

## **Rafsanjani on Iran's Conduct of the War**

June 21, 2008

Ayatollah Rafsanjani said: "Even Russians went so far as to supply Iraq with Scud C missiles which could hit targets twice further than Scud B missiles and could reach Tehran as well. They also supplied with MIG 29 planes that could fly so high that our artillery could not reach them."

The Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Expediency Council rendered an analysis about the reason for accepting Resolution 598 by saying that the resolution was accepted at the best possible time and conditions and added: "We benefited a lot by accepting the resolution; it saved our country from threats."

Reflecting on the conditions that started the war, he stated: "From the beginning of the war, Saddam felt disabled and started talking about a ceasefire. We had a clear demand and that was guarding our rights. We demanded our right be officially recognized and Iraq be punished as a criminal and pay for the damages inflicted on us. Furthermore, we demanded Iraq be declared a warmonger. But our demands were not accepted."

Rafsanjani also reflected on the advancement of Iran in the war and added: "The world and the region understood that Iran had the upper hand in the war and that Saddam could not do anything but resort to the use of chemical weapons."

"Meanwhile the Security Council and the U.N. were putting pressure on Iran to accept the ceasefire because they did not want Saddam to lose the war; however, we could achieve most of our demands through negotiation and finally Iraq was recognized as the aggressor who was ordered to pay 100 billion dollars for war damages, which was a substantial amount."

He further stated: "At the time that the resolution was accepted conditions dictated that the continuation of war could not be in favor of Iran. At that time it became completely evident that the West and even Russia were determined not to let us win the war militarily in the region."

He added: "The U.S. entered the war with us, but it was an undeclared war. The U.S. under the rubric of support for the oil carriers started that war and through that tried to cut off our financial resources and limit our exports of oil. But we countered and they could not gain very much of what they had in mind, although by resorting to excuses they attacked us several times and fired on a number of our helicopters and bombarded a few oil rigs and sank our warships."

He mentioned: The Russians also went as far as supplying Iraq with Scud C missiles whose range of attack was twice that of Scud B and could reach Tehran; they also gave them MIG 29 warplanes which could fly higher than our artillery could reach."

“France supplied Saddam with super advanced planes and missiles and laser bombs that could hit targets accurately.”

In regard to the usage of chemical weapons, he said: “The West and East blocs showed Saddam a green light, and at the time of the Halabja calamity the possibility of the same attack was possible on cities such as Tabriz, Urumia, Kermanshah and even Tehran by using long-range missiles. Nevertheless, we could not counteract against Iraq resorting to such an inhumane crime. We could not fight that way.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani in regard to Iran’s internal situation at the time of the acceptance of the resolution said: “Since oil exports had become limited, the country’s economy could not withstand the continuation of the war, needless to add that if the war continued we could proceed with austerity.”

“At this point the government wrote an official letter to the Imam and explained that economically the country had met the “red lines” and could not provide the people’s necessities for living and the war provisions; therefore resistance would become more difficult.”

He then added that he was the Commander-in-Chief since the *Kheibar* military operation: “when I visited the Imam in order to get permission to start the operation and to say farewell to him, I stated that we could succeed and keep some parts of Iraqi soil to be able to impose our conditions.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani mentioned: “If the *Kheibar* operation had met its objectives, we would have gone across the Tigris River and blocked the road to *Basra*. However, this did not happen and the operation was curtailed. This was my military policy.”

“At that time the Imam did not give a clear answer and only gave a sweet smile.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani added: “At the first meeting in the *Kheibar* garrison, I told the commanders that if we succeeded in these operations, I would end the war; of course what I said faced [both] opposition and approval from some commanders.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani added: “At the beginning of the war and after Iraq had been pushed away from Iran’s borders nobody was prepared to accept the ceasefire proposition. We had just driven Iraq out and were being asked to enter Iraq’s soil.”

He added: “In a meeting that Ayatollah Khamenei, myself, and commanders of the Revolutionary Guard and the Army had with Imam Khomeini, it was proposed to end the war. However, the Imam said we could not do such a thing because we would not be given what we had asked for. He said we should not enter Iraq’s soil either. Finally it was agreed to enter Iraq’s soil as long as it didn’t harass the Iraqi people. Therefore, regions such as the Majnoon Islands were chosen for this purpose.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani: “After the Halabja calamity, in a meeting with the heads of the three government branches and Haj Ahmad Khomeini the developments were presented and it was agreed to work on two fronts: 1) putting pressure on the Security Council to accept our demands and 2) presenting the situation of the war to the Imam.”

