



## GCC considers establishment of confederation

Dr Jassim Taqui in Riyadh

THE leaderships of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are seriously considering a Gulf Confederation(GC). According to diplomatic sources here, the Gulf confederation will have a unified foreign policy, defence and security policy. However, each of the six countries ( Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Sultanate of Oman and Qatar) will remain independent and sovereign.

The new thinking has emerged in view of the present state of turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East. GCC is increasingly looking to a new policy that emphasizes self-dependence in security and military fields by evolving collective security to confront foreign threats.

The Gulf confederation is being discussed in the GCC Secretariat General to find a consensus on the modalities of the Gulf Confederation. Under the confederation plan, the GC would have a single foreign affairs ministry in charge of relations with other countries. Gulf states would have only one common embassy in other countries. Similarly, foreign countries would be asked to have only one diplomatic mission in the Gulf region.

In the military field, the Gulf countries will turn the existing Peninsula Shield into a rapid deployment force by upgrading the weapon system and fighting capabilities of the shield. The task of the joint military would be centred on repelling regional threats and confronting plots to undermine stability in any of the six member countries.

A joint military committee has been established to decide a unified military leadership of the joint army. The committee would also submit its proposals on the new weapon system and on unifying military training.

It is also decided that the GCC would soon hold massive military maneuvers involving land , sea and air forces of the six Gulf States.

Another committee is presently studying the unification of GCC interior ministries starting with the unification of security agencies.A legal committee is taking care of legal and legislative affairs of the confederation, which would establish the GC on solid basis.

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