

INTERNATIONAL

Khamenei offers help to Iraq, calls for holy war against West

From Associated Press reports

Iran's spiritual leader offered more support to Tehran's former arch-enemy Wednesday, calling for a holy war against Western forces gathered in the Persian Gulf since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared that Muslims who die fighting to throw Americans out of the region would be martyrs bound for heaven.

His speech in Tehran came amid reports Iran had agreed to help break the U.N. embargo of Iraq by allowing in food and medical supplies in return for free Iraqi oil.

A U.N. sanctions committee broke up Wednesday after becoming deadlocked over what kind of food aid to allow into Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Most of the delegates want to allow shipments of food only to foreigners and children. Cuba and Yemen were calling for a broader resolution allowing in food to all civilians.

More than 400 Americans and Britons — women and children who had been stranded in Kuwait since the Iraqi invasion — left Baghdad on Wednesday. Their Boeing 747 was chartered jointly by the United States and Britain. Another flight carrying 10 ailing and elderly Italian men flew to Rome.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said he will allow foreign women and children to leave Iraq and Kuwait but is

holding most Western men as human shields to deter an invasion.

President Bush, in an address Tuesday night to a joint session of Congress, said his heart went out to the families of the American hostages, but he declared, "America and the world will not be blackmailed."

Bush also prepared a videotaped message to Iraq's citizens Wednesday in which he said that "we have no quarrel with the Iraqi people" and that Iraqis should blame hardships created by the embargo on their own government.

Bush made the eight-minute tape after the Iraq government offered to send a TV crew to interview him and broadcast the interview on Iraqi television.

Bush opted to make his own tape instead. White House officials said they doubted the entire message would be broadcast in Baghdad.

Iran's Khamenei, meanwhile, reiterated his opposition to Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. But the condemnation was muffled by his bitter denunciation of the U.S. forces deployed to protect Saudi Arabia.

"What has the security of this region got to do with you?" he asked. "The security of this region is the business of the nations of this region."

Khamenei warned: "Moslem nations will not allow America to set up its security and defense system in the region."

"The struggle against American aggression, greed, plans and policies in the Persian Gulf will be counted as a Jihad (holy war), and anybody who is killed on that path is a martyr," he said in the speech carried by Tehran radio and monitored in Nicosia.

Iran's spiritual leaders often referred to their 8-year conflict with Saddam's secular regime as a crusade. But Saddam last month withdrew troops that have occupied Iranian territory since a 1988 truce, and it agreed to share sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, the southern border between the two countries.

On Sunday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz was in Iran for the first visit by a high-ranking Iraqi official in 15 years. Officials said Iran agreed to allow food and medical supplies into Iraq in return for 200,000 barrels of free oil a day.

Analysts said Khamenei's comments may have been aimed at placating anti-Western radicals in the Tehran hierarchy who have been critical of the U.S. presence as well as the moderating policies of President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

One analyst contacted by The Associated Press said he doubted Khamenei's statement reflected a serious threat to unleash Iran's zealous Revolutionary Guards or other Moslem forces against American forces in the gulf.

Nations agree on treaty to form united Germany, balance power

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — The victors of World War II on Wednesday signed one of the most important documents of the postwar era, giving international sanction to both German unity and a major reshaping of the East-West balance of power.

Secretary of State James Baker proclaimed the signing a "rendezvous with history."

"This represents the end of a 45-year journey," Baker said after he and the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, Britain, France and the two Germanys signed a treaty settling the global aspects of German unification.

At the signing ceremony inside Moscow's posh October Hotel, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev watched West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher affix the first signature, followed by East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere, who is also foreign minister.

The Allies were next: French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, Soviet Foreign Minister Edouard Shevardnadze, Baker and British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

The sweeping document, called the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, climaxes seven months of tough bargaining between the six nations.

In it, the same four powers that

defeated Germany in 1945 give their seal of approval to German unity. It will lead to scrapping their special rights in Germany — such as their control of air corridors into Berlin.

The treaty was the last major document needed to clear the way for merging the two Germanys on Oct. 3.

Under the document, the Soviet Union loses East Germany as its most valued military ally. The six nations agreed all of Germany can belong to NATO.

