

**Strategic Horizons**  
**Periodical issued by the Department of Political Studies**

Editorial Board:

Dr. Qais Muhammad Nouri

Abd al-Wahab Abd al-Sitar al-Qasab

Dr. Zafar Nazim Sulaiman

Second Edition  
1999

Spring

Research published reflects the opinions of the authors

## **Strategic Horizons**

### **Correcting Myths About the Gulf War**

Stephen Bourqe

Translation by Staff General Abd al-Wahab al-Qasab

The Hustle of the Battle can be Harmful to Highly Sophisticated Technology

Staff General Tariq Mahmoud Shukri

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## Introduction

In the past, the proverb states that one's rights are what enemies acknowledge. We would like to add that we are pursuing our rights regardless of the reactions of our enemies, whether they agree with us or not. That being said, if the enemy acknowledges our rights, its acknowledgment will be additional proof for the legitimacy of our rights. This fact was crystal clear for the editorial board of the "Strategic Horizons". I obtained an article by the American military analyst and historian, Mr. Stephen A. Bourque. The article was entitled: "Correcting Myths about the Persian Gulf War" and was published in the "*The Middle East Journal*" [Volume 51, Number 4, Autumn 1997]. The author uncovers many facts concerning the biggest armed confrontation in the mother of all battles (The First Gulf War). The Western media outlets tried to surround these facts with misinformation and fabrication, especially those facts concerning the armed confrontation between the Iraqi forces of the Republican Guard and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps. Also, these facts include the role of the British Armed Forces in the aforementioned battle. The author, Stephen A. Bourque, has described the aforementioned armed confrontation as the Battle of 73 Easting. This description is widely used in U.S. military literature. The author is relying on the U.S. documents related to the Battle of 73 Easting, such as the Warfare newspaper, the Analysis of the Battlefield, and military briefings. He stated that the aforementioned battle displayed the values of esprit de corps, courage and sacrifice in the Iraqi military forces during the heavy fighting. In the light of that description, the author is correcting all misinformation and fabrication that the Western media outlets are propagating to the world. The author has emphasized that Iraqi soldiers possess motivation, dedication, persistence and military spirit to fight their enemies to the last breath they have. In addition, he highlighted the outcome of the military training given to the Iraqi soldiers in their preparation for the aforementioned battle. For that reason, the editorial board of the Strategic Horizons magazine has decided to correct all misinformation and fabrication disseminated by the media outlets, and illustrate the truthful facts to our sincere readers. Also, we dedicate our efforts to those heroes who served in the forces of the Republican Guard and the Iraq military, in general. This effort is to commemorate the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of 73 Easting, which will be published in the second edition of the Strategic Horizons magazine. I have delegated one of our editors to translate the article and a competent Iraqi military analyst, Staff General Tariq Mahmoud Shukri, to critically and rationally analyze what U.S. military historian, Mr. Stephen A. Bourque, stated in his article. Our military analyst will provide our sincere readers with the Iraqi military's perspective on all the information stated in the article.

The article has provoked many questions about the impact of modern technology on the battlefield; the vulnerability of modern technology to jamming operations in the midst of heavy fighting. Mr. Stephen A. Bourque entitled his article: "Correction of False Information about the Gulf War". On the other hand, Staff General Tariq Mahmoud Shukri entitled his article: "The Hustle of the Battle Can Be Harmful to Highly Sophisticated Technology". He was able to illustrate important facts excerpted from the aforementioned armed conflict. He did it in a very professional and intellectual manner. In his article, the readers will find many learned lessons and positive perspectives from the Battle of 73 Easting.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Strategic Horizons magazine aims to strengthen the strategic knowledge of its sincere readers, in depth. This is our continuous mission. May God bless us with success!

Editorial Board

[TC: Pages 5-20 contain an Arabic translation of this article written in English: Bourque, Stephen A. "Correcting Myths about the Persian Gulf War: The Last Stand of the Tawakalna." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Autumn, 1997): 566-583. Due to copyright reasons, the English text of this article has not been reproduced in this CRRC record. The article is available on JSTOR.]

[TC: The following pages contain a commentary on Borque's article that has been translated from Arabic]  
**The Hustle of the Battle Can Be Harmful to Highly Sophisticated Technology**

## Introduction

1. Before commenting on the article, "Correction of False Information About the Gulf War: The last resistance given by the *Tawklina 'Ala Allah Corps*," by the author Stephen A. Bourque, we have to give some brief information about the author and the academic sources he used to write his article. There is no doubt that this brief information will illustrate the level of credibility and trustworthiness that we can give to the author.

Mr. Stephen A. Bourque is an Adjunct Professor of History at Moorpark College, located in Moorpark City, in the state of California, United States of America. This paper is based on his forthcoming book, *Jayhawk: The VII Corps during the Persian Gulf War*, scheduled for publication by the U.S. Army Center of Military History. In the past, Mr. Bourque provided a version of this paper to be presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Valley History Conference, 17-19 October 1996. He excerpted his information from original documents and after-action reports of independent military units from the news bulletins of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps. It is worth noting that, unless otherwise noted, primary documents and unit after-action reports are located in the VII Corps After-Action Report concerning the Battle of 73 Easting, located at the Combined Arms Center Historical Archives, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, United States of America.

