

Libyan's Pan-Arab Summit Breaks Down Over Egyptian, Syrian Vacillation

Diplomatic efforts on the part of the Libyan government to convene a pan-Arab summit around the growing threat of a fifth Arab-Israeli war appear to have been rejected by the two most important "confrontation states," Egypt and Syria, thus putting the initiative in serious doubt. At stake in the Libyan proposal is whether the Arab nations can be brought together to formulate a Mideast policy independent of the Carter Administration.

Numerous press accounts and public statements from the Mideast in recent months indicate that every Arab leader recognized Carter's unwillingness to cooperate with Mideast leaders and the Soviet Union to immediately reconvene a Geneva peace conference. Nonetheless, both Egyptian president Sadat and Syrian president Assad at the last minute dismissed the summit call in order to give the U.S. "one more chance," anticipating Secretary of State Vance's visit to the Mideast next month.

Behind such vacillation is a growing Arab awareness of the increasing danger of war with Israel, a sentiment forthrightly reflected by a senior Syrian government official quoted in the *Baltimore Sun*; "There is no room for optimism...We are not giving up hope, though the outlook is rather bleak until now. Carter gave us, all the Arabs, the impression of being an honest man sincerely wanting to do something, and he may yet push for a settlement...but time is not on his side; our patience will be exhausted in a few months."

The official party newspaper in Syria *Al Ba'ath* last week editorialized that it was Carter and his ineptitude that is to blame for the provocative moves against the Arabs, principally in southern Lebanon, by Israel. The Soviet Party paper, *Pravda*, at the same time quoted other Syrian press sources that "Syria doesn't believe that the United States holds 99 percent of the cards" in negotiating a settlement, a phrase often repeated by Sadat.

The Critical Choice

Both Assad and Sadat are presently faced with either continued allegiance to the Carter Administration or heeding the warnings of their pro-Soviet neighbors Libya and Iraq which have repeatedly spelled out the imminence of war if U.S. "mediation" continued in the Mideast. A significant indication that Iraq and Libya are being taken more seriously by the more moderate Arabs is that *Ash-Shaab*, a daily published in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, earlier this month editorialized "Baghdad Knows What It's Talking About," referring to the danger of continued U.S. meddling in the region.

Wide Support for Summit

The Arab summit won the endorsement of the Persian Gulf state, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization following a regionwide organizing tour by Libyan Foreign

Minister Al Tareiki. The summit proposal was closely coordinated with the Soviets as a forum to reach a solution to the volatile southern Lebanon stalemate, a crucial precondition for achieving a Mideast peace. Backing up the incentive for an immediate settlement are diplomatic efforts between the Europeans, the East bloc and the Arabs, most particularly Libya, to reach a Mediterranean peace and security pact, a subject presently being explored at the Helsinki talks in Belgrade.

Just prior to the Libyan summit proposal, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi met with his Soviet counterpart Gromyko and Soviet Party leader Brezhnev where they called for a Geneva peace conference no later than October. Shortly thereafter Brezhnev publicly called on France to act as a co-guarantor for the Geneva conference, indicating that the Soviets are looking toward Europe for critical back up in getting the conference off the ground.

An open request by the Egyptian government this week that the EEC release its position on the Mideast, which must include support for the creation of a Palestinian state (not "homeland"), indicates that Cairo recognizes the Soviet-European option for Geneva. But Sadat and other Arab moderates, such as Saudi Arabia and Syria, continue to vacillate, thinking that the U.S. will be able to pressure Israel into negotiations. Such illusions were forthrightly dismissed last week by an editorial in the Iraqi government newspaper *Jumhuriyya* which stated: "Mondale's latest speech has defined a total collapse of the policy of those governments which try to establish a balance with Israel, hoping the U.S. will exert pressures. Years of efforts have changed nothing."

— Judy Wyer

'Baghdad Knows What It Is Talking About'

The following are excerpts from an editorial in Ash-Shaab, a daily published in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

...Washington will find out it is helpless in bridging the gap between Arab imagination and Israeli tactics. The Arabs will find out that they are facing a new situation, namely, that the American pressure on Israel is limited by American, Israeli, Arab and international considerations....Under such circumstances Washington will resort to a substitute for the Geneva conference — in an attempt to break the stalemate and also to save face for the Arab friends of the U.S. Inasmuch as the American version of the Geneva conference excludes the Soviet Union, some Arab regimes won't be able to contain Arab reaction to a failure at Geneva or absorb it with another farcical oil embargo....

