

*Government Orders*

The combination of Arab nationalism and Islamic renewal represents a somewhat new phenomenon. However the issue of Arabic identity in the modern world has been a much controversial issue for quite a while in all Arab countries. It is the main reason behind most divisions between these states. The desire for Arab unity and leadership, especially with regard to Israel, weighs heavily on the political culture of that region. Nevertheless these aspirations are but an ideal constantly eroded by a great many ideological and political undercurrents.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Arab policies were marked by intense rivalries, short of outright wars, between traditional Arab monarchies and the supporters of the more radical vision of Gamel Nasser, the then President of Egypt.

The tormented history of Iraq and the current state of things should be put in perspective. At first glance, the official philosophy of Hussein's regime contains very strong Pan-Arabic elements which could provide Iraq with a leadership role in the Arab world, which at least some could expect. However, the Iraqi regime's support of these ideals characterized by extreme radicalism and violence which have isolated Iraq from the other Arab countries. Nevertheless, Saddam Hussein is still trying to establish his supremacy over the region, of which the invasion of Kuwait was but a first stage.

The Iraqi President has tried to justify his aggression in different ways. He has presented it as an act of liberation of the Kuwaiti from a monarchy, as a territorial conflict, as a holy war against the West and its Arab allies, and, finally, as a means to ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth in the region as a whole. Close scrutiny of the reasons put forth reveals how false they are and shows that the actions of Saddam Hussein are nothing more than attempts on his part to impose a dictatorship in that region of the world.

The argument that Iraq was seeking to lend fraternal assistance to revolutionaries anxious to overthrow the monarchy in Kuwait proved to be pure fiction. Six days after the invasion the Iraqis demonstrated the inanity of this argument when they proclaimed their eternal and total fusion with Kuwait. This second claim stemmed

from a territorial conflict between both countries which they thought had been settled in the early 1960s.

Now and again, however, Iraq continued to lay claim to two small islands in the north of the Persian Gulf. Under Iraqi control, these islands would provide Baghdad with readier access to the sea. The negotiations on these two islands do show the bad faith of the Iraqi régime. They went on until as recently as July 31 when Iraq suddenly put an end to them by stating that Kuwait was not seriously considering relinquishing the territories in dispute. Iraq's "response" was to invade Kuwait.

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Faced with the determination of the world community against the invasion of Kuwait, the régime of Saddam Hussein tried to pass the conflict off as a holy war between Iraq and its opponents on one hand and the West and their allies on the other hand. The list of countries party to the multinational effort, including nine Arab countries and a few other Muslim states such as Bangladesh, shows that the argument is sheer sophistry.

The second Iraqi attempt to restore a dignity of sorts to this action was to say that the monarchs of the gulf kept for themselves the oil revenues which in fact belonged to all Arabs. This argument would carry more weight if it did not come from a country which was not a major oil producer and which had not received financial assistance from the gulf monarchs during the eight years of war with Iran.

None of the Iraqi arguments can stand close scrutiny. The annexion by Iraq is nothing more than an act of aggression to dominate a region, an act which nothing can justify. If the occupation of Kuwait continue, it might have further consequences.

One of these can already be felt—higher oil prices. This increase would affect not only the economies of our trade partners in the most industrialized countries. A sharp increase in oil prices would be an additional hardship for the eastern European countries which are experiencing enough difficulties as it is in their transition to a market economy. The load would become almost unbearable for the developing nations.