

known for his avid support of the Palestinian cause and his anti-Zionist, anti-Israel stances, as well as being anti-Camp David and anti-reaction. Qaddafi is also known for his support to national liberation movements in other parts of the world. Libya also has close relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Additionally, Qaddafi's declared commitment to fight imperialism on all levels makes him an enemy of the US.

In this period of resolving regional conflicts, the US has only made itself look worse in front of positive overtures by the socialist countries, by resorting to its historical use of direct military action. This military act was clearly a continuation of US imperialist aggression exercised against those who are in conflict with US interests. It is a documented fact that the US has for years been training anti-Qaddafi forces, trying to prop up pro-western substitutes, employing neighboring states such as Chad and Egypt against Libya, and working to cut Libya's connections with Europe. Without a shadow of a doubt, the US wants Qaddafi dead, as exemplified by the 1986 assassination attempt by bombing his home injuring his wife and sons, and killing his 16-month-old daughter.

It was also apparent that the US wanted to make a show of force with its extensive military build-up in the Mediterranean, including nuclear ships carrying nuclear weapons, to make its presence felt. Not only that, the US was seriously considering attacking the Rabta plant had the international reaction been different.

REACTIONS

Moscow called the US action «murder in cold blood» (*Newsweek*, January 16th). The Soviet Union warned the US that any military strike against Libya «would deal a serious blow to the current improvement in the international situation» (*Guardian*, January 5th). Of course, the US arrogantly dismissed this warning. The Soviet Union charged the US of engaging in «political adventurism and state terrorism,» using the harshest language in two years towards the US (*Time*, January 16th). The Soviet Union, China and seven non-aligned members

of the Security Council made it plain that they would support a resolution condemning the US for aggression against Libya. Mali called it «a premeditated act,» saying «nothing justifies the American campaign against Libya» (*Guardian*, January 7th).

European reservations about US military action against the Libyan plant were quite strongly expressed, even by states that supported the US claims about the plant's function. The European states have observed the ineffectiveness of other US moves, such as earlier attacks on Libya and the recent decision to deny Yasir Arafat a visa to address the UN. Europe has, moreover, begun exerting efforts in the peace process in the Middle East, and views disruptive moves with disfavor. Thus, the Italian government urged the US to accept Libya's offer of an inspection of the plant by international experts. The US spurned Libya's offer for the one-time inspection. Italian foreign ministry officials said, «Libya exists and the US cannot change the fact» (*Newsweek*, January 16th). Meanwhile, Margaret Thatcher had called for restraint. On January 1st, Thatcher said, «There must be no eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth» revenge mission against any countries like the US bombing raid against Libya, although Britain supported the US assertion that Rabta is intended for weapons production.

In the light of this position, the US did not use British bases to launch their attack, nor did it receive a green light from NATO allies. There are concrete reasons for Europe's views, aside from the previously mentioned ones. European NATO members are Libya's biggest customers for crude oil due to low transportation costs and all-around lower cost. European countries refused an economic boycott of Libya in 1986 for this very reason, as well as their profits from exports to Libya. Moreover, there are 40,000 Europeans currently living in Libya. And lastly, they realize that not all that the US wants is in their interests because Europe has its own interests to think of as well.

The Arab reaction to the latest US aggression was relatively, or at least

symbolically strong. Arab states lined up in the UN to denounce the US's brutal aggression. The Arab League called it an extremely serious aggression prejudicial to Middle East peace efforts.

PARIS CONFERENCE

Relevant to this article is the five-day international conference in January, hosted by France; 142 nations participated in an attempt to work on a new international convention banning the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, which according to French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas could be signed as early as 1990. The most interesting note that occurred at the conference was the Arab world's insisting that prohibitions on chemical warfare should be linked with prohibitions on all weapons of mass destruction, calling particular attention to the Israeli nuclear arsenal. Over the past 63 years, 131 nations have signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol which outlaws the use of poison gases. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, at least 17 countries are believed to possess chemical weapons.

US HYPOCRISY

While the US and Israel lead the world in calling for action against Libya, they maintain their own stockpiles of such weapons. This hypocrisy is exposed by the US's widespread use of napalm in Vietnam, the phosphorous bombs used by Israel in 1982 in Lebanon and the phosphorous bombs used by the US in their 1986 attack on Libya! Reagan's final \$315.2 billion defense budget reveals a sharp increase in US spending on chemical warfare technology and delivery systems.

While Reagan closed the Libyan People's Bureau in Washington, Libya was returning the body of a US captain from the 1986 attack as a humanitarian initiative. Even after the aggression, Qaddafi proposed direct talks with the US to resolve the dispute. Once again, we reiterate our support to the Libyan government and people and their sovereign rights, and condemn US aggressive violations of these rights.