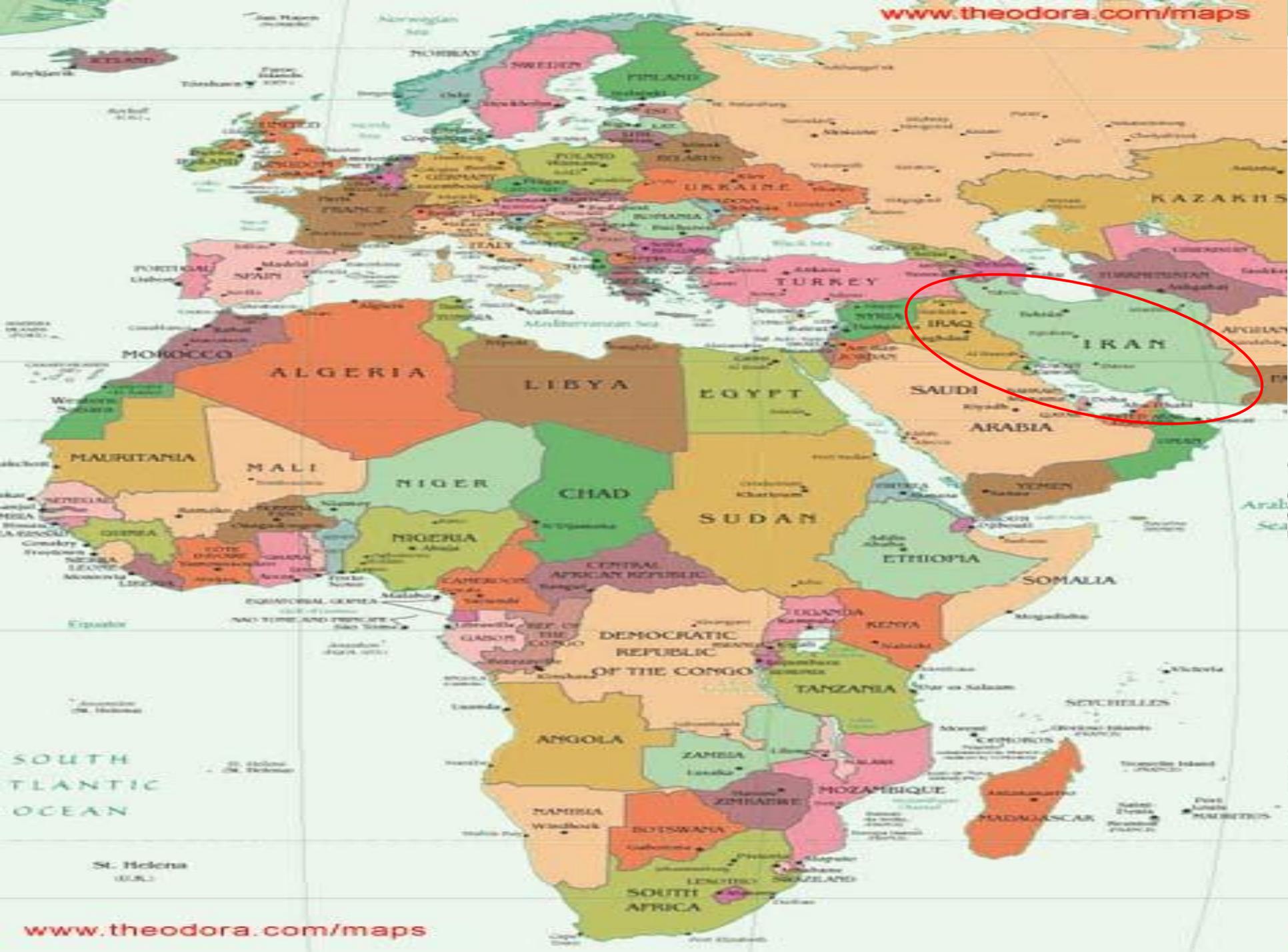


U.S. Involvement In the Iran-Iraq War





Middle East



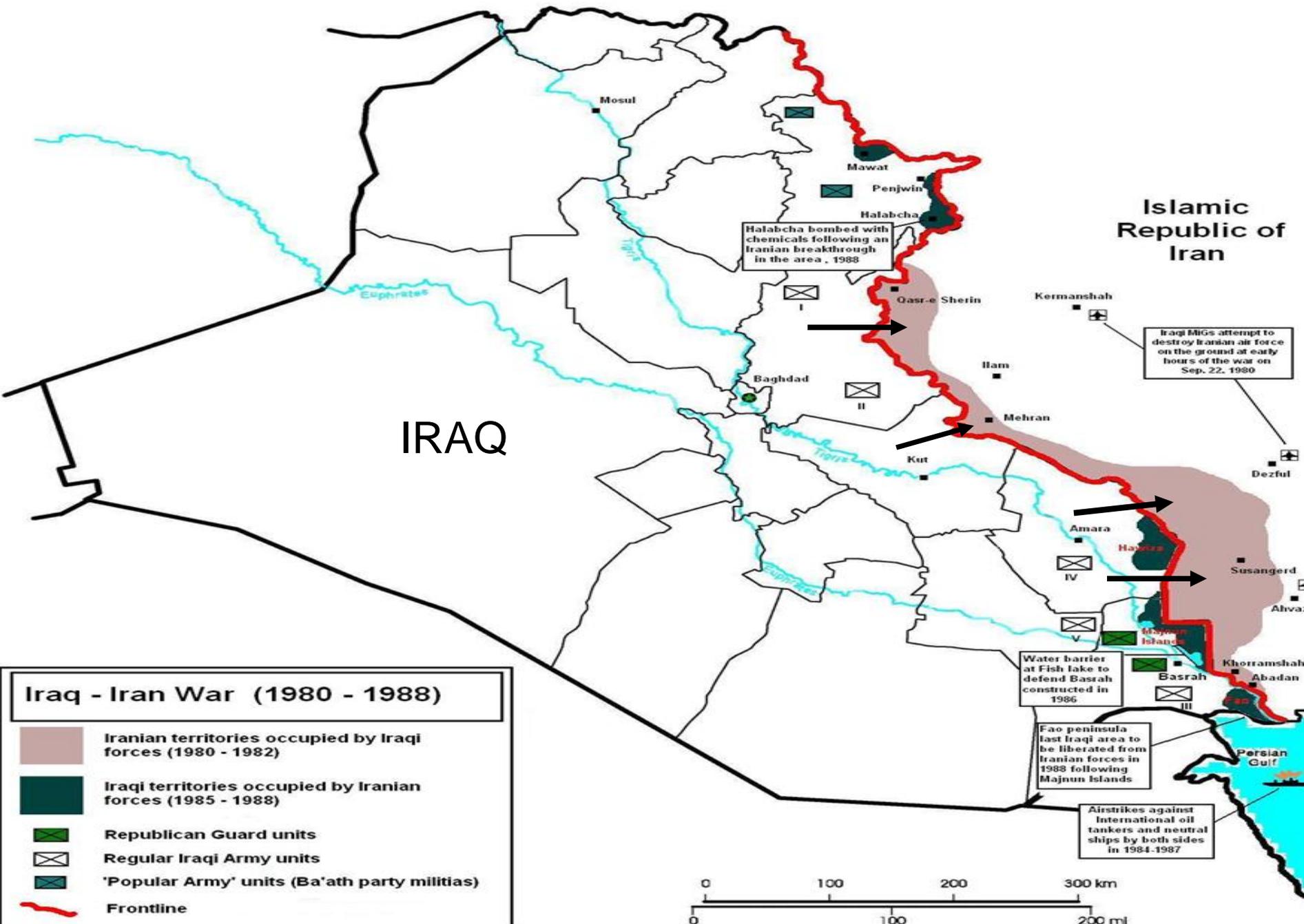
Scale 1:22,000,000
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection,
standard parallels 12° N and 38° N

0 500 Kilometers
0 500 Nautical Miles

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Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

War Background

- Hoping to take advantage of the chaos of the Iranian Revolution Iraq invaded Iran in Sept. 1980 under their leader Saddam Hussein
- Iraq was worried the revolution might spread to their country
- Iraq hoped to gain territory & protect their oil interests



Iraq - Iran War (1980 - 1988)

- Iranian territories occupied by Iraqi forces (1980 - 1982)
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- Republican Guard units
- Regular Iraqi Army units
- 'Popular Army' units (Ba'ath party militias)
- Frontline

Islamic Republic of Iran

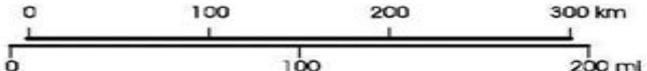
Halabcha bombed with chemicals following an Iranian breakthrough in the area, 1988

Iraqi MIGs attempt to destroy Iranian air force on the ground at early hours of the war on Sep. 22, 1980

