

Apart from Oman, the Gulf states however are not happy to admit the US connection, and Kuwait has, as the only real advocate of non-alignment, often expressed dissatisfaction with the policy of Sultan Qaboos. Nevertheless, the General Secretary of the GCC in 1983 made this comment to the yearly Omani-American military exercises on Omani soil: «I would not say that it really undermines our collective approach»(4)!!

The dependence on and alliance with US imperialism becomes further clearcut when one takes a closer look at some details in the GCC «Security Pact»:

## 1. Formation of a joint military unit - the Gulf Deployment Force

The preparations to establish a joint military force within the GCC have practically been going on since 1982. The unit consists of smaller units from all member states and is stationed in Saudi Arabia. A Saudi officer is head of the Gulf Deployment Force.

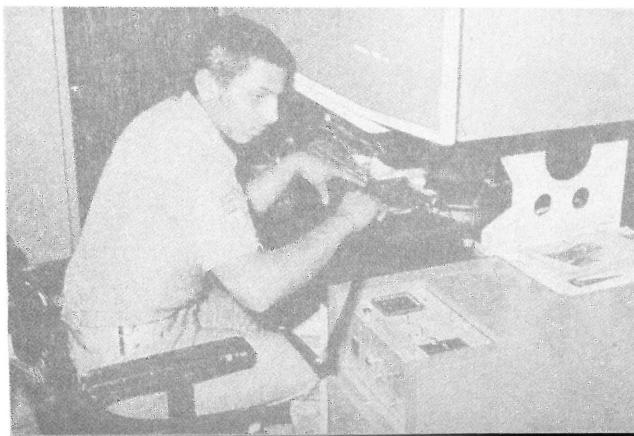
In November 1983 the first joint military exercises were conducted in the United Arab Emirates under the codename of «Peninsula Shield». Every year the GCC carries out these maneuvers including both defensive and offensive weaponry, and every time the leading officers claim the ability of the Gulf states to defend themselves. After «Peninsula Shield no.1» a US military advisor had this comment: «The maneuvers showed us how far the Gulf states have come, but also how badly they need us»(5)!!

Besides the dependence on US support, the reactionary monarchies face a common problem, namely the bad qualifications of their national armies. Most of them depend on military support from other reactionary states such as Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan. Thus between 20,000 and 30,000 Pakistani security troops are stationed in Saudi Arabia. In Oman several Egyptian officers serve in the Sultan's army which is under the command of more than 500 British officers. The Omani intelligence network at large is commanded by Jordanians.

## 2. Development of sophisticated weapons

Another central aspect of the Gulf Security Pact is the build-up of an advanced anti-aircraft missile system and supervision and communication equipment which runs to \$ 6 billion for 1984-86 alone. One of the key parts is the Saudi AWACS aircrafts. However, the Saudis are not able to use these sophisticated planes without assistance from American advisors. According to a report published by the US Defence Department «..the nature of the AWACS is so complex that US personnel will be required to maintain key elements of the system for its entire life...The withdrawal of US support for the Saudi AWACS would quickly result in the system becoming non-operational»(6)!

*New electronic equipment supplied by imperialist countries for the Saudi security forces*



With such information one must surely question the ability of the Gulf regimes to manage on their own. It is also well-known that American advisors are the chief architects behind the modernization of the Saudi armed forces. Not even 1000 declarations about «self-reliance» can remove these facts.

## 3. Standardization of weaponry

The GCC efforts to integrate also include standardization of weapons and a joint arms industry. So far \$ 1.5 billion have been invested in this project. At the same time, the US Administration has launched a major sales campaign for US weapons arguing that they would make it easier for US allies to fight together with the US army against common enemies!

Ironically, Washington has often been forced to cancel valuable deals due to pressure from the powerful Zionist lobby. For example it succeeded in preventing a delivery of Stinger missiles to Kuwait last year. This case among others reflects the US dilemma in the Middle East of protecting the Zionist state and simultaneously being a loyal friend to the pro-western Arab regimes.

## Who are they afraid of?

No other conclusion can be drawn than that the claimed «self-reliance» is a fraud. As a whole, the GCC must be considered as an instrument for imperialist interests in the Gulf within the context of the «Carter/Reagan Doctrine». The reason behind the efforts to hide the American presence in the area is simply that most Gulf regimes fear a popular resistance as it occurred in Iran.

However, one question remains: Who are they afraid of? What forces are the dynasties and US imperialism investing billions of dollars to protect themselves against? The answer is given in the above mentioned Saudi document from 1981, in which various «aggressors» are described.

One is characterized as «extremist Arab organizations», that is the national liberation movements, such as the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Popular Front and National Liberation Front in Bahrain. The category probably also includes various pro-Iranian Islamic groups which, for example, were claimed responsible for a coup attempt in Bahrain in 1981.

Membership in a political organization is enough to be considered «subversive». In its report for 1984, Amnesty International verifies 16 of such cases in Bahrain alone, where the activists were sentenced to prison for 7 years (7).

Besides the progressive national forces, Saudi Arabia mentions «the adventurous foreign policy of certain Arab states».

Also the USSR is mentioned as a threat in case of super-power confrontation. However, President Reagan's paranoia about «Soviet aggression» behind every local or regional conflict is not shared by the majority of GCC members. The main threat for them is the internal opposition forces and then, of course, the war between Iran and Iraq.

## GCC and the Gulf war

Today an escalation of the Gulf war constitutes the greatest danger for an imperialist invasion. The US policy was clearly stated by Mr. Reagan in 1983 when he declared that: «..the free world could not stand by and allow anyone to close the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf» (8).

According to official statements the GCC takes a neutral stand to the war, but in reality Iraq is supported heavily. The