

(U) Iraqi Commander Memoirs on Missiles (4)

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(U) Chapter IV: Call Day (2) [subhead]

(U) 1 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) Necessary measures were taken to redeploy and prepare the missiles for their mission in the western region and to make up for 10 missiles sent away for repair.

(U) The chemical detachment of the missile test group was moved to the western region and placed under the command of the Missile Operations Control Center in order to protect the units in that region.

(U) 4 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) I headed for the south, this time by car, to visit the Missile Corps units in Kuwait. The driver had put some newspapers in the car. My eye was caught by a news item in al-Qaqdisiyah newspaper saying that today marked the anniversary of the start of the Iranian aggression on 4 September 1980. So, 10 years have now elapsed since that black sedition, which evil forces had triggered and which encouraged Iran to declare a long-term war against Iraq. The same evil forces also encouraged the rulers of Kuwait to conspire against Iraq and do more harm to fraternal Iraq to increase its financial and economic burdens following its eight-year ceaseless war. I recalled a piece of poetry saying: "An injustice by kinsmen hurts more than the stab of a sword."

(U) The Zionists were angered by Iraq's victory on 18 August 1988 and by Iraq emerging from war,

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having weapons that could hit their vital installations and their war effort. Although they were pleased by the war and tried to prolong it, the Zionists were angered when Iraq emerged strong, safe, and capable of harming them if they committed aggression on the Arab nation. Therefore, they were worried and they launched a psychological and media warfare to clear the way for a direct strike against Iraq. For that purpose, they moved many of their suspect agents in the region and what happened happened.

(U) But Iraq, which was aware of the conspiracies, was planning once again to foil the spiteful Zionist schemes. President Saddam Husayn launched an initiative in the form of a message on 14 August 1990. This was to pave the way for neighborly ties with Iran and other neighboring countries in harmony with the spirit of his previous initiative of 12 August 1990 calling for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the whole of the region. But Iran did not offer anything significant to turn the Iraqi initiatives into effective agreements.

(U) That prolonged war reminds me of many martyr friends and missing in action, as well as the POW's, who were held in violation of the rules of our true religion and the international charter and treaties--friends, who served with me in the Fifth Mechanized Division in al-Basrah, from where we all took part in al-Muhammarah [Khurramshahr], Ahvaz, and Abadan battles.

(U) 7 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) We started to implement what we planned for last night. So, we moved the rest of Brigade 226 and the Second Battalion of Brigade 225 from al-Mahawil to the southern sector and we also sent 24 al-Ra'd (Luna) missiles to the same sector.

(U) I issued an order for the withdrawal of Brigade 225 from the western region to shelters around Baghdad. I also asked Brigades 223 and 224 to carry out the mission in the southern region of the country and to prepare for a strike against hostile targets in Dhahran and Buqayq.

(U) 8 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) We moved the Sixth battery of Antiaircraft Battalion 588, which was placed under our command, to protect the strategic brigades from al-Ramadi to the western sector. The battery then was placed under the command of the Operational Missile Control Center to reinforce the units protecting the operational units in the other sectors in accordance with our measures of 28 August 1990. This was not part of our direct duties but we carried it out in light of our assessment of the situation of our units in Kuwait and al-Basrah.

(U) 11 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) Once again toward Kuwait. I always wished to walk on this long road without stopping. As a small boy, I wished to go round the world by a train or bicycle. This was my dream. I wished to cross that artificial border, which only deepens enmity and separates the brothers from one another in the one homeland. Did I realize my dream when I visited green Tunisia? Tunisian poet al-Shabbi, who challenges death and scoffs at all the deceitful, says: "I tell those who want to destroy me that axes cannot destroy my edifice and that sword cannot affect my body."

(U) I was reassured about our missile units in Kuwait and I learned that all our needs were fully met. (more) 1 nov (b)(3)

(U) 15 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) Today, we drew up a plan that if war broke out, we would allow hostile military targets to enter the city of al-Khafji to strike against them along with other targets with operational al-Ra'd (Luna) missiles. I discussed with the army chief of staff other targets proposed by the Naval Force Command.

(U) We also assessed expected reactions from the US forces to the use of the Iraqi missiles, in light of information we had received from the General Military Intelligence Directorate. As a result, we offered the following proposals to abort the enemy's plans:

- (U) Night action.
- (U) Shortening the time used to make technical and tactical preparations for missile firing.
- (U) Applying certain rules in shelters and positions.
- (U) Adhering to concealment and deception rules.
- (U) Providing air protection in coordination with the air defense sectors.
- (U) Securing covers of the color of sand for all equipment.
- (U) Forming the first and the second special duty groups for the western region and Kuwait respectively to provide the necessary camouflage.
- (U) Manufacturing camouflaged launchers.
- (U) Carrying out other plans to confuse the enemy and foil its plans.

