



*Persian Gulf War
Illnesses Task Force*

CIA Support to the US Military During the Persian Gulf War

16 June 1997

CIA Support to the US Military During the Gulf War

No combat commander has ever had as full and complete a view of his adversary as did our field commander. Intelligence support to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was a success story.

*Gen. Colin Powell, USA, Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff*

One of the Central Intelligence Agency's primary functions is to provide intelligence support to US military forces. Since its creation in 1947, CIA has passed both "raw" intelligence information and in-depth "finished" intelligence reports of enemy vulnerabilities, capabilities, and intentions to US military forces deployed throughout the world. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990-91) were no exception. From the moment Iraq invaded Kuwait, CIA officers in Washington and around the world worked to provide intelligence support for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines deployed to the Gulf.

CIA's activities are usually secret, and the Agency rarely publicizes its successes. Nonetheless, CIA believes that Gulf war veterans may benefit from knowing the extent—albeit in summary—of CIA efforts to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Clearly, other US Government agencies and the US military provided extensive intelligence support to US forces deployed in the Gulf. Those efforts would provide equally enlightening reading, but are beyond the scope of this paper.

Prelude to War

Throughout 1990, CIA closely monitored Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's political and military moves. CIA notified US policymakers and the US military when, in July, Iraq began deploying forces near Kuwait's border. As the Iraqi buildup increased, CIA warned that Iraq was not bluffing and probably would attack its neighbor:

- The week before the invasion, CIA assessed that an Iraqi attack was "highly likely" within a few days if Kuwait failed to accede to Baghdad's demands and

that Iraq had positioned an attack force large enough to march through all of Kuwait and deep into Saudi Arabia.

- On 1 August 1990—the day before the Iraqi invasion—CIA assessed that "... Baghdad almost certainly believes it is justified in taking military action to reclaim its 'stolen' territory and oil rights. It is also possible . . . that Saddam has already decided to take military action against Kuwait."

CIA formed round-the-clock task forces in its operations and intelligence directorates the day of the invasion. The Directorate of Operations augmented appropriate CIA stations overseas to handle anticipated increases in collection, reporting, and liaison requirements. The Directorate of Intelligence increased the number of "all-source" and imagery analysts dedicated to the effort, while maintaining its core of experienced Iraqi analysts:

- CIA resisted requests that its Iraqi analysts be fully incorporated into the Pentagon's Joint Intelligence Center (JIC) because CIA did not want to dilute its base of analytic expertise. Throughout the war, CIA relied on its small number of Iraqi experts to produce reports and briefings for policymakers in Washington and the US military.
- Nonetheless, CIA assigned several military analysts to the Pentagon's JIC. The Iraqi experts at CIA Headquarters and the CIA military analysts at the Pentagon maintained daily contact with their counterparts at the Department of Defense.

CIA began its liaison with the US forces deployed in the Gulf when, in August 1990, a senior CIA Iraqi military analyst accompanied then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief (CINC) US Central Command (CENTCOM), to Saudi Arabia and provided briefings and intelligence updates to General Schwarzkopf before his discussions with Saudi political and military officials.

Soon after CENTCOM established its headquarters in Saudi Arabia, CIA deployed JILE (Joint Intelligence Liaison Element) teams to CENTCOM headquarters. The JILE teams were CIA's primary conduit for providing intelligence information to the deployed US forces. They comprised CIA operations officers, analysts, and communications specialists who passed CIA intelligence information to the military and relayed the military's questions, commonly referred to as "requests for information" (RFIs), to CIA Headquarters. CIA routinely responded to urgent RFIs within 24 hours.

