

## Middle East Report by Judith Wyer

### An oil war for the Gulf?

*Iran is threatening to block oil shipments from the region, a move the British majors wouldn't mind at all.*

**T**he Khomeini dictatorship is reported to be making final preparations for what it claims will be its deepest invasion of Iraq since Iran first crossed the border on July 13.

According to a Paris-based oil consultant, this time around Khomeini may be prepared to make good his regime's repeated threats to blockade the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. It is reliably reported that in recent weeks Iran has re-established their pre-revolutionary status with traditionally the two most active oil companies in Iran, British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell, as part of this geopolitical ploy.

Both companies played a role in supporting Khomeini's revolution, and were the first companies to purchase Iranian oil after the Khomeini takeover. Now, according to London sources, these two companies are buying the lion's share of Iranian oil at discount prices and stockpiling in anticipation of a third oil hoax.

For the first time in months, the speculative spot market has registered a slight upturn in oil prices in response to increased buying. The buying in turn reflects fears that the escalating Gulf war will affect availability of oil.

Following Iraq's Sept. 3 sinking of a Turkish freighter which was en route to Iran, Khomeini has announced that Iran's retaliation would be the most drastic ever. On Sept. 7, Khomeini's right-hand man, Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani, warned that if Iraq did not cease its attacks on Iran's oil facilities, Iran would spread the two-year-old war outside the war

zone and block oil shipments through the mouth of the Gulf.

The Anglo-Dutch nobility which runs BP and Shell not as corporations but as resource weapons on behalf of its anti-growth policies, wants an oil hoax in autumn since oil consumption increases at that time, making a cutoff more damaging for consuming nations. It is also reported that they calculate that the radical anti-Western faction in Saudi Arabia will have gained greater power by that time. Saudi Oil Minister Zaki Yamani, claim British sources, has become an asset of London in maneuvering the next oil hoax.

Britain also has the unique capability of providing covert logistical aid to Iran in blockading Gulf oil flows. British Special Air Services forces to this day oversee the military and security forces of Oman, which controls the mouth of the Gulf to the west, with Iran controlling the east.

Since the little noticed announcement by the Iranian Deputy Minister of Oil in early July inviting all multinational oil companies except American ones back into Iran, BP and Shell have secretly regained their position in Iranian oil marketing. One way that the two companies have facilitated this is through new supply contracts between Iran and certain British Commonwealth countries like Australia and New Zealand.

At the end of August, Iranian Oil Minister Gharazi announced that Iran was no longer interested in selling its oil through barter, the primary means by which its oil trade has been facili-

tated since the revolution, principally with the East bloc. He stressed that Iran was looking for cash transactions only, another sign that Iran has developed links with the oil companies.

Not only has Britain increased its presence in Iran, but it has also made gains in Saudi Arabia. Late last month, for the first time the Saudi state-owned oil company, Petromin, awarded BP its first long-term crude contract. Though the volume of the sale was small, it is considered a precedent-setting development given Saudi Arabia's declining sales. Since that contract was awarded, BP has sent another delegation to Riyadh for further commitments.

As has been reported in this column, London has made no secret of its design to regain control over its old colonial turf, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. London is cultivating a gang of "Young Turks" to take over Saudi Arabia, and impose a regime as radical as the Khomeini regime it created.

This month the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, known as the Hajj, began. Khomeini has appointed Ayatollah Koini, a mastermind of the U.S. hostage affair, to lead the Iranian pilgrims to Mecca. Iranian Foreign Minister Veliyati has called on the Iranian pilgrims to "politicize" the Hajj, raising suspicions that Iran and its radical allies within Saudi Arabia may try to foment unrest at Mecca and destabilize the Saudi royal family.

By London's calculations, the United States will then retreat into the Western Hemisphere, and attempt to make Mexico its petroleum reserve. London and its oligarchic allies will have control over the prime oil source for the Eastern Hemisphere, giving them heightened economic warfare capabilities against the industrial sectors of West Germany and Japan.