

European front or other fronts.

It was these extreme dangers which the Soviet peace offensive set out to counter, and under its impact, some changes in US policy can be detected as referred to earlier in this article. At the same time, there is still reason to doubt Washington's intentions. As noted by Ricardo Ribera of the FMLN/FDR — El Salvador, «It has to show itself whether the US is ready to make steps in this direction (of solving regional conflicts). It is possible that the US will try to reduce detente to relations between them and the Soviet Union, while increasing their aggression against the revolutionary countries and liberation movements in the so-called third world. Declarations of the Pentagon, announcing higher spending for conventional weapons as well as the intensification of the dirty war - called today the 'strategy of low intensity conflicts', make us fear that this is the

course taken by US imperialism.»

Similar reservations were expressed by Nicaragua's president, Daniel Ortega, at the end of June, about the fate of Sapoá, the provisory ceasefire agreement between the Nicaraguan government and the contras, signed on March 23rd: «Sapoá has been declared dead by the US. Shultz's trip to Central America at the end of June was meant to create new conditions to continue the military aggression against Nicaragua. A direct intervention by US troops is still among the options.»

A report issued in Washington on January 18th, entitled *Discriminate Deterrence*, adds credence to such fears. It was written by the commission on integrated long-term strategy, chaired by former secretary for defense policy, Fred Ikle, a well-known super militarist. The report recommends a shift in focus from Europe to «US security interests» in Asia, Africa and

Latin America. Forecasting that the 'third world' will play a greater role in the US war strategy, the commission recommends increased mobility for US intervention forces and more extensive and flexible US engagement in areas of crisis. It also recommends increased «security aid» for pro-US regimes and contras trying to destabilize revolutionary governments. Published five weeks after the signing of the INF treaty, the report also contains a broadside attack on arms control and disarmament.

Right now, the proposals of this commission do not fit into the political landscape, because of the strong public opinion for disarmament in Europe and partially in the USA. However, it is conceivable that this proposed strategy will influence the foreign policy of the coming president, and it is obviously more likely to influence Bush than Dukakis. ●

Ceasefire in the Gulf

The beginning of direct talks between Iraq and Iran at the UN's Geneva headquarters on August 25th, five days after a ceasefire went into effect in the Gulf, raised hopes for ending the grueling, eight-year war. It also heralded the possibility of a new stage in the struggle against Zionist and imperialist aggression in the Middle East.

Iran's July 18th announcement that it would abide by the UN ceasefire resolution no. 598 was mainly due to the military losses incurred by its forces over the preceding year. It was also a reflection of the new tendency in the Iranian government to be more conscious of the need for bettering relations with other countries. Iran hopes to use improved regional and international relations in the negotiations to counterbalance its disadvantages in the military outcome of the fighting.

As of this writing, it is impossible to predict the outcome of the Geneva talks. There is every reason to anticipate that they will be protracted with issues of contention ranging from the international border between the two countries and control over the Shatt Al Arab waterway, to political prisoners.

It is not our purpose here to go into the details of the issues to be negotiated. However, progressive forces everywhere must have a general position that questions which involve compensation between the two countries should not be resolved in a way that inflicts more hardship on the population of either Iraq or Iran. The two peoples have already suffered enough for their respective governments' decisions to begin and then to pursue this war.

One can, however, discuss the implications of the ending of this war in terms of how this will impact on the US military presence in the area on the one hand, and on the Arab-Zionist conflict on the other.

'ISRAEL' OPPOSES PEACE

'Israel' stood alone in all the world,

being the only state to express mainly negative reactions to the possibility of ending the Gulf war. The Israeli foreign ministry did issue a prefatory statement on August 10th, welcoming the ceasefire. However, the Zionists' real position was more accurately reflected in Israeli radio broadcasts and the press, quoting officials who expressed worry about what an end to the war would mean, especially the possibility of Iraq rejoining the Arab confrontation front. As AP reported on July 22nd, «Israeli defense officials on Wednesday stepped up warnings about the potential threat of an Iraqi army left idle by a ceasefire in the Gulf war... 'If there is an eastern front of Syria, Iraq and Jordan, with the assistance of Saudi Arabia, the armored force facing Israel would be equal to the number of tanks of all NATO countries,' Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in Israeli radio.»

This was a typical Zionist appeal for more military aid, trying to restore the image of 'Israel' as besieged by overwhelming enemy forces, a myth that has been irrevocably destroyed by the Israeli response to the Palestinian popular uprising. Intense debates in the Israeli cabinet and Knesset followed the Iranian decision for a ceasefire, and