2. What misinformation and fabrication does the author want to correct? The author already stated them in the beginning of this article, highlighting the following aspects:
  - a. The ground warfare was a relatively easy military campaign, but it was highly sophisticated.
  - b. This military campaign completely destroyed the Iraqi Army.
  - c. The Iraqi Army did not fight the Coalition forces, but surrendered without any resistance when the Coalition forces advanced into Iraqi territory.

The author explained in his article all the facts related to the aforementioned aspects. He was able to prove the opposite, concerning the aforementioned aspect. He stated that he was not defending the negative stereotypes about the Iraqi Army and praising its courageous resistance to the U.S. forces. In fact, when there was an armed confrontation between the Iraqi forces and the U.S. forces, the American forces avoided such confrontation by all means, especially in the Battle of 73 Easting. In this particular battle, it was a coincidence that the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps fought the Iraqi forces because the Iraqi forces utilized the element of surprise to attack the Americans. The details of this battle will be mentioned later in the article.

In this article, the author tries to respond to those voices that are vociferating within the United States and most European and Asian countries, in addition to other parts of the world. Those voices were calling to stop the war. They highlighted that the U.S. Army did not fight and engage with the Iraqi Army, for the aforementioned aspects. The author described these aspects as false pretenses and claims. It is worth noting that the 'Curse of Vietnam' will follow the United States into every war they get involved in. Regardless of the positive outcome of the war and decisive victory for the United States, the subconscious minds of the American people and the world public opinion cannot be ignored or deleted from people's minds and thoughts concerning the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. This defeat will stay as a source of shame and humiliation for the United States until the Day of Judgment. It is a similar shame and humiliation to the Italians when they withdrew their military forces from World War II.

... [to be continued on the next page]

..... Consequently, the Italian military was stigmatized as an incompetent military force, which was a heavy burden on the Germans. This negative impression was instilled in people's minds and souls. It will never go away. History has no mercy.

The author has faithfully stated the truth, but his intentions are not honest. Basically, the author is trying to employ the heavy fighting and heroic resistance displayed by the Iraqi Army while they were militarily confronting the U.S. forces. He is trying to give an impression that the U.S. military fought furious battles and confronted tough resistance from the Iraqi Army, which were not reported in the Western propaganda campaign. The views of the author give credit to the heroism and military honor of the Iraqi Army for its resistance and confrontation with the enemy to defend its sovereign territory and the Iraqi people. In fact, the Iraqi Army was willing to resist its enemy to the last bullet and the last soldier in its confrontation with a superior enemy in number of personnel and sophisticated weapons systems.

3. Stephen A. Bourque has stated something new when he illustrated the Battle of 73 Easting. In fact, there were many writers who wrote about it in the past. These views were highlighted in a book entitled: *Triumph without Victory: The History of the Persian Gulf War*. Its first edition was published in 1992 by Time Books, [Illegible] House, New York, U.S.A. So the book was published four years before the aforementioned article was published. The Battle of 73 Easting was stated under the title: "The Battle of the Highway 8". This section of the book stated in depth details about this battle including all losses inflicted on the United States, in addition to the state of confusion and chaos within the U.S. military during its armed confrontation with the Iraqi military forces. Because of the aforementioned confusion and chaos, the U.S. military forces were in a state of panic and fear when they confronted the Iraqi forces unexpectedly, especially right after they left the Al-Dhabab region. As a result of this unexpected confrontation, the U.S. military forces had to withdraw out of the shooting range of the Iraqi weapons.

Unfortunately, every author who writes about the aforementioned battle will excerpt from the American sources or from American and European writers. It is a pity to say that the Battle of 73 Easting did not inspire Arab authors and writers to write about it. More ironically, Iraqi authors and writers have not tried to challenge all the false information and claims stated in the Western media outlets until now. From my current position at the House of Wisdom publishing agency, I call upon the intellectual and military institutions to appoint one author to challenge the aforementioned false information; or to form a committee to author a book that can cover all the details in the aforementioned battle, especially since this battle took place approximately ten years ago. As long as most eyewitnesses are still alive and still serve in the Iraqi military, they can assist in this intellectual effort before this battle falls into the abyss of oblivion.

4. In light of this matter, we are going to discuss and analyze the Battle of 73 Easting in accordance with all the information stated in the article itself, not from any other sources. The main purpose of highlighting the aspects of the Battle of 73 Easting or the Battle of Highway 8, is to assess all the facts and conclusions objectively, so the aforementioned battle can be understood by the readers without misinformation or fabrication. I have confidence in every specialized reader and expert assessing this battle to discover very easily how Stephen A. Bourque described the battle in his literature. In fact, he intentionally concealed many facts. It is irrational that the U.S. forces fought a furious battle with the Iraqi forces and the losses on the U.S. side were very limited. Let alone the fact that Iraqi forces fought the U.S. forces with the intention of fighting to the last soldier and the last bullet. This view proves what was stated previously in paragraph (3). In the light of this fact, we are able to say with confidence that the author has concealed many facts. Accordingly, we will be able to see some hidden facts between the lines, when the author vaguely goes through some events very quickly for the purpose of distorting the facts or eradicating them. In addition, the author was influenced by .... [to be continued on the next page]

.... American counts that focused on the heroism of the U.S. forces when they confronted the Iraqi forces. The truth is the opposite of what the author has highlighted in his literature. If we take into consideration the element of superiority of the U.S. military and the circumstances surrounding the battlefield at that time, the U.S. authors and writers would not act so brave or would not commit any false pretenses. The U.S. arrogant behavior and false pretenses cannot be seen as a source of pride and superiority for the U.S. military forces. On the contrary, it is seen as a source of pride and superiority for the Iraqi forces. If the Iraqi forces had the same level of the U.S. superiority and dominance, they would have completely eradicated the U.S. military forces from existence. In the battlefield, the Iraqi forces did not lose their military capability and strength due to their ferocious battles with the U.S. coalition forces. It is worth noting that the Iraqi forces were able to protect their withdrawing forces from the hostile acts of the coalition forces and prevent them from interfering and influencing the course of the Iraqi withdrawal operations.

