

## Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

### Making the Gulf secure

*A regional security pact is in the works against Khomeini-inspired insurrection.*

Late last month, Arab interior ministers from the Persian Gulf gathered together in Taif, Saudi Arabia for three days to discuss a common and deeply disturbing concern. The question of Gulf security has become paramount in the minds of Arab leaders in the wake of the revolution in Iran and the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the region. The security danger is compounded by Israel's provocations and by the activation of radical students and young Western-educated Arab technocrats who are loudly demanding "reform" and "liberalization" in the Gulf. These demands, at this juncture, are aimed at provoking one thing and one thing only: the destabilization of the strategic Persian Gulf, leading ultimately into a cutoff of oil supplies to the West.

At their conference in Taif, the interior ministers approved Saudi Arabia's proposals for "the creation of an Arab security organism charged with struggling against criminality and assuring the stability of the Arab countries." This new entity, according to Agence France Press, will supervise "the measures taken by the Arab states toward facing the dangers that threaten to disturb the region."

The Khomeini government denounced the interior ministers' conference as "a meeting convened to hatch plots against Iran." The location of the conference reflected

the fact that Saudi Arabia, the linchpin of the Arab world, is pressured from all sides by those who seek to topple the monarchy in the name of "liberalization." The operation is being given a boost by Iran, whose broadcasts into Saudi Arabia are tailored to appeal to the Saudi middle class.

"It is not the tribes so much that the Saudis have to worry about," University of Pittsburgh professor Richard Cottam, one of the architects of the Khomeini takeover, recently stated. "The Saudis have the tribal situation pretty much under control. It is the middle class that is going to turn things upside down in Saudi Arabia."

According to Arab intelligence sources, the immediate goal of the operation is to trigger a major upheaval some time during the height of the yearly September-October *haj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca, when millions of Muslims flood into Saudi Arabia. "This year's incident," stated one source, "will make last year's Mecca siege look minor."

Whether the Saudis—who are working closely with the Iraqis on security matters—will be able to preempt an operation to destabilize the monarchy depends to a large extent on the nature of the agreements worked out in Taif.

There are other factors. Two disturbing things that bode ill for the future stability of Saudi Arabia are the monarchy's recent rapprochement with Great Britain and

its ongoing friendship with Pakistan's Muslim fundamentalist leader Zia ul-Haq, who has reportedly agreed to send one or two divisions to Saudi Arabia to help with security problems.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad has warned of ongoing plans to destabilize the region "from within." Alluding to the role of Iran in provoking regional unrest, Sabah al-Ahmad charged "certain embassies" with stirring up trouble in Kuwait. The crown prince of Kuwait was more explicit. "All the states in the region are exposed to a plot aimed at creating disturbances and unrest. Weapons and explosives have been smuggled into Kuwait and used, while leaflets being sent by mail emanate both from inside and outside the country. Infiltrating agents are trying to create panic among the people."

The source of much of the agitation in the Gulf states of Kuwait and Bahrain and in Saudi Arabia are radical students, educated in the U.S. and Europe. The use of Gulf radical students began five years ago when the young Prince Faisal, a nephew of the Saudi king, was transformed during his years of study in the U.S. into a flower-child radical who was eventually deployed to assassinate the king, who had been a formidable obstacle to destabilizing the Gulf.

A security force cannot be wholly effective unless such deployments are dealt with. *EIR* investigations into the Faisal assassination have uncovered the individuals and institutions behind the current activation of student radicals in the Gulf; a report, including a map of universities and professors involved, will appear soon.