

Iran’s power under the waves



The photo shows Iran’s homegrown Fateh (Conqueror) submarine sailing in the Persian Gulf waters.
● TASNIM

PERSPECTIVE

The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have bolstered their deterrence capabilities and stood firm against diverse threats by designing and manufacturing a wide range of naval equipment. Top of Form “Iran manufactures its own submarines, including the Fateh-class and the smaller Ghadir-class, which are optimized for the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf.” This statement, aired on an Indian television program, shed light on Iran’s rise to the ranks of a regional military power beneath the waves. Up until the early 1990s, Iran’s Army had no submarines at its disposal, having only bought a handful of Kilo-class subs. Interestingly, even the country that built such submarines refused to carry out repairs and overhauls for Iran. The move forced Iran’s hand: not only did it pick up the know-how for overhauling and maintaining submarines, but it also gradually got the hang of designing and building them from scratch.

Ghadir-class; major leap toward homegrown submarines

The Ghadir submarine joined the ranks of the Iranian Navy in 2006. Recognized as a medium or midget submarine, it was made by the Marine Industries Organization of the Ministry of Defense, and a significant number have since been brought into service. Over the years, newer ver-

sions of the Ghadir have been kitted out with more advanced systems, so much so that the current model boasts sophisticated detection equipment and is capable of firing anti-ship cruise missiles. With a length of 29 meters and a displacement of 115 tons, the Ghadir can hunker down on the seabed, making it invisible to radar systems. At the front, two long-range torpedo tubes with a 533mm diameter have been fitted, allowing for the launch of both torpedoes and anti-ship cruise missiles. On top of that, the Ghadir’s strengths include rapid troop transport, tracking enemy surface and subsurface vessels, target identification, special forces deployment, and respectable underwater endurance.

Fateh; Iran’s hidden weapon

Iranian experts later set their sights on designing the Fateh submarine, which was officially handed over to the Navy in 2018. Weighing in at 527 tons on the surface and 593 tons submerged, the Fateh is classed as a semi-heavy submarine and outshines the Ghadir in terms of operational specs. It can dive down to 200 meters under normal conditions, with a maximum depth of 250 meters, and is able to carry out missions for up to 35 days. Measuring 43.5 meters in length and 4.5 meters in width, the Fateh is outfitted with four 533mm torpedo tubes and can also take on board eight naval mines. The construction of the

Fateh called for over 412,000 parts and the localization of 76 advanced technologies. This massive undertaking clocked up more than 4.2 million man-hours, with a network of 48 design centers, 120 industrial sites, 80 knowledge-based firms, 57 universities, and 195 research centers pitching in across the country. The Fateh features 12 types of sonar, both active and passive, scanning its surroundings, and an ESM system to ward off enemy threats. It can fire off underwater missiles and man-portable surface-to-air missiles at designated targets, and, if the need arises, ferry commandos to operational zones.

Iranian submarines use cutting-edge tech

Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Shahrām Irāni, has said that new submarines are currently under construction and will soon be rolled out. Meanwhile, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps is already equipped with unmanned submarines boasting unique capabilities. Should the IRGC get its hands on advanced manned submarines, its dominance in the Persian Gulf would, without a doubt, go up a notch. Many experts believe Iranian submarines have strong export potential and could break into global markets, as they have taken advantage of some of the world’s most advanced technologies.

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Head of the Iranian Defense Ministry’s Marine Industries Organization Rear Admiral Amir Rastegari inspects the indigenous Fateh submarine in southern Iran on February 18, 2019.
● MEHR

Perfumed death Saddam dropped on Iranian civilians

PERSPECTIVE

Imagine this: You’re not on a battlefield, not behind trenches, but sitting in your own town, enjoying the fresh air and going about your daily life, when suddenly the sound of bombing and people’s screams takes over your entire being. They say when people are afraid, they should take deep breaths to calm down. You try to inhale deeply, but then you find out that the very breath that, moments ago, was life-giving has now turned deadly. Now, you feel the horror of the bombing weighing down on your chest, and the grief of losing your life and loved ones clouds your vision... This is the story of all those who, because of Saddam’s chemical bombings, struggled to breathe — some were defending Iran behind the frontlines, while others were innocent women and children in their homes.

of Agent Orange on Vietnamese hiding in forests. Eventually, the UN banned these weapons, but Saddam, indifferent to this, broke the agreement and used them extensively against Iran, making Iraq the record holder for chemical weapons use after the World Wars.

