

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

Will Sadat chuck Camp David?

Saudi Arabia signals that the Arab world is prepared to welcome Egypt back into the fold.

A well-organized movement has begun to shape up to reconcile Egyptian President Anwar Sadat with his fellow Arabs. At the forefront of the operation is Saudi Arabia. In an interview with the *Washington Post* last week, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal declared in the first public signal to Egypt since the Camp David process began two years ago that "we are making efforts to bring Egypt back into the Arab camp." Working with the Saudis to resolve "the Egypt problem" is Iraq, whose president, Saddam Hussein, just made a lightning visit to Riyadh to hammer out the details of an emerging Riyadh-Baghdad axis.

Camp David is a dead letter in the wake of the Begin annexation of East Jerusalem and Sadat's subsequent freeze on autonomy talks. Faced with this reality, Sadat finds himself with few options but to pick up on the Arab initiatives.

Morocco, a close ally of Saudi Arabia, is making parallel overtures, with a promise to Sadat that if he takes a firm stand on the question of Jerusalem, Morocco will work to restore Sadat to Arab favor.

According to Arab sources, there is little doubt that a process of reconciliation is going on between Cairo and Riyadh, opening the way to unify the Arab world. Sadat is reported "in retreat" on Mount Sinai, where he is mulling over his next step and refusing press inter-

views or conferences.

Last week Egyptian officials dismissed Israel's call for a return to the Camp David autonomy talks as "ridiculous." In his Aug. 2 letter to Begin, Sadat declared further Israeli-Egyptian talks to be "virtually impossible" because of Begin's stance on Jerusalem and the West Bank, and expressed concern over the "deterioration" of relations between the two countries.

The unifying element of the drive to reintegrate Egypt into the Arab world is the growing—and increasingly vocal—Arab opposition to Muslim Brotherhood extremism à la Khomeini. In recent days, the Moroccan ulema, or clergy, the Grand Ayatollah of Iraq, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, the Muslim World League in Saudi Arabia, and religious leaders in Tunisia, have all exposed Khomeini as a false prophet and blasphemer. In a special religious edict, the Moroccan ulema condemned Khomeini for placing himself above the angels and the Prophet Mohammed and for his pretensions to be a "mahdi," or messiah, having greater power than God. "Such pronouncement is contrary to the monotheistic faith and is deplored by every Muslim," the Moroccan ulema declared.

The ulema called upon other Muslim religious leaders to take a stand on Khomeini's heresy.

A well-placed Arab diplomat told *EIR* this week that these denunciations have "started the ball

rolling" against the Muslim Brotherhood in the region, and against the covert alliance between the Brotherhood and the backers of Camp David. The Arabs are kicking the door open to the Europeans, whose initiatives for an overall peace approach have already been well received.

Sadat, who himself has unreservedly attacked Khomeini in recent months, is thus well positioned to return to the Arab cause. In planning his next move, Sadat has been in consultation with both French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Symbolizing Sadat's new European connection, a secret \$500 million loan by France to Egypt for the construction of a Cairo subway system and an expanded communications system has just been made public.

In addition, Egyptian envoys are being sent to several world capitals to negotiate a post-Camp David strategy. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali has been dispatched to Rumania, whose president, Nicolae Ceausescu, appears to be initiating mediation efforts for the Middle East. Ceausescu will host Jordan's King Hussein over the weekend, and has recently held summit meetings with Giscard and Soviet leader Brezhnev. Ceausescu has reportedly also been conveying messages to the Palestine Liberation Organization concerning possible shifts in Egyptian policy. Other Egyptian diplomatic missions include the dispatch of Vice-President Mubarak to several Western European nations at the end of this month and the sending of special envoys to both West and East Germany during the next several days.