

# Imperialism: Petrol, the Middle East and the Caucasus

By TKP/ML 1997

The brutality in the Middle East existed for a long time within a two-poled world system. Today the world's imperialist hegemony seems to have triple polarity. This will increase the dimension of the conflicts in the region, and it will be even worse in the Middle East. Today, the imperialists of the USA, the members of the European Union and Japan form these three poles.

Nowadays, the importance of petrol is continuing to have the same effects on human life as before.

*"The word petrol is derived from Latin and means 'rock oil' (Petrol Oleum). It has been considered that petrol was used for the first time by Phoenicians for caulking ships."*

*"It is known that the first users of petrol were Sumerians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. Five thousand years ago, Tutul, on the banks of the River Euphrates, was one of the asphalt production centres in that area. It has been known that the ancient Egyptians used liquid petrol as a purgative and dermal medicine. Persians used to dip their arrows' fibre ends into liquid petrol during the siege of Athens in 480 BC." (1)*

If we leave aside this type usage of petrol in ancient history, petrol was produced deliberately for the first time in the year 1859.

*"The Valley of OIL CREEK, on the south-east of Titusville became the foundation of the STANDARD OIL OHIO COMPANY, which was the ancestor of 'Seven-sisters'. In the future, these companies would hold 90% of oil of the world in their possession." (2)*

Petrol was a great gain for humanity, however with the formation of imperialism petrol brought blood and tears to the people of poor countries--especially the ones that possess petrol. Petrol also became a facilitating and encouraging factor for a handful of monopolies, compared with the population of the world, for tightening control over the poor people of the world.

65% of petrol reserves are in the Middle East, and the richness of petrol made the region centre of attraction for imperialism. Before the First Imperialist War of Partition and during the Second War of Partition, imperialist countries like Britain, Germany and France were dominant in the region.

During the nationalisation period of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East, which was once within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, was left under the control of Britain, Germany and France. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was not a single piece of land, which was not under the control of imperialism. During the First War of Partition and afterwards the effects of imperialism had not declined, rather the contrary, with the BALFOUR DECLARATION.

In 1916 the seeds of the Jewish State were sown in Palestine and in 1948 this process was completed. The STATE OF ISRAEL formed as the ever-present sword of imperialism against the Palestinian people in the Middle East. With the TREATY of LAUSANNE the land of Kurdistan was divided into four pieces. Previously Kurdistan was divided into two pieces by the TREATY of KASRI-SHIRIN.

After the October Revolution in 1917 and First War of Partition, imperialism entered a stagnation period in its Middle East policies until the Second War of Partition. After the end of the Second War of Partition

new masters, and new scenarios and new players entered the scene of history of the Middle East and the other colonies or semi-colonies.

The capitalist-imperialist countries entered economic crisis after the First War of Partition, which with the help of developing and developed nationalist and racist policies, enabled fascism to come into power in Germany and Italy. Their imperialist and expansionist policies envisaged war as a solution to their economic crisis. The Second Imperialist War of Partition started after Poland's invasion by Germany in 1939. Six years later German imperialism retreated under the blows of the USSR led by Stalin. A Partisan War in Greece developed. Japan was defeated in Peoples War led by the Communist Party of China and, surrendered after the atom bombs were dropped by the USA. Britain, compared with the other imperialist states (USA, Germany, Italy and Japan) played a passive role in this war. All these created possibilities for the USA for having authority in the world structure. Thus, the balance of the world entered a two-poled structure.

The Entrance of the USA and the other imperialists in to the Middle East was caused by the petrol sheikhs and the state of Zionist Israel. *"Today the capitalist world is dependent on petrol from the Middle East. However, the degree of dependency differs.*

*The share of imported petrol production from the Middle East is 11% for USA, 14% for Britain, 35% for France. One cannot measure in itself the low proportion of petrol dependency for USA and Britain because these two imperialist countries are producing petrol of their own. The USA is importing a significant proportion (25%) of petrol from the Middle East."* (3)

Being a steady market, having cheap petrol and making them dependent on their own petrol companies are the main aspects that enable imperialist countries to stay in the Middle East. The conflict of interests and social liberation struggles in the region enables imperialist countries to create a regular market for arms trade in the Middle East.

