

Superpower showdown looms in the Persian Gulf

by Nancy Coker

The United States and the Soviet Union are on a collision course over the Persian Gulf and the current fighting between Iraq and Iran.

The United States, which was initially caught off guard by the outbreak of the war, has rapidly mobilized both military and diplomatic machinery for a possible direct U.S. intervention into the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia. According to reliable information made available to *EIR*, that intervention may include a combination of three options:

First, a direct American military move, with naval and airborne forces, into the Gulf oil-producing states; second, a U.S.-supported coup in Iran that might include an attempt to restore a militarist monarchy there; and third, the opening of a second front against Iraq by Israel, whose government last week issued a series of overt threats to intervene against Iraq and its ally, Jordan.

Moscow, with enormous military capabilities in the area and important allies in Syria, Iraq, and to a more limited extent, in Iran, is publicly signaling its own readiness for a showdown. In the Soviet military daily *Red Star*, an article by Col. M. Ponomarev entitled "Washington Plays with Fire" cites the danger of a U.S. nuclear intervention into the region using American B-52 strategic bombers stationed aboard a flotilla of aircraft carriers at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Adding to the danger of the crisis is the covert British intelligence manipulation of the U.S.-Soviet adversary relationship in the Middle East. A recent statement issued by Lyndon H. LaRouche, the former U.S. Demo-

cratic presidential candidate, underscores the British role.

"In connection with the current Middle East crisis, British intelligence and its accomplices in Israeli intelligence are at this time supplying the Soviet Union with sensitive, National Security Council-grade policy information," LaRouche has charged.

By leaking accurate and partially accurate information concerning U.S. military contingency plans in the Gulf crisis to the U.S.S.R., the British are deliberately feeding known Soviet beliefs that the United States is planning to deliver a strategic setback to the Soviet interests in the Middle East. The Soviets are said to be particularly concerned about reports of a U.S. military putsch in Iran to restore the status quo ante there.

Target: Europe

In so doing, the British are seeking to trigger a U.S.-Soviet showdown in the Gulf. London, LaRouche has charged, "is now fully prepared to utilize such a U.S.-U.S.S.R. confrontation to cause a political breakthrough against Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in the Federal Republic of Germany and to crush President Giscard d'Estaing in France.

"The immediate object of this British intelligence operation is the destruction of these two political leaders' policy of détente with the U.S.S.R. and of European-Arab cooperation," LaRouche added.

Important in this regard is the sudden renewed prominence in Carter Administration policymaking of Zbigniew Brzezinski and his National Security Council.

Last week, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie let it be known through widely leaked reports that he intends to resign because of his inability to exercise a restraining influence over the hawkish policy of Brzezinski and the NSC.

The hegemony accorded Brzezinski is what has given free rein to Menachem Begin's Israel. The Israeli foreign ministry issued a warning last week that it "cannot sit idly by" while Iraq and Jordan intensify their military cooperation. Begin himself said threateningly, "I have a feeling that he [King Hussein] has made an unwise move." According to several Israeli intelligence sources, Israel is actively considering trying to blockade the Gulf of Aqaba, through which Soviet and other supplies for Iraq are being shipped, via Jordan. Said one Israeli source: "We must stop that foolish little king. He is making the same mistakes that he made in 1967 and must be taught a lesson."

In the same breath, Israel is also targeting the French, accusing Giscard of condoning the recent bombing of a synagogue in Paris. Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir has charged France with promoting anti-Semitism and harboring "neo-Nazi groups working in alliance with the Palestine Liberation Organization"—a charge Shamir admitted he could not prove. In another statement, Israeli foreign ministry spokesman David Kimche pointed to the "profound hostility between France and Israel," adding, "we don't expect anything from the French."

Iran—Israel's undeclared strategic ally in the Persian Gulf crisis—is similarly blasting France. Last week, President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr denounced France for refusing to supply Iran with weapons. "We offered them the position once held by the U.S.," said Bani-Sadr, "and they rejected it."

An 'October flash'?

In this context, analysts in Washington are giving credence to reports that President Carter might be induced—on Brzezinski's advice—to launch a dramatic military adventure in the Gulf region in order to gain electoral momentum. Both Ronald Reagan and George Bush, the Republican candidates, have warned that such an "October flash" may occur in the remaining weeks before the election.

An Oct. 4 release by the U.S.S.R.'s TASS news agency specifically attacked the "hypocritical demagogue" Brzezinski for warning Moscow against intervening in the Gulf while the United States is "positioning itself in order to take part in a demonstration of multinational force . . . in the Straits of Hormuz."

A speech last week in Boston by Undersecretary of State Warren Christopher corroborated the Soviet charges. Christopher, reported by insiders to be the NSC's point man in the State Department, issued a not-so-veiled warning that the United States might abandon

its public stance of neutrality if the war spreads. If Iraq, said Christopher, tries to seize control of Khuzestan province in Iran, "the nature of the conflict would be fundamentally altered and the danger dramatically sharpened." Christopher then offered military aid to those Gulf states "who feel threatened by the conflict."

One State Department source told *EIR* that if the Carter administration determines that the Soviet Union is resupplying Iraq—something that is to be expected given Moscow's bilateral treaty arrangement with Baghdad—then Washington is prepared to "reassess Soviet neutrality."

Preparing for war

On the ground, the Carter administration is already taking steps to prepare itself for a showdown—a showdown that, by all competent military estimates, will lead to either disaster or the strategic humiliation of the United States given the superiority of Soviet forces in the region.

