

# Conference Is Big Story In Arabic Mass Media

by Hussein Askary Al-Nadeem

Arabic mass media gave great attention to the Abu Dhabi June 2-3 conference on "Oil and Gas in World Politics," arranged by the Zayed Centre for Coordination and Follow-Up (ZCCF, of the Arab League), with Lyndon LaRouche as the only featured speaker from the West. This conference was regarded as a platform for discussing and shaping Arab oil policy in the current strategic and financial situation.

It came at a time of extremely hot "oil diplomacy" in the region, where Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary General Alí Rodríguez is touring for consultations with OPEC leaders. The threat of spreading war in the Mideast and South Asia, a renewed Iraqi-directed oil blockade against the world oil market, and/or a price and production war between OPEC and Russia, have been the talk of the past weeks.

Russia's decision to break with its agreement with OPEC, which imposed a ceiling on oil production to keep the price between \$22-28 per barrel, is regarded in the region as reflecting moves by the United States to destabilize and marginalize the Persian Gulf region in the so-called "war against terrorism."

The emphasis placed on LaRouche's participation is a signal that the oil-exporting countries in the region are not easily giving in to the blackmail, and would rather encourage the United States and Europe to adopt the reasonable and morally founded ideas of LaRouche for a solution for the current economic and strategic crisis.

The Arabic press widely publicized this conference already in early May. Announcements and promotional reports were published in virtually every Arabic newspaper, most prominently, the London-based *Al-Arab International*, *Ash-arq Al-Awsat*, *Al-Hayat*, *al-Quds Al-Arabi*, and newspapers in the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain. English-language dailies in the U.A.E., the *Gulf News* and *Khaleej Times*, also contributed to the coverage. These dailies followed the sessions of the conference and reported on its activities on June 3 and 4.

## 'Appropriate Opportunity' To Hear LaRouche

The Arabic press release announcing the arrangement of the conference by the Zayed Centre said, "The ZCCF states that well-known international figures will represent a qualitative and outstanding attendance to discuss the main themes that will be presented in the conference."

It added that "the ZCCF disclosed that Arab and international figures, who are known for their continuous contributions to the Arab and international oil and gas policies as well as having a remarkable presence in oil and gas issues internationally, have confirmed their attendance in the conference."

Referring to LaRouche's participation, Aminah Al-Mehiri, Chairwoman of the ZCCF Press and Technical Affairs section, stated that "the strategic expert, economic analyst, and American Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche would take part in the activities of the conference. The General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council will also participate through an official delegation. His Excellency Obeid bin Saif Al-Nasiri, Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources of the United Arab Emirates will give an opening speech."

Al-Mehiri said "that parallel contacts are being conducted with the current Oil Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Algeria, and His Excellency Abdul Rahman Al-Atiyya the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and with the Secretary General of OPEC and Director of the Venezuelan Oil Company, Alí Rodríguez."

Al-Mehiri emphasized that the ZCCF has decided to arrange this conference at this sensitive juncture of the current history of the Arab world, because of the proliferation of countless political, academic, and popular theories about the power and ability of Arab oil to affect the directions and options of international politics.

The Zayed Centre's Arabic press release announced that "the conference would be an appropriate opportunity for the attendance by the major American politician and a Presidential candidate in earlier and coming elections, Lyndon LaRouche. . . . The invitation of the American Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, according to the ZCCF, was extended to him as an appreciation of the positive stances expressed by LaRouche towards the causes of the Arab nation and just causes in all parts of the world in general."

## Contrast With Western Press

Most of the reports briefly covered the theme of LaRouche's speech. *Al-Arab International* was the first Arabic international daily to publish LaRouche's presentation in full on its "economy" pages on June 6 and 7. *Al-Hayat* extensively cited LaRouche's warning regarding the financial-economic system and his proposals for reorganization of the system with new, long-term credit and trade agreements.

The Dubai Business Satellite Channel led its coverage with clips of LaRouche speaking and noted, "The discussion was dominated by the events of Sept. 11." Other speakers, who spoke on the second day of the conference, were interviewed briefly. The British and French international news agencies such as Reuters and AFP, by contrast, tried to avoid LaRouche by reporting only on the second day of conference and its final statement.