

# Security to top GCC summit agenda

Major challenges to security and stability in the region include the foreign military presence in the region, instability stemming from Yemen, Iraq, Iran and the impact of the US "war on terror," as well as terrorism, analysts have said.

- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
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Abu Dhabi: Security challenges will dominate the agenda of the upcoming Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit on December 6-7, security analysts told *Gulf News* on Sunday.

Major challenges to security and stability in the region include the foreign military presence in the region, instability stemming from Yemen, Iraq, Iran and the impact of the US "war on terror," as well as terrorism, analysts have said.

These threats are exacerbated by regional factors such as the increasing openness to the global economy and demographic stresses stemming from vast immigration into the GCC countries, they added.

"Political conflicts surrounding the GCC region have created security trends that signal a potential blowback that may lead to a dangerous destabilisation," Dr Theodore Karasik director of Research and Development at the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA) told *Gulf News*.

He added that these tensions had become mixed up with other long-standing conflicts such as the Palestinian cause, Iraq, and Lebanon.

"The GCC [country] are today regarded by most people as the emerging world capitals of globalisation, despite the financial crisis," Dr Karasik said.

"The scale of reform and changes on all levels that have taken place in these cities exceeds most countries in the region and even the world."

Therefore, and to avoid any surprises, Dr Karasik said, leaders of the GCC are preparing to protect their valuable achievements, way of life and future.

He added that there are both state and non-state threats — specifically Iran, the outcome of the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan and groups such as Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen. Dr Karasik stressed that recent events and rhetoric point to growing threats to the GCC countries.

Abdul Khaleq Abdullah, a professor of political science at Emirates University, said that GCC states need to beef up their military capabilities in anticipation of a possible military confrontation between Iran and the United States.

### **Malicious rumours**

Meanwhile, as Yemen prepared to host the prestigious Gulf Cup that starts on Monday, the government said that Al Qaida and the southern separatist movement were doing their best to foil the regional football tournament.

In a statement issued by the local authority in Aden, the local government said that "dark and terrorist elements from Al Qaida separatists against unity and Yemen's stability" were behind the spreading of rumours and allegations that the Gulf 20 tournament would be an occasion for drinking liquor, in addition to men and women dancing together.

— *With inputs from Nasser Arrabyee in Sana'a*

### **Gulf Cup: Showcase event**

The 20th Arabian Gulf Cup, the 40-year-old football feast of the region, will kick off tonight for the first time in its history in Aden, Yemen.

- Participating countries are the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq and Yemen.
- Hosts Yemen and Saudi Arabia set the ball rolling today at 8pm.
- The UAE open their campaign against Qatar on Tuesday.

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