The first recorded Iraqi chemical attack on Iran was on January 13, 1981, when our fighters in western Ilam were targeted. This led to the Ba’athist army stepping up these attacks, later taking down civilians as well.

Sardasht; WMD’s third target

What makes chemical weapons deadlier is their long-term effects — even if people don’t die immediately, injuries can pass down physical and genetic disorders for generations. Years ago, credible Iranian media reported that around 10% of the veterans of the Holy Defense era (Iran-Iraq

Halabja.

Fruits that smelled like death

The UN later confirmed that Saddam’s regime dropped over 1,800 tons of mustard gas, 140 tons of nerve agent Tabun, and 600 tons of Sarin gas on Iranian soldiers in the western and southern fronts. The enemy used blister agents, nerve gases, choking agents, mustard gas, blood agents, and more. One eerie detail? Many of these bombs had strange, deceptively pleasant scents — like apples and other fruits — tricking civilians into inhaling more before realizing the danger. Mustard gas, for example, has a mild smell, sometimes like radish or fresh apples. It causes severe skin and respiratory burns, leading to blindness, cancer, and death. Tabun gas, the world’s deadliest, can shut down the nervous system within two hours.



Victims of Iraq’s brutal use of mustard gas bombs on the city of Sardasht, West Azerbaijan, Iran, on June 28, 1987, are being moved by a helicopter to receive urgent care.
● navideshahed.com



Victims of Iraq’s brutal use of mustard gas bombs on the city of Sardasht, West Azerbaijan, Iran, on June 28, 1987, are gathered in a makeshift treatment facility. Many of the victims were women and children.
● navideshahed.com

On April 26, 1985, the UN issued its statement against Saddam’s chemical bombings in Iran — a massive humanitarian tragedy that even violated the rules of war. Years later, we look into who was behind this horrific event and which countries sided with Saddam.

When were these weapons first used?

If you look back at historical records, the first chemical attacks date back to around 400 BC, during the Peloponnesian Wars, where substances like tar, oil, fire, and arsenic were used. But modern chemical bombs trace back to World Wars I and II — so much so that Nazi Germany, using 124,000 tons of chemical agents, killed one million Europeans. Later, the Americans dropped around 75 million liters

War) are chemical attack victims. Iran has roughly 70,000 chemical warfare survivors, with over 10,000 later martyred. According to the UN, Saddam used chemical attacks over 350 times against Iran. This Ba’athist dictator, who knew no rules of war, spared no one — not even residential areas. One of his most infamous crimes was the chemical bombing of Sardasht in West Azerbaijan, a town of 12,000 that ended up with 2,000 wounded in the first moments. Later reports confirmed around 8,000 were poisoned, with many martyred. Hard to believe, but Sardasht is considered the third city in the world to be hit by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) after Japan’s Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Saddam was so ruthless that he even used these weapons against his own Kurdish citizens, like in

Trading in war, death

Many believe Iran only fought the Ba’ath regime during the eight-year Holy Defense — but in reality, many countries backed Saddam, arming him to the teeth. Countries that were permanent UN Security Council members. European nations put their arms factories to work for Saddam’s crimes. The Germans took the lead in selling chemical weapons to the Ba’athists, followed by the US, France, the Netherlands, Britain, and the USSR — all supplying these deadly bombs, profiting from Saddam’s atrocities against Iranians. Countries that claimed to stand for peace at the UN, yet made money off war.

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