

Valiant Shield 07 - Big US Naval Exercise May be Practice for Big Run Against Iran

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Valiant Shield 2007 Gets Underway Today August 7, 2007

A major U.S.-organized naval and air exercise off Guam's waters, which begins today, involves 20,000 military personnel, three aircraft carrier battle groups, six submarines and 60 aircraft, the Pacific Daily News reports.

Valiant Shield
{youtube}tKR39WCndU8{/youtube}

DEBKAfile: Big US Armed Forces integrated Valiant Shield exercises simulate possible operation against Iran August 6, 2007, 1:37 PM (GMT+02:00)

The maneuvers beginning Monday, Aug. 6, in waters off Guam include the simultaneous deployment of three carriers and their air and naval strike groups: USS Stennis, USS Nimitz and USS Kitty Hawk, altogether 30 warships, 280 warplanes and 22,000 soldiers and sailors. The exercise is commanded by Adm. Robert Willard, Pacific Fleet chief.

DEBKAfile's military sources report: This will be America's last major combined sea-air war game before during Bush presidency which ends in Jan. 2009 and last opportunity for drilling large-scale combined units should the president decide on a military operation against Iran.

To indicate that outside eyes were not desired, foreign observers who attended the Pacific exercises last year were not invited this year. US military sources in the region said that invitations to officers of regional nations to watch the drills would have had to include Malaysia, which has close ties with Iran.

According to DEBKA-Net-Weekly's military sources, the exercises will be held in conditions resembling as closely as possible those in Iran and practice assaults of the kind that may be executed against the Islamic Republic.

When he spoke of the drills, Willard may well have been describing the realities expected to prevail in a real-life offensive against the Islamic Republic..

Valiant Shield, he said, will "include the complexities of operating three aircraft carriers in the same area while at the same time adding in the operations of another component — the fighters, bombers and tankers of the US Air Force."

He said the exercise will not detract from the Navy's "real world" missions in the Persian Gulf but help drill the Navy and its crews [for that real world.]

Valiant Shield's commander's words may have been meant to answer the sharp criticism coming from Persian Gulf governments.

"Washington may be sending the USS Enterprise Strike Group to the Persian Gulf. It has not yet arrived. The other two American carriers, Nimitz and Stennis, have gone to take part in an exercise far away in the Pacific."

"So where does that leave us?" asked a Gulf military official. "Vice President Dick Cheney and Robert Gates promised three American air carriers to protect us plus naval, marine and air forces. Now all the carriers are gone."