**Size of Military Forces on Both Sides**

**5. The size of our military forces:**

- a. The *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps mainly stated in the aforementioned article as illustrated in its headline. According to the information stated in the article, the Corps consisted of the following:

14,000	Soldiers	42	Mortars
220	Tanks	126	Artillery
284	Infantry fighting vehicles (Bradleys)	18	Projectile weapons (Tubes)

- b. We should take into consideration the circumstances of the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Corps from the period of its participation in the Battle of Kuwait through its armed confrontation with the U.S. forces at 73 Easting. There is no doubt that what the Corps confronted during that period definitely had a negative impact on its fighting capabilities and performance. Here are some examples:

- i. Its participation in the Battle of Kuwait resulted in many losses.
- ii. The Corps moved from Kuwait for the purpose of protecting the forces of the Republican Guard at 73 Easting.
- iii. The Corps was exposed to 42 days of continuous airstrikes from the coalition forces.
- iv. The Corps did not have its defensive position prepared beforehand. All of its defensive positions were hastily prepared due to the nature of the urgent mobilization and the critical mission it had. In addition, the Corps was mainly a mechanized formation, which had a limited number of infantry personnel in comparison to the regular infantry corps.
- v. The Corps was deprived from the coverage of all types of the air defense and support, including helicopters, because the air dominance was possessed by the enemy.
- vi. When the Corps engaged with the enemy, it was exposed to the enemy’s airstrikes, including missiles, artillery rounds, enhanced cluster bombs and laser-guided bombs (LGB) that were utilized against tanks and shelters.

**6. The size of the opposing forces:**

- c. In addition to the British 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Corps, information excerpted from the article itself stated that the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps consisted of following: .... [to be continued on the next page]

142,661	Soldiers	568	Artillery
1,487	Tanks	132	Projectile weapons (tubes)
1,384	Infantry fighting vehicles	8	Rocket launchers
300	Mortars	242	Anti-tanks helicopter

Consequently, the opposing forces were superior and dominant in terms of numbers of personnel and military armaments.

- d. When we take a look at the circumstances surrounding the opposing enemy, we observe the following aspects:
- i. The opposing forces were not exhausted in previous warfare operations. On the contrary, they were well-rested when they deployed to the battlefield with full gear.
  - ii. The opposing forces possessed the complete coverage of air defense, so they were not subjected to any sort of airstrikes and artillery attacks.
  - iii. The opposing forces were supported by aircrafts, helicopters, missiles, projectiles, artilleries and mortars when they engaged with the Iraqi forces.
  - iv. The opposing forces possessed sophisticated equipment such as global positioning systems, surveillance satellites, radar systems, laser-guided weapons and thermal sights, in addition to smart weapons and other additional advantages.

## 7. Conclusion

- a. The opposing enemy had a military superiority and dominance that assisted it in achieving victory, which was indicated in abstract numbers. This level of military superiority and dominance should enable the opposing forces to penetrate the Iraqi defensive lines and defeat them in one day. In fact, the opposing forces possessed approximately sixfold to tenfold in military superiority. If one military force possesses from onefold to threefold in military superiority over their enemy, they should be able to wage a successful offensive attack. In the battlefield, the opposing forces were very cautious and confused while executing their offensive attacks. As a result, they fought for several days.
- b. The opposing enemy relied on sophisticated technology and smart weapons rather than the minds of its personnel. So the opposing forces were profoundly attached to these advantages. When the sophisticated technology and smart weapons broke down for some reason, they were a completely disabled force. They could not do anything to fix the issue or find solutions for the operational problems. The article confirmed this fact while describing the course of the battle.

## 8. Comment

The level of military superiority and dominance that was achieved by the United States, as was previously illustrated in the size of both military forces and all circumstances surrounding our armed forces, in terms of our lack of air defense coverage and sophisticated technology, would not give the U.S. military forces any positive feedback or assessment for what they achieved in the battlefield. What the U.S. military accomplished in the battlefield was actually far less than what was expected of them as a superior military force. On the other side, the Iraqi Armed Forces stood adamantly against the opposing forces with heroism and courage. They were able to fight the opposing forces for four days, as the article stated. Under such condition, if any military forces confront superior military forces, they will have only two options: surrender or withdraw. On the contrary, our military forces decided to fight the opposing forces ferociously. In spite of sophisticated technology and smart weapons, the U.S. military forces indicated signs of hesitation, confusion and anxiety.

