

## International

# Iraq declares *Jihad* against UN sanctions

## US takes hard line on Saddam's latest ultimatums

WASHINGTON, Jan 19: Responding to Saddam Hussein's latest ultimatums, US officials stressed Sunday that Iraq not only must allow weapons inspections but must show a commitment to peace before crippling trade sanctions can end, reports AP.

Republican leaders went further. They said it's time for the United States to issue its own ultimatum that the Iraqi president must either cooperate or face US military retaliation.

"The burden of proof is on Saddam Hussein," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on NBC television. "The bottom line here is, has Saddam isolated himself by not fulfilling the obligations that have been laid on him by the Security Council."

Saddam, in a speech Saturday marking the seventh anniversary of the Gulf War, threatened to bar future UN weapons inspections if sanctions against Iraq are not lifted. Widespread military training of Iraqis was ordered.

Saddam's speech also came on the eve of a visit to Baghdad by chief UN arms inspector Richard Butler. He said he will state plainly to the Iraqis that the inspection teams must have total freedom of movement, including access to all military palaces that the Iraqis have declared off limits.

"There can be no such sanctuary," Butler said on CNN. "That's what I will be putting before (Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister) Tariq Aziz."

Administration officials insisted the policy of applying diplomatic pressure through the United Nations is working. "There are no prospects of sanctions being lifted," said Bill Richardson, America's UN ambassador. Saddam has "got the (UN) Security Council against him and we have once again a state of desperation on his part," Richardson said on ABC television.

"I don't want to saber-rattle," he said, but "What Ambassador Butler's trip brings back will be a very important threshold."

White House National Security Adviser Sandy Berger repeated on CBS television that the United States is prepared to use unilateral military force against Iraq if that becomes necessary.

But Republican Sen John McCain told CBS that the time has come for an ultimatum. He said military action now appears inevitable. And unlike the limited military strikes of

Iraqi women who joined a para-military group on Sunday, making a victory sign and holding guns. They were responding to a call-to-arms by president Saddam Hussein. The newly established group is expected to start training on February 1, 1998. They will be supervised by the party and trained by the defence ministry.

— AP/UNB photo

Meanwhile, as Iraq steps up

preparation for a possible military confrontation over UN arms inspections, the chief international inspector is traveling to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi leaders.

Richard Butler's visit today comes at a time of renewed tensions between Iraq and the United States, the chief proponent of the inspections.

Iraqi officials, fearing an American military strike, urged residents Sunday to volunteer for weapons training.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan accused the United States of "increasing its aggressive stands" to prolong UN economic sanctions.

Reuter adds: Iraq declared holy war on UN sanctions today, calling for a one-million volunteer force to push for an end to the seven-year-old embargo it says has caused widespread starvation and death.

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However, Washington immediately rejected Baghdad's ultimatum and insisted that Iraq must first comply with all UN resolutions for sanctions to be lifted.

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