

Cuba condemns U.S. war moves in Arabian Gulf

Since the onset of the crisis in the Middle East, one world power—Cuba—has consistently spoken out against Washington's preparations for war against the people of Iraq. At the same time, it has condemned the cover being given to this military operation by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Pathfinder Press of New York has just published *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*. This 82-page booklet reprints every UN Security Council resolution adopted since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, together with remarks by Ricardo Alarcon, Cuba's permanent representative to the UN, during the course of the debates.

Several statements by Cuban President Fidel Castro are also printed, including urgent letters he sent to the heads of state of Arab countries and to the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

"Is the defense of the legitimate interests of the Kuwaiti government really the concern that has led the United States

delegation to act as it is doing now," Ambassador Alarcon asks the Security Council in one of its first debates on the crisis, "or is it the ambition of the United States to intervene in and dominate the Middle East?"

From the beginning, Cuba has condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, expressing its commitment to "the principles of noninterference in the internal affairs of states; . . . the peaceful settlement of disputes between states; and of respect for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all nations."

At the same time, Alarcon has repeatedly pointed to the double standard employed. In 1967, the UN imposed sanctions on the white minority regime in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). At the time, the United States government refused to abide by that embargo, openly purchasing chromium from Southern Rhodesia.

One of the most vocal defenders of this move, in fact, was George Bush, U.S. ambassador to the UN in the early 1970s. Similarly, Washington and other

Western powers refused to strictly abide by the 1977 UN decision to embargo arms to South Africa.

Cuba has also pointed to the Security Council's failure to impose sanctions on Israel for its invasion of Lebanon in 1982; on South Africa when it invaded Angola and occupied its territory for 15 years; on the United States when it invaded Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989.

In *Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations* Alarcon explains Cuba's refusal to vote for the Security Council resolutions imposing an embargo against Iraq. "Cuba regards as completely inadmissible the very idea of claiming that hunger can be used to deprive people of what is an absolutely fundamental right . . . to receive adequate food and appropriate medical care."

As Castro stresses in this booklet, the stakes involved are enormous. A war in the Arab-Persian Gulf "will not only cost many lives on the battlefield," he says. It "would also be a catastrophe for the world economy."