## Mobilization Tactics

9. Any person who reads the article very carefully will find the author assessed the course of the battle and its events in accordance with official U.S. documents, including operational status reports and war news bulletins. These official documents were generated by the coalition forces, not Iraqi military forces. So the readers will find information related to the Iraqi forces that implemented the correct mobilization tactics to set its defensive lines. They implemented the following:
- a. Setting up a security zone in front of the defensive line. All types of armed forces, patrols and barriers are placed in this security zone. These Iraqi forces confronted the enemy and hindered its ground advancement. They were able to inflict some damage on the opposing forces and had sufficient time to report these operations to the central command. In fact, they actually gave their central command the early warning for the enemy's potential attacks.
  - b. The Iraqi forces implemented the correct defensive tactics in the Mechanized Corps. It is worth noting that the infantry forces placed themselves in the correct defensive positions. They dug trenches for personnel and weapons; placed personnel transport vehicles in shelters. These operational tactics assigned to provide an additional firepower. The armored brigade was placed behind the defensive line in order to provide an offensive power for the Iraqi forces.
  - c. The Iraqi forces defended their positions and resisted the enemy's offensive attacks. As a result, they inflicted some damage on the enemy. And then they conducted different types of attacks on the enemy in return. These attacks were conducted by the reserve and active duty personnel, who had previously prepared to execute similar missions when there was a need to do such a thing.
  - d. The Iraqi forces utilized their artillery and projectile weapons effectively and efficiently to attack the opposing forces. When the opposing forces were within firing range, the Iraqi forces applied intense firepower against the enemy. The opposing forces were subjected to continuous and concentrated firepower from the Iraqi defensive forces. This firepower would increase while the opposing forces got closer to the Iraqi defensive lines. It is worth noting that the defensive firepower was executed in accordance with the operational plan, which inflicted some damage on the enemy. As a result, the enemy had to retreat to the rear for the purpose of re-arrangement of its forces.
  - e. After the Iraqi defensive units withdrew from the security zone, they were placed in the sector that Iraqi forces needed to defend and protect. This was the required mobilization tactics as stated in the page of defensive operation.

## 10. Comment

The aforementioned mobilization tactics display that the Iraqi military ranks (officers and soldiers) possessed mature operational tactics and principles endorsed by any military institution. Also, the Iraqi forces proved they had the ability to utilize all of their available weapons systems effectively and efficiently. In fact, the Iraqi Army had used all tactics that were approved by the Iraqi Army Staff College and the War College. Their success in the battlefield indicated that the Iraqi military training was very useful in preparing their units and personnel to confront enemies. Their success would not have been achieved without good training and exercises. Under such conditions, all personnel were able to execute their duties without the need to receive advanced instructions or continuous directions. The author literally indicated that the Iraqi forces implemented the correct mobilization tactics when he was talking about the battle of the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division. The division commander described this battle as ..... [to be continued on the next page]

...the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division. Good mobilization is as important as modern technology and equipment. So the author is referring to what the Iraqi forces implemented to confront and resist the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division. The proper mobilization of the Iraqi forces in the battlefield had neutralized the modern technology used by the U.S. military forces.

### The U.S. Military Forces: Confusion and Chaos

11. The Arabic proverb states: “From your own words, I can prove you wrong.” This proverb is relevant to what we are about to explain in this paragraph. The author clearly confessed that the U.S. military forces were confused and hesitant when they confronted the Iraqi forces. This article was written by an American writer who illustrated this truthful fact. The American writer seemed to distort the facts related to the spirit of the defeat of the U.S. military forces. Finally, the truth came out to the world, which is similar to the sun when it rises in the sky. The American writer could not conceal this truth. It is worth noting that when the U.S. military forces were confronted with Iraqi resistance forces, whether they were reconnaissance units or defensive units, the U.S. military seemed to be confused and uncertain about what they should be doing. There was no single armed confrontation between both sides without the U.S. military forces displaying signs of confusion and uncertainty. Stephen A. Bourque was very straightforward in his article. In fact, this is very strange. Military superiority is supposed to give strength, confidence and the fighting spirit to those who possess it. Anyway, I will not assess anything that was not mentioned in the article. So I will excerpt statements from the article to support my line of thought. What I am going to mention is just a small piece of the whole picture.
- a. In the battle of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade, in the sector of responsibility belonging to the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade, the author stated that the armed confrontations caused confusion to the U.S. military forces due to casualties they sustained from all directions.
  - b. In the battle of the U.S. 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, the article stated: “Due to the confusion and misguidance, the U.S. 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, unintentionally confronted an Iraqi Mechanized Regiment after they crossed the road. As a result, the Iraqi regiment was able to destroy two armored vehicles, kill one soldier and wound five others. So the U.S. commander decided to withdraw his vehicles to the rear, as a result of his losses.”
  - c. Regarding the U.S. 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, the article literally stated: “The U.S. 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, lost in the battlefield after leaving the road due to deep darkness.”
  - d. One paragraph in the article indicated how much confusion and misguidance the U.S. military forces had on the battlefield. The author stated that the Iraqis did not turn on the engines of their tanks during the offensive attack conducted by the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division. So the Iraqi tanks did not appear on the thermal sights equipment mounted on the U.S. armored vehicles because the Iraqi tanks did not generate any heat to be tracked. As a result, the U.S. tanks rushed forward onto the battlefield, leaving the Iraqi tanks behind them. At the time, the Iraqi tanks, rocket launchers and infantry seized the opportunity to attack the U.S. tanks from the rear flank. In addition, the U.S. tanks mistakenly shot at friendly tanks that were moving in front of them because they thought the tanks were Iraqi ones. The friendly fire caused some casualties within the U.S. coalition forces. When the armed confrontation ended for the U.S. forces, the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Division discovered that five tanks and four armored vehicles were destroyed by friendly fire. As a result, six soldiers were killed, and 30 others were wounded.