Intelligence Support for the Warfighters

From August 1990 through February 1991, CIA operations officers, political analysts, military analysts, weapons analysts, economic/oil analysts, imagery analysts, and cartographers produced thousands of intelligence cables, reports, and briefings on Iraq. While taking measures to protect its sources, CIA shared its information on Iraq with the US military:

- The JILEs passed thousands of intelligence cables, photographs, maps, and numerous finished intelligence reports to military units in what had come to be known as the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO). Hundreds of these intelligence products addressed the probable locations and capabilities of Iraqi chemical weapons and their potential delivery systems.
- CIA analysts presented more than 100 briefings to US military audiences during the Gulf war period. Those audiences included, among others, officers from the US Army 24th Mechanized Division, the US Army War College, the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and senior Marine Corps officers preparing to deploy to the Gulf. The briefing topics included Iraqi ground, air, and air defense forces; Iraqi tactics—including chemical weapons use—during the Iran-Iraq war; and Iraq's construction of minefields and other defensive barriers in southern Kuwait.
- Of the dozens of CIA employees called to active military duty in late 1990, several served in military intelligence. For example, a CIA analyst who was also an officer in the US Marine Corps Reserve

CIA Research Paid Big Dividends

CIA's support for US military forces in the Gulf war began long before Iraq invaded Kuwait. CIA carefully monitored Iraqi military developments throughout the 1980s and wrote hundreds of reports for US political and military leaders on the threat Iraq posed to its neighbors, Iraq's relations with terrorists and insurgents, and Iraq's acquisition of weapon systems and military technology. Much of CIA's basic research and reporting from before the invasion proved vital to US military forces deploying to the Gulf. Beginning in August 1990, CIA provided the US military copies of published CIA research papers on Iraq. Some of the topics included:

- *The status and capabilities of Iraq's ballistic missile forces and its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs.*
- *Iraq's use of chemical weapons in combined arms operations during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88).*
- *The size and strength of Iraqi forces and the effect of Iraqi ground force restructuring that followed the Iran-Iraq war.*






deployed to Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington. From that point on, he shuttled daily between CIA Headquarters and Headquarters Marine Corps carrying the latest information and analysis from CIA. Another CIA military analyst on active duty briefly served as an aide to the Director of Intelligence (J2) for the Joint Staff.

Strategic Warning. CIA intelligence information and assessments passed to the US military included warnings that:

