

# Israel allies with Khomeini's Iran

by Mark Burdman

As the fighting between Iraq and Iran goes into its third week, there is a growing danger that Israel might take military action to provide flanking support to the Khomeini regime against Iraq, in coordination with U.S. National Security Council policy. Washington-based intelligence sources report that an Israeli military move could involve limited attacks on Lebanon or Syria, or even strikes against Iraq itself.

From evidence in the public record, it is apparent that Israel is already deeply involved in supplying Iran with defense capabilities, including strategic intelligence and advice, spare parts, and, according to some intelligence insiders, aircraft and personnel. Statements from leading Israeli government officials only serve to underscore the scope of this involvement.

One of the first signs of Israel's alliance with Khomeini came from Gen. Mordechai Hod, former chief of the Israeli air force. In an interview with the Israeli daily *Maariv* on Sept. 25, General Hod expressed his concern over the possible disintegration of the Iranian air force. "It is perhaps the occasion," Hod suggested, "for an Israeli initiative toward a rapprochement with [Iranian President] Bani-Sadr to offer him the aid which we alone are capable of furnishing to him."

Two days after Hod called for Israel to aid Khomeini, Israel's Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zippori made the first explicit offer of assistance. In another *Maariv* interview, Zippori said that Israel is prepared to offer "logistical aid" to Iran if Iran breaks from its current anti-Israel posture. "Iranian gunboats use Gabriel missiles as well as artillery shells provided by Israel and bought during the time of the Shah," said Zippori.

Zippori is the closest aide to Prime Minister Begin, who is currently acting as Israel's defense minister.

Other Begin aides are being just as open in their expressions of support for the Khomeini regime. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir has offered military assistance to Iran in exchange for a "gesture"—for example, a break by Iran of its close relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organization. In a meeting with West German Foreign Minister Genscher at the United Nations, Shamir described Iraq as "the most dangerous enemy of Israel," and asserted that the future of the Middle East

would center around an eventual showdown between Israel and Iraq.

Begin himself, in a Sept. 23 speech, warned of the "great danger" contained in the Iraq-Iran war, and demanded that the United States intervene militarily to contain Iraq. In another speech several days later, Begin publicly revealed Israeli intentions to stir up the Kurdish minorities in the region against Iraq. Stressing the historic ties between the Kurds and Israel, Begin gave away Israeli complicity in last week's bombing by the Kurds of Iraq's oil pipeline that runs through eastern Turkey.

## Iraqi nuclear center bombed

Israel's readiness to ally itself with Iran against Iraq stems from Israel's fear that Iraq will emerge from its conflict with Iran as the leader of the Arab world. The Israelis are particularly distraught about Iraq's cooperation with France over the construction of a nuclear research center in Iraq.

Last weekend, in an interview on Israeli television, Gen. Yehoshua Saguy, the head of Israeli military intelligence, expressed his "amazement" that Iran had not yet bombed Iraq's nuclear facilities. He then offered the Iranians "urgent" advice: he presented detailed instructions—complete with map—on how the facilities could be bombed, noting the center's precise location on the outskirts of Baghdad.

"If I were Iranian," said General Saguy referring to the map, "I would keep this picture before me at all times."

Picking up the cue, Iranian planes bombed the nuclear center several days later, failing, however, to hit the reactor.

According to syndicated columnist Jack Anderson last week, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency had just completed a report outlining "the prospect of a preemptive Israeli strike . . . against the Iraqi reactor. . . ."

"Prudently," the DIA report estimated, "we must assume that Israel is considering some sort of action to forestall Iraqi acquisition of a nuclear capability, and we must consider the implications of such actions."

DIA-connected sources in Washington have also put forth the likelihood that Israel is sending Iran jet fighters whose Israeli markings have been removed. "I would not put it past the Israeli Defense Forces to be doing this sort of thing," said one DIA source, noting Deputy Defense Minister Zippori's proposals for sending missiles and artillery shells to Iran.