- e. The same thing happened to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 32<sup>nd</sup> Armor (4-32 Armor). The article states “After this unit slightly advanced in the battlefield, it shot down one of its armored vehicle. As a result, two soldiers were killed and two others were wounded.”
- f. The same thing happened to the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Combat Aviation Brigade, 3 AD). The article states: “While the U.S. was conducting a sweeping operation on the southern flank, it collided with an Iraqi battalion in the region. This Iraqi unit was in a defensive position. After one hour of military engagement, the U.S. unit did not accomplish its objectives. Consequently, the unit commander decided to withdraw his troops thereafter. Under such confusion and misguidance, one of the U.S. tanks shot a friendly infantry-fighting vehicle (Bradley). As a result, one soldier was wounded and another vehicle was shot by friendly fire. In the midst of that confusion, the Iraqi unit was able to directly hit nine infantry-fighting vehicles out of thirteen vehicles belonging to the aforementioned unit. The total losses for the U.S. unit were eleven infantry-fighting vehicles, including those vehicles that were shot by friendly fire. The casualties included two killed and twelve wounded personnel.
- g. Finally, the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division engaged with the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade. The article states: “In the midst of confusion and misguidance, the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade was able to inflict some damage on the U.S. unit. As a result, four (M-1) tanks were destroyed and four U.S. soldiers were wounded. The U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade commander Colonel [Daniel] Zanini synchronized his airstrikes and artillery attacks with the aforementioned engagement with the Iraqi forces. The commander wanted to increase the firepower in order to decrease the state of confusion and misguidance among his units.

## 12. Comment

The aforementioned examples in the paragraph (11) are just like a needle in a haystack. We are able to refer to so many examples similar to those already mentioned. Definitely, the author, Stephen A. Bourque, has concealed a lot of information related to the First Gulf War. The Arabic proverb states: “It is not everything we know, we will talk about it.” If the author mentioned all of the truth, the ‘Curse of Vietnam’ would be proven. Consequently, the author did his best to distort the facts for the purpose of proving that the U.S. military personnel were strong fighters. However, they did not display that on the battlefield because all armed confrontation must have some sort of confusion and chaos in executing combat missions. In addition, armed confrontation must have some combat issues such as interference among armed units, shooting at friendly units, sustaining casualties and losses, and withdrawing from the battlefield when the forces are facing a ferocious enemy. The aforementioned justifications meant to maintain the image of the U.S. Army as the best trained military force with sophisticated technology and smart weapons. Most battles that the U.S. military forces fought were characterized by a state of confusion, chaos, hesitation and procrastination. These elements were obviously displayed while they were fighting the Iraq military forces. These views and examples can be excerpted from the article itself, which are like a needle in a haystack. In fact, the author did not mention many facts related to the topics he addressed in his article.

## Iraqi Forces: Courageous Resistance

- 13. The author, Stephen A. Bourque, illustrated excellent examples of the courageous resistance of the Iraqi forces against the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps, more precisely, the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps, Republican Guard. Even though he did not mention the whole truth, he provided sufficient information that can support the truth about the course of the war. These truths cannot be hidden. All facts are addressed in many academic sources. However, we are obligated to excerpt our information from the article itself. We are going to illustrate different situations that the author mentioned in his article such as .... [to be continued on the next page]

- a. When the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Combat Aviation Brigade, 3 AD) was conducting a sweeping operation on the southern flank, it collided with an Iraqi battalion in the region. This Iraqi unit was in a defensive position. After one hour of military engagement, the U.S. unit did not accomplish its objectives. Consequently, the unit commander decided to withdraw his troops thereafter.
- b. Even though the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 32<sup>nd</sup> Armor (4-32 Armor) slightly advanced in the battlefield, the Iraqi defensive line was not broken.
- c. The U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division engaged with the Iraqi tanks. The article states: “The Iraqi tanks could not directly hit the U.S. (M-1) tanks from the rear and flanks because they were out of range. Consequently, the Iraqi infantry personnel courageously moved closer to attack the U.S. tanks.
- d. In a different paragraph, the article states: “Instead of pressing an offensive attack on the Iraqi forces, which was in compliance with the instructions of the central command, the Brigadier commander Colonel David S. Weisman decided to withdraw his forces to the rear; and utilize his artillery to destroy the ferocious Iraqi infantry forces.
- e. The article described the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps: “The U.S. forces executed intense offensive attacks on the Iraqi forces in such a way that the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps had no other option but to surrender or fight to the last soldier. In fact, the Iraqi Corps decided to fight to the last breath.”
- f. The battle of the Republican Guard’s security zone took one full day to clear and secure from the Iraqi forces, which consisted of 5,000 fighters, 119 tanks and 126 armored fighting vehicles. On the other side, the U.S. forces consisted of 17,000 fighters, 316 tanks and 285 armored fighting vehicles. These numbers display the level of the Iraqi superior resistance and persistence.
- g. A ferocious battle took place at 73 Easting. It was described as follows:
  - i. The U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps Commander, General Franks, ordered Colonel Don Holder, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment commander to avoid a decisive engagement with the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps because the U.S. forces did not have sufficient personnel to penetrate the Iraqi defensive lines. Consequently, the commander asked his forces to hold on to their positions.
  - ii. At 0600, on 26 February, the Iraqi infantry personnel, (T-55) tanks and fighting vehicles started to execute offensive attacks on 73 Easting. They utilized all the firepower they had, including rockets and firearms.
  - iii. The 18<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade and the 37<sup>th</sup> Armor Brigade, under the command of the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps, confronted six U.S. regiments with heavy armaments such as tanks and armored fighting vehicles, in addition to six (155-mm) artillery battalions. Despite the military superiority of the U.S. forces, the Iraqi forces did not run. On the contrary, they positioned their weapons systems and directed them toward the U.S. forces.
- h. The author described the *Center of the Line*: “The U.S. forces moved into firing positions and began to locate and shoot at the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade. Long-range tank and TOW fire, high explosive and DPICM rounds, and even COPPERHEAD rounds ravaged the Iraqi forces. The Iraqi soldiers, however, continued to fight, preventing this American battalion from advancing any farther for the next 12 hours.”