The contradiction of advantages between the countries around the region often concludes with a war and these contradictions kept alive by the imperialists for being able to expand their arm markets. The petrol crises that occur from time to time force capitalist industries to research new energy resources. The rise of petrol prices during the ARAB-ISRAELI war in 1973-1974, forced people into looking for alternative energy resources like nuclear and electrical energy rather than being dependent on petrol.

*"The petrol companies are the key factors for imperialist countries staying in the Middle East. These companies are the members of world petrol cartels known as the 'Seven-sisters'. Five of them come from America, they are: STANDARD OIL OF JERSEY, STANDARD OIL OF CALIFORNIA, SOCAU MOBIL, GULF and TEXACO. The other two are a British-Iranian Company (BRITISH PETROLEUM) and a British-Dutch Company (ROYAL DUTCH SHELL). These seven companies hold 90% of the world's petrol production in their possession."* (4) [Today, Standard Oil of New Jersey has become "Exxon." Standard Oil of California is "Chevron" and bought "Texaco". —Ed.]

OPEC was formed by the petrol exporting countries in 1960, in Baghdad against the "Seven-sisters." The countries involved in forming OPEC are; VENEZUELA, SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, IRAQ and KUWAIT. However, they were unable to have any effect on the "Seven-sisters," so they became branches of the "Seven-sisters." Everybody knows the tricks which were played on the petrol producing countries.

After the First War of Partition, the imperialists created artificial states. These are ADEN, OMAN, QATAR and KUWAIT. Besides these, the imperialists are effectively creating puppet regimes and personal dictatorships in their colonies and semi-colonies all over the world.

The imperialists have always played a role in causing the rise in petrol prices. The USA is able to influence economical struggles to her own advantage by using her five petrol companies and applying various economical restrictions on Western Europe and Japan, because Western European and Japanese economies are highly dependent on petrol produced in the Middle East. That is why the USA sometimes raises petrol prices in the world markets by consulting OPEC and the "Seven-sisters" to equalise her rivals.

The Second petrol crisis occurred in 1979 with the IRANIAN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION.

With this revolution, the USA supported the destruction of the Shah's regime in Iran. The Iranian revolutionaries declared themselves anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist and showed some kind of tendency (only on a tendency basis) for these kind of policies in the beginning and then the second petrol crisis started; though, it was not as effective as the first one.

General KASIM cancelled 95% of foreign companies' petrol franchises in Iraq, in 1961. After this, petrol cartels created KUWAIT with the help of the British State. Thus the Persian Gulf was taken from Iraq, and Iraq became a land-locked country with her access to the sea cut.

In 1961, Britain pulled her military forces from KUWAIT and granted independence to this country. Thus, a great deal of petrol that had been in the hands of Iraq passed to this artificial petrol state. Thus, Iraq's desire for hegemony in the region--or, more precisely, in Kuwait--created the third petrol crisis.

In August 1990, SADDAM invaded Kuwait. Before the invasion, the USA and western imperialists turned a blind eye to the invasion of Kuwait and even encouraged Saddam indirectly. After the dissolution of Soviet Social Imperialism, the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam, USA had the first opportunity of applying "NEW WORLD ORDER" system. In addition to this, the economy of U.S. imperialism was continuously losing blood. They had to reduce their arm stocks. They had to decrease unemployment, which was increasing day by day. They needed to ignite and burn an area to able to turn unruly masses' attention outside. This area was the Middle East.

The Middle East was already like a gunpowder barrel ready for ignition. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq meant ignition of the gunpowder. One other reason for the war in the Middle East was that the other imperialist countries (France, Britain etc.) allied with the USA in order to secure their own oil resources in the Middle East. According to the JANUARY 1990 issue of PETROLEUM ECONOMICS the reason was that

*"The life of the oil reserves was 8-27 years in the Western Countries, but the life of oil reserves in the Middle East was between 88-138 years."* The path that led to the Gulf War created the third oil crisis.

Getting the backing of the other imperialist countries created the opportunity for the USA to challenge the others. Its attitude meant to its other imperialist allies and repressed people of the world that, "I am the master of the world, he who stands against me or touches my interests would end with the same faith."

Whilst the USA seemed to be consolidating its hegemony in the Middle East, gradual opposition policies were developing against it and this was shaking the USA's world-hegemony plans to a significant degree. This shaking of a certain speed today seems to cause serious problems.

