



How German Firms Helped Arm Iraq

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Though numerous Western industrialized nations helped Iraq to build its war arsenal, the list of German firms involved reads like a "Who's Who" of the industry

Official statistics reflect arms sales from West German firms to Iraq valuing \$625 million in the period 1982–1986. These figures did not include illegal shipments that were not declared to be weapons exports, "civilian" shipments that were put to military use in Iraq, or imports through third countries, as, for example, weapons systems produced in France but containing German components.

Nor do these qualifications suggest the magnitude of the illegal West German trade. Government sources in Bonn list approximately 170 German firms suspected of having circumvented export restrictions to deliver either military hardware or know-how to Iraq. Of the 207 Western firms that helped Iraq to develop atomic, biological, or chemical weapons, 86 were from West Germany.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Iraq's largest chemical processing plant believed suited for weapons production prior to the Gulf war

was located in the desert outside the city of Samarra. Of West German firms implicated in the Iraqi weapons industry, three were particularly prominent in the construction of the Samarra plant

Karl Kolb GmbH & Co. and its subsidiary Pilot Plant Engineering & Equipment began work on the Samarra plant, allegedly designed for the production of pesticides, in 1975. Together they directed a total of seven pilot projects in Iraq. Another firm, Quast, supplied the plants with various hardware and outfitted them with special anticorrosion materials. Water Engineering Trading GmbH (WET) constructed corrosion-proof water treatment facilities, in addition to a plant that could be used for producing phosphorus trichloride, a necessary constituent in the manufacture of nerve gas. WET also supplied facilities for the filling and capping of gas canisters.

According to an expert report prepared in Switzerland, these facilities were more suited to the production of nerve gases and mustard gas than of pesticides. The Swiss report concludes that the West German technicians working in Samarra could not have been ignorant of the true use to which the facilities were to be put.

Six managers employed by Karl Kolb/Pilot Plant and WET were arrested in August 1990 for violations of export regulations. One of the WET managers was also employed by the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) (the German secret service), suggesting that the BND and German government officials were aware of the violations well before the arrests took place.

Other firms named in connection to deliveries to

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Iraq's chemical weapons industry include the following:

Aviatest, Neuss
Demag, Frankfurt
Anton Eyerle/Rhein-Bayern, Kaufbeuren
Gildemeister Projekta GmbH, Bielefeld
Hammer
Bauunternehmen Heberger, Schifferstadt
Infraplan, Cologne
MBB (Messerschmitt, Bölkow, Blohm), Munich
Spedition Merkur, Munich
Preussag AG, Hanover
Rhema Labortechnik, Hofheim
Rotextchemie International Handels GmbH u. Co.
Thyssen Rhein Stahl Technik, Dusseldorf
Fritz Werner Industrie-Ausrüstungen, Geisenheim
WTB (Walter Thostl Boswau), Augsburg
Carl Zeiss, Heidenheim

DELIVERY TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

The military deployment of chemical weapons presupposes the availability of suitable delivery systems. Prior to the war, the Iraqi military added steadily to its delivery capacities, modifying the rockets to increase their range. Although most Iraqi delivery systems are based on the stock of Scud-B missiles imported from the Soviet Union, the technological assistance required for the modifications has come primarily from Western sources.

West German firms named in connection with the Iraqi missile program and associated technological assistance include the following:

MBB, Munich
Consen (Swiss affiliate of MBB)
Gildemeister Projekta GmbH, Bielefeld
Aviatest, Neuss
Mauser-Werke, Oberndorf
ABC (Anlagen Bau Contro), Hamburg
Havert Handelgesellschaft
Heinrich Müller Maschinenfabrik GmbH
H+H Metallform, Dernstefurt
Integra Sauer Informatic, Neumünster
Jvaco GmbH
Krauss-Kopf
Leico (Liefeld & Co.), Ahlen
MBB-Transtehcnica, Taufkirchen
Nickel GmbH
PBG
Promex Exploration GmbH
Siemens, Munich
Waldrich, Siegen
Wegmann
Ferrostahl AG, Essen
MAN-Konzern

Hochtief, Essen
Klöckner-Konzern, Duisburg
Rheinmetall
ABB, Mannheim
AEG, Berlin
Brown Boveri, Buderus, Wetzlar
Dango & Dienenthal, Siegen
Dynamit Nobel, Troisdorf
Essener Ruhstahl
Fritz Werner Industrie-Ausrüstungen, Geisenheim
Graeser
Lasco Metal Forming Technology
Leybold, Hanau
LOI Industrieofenanlagen, Essen
Mannesmann Demag, Duisburg
Mannesmann Rexroth, Marpass, Krefeld
Ravensburg Maschinenfabrik, Ravensburg
Schirmer-Plate-Siepelkamp, Krefeld
SMS Hasenclever, Dusseldorf
TBT Tiefbohrtechnik, Dettlingen
Thyssen, Dusseldorf
Züblin, Stuttgart

GERMAN CO-RESPONSIBILITY

Germany has played a leading role in the invention and development of chemical weapons from the start. Mustard gas, from which an estimated 91,000 soldiers died in World War I, is a German product, as are the nerve gases tabun and sarin, of which the latter was the main component of United States chemical weapons reserves until the mid-1960s and remains the primary nerve gas in the Soviet arsenal. Iraq's chemical warfare capacity consists of supplies of all three: mustard gas, tabun, and sarin.

In 1954, Germany renounced production on its own territory of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons. German firms have nevertheless remained involved in the production of chemical weapons elsewhere, a circumstance to be explained by the worldwide prominence of the German chemical industry, government reluctance to interfere with trade, and a system of export regulations that can be easily circumvented.

