

How Yesterday Resembles Today: Iran Confronted the US in the Straits of Hormuz in the 1980s

By [Elijah J. Magnier](#)

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[Elijah J. Magnier](#) 28 May 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

“We are going to intercept and stop all oil exports from the (Middle East) region if we are prevented from exporting our oil. We shall take every measure possible to close the Straits of Hormuz. If the US aims – by sending jets, carriers – to reinforce its positions and status among the international community, it doesn’t concern us. But if the US is seriously aiming to threaten us, it should know that not one drop of oil will leave the region and we shall destroy all US interests in the Middle East”. This is what the President Grand Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei said in 1983, in response to the US President Ronald Regan’s decision to send jet carriers to the Middle East during the Iran-Iraq war. It seems like only yesterday.

Today, in 2019, the experienced and veteran leader of the revolution, Sayyed Khamenei – who played a role in the very similar critical situation in the 80s – is facing President Donald Trump and an administration who seem not to have learned much from history and the previous US-Iran confrontation. Looking at past foreign policy with a critical eye seems not to be part of the current US administration’s practice. A small reminder may give many answers to what Trump can expect in a wider confrontation with Iran.

In the 80s, Iran’s “Islamic Revolution” was facing serious problems on many levels. Its armed forces were disorganised and dispersed; there were serious differences between decision-makers and politicians over how to run the country following the fall of the Shah; domestic security was lacking; there were ethnic and national struggles; no country was ready to sell weapons to Iran; the US, Europe and the Gulf states supported Saddam Hussein’s aggression against Iran; and the country was going through serious economic difficulties.

It was a perfect scenario for Saddam Hussein to invade Iran, which he did in September 1980 by bombing Mehrabad international airport and occupied later Khorramshahr, calling for an uprising of ethnic Arabs “in al-Muhammara”. This same objective, and concomitant regime-change is what the US administration has been aiming at since 1979- and it apparently retains the same fixation in 2019.

Many may not remember that Imam Khomeini did not hesitate to encourage the Iranian leadership, led by the current Rahbar (Spiritual Leader) Sayyed Ali Khamenei (1987), who was the President of Iran then, to confront and open fire against US forces or indeed any hostile country sailing in the Gulf. “If I were you (addressing his speech to the political leadership), I would order the armed forces to target the first vessel protecting an oil carrier trying to cross the Straits of Hormuz. You decide what you think best (as a course of action), whatever it takes”, said Imam Khomeini.

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition
New York, Friday, October 16, 1987
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N.F.L. Players End Strike but Can't Play Sunday

No Bargaining Accord
—Antitrust Suit Filed
Against Club Owners

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The National Football League players' union ended its 10-day strike today by agreeing to a tentative deal with the owners, but the players' union said it would not sign the deal until it had secured a ruling from the Federal Trade Commission that the league's antitrust exemption is unconstitutional.

The deal, which was reached after a series of meetings between the union and the owners, would allow the players to return to the field on Sunday. The deal also provides for a new collective bargaining agreement to be negotiated by the end of the year. The union said it would not sign the deal until it had secured a ruling from the Federal Trade Commission that the league's antitrust exemption is unconstitutional.

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Some players, head of football players' union, announcing the end of the strike. (AP Wirephoto)

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New Reagan Policy to Cut Benefits For the Aged, Blind and Disabled

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The Reagan administration has adopted a new policy that would cut benefits for the aged, blind and disabled, according to a report in the Washington Post.

The policy, which was announced by the Social Security Administration, would cut benefits for the aged, blind and disabled by 10 percent. The policy would also cut benefits for the aged, blind and disabled by 10 percent. The policy would also cut benefits for the aged, blind and disabled by 10 percent.

Prosecutor Studying Actions Of Meese While in the Cabinet

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The Justice Department is studying the actions of James Meese while he was in the cabinet, according to a report in the Washington Post.

