

U.N. imperial precedents set in Somalia and Haiti

by Joseph Brewda and Peter Rush

The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously on June 16 to impose a naval blockade on Haiti until the government agrees to accept the imposition of Jean-Baptiste Aristide, who had been deposed by the Haitian Army and opposition groups in 1991, as Haiti's President. Together with the brutal bombing of Somalia's civilian population which began on June 12, the U.N. actions show that the Security Council permanent members have resumed their drive to make that body an effective instrument of their joint imperial rule.

Simultaneously, the U.S. State Department proclaimed at the U.N. conference on human rights in Vienna in mid-June, that it would crush any effort by Third World states leaders who would deny the new Security Council position that "human rights" supersedes national sovereignty. "We will not hesitate to crack heads with our opponents and isolate those who are being most obstructive," John Shattuck, deputy head of the U.S. delegation, stated on June 17 (see p. 41).

For a while it had seemed that the drive had been put on hold, especially given the declaration of incoming President Bill Clinton that he would be abandoning the policies of the Bush administration by arming Bosnia and possibly bombing Serbia. Clinton's dramatic capitulation to combined British, French, and Russian pressure—the three Security Council members which have sponsored the Serbians together with the Bush administration—created the conditions for the renewed drive.

Murdering the Haitians

The June 16 Security Council vote represents the first time the Security Council has ever voted to intervene against a country without even attempting to claim that the country in question posed a threat to its neighbors. The vote sets a

precedent for similar future violations of national sovereignty on behalf of the U.N. and the Anglo-Americans who dominate that body.

The core of the resolution is a worldwide embargo on exporting oil to Haiti. The resolution gives any U.N. member nation the right to intercept on the high seas any vessel bound for Haiti, board it, and inspect it to determine if it is carrying oil, or any kind of arms, which are also banned. Any nation found guilty of sending oil to Haiti will itself be subject to sanctions.

The pretext for the blockade is to force the Haitians to agree to allowing Jean-Baptiste Aristide to return to power. Elected President in 1990 with backing from the Bush administration, Aristide, a former Catholic priest, is Israeli-trained and a Marxist, who governed by mob rule, through bypassing the elected legislature and using street gangs to terrorize all opposition. The Haitian Army, backed by a broad coalition of forces, moved to depose Aristide and send him into exile, after his mobs began kidnapping people, including politicians, and burning them to death.

Despite Aristide's proclivities, the U.S. has consistently demanded his return to power in Haiti, in the name of "restoring democracy." The embargo just voted up is supposed to remain in place until the Haitian Parliament and Army agree to let Aristide return and resume the powers of the presidency. Aristide has vowed to remove from military command and to prosecute the leadership of the Army, starting with Army head Raoul Cedras. In fact, a bloodbath, and probably a civil war, will result from Aristide's return.

Prior to the U.N. vote, the U.S. press urged even stronger action. A leading U.S. academic expert on Haiti, Robert Rotberg, wrote a column in the *Christian Science Monitor*

just two days before the vote, urging that a force of 5,000 U.N. "Blue Berets . . . be the surgical instrument" sent in to impose Aristide by force of arms. Scripps-Howard columnist B.J. Cutler, in the *Washington Times* on June 15, urged the United States to create an army of Haitian exiles, trained by Washington, to invade the island, Bay of Pigs-style.

And the *New York Times* on June 18, editorially blasting Brazil for having softened the final version of the UNSC resolution. Brazil, backed by Venezuela, insisted that national navies not be granted permission to physically prevent oil shipments to Haiti, but be allowed merely to board and search ships—and, if prohibited items were found, to use that as grounds for sanctions against the country of origin. The *Times* charged that Brazil was unfit to be a member of the Security Council, because it would not automatically vote with the U.N. Security Council permanent members—the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China—to eliminate national sovereignty.