(U) On this day, 15 September 1990, we distributed missile units to army corps, and we asked battalions to give support to the army corps as follows:

- (U) The Third Battalion of Brigade 225 without the al-Ra'd (Luna) battery and the First Battalion of Brigade 226 without al-Tariq (Astras) radar will extend support to the 3d Army Corps.
- (U) The First Battalion of Brigade 225 with the (Luna) battery and the Second Battalion of Brigade 226 will support the 4th Army Corps.
- (U) The Second Battalion of Brigade 225 (Luna) and the Third Battalion of Brigade 226 (Astras) will support the 6th Army Corps.

(U) We also defined these units' priorities as follows:

- (U) Hafar al-Batin-al-Salimi.
- (U) Ra's al-Sabiyah.
- (U) al-Manaqish.
- (U) Al-Wafrah-al-Nuwaysib.

(U) These measures were taken after we discussed the instructions of the army chief of staff.

(U) On 16 September 1990, I finished my analysis of the information, which was provided to us by the General Military Intelligence Directorate. The information quoted the US forces as saying that the Iraqi missiles took 15 minutes to be launched and that the US Air Force could destroy them within that time limit. This what Schwarzkopf mentioned in his memoirs for 19 January 1991, when he said that the launching operation needed from 30 to 60 minutes. Of course, he was inaccurate.

(U) I read his memoirs, which were translated into Arabic. He said that Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan had learned from the Egyptians that the Iraqi launcher did not take more than 60 minutes while Schwarzkopf said, according to his intelligence sources, that it took only 30 minutes. How silly this information is! In 1993, I discovered from the questions posed by the inspection teams and from Schwarzkopf's memoirs that the enemy erred in locating our positions by scores of kilometers.

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(U) I told the Operations Department that from 35 to 40 minutes were needed to prepare for a strike by al-Husayn missile. But if a technical failure took place during preparation, the process would take about 60 minutes. In this case, the electric system should be switched off and it could not be switched on again before the elapse of at least two hours. As a result, the system should be moved into the shelter but not before half an hour to give the gyroscopic devices enough time to cool off. We may expose devices to danger while trying to secure the safety of the launcher in emergency cases. I also explained similar issues related to al-Ra'd and al-Tariq missiles and the

fixed bases of the strategic missiles.

(U) A specialized committee studied the Zionist enemy's capability of carrying out an air or missile strike against our bases immediately after an Iraqi military strike. The study was conducted in response to our demand after we discussed the sites of the new shelters.

(U) The committee said that the enemy missile retaliation would take from 30 to 40 minutes and its air retaliation would take from 40 to 50 minutes.

(U) So, we tried to shorten the time by holding more training, and we asked the units to give only 35 minutes to al-Husayn missile and 15 minutes to the operational missiles and to shorten the time used to enter the positions with the minimum quantity of equipment and change the shelters and positions. We also banned the use of wireless equipment during these activities, stressing the need to withdraw immediately after the moment of firing, using no vehicles. We said that the most important part of these activities was the launchers and the missiles. Therefore, we banned the entry of any other equipment. We also relied on night action and other measures to secure protection, camouflage, and concealment, including the painting of equipment with a special paint.

(U) In order to install the camouflage bases in the western region as early as possible, I requested the Electric Mechanized Engineering Directorate to carry out this duty quickly.

(U) The army chief of staff welcomed our measures and asked for their implementation. I informed this to the corps and missile units on the same night.

(U) 17 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) I tried to find a more effective way to fill missiles with fuel, asking a technical committee to do the work. An appropriate way was actually worked out. As a result, this process took only 30 minutes. I thanked the committee for its efforts.

(U) 20 September 1990 [subhead]

(U) I should congratulate Staff Lieutenant General Husayn Rashid, assistant to the army chief of staff, on assuming his new post as army chief of staff. His former post was occupied by Staff Lieutenant General Sultan Hashim Ahmad, who became assistant to the army chief of staff for operations.

(U) Today, we sent 22 Luna missiles from al-Taji area north of Baghdad to the south to reinforce our missiles in Kuwait. (more) 1 nov (b)(3)

(U) No measure was taken regarding the Saudi territory maps that we ordered on 29 August. There was a problem. The Military Intelligence had not drawn up military maps for the Arab countries at a time when it had maps and information of the whole world.

(U) This sharply contrasted with those standing in the same trench with Iraq's enemies, and I was filled with pain and bitterness.

(U) Once again, I was obliged to write to the Operations Department, explaining that what had been done by the Military Survey Directorate could not be relied on and that if it had no other capabilities, it should have clarified it so that we could rely on our own efforts.

(U) I urged the committee of experts charged with checking coordinates to provide accurate information after I secretly prepared a list of targets and other points.

(U) The coordinates could not be checked for they were not near the border but in the depth.

