



Gulf Cooperation Council

Survival Plan for Reactionary Dynasties

The following is an article contributed to «Democratic Palestine» by the Committee for the Revolution in Oman and the Arab Gulf (KROAG) in Denmark, an anti-imperialist organization supporting the revolutionary forces in the Gulf, especially the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman. We thank these comrades for their active interest and contribution, and publish the article in their name.

Since its formation in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council has emphasized «self-reliance» as its main characteristic. However, reality proves that the GCC is merely part of the aggressive strategy of the US imperialism in the Gulf area.

«Gulf security should be shouldered by the people of the Gulf alone, and foreign troops, no matter how friendly they could be, no matter what pretext they may use, are not in line with the interests of the Gulf» (1). This statement was made in 1983 by Abdullah Bishara, General Secretary of the GCC. The six member countries - Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, the Emirates and Kuwait - have often repeated these words, but what does it mean in practice?

The idea of uniting the Gulf states in a military pact is not new. The regimes' fundamental common interest in keeping each other in power is the basis for their close cooperation which must also be seen in light of US interests in the Gulf. To maintain the political status quo is of vital importance for the imperialist countries because of their need for oil. In addition, the area has become a cornerstone in the military strategy of the US to control the whole Middle East. Thus imperialism and Gulf regimes share a common goal in crushing any possible threat to «stability» in the area.

The «Carter Doctrine»

Following the Iranian revolution, Carter, US President at the time, formulated a new strategy for US policy to replace the so-called «Nixon doctrine». The Gulf was declared a «vital zone» to be protected by all means, including military intervention. Consequently it was decided to build a giant intervention unit, the Rapid Deployment Force, now also known as the US Central Command. RDF counts more than 300,000 men primarily based in the USA. Within a week all of these troops can be transferred to the Gulf and brought into action.

This plan depends on US access to local military bases from where the RDF can operate. Since 1980, the US has built a

large network of bases and other military facilities in the Gulf. Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have become centres for sophisticated American weapons and smaller units of RDF. Especially Sultan Qaboos in Oman has shown his hospitality by allowing US bases on Masirah Island, in Dhofar and the Mussandam province.

Direct US intervention will however be decided as the last resort. In the first place the Gulf states will try to take care of their own security. To postpone the necessity of imperialist intervention it is therefore crucial to strengthen the military cooperation between the US Arabs in the area. It is within this context the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its proclaimed «self-reliance» should be analyzed.

GCC became a reality in 1981 and from the very beginning «security» was the main issue of the Council. At a meeting between the foreign ministers of the member states in August 1981 Saudi Arabia presented a secret report on military cooperation saying that: «Any threats to any state threaten the security and safety of the other states. The responsibility of safeguarding the security and stability of the Gulf is shouldered not by each state separately, but by all six states» (2). This one for all and all for one philosophy has several times been emphasized as the label of the GCC.

«Self-reliance» has clearly been used to legitimize a military build-up in the Gulf states, explained this way in the Saudi report: «We must set up a Gulf force which will enable us to rely on our own strength...The establishment of such a force requires an increasing capacity of the armed defence forces» (3).

Modified «self-reliance»

All member states have agreed to the Saudi document and its opposition towards foreign military presence. As mentioned, this is for sure a qualified truth concerning Oman, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia itself.