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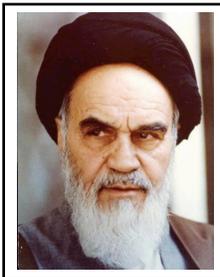
Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)

Terms & People to Know

Islamic Revolution
Saddam Hussein
martyr

☀ In September 1980, Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein tried to seize a waterway (the Shatt al Arab) that spilled into the Persian Gulf and was claimed by both Iran and

Iraq. He also wanted to stop Iran from spreading its Islamic Revolution to Iraq threatening his power.



☀ Iran's Islamic Revolution: a new leader in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, intended to transform Iran into a pure Islamic state. His wanted to eliminate all Western popular culture in his country. Movies and music were not allowed and women were ordered to cover themselves from head to toe when they were in public.

☀ Saddam Hussein's strategy called for a quick knockout blow, concentrating on Iran's oil facilities. Instead, Iraq's invasion stalled. Iran counterattacked but lacked the strength to defeat Saddam's impressive military.



☀ For the next eight years, the war seesawed back and forth. Iraq had an advantage in air power, missiles, and even chemical weapons.



☀ Iran could count on millions of dedicated volunteers. Tens of thousands of Iranian boys were killed in human-wave attacks on Iraqi positions, often with plastic keys to "heaven" dangling from their necks. They were told if they were killed in the war, they would have their key to heaven and directly go there because they were fighting for their religion; they would be martyrs (individual who sacrifices his or her life in order to further a cause or belief for many).

☀ During the war, the administration of President Ronald Reagan remained officially neutral. American uncertainty towards which side to support was summed up by Henry Kissinger when the American statesman remarked that "it's a pity they [Iran and Iraq] both can't lose."

☀ The United States started helping Iraq when Iran began attacking Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. The United States extended Iraq credit to buy advanced American weapons and shared military intelligence.



☀ President Ronald Reagan decided that the United States "could not afford to allow Iraq to lose the war to Iran", and that the United States "would do whatever was necessary to prevent Iraq from losing the war with Iran."

☀ By the time Iran and Iraq agreed to a cease-fire in 1988, the war had claimed more than one million lives. Iraq had gained the upper hand on the battlefield in the final months of the conflict, in part through the use of chemical weapons, but neither side could claim victory.

☀ The United States looked on as Iraq used chemical weapons on the Iranians. President Ronald Reagan and his aides were desperate to make sure Iraq did not lose and overlooked the use of these "weapons of mass destruction."

☀ The war ended when Iran accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolution for a cease-fire in August 1988.

☀ The war had huge financial consequences for Iran and Iraq. Oil exports had been disrupted and Iraq was left with serious debts to its former Arab backers. Iraq owed \$14 billion to Kuwait, which contributed to Saddam's decision to invade there in 1990. Iran's oil production has yet to fully recover from the damages of the war.

