

Massive US Naval Armada Heads For Iran

By Earl of Stirling

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Operation Brimstone ended only one week ago. This was the joint US/UK/French naval war games in the Atlantic Ocean preparing for a naval blockade of Iran and the likely resulting war in the Persian Gulf area. The massive war games included a US Navy supercarrier battle group, an US Navy expeditionary carrier battle group, a Royal Navy carrier battle group, a French nuclear hunter-killer submarine plus a large number of US Navy cruisers, destroyers and frigates playing the "enemy force".

The lead American ship in these war games, the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN71) and its Carrier Strike Group Two (CCSG-2) are now headed towards Iran along with the USS Ronald Reagon (CVN76) and its Carrier Strike Group Seven (CCSG-7) coming from Japan.

They are joining two existing USN battle groups in the Gulf area: the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN72) with its Carrier Strike Group Nine (CCSG-9); and the USS Peleliu (LHA-5) with its expeditionary strike group.

Likely also under way towards the Persian Gulf is the USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) and its expeditionary strike group, the UK Royal Navy HMS Ark Royal (R07) carrier battle group, assorted French naval assets including the nuclear hunter-killer submarine Amethyste and French Naval Rafale fighter jets on-board the USS Theodore Roosevelt. These ships took part in the just completed Operation Brimstone.

The build up of naval forces in the Gulf will be one of the largest multi-national naval armadas since the First and Second Gulf Wars. The intent is to create a US/EU naval blockade (which is an Act of War under international law) around Iran (with supporting air and land elements) to prevent the shipment of benzene and certain other refined oil products headed to Iranian ports. Iran has limited domestic oil refining capacity and imports 40% of its benzene. Cutting off benzene and other key products would cripple the Iranian economy. The neo-cons are counting on such a blockade launching a war with Iran.

The US Naval forces being assembled include the following:

Carrier Strike Group Nine

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN72) nuclear powered supercarrier
with its Carrier Air Wing Two

Destroyer Squadron Nine:

USS Mobile Bay (CG53) guided missile cruiser

USS Russell (DDG59) guided missile destroyer

USS Momsen (DDG92) guided missile destroyer

USS Shoup (DDG86) guided missile destroyer

USS Ford (FFG54) guided missile frigate

USS Ingraham (FFG61) guided missile frigate

USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG60) guided missile frigate

USS Curts (FFG38) guided missile frigate

Plus one or more nuclear hunter-killer submarines

Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Group

USS Peleliu (LHA-5) a Tarawa-class amphibious assault carrier

USS Pearl Harbor (LSD52) assault ship

USS Dubuque (LPD8) assault ship/landing dock

USS Cape St. George (CG71) guided missile cruiser

USS Halsey (DDG97) guided missile destroyer

USS Benfold (DDG65) guided missile destroyer

Carrier Strike Group Two

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN71) nuclear powered supercarrier
with its Carrier Air Wing Eight

Destroyer Squadron 22

USS Monterey (CG61) guided missile cruiser

USS Mason (DDG87) guided missile destroyer
USS Nitze (DDG94) guided missile destroyer
USS Sullivans (DDG68) guided missile destroyer

USS Springfield (SSN761) nuclear powered hunter-killer submarine

IWO ESG ~ Iwo Jima Expeditionary Strike Group
USS Iwo Jima (LHD7) amphibious assault carrier
with its Amphibious Squadron Four
and with its 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit
USS San Antonio (LPD17) assault ship
USS Velia Gulf (CG72) guided missile cruiser
USS Ramage (DDG61) guided missile destroyer
USS Carter Hall (LSD50) assault ship
USS Roosevelt (DDG80) guided missile destroyer

USS Hartfore (SSN768) nuclear powered hunter-killer submarine

Carrier Strike Group Seven
USS Ronald Reagan (CVN76) nuclear powered supercarrier
with its Carrier Air Wing 14
Destroyer Squadron 7
USS Chancellorsville (CG62) guided missile cruiser
USS Howard (DDG83) guided missile destroyer
USS Gridley (DDG101) guided missile destroyer
USS Decatur (DDG73) guided missile destroyer
USS Thach (FFG43) guided missile frigate
USNS Rainier (T-AOE-7) fast combat support ship

Also likely to join the battle armada:

UK Royal Navy HMS Ark Royal Carrier Strike Group with assorted guided missile destroyers and frigates, nuclear hunter-killer submarines and support ships

French Navy nuclear powered hunter-killer submarines (likely the Amethyste and perhaps others), plus French Naval Rafale fighter jets operating off of the USS Theodore Roosevelt as the French Carrier Charles de Gaulle is in dry dock, and assorted surface warships

Various other US Navy warships and submarines and support ships. The following USN ships took part (as the "enemy" forces) in Operation Brimstone and several may join in:

USS San Jacinto (CG56) guided missile cruiser
USS Anzio (CG68) guided missile cruiser
USS Normandy (CG60) guided missile cruiser
USS Carney (DDG64) guided missile destroyer
USS Oscar Austin (DDG79) guided missile destroyer
USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG81) guided missile destroyer
USS Carr (FFG52) guided missile frigate

The USS Iwo Jima and USS Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Groups have USMC Harrier jump jets and an assortment of assault and attack helicopters. The Expeditionary Strike Groups have powerful USMC Expeditionary Units with amphibious armor and ground forces trained for operating in shallow waters and in seizures of land assets, such as Qeshm Island (a 50 mile long island off of Bandar Abbas in the Gulf of Hormuz and headquarters of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps).