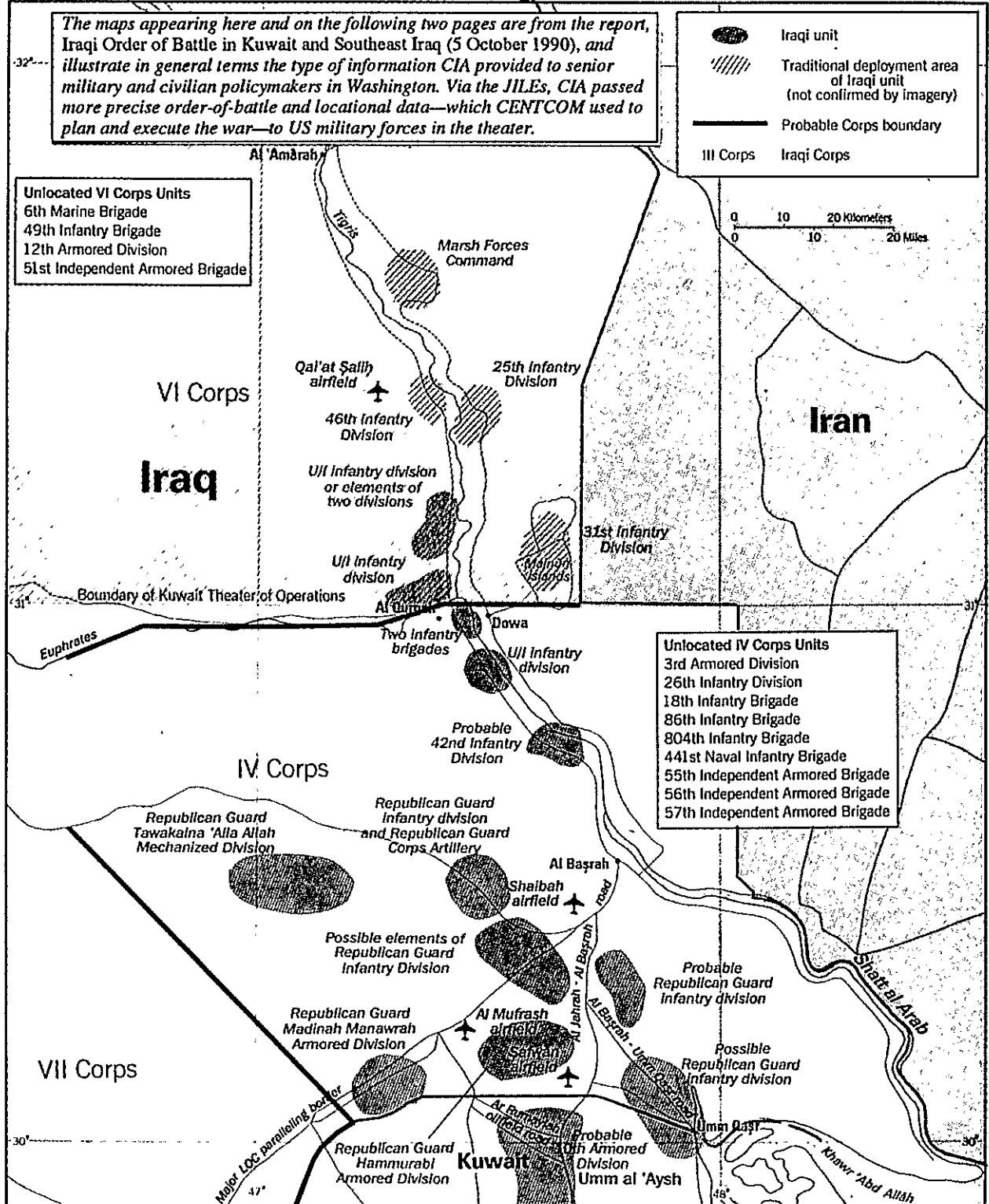
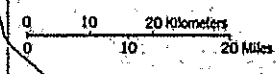
- Iraq was likely to use chemical weapons in a defensive ground war with the Coalition. (In retrospect, CIA assessments that Iraq would use chemical weapons may have influenced President Bush's

Iraqi Order Of Battle, 4 October 1990

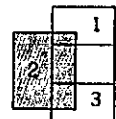
The maps appearing here and on the following two pages are from the report, Iraqi Order of Battle in Kuwait and Southeast Iraq (5 October 1990), and illustrate in general terms the type of information CIA provided to senior military and civilian policymakers in Washington. Via the JILES, CIA passed more precise order-of-battle and locational data—which CENTCOM used to plan and execute the war—to US military forces in the theater.

 Iraqi unit
 Traditional deployment area of Iraqi unit (not confirmed by imagery)
 Probable Corps boundary
 III Corps
 Iraqi Corps

Unlocated VI Corps Units
 6th Marine Brigade
 49th Infantry Brigade
 12th Armored Division
 51st Independent Armored Brigade

