

hands of rulers who would comply with imperialist interests. This is the background for the ensuing divergence in oil policy between such regimes and nationalist governments which sought economic independence and modernization (Iraq, Algeria, Libya). Kuwait has been part of the traditionalist Arab bloc led by Saudi Arabia, that engages in overproduction of oil, leading to glutting the world market and consequently lower prices. The other side of this policy is the recycling of petrodollars whereby the revenues are

Israel, as well as the fact that Iraq is targeted for the largest direct imperialist attack ever in the Middle East.

In this sense, the current crisis appears as an extension of the struggle between the Arab people and colonialist/imperialist control, which has characterized the area throughout the century. In the second half of the 1900s, with the formation of the Zionist state as imperialism's forward base, this contradiction has taken the form of the Arab-Zionist conflict and

Gulf with the struggle against the occupation of Palestine. Thus, it is totally correct for the Iraqi regime to demand Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories, along with the withdrawal of US troops, as conditions for its own withdrawal from Kuwait. However, the Iraqi move into Kuwait was not actually motivated by this demand. Rather the oil question has assumed life-or-death proportions for Saddam Hussein in view of the need to rebuild Iraq from the ravages of the war it began with Iran. On the eve of



Airborne troops prepare for flight to Saudi Arabia.

invested in the capitalist countries or squandered outright on luxury projects, robbing the Arab people of needed resources for development.

In a progressive nationalist perspective, there has long been a need to combat this policy. On the mass level, much of the spontaneous support for Saddam Hussein stems from the resentment of the poor (including Yemenis, Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians, etc.) who do the menial work in the oil kingdoms. The other reason for the masses' sentiments is Iraq's declared intention to stand up to

its core, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Today, the most prominent expression of the contradiction is the Palestinian intifada's struggle against the Israeli occupation. Any effort to redress the Arab status quo should therefore be judged in terms of how it affects the progress of the intifada and the Palestinian cause generally, since this represents the vanguard in the Arab masses' struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

The PLO's line in relation to the current situation is to combine the struggle against US intervention in the

Iraq's move into Kuwait, oil prices had dropped to their lowest in nine years as a result of the glut on the world market caused by overproduction.

Among the negative repercussions of the crisis is that it has overshadowed the intifada, as well as the question of democracy which had become acute in a number of Arab countries. On the other hand, mass mobilization for defeating the US intervention could set new conditions which would positively influence these issues in the future.