The large and very advanced nature of the US Naval warships is not only directed at Iran. There is a great fear that Russia and China may oppose the naval and air/land blockade of Iran. If Russian and perhaps Chinese naval warships escort commercial tankers to Iran in violation of the blockade it could be the most dangerous at-sea confrontation since the Cuban Missile Crisis. The US and allied Navies, by front loading a Naval blockade force with very powerful guided missile warships and strike carriers is attempting to have a force so powerful that Russia and China will not be tempted to mess with. This is a most serious game of military brinkmanship with major nuclear armed powers that have profound objections to the neo-con grand strategy and to western control of all of the Middle East's oil supply.

The Russian Navy this spring sent a major battle fleet into the Mediterranean headed by the modern aircraft carrier the Admiral Kuznetsov and the flagship of its Black Sea Fleet, the Guided Missile Heavy Cruiser Moskva. This powerful fleet has at least 11 surface ships and unknown numbers of subs and can use the Russian naval facility at Syria's Tartous port for resupply. The Admiral Kuznetsov carries approximately 47 warplanes and 10 helicopters. The warplanes are mostly the powerful Su-33, a naval version (with mid-air refueling capability) of the Su-27 family. While the Su-33 is a very powerful warplane it lacks the power of the stealth USAF F-22. However, the Russians insist that they have developed a plasma based system that allows them to stealth any aircraft and a recent incident where Russian fighters were able to appear unannounced over a US Navy carrier battle group tends to confirm their claims. The Su-33 can be armed with the 3M82 Moskit sea-skimming missile (NATO code name SS-N-22 Sunburn) and the even more powerful P-800 Oniks (also named Yakhonts; NATO code name SS-N-26 Onyx). Both missiles are designed to kill US Navy supercarriers by getting past the cruiser/destroyer screen and the USN point-defense Phalanx system by using high supersonic speeds and violent end maneuvers. Russian subs currently use the underwater rocket VA-111 Shkval (Squall), which is fired from standard 533mm torpedo tubes and reaches a speed of 360kph (230mph) underwater. There is no effective countermeasures to this system and no western counterpart.

A strategic diversion has been created for Russia. The Republic of Georgia, with US backing, is actively preparing for war on South Ossetia. The South Ossetia capital has been shelled and a large Georgian tank force has been heading towards the border. Russia has stated that it will not sit by and allow the Georgians to attack South Ossetia. The Russians are great chess players and this game may not turn out so well for the neo-cons.

UPDATE 8 August 2008 ~ War has broken out between Georgia and South Ossetia. At least 10 Russian troops have been killed and 30 wounded and 2 Russian fighter jets downed. American Marines, a thousand of them, have recently been in Georgia training the Georgian military forces. Several European nations stopped Bush and others from allowing Georgia into NATO. Russia is moving a large military force with armor towards the area. This could get bad, and remember it is just a strategic diversion....but one that could have horrific effects. Link to story "Russia sends forces into Georgia rebel conflict".

FURTHER UPDATE ~ Russian military forces in active combat; now total of four Russian fighter jets reported downed.

ADDITIONAL UPDATE ~ Georgia calls for US help; Russian Air Force bombs Georgian air bases. DEBKA, the Israeli strategy and military site, states that Israeli military officers are advising the Georgian armed forces in combat operations and that 1,000 Israelis are in-combat on the side of Georgia at this time.

Kuwait has activated its "Emergency War Plan" as it and other Gulf nations prepare for the likelihood of a major regional war in the Middle East involving weapons of mass destruction.

The two-ton elephant in the living room of the neo-con strategy is the advanced biowar (ABW) that Iran, and to a lesser extent Syria, has. This places the motherlands of the major neo-con nations (America, France, the United Kingdom), as well as Israel, in grave danger. When the Soviet Union fell the Iranians hired as many out-of-work former Soviet advanced biowar experts as possible. In the last 15 or so years they have helped to develop a truly world class ABW program utilizing recombination DNA genetic engineering technology to create a large number of man made killer viruses. This form of weapon system does not require high tech military delivery systems. The viruses are sub-microscopic and once seeded in a population use the population itself as vectors. Seeding can be done without notice in shopping malls, churches, and other public places. The only real defense to an advanced global strategic biowar attack is to lock down the population as rapidly as possible and let those infected die off.

Unless the public gets it act together and forces the neo-cons to stop the march to yet another war in the Middle East we are apt to see a truly horrific nightmare unfold in OUR COUNTRIES.

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