One of the missiles fired during U.S. aggression.

sell billions of dollars worth of goods to Libya annually. Moreover, 40,000 Europeans are living in Libya, as compared to some thousand US citizens. Over the years, US dependence on Libyan oil, as well as exports to Libya, have dropped. **In 1979, US exports to Libya were worth $ 860 million; by 1984, they had dropped to $ 200 million, mostly pharmaceuticals, farm products and manufactured goods. On the other hand, Libyan oil sales to the US dropped from $ 5 billion in 1979 to $ 9 million in 1984. Economic sanctions would thus hurt US interests least, but western European interests most. Similar differences took place between the imperialist allies when the US came down on European countries, forbidding work on the** Siberian pipeline.

West Germany, Greece, Austria, Italy and even the Vatican were among the most vehement opponents of economic sanctions. Reagan's special envoy to West Germany had proposed a four-step program to retaliate economically against Libya - reduction of oil imports, withholding West German technology, curtailing flights between the two countries and increasing security controls against Libya's embassy in Bonn. The plan was rejected. Austrian Bruno Kreisky told the *Vienna Kurier* newspaper that the bombings at Rome and Vienna airports were Reagan's pretext for his anti-Libyan moves. Greece even declared outright that Libya was not behind the airport attacks. According to Vittorio Zucconi of the Italian *La Republica*, «Economic sanctions make particularly little sense at a time when Europeans' main concern is to get payment for arms already delivered to Libya. (Libya's foreign debt is $ 4 billion with payments badly in arrears.) An economic boycott would simply prevent Libya from paying its bills.» Even the Vatican ignored Washington's call for economic sanctions, entering into a joint venture with the state-owned Libyan Arab Bank and Italian investors.

John Whitehead had toured European capitals in January, to drum up support for Reagan's hard-line policy. He returned empty-handed from his eight-nation tour. The US had threatened to strike Libya if the Europeans didn't show more flexibility to US proposals. According to a senior US administration official, «The large-scale US air and naval exercises now underway off the coast of Libya were planned more than two weeks ago to take place if US allies failed to support its economic sanctions» (*Boston Globe*, January 25th). Zbigniew Brzezinski explained in a January interview that US military action against Qaddafi «would induce Europeans to embrace sanctions.» However, whatever perverse methods the US uses to coerce its European allies, the latter have remained adamantly opposed to economic sanctions. The US was, however, able to extract a pledge that they would not undercut its sanctions against Libya, by taking over contracts or filling jobs vacated by Americans. Then under the impact of the US aggression, EEC countries moved to enforce mass expulsion of Libyan diplomats and others from Europe, not to mention strengthening intelligence cooperation between Europe and the US.

US double talk

However, despite Reagan's war drive, even US citizens obliged to leave Libya are dragging their feet. Oil employees earn up to $ 100,000 a year, three times what they would earn in the same job in the US. Most of them have decided to take their chances and stay, while many more are trickling back into the country. In fact, the US administration came down much harder on individuals working in the oil field and their families living in Libya, than they did on the five major US oil companies operating there. «US citizens working in Libya are subject to 10 years in jail and a $ 50,000 fine,» said Robert Oakley, director of the State Department office for 'counterterrorism' and emergency planning. Moreover, all purchases, including grocery shopping require a «prohibited transactions» permit from the US Treasury Department to be acquired at the Belgium embassy in Libya. Despite all measures, US citizens don't seem to be intimidated. One oil engineer, who wanted to remain anonymous, made the following statement to the *Journal of Commerce* on January 31st: «I am more afraid of remaining unemployed than of what Reagan can do to me.»

The five US companies with oil concessions in Libya are Occidental Petroleum, Amerada Hess, Marathon, Conoco and Grace. These suspended their oil liftings in February. However, the US administration left many loopholes in the measures taken against them, enabling them to preserve their interests in Libya through foreign subsidiaries of so-called unrelated foreign firms. These companies account for 20% of the country's total oil production which is 1.1 million barrels a day. Moreover, forty US oil service companies exist in Libya, which handle 33% of Libya's production to customers in Europe and elsewhere. A unit of Halliburton Company, Brown and Root, Inc. are managing a project to tap water underneath the Libyan desert. The project is estimated at $ 20 billion. The Price Brothers Company of Dayton, Ohio, is providing the technology, machinery and equipment. For the US to simply walk out of Libya would mean losing $ 150 million in annual income and $ 2 billion in fixed assets, and many more millions from company projects. The US has therefore more to lose by imposing sanctions than Libya that can find many willing to fill the vacuum. Thus, although the US has pressured the Europeans all along to do just that, i.e., walk out, it has left wide escape clauses when legislating its own trade embargo. The embargo was *permitted* not required by replacing the word *shall* with *may*. The final bill signed by the president reads: «The President may prohibit any article grown, produced, extracted or manufactured in Libya from being imported to the US...»; a similar clause was included on exports.

According to a western oil executive, the action of US companies is having absolutely no effect on Libya's overall oil income. Realizing this, many companies and their employees have confirmed that they are likely to 'return under cover', to avoid losing their investments or livelihood which is tax-free. Even State Department spokesman, Charles Redman, indicated the futility of such sanctions, referring to them as «somewhat effective» but saying that at the same time, the US administration was «looking at other things (they) could do» (*Washington Post*, January 3rd). ▶