So far, neither the Haitian government nor the Army appears to be intending to capitulate. Leslie Manigat, a former Haitian President, urged "national resistance" to foreign economic pressure. "We must resist . . . we must put in place a war economy. . . . I am ready to lead the state in that effort," he said.

It is not known how much oil has been stored in the country, but a private storage facility was recently completed, and some estimates indicate at least two months' worth. The result of the embargo will simply be much greater suffering for the Haitian people, who are already the poorest in the hemisphere, and live at the edge of starvation. In the Dominican Republic, Haiti's sole neighbor on the island, officials said that the government will keep sending humanitarian aid regardless of any blockade imposed by the Security Council. "We have to think as a neighbor in a special way when they are talking about boycott and certain blockade conditions with which we do not agree, as a matter of principle," Foreign Minister Juan Aristides Tavares said on June 21.

U.N. 'Thornburgh doctrine' in Somalia

On June 12, a U.N. task force began bombing the Mogadishu headquarters of Somali Gen. Mohammed Farah Aideded, claiming that he had been responsible for killing 23 U.N. troops on June 5, an allegation Aideded has denied. On June 13, U.N. soldiers fired into Somali demonstrators protesting the bombing, killing at least 20. On June 18, the U.N. announced that it would be "arresting" Aideded for his alleged killing of these troops.

In his statement announcing the effort to "arrest" Aideded, U.S. Adm. Jonathan Howe, the U.N. Special Representative for Somalia, asserted that the Security Council had "reaffirmed the authority of the secretary general to investigate, arrest and detain the individuals responsible for the armed attack [of June 5] including those responsible for publicly

inciting such attacks, for prosecution, trial and punishment."

Howe further claimed that "the investigation of circumstances leading to, during and subsequent to the acts of June, 5 1993 in Mogadishu has progressed to a point where safeguarding of the Somali public and United Nations personnel requires detention of General Aideded pending completion of the investigation and appropriate criminal proceedings. Charges being investigated include: conspiracy to conduct premeditated attacks against U.N. forces; crimes against humanity (Article 3 of the Geneva Convention of 1949); endangering civilians and U.N. personnel through organized incitement of violence." He continued: "Detention of General Aideded will ensure his safety and that of the Somali people. He will be granted all appropriate rights. Others will also be arrested if evidence is developed implicating them in the same or similar crimes."

The U.N., of course, is not a government. It has no jurisdiction over any criminal case of any kind, nor does it have a court system or legal system.

Commenting on this new assertion of power, former U.S. attorney general Richard Thornburgh gloated, "There are a lot of constitutional and legal scholars who would find difficulty with that." Thornburgh, who retired as undersecretary general of the U.N. last March, added, "But let's face it, this [arrest of Aideded] would be a political act, and international law is more politics than law."

During his tenure as attorney general in the Bush administration, Thornburgh had developed the so-called "Thornburgh doctrine" which claimed that the United States had the right to kidnap anyone, anywhere, and try him or her in the United States. This doctrine was then applied in the case of Gen. Manuel Noriega, kidnapped from Panama in 1989, and in the kidnapping of a Mexican physician, Dr. Humberto Alvarez Machain in 1991, accused of aiding the murder of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agent. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that such kidnappings were lawful.

Now, it seems, the U.N. is arrogating the same authority to itself. In order to facilitate this new power-grab, the German government has been continuing to lobby for the establishment of an international criminal court, affiliated with the U.N., which would try selected "criminal cases" of any national of any country, anywhere in the world.

At the same time, the U.N. is seeking to make Somalia a precedent for justifying the creation of a U.N. army, as called for by French President François Mitterrand in 1992. Since then, British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd called for the U.N. to establish a "general staff" of "highly professional military and civilian experts" to deal with such crises, in a speech to diplomats in London on June 17. That same day, British Defense Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told Parliament that he was considering using volunteers from the part-time Territorial Army on operations normally conducted by the regular Army, to free up regular Army troops for U.N. military operations.