

## Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

### The Fahd plan picks up steam

*International backing for the Middle East peace program of Saudi Arabia is growing fast.*

Throughout Washington, intelligence sources report that the White House is seriously considering throwing its weight behind the eight-point Middle East peace plan of Saudi Crown Prince Fahd.

U.S. support of the Fahd plan, which proposes Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for Israeli acceptance of a Palestinian state, would open up immense new opportunities.

In the wake of the President's tremendous political victory in the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia, America's position in the Arab world is at its highest since the 1950s. Should Reagan move to consolidate that power by an array of U.S.-Arab economic accords, the President can rally both the Arabs and Israel for peace talks and, at the same time, possibly reach an equitable accord with President Brezhnev on joint efforts to stabilize the Middle East.

Signaling his openness to the Fahd plan, in his meetings Nov. 2-3 with Jordan's King Hussein in Washington, Reagan did not even give lip service to Camp David, contrary to published reports.

Hussein, who met with Prince Fahd twice in the 10 days before arriving in Washington, emerged happily from his talks with Reagan. "This particular meeting at this particular time in comparison with all my previous visits to Washington has left me more reassured than any in the past and more confident of

the future," beamed Hussein.

In addition to Jordan, the Fahd plan has won the endorsement of others in the Arab world, including Yasser Arafat of the PLO.

Egypt has also signaled its support of the Fahd plan. In a meeting with American businessmen on Nov. 1, President Mubarak called the Fahd plan "encouraging" and said that its points "could be negotiated." According to Arab diplomats, Egypt is secretly in regular contact with the Saudis in preparation for returning to a joint Arab strategy. But, these sources say, Egypt will not be required to abandon its peace treaty with Israel.

Prince Fahd, who met with Reagan in Mexico recently and who will soon visit Washington for further talks, is also making overtures to the Soviet Union to appeal to the Brezhnev leadership. In talks last week in Bonn, Fahd reportedly asked Chancellor Schmidt to intercede with Brezhnev when Brezhnev visits late this month.

In an interview with the Saudi press agency Nov. 2, Fahd strongly urged the United States and the Soviet Union to support his plan. Camp David, he said, is at a "dead end," and he urged Arabs to work to bring both Washington and Moscow into the plan.

Already, West Germany and Japan have indicated that they are prepared to join a major industrial effort to develop the Middle East in conjunction with a viable peace

plan.

At the Nov. 25 Arab League summit in Morocco, Iraq will propose in parallel with the Fahd plan a program for nuclear energy-based economic and industrial development of the Arab world, potentially involving tens of billions of dollars in trade with the United States.

Opposing the Fahd plan is a disparate group of political forces that agree on a plan to polarize the Middle East. Among them are:

- the government of Israel;
- the radical, terrorist Arabs associated with Libya, Syria, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine;
- the Soviet ideologues and orthodox Marxist-Leninists led by Mikhail Suslov and Boris Ponomarev, along with elements of the Soviet KGB;
- and, finally, the Socialist International, including its Vice-Chairman, French President Mitterrand and its ally, Tory Lord Carrington.

Inside the United States, Secretary of State Haig and National Security Adviser Richard Allen are bitterly opposed to the Fahd plan, emphasizing at every opportunity their support for Camp David. And, within Saudi Arabia, British agent Prince Abdullah, a sponsor of the Muslim Brotherhood, is out to undermine Fahd.

According to Arab intelligence sources, Syria is considering a reversal of its stand at the summit in Morocco. In part, Syria's decision will depend on Soviet policy. For, despite their opposition to increased U.S. influence in the Middle East, the Soviets do not relish the idea of being isolated in the region in support of a small Arab "rejection front."