The following examples will give a better understanding of the meaning of this stage. The hegemony of the Mullah regime in Iran, which created the second oil crisis in 1979--its adoption of anti-American policies instead of anti-imperialist policies brought onto the agenda the implementation of an embargo on

Iran by the USA--and other imperialist countries. However, during this time, the other imperialist countries apart from the USA, secretly developed their trade relationships with Iran.

*Whilst the USA's " export to Iran was 1 billion 181 million dollars in 1979, this dropped to 81 million dollars in 1985. Germany's export to Iran was 1 billion 413 million in 1979, it went up 3 billion 430 million dollars in the period of 1990-1991. Japan's export to Iran was 1 billion 13 million in 1979, it went up 1 billion 933 million dollars in the period of 1990-1991. Britain export to Iran was 542 million dollars and it reached 1 billion 15 million dollars in the period of 1990-1991."(5)*

As we can see from these figures, the hegemony of the USA was shaken. It is right to say that the hegemony of the USA was replaced by the other imperialist countries' hegemony. Another concrete step, which will support this is that according to the D'AMATO agreement, sanctions will be implemented against those third countries, which invest more than 40 thousand dollars in Iran and Libya.

France, one of the European Union members, suggested that this was intervention in home-affairs and TOTAL, one of the petrol giants of France decided to make an investment of 2 billion dollars to dig for natural gas in Iran. Again, another giant of France ELF, declared that it was bargaining with Iran. It went even further.

*" Our strategy has not changed, Iran is still in our interest area. We want to invest in Iraq as soon as the international embargo is lifted. We are negotiating,"* declared the spokesperson of ELF.

This declaration shows that the hegemony of U.S. imperialism was wounded in a few places. It also shows that the imperialist countries, which form the European Union went some way towards forming an alternative pole against the USA. The discussion on lifting the embargo, which was imposed on Iraq, gives a sign of speeding up the quarrels between the imperialist states.

The imperialists--mainly the USA with the biggest share--who secured their hegemony in the Middle East, set their sights on the 'independent' countries of Central Asia and Caucasus, which were formed after the collapse of Russian Social-Imperialism.

Today, it is obvious that, the desire of Imperialism to secure hegemony in the Caucasus will not cause any losses in the short and long term, but bring many advantages. The agreement often made between the imperialist countries and the countries, which became rich from the oil and natural gas resources of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and many transport line projects looks very complicated at first glance and gives a chaotic impression.

However the gist of the problem between the importers and the holders of the oil and natural gas countries is to have a better share in the short term; in the long term, it would not take a soothsayer to see the imperialist policy as the first phase of planning to gain hegemony over the Caucasus and Central Asia like in the Middle East through oil companies.

Whilst on the one side of the coin these mutual agreements are made, on the other side assassinations, coups, and wars follow each other. HAIDAR [also spelled "GEIDAR,"—Ed.] ALIYEV has been targeted many times in assassination attempts. Haidar Aliyev made a coup against EBULFEYZ [also spelled "ABULFAZ," —Ed.] ELCHIBEY, who was following nationalistic policies for preparing to give great profits to Turkey for the production and marketing of Azerbaijan oils. We should not forget that Turkish fascists connected to the CIA were involved in these assassination attempts.

Besides this, unsuccessful assassination attempts against EDVARD SHEVARDNADZE, the President of Georgia, through which one of the Russian oil pipeline is intended to go to Russia caused the deaths of thousands of Russian soldiers to be able to keep Chechnya under its hegemony during the Russia-Chechnya war. The Second oil pipeline in Russia goes through Chechnya.

The USA's support for the Taliban movement in Afghanistan in case one of the oil pipelines goes through that country, the non-stop blood bath in Kashmir, which is a problematic region for Pakistan and India, and the fall of Benazir Bhutto from government in Pakistan show the other side of the coin in the oil war.

We should look at the amount of the oil and natural gas reserves in the region to be able to understand the reasons behind the deals made between the imperialists and the countries in the region. That will be sufficient to explain the pitiless bargains. Discovered oil reserves in the region is 15.6 billion barrels. According to reports by the USA, there are still more than 160 billion barrels of oil. These make a total of 180 billion barrels. Expectations are 200 billion barrels.