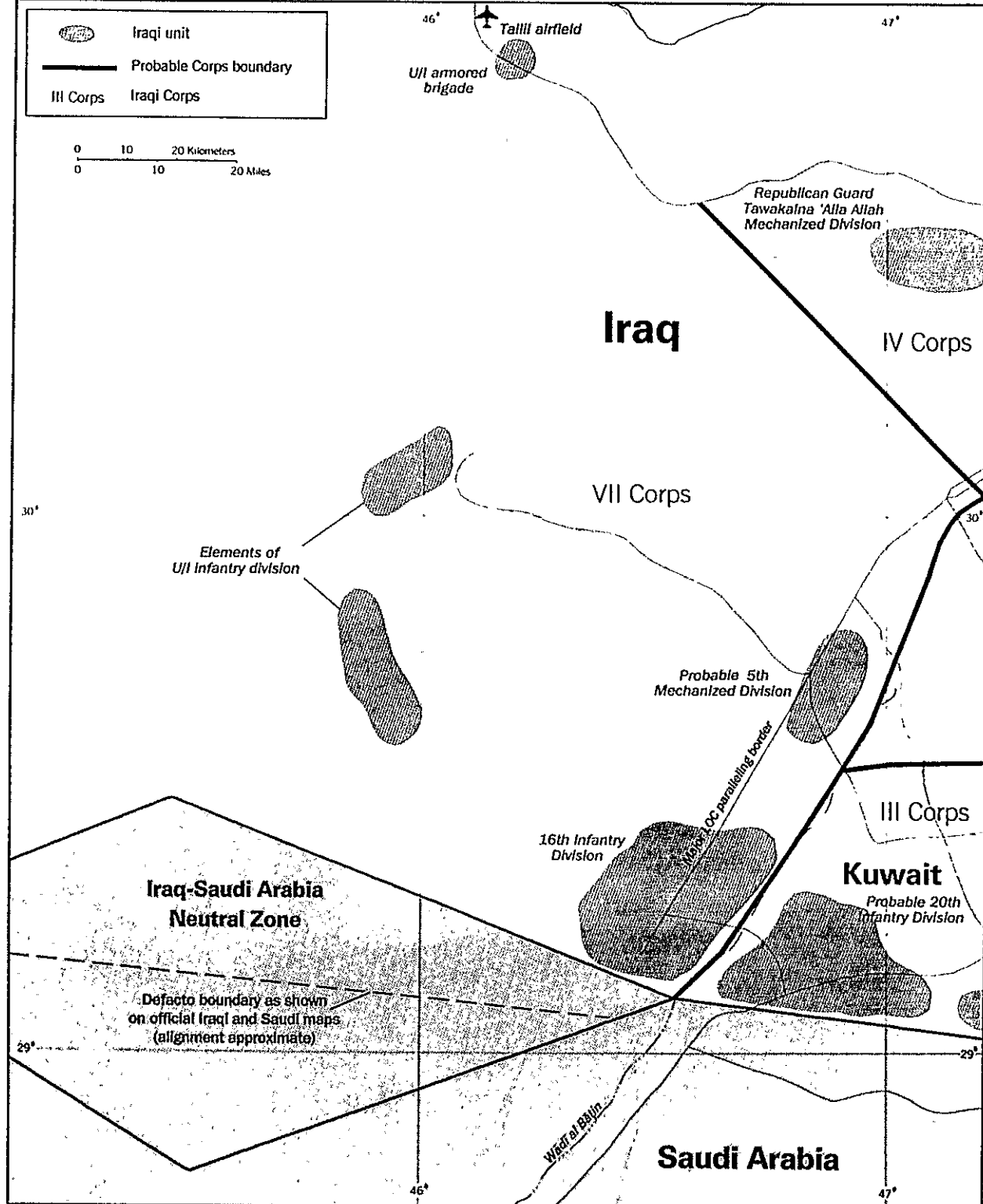


Unlocated IV Corps Units
 3rd Armored Division
 26th Infantry Division
 18th Infantry Brigade
 86th Infantry Brigade
 804th Infantry Brigade
 441st Naval Infantry Brigade
 55th Independent Armored Brigade
 56th Independent Armored Brigade
 57th Independent Armored Brigade

