

## REPORT FROM THE SECURITY COUNCIL



### Sanctions Against Iraq

■ As July drew to a close, Iraq continued to dominate the proceedings of the Security Council. Among other things, the fifteen members of the Council were in the midst of considering a proposal that for the first time would allow Iraq to sell oil. The aim would be for Baghdad, under tightly monitored conditions, to use oil money to pay for urgently needed food on a one-time only basis. The Security Council's sanctions committee had heard from Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who is in charge of UN humanitarian operations in the Persian Gulf area, that Iraq faced a "catastrophe" if food shipments were not urgently authorized.

The proposed resolution would also authorize the Council to take money from oil sales to pay for the scrapping of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, fund the UN commission in charge of determining the final Iraq-Kuwait borders, and compensate those who suffered as a result of the Iraqi invasion.

The issue was also noteworthy because it sparked the first open dissension among the five permanent members of the Security Council. The split involved the US and Britain on one side who insisted that Iraq divulge all its gold reserves before any oil sale was approved, and France which argued it would be impossible to fully verify any information provided by Iraq.

Underlying the debate was Iraq's failure to fully satisfy UN inspectors who were seeking information on Baghdad's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. On 15 July, Rolf Ekeus, the head of the UN Special Commission looking into Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, told of Iraq's attempts to withhold

information and hide equipment for enriching uranium as well as of its earlier denial that a clandestine programme even existed.

On 19 July, the Council was told by Ekeus that Iraq had built and tested a "supergun" capable of delivering nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The gun had been designed by Canadian inventor Gerald Bull. The disclosures confirmed the worst suspicions of some Council members. In Resolution 687 of 3 April, the Council had called for the destruction of any nuclear weapons capability.

In the view of many members, Iraq was often uncooperative, and on 28 June, the Security Council adopted a statement calling on Iraq to grant a UN nuclear inspection team unimpeded access to a site it had been previously prevented from entering. The statement warned that failure to comply would lead to "serious consequences."

The warning was repeated the following month when the five major powers summoned the Iraqi ambassador and told him to provide all relevant information by 25 July. The date passed without any formal Council action, but diplomats noted that the Iraqi request to sell oil to buy food was moving at an extremely slow pace. On 17 June, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 699 which ordered that Iraq should bear the cost of scrapping its weapons of mass destruction, a process estimated to cost about US \$ 200 million.

On the same day, the Council unanimously approved Resolution 700, which outlined a set of guidelines to enforce the arms embargo against Iraq. The resolution proscribed a wide variety of weapons to be sold to Iraq and also included research, development and manufacturing facilities for chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons; and ballistic missiles.

On 20 May, the Security Council set up a compensation fund for payment of claims against Iraq.

Resolution 692, adopted by a vote of fourteen in favour with Cuba abstaining, also created a commission to administer what became known as the United Nations Compensation Fund. Eleven days later (31 May), the Secretary-General, as called for in Resolution 768, made public his suggested "ceiling" or maximum amount of annual Iraqi oil revenues that should be made available to pay those who suffered as a result of its invasion of Kuwait. In a letter to the Security Council, the Secretary-General said the amount should not exceed thirty percent. It will be up to the Compensation Commission to determine the final percentage.

### Central America

■ On 20 May, the Security Council decided to establish an observer mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) with the initial task of monitoring human rights. Adopted unanimously, Resolution 693 was a radical departure for the world body which for the first time in its history, had volunteered to survey the human rights situation of a member state. Some diplomats saw the resolution as a portent for a new and more vigorous UN.

The UN will deploy over 100 civilians and police human rights specialists during the summer to be followed by an additional fifty monitors in the fall. Observers say ONUSAL is expected to change the nature of the ongoing conflict in El Salvador by making both sides more wary about committing human rights abuses. Both sides in the conflict requested the creation of ONUSAL.

On 6 May, the Council extended the mandate of the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) for another six months. ONUCA is charged with observing and reporting on the five Central American governments to ensure that they comply with the peace plan contained in the Esquipulas II agreement, which requires the governments to cease providing aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements operat-

ing in the region, and to prevent the use of their territory for attacks on other states.

### Angola

■ On 30 May, the Council enlarged the mandate of the Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) responsible for verifying the staged withdrawal of Cuban troops from the country. UNAVEM II is charged with the additional tasks of monitoring the ceasefire worked out between the government of Angola and the insurgent movement UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

### The Middle East

■ On 24 May, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 694 which deplored the deportation by Israel of four Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. On 18 May, Israel had moved the four from the Gaza Strip to southern Lebanon. The resolution called on Israel to refrain from further deportations and to "ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported."

On 30 May, the Council renewed for another six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) which has been supervising the ceasefire between Israel and Syria since 1974.

### Cyprus

■ On 14 June, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 698, which attempts to address concerns by countries like Canada who feel they bear too much of the financial burden of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The document "concludes that a method of financing is needed which will put the Force on a sound and secure financial basis." Resolution 696 was adopted on the same day that the Council extended the UNFICYP mandate for an additional six months. □

- TREVOR ROWE