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Iran-Iraq War: Iran Launches New Offensive

Iran Feb. 7 launched a new offensive against Iraq in the center of their extended desert battlefield. Iran described the offensive, the fourth since July 1982, as its largest operation since the war began in 1980. [See 1982 [Other World News: Iran-Iraq War: Dizful Said to Be Hit](#), 1982 [Other World News: Iran-Iraq War: Iran Claims New Gains](#)]

Iran said that in a pre-dawn assault, thousands of its troops had crossed the border at Fakeh, in Iraq's Misan Province, and had captured some 100 square miles (300 square kilometers) of Iraqi ground. Fakeh lay west of the Iranian city of Dizful, some 150 miles (240 kilometers) south of one end of the battlefield, around Mandali, and about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of the other end, around Basra at the head of the Persian Gulf. Combat at both extremities of the front had settled into a virtual stalemate.

Iran Feb. 8 said its forces, "having achieved the objectives of the first stage of the victorious Operation Before Dawn, are strengthening their new positions and purging liberated regions."

Iraq said it had met the offensive with heavy air attacks, leaving the assault "dead, completely crushed by our forces." Iran claimed 6,894 Iranian deaths in the first day of combat.

Neither side's claims could be confirmed by the press, which was barred from the battlefield, but Western military analysts saw the latest combat as typical of the recent pattern of the war. Iran, mobilizing superior numbers of troops, could mount sudden strikes at weak points in the thinly-stretched Iraqi lines along the frontier. Iraq, commanding superior air power, was able to stem the assaults after only limited gains.

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