraregional Rivalry

4. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The aspirations of Gulf States for a regional security regime have been frustrated by mutual suspicion and the rivalry of the three dominant states--Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. During the seventies, Iran was the strongest of these states and took upon itself the unchallenged role of "regional policeman." The internal instability that has followed the Iranian revolution and the demands of the war with Iraq are undermining Iran's preeminent position but not its desire to follow an activist policy in the region. Concomitantly, the new Iranian regime's announced intention to spread revolution and the internal turmoil that resulted from political change in Iran are producing anxiety among the other Gulf States. Their apprehension will continue to be fueled by the strong Shia messianic and antimonarchical direction of Iranian actions and pronouncements. All of these regimes subscribe to Sunni Islam and, with the exception of Iraq, are monarchies. Some elements among the large Shia populations in Iraq, Bahrain, and Kuwait, as well as the important Shia colony in the key petroleum region of eastern Saudi Arabia, are probably susceptible to Iranian appeal, at least to some extent.

5. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The Iran-Iraq war has focused the attention of the two strongest states on one another, and confrontation between them will channel much of their energy over the next year or so. Spurred by Iranian support of Iraqi dissidents, Baghdad set out to inflict an embarrassing military defeat on Iran in hopes of bringing down Khomeini and regaining territory conceded earlier to the Shah. The apparent failure to attain these goals has brought the Iraqis to the point of merely hoping that a face-saving arrangement can yet be made. The Iranians, however, are continuing to fight and apparently now see this as a strategy for dislodging Saddam Hussein from power. The remaining Gulf States, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, will continue to support Iraq out of commitment to its Arab character and to preserve balance against the potentially more powerful and threatening fundamentalist Iranian regime. To the extent that Iraq is able to galvanize support and concrete assistance from the other Arab states, the chances of holding out for a favorable resolution of the conflict will be enhanced.

6. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ With the two largest regional armies preoccupied, the traditionalist states of Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain have lined up with the third strongest power, Saudi Arabia, to form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Initially planned as an organization for broad cooperation in all areas, the GCC first moved ahead with economic cooperation. The continued subversive threat in the Gulf, however, largely inspired by Iran and exemplified by the December 1981 coup attempt in Bahrain, will likely cause the GCC to focus increasingly on regional security issues. Cooperation in military matters will initially be limited to less entangling arrangements such as coordination of arms purchases and exchange of air defense information. Oman's concern over the threat to its security from its traditional enemy, South Yemen, is growing following the signing in August 1981 of the Aden Pact by South Yemen, Ethiopia, and Libya. Although Saudi Arabia is also upset, other GCC states, notably Kuwait, will remain less concerned about the potency of this threat. The GCC's attention to regional security will be limited by mutual suspicions and the inadequacies of the population bases of the states in terms of numbers and skill levels of personnel

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needed to establish credible forces. The GCC states will ultimately have to rely on outside--e.g., Jordanian, Pakistani, and as a last resort US--forces to meet any major external security threat.

~~(U)~~ Persian Gulf Oil

7. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ A favorable security climate in the Persian Gulf will remain essential to the uninterrupted flow of oil to the non-Communist, industrialized world. In their continuing armed struggle, Iran and Iraq have attacked each other's oil facilities, and there is a continuing risk that the conflict might be broadened to include damage against other Gulf producers' oil facilities. Iraq has hurt Iran's domestic refining capabilities, thus forcing rationing of kerosene, gasoline and other oil products. Iran's crude oil production had already been greatly reduced in the wake of the revolution, and has been further reduced by the hostilities with Iraq. The war has also impeded the export of Iraqi production.

8. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ Interestingly, the Iran-Iraq war has had little adverse impact on the availability of oil on the world market. There has, indeed, been a war-related loss of nearly 3 million barrels per day, but various factors have prevented supply shortages. Principal among these have been increases in non-OPEC oil production and the maintenance of high production levels by major OPEC suppliers, particularly Saudi Arabia. Additionally, major importers have built up substantial reserves which they have used as a cushion against upward price pressures, and this has tended to artificially depress demand. High OPEC oil prices have spurred conservation and increased substitution of alternative fuels, while the related world-wide economic recession has depressed demand. A relatively stable supply-demand balance is likely during 1982, barring some new major disruption.

9. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ There are indications, however, that the downward trend in both consumption and demand for oil has leveled off and will be reversed within about a year's time. The factors pointing to this upturn are Saudi efforts within OPEC to bring production and demand more closely into alignment. Additionally, non-Communist industrialized nations are reaching the limits of easily implemented oil-conservation and fuel-substitution efforts concurrently with the draw-down of their reserve oil inventory. Furthermore, it is expected that there will be a gradual end to the economic recession that will stimulate increased demand for oil. The outlook is for balance between supply and demand, predicated by the large capacity of producers to cover the upturn in demand. A less likely possibility is for a buyer's market to develop, with price unity breaking down and producers competing aggressively for a share of the market.

