

*The Arab Summit*

## Arab Reaction Meets in Casablanca

Despite the boycott by Democratic Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Syria and Lebanon, representatives of 16 Arab states convened for a summit in Casablanca, Morocco, on August 7th. This is the first time an Arab summit has been carried out despite an organized boycott of member states. As such, it marks a dangerous turning point: The reactionary regimes have signalled that they are prepared to unilaterally pursue their efforts to resolve the Arab-Zionist conflict via US solutions. In this sense, Casablanca was Reagan's summit, marking an advance for imperialism's designs to further divide the Arab world, in order to impose its own hegemony.

Most disturbing, the Palestinian right-wing led by Yaser Arafat not only participated in the Casablanca summit, but was a moving force in its being convened and in its deliberations.

Still the proceedings and results of the Casablanca summit revealed that Arab reaction does not yet have complete confidence in its own ability to pursue its chosen course without obstacles. While the reactionaries are dead set on involvement in US solutions, they hesitate to be exposed as traitors to the Palestinian and Arab cause, which they normally use to contrive legitimacy for their corrupt rule. In short, they want to avoid the fate of Sadat - his isolation and his assassination. After all, the final end of these regimes is to create reactionary stability in the area to insure that they can maintain their own power. They are thus concerned to find ways to preempt the opposition that can be expected from the nationalist regimes, the Palestinian revolution and the Arab masses in general. Syria in particular has been recognized by all as a major power in the region, and there are many signs that the reactionaries want to absorb the opposition of the anti-Camp David forces. The fact that King Fahd did not himself represent the Saudis at Casablanca is one sign that the Saudis want to keep open lines to Syria. They hope to emerge as the mediators of a new Arab consensus.

For the same reasons, the Casablanca summit did not take a definitive stand on the February 11th agreement concluded between Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan, or its concrete implementation in the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation for «peace» talks with the US and 'Israel'. The final statement said: «The summit heard detailed explanations from King Hussein and Yaser Arafat about the February 11th agreement signed in Amman. The summit highly values the explanations of Yaser Arafat and King Hussein about the adherence of this agreement to the Fez plan. The summit considers the February 11th agreement as an implementation of the Arab peace program for a comprehensive, just, peaceful settlement which guarantees the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all occupied Arab territories, first and foremost Jerusalem...»

This seemingly non-committal wording represents a compromise between the summiteers who had tactical differences about how to present their intents. While King Hussein argued insistently for the summit to express open approval of the February 11th agreement, Arafat and the majority of participants opposed this, because they do not want to worsen existing Arab differences.

*The summit host King Hassan of Morocco, is one of America's favorite Arabs.*

In fact, the Casablanca summit did not announce any ground-breaking decisions, though it did back the Iraqi position in the Gulf war more strongly than before. The main decisions were on the establishment of committees. One committee, chaired by Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, is charged with reconciling Jordan and Syria, and Iraq with Syria. Another, chaired by Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Mauritania, should reconcile Iraq with Libya, and the PLO with Libya. Notably, no committee was formed to reconcile Arafat with Syria.

From this one can see that the Arab reactionary regimes prefer, if possible, to recreate a semblance of official Arab «solidarity» before convening the next and the *real* summit which they scheduled for October in Riyadh. In this perspective the Casablanca summit was a threat to the nationalist regimes: If they do not compromise on their positions, the Casablanca summiteers will go it alone and enforce their policy as the official majority.

Thus, the summit in Casablanca has a double message: On the one hand, Arab reaction, joined by the Palestinian right-wing, is more than ever determined to enter into the US solution for the Middle East conflict. On the other hand, the nationalist regimes still have the power to hinder and expose these efforts. This potential can be realized by the nationalist regimes seriously implementing their declared positions, and increasing their alliance and support to the nationalist and revolutionary forces in the common struggle against Camp David and its new variations.