The Soviets will be allowed to keep their estimated 370,000 troops in East Germany for a maximum of four years. Armed forces of the three Western World War II allies will be permitted to remain in Berlin as long as Soviet troops are still in East Germany.

The treaty also addresses Soviet concerns about the potential might of a united Germany and about shifts in the European balance of power.

The Soviets won a pledge from the Germans that they would put a cap of 370,000 on their total troop strength. The two Germanys currently have about 600,000 soldiers.

Both German nations also vowed to renounce ownership or use of atomic, chemical and biological weapons.

The Soviets won a concession that no nuclear weapons would be deployed on East German soil even after all Red Army troops are withdrawn.

The treaty also states that a united Germany will never try to claim land forfeited to Poland after World War II.

Poland had expressed reservations about a united Germany, fearing the Germans might try to reclaim the territory.

The horrible devastation of World War II, started by Nazi Germany in 1939, is evoked in the six-nation treaty. Germany's division — and the start of the Cold War era — followed the Nazis' 1945 defeat.

"The governments of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) reaffirm their declarations that only peace will emanate from German soil," the treaty states.

It adds, "According to the constitution of the united Germany, acts tending to and undertaken with the intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for aggressive war, are unconstitutional and punishable."

Genscher said that the treaty signing was "a day of joy and jubilation" for Germans, but that the victims of World War II and the Nazi terror must never be forgotten and the "agony of the Jewish people" never repeated.

Police estimate at least 50 killed by gangs in South African violence

From Associated Press reports

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Chaotic violence raged Wednesday through black townships, where armed gangs set fire to homes and chased people through the streets. Police said at least 50 people were killed.

It was some of the worst unrest in a month of black faction fighting in townships near Johannesburg. More than 700 people have died.

People piled possessions in wheelbarrows and supermarket carts to flee clashes between groups armed with machetes, axes, spears and clubs. "We have to leave. We are helpless without guns," said one man who refused to

give his name.

Ambushes in Soweto killed a white policeman and three blacks, while street fighting killed 46 blacks in four other townships, police said.

Officers fired tear gas and birdshot to disperse crowds in Vosloorus and Soweto. Houses and cars were set alight, and charred corpses remained on the street in several areas.

"The Zulus are killing us," said one man at the Tokoza squatter camp, who was carrying an ax. "Every night they come with guns."

ANC leader Nelson Mandela discussed the violence Tuesday with President F.W. de Klerk and called for

the military to end the fighting. Mandela and other black leaders have been unable to bring peace, despite repeated pleas. They have accused police of fueling the fighting and allege that whites with blackened faces or wearing masks have joined in the attacks.

The fighting involves Zulus loyal to the conservative Inkatha movement and Xhosa and other blacks linked to the ANC. It began Aug. 12 in Johannesburg-area townships after spreading from Natal Province in the east. Natal is the traditional Zulu homeland.

ANC supporters have charged that much of the recent fighting began with Inkatha attacks on squatter camps and

other dwellings.

The latest victims included a police officer and three colleagues who were ambushed with assault rifles while driving through a squatter camp in Soweto. The police officer was killed, and the others were seriously injured.

Police said the ambushed patrol went to the camp after ANC leader Walter Sisulu told them Tuesday night that Inkatha was attacking residents. Police Brig. Gen. Vic Haynes said Sisulu's report proved false, but that the quick police response showed the force was not siding with Inkatha.

"We do not at all say that Mr. Sisulu deliberately led the policemen into an

ambush," Haynes added.

Also in Soweto, three blacks died when their yellow van was riddled with gunfire from AK-47 rifles, police said. The attackers apparently mistook the van for a police vehicle, most of which are yellow.

The government sent troops into the townships last month to back up police, but fighting didn't stop. Mandela said Tuesday the government could stop the fighting if it wanted to by using its powerful military.

He also said the continued unrest threatened talks with the white-led government on ending apartheid. Mandela has made similar statements

in the past, but the talks have continued.

Both Inkatha and the ANC oppose apartheid but differ over tactics and plans for a future South Africa. Inkatha accuses the ANC of trying to monopolize power by terrorizing political opponents. The ANC says Inkatha spread the violence from Natal in a bid to broaden its constituency.

Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha, in a letter to the United Nations, called for international pressure to get Mandela and Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi to join forces in seeking an end to the fighting. The ANC has so far rejected contact with Buthelezi.

Arabs anxious about potential Israeli involvement in conflict

From Associated Press reports

DAMMAM, Saudi Arabia — A government official was discussing what Saudis increasingly refer to as Saddam Hussein's "Israeli option" when he suddenly began shaking his head.

"Saudi Arabia would rather be absorbed by Saddam Hussein than saved by Israel," said the official, who, as is customary, spoke on condition of anonymity.

His remark was likely an exaggeration. Indeed, the official and several other prominent Saudis interviewed recently offered private praise of Israel for keeping a low public profile since Iraq invaded Kuwait.

But the statement highlighted growing Saudi anxiety over Saddam's potential to change the face of the standoff by drawing Israel into the conflict. Any Israeli involvement could change the alignment of forces against Iraq, isolate Saudi Arabia and put the United States in an awkward position. No Arab country could afford to fight against Iraq alongside Israel and the United States, Israel's main aid and arms supplier.

"The option that keeps people awake at night is the Israeli option — that Saddam will lob missiles at Israel," the Saudi official said. "Saddam knows that if he fools with Israel he'll be clobbered. But he also knows that fooling with Israel would devastate us."

By "devastate," the Saudi official means isolate, arguing that Saudi Arabia would be blamed for the destruction of an Arab state — albeit a belligerent one — and ostracized among its brothers much like Egypt was after making peace with Israel.

Saudi officials are quick to warn that any public Israeli role in the crisis would quickly undermine the support the kingdom has received from most of the Arab world, including the in-

fluent Syrians and Egyptians.

The United States has been sensitive to Saudi concerns and asked Israel at the outset of the crisis to keep its involvement, at least publicly, to a minimum.

Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. forces here, responded with a blunt "no" when asked if the United States was getting help from Israel. The United States is believed to be getting intelligence from the Israelis.

How the current standoff will affect regional politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict is unclear. If nothing else, the Saudis are vowing to be far more selective in doling out foreign aid, including the hefty assistance they provide the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A senior government official said this week the Saudis want and plan to continue their support of the PLO. But the official said the kingdom hoped PLO leaders would move away from statements viewed as supportive of the Iraqi invasion.

There have been a few public episodes that have illustrated the often conflicting attitudes among Saudis toward Israel.

Two English-language Saudi newspapers last week took the unprecedented step of publishing a map showing Israel. Most maps sold here identify the territory as Palestine.

"Don't think it wasn't noticed," an official in the government of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province said.

That seemingly liberal step was balanced the same week by the seizure of hundreds of T-shirts vendors were selling that referred to the gulf crisis and the deployment of American and other troops here.

Saudi and U.S. military officials said the reason for the confiscation was that the maps on the shirts referred to Israel.

Soviet Union to consider switching to market economy

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — President Mikhail Gorbachev said Wednesday a plan for converting the Soviet Union to a market economy has been submitted simultaneously to the national parliament and to those of the 15 republics.

Gorbachev, saying the entire country should be involved in this "difficult choice," was for the first time seeking nationwide approval — via the elected parliaments — of a policy that previously was determined by the Communist regime's central government.

In an interview with the evening television news program "Vremya," Gorbachev confirmed that the plan he endorsed and submitted to the national and republic parliaments was based on a radical proposal by economist Stanislav Shatalin.

In doing so, Gorbachev has rejected the proposal for a more moderate reform program put forth by Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, who has indicated he would resign if his plan is defeated when the national legislature reconvenes next week.

Reflecting the political uncertainty and public anxiety over the economy,

some Soviet newspapers raised questions about the stability of society. "Democracy that doesn't provide food is doomed," said an editorial in Wednesday's Komsomolskaya Pravda.

A columnist for the weekly Literaturnaya Gazeta suggested the military-industrial complex might well decide "it's cheaper and safer to launch a military coup." He then suggested such an action would return the nation to the "stagnation" that existed under former leader Leonid Brezhnev.

The government newspaper Izvestia ran an interview Tuesday with Col. Gen. Vladimir Achalov, who sought to calm readers by telling them the presence of paratroops near Moscow was benign. The troops are helping with the harvest and drilling for the Nov. 7 Revolution Day parade, he said, and are not a "threat to democracy... so please don't suspect them in any actions against the people."