- i. In a different paragraph, the article stated about the Iraqi forces: “When they confronted the U.S. forces, they were able to inflict some serious damage and losses on the U.S. forces.”
- j. The Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade of the *Tawklna ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps stopped the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division. Despite overwhelming firepower, this American brigade had moved forward only four kilometers. That minor tactical success, however, had little effect on the battle's overall outcome.
- k. The U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade advanced through the security zone of the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade. The Iraqi brigade was similar to its counterparts in the adjacent sector. It prepared its defenses according to doctrine. Bunkers, dug-in vehicles and pre-planned fires, backed by determined soldiers, made a formidable defense. The aforementioned defensive lines were manned by brave and determined soldiers. The bravery of these men made all defensive lines stronger and more powerful.
- l. Major General Paul Funk, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division commander, issued the following orders:
  - i. For his divisional artillery to pound the Iraqi positions with all the indirect fire he had available. Almost five battalions of artillery were fired at identified and suspected targets in a nine square kilometer box. In addition, the Attack Helicopter Battalion was order to move across the forward line of U.S. troops and into the depths of the Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade’s operations zone.
  - ii. Thousands of Iraqi infantry personnel dismounted from their combat carriers. Once they were on the ground, they constructed their dug-in company strong points and prepared to use their anti-tanks rockets and RPGs to engage the attacking Americans. The Iraqi defensive lines were very thick. Major General Paul Funk, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division commander, had no soft or exposed Iraqi flanks to exploit in his attack.
- m. The U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade was better than other U.S. units when engaging with the Iraqi resistance. The article stated the following about the Iraqi resistance to the U.S. unit:
  - i. The U.S. units with their thermal sights, taking advantage of the fighting capabilities between the U.S. and Iraqi tanks in terms of the firing range, engaged with the Iraqi forces. The Republican Guard returned fire at the source of shooting. While the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade was advancing forward on the battlefield, the Iraqi soldiers came out of their hidden positions to engage with the U.S. tanks and armored fighting vehicles from a close distance.
  - ii. The Iraqi 29<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade continued resisting the U.S. attacking forces. In fact, the Iraq offensive attacks were executed by a combination of platoons, squads, mechanized infantry companies and tanks. Many of these attacks were effective to harm the left flank of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade.

14. The article ended with the following paragraphs:

- a. The Iraqi forces fought with high spirit and determination. It is worth noting that many Iraqi tanks kept their engines off in order to defeat the American thermal sights. ....[to be continued on the next page]

- b. Lt. General Frederick M. Franks, the commander of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps, described his armed conflict with the Iraqi forces: “The forces of the Iraqi Republican Guard did not run away and fought with extreme bravery.” The U.S. battle reports cited the bravery of the determined defenders of the *Tawklina ‘Ala Allah* Mechanized Corps (Republican Guard).

## 15. Comment

The best testimony any fighter can get comes from the enemy, regardless of the outcome of the armed conflict. The military forces that are able to fight with extreme bravery and dedication are willing to fight to the last soldier rather than surrender to their enemy or concede to their defeat. Even though the armed conflict was basically asymmetric warfare, the U.S. forces were definitely expected to win this conflict. For example, when the German Army lost World War II, all military forces, whether they were friends and foes, acknowledged the German Army’s extreme bravery and dedication in the battlefield. It is ironic to know that the U.S. Allied forces had feared the defeated German Army even when Germans were withdrawing their forces. This fact was stated by the commander of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps that participated in an armed confrontation with the Iraqi forces. It is worth noting that the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps fought a ferocious battle with the Iraqi forces. As previously stated in paragraph (13), the Iraqi forces were complimented for their bravery, dedication, fighting spirit, adamant resistance, formidable defensive lines, and the like. On the contrary, the U.S. military forces possessed all elements of superiority and dominance in terms of human, financial and technological resources. Despite the U.S. military superiority, they were defeated morally and spiritually. As previously stated in paragraph (14), article (b), the commander of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps highlighted the quality characteristics of the Iraqi forces. His judgment was mainly based on the operational reports submitted by his operational officers who fought the Iraqis face to face. In the light of the aforementioned official testimonies, the secret behind the outstanding performance of the Iraqi forces lies in this known formula: (Human Resources + Weapons + Equipment) x Esprit de corps. This formula explains the Iraqis’ bravery and fighting spirit on the battlefield, which equaled U.S. superior military capabilities. These superior military capabilities had been dwarfed by the Iraqi high fighting spirit, which was translated on the battlefield as bravery, dedication, adamant resistance and willingness to fight to the last soldier and the last bullet. Lt. General Frederick M. Franks, the commander of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps, stated: “The Iraqi forces did not run away and fought with extreme bravery.” Esprit de corps will play a major role in winning battles and claiming victory in the wars. This fact has been emphasized by all military leaders, including the Chinese military leader, Sun Tzu (544–496 BC), because it has been proven as an important element in modern warfare, regardless of any sophisticated technology and scientific development, including smart and precise weapons. Those who consider esprit de corps as one of the warfare principles are absolutely correct because esprit de corps is implemented as a fighting principle in military institutions around the world, to this day. This fighting principle will still be implemented in the future, regardless of any changes that can occur to the methods and means of warfare.

