
Arab League Summit

The Conditions Needed For a Winning Strategy

by Christine Bierre,
Special Correspondent

As the world monetary system enters into its final throes, the international financial oligarchy has renewed its war drive against the countries of Southwest Asia. And while the participants in the March 29-30 Arab League Summit in Damascus, Syria were largely oblivious to the broader strategic implications for them, of the world financial crash, it is only in that larger context, that the causes of the crisis in this part of the world can be found.

Behind the renewed war drive in Southwest Asia is the need for the City of London to reaffirm its power over the world in the face of the ongoing financial crash, and to use the crisis to destroy the post-Westphalian order of nation-states, including the United States itself, and to impose its World Empire, once and for all.

In this context, the only winning strategy for those who want to defeat the British gameplan in the region, is one which addresses that crisis. While the financial oligarchy will react to the breakdown of the system by attempting to impose a global dictatorship, the crash is also threatening the very power and existence of the oligarchy itself. This is the moment, therefore, in which the more clear-sighted Arab League countries must turn to Russia, to China, to India, and to opposition forces in the U.S. and Europe, like those represented by Lyndon LaRouche and his collaborators, with proposals for rebuilding a new, just economic world order.

Cheney Tries To Organize a Boycott

No sooner had the Arab League Summit convened, than the British- and U.S.-dominated international media began putting out the line that the summit had been a total failure for Damascus, and that Syria had been successfully isolated from the rest of the Arab world.

What only the Arabic media and a few others were reporting however, was that U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney had deployed himself to Southwest Asia last month, prior to the summit, to, among other things, pressure U.S. allies to boycott the meeting entirely, or to send low-level diplomatic representatives. As the summit neared, the heads of state of Saudi Arabia and Egypt announced that they would not be participating themselves, and instead, they would send their ambassadors to the Arab League. Jordan, which had already sent its

foreign affairs minister, was forced to call him back and replace him with an ambassador; while the Lebanese government, whose problems were to be at the center of the summit, announced it was boycotting altogether. From London, where they were having talks on the upcoming April 2-3 NATO summit, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy ostensibly supported those countries which had decided to boycott.

By a mere chance of protocol, it fell on Syria, for the very first time in the history of the Arab League, to host the summit, an enviable position of power which will extend throughout the coming year. Needless to say, the Bush-Cheney Administration, under the influence of Great Britain, decided to use all means possible to pull off a boycott of the summit, as part of its continuing policy of provoking war in the region. Clearly, the effort prompted by the publication of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group report in December 2006, calling for a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, and for dialogue with Syria and Iran to establish peace in the region, seems to have come to a halt with the resignation in early March of Adm. William Fallon as head of CENTCOM.

In Palestine, Washington is embarked on a policy of extermination of Hamas, as a first step towards a weakening of the Hezbollah in Lebanon and, by domino effect, of Syria and Iran, wrongly considered to be the controllers of the opposition in Lebanon.

Well-informed regional sources have noted that while Cheney played the role of the bully in the attempt to orchestrate a boycott of the summit, the policy had been crafted by Condoleezza Rice's State Department. The strategic project was to replace the UN order, where each nation has one vote, and where the "Big Five" (U.S.A., Russia, China, France, and Great Britain) are represented at the UN Security Council, by an order of regional organizations run by directorates controlled by the forces of the new trans-Atlantic U.K./U.S. empire, along with its new French poodle, Nicolas Sarkozy. Just as they would like the European "region" to be run by a Franco-British directorate, they would like Southwest Asia to be run by a Saudi Arabian-Jordanian-Egyptian directorate. To win its agreement, Saudi Arabia apparently was promised greater power for the Sunnis in the Iraqi government; Jordan is expected to play a bigger role in counterinsurgency operations in Lebanon and elsewhere; while Egypt expects U.S. economic aid.

'The U.S. Failed To Sabotage the Summit'

However, as Faysal Mekdad, the Syrian vice minister of foreign affairs, told this correspondent in a short interview during the summit, "The U.S. tried to sabotage it but they failed," as they have failed everything in the recent period. "They failed in Iraq, they failed in Lebanon, they failed in Palestine, and they failed in Afghanistan. This administration has failed everywhere, and has failed again, now." Asked whether the sabotage had been carried out by Cheney, Mekdad said,



UN photo/Paulo Filgueiras

Faysal Mekdad, the Syrian vice minister of foreign affairs, confirmed, in an interview during the Arab League Summit, that Dick Cheney, on his Mideast trip, who had attempted to sabotage the conference. "Absolutely, he did his best," Mekdad replied. "But ... he failed."

