

African-Arab Summit In Cairo Sets Agenda For Peace And Development

A meeting of heads of state and representatives of 60 Arab and African countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization ended in Cairo this week with a resolution calling for intensive cooperation between the Arabs and Africa in agricultural and industrial development and for the establishment of an Arab-African Permanent Commission to coordinate political work.

The twin themes of the Cairo summit, according to Algerian reports, were the struggle for the new international economic order and for peace in southern Africa and the Middle East.

Although the final documents of the conference are not yet available, initial reports from Cairo indicate that the summit succeeded "beyond expectation." Traditional suspicions long festering between the Arabs and Africa were overcome, and the two sectors agreed to work together, especially in seeking political cooperation with Western Europe. Statements from the foreign ministers of Algeria and Tunisia, in particular, explicitly called on the Europeans to show more independence from the United States.

The meeting of Arabs and Africans in Cairo coincided with a Brussels meeting of the foreign ministers of the Common Market (EEC), called to discuss the issues of North-South and East-West economic relations. Despite urgent calls from Italy's Prime Minister Andreotti and others for a European endorsement of the Third World's negotiation position, the EEC ministers failed to take a stand, issuing instead a vaguely worded statement on the question of prices of raw materials and other commodities, the result of direct U.S. pressure to the EEC to accede to demands from Rockefeller and Co. for raising the prices of these commodities to bail out the New York banks.

Europe's forced endorsement of the phony Brookings Institution-UNCTAD plan for raising commodity prices along the model of the 1973 Great Oil Hoax — like the coffee price boom that has bailed out the huge Brazilian debt burden — is not the final word from Western Europe, however. The fight that is raging in the cabinet rooms in all Western Europe is best reflected in the debate in West Germany.

According to a spokesman for the West German Development Ministry, both Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Maria Schlei, the minister of development, are resolved to support debt moratorium for the Third World. "Some members of the Cabinet are still afraid of a debt moratorium," said the spokesman, but Schmidt and his supporters "do not want West German loans to the Third World to be used simply to pay back its debt service to another industrialized country." The leading

opponent on this issue is Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who told the EEC ministers today to await the position of the Carter Administration before making any decision, adding stupidly, "but we cannot have a slavish mentality."

Heavy-handed efforts by the Carter Administration to disrupt the working of the summit by exacerbating the numerous fissures in the Arab world and Africa — most recently the synthetic crisis in East Africa centering on Uganda's Idi Amin — failed to prevent the assembled leaders from singling out the crucial issues facing the Non-Aligned Movement and the developing sector. Perhaps the key event at the Cairo summit was the decision by Saudi Arabia and several other smaller Gulf

Algeria's Bouteflika On Arab Aid To Africa

The African countries are not upset by the polemics around the amount of aid, because they know that the Arab countries favor long-range economic cooperation with Africa... Like the Arab world, the African world is seeking cooperation with European countries, once past relations are cleared away in favor of cooperation based on the future... The Europeans and the Arabs are seeking through their dialogue direct formulas of cooperation, which would be used as a test of the industrialized world's willingness to cooperate with all other nations... The African world and the Arab one will be the core of the whole Third World. It is a homogeneous group which must be the privileged partner of Europe and the industrialized world.

-El Moudjahid, March 5

oil-exporting countries to provide \$1.5 billion in development assistance to Africa, most of which has been earmarked for specific development projects in Africa. According to *Le Monde*, the Saudi financial aid will not be used for making up the balance of payments deficits of poorer African states, but will be used almost entirely for real development. Among the projects named by the Saudis will be several ambitious road-building plans, including transport routes from Egypt to southern Africa and across West Africa from Senegal to Chad, and from Algeria to Nigeria.

The Saudis' decision to grant the aid to Africa, which came as a surprise, was viewed by African diplomats in Washington as a key indicator of a Saudi shift away from purely monetary dealings in support of the bankrupt Eurodollar market. In fact, the development demands of the African countries on the Saudis and other Arab states

with huge surplus revenues were an important factor in bolstering Saudi resistance to supplying the IMF and Chase Manhattan Bank with an estimated \$15 billion liquidity, as demanded by the New York Times and the Carter Administration.

North-South Talks Back On The Burner

The Phoenix of international diplomacy — the Conference on International Economic Cooperation (CIEC), otherwise known as the North-South talks — is due to rise once again. The final ministerial session of the talks was due to take place last December, concluding a year of fruitless "dialogue" between the representatives of 19 developing and oil producing countries and eight developed countries. But the U.S. and its allies seized upon the election of the Carter Administration as an excuse to postpone the talks, thereby avoiding a long delayed final confrontation on the key issue of general debt moratorium for the developing countries, the sticking point of the talks. Many in the Group of 19 developing countries were equally relieved to have the opportunity to avoid that crunch themselves and no doubt have spent the intervening months daydreaming about how much nicer Jimmy Carter and the Trilateral Commission will be to the poor countries of the world.

The Group of 19 will meet March 19 to issue an already agreed upon statement on the schedule for holding the final session. This follows discussion between the two co-chairman of the talks, Perez Guerrero from Venezuela and David MacEachen from Canada on the talks' resumption. As it now stands, the four commissions of CIEC — Finance, Energy, Raw Materials, and Development — will convene April 13 and hold negotiations until the end of the month. This will be followed by a weeklong session at a higher level of officialdom which will precede the ministerial session which is going to be held in the second week in May.

The timing of the ministerial session is of course crucial — it will follow just after the London summit of the big advanced capitalist nations (on May 7-8) which will undoubtedly be where Europe will have to decide whether to follow Jimmy Carter into the breach of confrontation with the developing and oil producing countries. The EEC Foreign Ministers themselves will meet on March 25 in Brussels to discuss their policy previous to the reopening of the talks, and no doubt to get a report on the talks between Callaghan and Carter on these issues.

The fact that Carter is committed to a confrontation

policy with the developing countries is now clear to everyone except the professionally blind diplomats of certain developing countries. The core of the Carter commitment, as David Rockefeller insists, is the inviolability of the Third World debt obligations and it is here that one inch will or can be yielded. The Carter Administration is willing of course to "talk" about such "complicated" issues but on debt their standing position will be: a general statement on the debt problem can be agreed to, within which debt problems must be handled "case by case." That is of course the old Kissinger policy which should not surprise anyone.

Carter will be making a speech before the United Nations next week where inside sources have it he will make his bid to be seen as the friend of the developing countries, the defender of their human rights. One reliable story on Carter's appearance is that this was actually the subject of his recent meeting with UN Secretary General Waldheim, not the Middle East as the press reported at the time. Carter insisted to Waldheim that he be able to speak, despite the fact that the UN General Assembly is not in session and there is no official forum convenient for him to appear at. Nonetheless, despite a Waldheim offer to arrange everything for the fall when the General Assembly does reopen, Carter insisted on a command performance, which is what will occur.

While there are plenty of credulous diplomats around at the UN, many know well what the Carter game is. One African diplomat, very close to the progress of the CIEC talks, told us: "For us, the crucial issue, in fact almost the only issue, is the question of debt. It is possible that the U.S. will try to avoid dealing with this issue, by making small concessions on such issues as commodity prices. But this will not be acceptable." Another Southeast Asian diplomat, who has participated in his country's CIEC delegation, told us that he was "pessimistic" about the possibility of a successful conclusion of the talks. He and others from the developing sector feel that the only hope lies in European willingness to break from the U.S. — that is where the real issue lies.