## Sophisticated Technology and Smart Weapons

16. No one can deny that sophisticated technology plays a major role in warfare. In fact, warfare as a life activity is profoundly attached to science and technology. In the midst warfare, human minds can be creative and innovative to offer something new to the public life thereafter. Technology has introduced a lot of methods and equipment that changed the concepts of commanding and controlling battles and wars.

...sophisticated technology and smart weapons with precise destruction capabilities. According to the author, Stephen A. Bourque, the Battle of 73 Easting proved that sophisticated technology and smart weapons do not guarantee a decisive victory in the battlefield. With everything we have in life, we also have its opposite. The warfare taught the U.S. that every weapon appearing in the market has been countered by other weapons, to make them obsolete. The best example of this view was illustrated during the course of the war between the U.S. forces and Iraqi forces, more precisely the Battle of 73 Easting, which was stated in this article.

17. Before giving more examples, I would like to refer to the nature of the terrain where the aforementioned battle took place. I think it is very important to mention it because it had an influential role on the course of events, including all elements of surprise that were associated with them. The area of engagement was an open desert, with no distinguishable terrain features. This area was distinguished in the winter months, especially during the wet season, by heavy fog being condensed in the lower grounds from early hours of the morning to the middle of the day; also during the late hours of the evening. Late in the month of February 1990 (in the middle of the winter months), the battles broke out between the U.S. forces and Iraqi forces. Due to the fall of heavy rain in the beginning of February, the U.S. forces postponed their offensive attack until they had suitable weather to utilize the Air Force and helicopters. So they decided to start their offensive attacks on 26 February 1991. The ground of the battlefield was known to be a quarry area, which was filled with many wide and deep excavations. These excavations were considered natural obstacles which prevented the opposing forces from advancing its tanks and personnel. The opposing forces were able to overcome it by taking different routes to advance forward. The nature of the terrain had a profound effect on the advancement of the opposing forces in terms of the time of the offensive attack; their ability to handle the firepower of the Iraqi resistance; and their ability to execute the operational mission. It is worth noting that the ground of the battlefield was filled with water due to the heavy rain fall. Under such conditions, the ground became so fragile that the opposing forces could not use it to advance their troops. The aforementioned aspects had imposed a strong obstacle for the enemy to advance forward and execute its offensive attack.
18. Now, let us talk about all examples related to sophisticated technology and smart weapons. We would like to know what these superior capabilities gave the U.S. forces to win the war and then how these capabilities had become a burden to them during the course of the war. Here are the examples:
  - a. The article stated: "Many Iraqi tanks kept their engines off in order to defeat the American thermal sights installed on their tanks. Once again, the Iraqi forces had not turned on their engines and were not, therefore, generating heat during the offensive attack of the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division. As a result, the Iraqi tanks did not show up on the American's vehicle-mounted thermal sights."
  - b. The article stated: "Burning vehicles and explosions 'washed out' the thermal sights and made it difficult for U.S. forces to locate Iraqi tanks."
  - c. The U.S. forces used long-range tank and TOW missiles, high explosive and DPICM rounds, and even COPPERHEAD rounds to ravage the Iraqi strong points. The Iraqi forces, however, continued to fight ferociously, preventing the U.S. forces from advancing any farther.
  - d. The article stated that the U.S. forces used M1A1 (Abrams) tanks, which were equipped with the best control and command systems, in addition to their improved armored hulls. As stated previously in paragraph (13), the Iraqi forces were able to destroy some of these tanks.