~~(U)~~ Soviet Prospects

10. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The Soviet Union probably judges that its prospects for gaining a dominant position of influence in the Persian Gulf region are greater now than at any time during its long history of effort in this direction. The Soviets will sponsor National Liberation Front elements and state-oriented Communist parties operating from South Yemen as well as encourage certain radical and Palestinian groups; all of which are endeavoring to overthrow the conservative Gulf regimes. These activities will likely be unsuccessful but will pose a continuing problem for those regimes.

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11. (~~S/NOFORN~~) The formerly close Soviet-Iraqi relationship has begun to unravel, but the Soviets will attempt to maintain their client-patron relationship while offending Iran as little as possible. Iraq believes that the Soviets are not being forthcoming in support of the war effort and actually favor Iran. The Iraqis also suspect the Soviets of meddling in their domestic affairs and are uncomfortable with Soviet military advances into the Horn of Africa and particularly in Afghanistan. The importance of Iraq as a major Soviet source of convertible currency will dictate that Moscow deal cautiously with Baghdad to avoid rupturing the relationship. Iraqi reliance on Moscow for support of their largely Soviet-equipped armed forces will inhibit Baghdad's move away from the USSR although Iraq is beginning to diversify its sources of military equipment. Baghdad's suppression of the pro-Moscow Iraqi Communist party and purchase of Western arms, however, will continue to aggravate the relationship. There will likely be increased Soviet covert support to elements opposed to the Iraqi regime, particularly among Kurdish dissidents, while Iraq carefully but steadily takes a course independent of Moscow.

12. (~~S/NOFORN~~) It is in Iran, however, where Soviet activities and opportunities are expanding. The high priority Moscow likely accords Iran, based on its geostrategic value, its resource wealth, and its population base, will continue. Despite the largely unsuccessful nature of its efforts to date, Soviet activities in Iran appear to be increasing in a number of areas: state-to-state contacts with a large Soviet official presence; growing indications of Soviet clandestine and covert operations; attempts to promote influence among tribal groups; and political alignment with the regime by the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party. The Communist Tudeh Party is Moscow's principal advocate in Iran and the only non-fundamentalist group supporting the regime. It is undoubtedly involved in a variety of subversive activities and is clearly overseen by the Soviets. It appears that the Soviets are encouraging and attempting to help their Iranian collaborators gain positions where they will ultimately be able to take over the Government if the present regime falters. It is unlikely that the Soviets wish to intervene militarily to establish a surrogate state; however, they would likely respond to a call for military assistance from an established government in Tehran as a last resort. In attempting to gain control of the Government, the Tudeh would probably use the National Front method, lining up whatever radical clergy, tribal leaders, and left-wing political elements they believe they can control or influence. A Tudeh-dominated government, however, would greatly increase the prospects for civil war.

~~(U)~~ Implications for the US

13. (~~S/NOFORN~~) The prospects for increased US influence with Gulf States will be inhibited by their perception that US policy in the Middle East is largely dominated by support for Israel. An additional impediment, in the case of conservative states, is their belief that the United States is not always discreet in handling sensitive issues, such as regional security. Understanding their own military limitations, however, the GCC states will rely on the United States--through its strategic commitment reinforced by substantial American interests in the Gulf--to counter the Soviet military threat. They will strongly argue, nevertheless, that the United States' military presence remain "over the horizon" or at least that such presence be as low in visibility as possible. These states believe that too close a military association with the United States will provide opposition elements ammunition to challenge the legitimacy of their rule.

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14. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ There will be opportunities, nevertheless, to increase US influence, particularly with the GCC states and, to a lesser but still important extent, with Iraq. The GCC states will look to the United States for quiet assistance in planning, developing, and equipping a regional defense-security system, particularly in the areas of air and sea defense. Iraq will be looking for ways to improve relations, emphasizing commercial transactions but increasingly looking toward closer government-to-government relations as an offset to steadily cooling relations with Moscow. Sales of non-lethal US military equipment would be most welcome.

15. ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Prospects for improvement in the Iranian attitude toward the United States will remain dim. The Iranian Armed Forces are the only potential power center where any degree of good will toward America is likely to remain. Khomeini's arbitrary and repressive policies, however, are alienating a growing number of Iranians who are basically neither pro-Soviet nor radical. Opportunities to reestablish US relations with such Iranians could develop if there is a dramatic change in government, or precipitous and heavy-handed Soviet intervention in Iranian affairs.