This amount is 50 times more than AIOC's (AZERBAIJAN OILS CONSORTIUM) expected amount of oil production. AIOC signed the "agreement of the century." It is the double the amount of oil reserves in Iraq. The amount is nearly four-fifths of the 260 billion barrels of petrol reserves expected to be produced in Saudi Arabia, which possesses the world's largest oil reserves.

The richness of the Caspian Sea was not allocated equally between the five coastal countries. According to American reports, the countries which provide oil from the Caspian Sea are--Kazakhstan 85 billion barrels, Turkmenistan 35 billion barrels, Azerbaijan 32 billion barrels, Russia 12 billion barrels, and Iran 5 billion barrels and these numbers are almost certain. In addition to these numbers, we should consider 55 billion cubic metres of natural gas.

Haidar Aliyev, the president of Azerbaijan visited the USA in August. According to the agreements, which proposed 10 billion dollars of investment in the Caspian Sea, four American companies (AMOCO, CHEVRON, EXXON, and MOBIL) gained 2000 billion tons of oil producing and processing rights in four separate areas.

Beside American companies there are two British, two French, one Japanese, one Norwegian, one Turkish, one Russian, one Italian-Russian partnership, and one Italian companies operating in the region for oil and gas production and marketing. In the beginning there were talks about 7-8 routes for the transportation of Caspian oil to the open seas. These numbers dropped to three in the latest report of the Azerbaijan Oil Consortium on 12 June 1997. The proposed, possible three routes are:

1. BAKU-NOVOROSSISK-BLACK SEA-BOSPHORUS-AEGEAN SEA
2. BAKU-SUPSA-BLACK SEA-BULGARIA-GREECE-AEGEAN SEA
3. BAKU-CEYHAN. However, in the last phase, Russia won the early production bargain.

Early production of Azerbaijan oil will reach its purchasers by tankers from ports of BAKU-NOVOROSSISK and SUPSA to the Mediterranean Sea. It has been planned that if Turkey does not allow its passage through the Bosphorus for security reasons, it will be taken from the Port of Burgaz in Bulgaria to the Port of Dedeagac in Greece and thence to the Mediterranean Sea.

Russia, which won the early production and transportation bargain, will not be satisfied with the transportation fees, but will also bring in to the debate the Caspian Sea's position. In order to get more shares out of it, Russia will maintain that the Caspian Sea is a land-locked sea. The gist of this debate is whether the Caspian Sea a land-locked sea or an open sea.

Russia is maintaining that the Caspian Sea is a land-locked sea and claims international sea laws must be applied. According to these, the Caspian Sea is an area, which will be used commonly by the coastal countries. The use of its resources including every activity must be done commonly by all the coastal countries to the Caspian Sea. In short, Caspian oil is a common asset.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries most in conflict with Russia over the Caspian Sea. According to Azerbaijan the Caspian Sea is an international "lake." International laws define the borders in international lakes by borderlines drawn in the middle. Thus, every coastal state's area, called a "sector," will be defined. Kazakhstan, which produces oil from the Caspian Sea also supports the thesis of Azerbaijan. The other coastal countries Iran and Turkmenistan's opinions are nearer to the Russian position.

Russia's intentions of not giving up its influence in the region causes conflicts of interest with the other imperialists. In the view of imperialists, thoughts of leaving Russia off the stage or limiting, provoking and deepening the disagreements between Russia and the countries around the region give clues to the policies of establishing hegemony over Central Asia and the Caucasus in the near future. The same policies turned the Middle East in to a bloodbath since the First War of Partition.

Again, to be able to understand the dimensions of exploitation and wars in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the savageness in the Middle East existed for a long time within a two-poled world system. Today the world's imperialist hegemony seems to have a triple polarity. This will increase the dimension of the conflicts in the region, and it will be even worse than the Middle East. Today, the imperialists of the USA, the members of European Union and Japan form these three poles.

If Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic join NATO, [they have since joined—Ed.] they will open the way for NATO led by the USA to expand in to the continent of Asia and this will help the USA set up a military force in order to be able to influence the region.

The main duty of Maoists must be to expose the intentions of the imperialists, which will create wars generally in Asia, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia and inspire the people of the Caucasus and Central Asia to be an independent and socialist country by forming their own organisations (Communist Parties).