Water barrier at Fish lake to defend Basrah constructed in 1986

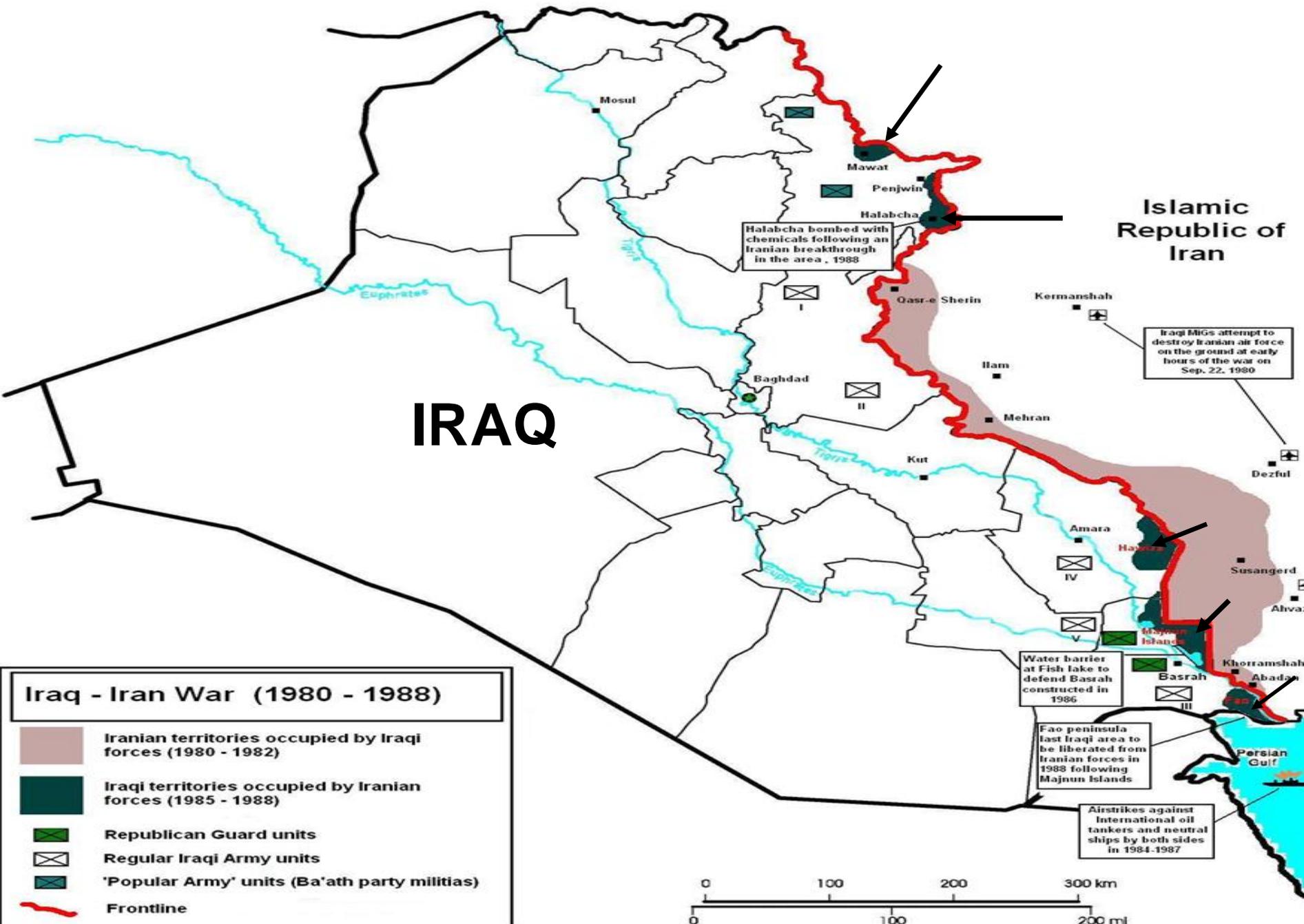
Fao peninsula last Iraqi area to be liberated from Iranian forces in 1988 following Majnun Islands

Airstrikes against international oil tankers and neutral ships by both sides in 1984-1987



Background Cont.

- By 1982 Iran had pushed Iraq back to its border and began pushing into Iraq

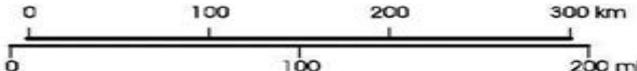


IRAQ

Islamic Republic of Iran

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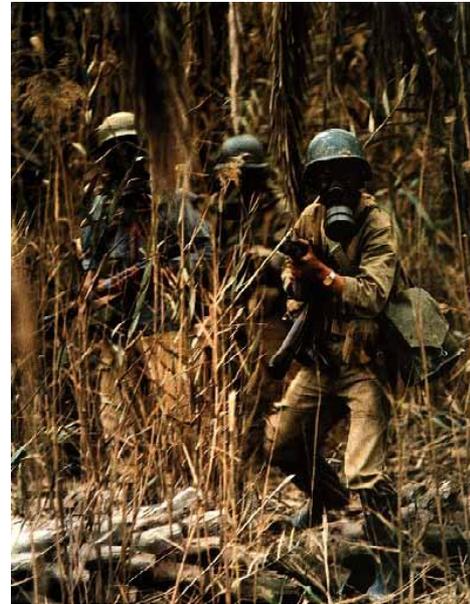
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Background Cont.