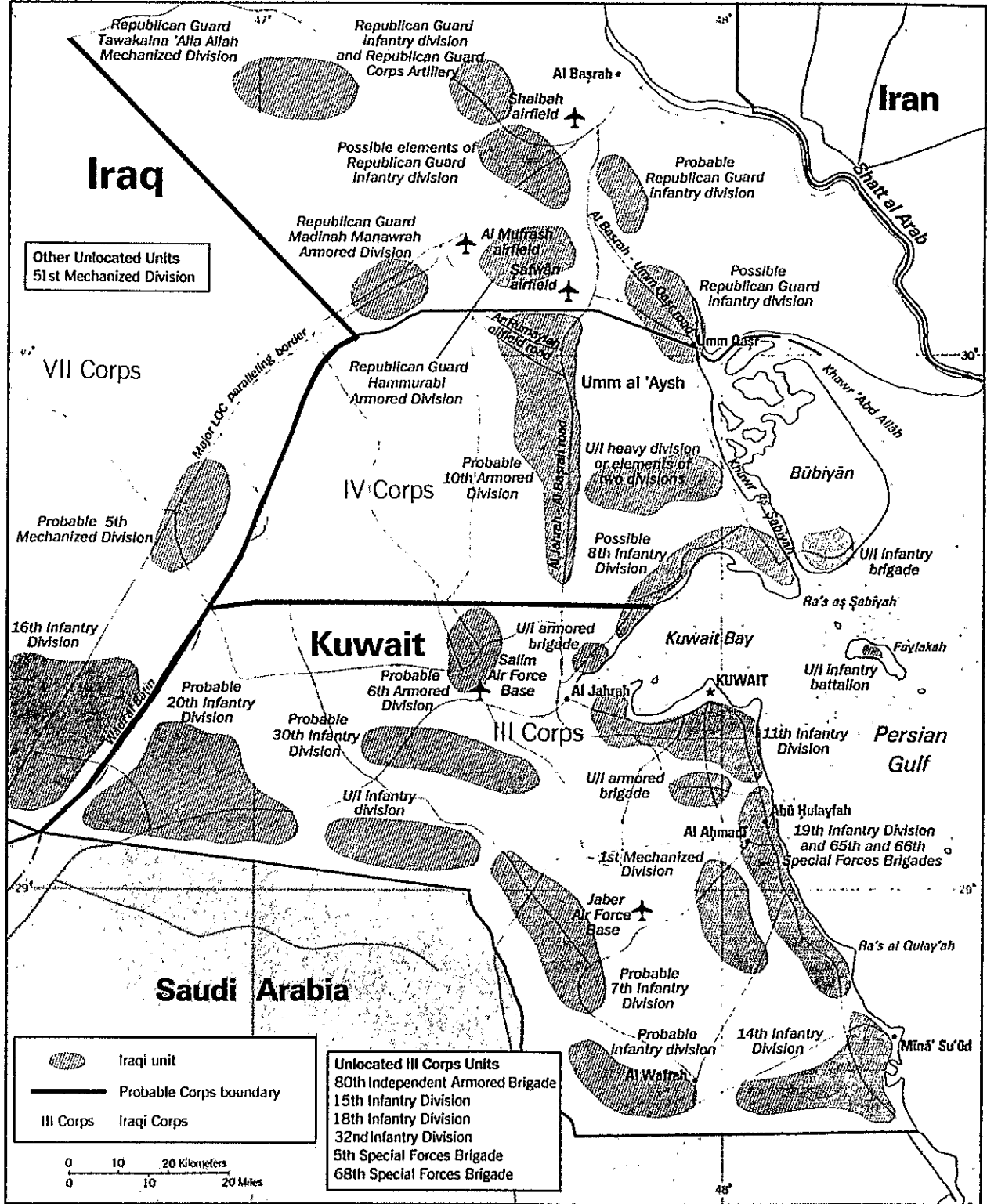


Map 2 of 3

Iraqi Order Of Battle, 4 October 1990



Iraqi Order Of Battle, 4 October 1990



decision to warn Iraqi President Saddam Husayn of grave consequences for such use. To date, the US Intelligence Community has not uncovered evidence that Iraq employed chemical weapons during the Gulf war.)

- Iraqi ground force deployments in the KTO included chemical decontamination stations, a development that suggested Iraq might have been planning to use, or feared being attacked by, chemical weapons. (Iraqi documents captured during the ground war indicate that Iraqi regulations called for both offensive and defensive ground force deployments to include chemical decontamination stations.)
- Iraq had chemical warheads, and probably biological warheads, for its Scud missiles.
- Iraq was preparing to launch Scud missiles. CIA accurately predicted that Iraq would launch Scuds into Israel during the first 48 hours of the war.