## **What is the way of peace settlement in the Middle East? The way to peace in the Middle East opens by fighting imperialism and reaction!**

Before we go into recent developments in the region, we should scan the recent events of the history of the Middle East. The Middle East is known as one of hottest and most conflicted areas in the world. The main reason that put the region in a such heated atmosphere is the strategic position of the region. Especially the possession of almost 60% of the world oil in the region is a sufficient reason for the imperialists to keep the area in conflict.

The existence of nationalism and religious and sectarian contradictions negatively affects the united struggle of the people in the Middle East and this creates an opportunity for the "divide and rule" policies of the imperialists. One of the concrete examples of this is the war in Lebanon. Similar clashes still happen nowadays.

The Gulf War is one of the most extensive and shortest wars in recent years. The imperialist coalition led by the USA militarily defeated Saddam's administration in a short period after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The invasion of Kuwait became an important reason for the USA's military settlement in the region. With this invasion, imperialism threatened the peoples of the world.

However much the invasion of Kuwait was made by "an administration which lost its way," and had not served its people badly still it was not able to escape being the object of imperialists' anger, because this undertaking was threatening the interests of imperialists and was also a bad example for the future. That is why the imperialist powers, which used to unite against the "dangers of communism" of the USSR, united against the invasion of Iraq.

In short, the reason that brought them together was not Saddam's cruelty, but concerns about their interests. In cruelty and despotism the sins of imperialists are much more than Saddam's. Moreover, they were themselves the creators of Saddam.

Kurdish forces in Iraq that used the fight against the Saddam-regime established an "autonomous parliament" led by PDK and YNK with the approval and support of imperialists. The United Nations was the umbrella of this parliament. In other words, the enemies of the Kurdish people played the role of "umbrella" against Saddam's hail of bullets.

Thus, later the USA attacked Iraqi targets with rockets reasoning that Saddam was infiltrating into "Northern Iraq." In short, the imperialists have been trying to use every military and diplomatic means to bring Saddam into the course they want.

However, the recent attacks created cracks within the imperialist coalition, which formed during the Gulf War. In other words, the inevitable happened. This proved again the correctness of the Marxist thesis that conventions between imperialists are temporary.

Rivalry and conflicts are the main principle of imperialists. The British and German governments supported the recent rocket attacks, but France, China and Russia did not offer support. The Arab countries in the region also did not offer support and they were not late in stating their unhappiness in different ways.

This objective situation did not do anything towards the removal of Saddam; on the contrary, it empowered his position. At the same time this situation shook the prestige of the USA in the region and encouraged Arab nationalism. The situation gradually strengthened the basis of anti-USA waves within the people of Arab countries.

The picture we have drawn above, continues to reflect the reality of the situation between the USA and Iraq. [Since the time this was written, the USA invaded Iraq. —Ed.] Another point that we should concentrate is the dimension of relations and conflicts between the imperialist coalition that formed during the Gulf War.

Today, the first and most urgent problem, which should be solved in the Middle East, is the Kurdish problem. Of course, there are some other serious problems, which relate to the interests of the imperialists and reactionary governments in the region. One of them is the Palestine problem.

Again, there are wars, which continue in many countries in the region due to the growing radical Islamic forces. Especially the situations in Afghanistan and Algeria give concrete messages for the future of countries in the region. (There are objective bases for this for many countries in the region).

We have seen in the Palestine problem once more that the imperialists are not problem solvers but problem creators. Undoubtedly, the realities, which became clear in the Palestine problem, are not limited to it. Palestinian practice showed us how a compromising and reformist leadership, like Arafat's, could be a disaster for the people. The "peace process", which was started by the leadership of USA, reached a complete deadlock at this stage.

Arafat made every effort during this process to deactivate the Radical Palestine Movement; in other words, sacrificing armed struggle to international diplomacy, being an extra to the peace plan scenarios prepared by the imperialists. His reformist and compromising policies pushed him towards this line.

This line sacrificed the values and labours of Palestinians, who created these values with their blood and sweat, for incomplete rights. This line surrendered the people's struggle, which once commanded the affection of people around the world. The people's struggle became fodder for the imperialist bandits' false pleas for peace.

Everybody knows the result. Palestinian people are again on the streets, Palestinian people are still a target for the bullets of Israeli Zionists. The only change is that the democratic movements, which used to lead the struggle in the past, lost their power in today's struggle. Some of them even stand against the people's resistance.