The study, which was conducted by the Justice Department, would look at Meese's actions while he was in the cabinet. The study would also look at Meese's actions while he was in the cabinet.

35 Held in \$1 Million Parking-Meter 'Rip-Off'

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

NEW YORK, Oct. 15 — Thirty-five people were held today in a parking-meter "rip-off" in New York City, according to a report in the Washington Post.

The "rip-off" was conducted by a group of people who were holding the parking meters. The "rip-off" was conducted by a group of people who were holding the parking meters.

Wholesale Tax Plan

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The House of Representatives has passed a wholesale tax plan, according to a report in the Washington Post.

British Force Over Sea Lines

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U.S. CAUTIONS BONN THAT IT MAY FORCE THE DOLLAR LOWER

Treasury Secretary Announced

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The United States has cautioned Bonn that it may force the dollar lower, according to a report in the Washington Post.

SOVIET, IN SWITCH, SAYS IT IS PAYING U.N. ALL IT OWES

The Russians' Bill

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The Soviet Union has announced that it is paying the United Nations all it owes, according to a report in the Washington Post.

Iran Missile Hits A Gulf Tanker Owned in U.S.

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — An Iranian missile has hit a U.S.-owned tanker in the Persian Gulf, according to a report in the Washington Post.

AID TO PEACE UNITS

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 — The United States has announced that it will provide aid to peace units, according to a report in the Washington Post.

Moscow Is Also Making Budget Contribution

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Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (and Sheikh Hashemi Rafsanjani) gave immediate orders to the armed forces to act accordingly. All armed forces were fully coordinated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Forces (IRGC - Pasdaran). Iran launched Chinese-made Silk worm missiles on [Kuwait port al-Ahmadi](#). Another attack was registered on a [Kuwaiti oil tanker](#) that had been registered to fly the American flag and was sailing under US Navy protection- it hit

an Iranian mine in the Gulf. Moreover, Iran shot down a [US helicopter](#) using US-made Stinger missiles delivered by the Afghan Mujahedeen to Iran. It was ready to take the confrontation further in the Persian Gulf, careless of the US “almighty” military power. Iran also attacked a [Soviet vessel](#), the freighter Ivan Korotoyev, sailing in the Gulf and providing naval escorts for its ships.

It was rare to see the two superpowers, the US and Russia, united against Iran in one Middle Eastern conflict, in support of Saddam Hussein. Of course, Iran’s diplomacy skills were not yet sharpened. It was helping the Afghans against the Soviets and was committed to fighting US hegemony in the Middle East.



Sayyed Ali Khamenei went to New York, and at the UN Security Council [told the world](#) that “the US will receive a response to its hideous action” in the Gulf (following a US attack against an Iranian commercial ship called Iran Ajr). Indeed, a US owned giant oil tanker carrying the name of [Sungari](#) was attacked and set ablaze by the IRGC. Iran was not willing to stand down, but instead showed itself ready to confront two superpower countries at a time when Tehran was in its worst condition.

Today, Iran is well equipped with all kinds of missiles, and is a more powerful, highly productive country with strong and efficient allies who can hurt its enemies much more than in 1987. The Islamic Revolution principles and values are still the same, led by more or less the same people. The IRGC is stronger than ever and is an integrated part of the armed forces.

Sayyed Ali Khamenei was fully devoted to Imam Khomeini. He served as a faithful guardian of the “Islamic Revolution”, supervised the IRGC, represented Imam Khomeini at the Security Council and played an effective role in arming and merging the IRGC into all levels of the country’s armed forces. He will not hesitate to take further steps against any weakness any leader in the country today might show in trying to soften the relationship with the US. Today, the leader of the Revolution is neither afraid of war, nor of peace. He will not negotiate with Trump and will not help him be re-elected in 2020. Those who think Iran is desperate or cornered or failing due to the US sanctions may need to read more carefully the history and behaviour of the “Islamic Revolution” since 1979.

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