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

February 27, 1982

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Persian Gulf 1252
GK/RT
file

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK

THROUGH: NORMAN A. BAILEY *ABG*
FROM: DOUGLAS J. FEITH *ABG*
SUBJECT: OPEC's Woes Threaten Stability of Persian Gulf

OPEC is not able to command any price it chooses. Oil is no more exempt from the laws of supply and demand than is copper, tin, or any other commodity traded in the world. Oil prices now are falling not only in real terms (i.e., when measured in constant dollars, adjusted for inflation) but nominally. It is likely that real oil prices five years from now will be substantially lower than today's prices, barring unforeseen calamities.

These are the facts currently plaguing OPEC. They mean diminishing oil revenues, reduced government spending, and increased political instability throughout the Persian Gulf.

Because economics is dismal, it is ignored by many diplomats and strategists. I fear that much of the Administration's Persian Gulf security planning is based on outdated (and discredited) analyses, reflecting the unduly alarmist assumptions and expectations about oil that became "conventional wisdom" in the days following the 1973 oil shock. Students of the oil market have learned a great deal since then. Administration officials, I think, might beneficially readjust their thinking to take account of the actual history of the oil market and the actual behavior of the various oil states. There is a striking contrast between what officials of those states have said and what they have done.

Given the subject's importance, you may wish to send the attached information memo to the President, with copies to appropriate other officials.

DECLASSIFIED
NLS F97-003 #3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Review Feb. 27, 1988

BY MSD, NARA, DATE 5/8/00

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo to the President at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

That you send copies to the Vice President and other appropriate White House and Cabinet officials.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Norman Bailey concurs. Henry Nau is out of town.

cc: Kemp, Shoemaker, Tanter

Attachment

Tab I Memorandum for the President

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: WILLIAM P. CLARK

SUBJECT: OPEC's Woes Threaten Stability of Persian Gulf

DECLASSIFIED
NLS # F97-003 #4
BY MSP, NARA, DATE 5/8/00

Iran, having cut prices three times within the last few weeks, is now selling oil at around \$4 per barrel below OPEC's floor price. Other OPEC countries have effectively been discounting for months.

The world oil market is experiencing a shortage of demand, not supply. Buyers are unwilling to buy at current prices all the oil that producers are producing. OPEC countries suffer most because they generally serve as suppliers of last resort, receiving, as a rule, only the business that cannot be satisfied by non-OPEC sources. OPEC's production capacity is around 32 million barrels per day. Its current production is around 19 million, approximately 3 million of which is for the OPEC countries' domestic use.

Current oil market conditions promise no surge in demand even if economic activity increases in accordance with Administration hopes. Moreover, on the supply side, resolution of the Iran-Iraq war could aggravate OPEC's woes to the tune of an additional 4 or 5 million barrels a day (representing an increase in non-communist world daily oil production of over 10 percent). OPEC producers now must either cut their prices (openly, as Iran has done, or covertly) or resign themselves to lower production (i.e., diminishing sales) for the foreseeable future, or both.

Saudi officials over the years have encouraged the view that Saudi Arabia is eager to cut its oil production, and would do so if no shocking price jump were to result. Saudi Arabia has made diplomatic hay of both the assertion that it is garnering more oil revenues than it "needs" and the warning that the West's failure to satisfy Saudi political desires will result in a less "generous" Saudi oil production policy. But by resisting current pressure from other producers to cut Saudi production, Riyadh belies more clearly than ever before the notion that non-business considerations motivate high Saudi production. Simply put, the Saudis want the revenues.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Review Feb. 27, 1988

They do no one favors when they sell large quantities of oil. Indeed, it is precisely because they desire to do no one favors--not oil consumers, not oil producers--that the Saudis refuse to cut production unilaterally, an act that would amount to a Saudi subsidy to all other oil producers.

Saudi Arabia and its neighbors are facing greatly diminished oil revenues. Saudi Arabia may run a sizable current account deficit by 1984. (It ran such deficits in FY 1978 and FY 1979, though few Westerners took note.) The prospect of very "soft" oil market conditions for at least the next five years will necessitate government spending cuts in all OPEC countries.

Given the sky-high and rising expectations of the populations of the Persian Gulf oil states, the drop in revenues (and government spending) is certain to cause disappointment and exacerbate the region's political instability. Also tending to destabilize the region will be the increased economic incentive for oil states to disrupt the oil production of neighboring states.

We shall ensure that the effects of oil market developments on the strategic and political picture in the Persian Gulf are taken fully into account as we devise U.S. strategic plans for the region.

Prepared by:
Douglas J. Feith

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