

Difficult as the problem is, facing it is an important step forward. Not so long ago a Prime Minister of Israel said there was no such thing as a Palestinian Arab. And many of us, supporters of Israel, have wished the problem away in similar fashion.

We know better now. There is a distinct group of Arabs with origins in Palestine and roots there going back many hundreds of years. Their sense of attachment is

strong, and many of those now living elsewhere fell themselves in a diaspora just as Jews did for so long.

(Therefore) it remains necessary to encourage participation by moderate Palestinians (in the negotiations). They could be genuine West Bank figures at first, but one hopes they would in time draw in moderate PLO elements.

Shah, Boumedienne Join Mideast Peace Diplomacy

Algerian President Houari Boumedienne and the Shah of Iran emerged publicly last week as two major contributors to the Mideast peace process. Mistakenly identified as leaders of opposing camps, the "radical" Boumedienne and the "conservative" Shah have, in fact, both been pursuing a comprehensive Mideast peace accord, largely behind the scenes, for some time.

For both leaders, there is a convergence of views around the immediate necessity of supporting the Sadat-Begin peace initiative. Boumedienne has used his leverage in the "hardline" Arab bloc (led by Iraq and Libya) to attempt a reconciliation of the longstanding Syrian-Iraqi feud. Through such a reconciliation, Boumedienne intends to swing the hardliners away from their heretofore purely negative anti-Sadat posture and into a more constructive "critical" position—one which would keep Sadat in line, especially around support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization in upcoming talks with the Israelis. Boumedienne has been stressing the final resolutions of the Rabat Arab summit of 1974, where the differing factions of the Arab world agreed to unanimously support the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Unlike Boumedienne, the Shah of Iran has come out in open support of Sadat's peace initiative. In launching his Mideast peace tour, which took him to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the Shah declared that he wanted to work for an overall peace settlement. Although he has expressed interest in Jordanian representation for the Palestinians—a decision which prompted recent criticism from PLO chief Yasser Arafat—the Iranian leader has demonstrated his willingness to discuss his differences with his Arab neighbors. It is rumored that the Shah will soon be visiting Iraq.

The unifying factor in this de facto Algerian-Iranian collaboration is a desire for peace and economic development for the region. Both Boumedienne and the Shah have repeatedly called for such a program.

The following is a roundup of the diplomatic activities of these leaders:

Jan. 4—Boumedienne to Iraq.

According to the international press, Boumedienne launched his whirlwind tour for Arab unity with the stated purpose of resolving the Syrian-Iraqi feud. Indications of the impending reconciliation had already surfaced two weeks ago when the London *Times* reported that Salah Bitar, a former Syrian Baath Party leader

(the pan-Arab Baath Party is the ruling party in Iraq) and arch-rival of Syrian President Assad, had returned to Syria to head the Syrian cabinet.

Libyan Foreign Minister Tariki arrived in Baghdad later in the week in order to support Boumedienne's efforts. According to press reports from Kuwait, Tariki stated that "positive results" from the talks indicated that the conflict was in the process of resolution.

Jan. 5—Boumedienne to Saudi Arabia.

The French daily *L'Aurore* reports Jan. 10 that Boumedienne and Saudi King Khaled discussed support for the PLO in the global context of Mideast peace solution. In addition to the question of Arab unity, *L'Aurore* reports that the Saudis urged Boumedienne to settle his differences with Moroccan King Hassan over the Sahara. Algeria's continued support for the Polisario Liberation Front, which is fighting Moroccan and Mauritanian troops for rights to the Spanish Sahara, has severely threatened Algerian-Moroccan relations. Saudi Arabia informed Algeria that it would perform a more active role in mediating the dispute.

Jan. 7-9—Boumedienne tours the Gulf States with stops in Kuwait, North and South Yemen, Bahrein, and Qatar.

Jan. 10—Boumedienne to Jordan.

Strengthened by his talks with the Saudis, Boumedienne apparently urged Jordan's King Hussein to distance himself from any "negotiations" that did not adequately address the independent role of the PLO. Under this direct pressure, the king has had to stay out of the picture to date. A recent statement from Hussein indicates that Jordan, under the terms of the Rabat decision, is not empowered to represent the Palestinians. Jordan's response is of course a direct warning to Sadat that he too is bound by a commitment to the PLO to plead their case in any further negotiations.

Last week, two interviews granted by Syrian President Assad and Saudi Crown Prince Fahd reiterated this warning to Sadat. In an interview with Barbara Walters on ABC-TV, Fahd affirmed that the Palestinian people had chosen the PLO as their representative. And in *Newsweek*, Syrian's Assad pointed out that the participants of the Tripoli Summit last month (Algeria, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and the PLO) had shifted from "rejectionism": "What took place was definitely not a rejectionist front. It was the front of Arab steadfastness...we didn't say we were against peace." After

attacking Sadat directly for carrying on unilateral negotiations, Assad declared that Israel and the PLO should talk directly.

Jan. 9—the Shah of Iran to Egypt.

Upon leaving Aswan, the Shah congratulated Sadat on his peace initiative and declared that “the ball is now in the Israeli court.” According to the French daily, *Le Figaro* of Jan. 11, “the Shah’s visit is considered an important element in the present peace process.”

Jan. 10—the Shah to Saudi Arabia.

While Boumedienne was meeting with Hussein, the

Shah conferred with Saudi leaders. In addition to discussing OPEC-related matters, the Shah confirmed his support of the Sadat peace initiative. According to the French press, the Shah and King Khaled discussed the Mideast in minute detail.

Jan. 12—Boumedienne to Syria.

The results of Boumedienne’s factfinding tour were discussed with Syria’s Assad. According to the press accounts, the Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement was the top agenda item.

Schlesinger Organizing The ‘Crash Of ‘79?’

The most reliable reports from Riyadh this week indicate that the visiting Shah of Iran and the Saudis reached common perspectives on the need for stabilizing the Persian Gulf and for mediating various outstanding crises in the Middle East-North African region. Agreement was also reiterated on the touchy subject of oil prices.

Nonetheless, coinciding with U.S. Energy Czar James Schlesinger’s current visits to Morocco and Saudi Arabia, various British press outlets have begun to propagandize the likelihood of a new Cold War taking over the region. France’s *Le Matin*, mouthpiece for François Mitterrand of the French Socialist Party, predicted on Jan. 9 an anti-Soviet, anti-radical bloc of Iran, Israel, Egypt, and Morocco forming to police the region. The *Christian Science Monitor* on Jan. 11 claimed that the Saudi-

Iranian talks were concerned mainly with Soviet spy reconnaissance flights over the oil-producing countries!

No doubt Schlesinger is working according to the scenario recently detailed by Senator Henry Jackson in a special Senate Energy Committee report recommending U.S. dependence on Israel and Iran as the U.S. bulwarks in the Mideast against the Arab producers. This is Henry Kissinger’s favored gameplan...and, interestingly, appears to be a realization of the scenario for World War Three in the recent bestseller, “The Crash of ‘79.”

Next week *EIR* will carry a special feature on the politics of the Gulf, contrasting the actual politics of the region and the increasing European input there with Schlesinger’s unfortunate meanderings.