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Central  
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Iran-Iraq: The Chemical Warfare Issue ..... 9

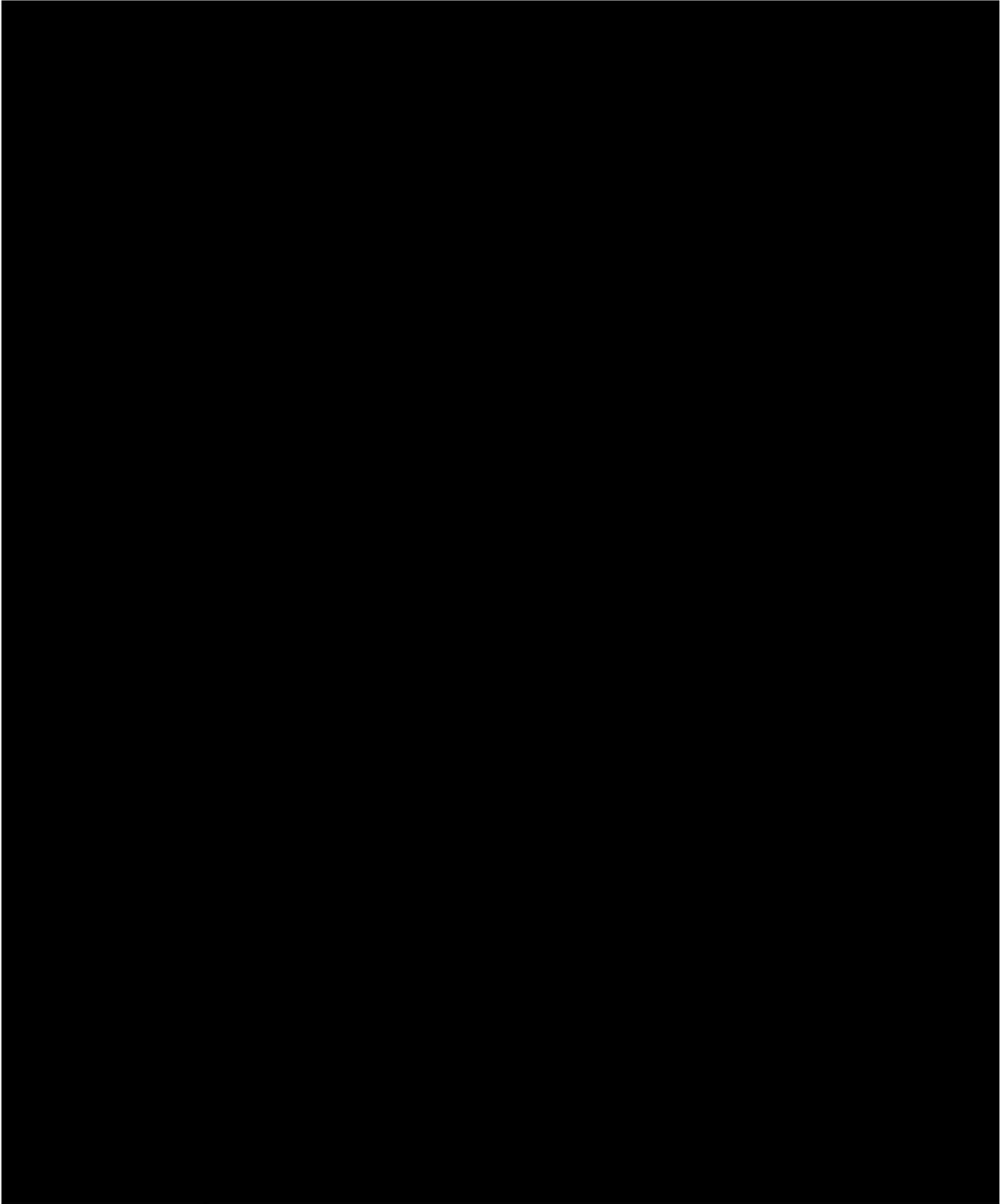


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**Special Analysis**

**IRAN-IRAQ:**

**The Chemical Warfare Issue**

*Recent fighting in northeastern Iraq has underscored the regular, recurring use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war and suggests that such activity will continue to increase. Chemical attacks on either country's major cities are unlikely under current circumstances, but the risk is growing that smaller population centers might be attacked with chemical weapons. If such attacks failed to evoke international sanctions, the chance of chemical strikes on larger cities would increase significantly.*

The Iraqis have the largest stockpile of chemical weapons in the region, including mustard and nerve agents that can be delivered by air or artillery strikes.

**Battlefield Use Increasing**

Baghdad and Tehran apparently believe chemical weapons are tactically useful and effective. The increasing availability of chemical munitions and experience in their use are likely to encourage both sides to employ chemicals more frequently and on a wider scale.

**Prospects for a Chemical War of the Cities**

Neither side is likely to initiate a chemical war of the cities in the near term. There is no evidence that either Iran or Iraq has developed chemical warheads for Scud missiles, but that possibility cannot be ruled out. Baghdad's success in developing chemical bombs and

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[REDACTED]

artillery shells suggests it could produce a crude chemical warhead for its Scuds, and Tehran might have obtained foreign assistance in producing chemical warheads for its surface-to-surface missiles. Each side has the capability to conduct chemical airstrikes against major cities [REDACTED]

A strategic breakthrough by Iran in the ground war would be the scenario most likely to drive Iraq to chemical attacks on Iran's major cities. Such attacks might provoke Iran to retaliate in kind against Baghdad or Karkuk, but Tehran probably would refrain from doing so initially—hoping for widespread international condemnation of, and possible sanctions against, Iraq [REDACTED]

Iraq probably would use chemical weapons in a battle for a major Iraqi city such as Al Basrah or As Sulaymaniyah if Baghdad believed Iranian forces were on the verge of seizing control. Unless residents were evacuated or fled, large numbers of civilians could become victims of chemical agents. [REDACTED]

In the near term, civilian chemical casualties probably will rise as a result of the gradual increase in the frequency and intensity of chemical attacks on smaller cities close to major battles or military targets [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]