The Islamic HAMAS that embraces and leads people for struggle came into existence; Arafat the hero is declared as a traitor by his people. That same Arafat, who formerly used to be declared as a "terrorist" by the imperialists, is recognised today as the only "representative" of Palestinian people and as a bastion of the "peace" process.

So who has changed during this period? Is it the bandits of USA and Israel, or Arafat? Obviously, Arafat has changed. In fact, this was the unavoidable fate of his reformist and compromising line. This result has nothing to do with the intentions of people, but is the product of the formation of their ideologies.

If we summarise the direction of Israel-Palestine negotiations, which was seen as the first step in the "peace process" in the Middle East, it turned not towards "peace," but towards new clashes. These clashes will continue in the coming period. The Palestinian people are going to give the necessary lesson not only to Israel, but also to traitors like Arafat.

Imperialists and their collaborator bandits are enforcing this unfair war not only on Palestine but also on Lebanon. In the coming period clashes in Lebanon will continue between progressive and Islamic movements and Israeli Zionists.

Today, the first subject on the agenda of the Middle East is the Kurdish Problem. That is why various imperialist powers and reactionary governments in the region are applying every device to solve the problem to their advantage. Each new project for a "solution" becomes the messenger and creator of new clashes. The recent clashes and invasions are vivid examples of these policies.

Why invasions and clashes? The answer to invasions and clashes lay in the strategic position and importance of the region. This means establishing hegemony over Kurdistan's geography would widely increase influence in the region and enable sharing the oil treasure, because every movement against the imperialists and reactionary governments in the region puts the interests of the imperialists in danger. What makes them act in pursuance of their interests, (as happened in the "Gulf Crisis")--their love of oil. We must search their silence against the Turkish Government here. Undoubtedly, the policies of the imperialists on the Middle East do not tally. They cannot tally.



The conventions made between imperialists are temporary. Rivalry is the main theme. That is why their common attitudes of unity, which they display from time to time, should not mislead us. For example, none of the imperialist countries seriously protested against Turkey for its USA supported invasion of Northern Iraq, (because they also want weakness and the retreat of the PKK both politically and militarily.) However, they will not keep their silence and allow a permanent settlement of Turkey in the area.

In another words, it is obvious that the weak diplomatic protests will get heavier and harsher, if the dimensions of invasion turn to a permanent settlement, because conflicts of interests between the imperialist countries force them to act this way.

All these are one side of the problem. The other side of the problem is, even the imperialists themselves before everyone else admit that the dress they made for the Kurds is shrinking. U.S. imperialism saw this reality in all its clarity. It produced solution policies and dragged the countries in the region to an atmosphere of debate. The gist of these policies is,

1. the map of the region, that is to say borders should not change.
2. Kurdish people should be given cultural rights and a legal basis will be created for their political activities, etc. Undoubtedly, the PKK must be militarily weakened and forced to retreat before applying these policies on the Turkish Kurdistan, because, this is the way for a solution within the system. The way of coming out of a problem that was locked in table-top diplomacy with little damage and strong, is the possession of power. The recipe of "oppress and solve," which is defended by some of the people in power on the Turkish front, is a product of the sort of concept above.

The architect of this concept is mainly U.S. imperialism. We have already mentioned above that the Republic of Turkey's recent invasion happened with the approval of the USA. Indeed the USA publicly supported Turkey, as soon as the invasion started. Certainly, the USA's open support is not only limited to this. Especially in recent days, the USA openly offered support to the army and its civil servants, architects of the invasion whose policies target the Islamic movement in Turkey. They are trying to protect their own interests and the interests of their servants.

All these show us that it is an illusion to seek a solution from imperialists for the Kurdish problem. These illusionist expectations and hopes for solution are kept alive especially by the reformist Kurdish movements. These illusions greatly affected and still affect the atmosphere of the national revolutionary movements.

Undoubtedly this is an ideological problem. This is an ideological approach. This is a confusion created in the analysis of imperialism and assessment of imperialist policies. This is a fear of coming down on the wrong side. This negative approach and reluctant position unavoidably mislead us to expecting solutions from the imperialist bandits that are the creators and roots of all evil acts. It has been proved not once but many times that the imperialists are not problem solvers: on the contrary they are problem creators.

