

The Gulf War

Towards Internationalization

Iranian bellicosity and intransigence have combined with the attack on the US warship Stark to invite more imperialist involvement in the Gulf, opening a new chapter in US-Iraqi relations.

On May 17th, the US guided missile frigate Stark was hit by an Iraqi missile. Thirty-seven US sailors were killed and twenty-one injured. This coincided with Iran's threats to the Kuwaiti government for supporting Iraq in the Gulf war. The Iranians also threatened the United States and Soviet Union for responding to the Kuwaiti requests to have their oil tankers escorted as protection against any Iranian attack.

Tension has been high in the Gulf since the attack on the US warship, focusing increased international attention on the conflict there. Among the major world powers, it is perhaps only the Soviet Union that has genuine interests in a solution being found to the war. Besides the overall Soviet line for peace and stability internationally, there are two major reasons for this. One, the Soviets are interested in friendly relations with the Gulf countries, leading to mutual benefit, rather than seeing the two major Gulf powers

squander their resources in this senseless war. Two, the Soviets are concerned that the war gives imperialism added pretexts for reinforcing its military network just south of Soviet borders.

The Soviet policy can be embarrassing for the imperialist countries, and spoil their plans for exploiting the Gulf war to their own advantage. While publicly espousing solutions, the imperialist countries are playing their role of war capitalists to the hilt - selling arms to one side or the other, or to both. In contrast to the Soviet Union, the capitalist countries are delighted to make money while Iran and Iraq destroy each other, making both more vulnerable to imperialist domination and ultimately strengthening 'Israel' and other pro-imperialist regimes in the area.

The US, however, is still smarting under the Iran/contragate scandal, and thus especially attune to the need for

giving its Gulf policy a degree of coherence and respectability. So when the Soviets offered to protect Kuwaiti vessels, the US was quick to match the offer. Under the guise of working for peace and stability, the US is seeking to utilize the situation as an excuse for increased US naval presence in the area, strengthening the imperialist military network against any revolutionary movement and the socialist community.

JOINT EFFORTS?

The Stark accident along with the threats to the Kuwaiti government led to the activation of United Nations' efforts to seek possibilities for ending the Gulf war, forcing the two sides to enter into reconciliation talks. The five permanent members of the Security Council have presented a draft resolution to the council on ending the Iraq-Iran war. It contains a paragraph on imposing an arms embargo on either of the two sides that does not abide by the resolution.

The states of the Gulf Cooperation Council consider that the situation in the Gulf has reached its most critical point yet in the seven years of war. At the Venice Summit, the main capitalist countries demanded effective UN measures to stop the Gulf war. This is what was announced, yet no practical steps have been taken, making it obvious that there is not actual joint international work to stop the Gulf war.

