

Will Russia side with Khomeini in war on U.S.?

by Criton Zoakos

Ayatollah Khomeini's declaration of war against the United States has already caused the collapse of any possibility for a superpower summit meeting in the foreseeable future, but this is one of the more trivial consequences of the unfolding high drama in the Persian Gulf.

The present American military deployment in the Gulf, in coordination with the allied navies of France and Great Britain, as masterminded by Defense Secretary Weinberger, is unfolding on behalf of the highest imaginable political and strategic stakes: This deployment must end once and for all the ability of the Khomeini regime to cause mischief in the Gulf, or else, if it fails in this purpose, the United States' status as a "superpower," will collapse precipitously, with dramatic consequences in world politics.

For reasons which need not be elaborated here, it is obvious that if the Weinberger-led allied military deployment in the Gulf, succeeds in forcing the Khomeini regime into the humiliation of abandoning its fire-breathing belligerence, if it succeeds in showing practically to the terrorized Iranian population that Khomeini's cruel magic of omnipotence is merely a cruel fraud, then a chain of strategic events will be unleashed which will destroy two very influential political forces: In the West, it will destroy a combination of forces, a faction, in the U.S.A., Israel, and West Germany, which arose as a result of Jimmy Carter's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's Camp David Accords of 1977.

Without describing this entity any further, suffice it to say that it includes Ariel Sharon in Israel, Hans-Dietrich Genscher in West Germany, and that political entity in the

United States which spans from Jimmy Carter in the Democratic Party, to Alexander Haig and the American Enterprise Institute in the Republican Party.

In the East, an eventually successful outcome of the Weinberger Gulf deployment will remove the props from under the *perestroika* and *glasnost* policies of the Gorbachov-Ogarkov junta in the Kremlin.

Within four weeks from now, either success will cause the downfall of some of the greatest menaces the American republic has ever faced, or, failure will reduce the United States to the status of a second-rate regional power. Much will depend on whether the enemies of the United States succeed in misapplying the War Powers Act toward the end of protecting Ayatollah Khomeini.

Either one of these two possible outcomes will have transpired by approximately the middle of September, when the annual Reforger maneuvers of the NATO Alliance will come to their conclusion.

This year's Reforger will take place with the participation of 35,000 U.S. combat troops, the largest such number ever in the history of the maneuvers; Reforger will be accompanied with the largest ever NATO alliance naval exercise in the North Atlantic, the Ocean Safari '87, which will deploy 150 major surface combatant ships from Greenland and Iceland to the Danish Straits, bottling up Russia's Northern Fleet, and securing the naval lines of communication between North America and Europe.

By the time these land and naval deployments of the NATO alliance in Europe are in place, the United States will

have amassed in the Persian Gulf, its greatest concentration of combat-ready military forces since the Vietnam War. Unlike the West European and North Atlantic deployments, the American and allied naval deployments in the Gulf are neither for exercises nor for diplomatic show.

They are deployed there with the assigned mission to secure freedom of navigation from Ayatollah Khomeini's terror, and they are deployed under a new set of rules of engagement, which the White House described as follows:

"The new rules of engagement as set forth following the Stark incident, are that American forces may respond in defense of any hostile act when the commander of the ship or the aircraft determines that it is appropriate. So that if you have a case where pilots feel that they are in a defensive posture of having to defend themselves against an imminent threat, they are authorized to take defensive action."

These "rules of engagement," are regulating the behavior of a very formidable concentration of American firepower in the Gulf. Already deployed there are: the flagship *Adm. LaSalle*, three guided missile cruisers, the *Fox*, *Warden*, and *Reeves*, four guided missile frigates, the *Crommelin*, *Jarrett*, *Klakring*, and *Flatley*, and the guided missile destroyer *Kidd*, all operating inside the Strait of Hormuz. On the other side of the Strait, is the aircraft carrier *Constellation* with its battle group consisting of the guided missile cruiser *Valley Forge*, the guided missile destroyer *Cochran*, the frigates *Cooke* and *Ouellet* and the support ships *Camden* and *Niagara Falls*.

Steaming toward the Gulf is also the battleship *Missouri*, its battle group of five warships, and the helicopter carrier *Guadalcanal*.

The French have deployed the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau*, the destroyers *Suffren* and *Dusquesne*, the corvette *Georges Leygues*, the convoy-escort ships *Victor Scoelcher* and *Protet*, and the oilers *Meuse* and *La Marne*. The British have deployed the destroyer *Cardiff*, the frigates *Active* and *Broadsword*, and the oiler *Orangeleaf*. Steaming toward the Gulf are four British and two French minesweepers.

Without counting Iraqi or any other Arab naval and air forces, the United States complement, even apart from the British and French forces with which it coordinates, has established overwhelming naval and air superiority over all of Iranian forces. The question is: To what purpose is this overwhelming force being applied?

Contrary to congressional belly-aching, the answer to this question could not have been simpler and clearer: The Islamic Republic of Iran, through its chief legal authority and spokesman, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, formally declared war against the United States of America, on the day following the bloody Shi'ite riot at the Mecca pilgrimage. Even though Khomeini did not dutifully obey the U.S. Congress's War Powers Act, just the same, as of Khomeini's declaration, a technical state of war exists between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This, of course, does not mean that the American naval

forces there are going to formally respond to Khomeini's declaration and dutifully commence the fighting. It does mean, however, that they have the obligation, as stated, to protect freedom of navigation, and to protect the right of the peaceful nations of the region to conduct normal relations with the United States.

It is the duty of the United States government, to force the Khomeini regime to keep its insanity strictly within its borders.

Diplomacy

Where does the Soviet Union stand in this whole matter, is of course, the critical question. So far, Moscow is responding by enlarging its naval forces in the Gulf, tightening its ties with Teheran, and distancing itself from its earlier efforts to reach an arms control agreement with Washington. With each passing day, Moscow finds itself closer to the side of Khomeini and further away from the United States.

When the war which Khomeini declared against the U.S.A. becomes a shooting war, it will be interesting to see which side Moscow will select. True, Moscow has mobilized some 22 of its divisions on the Soviet Iranian border; true, Yuli Vorontsov, the Soviet deputy foreign minister who runs the arms-control negotiations in Geneva, has been frequently to Teheran in recent weeks, where he wrote a draft for a U.S.S.R.-Iran Friendship Treaty, scheduled to be signed by Eduard Shevardnadze at the end of August, one week before his scheduled visit to the United States, where he is supposed to work out the details of a summit meeting whose chances of ever taking place are rapidly disappearing.

Also true, the Soviet propaganda machine is busy supporting Khomeini and accusing the United States of deliberately provoking Iran. A recent issue of the daily *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, had the nerve to argue that since the Iranians are crazy, and since the United States knows them to be crazy, the United States is deliberately provoking them to violence by not submitting to their blackmail in the Gulf—or words to the same effect.

The dilemma of the Soviet command is this: If, in case of a shooting war between the U.S.A. and Iran, Moscow sides with Iran, they should know that they are committing the same error as the Japanese did in attacking Pearl Harbor: They shall awaken the American people from their present complacent slumber into a wartime mobilization against the twin monstrosity of Khomeiniac fundamentalism and Russian imperialism.

If they simply occupy northern Iran, as they have darkly hinted, the effect on the American people will be the same. If Moscow remains idle and acquiesces in the event that American military actions lead to the Khomeini regime's demise, then Moscow's aura of power among impressionable Arabs, Israelis, and others in the region will rapidly evaporate, and with the aura, the many political assets that Moscow so painstakingly developed over the last 10 years.