Today the events in the geography of Kurdistan provide a vivid illustration of the above. To rule and control the people the imperialists often apply methods of divide and rule. They provoke people against each other and thus weaken them. The practice of Lebanon still stays fresh in our memories. Iraqi Kurdistan is gradually becoming like Lebanon.

Of course, this did not happen suddenly. What we see today is the end result. The creators of this result are the YNK and the PDK. These two powers have fought against each other for years. They bend now to

reactionary governments in the region and now the imperialists. Often they do not fight in their own interests but play as an extra for the imperialists and reactionary states. That is why they do not hesitate to kill each other as they do nowadays.

During and after the Gulf war they had clashes and cease-fires many times. All the negotiations for stopping the fighting went bankrupt. These negotiations were started by the imperialists in Dublin and continued with the Ankara Process.

The PKK played a quite significant role (in the sense of speeding up this process) in deciphering the real identity of these two powers or for creating such a result. However, that was not all, because these two forces were killing each other even before PKK's existence in Northern Iraq.

The main reason for this situation is the bourgeois-feudal characteristics of the leadership, which could not get over their tribal structure. These bourgeois-feudal leaders are trying to protect their own tribes' interests rather than protecting the interests of the Kurdish people. For this reason their policies of bending their knees to the imperialists and reactionary states in the region counted as very normal objective policies.

These two parties played, in line with their policies, necessary roles in different times in history within the triangle of Syria, Iran and Turkey. From time to time, they even had similar connections with their executioner Sadism. It is good to look at the reasons and deadlocks and summarise the conclusion of such policies especially after Turkey's recent invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan.

In particular the advantages and disadvantages of this invasion for PKK must be analysed. Because Turkey always gives the PKK factor as the reason for its invasions.

Turkey's invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan with regular time gaps, and fighting between PDK and YNK for years, both made masses terrified and created protests. The PKK used this objective opportunity well. Not only was PKK making propaganda of the meaninglessness of this fighting between PDK and NYK, and nurturing feelings of national unity. On the other side PKK entered a successful war against Turkish forces.

This positive ascent created positive effects on the Kurds in the region, and PKK's influence on the Kurds in the region gradually increased. The Kurds, who were under the hegemony of PDK and YNK for years started to see an alternative. Those who did not approve these two forces' methods reacted by starting to join PKK. Today at this stage, while PDK and YNK are in a period of dissolution, PKK has become a powerful force in the region.

In other words, Iraqi Kurdistan is not behind the lines for PKK anymore. On the contrary, PKK is alternative-partner of a supposed formation. Both USA and Turkey know this position very well. Furthermore, the other imperialists are also aware of the danger. The real reason behind the silence on Turkey's invasion attempts lay here.

These existent situations force us to consider these possibilities. Today, those who saw Saddam as an enemy for deactivating PKK may tomorrow have warmer relations with Saddam and they may bring PDK-Saddam together for an autonomy. Because, today the unity of the USA, Turkey, PDK and Israel creates or will create huge protests both in Kurdish geography and in the Middle East.

Thus, the USA and Turkey know that they cannot protect their interests by the support of only PDK in the region. That is why they will look at alternative solutions without PKK, and will create an alternative to

PKK. They will prevent the development of PKK. They will look for an alternative force, alternative formation, which gives less damage to their interests.

In recent years, many-sided attacks against the PKK are one of part of this plan. Again, the reality behind their silence against the invasions lay here. Because the imperialists are looking for a dismayed PKK, that will say farewell to their weapons for some cultural rights. The existing PKK does not fit this mould. They will continue to attack in order to fit PKK in to this mould, in the coming period.

If we look at today's picture of Kurdish geography in Iraqi Kurdistan; on the one side we have the PDK, which is in the period of dissolution, and partly YNK and on the other side a growing and developing PKK. In the regional sense Iran, Syria, Iraq and PKK are ranged against the front of the USA, Turkey, Israel and PDK.

PKK's influence on the countries in the region increased gradually with the recent attacks. Today, however YNK is taking sides with PKK, tomorrow no one knows where this force will go. The practice YNK has followed until now is proof that it cannot be trusted. This possibility also is not improbable: the USA and Britain may push PDK and YNK into a cease-fire period with the conditions agreed earlier. The Imperialists may put pressure on YNK to tighten the existing front.

