

# Flight ban: new plot to dismantle Iraq

by Joseph Brewda

The Anglo-Americans and French have begun a new phase of their plot to carve up the Middle East with their Aug. 26 unilateral ban on Iraqi domestic flights south of the 32nd parallel. Under the cynical pretext of protecting Iraqi Shi'ites from alleged repression, U.S. warplanes began flying more than 100 sorties daily since the ban began. "There have been signs of preparations for another ground offensive for several weeks now," national security adviser Gen. Brent Scowcroft told NBC on "Meet the Press" Aug. 30. "I won't want to say exactly what we'd do, but I think Saddam ought to take the prospect very seriously."

Commenting on the latest move, Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan told the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on Sept. 2 that it is part of a "campaign to foment sectarian sedition and incite racial differences in an attempt to dismantle the country into weak and helpless parts." Ramadan invited summit participants to tour the south to see for themselves the situation there. In fact the dire situation is largely the result of the murderous embargo against Iraq, now entering its 25th month.

Even according to U.S. estimates, Iraq has only flown 30 planes in the region since the war. Adding to the farce, former Dutch Foreign Minister Max Van der Stoep, has claimed that ongoing construction of a 350-mile canal to drain saline ground water in the south is actually part of a conspiracy to destroy "Shi'ite culture," and, of course, violate the environment by drying up wetlands.

In a further display of arrogance, the Anglo-Americans and French are not bothering to give their actions even the appearance of legality. This time, they have not even rammed through a U.N. Security Council resolution. Commenting on the unilateral decision of the three (with the verbal support of Russia), U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali claimed that no new resolution was necessary. "We don't need to endorse" it, the British toady claimed, "because the four member states that have done this have already received a mandate from the Security Council." Even British Foreign minister Douglas Hurd has acknowledged that the air ban was not sanctioned by earlier resolutions.

## Sykes-Picot revisited

Ever since the Gulf war, the Anglo-Americans and French have been toying with various schemes to carve up the region, just as they had following World War I

with the so-called Sykes-Picot Treaty. Except for the later imposition of Israel onto the region, that agreement has defined boundaries ever since. Now, with Iraq crushed, the oil fields occupied by the West, and OPEC eliminated all but in name, there are indications that the powers are getting ready for major moves. These include fomenting revolt in Iraq followed by its virtual division between Turkey and Iran; provoking a Turkish-Iranian war and Turkish-Syrian war; and preparing for an Iranian-Arab conflict. Palace coups and assassinations also appear to be on the agenda. The ongoing Mideast peace conference is intended to lead to a significant increase in Israeli power. Indicating the direction of developments, Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani told the Turkish daily *Milliyet* on July 25, "We think it is better for us to become part of democratic Turkey than live indefinitely under the horrible conditions of Iraq." He added that the oil-rich Kurdish region was once part of Turkey, and claimed that Turkey and Britain have the right to return the region to Turkey, because they were both signatories to the post-World War I deals. The offer to hand Iraqi Kurdistan to Turkey had been first publicly made in the summer of 1990 by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger as an inducement to Turkey.

On Aug. 30, the Syrian-based Islamic Action Organization and the Da'wa group called on Shi'ite exiles to return to the south and to "fill the political and administrative gap created by the regime's gradual absence from the area" due to the new flight ban and related Anglo-American moves. The groups called on Iraqi government officials and members of the Armed Forces to join a rebellion against the government. They also called for coordinating revolts in the south with the Anglo-American Kurdish "safe haven" in the north.

Commenting on such plans, Barsan el-Takriti, Iraqi ambassador to Switzerland and Saddam Hussein's brother, told German weekly *Der Spiegel*, in an interview published Sept. 1: "The partitioning of Iraq would be like the explosion of a bomb whose shrapnel would hit the entire Mideast." If Iraq were partitioned, he warned, Iran, Turkey, and Syria would have to be as well. "It would be the same as lighting a fire in a room. One must consider carefully whether the fire will spread to the whole house." The fact is that a "Shi'ite safe haven" in the south would tend to fall under the control of Iran, leading sooner or later to an Arab-Iranian conflagration, while fooling around with a "Kurdistan" in the north will probably trigger a Turkish-Iranian conflict in fairly short order. On Sept. 1, Turkish helicopters violated Iranian airspace in hot pursuit of Kurds in Iran, the first instance of this kind since the Gulf war.

In other words, a new Sykes-Picot also means spreading wars in the Mideast region that could exceed in horror the war in former Yugoslavia, which the Anglo-Americans and French also provoked.