Trends. Meanwhile in Iraq: Just Say No Becomes Not Accepting Yes

Editor

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In the continuation of efforts to weaken United Nations (UN)-inspired economic sanctions against Iraq, the government of Saddam Hussein recently "induced" about 18,000 of its citizens to gather at the Iraqi border with Saudi Arabia. The proximal purpose was to demonstrate that UN economic sanctions had left Iraqis without the resources to make the hajj to Mecca. Without appropriate resources, the Saudis would have no choice but to say but to say "No." No resources, no hajj. Preventing Muslims from making the hajj--an obligation for any Muslim who is able--would in effect portray the sanctions as contributing to a sacrilege against God and would further decrease support for continuation of the sanctions among UN members. On the other hand, if the Saudis said, "Yes," it could only be in the context of funding the hajj-bound Iraqis by the UN freeing Iraqi financial assets that have been frozen through the sanctions. The Iraqi government assumed that the UN would not weaken the sanctions, so the incipient Saudi "Yes" could only become an actual "No".