

Middle East File by Joseph Brewda

Iraq issues appeal on 'no fly' zone

The Iraqi Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party warns that the western powers are plotting to partition the country.

On Aug. 27, the ruling Iraqi Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party external relations bureau, headed by Abdul Ghani Abdul Ghafour, issued an international statement on the ongoing Anglo-American and French threats against Iraq.

The context for the statement is the imposition by the three powers of a "no fly" zone over southern Iraq. This time, the powers did not even attempt to give the action a façade of legality by enacting some new Security Council resolution justifying the action. Showing its nature as a mere imperial instrument, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali even said that such a resolution was not necessary.

The pretext for the "no fly" zone is alleged Iraqi repression of the Shiite population in the south, a religious minority in the country overall but a majority in that region. The absurdity of the powers' claim is shown by the fact that the main problem facing the Shiites is the murderous embargo on Iraq, now entering its second year.

One purpose of the "no fly" policy is to hand over southern Iraq to Iran, just as the powers move to hand over northern Iraq to Turkey. But this is not the ultimate objective, which is to spark a new Arab-Iranian war and a Turkish-Iranian war, which such a division of Iraq would cause.

The statement follows:

"The Foreign Relations Bureau of the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (ABSP) presents its compliments to you and wishes to draw your attention to U.S., Brit-

ish, and French threats against Iraq, and their attempts to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs through actions taken by them denying Iraq the right to fly over its southern territories.

"The involvement of Washington, London, and Paris in this conspiracy is a return to the old colonialist scheming of divide and rule, for these three circles are planning to partition Iraq on a racial and sectarian basis. In a nutshell, the objective of the U.S.A., Britain, and France is to ensure the division of Iraq into sectarian and racial entities.

"Iraq's foreign policy has long been based on the principles of equitable respect of people's rights and choices, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, and respect of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of other nations. The resumption of Arab-European dialogue in Paris, in 1989, was viewed by Iraq and the Arabs as a step forward in the direction of enhancing relations between the Arab Nation and Europe, on these bases.

"Drastic and fast changes in the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc have made the U.S.A. the dominant force over the world. France and Britain soon became subordinate to U.S. policies and schemes. The principles of independence so long cherished by Britain and France have been drastically weakened accordingly. The role of the European Community in resolving regional and international conflicts was also weakened. The war against Iraq and the failure to resolve

the Palestinian problem testify to this fact.

"The ABSP, which maintains friendly ties with European ruling parties and those in the opposition, takes this opportunity to warn against the drastic repercussions of any action leading to dismembering Iraq, for such actions can easily lead to greater instability and tensions in our region, thus negatively affecting the ties of cooperation and coordination between Europe and the Arab world.

"Objective constructive dialogues among concerned parties are the surest way to ensure the resolving of existing conflicts. Hegemony and domination should be abandoned. As such, we call upon you to exert utmost efforts to put an end to any attempt leading to intervention in Iraq's internal affairs, under any pretext or excuse. We, in Iraq, since the July, 17-30, 1968 Revolution, have been pursuing a policy that best serves the interests of the people without any kind of discrimination. Peoples' rights are fully protected and preserved. We are determined to expand our democratic experiment, utilizing all potentialities in this direction, through the new constitution, multi-party system, freedom of the press, etc., despite the prevailing of extraordinary circumstances imposed on us by external forces.

"Our people are unified under the wise leadership of H.E. President Saddam Hussein. They are determined to sacrifice their lives for their independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We are determined also to foil any forthcoming plans to partition Iraq into sectarian and racial entities.

"It is indeed ironic that while Europe is witnessing efforts to ensure its unity, U.S.A., Britain, and France are working in the direction of disuniting other nations. Is this fair and justified?"