- e. The article stated that the U.S. forces hit each other with friendly fire: “The U.S. Task-Force 4-32 Armor shot up one of its own Bradley scout vehicles, killing two soldiers and wounding two more.” In fact, there were many friendly fire incidents that were previously stated in the beginning of this analytical report.
  - f. Here are some examples of how sophisticated technology failed to achieve tactical and operational missions. These examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - i. Because the area of operations designated for each unit was demarcated by only imaginary lines on the ground, units often strayed into adjacent sectors.
    - ii. The U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (Task Force 2-34 Armor) that passed through the passage lane became momentarily lost because it was dark.
  - g. We can excerpt a testimony stated by the author, Stephen A. Bourque, concerning the reliability of sophisticated technology and smart weapons. He highlighted: “The U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division's battle against the Iraqi forces illustrates that good tactics are just as important as good technology.”
19. The aforementioned examples in this analytical report concerning sophisticated technology and smart weapons are just like a needle in a haystack. The war was not only the Battle of 73 Easting, but was a series of confrontations and engagements. Each one of them proved that sophisticated technology and smart weapons had failed to serve their purpose; whether they failed to execute common sense countermeasures or correct operational tactics. The U.S. helicopters utilized the anti-tank guided (RM-1) missiles and laser-guided Cruise missiles. These weapons systems could be commanded and controlled by aircrafts. In addition, smart weapons included ground radar systems, an airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system, and many other armaments and equipment that could give superior fighting capabilities to those who possessed them to win their war without being forced to engage in ground confrontations. Despite all that, these smart weapons did not enable U.S. forces to have easy confrontations with the Iraqi forces. On the contrary, they gave the Iraqi forces the fighting spirit to challenge these sophisticated technology and weapons on the battlefield. In fact, they did not negatively affect the Iraqi's *esprit de corps* and morale during the course of the war. Please refer to paragraph (18), article (g), to observe the importance of good operational tactics. When good operational tactics are implemented effectively and efficiently, in accordance with military instructions and principles, they will be superior to all sophisticated technology and smart weapons. This is not the first time that military forces have confronted each other under similar circumstances. When gunpowder was invented with artillery, it was said that the ground forces would not be able to resist on the battlefield. In addition, gunpowder would give the advantage to the offensive forces to sweep all defensive lines very easily, after taking them down by the artillery. In reality, this concept proved to be wrong on the battlefield. The same thing applies to aircrafts and tanks nowadays. When new weapons and technology appear on the surface, they give the impression that it will be easier to achieve victory with ground warfare. However, if the military forces execute good operational tactics and fight with high spirit and dedication, they will be able to set strong defensive lines for the opposing forces and turn the battlefield into a graveyard for the enemy. Therefore, the dynamic concept of measures and countermeasures is going to be the basic foundation of warfare development as time passes by. When one weapon appears on the surface, another weapon will be invented to counter it and make it obsolete, in addition to reducing its tactical effectiveness. For example, the tanks, aircrafts, missiles and other related weapons systems can be made obsolete by a set of countermeasures applied by the opposing forces.

20. What have sophisticated technology and smart weapons done during the course of the war, more specifically the Battle of 73 Easting? Before the war broke out, it was said about these sophisticated technologies and smart weapons were the most top notch weapons systems, to date. No doubt this statement is correct, but what are the outcomes of these weapons systems? In reference to paragraph (18) and other related contents mentioned in Stephen A. Bourque's article, some sophisticated technologies and smart weapons proved that thermal sights technology was ineffective and obsolete in the battlefield because of very simple reasons; if the engines are kept off and heavy smoke results from burning vehicles and explosions, the U.S. tank-mounted thermal sights will be similar to any other tank without any sophisticated technology. Actually, they could be less effective in the battlefield, as we all witnessed how some of the U.S. tank-mounted thermal sights were momentarily lost because of total darkness and confusion about each unit's area of operations. All sophisticated technology related to track directions and targets did not work because of the darkness, heavy smoke, dust and fog. Those who rely only on these sophisticated weapons systems will find themselves at a loss when they confront unpleasant circumstances, of which there are many in the battlefield. In addition, sophisticated weapons such as cluster bombs and laser-guided missiles were utilized to destroy the Iraqi defensive lines, as previously stated in this analytical report. Despite all that, the Iraqi defensive lines were formidable and strong. The Iraqi forces fought the opposing forces with courage and dedication. They used their tanks and weapons effectively and efficiently. As a result, they inflicted some casualties on the U.S. forces. The U.S. forces thought their sophisticated weapons would destroy the Iraqi defensive lines very easily and force the Iraqi soldiers to run away. What happened was completely not expected by the U.S. forces. How can you explain that the U.S. forces hit each other with friendly fire, resulting in some casualties, in more than one incident? What advantage did these sophisticated weapons give the U.S. forces to discern their friend or foe forces? What changes did these sophisticated weapons make in comparison to previous military campaigns? It is worth noting that old military campaigns did not have any laser-guided missiles, remote command and control capabilities, thermal sights, infrared laser weapons or other related weapons systems. Those who possess these sophisticated weapons systems have become attached to them in such a way that they completely rely on them as if they are like the magic stick that can lessen casualties and losses in any armed confrontations. After the armed confrontation with the Iraqi forces, the U.S. forces found out they were wrong about how they thought about their sophisticated weapons systems. They stated: "Good tactics are just as important as good technology." This simple fact cannot be ignored at all, regardless of the advanced pace of weapon and equipment developments. Regardless of sophisticated weapons, good operational tactics will have an influential role in armed confrontation. They will still be the cornerstone for any future conflicts and wars.
21. Last but not least, all sophisticated weapons such as command and control equipment, did not save the U.S. forces from unpleasant surprises when they found themselves face to face with the Iraqi forces. The heavy fog was covering the entire area of operation, luring the U.S. forces to push forward on the battlefield without being able to detect the Iraqi forces. When they went up the hill, above the level of the heavy fog, they came within the firing range of the Iraqi artillery and rockets. Consequently, the Iraqi forces inflicted some casualties on the U.S. forces and forced them to withdraw to a region that was outside of the Iraqi firing range. The U.S. forces had to wait for the heavy fog to clear from the area of operation. Some U.S. forces were trapped in soft grounds and quarry excavations. Because of the heavy fog covering the entire area of operation, military satellites, tracking and direction systems, thermal sights, reconnaissance aircraft and ground radars were not able to give precise information about what was happening on the battlefield. All claims of military superiority were gone with the wind. This fact will .....[Incomplete sentence]