- It was a very nasty war fought much like WWI—Using trench warfare & Chemical Weapons
 - Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran & against its own Kurdish people in the North



**Ethnographic
Map of Iraq**



KURDS (Sunni)

SUNNI

SHIA

0 50 100 150 200 km

- Arab Shia
- Arab Sunni
- Kurdish (Sunni)

U.S. Involvement

- Complicated
- The official U.S. position was neutrality –U.S. had no official diplomatic relations with either country

IRAQ

- As always the chief U.S. concern is always the SOVIET UNION & the spread of Worldwide Communism
- The Iraqi Communist Party began calling for an end to the war in 1981
- Saddam Hussein responded by severely repressing the party—having members jailed & killed

IRAQ Cont.

- The U.S. saw this as a sign that Saddam Hussein was concerned about Soviet influence in the Middle East
- In response the U.S.
 - removed Iraq from the list of countries that sponsor international terrorism
 - restored diplomatic relations with Iraq
 - approved the sale of Boeing jetliners to Iraq

IRAN

- ***Remember:*** The U.S. was not happy about the Iranian Revolution
- In 1983 a terrorist group called “Hezbollah” took some Western hostages (six of whom were American)

IRAN Cont.

- A moderate group of Iranian leaders (who apposed the Ayatollah) secretly approached the U.S. & offered to negotiate with Hezbollah for the release of the hostages
- In exchange, the U.S. would sell arms to Iran

IRAN Cont.

- The U.S. liked this idea because the Ayatollah was old & they wanted to have good relations with the Iranian government (led by the moderates) when the Ayatollah died
- If not us, then the Soviets would
 - ***Remember:*** Everyone's either with the U.S. or with the Soviet Union

IRAN Cont.

- So by 1985 the U.S. was secretly selling weapons to Iran
 - They were using the \$\$\$ to fund rebel fighters in **Nicaragua** against the **Communist** government there



ARCTIC OCEAN

Norwegian Sea

RUSSIA

Chukchi Sea

Beaufort Sea

GREENLAND

ICELAND

Reykjavik

Bering Sea

Gulf of Alaska

Baffin Bay

Godthab

Unalaska

Fairbanks

Nome

Fort Yukon

Whitehorse

Yellowknife

Baker Lake

Rankin Inlet

Iqaluit

Juneau

Bear Lake

Dawson Creek

Fort Chipewyan

Edmonton

Fort McMurray

Winnipeg

Churchill

Thompson

Moosonee

Quebec

Halifax

Prince Rupert

Prince George

Grande Prairie

Fort McMurray

Edmonton

Winnipeg

Thompson

Moosonee

Quebec

Hudson Bay

Labrador City

St. John's

Victoria

Vancouver

Calgary

Edmonton

Winnipeg

Thompson

Moosonee

Quebec

Halifax

Vancouver

Seattle

Spokane

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THE TANKER WAR



THE TANKER WAR Cont.

- By 1984 a large part of the war was taking place in the Persian Gulf
- Iran & Iraq began attacking oil tankers from each other's countries
- When Iran began attacking Kuwaiti & Saudi Arabian oil tankers however, the U.S. (& Soviet Union) got involved

Middle East



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THE TANKER WAR Cont.

- Kuwait (who was trading with **Iraq**) offered to “re-flag” its ships as **U.S.** ships in exchange for U.S. protection
- The idea being that now these were now **American** ships & if Iran attacked them, they were attacking **the U.S.**; then the U.S. could (& would) respond **militarily**

THE TANKER WAR Cont.

- The U.S. initially declined
- But when the Soviet Union said they would do it, the U.S. agreed.
- So the U.S. began patrolling the Gulf & protecting these ships
- Eventually Iran came to believe that the U.S. would stop at nothing to make sure that Iraq won the war

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

- In 1986 America's secret arms deal with Iran came to light
- In response, (embarrassed) the U.S. shunned Iran & threw all of its support behind Iraq
- So in the peace negotiations at the U.N. the U.S. stood up for Iraq
- In 1988 the war finally came to an end

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE Cont.

- Neither side really won but Iraq claimed victory & blamed Iran for the war
- In the end the U.S. had lost what little support it had in Iran & now had a wild dictator “friend” on its hands
- This “friendship” would be short lived however...





Writing Prompt

- *Most (if not all) of the foreign policy decisions of the U.S. during the Cold War were made in an attempt to contain the real threat of **communism** & the **Soviet Union**. How would you feel as an Iraqi or Iranian citizen about the way the U.S. acted during the war? How might their situation compare a situation that has happened in your life?*
- **Homework:** *Give three other examples of how the U.S. foreign policy has been affected by its relationship with the **Soviet Union**.*