(U) I and the Military Survey Directorate chief discussed the issue with the assistant to the army chief of staff and found out ways to solve the problem.

(U) In the evening, I held a meeting to study the results of the checking of the Iraqi al-Nida' launcher.

(U) In fact, this launcher is not as flexible as the foreign-made one called TIL, which stands for transportation, installation, and launching.

(U) Al-Nida' launcher, however, helped us intensify the firing but was not suitable for tactical maneuvering because it failed to meet transportation, installation, and launching requirements. What was even more dangerous was that it was loaded on the site in conflict with my orders to shorten the time used for the entry into the position. Moreover, checking the missiles by actually installing and preparing them technically before being taken to their launching site, needed launchers and other complicated processes.

(U) We submitted the results of the checking to the MIO, which started tests on the issue of flexibility that we had proposed for these launchers. We also asked for increasing the number to six launchers. As a result of many technical problems, I decided to use these launchers only in the south, which enjoys many natural elevations suitable for that purpose.

(U) 22 October 1990 [subhead]

(U) We started the exercises today in the western region of the country, which would be our principal operations field. In the evening, I was very busy issuing orders and responding to others. The missile attack on the Zionist entity started after the enemy carried out a treacherous strike against beloved Iraq. Our missiles rained on important military targets and other targets feeding the enemy's war machine. I was pleased by the success of the mission.

(U) These were the details of a battle by telephone, which we applied for training purposes between our headquarters on the one hand and Brigades 223 and 224 and the other concerned units on the other.

(U) Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud Wahib, an officer of our directorate headquarters, entered my room and shook hands with me, congratulated me on the success of the exercise, and handed me some observations. I imagined for a while that the Arab masses had come into my room chanting for Iraq and its brave leader Saddam.

(U) 1 November 1990 [subhead]

(U) The president's secretary discussed with us the issue of the accuracy of the maps, and we started an intensive campaign with the Military Survey Directorate to improve the maps. It took a long time and a great effort to achieve a higher degree of accuracy. Today, I also studied a file on an air exercise, which made me redistribute efforts and materials. I ordered that two thirds of the missile units be sent to the Kuwait sector and one third be kept outside that sector.

(U) 15 November 1990 [subhead]

(U) We received information saying that today was the date for the so-called Dark Night air strike, that the United States might carry out an air strike using nuclear-like bombs, and that the Zionist entity would attack Iraqi missile positions in the northern and western regions and carry out air raids on our units in Kuwait.

(U) The matter appeared to be a provocation or a psychological warfare, but I took the necessary measures to change the shelters and prepare the strategic duties.

(U) We were ready to confront the enemy whether it came in a dark or bright night. The challenge was a big one, and we were at the level of the challenge and capable to retaliation.

(U) 29 November 1990 [subhead]

(U) The General Intelligence provided us with a list of vital targets of the hostile concentrations in different depths of Saudi territories--an issue which we discussed with the intelligence until 18 January 1991.

(U) The Security Council, which had become an American council, issued two resolutions against Iraq on 29 and 30 November, and our directorate issued an order on that day that the reserve Fourth al-Ra'd missiles battalion be formed.

(U) 1 December 1990 [subhead]

(U) Our car left Baghdad for al-'Amarah city in Maysan Governorate. I was listening to Koranic verses from the radio. Today marks the Martyr's Day, that painful day on which the Iranian side killed 600 Iraqi POW's after tying their hand behind their backs during the al-Busaytin battle on 1 December 1981, in conflict with international law banning the killing of POW's in military fields and calling for moving them from military fields to protect them from danger.

(U) We arrived in al-'Amarah late, and we checked preparations for the following day to start them as early as possible. Next day, I attended a test on the accuracy of al-Husayn missile in order to revise firing chart and new Brigade 223. The firing test was successful, God be praised.

(U) 4 December 1990 [subhead]

(U) Finally, our efforts yielded fruits and we issued the al-Husayn missile firing chart. It was the second revised edition, which I had asked for four times to correct certain the errors. I do not know if any missile unit in the world used such a number of draft charts.

(U) I came back home late in the night, and I was busy preparing a special poison-gas-proof chamber, which was called the chemical chamber. I also made special gas masks of cloth. The children used to call it the chemical chamber. If I asked one of them about something, he would say it was in the chemical chamber.

(U) We expected an imminent aggression by the Zionist enemy with chemical weapons.

(U) 9 December 1990 [subhead]

(U) The General Military Intelligence Directorate released new information on the Zionist entity's preparations to confront the Iraqi missiles. The Zionist plan included assessments that the Iraqi missiles were able to circumvent the antimissile weapons and that it was necessary to launch a lightning preemptive strike against the Iraqi launching pads during launching preparations.

(U) [Description of source: Independent newspaper often critical of government policies. Internet version is also available at <http://www.alarab-alyawm.com.jo>]

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