To hammer out the finer details of Israel's alliance with Khomeini, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Komer, the "godfather" of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force, met in Israel with Prime Minister Begin. Also present at the meeting with Komer, who strongly advocates using military force in the Persian Gulf as a

“deterrent” to the Soviet Union, were Begin’s pro-Khomeini advisers Zippori and Saguy. After the meeting with Komer, Begin emerged to announce “a positive change” in the “strategic relationship” between Israel and the United States.

## Stopping the Iraqis

In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation last week, Chaim Herzog, the former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, stated that from the Israeli standpoint the worst possible outcome of the Iraq-Iran war would be an Iraqi victory. He added that while Israel had at first wished on Iraq and Iran “a plague on both your houses,” Israel now prefers to recall its long friendship and cooperation with Iran—especially the Iranian military—in the interest of preventing an Iraqi victory.

Why is the Israeli government so intent on allying with Khomeini? The answer may lie in a closer look at some of the proponents of the alliance.

Gen. Mordechai Hod, for example, was commander of the Israeli air force during the June 1967 war in which Israel launched a preemptive strike and demolished the regime of Egyptian President Nasser, the Arab leader then most committed to the region’s industrial development. Hod’s associates in this enterprise were the two architects of the Israeli air force capability, Ezer Weizman and Gen. Dan Tolkovsky.

Tolkovsky is today the only Israeli member of the Club of Rome International, an organization dedicated to reducing the world’s population and to keeping the developing world in a state of “permanent primitivism.” He is also the head of the Israeli branch of the Israeli Discount Bank, an offshoot of the British Barclays Bank.

Both Barclays and the Club of Rome International are among the sponsors of the Muslim Brotherhood, the secret fundamentalist society that put Ayatollah Khomeini in power. Barclays is a funder of the Center for the Advancement of British-Arab Understanding, the London-based organization that “deploys” the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, Ayatollah Khomeini and Israeli generals like Hod are two arms of the same British intelligence capability in the Middle East—a capability threatened by Iraq.

Significantly, the Israeli Labour Party opposition is taking issue with Begin’s flirtation with Iran. Last week, Labour Party leader Shimon Peres declared that Israel should stay out of the feud between Iraq and Iran. Earlier, the Labour Party-linked daily *Davar* published an analysis suggesting that an Iraqi victory might be the best thing for Israel and the United States, since it could, if the United States maneuvered correctly, reinforce U.S. influence in the Middle East.

Israel’s alliance with the Khomeini cause could,

according to intelligence sources, backfire right in Israel’s face. Any further Israeli move to back Iran could force Egypt, which has endorsed Iraq in the conflict, to scrap Camp David altogether, thereby clearing the way for a European initiative toward an overall settlement.

## U.S. Press calls for aid to Khomeini

*After background briefings to the press by Carter administration spokesmen, the major American newspapers last week issued virtually identical editorials denouncing Iraq. Excerpts from the editorials of main East Coast dailies—the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Baltimore Sun—appear below.*

### The New York Times

Despite its lack of affection for Iran, the United States has wisely removed any doubts about its attitude to the dismemberment of Iran, either by Iraqi legions or by a Soviet thrust. That, in the words of Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, would be a matter of “the utmost gravity” to Washington. Americans can expect no gratitude in Teheran for this warning. . . .

### The Washington Post

American policy has been more a matter of words than deeds, but the right words have not always been used. “Neutrality,” for instance, has dulled the emphasis the United States ought to be putting on Iraqi aggression. The United States, an official says all too mildly, “couldn’t condone” Iraq if Iraq grabbed the Iranian oil province of Khuzestan. The American interest lies in seeing that the inevitable disputes in the Persian Gulf are settled peaceably. The United States should be losing no occasion to say so.

### The Baltimore Sun

We cannot retreat into neutrality. . . .

The United States should be prepared to use its influence and leverage to prevent the disintegration of Iran, the one nation that can challenge Iraq’s efforts to dominate the Gulf. The spectacle of this country even indirectly aiding a regime that has . . . held hostages . . . for 11 months would be galling. Nevertheless . . . the United States will have to play its full role as a world power capable of preventing disaster in the Gulf.