“To do so we talked to Commander Rezaie and asked him what he needed in order to succeed in the military operation. Commander Rezaie in response mentioned the provisions needed for the war in a letter which was then handed over to the Imam.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani said: “What is being said about me concocting the whole letter is not true.” “We five went to the Imam and presented to him what was requested in that letter, and mentioned that what was being requested could not be provided and we suggested a ceasefire.”

He added: “We analyzed that if we accepted the ceasefire what we had expected would not materialize because after eight years Saddam had been driven out of our country and he had to deal with a lot of damage and debts inflicted by the war; in effect, he would have to compensate Iran for war damages, and most of that compensation would have to come from Iraqi oil revenues, which he would perhaps be unwilling to tap into.”

“At first it was not easy for the Imam to accept it and he mentioned that the [Iranian] people and the fighters had other expectations.”

“Ayatollah Khomeini requested us to brief the personalities and *ulama* [clergy] so that all would defend it. He stressed avoiding any differences of opinion. So, Ayatollah Khamenei invited personalities and the military and political clergy to his office to brief them.”

He added: “Afterwards, Haj Ahmad Khomeini told us that the Imam had decided to announce it himself, because differences could have risen among “you” if “you” announced it. Later the Imam wrote that historic letter and Haj Ahmad Khomeini recited it in front of our group.”

“The Imam brilliantly solved the problem of public opinion and did something wise and timely.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani emphasized that the acceptance of Resolution 598 resulted in substantial victories for the Iranian people and stressed: “under the conditions that the most impartial statement made about the war would identify Iraq as the aggressor and Iran as also complicit in continuing the war; recognition of Iraq as the aggressor is counted as a victory.”

He then added that after gaining this victory, a propaganda war aimed at destroying the morale of Iranian people began, and said: “The psychological warfare to promote Saddam’s morale went as far as giving the Iraqi regime the incentive to start another war against Iran, but once again it was defeated by the resistance of Iranians and everyone realized this fact -- that the Islamic Republic of Iran would not accept the resolution simply because we are in a weak position.”

The Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Expediency Council continued: “recognition of Iraq as the aggressor made Iraq accountable to pay compensation for damages inflicted, which, based on the U.N. evaluation, the non-military charges alone were estimated at 100 billion dollars.”

The Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Expediency Council said: “Saddam, after his lack of success in achieving anything in Iran, was developing the thought of attacking Kuwait; therefore, prior to attacking Kuwait, in order to end its disputes with Iran, he had to accept Iran’s proposition on releasing the POWs and opening the Arvand river which had been his incentive for starting the war against Iran. And [he had to] announce that he had accepted all Iran’s proposals.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani also added that Iraq’s damage compensation file is not yet closed, and said: “The Iraqi regime after starting the war with Kuwait never found the opportunity to settle its dues, because right after that it engaged in other wars with the U.S.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani, with regard to the future of the region, added: “The Americans cannot remain in Iraq for a long time; the more they stay there the less they gain.”

The Head of the Assembly of the Experts of the Leadership added: “The day that the Americans leave the region, the Iraqi people will find their best friends in Iran.”

He emphasized the mutual religious bonds between the two nations and said: “Most Iraqis are Shiite and since the time of our resistance [war with Saddam] have had brotherly relations and Kurds and Sunnis have been very close to us, and we also have had our best friends inside Iraq.”

Then, emphasizing the strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the independence and freedom of Iraq, he said: “We support the demands of the Iraqi people and all the peoples of the region and in the future we will continue to have good relationships with the people of Iraq and other nations in the region.”

The Head of the Assembly of the Experts of the Leadership continued by saying: “The peoples of the region have a good understanding of Iran and know that the Islamic Republic of Iran can stand on its own feet and defend itself.”

Then, saying that he is an optimist about the future of the region, he added: “We must be sensitive about the greediness of the imperialists in the region because they have vital interests in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.”

Ayatollah Rafsanjani added that Afghanistan, Iraq and the Persian Gulf “are not places they can remain in for a long time.”

The Head of the Assembly of the Experts, mentioning that the psychological warfare of the U.S. and the Zionists in the region is based on deep prejudices against the Iranian people, said: “Any psychological warfare can have other consequences and we should not be sensitive about that

because it is merely psychological. We should bear in mind that those who spend hundreds of billions of dollars, and who would have no problem killing or wounding thousands or risking their international reputation – such parties have particular interests and aspirations which we should respond to in a thoughtful, clever manner.”

[Source: Aftab News Agency, <http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdce7n8jhz8pp.html>.]