Following the deployment of the four AWACS to Saudi Arabia last week, the Department of Defense announced the arrival in Riyadh of one of its top air defense authorities, Maj. Gen. John L. Piotrowski, along with staff, to run the AWACS early warning system for the Saudis. Significantly, the responsibility for detecting and alerting the Saudis to an attack lies totally in the hands of the Americans.

Along with Saudi Arabia, efforts to militarily bolster Egypt, Cyprus, and Turkey are also being made. According to military sources, U.S. personnel and materiel tied to the recent Dawn Patrol '80 military exercises were never removed from Egypt following the maneuvers and are currently being beefed up with the arrival of additional planes and men.

In Cyprus, the two British bases there have reportedly entered into a state of war readiness under the operational control of the Pentagon and in cooperation with NATO headquarters in Belgium. U.S. personnel and military forces have been stationed at the two bases (one of which is known to harbor nuclear warheads), and U.S. Air Force Phantom jets, transport aircraft, and bombers have reportedly landed at the bases in recent days.

Turkey is similarly being drawn into the operation. Last week, NATO commander Bernard Rogers arrived in Turkey for his third visit since the Sept. 12 coup d'état. Well-placed military sources informed *EIR* that the focus of Rogers' trip was not so much reintegration of Greece into NATO as it was "negotiating the placement of new facilities in Turkey" and the use of Turkey as a base of operations for actions in the Gulf.

Reports from Washington also indicate that Turkey may be amenable to serving as a launching pad for a military putsch by exiled Iranian officers, significant numbers of whom are reported to be operating out of

southeastern Turkey near the Iran border.

Although confident of their military superiority over Iran, Iraqi diplomats at the United Nations last week stressed their fear of superpower involvement in the Iraq-Iran conflict. If the conflict is not internationalized, there is little question that the Khomeini regime is doomed and that Iraq will emerge as the pivotal power in the region and the connection point between Europe and the Arabs.

U.S. maneuvers for Middle East buildup

by Judith Weyer

Following a meeting last week with U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Komer, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin became Israel's first head of state to call for a mutual defense pact and to agree to joint military maneuvers with the U.S. At the same time, Begin offered the U.S. base rights at its Etzion airbase on the Sinai.

Begin made his unprecedented offer to Komer to strengthen the U.S.-Israel military alliance at the same time that the Israeli air force allegedly bombed Iraq's nuclear training facility under the guise of an Iranian air raid. Days later, Iraqi Defense Minister Adnan Khairallah declared that Iraq had proof that it was an Israeli and not an Iranian Phantom jet that hit the facility.

Historically, Israel has been the strongest ally of the faction of Anglo-American elites Komer represents, which envisions a provocative military buildup in the Mideast to challenge the Soviet Union on its southern borders. When Komer arrived in Japan on the first leg of his trip last month, he declared that it was his intention to build a NATO-allied international military presence in the Mideast and the Indian Ocean.

Komer, who was personally appointed to the post of Deputy Defense Secretary for Policy by Harold Brown, is the architect of the controversial Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for the Persian Gulf. Israel, which already has a small arsenal of nuclear weapons, is the prime regional component of the RDF.

A *New York Times* lead editorial on Oct. 9 laid out the need for militarizing the strategic Persian Gulf along the lines of the "strike force" doctrine of Komer. It calls for the United States and its NATO partners to enact an "imperial response" to a colonial legacy, referring to the domination of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean Britain once enjoyed.

That display [of American warships] has begun with the naval armada now on station near the Gulf. It is to be gradually augmented by the mobile land forces, supplied from assorted bases in the region. Egypt and Israel will become discreet partners and the scare of this war may finally persuade the Saudis to permit a more conspicuous American operation on their soil. The buildup has to continue.

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, like Begin, gave Komer a warm reception. Shortly after his departure from Egypt, Sadat for the first time publicly stated that Egypt would make available to Europe the same base facilities it has already opened up to the U.S.

The role of General Jones

Komer's tour of the Middle East was followed in less than a week by an American military delegation led by Chief of Staff General David Jones. While Komer discussed the policy of military buildup with various Middle Eastern leaders, Jones consolidated a series of agreements aimed at realizing the policy. During his visit to Egypt, Jones won Sadat's permission to deploy 1,400 American troops to Egypt next month. Egyptian vice-president Hosni Mubarak discussed with Jones plans to expand and upgrade the facilities at the Egyptian base Ras Banas to accommodate future American military deployments to Egypt.

Jones is reported to be personally preparing American maneuvers from Egyptian soil, where the 1,400 American troops will be airlifted to rendezvous with the RDF "under warlike conditions." It is expected that as a result of the Jones-Komer visits to Egypt, the U.S. will send new combat planes to Egypt. Jones also worked out a plan to produce American-designed M-113 tanks in Egypt, according to Egyptian armaments minister Gamal Sayed, who stated that Egypt was negotiating production of other American-designed artillery.

According to well informed U.S. military sources, it was Jones personally who pressured Saudi Arabia into accepting the deployment of four AWACS radar planes shortly after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. These same sources report that certain leading members of the Saudi royal family were opposed to accepting the U.S. equipment for fear that it would invite a super-conflict in the Gulf. Twice in the last two weeks, Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal repeated his concern that the Iran-Iraq conflict could expand to include the super-powers. In an interview with the *Washington Post* Sept. 28, Faisal condemned Carter's bid to create an international naval force for the Persian Gulf and criticized the "logic" which prompted the administration to create the RDF. He termed Washington's headlong rush to