

## U.N. 'eases' embargo, maintains sanctions

The Permanent Five members of the U.N. Security Council have decided to adopt a variant of a French proposal which would allow Iraq to sell up to \$1.6 billion worth of petroleum, while continuing sanctions against that nation. The specifics of this "humanitarian" measure are so onerous, that one unidentified U.N. diplomat told the *New York Times* on Aug. 8 that "the U.N. has Iraq spread-eagled against the car and is going through its pockets. Iraq will never touch any of this money."

The reported conditions are:

- Iraq can sell \$1.6 billion of oil over the next six months. At current oil prices, the revenue would be about one-sixth of what Iraq was earning in a comparable period before the war.
- Proceeds of the oil sales will go directly to the U.N.
- Thirty percent of the proceeds will be used to pay Kuwait and other states for "war damages."
- Another large chunk will pay for International Atomic Energy Agency inspection teams, the destruc-

tion of Iraqi weapons, the expenses of redrawing the border with Kuwait, and other U.N.-imposed measures.

- The remainder of the funds, about 50%, some \$700 million, will remain under U.N. control, and will be used to buy food and medicine, and distribute it under guard. The food will not be distributed to members of the Iraqi military and their families, or to members of the ruling Ba'ath Party.

Iraqi Ambassador to the U.N. Abdul al-Anbari said that Iraq will reject the resolution: "Iraq won't accept it both as a matter of principle and a matter of practice. For all practical purposes, it allows Iraq to buy not one sack of rice or one sack of grain."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein on Aug. 3 had already described the French proposal as "a sugar-coated draft resolution which pretends to serve human values," but which in fact repudiates "all the noble and generous traits of our people, who are accustomed to eating their bread in dignity and who have been sacrificing their nearest and dearest to maintain this dignity." He concluded that the plan "compromises Iraq's national sovereignty, mortgages its independent free will, and imposes foreign tutelage over the Iraqi people. It also usurps prerogatives and responsibility of the legitimate government for the welfare of its citizens."

new Chernobyl for the whole region?" Anyone conversant with political realities of the region will bring up the other glaring paradox of the nuclear argument: "Bush claims Iraq was building the bomb, yet experts agree, if that were the case, it would be a decade away. Iraq has been a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and has accordingly allowed regular inspections of its programs, set up in all legality with the Soviet Union and France. Israel, on the other hand, has admitted having the bomb, yet has refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and has never allowed any inspections whatsoever."

The conclusion drawn by every thinking person, is that the nuclear argument, like those involving Kuwait, the Kurds, the Shiites, and so on, is a pretext, contrived to justify the annihilation of a country and a people.

### Support for Saddam increases

Knowing this, Iraqis have not drawn back in fear, however. The mood prevailing in the capital is distinctly not one of capitulation. Quite the contrary. One gets the sense that as each day goes by and the embargo tightens its stranglehold over the life of 18 million human beings, their determination to resist increases. With it, their support increases for Saddam Hussein.

Computerized political profiles, such as those probably being scrutinized in think tanks in Washington, will provide

no easy explanation for why this is so. What determines the behavior of a people is not a Skinnerian stimulus-response mechanism, but underlying axiomatic beliefs, deeply embedded in thousands of years of culture and history. Thus, leading spokesmen for the ruling Ba'ath Party, like Dr. Elias Farah or Dr. Abdul Majeed al-Raf'i (see accompanying interviews), will point to the fact that the current onslaught against Iraq is but the most recent chapter in a book whose first pages date back 700 years. They refer to the sacking of Baghdad in 1258 at the hands of the Mongols, an event which not only destroyed the richest cultural center of the world at the time, but divided the Arab world for centuries to come. It is precisely the attempt to restore Arab unity around that highpoint of Arab culture, which they see as the target of the renewed hostilities today. As Dr. Farah put it, "Iraq had been targeted for its development, not only in the industrial and economic, i.e., material realm, but also in the spiritual realm . . . in its attempt to effect a renaissance" hearkening back to Baghdad as the cultural center which dialogued with the West "in a spirit of progress and humanism."

Although persons like these represent the country's elite, the philosophy which they articulate is alive in other layers of the population. One catches a glimpse of the same historical self-consciousness even in the proud gaze of the children victims of the war.