Actionable Intelligence. CIA also provided information that helped the US military plan and execute the war. In August 1990, CIA published its analysis of the key strengths and weaknesses of Iraq's ground forces; strengths CENTCOM planners worked to neutralize and weaknesses they exploited. CIA continued to provide detailed, actionable intelligence information throughout the war. The list includes, but is not limited to:

- **Intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.**

- The specific chemical and biological agents Iraq might have employed against US forces.
- The locations of known Iraqi ballistic missile and chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons production facilities.
- The locations of fixed Scud missile launchers in western Iraq and the size and composition of Iraq's Scud force.

- **Intelligence on Iraq's ground forces.**

- Iraq's military "order of battle" (the equipment holdings and structure of Iraqi military units).

- The precise, continually updated locations and activities of Iraq's Republican Guard divisions.
- The locations of Iraq's regular Army armored, mechanized infantry, infantry, and artillery units.
- The locations of Iraqi ground forces' headquarters and command and control facilities and equipment.

- **Intelligence support for the Coalition ground offensive.**

- A map of the road network in southern Iraq and Kuwait, including roads that Iraq constructed after the invasion.
- The locations of oil pipelines that may have restricted movements of armored vehicles.
- The precise locations of passages through the minefields and barriers in southern Kuwait.
- The locations of coastal artillery, minefields, and obstacles to amphibious landings in southern Kuwait and on Faylaka Island.
- Information indicating that what was thought to be a huge minefield northwest of Kuwait—in the area where the US XVIII Airborne Corps would operate—was actually ground scarring from extensive oil exploration.

- **Intelligence on Iraq's air and air defense forces.**

- The precise locations and readiness levels of Iraqi aircraft, including the locations where Iraq was attempting to hide aircraft from Coalition airstrikes.
- The precise locations of Iraqi surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery.
- The locations of Iraq's air defense forces' command and control facilities and equipment.
- Technical information on Iraqi aircraft and air defense equipment.

- **Intelligence on Iraqi threats to Coalition naval forces.**
 - The locations and readiness levels of Iraqi “Silk-worm” antiship missiles.
 - Assessments of Iraq’s capability to employ Exocet antiship missiles.
 - The locations of Iraqi artillery deployed on the coast of Kuwait.
- **Intelligence on areas and facilities of interest to US military special operations forces.**
 - For example, the most likely locations of Coalition pilots detained in Iraq.

Steps Taken To Improve CIA-US Military Cooperation

CIA has taken steps to correct the shortcomings identified during the Gulf war and improve its support to the US military. Shortly after the war, CIA Headquarters improved communications with major US military commands. In 1992, CIA created the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) to enhance cooperation and increase information flow between CIA and the military. OMA is subordinate to the Associate Director of Central Intelligence for Military Support and is jointly staffed by CIA officers from all directorates and military personnel from all the services. OMA supports CIA-US military activities by:

- Posting Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Representatives and staff, on a permanent basis, to some unified commands.
- Providing DCI Faculty Representatives to Senior Service Colleges.

- Deploying Office of Military Affairs/National Intelligence Support Teams (OMA/NIST) in support of US military forces overseas.
- Ensuring that CIA products are properly classified and formatted for military use.
- Providing timely responses to short-fused requests for information and analytical products.
- Hosting orientation seminars, intelligence exchanges, and briefings.
- Participating in a broad range of joint military exercises worldwide.

The Central Intelligence Agency remains dedicated to supporting US military forces in peacetime and during war. As part of that mission, CIA is searching its files and databases for intelligence information that may help identify potential causes of Gulf war veterans’ illnesses. CIA will continue to research this issue, explore any leads that surface, and make its findings available to the public. Finally, CIA will make every effort to ensure that, both now and in the future, the United States maintains the best informed military in the world.