

Documentation

The French press hails the French president

The French press is euphoric over the outcome of French President Giscard d'Estaing's tour of the Middle East. Le Monde, not known for its sympathy towards the president, carries a front page interview of PLO leader Arafat with the banner headline: "Giscard Has Gotten Europe To Take The First Step Towards a Settlement Of The Mideast," a quote of Arafat. Otherwise, the following are exemplary of French press comments.

Les Echos

"Apotheosis in Riyadh for the New Foreign Policy of France," Mar. 10: The trip of Giscard in the Mideast is a beautiful success for French diplomacy. It marks the return in force of France's foreign policy in that part of the world. We hope that Saudi Arabia's commitment to a \$250 billion national industrialization plan will see French technology getting its share of the pie usually monopolized by the 'anglo-saxons.'

Le Figaro

"Four Successes for Giscard," Mar. 10: The ten day trip of the President of the Republic to four states of the Persian Gulf ended in Amman yesterday with total self-

assurance, method, and care in the framework of a foreign policy that is equally balanced between the East and the West and is consistent with itself as far as the Mideast is concerned, a policy that has strengthened itself since Afghanistan, one which clearly sees its objectives and which anticipates the future.

The successes were 1)The Emirates have guaranteed France's oil supplies; 2)The prestige of France is at its highest in the Arab world and most of the Third World; 3)The phrase on self-determination for the Palestinians went far to unblock the situation; 4)The idea of dialogue with developing countries has made a gigantic step forward.

Le Matin

Mar. 11: Giscard d'Estaing, accompanied by his foreign minister Francois-Poncet, received yesterday an absolutely exceptional welcome on the part of the Saudi authorities led by Prince Fahd waiting for him at the airport. There was something very rare even for a foreign head of State—all the sons of the founders of the Kingdom of Ibn Saud who are in the government. That is: Prince Sultan, defense minister; Nayef, Interior ministry;

Saud, of foreign affairs; and Abdullah, commander of the National Guard. Even King Khaled would have come to the airport were he not ill....

Giscard had a two and a half hour private meeting with Khaled while Francois-Poncet was meeting Prince Saud. After the meeting, Giscard declared: "I have been happy to see the convergence of analysis and intentions that exists between Saudi Arabia and France."

After Giscard departed, Prince Fahd brusquely pushed aside his head of protocol—something extremely rare—to speak into a microphone, underlining that Giscard d'Estaing "is the friend of Saudi Arabia and of the Arabs, he has made very interesting declarations that left nothing in the dark, neither for the Gulf nor for us." According to Prince Saud, "Giscard's proposals have been well considered and examined. They must now be implemented. Any European initiative will be welcome and constructive, considering the ties we have with Europe."

Asked whether it would have been better if Giscard had talked about a Palestinian State, Prince Saud answered that: "Self determination is the best expression. If the Palestinians want a state, it is for them to decide."

Le Monde

Mar. 11: For the president of the Republic, the trip to Amman (Jordan) was the occasion to reshape his policy in the Mideast, a shift that was absolutely not improvised under the pressure of events, but one methodically realized. ...But he has also moved forward what is his Grand Design for the long term: the cooperation between the industrial and the developing sector through all possible bilateral and multilateral channels—the only path, he thinks, to avoid a *universal regression*.