"Absolutely, he did his best. But again he failed." The minister said that in spite of all that, "the meetings between all Arabs this time were very frank, very open. Real discussion took place, which is the basis for facing all the forthcoming challenges, including the biased position of the U.S. against the Palestinians, against the real Lebanese, and against the real struggle of people for liberation."

Indeed, delegations of the 22 member-states attended the conference, including Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, who had boycotted recent summits, and the Gulf States—Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar—usually highly vulnerable to U.S. pressures. In total, 11 heads of state were present, about the same number that attended other Arab League summits in previous years.

The reality is that the entire region fears that the Bush-Cheney Administration will use the final months of its Presidency to launch new wars in the region. Sources familiar with the Gulf countries reported extreme tension in those quarters over the possibility of a war against Iran which would destroy them. The Cheney visit to the region, followed by Condoleezza Rice, occurred as tension is already at a high point throughout the area: in Palestine where a new Israeli offensive against Hamas is expected; in Lebanon where the U.S. Sixth Fleet has been deployed off its coast to support the anti-Syrian March 14th coalition of "friends" of the administration, and where U.S. airplanes were used at the end of March to disrupt a national address being broadcast by Gen. Michel Aoun (ret.) on his own television network. The murder of Hezbollah military commander Imad Moughnieh, which Hezbollah blames on Israel and has promised to avenge, is also a major source of tension for the entire region.

Under these conditions, tension at the summit led to draconian security conditions: The Damascus international airport was closed to all non-summit-related traffic throughout the three days; entire sections of Damascus were blocked to traffic, while a 6 km security strip surrounded the location of the conference. Sources close to the conference reported on a

terrorist incident the day that proceeded the opening session, without disclosing further details; and as soon as the conference ended, hackers destroyed all Syrian websites related to the summit, among other well-informed networks and those engaged in Middle East affairs, such as the French website Réseau Voltaire.

The Russia Factor

The Bush-Cheney bullying seems to have backfired, with Syria emerging reinforced, in a context where the entire region is clearly divided between Washington and its allies, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt, on the one hand, and a strengthened Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-Hamas resistance alliance on the other. While not much credit is generally attributed to the final communiqués of the Arab League as meaningful policy statements, there is a kind of cocky note included in the final communiqué, directed at Israel, stating that the Arab countries will not eternally promote their peace initiative if nothing is forthcoming from Israel.

Beyond the influence radiated by Iran throughout the area, another factor contributing to the reinforcement of the resistance group is undoubtedly a renewed Russian presence in the region. Following Cheney's tour, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Vice Foreign Minister Alexander Sultanov intervened to encourage Arab countries to attend the summit, while President Vladimir Putin addressed a message to the meeting calling for a new peace conference in Moscow, as a follow-up to the Annapolis conference held at the end of last year. And even though summit leaders declared that that conference had been postponed indefinitely, Russian moves in that direction are strongly appreciated. In particular, over the last several years, Syria has become the main commercial and military partner of Russia in the region, going as far as offering port facilities to Russia's large Mediterranean fleet. Russia has also been talking to Hamas about rebuilding Palestinian unity. On April 8, former prime minister Yevgeni Primakov called for relaunching the Annapolis process, with a special focus on Syrian-Israeli negotiations for a return to Syria of the Golan Heights.

This new coherence is key to resisting renewed attempts from the trans-Atlantic imperial faction to blow up the entire region. While the British-run policies of Washington over the last decades have provoked understandably intense rage around the world, leading many to wish for the downfall of the American Republic, the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and of the Roosevelt-influenced de Gaulle/Adenauer European post-war reconstruction policies, represents the only economic design that can bring the world out of a threatened New Dark Age. It is not by chance that it is American economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche who has been both the main opposition to the Bush-Cheney regime and its war policies, and the author of a proposal for a New Bretton Woods which is the only coherent strategy on the table to pull the world out of this deadly crisis.