When it comes to the power balances of imperialists in the region

Nowadays, the imperialists of the USA, Germany and Japan are in a severe competition to be able to establish hegemony over the world markets. One of the important regions where this competition takes place is the Middle East.

The Middle East is vitally important for U.S. imperialism. The policies, which the USA implemented or wanted to implement during the Gulf crisis, the Palestine-Israel war and the Kurdish problem are the concrete examples. Undoubtedly, not everything goes as smooth as U.S. imperialism wished. The greatest obstacle is the relationship and contradictions of imperialist powers with the countries in the region.

As one can remember, before the dissolution of the USSR there was a block or alliance of imperialists led by the USA. This formed a common policy for the region. However, after the dissolution of the USSR this allied force was shattered. Then the conflicts of interests in the region (Caucasus and the Middle East), that previously before between the imperialist countries came in to the open. These conflicts become bitter.

The rivalry, which is mainly between USA, Japan and Germany is the best reflection. Of course, they are not the only ones that have plans and projects for the region. China has extensive undertakings. Russia, France, Britain and Italy are not staying idle to be able to get their shares of the cake. They could not stay idle.

This situation unavoidably prevents free hegemony of the USA in the region. For example, U.S. imperialism is in competition with Germany, France, Russia, Japan etc. Countries like Iran, Iraq and Syria are disturbing the policies of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

A concrete example of this is after the Gulf War Germany and France had different approaches against Iraq. The same position significantly showed itself in the Kurdish problem. From time to time even the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan may have contradictions with the USA, though this will be tactical. Britain, Turkey and Israel have the best-harmonised policies with the USA about the Middle East.

Policies of German imperialism in the Middle East have picked up speed in the recent period. U.S. dominance during the Gulf War is seriously disturbing Germany. Germany wants to tighten the movements of the USA in the Middle East after the Balkans. Iran, which has contradictions with the USA, develops its relations with Germany in every area. The same position may prevail with Iraq in the future. Again, German imperialists are having significant relations in the region through Turkey.

In the region, the dominance of France, Britain and Russia are weakened compared with the past. France and Britain especially were not able to develop a serious independent policy for the region. They often acted within their traditional policies. However, the clues show that the situation for France is going to be different (as seen through their policy on Iraq). Again, France's efforts towards having a warmer relationship with Syria and Palestine and the arrogant attitudes shown to Israel are the concrete proofs of its policy.

In short, from now on it is possible to say that France will follow an independent policy in the region, different from the USA and Britain's policy. France may come up against these powers in the problems regarding the region. Russia is not in a position to show its power in the region because of its economic and social problems.

To be able to implement a permanent peace settlement in the region is only possible by fighting against imperialism and all kind of reactionary movements. The peace overtures of imperialists and reactionary forces are actually invitation for wars. The people of the Middle East witnessed this in the Iran-Iraq war, the Palestine-Israel clashes, in the reality of Lebanon and in the Gulf crisis.

All these require from us that, we tell people the truth behind the peace overtures made by the imperialists and get rid of the confusions which were created in the minds of revolutionary movements. Because, imperialists and reactionary people are not security for a real peace: they are security for unjust wars. The real peace will be won by fighting against imperialist bandits and reactionaries without compromising.

For us this means, that we should join the People's War with all our energy with the leadership of the Proletarian Party against bosses and feudal leaders and build the Democratic People's Government.

The state of Turkey is one of the best arms of the USA in the Middle East. For this reason, this arm must be destroyed. This is a most important duty for us. This is the best internationalism at the same time. Besides being sensible of daily developments in the Middle East, finding out political realities and deciphering imperialism are our international duties.

Autumn 1997

#### Footnotes:

1. Munir Jerid, Petrol Imperialism, 1965, Sol yayinlari pg. 10
2. Anna Britannica bind 17.
3. The Middle East, From Mesopotamia to the Gulf War, Allain Gresh-Dominique Vidal (Translated by Hamdi Ture) Alan Yayincilik, pg.44
4. Coskun Adali. Imperialism's Intervention in the \middle East, Sorun Yayinlari
5. Alain Gersh-age, pg.53

[This document was edited and posted on the MIM website. A few of their brief editorial insertions (in brackets) have been left in place. –BannedThought.net]