However, if some observers believe that an Arab-Israeli dispute over Geneva will lead to a military confrontation, I believe that the Geneva disappointment will eventually increase the chances for aggravating contradictions in the Arab camp. This will ultimately lead to some changes in the political arena. Furthermore, now is the right time for some Arabs, who believe that U.S.

interests in the Middle East compel the U.S. to protect and help its friends in the area, to stop exaggerating their evaluations of possible U.S. reactions to the chances for changes in the Arab arena.

Baghdad knows this very well. Why then do we not heed the Iraqi capital's words in order to avoid returning empty-handed?

Cyprus Left Seeks Ouster Of Rightist Agents

Efforts by the communist and socialist parties of Cyprus to purge right-wing reactionaries in the government, police and army have brought that country to the edge of head-on confrontation. The Communist Party has called for the ouster of the Interior-Defense Minister for refusing to prosecute collaborators of Nicos Sampson, who in 1974 overthrew Cypriot President Makarios in a NATO-choreographed coup and brought Greece and Turkey to the brink of war, according to the *Baltimore Sun*. Similar allegations have been leveled by Socialist Party leader Lyssarides, who has warned of renewed right-wing coup preparations by sympathizers of the Sampson-linked EOKA-B terrorist organization and has mobilized his personal militia to defend Makarios.

The activation of the EOKA-B terror option is geared to plunge Cyprus into civil war and block Makarios' persistent efforts to resolve the Turkish-Greek dispute over the island outside of NATO's aegis. A Cyprus resolution would not only defuse a potentially dangerous flashpoint for general war but would clear the way for the transformation of the entire Mediterranean into a zone of peace — long the goal of the Soviet Union and many Third World nations.

Following a meeting with Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis in Athens last week, Makarios emphasized the "absolute necessity" of keeping the Cyprus problem internationalized, and reiterated his support for a Soviet-backed international conference to end the dispute.

To counter Makarios, Clark Clifford, President Carter's personal emissary to the eastern Mediterranean, will arrive in Cyprus next month to "mediate" the conflict. During a similar trip by Clifford earlier this year, Makarios let it be known that Clifford's efforts to keep the Cyprus problem an "internal NATO quarrel" were unwelcome and provocative.

Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish region of the divided island, is likewise doing his best to keep the

situation inflamed by announcing this week that he wants to declare the Turkish-held portion an independent state. His plans are meeting strong resistance from the newly elected Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, who in an interview in *The Middle East* magazine categorically asserted: "No, Cyprus must be allowed to continue as an independent state."

Destabilization in Turkey

Not surprisingly, Ecevit has also been targeted for attack by the "commandos" of Col. Alparslan Turkes, a pro-U.S. deputy prime minister in the previous government. Describing the commandoes as "fanatical storm-troopers," the *Sunday Times* of London reports that the thugs intended to "obliterate left-wingers on campuses."

Ecevit, whose main task will be to mop up the Turkes network, is currently trying to form a government with independents and defectors from other parties. Such a strategy will make it unnecessary for Ecevit, who is 13 seats short of a parliamentary majority, to enter into an unstable coalition with the fascist National Salvation Party, which holds 22 parliamentary seats.

Former Prime Minister Demirel has blocked with the Salvationists and Turkes' National Action Party to form a government in the event that Ecevit is unable to do so, and has given orders to members of his Justice Party to vote against Ecevit during the upcoming vote of confidence. However, according to the Turkish daily *Cumhuriyet*, there is a faction emerging in Demirel's party that opposes all cooperation with the Salvationists and Turkes. The faction, led by Foreign Minister Caglayangil and backed by Turkish business and industrialist circles, has given signs that it may lend unofficial cross-party support to Ecevit in the interest of forming a solid government. Already, one Justice Party senator has left the party to join up with Ecevit.

— Nancy Parsons