

# The Gulf War and the farce of the Anglo-Americans' 'neutrality'

by Judith Wyer

U.S. State Department spokesman John Hughes on March 30 announced that the United States was embargoing chemical exports to Iraq in order to prevent that country from manufacturing poison gas. In early March, the State Department first upheld an Iranian claim that Iraq was using chemical warfare in the 43-month Gulf war. To protect the State Department's "neutral" stance towards the war, Hughes declared that the United States would also restrict the export of chemicals to Iran, a meaningless gesture considering that above-board U.S. exports to Iran are virtually nil.

The neutrality professed by both the State Department and its British counterpart, the Foreign Office, is a sham. Their goal is to arm both sides in order to perpetuate the war, undercut Iraq's economic development potential, and maintain the option of rigging a new Gulf oil crisis.

In an interview with syndicated columnist James Brady on April 4, Henry Kissinger, who advocates surrendering the Mideast to the Soviet Union, was asked if he had any hopes for peace between Iran and Iraq. "No, he said, he thought they would fight 'til exhaustion but that if anyone won, it would be the Ayatollah's Iran, which has three times as big a population." Thus Dr. Kissinger looks benignly upon this meatgrinder slaughter of darker-skinned peoples, and intervention to halt the Khomeini's bestial "human wave" assaults is the furthest thing from his mind.

The British Foreign Office admitted that it is arming and training both Iran and Iraq militarily in a press statement April 2. A Foreign Office spokesman disclosed that it had approved the training of dozens of Iraqi pilots on British aircraft at the same time that a Swiss subsidiary of a British company was training Iranians on anti-aircraft systems. Nonetheless, the Foreign Office spokesman insisted that this does not "prejudice" Britain's neutrality in the Gulf war.

The London *Times* on Jan. 4 printed an editorial comment which states outright that Britain hopes to regain a strong economic and political influence in Iran through the increase in arms sales to Iran. According to the London *Guardian*, Britain is selling sophisticated weaponry to Iran, including Rapier missiles.

Statements issued by the Khomeini regime since mid-February indicate that Iran is re-evaluating its military strategy, planning even more ferocious assaults with increased cannon fodder and fresh military equipment from such "neu-

tral" countries as Britain.

Diplomatic sources discount reports of a State Department effort to halt the British arming of Iran as only half-hearted, as are attempts to close off other third-party suppliers. These sources questioned the seriousness of a statement from Secretary of State George Shultz in late March publicly chastising Britain for arming Iran. Since mid-February, reports have appeared in both the West German and Italian press of stepped-up Israeli arms shipments to Iran. In the first week of April an Israeli freighter loaded with artillery was halted in Messina, Italy. According to the Italian press, the arms were bound for Iran.

While the Anglo-Americans continue to arm both sides, the Soviet Union is capitalizing on the war by strengthening its ties with Iraq, while angling for a potential invasion of Iran. In a rare interview with the Western media, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein suggested that the U.S.S.R. will be the Gulf War's only winner. Speaking to the March 30 *Le Figaro* magazine, Hussein for the first time stated that one solution to the spreading Khomeini menace would be for the Soviet Union "to come in" to Iran. Hussein also noted that Iraqi-Soviet relations are sound. European sources report that the U.S.S.R. has provided large arms shipments to Iraq through Jordan's port of Aqaba.

## Mammoth hypocrisy

Iran is said to be massing its largest human wave offensive to date with the objective of cutting off Iraq's second largest town, Basra in the southeast, and with it Iraq's only access to the sea at the Persian Gulf.

And Iran is reported to be prepared to use its own chemical weapons against Iraq. As early as July of last year there has been evidence on the public record that Iran is producing its own chemical warfare capability, but such evidence has gone unnoticed by the State Department and the Foreign Office.

On several occasions since late March, Iran's speaker of the House, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, has openly stated such intentions. During a sermon at Teheran University on March 23 he boasted, "We have complex chemical industries and the construction of these chemical weapons is not a difficult thing." A week later he declared that Iran had created its own "chemical mobil units" using gunship helicopters. He also

noted that Iran now has a bacteriological warhead with a 28 kilometer range. Hashemi-Rafsanjani also revealed that Iranian terrorists operating abroad will be "equipped with chemical weapons."

The French weekly *Paris Match* reported March 16 that the French government is bracing for a wave of terrorism by commandos armed with such weaponry. The office of the prime minister is reported to have set up a liaison office with the French defense ministry to counter such attacks. *Paris Match* reports that many European terrorist groups with long-standing ties to the Khomeini regime are now known to have chemical weapons.

A consultant to the Spanish Defense Ministry was cited by the daily *El Pais* last July that Iran was well on the way to producing its own chemical weapons. The consultant professes to have seen first hand Iran's capability to produce these weapons after he penetrated the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in early 1983.

VSD, a French weekly, questioned late last month whether hospitalized Iranian prisoners recently examined by a United Nations team were not the victims of Iranian-made chemical warfare.

### The Israeli angle

The same day the State Department announced the cut-off of chemical exports to Iraq, Seymour Hersh wrote a muckraking story which appeared on page one of the *New York Times*, alleging Iraqi production of nerve gas from a fertilizer factory provided by a West German firm. The Hersh story was the beginning of a propaganda campaign by journalists with well-known connections to the extremist wing of Israel's ruling Likud party, associated with former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and Minister of Science and Technology Yuval Ne'eman. Uri Dan, Sharon's official biographer, continued the scandal in the *New York Post*.

A statement from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry on March 18 expressed concern that Israel was using the chemical warfare scandal as a pretext for preparing another bombing raid to knock out Iraq's chemical plants in a replay of the Israeli raid against Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. According to Hersh, factions within the Reagan administration have considered such an attack on Iraq. Hersh reveals that CIA chief William Casey was a leading proponent of a policy of punishing Iraq for the chemical warfare charges.

Sharon has been the only Israeli official to admit that Israel is arming Iran. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Israeli arms shipments to Iran are again on the rise.

Since the first of April, schools in Iran have been closed in order to transfer pupils directly into training for immediate deployment to the front. Last month, the Italian daily *Il Giornale* reported that Khomeini was planning to deploy as many as 3 million children and old people to the front in an attack which Rafsanjani called the biggest ground battle seen since World War I.

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