EXPORT REGULATIONS

The regulation of exports in Germany, a nation committed in principle to free trade, is authorized in the federal constitution and the 1961 law on Military Armaments. The law recognizes three circumstances in which the export of goods is not authorized: when such exports might "considerably endanger (1) the external security of the Federal Republic of Ger-

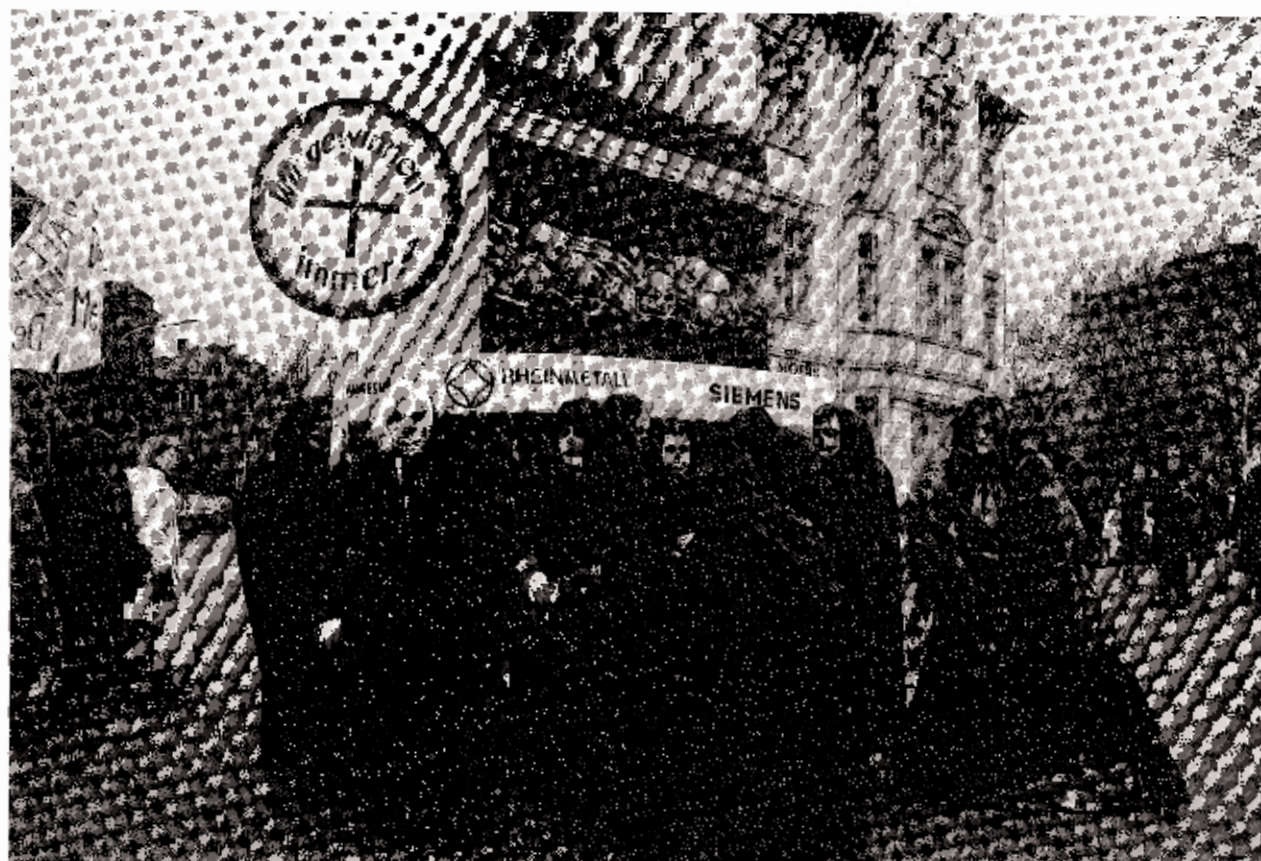


FIGURE Anti-Gulf war demonstration in Bonn Photograph courtesy of Burkhard Maus

many, (2) the peaceful coexistence of nations, (3) the foreign relations of the Federal Republic of Germany."

However, there is no indication that applications for export licenses to Iraq were denied with any noticeable regularity prior to 1989, when concerns regarding the production of chemical weapons in Libya drew attention to the issue of Western technological assistance. Some changes have been made in an attempt to tighten regulations, with an expansion of the list of materials requiring permits from 17 to 42 in 1989 and the recent inclusion of Iraq on the list of countries to which all exports are prohibited without official authorization.

EXPORT POLICY

In practice, the West German government has traditionally encouraged all exports that cannot be expressly excluded from nonmilitary applications. Yet, as the Iraqi case illustrates, it can be very difficult to identify in advance the uses to which a given technology will be put by the importing

nation.

Moreover, the West German government has proved extremely ambivalent on the issue of enforcement. On one hand, it has no interest in having the reputation of German exports damaged or in having potential restrictions to free trade brought on by further violations. On the other hand, it appears very reluctant to support concrete measures that could lead to improved enforceability, because they would also interfere with trade. The government's position has been to insist that the *practice* of trade not be compromised, which can be taken to imply a continuation of its traditional laxity.

As long as Iraq enjoyed the favor of Western nations as a counterweight to Iran, it could purchase freely on the international arms market. Now a despised and defeated nation, it is excluded from that trade. At the same time, however, the countries that joined the alliance in opposition to Iraq can go on (nearly) unimpeded in their purchases of military goods. As long as this remains the case, it is almost impossible to prevent them from arming themselves with chemical weapons.