Worldwatch

By Frank Hrach

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammud Ali Rajai announced recently that Iran will do everything in its power to keep open the critical Strait of Hormuz, the only sea route for oil from the Persian Gulf countries. The operation of the waterway has been threatened by the recent Iran-Iraq border conflict.

This statement was seen as a direct response to the Carter Administration's suggestion that the world's industrial nations meet and consider the possibility of employing a collective task force to keep the Strait open.

The statement charged that several governments were considering "interference in the region of the Gulf," and it pledged that "The Government of the Iranian Republic, in full view of its international obligations, wishes to assure the international community that Iran shall not hesitate in any effort to keep this waterway in full operation."

Rajai also claimed that Iranian armed forces had made considerable offensive gains by driving the Iraqis out of Ahwaz, the capital of the oil-producing Khuzistan province. Iran also reported that its troops had recaptured the strategic border town of Mehran.

International military analysts reported that the Iraqi troops had penetrated the Iranian oil port of Khorramshahr, but that the Iraqi offensive appears to have been stalled.

The recent fighting has puzzled analysts, as both sides appear to be missing their foreign-supplied air power. The Iraqi air force, comprised mostly of Soviet-built MIG 23's and MIG 21's, has virtually vanished from the skies. Experts also question the deployment of the Iranian air force. The Iranians have been using their American-built F-4 fighters primarily for air raids on Baghdad and other "political" targets, rather than being used for air support of their ground forces.

Both sides appear to be regrouping in preparation of heavy new fighting. Western reporters in Tehran reported that Iranian officials were encouraged by the news from the front, and they were predicting a long guerrilla-type war in light of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's declaration that Iran will not enter into peace negotiations until the Iraqis are driven from Iranian soil.

Applications are now being accepted for the annual Harry S. Truman Scholarships. The scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit to current sophomores who possess outstanding potential for leadership in government. Students following courses of study in history, political science, public administration, economics and finance, and international relations should especially be encouraged to apply.

The awards are made to one student from each state and, in addition, up to 26 scholarships may be awarded at large. Each scholarship covers tuition, fees, books, and room and board to a maximum of $5,000 annually, and are renewable for the senior year and for up to two years of graduate study.

Any student wishing to be considered should contact Dr. Louis Menard III, Room 3-234, Ext. 3-7752, no later than October 15, 1980.

The fellowship is limited to individuals who are citizens or nationals of the United States as of the time of application, and who have not completed postbaccalaureate study in excess of 12 semester hours. Preapplication forms are available at the Graduate School Office, Room 3-316. Application deadline is November 26, 1980.

The Fannie and John Hertz Foundation awards graduate fellowships to students of outstanding potential in the applied physical sciences. The fellowships may be used at one of 15 institutions, including MIT. Applicants must be US citizens, or have documented proof of intent to acquire US citizenship. The proposed field of graduate study must be concerned with applications of the physical sciences to human problems, broadly construed. High previous scholastic performance is expected of all applicants, including at least an A- average during the last two years of undergraduate work. Contact the Graduate School Office, Room 3-316, for further information. Application deadline: November 15, 1980.

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