"It's a difficult choice to be made," Gorbachev said in the nationally televised broadcast, speaking about the decision to launch the overall economic reforms.

"This is not the choice of one person or of a group of people," he said. "It is

the country that should make its choice. And having made the choice, to have it going and moving forward."

Shatalin's plan calls for transferring most economic authority from the national government to the republics, who then could move to free prices, privatize government industries, legalize private ownership of land and take other steps toward a market-based system.

Ryzhkov's plan calls for keeping central control over the economy and making a much slower transition to a market-based system. He recommended keeping price controls on most food and household products, while raising the cost of some major items, such as televisions, radios and refrigerators.

The parliament of Russia, the largest of the republics, on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a version of the Shatalin plan. The republic, led by popular reformer Boris Yeltsin, has taken the initiative on pressing for economic change, increasing the pressure on Gorbachev.

Gorbachev had asked a group of economic experts, led by Abel Aganbegyan, to hammer out a program to submit to the national parliament taking elements

from both the Shatalin proposal and the government plan, which was written by Ryzhkov.

On Tuesday, he told the parliament of his preference for the Shatalin proposal, and on Wednesday, he said the unified plan submitted to the parliaments "is generally based on the concept suggested by the group headed by academician Shatalin."

"But at the same time, it is a new document," Gorbachev told the "Vremya" interviewer. "It has absorbed lots of ideas and suggestions of the government's program, and of the program suggested by many scientists... and many ideas and suggestions made by our union republics."

Gorbachev also appeared to calm the anxieties of a Soviet populace that has endured shortages of the most basic goods, such as bread and cigarettes, and a wave of panic-buying this year.

"No matter what program we choose, this transition will be the most difficult compared with anything we have done so far during the perestroika years," he said, referring to the economic and social program he has launched since taking power in 1985.

Reagan takes a whack at Berlin Wall on European trip

From Associated Press reports

WEST BERLIN — Former President Reagan, who once used the Berlin Wall to give the East bloc a rhetorical bashing, grabbed a hammer and chisel Wednesday to take a few real whacks at the remnants of the Cold War barrier.

Onlookers applauded and shouted, "We love you, Ronnie!" and, "Bravo, Ronnie!" as the 79-year-old Reagan and his wife, Nancy, walked through the landmark Brandenburg Gate between East and West Berlin.

A hundred yards farther, the Reagans came to one of the few remaining sections of the concrete wall in central Berlin. The ex-president, his tongue sticking through his teeth in determination, gave it a few smacks.

In a speech three years ago, Reagan challenged Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear this wall down."

Reagan's presidential library in Simi Valley, Calif., has a three-ton section of the wall, which was opened in November following an autumn of pro-democracy demonstrations. The two Germanys are scheduled for reunification Oct. 3.

"Looking back one year, who would have believed that today you would be in the final stages of uniting your country?" Reagan said in a speech later to a forum on Germany's future.

"Today, that symbol of separation, the Berlin Wall, is a fading memory. Yet, for nearly three decades it had separated the German people and it

symbolized the lack of freedom for those in East Germany to travel, to speak out, to live and to work where they chose."

He predicted the united Germany would be a partner in Western security and economic growth and join international peacekeeping forces.

"It will also serve as a symbol of the unquenchable human spirit, a spirit embodied in the terms 'freiheit' — freedom — and 'einigkeit' — unity."

After visiting the wall, Reagan visited East German Parliament President Sabine Bergmann-Pohl. She said she hoped Reagan would return to visit the country after unification.

Berlin was Reagan's first stop on a 10-day European trip that also includes scheduled stops in Poland, the Soviet

Union and Italy.

On Thursday, he is expected to travel to Bonn, the West German capital, to meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Reagan said he believed the course for reforms in Eastern Europe began in the early 1980s when West Germany agreed to accept bases for cruise missiles with nuclear warheads and the U.S. began its "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative, conceived as a shield against nuclear strikes.

Both decisions forced the Soviets to accept a treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces and focus more on internal economic problems, he said.

"Inevitably, they loosened their grip on the states of central and Eastern Europe," Reagan said.

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