

## **Casablanca agenda: Begin development of the Mideast now**

by Marcia Merry

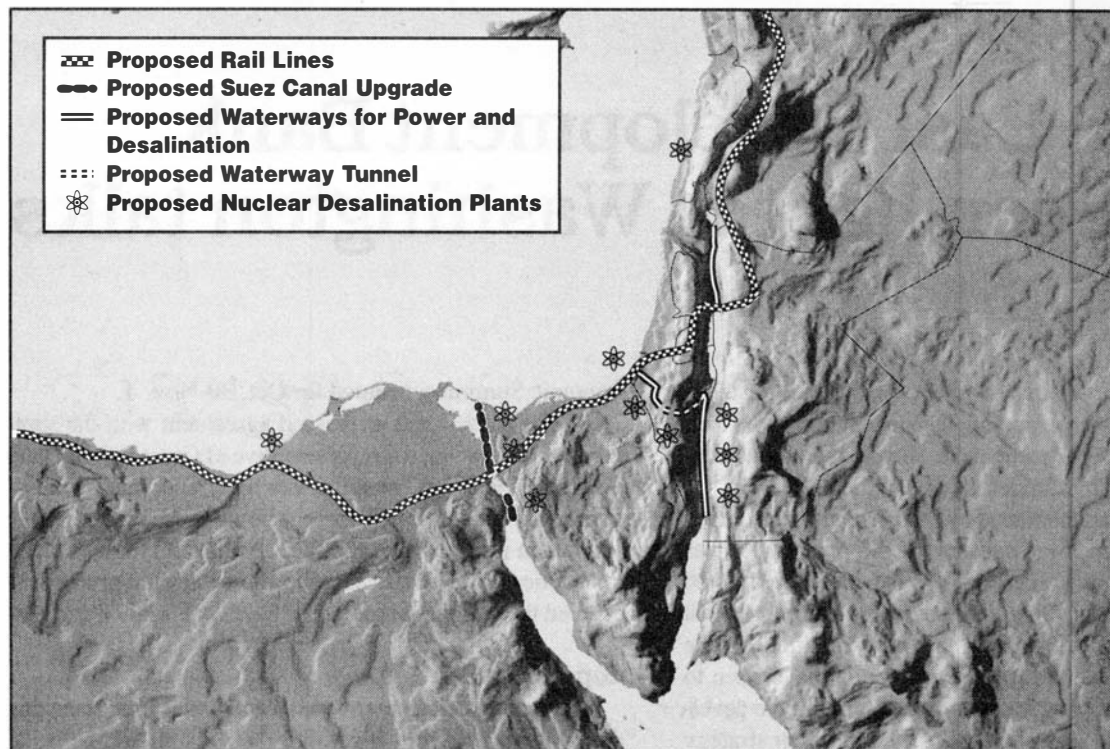
On Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1994 in Casablanca, Morocco, representatives from 60 nations attended the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit, for which special development reports were prepared by many attendees, in particular, from the governments of the greater Jordan basin region: the Palestinian National Authority, Israel, and Jordan. These reports outline infrastructure, social services, and other projects that are presented as either options or priorities for the nations involved.

Getting these projects under way is long overdue. The historic Palestine Liberation Organization-Israel Peace Accords, signed on Sept. 13, 1993, contained economic protocols that outlined mutual-interest projects that could have been started within weeks of the signing (water supply and electricity grid improvements, housing, etc.). Starting essential projects now is the only path to peace in the Middle East, and the only right course to take, out of respect for the dignity of peoples in the region denied access to basic necessities for so long.

Moreover, the launching of needed development projects here would set the precedent for economic emergency measures around the globe. A program based on building infrastructure is the only sound alternative to the disintegration of the prevailing financial system.

Therefore, we present in this issue short excerpts from each of the three reports released at Casablanca. While the media play up the incidents of terrorism in the Middle East—much of it directly or indirectly tied to outside financial interests opposing infrastructure development there, or anywhere—the coverage of the Casablanca development proposals has been almost nil.

An important agenda item at the Casablanca conference, put forward by the Israeli government, concerned the financing of these projects. Israel proposed the formation of a Middle East Development Bank specifically for this purpose. The idea was strenuously opposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and no decision was made at Casablanca. But in meetings in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 11, the idea made substantial progress, as we report on p. 24.



**FIGURE 1**  
**LaRouche's nuclear power-based Oasis Plan**

*The atomic symbols on coastal and canal sites illustrate how "nuplexes" (nuclear-powered desalination complexes of high-technology agriculture and industry) could create oases of development in the desert. Just 20 such sites could provide the freshwater equivalent of the entire Jordan basin's present flow: a "Second Jordan River."*

### Priorities for development

The reports provided by the Palestinian Authority contain a detailed listing of dozens of projects, ranging from school-rooms, to toilet stalls, to hospital beds, to housing units, which uncontestedly should be built on a crash basis. For almost 30 years, next to no construction or refurbishing of needed plumbing, buildings, roads, and waterworks has taken place for the Arab population in the West Bank and Gaza, while thousands of people are living in camps in Gaza.

Apart from the category of short-term emergency construction for the West Bank and Gaza, the next most pressing feature of the three nations' proposals is the question of water supply.

Geographically, this region does not have the freshwater volume to support the economic activities required for the population now living in the region. The nearest freshwater "surplus" areas are the Anatolian highlands in Turkey, the Sudd in southern Sudan, and the run-off from the Ethiopian highlands.

In response to this geographical constraint, Israel, over the past 25 years, simply diverted water from the Jordan system by building its National Water Carrier, thus shorting users in Jordan and the Occupied Territories.

The Casablanca reports all have modest proposals for better water-sharing and management. However, no amount of engineering the existing supplies will provide the ratios of water per hectare and per household usage required.

In partial recognition of this, larger-scale water projects are proposed, such as the Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal,

and the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal, from which electricity for desalination is an objective. A Haifa-to-Beisan "northern" conduit is proposed by Israel, for desalinating Mediterranean seawater by reverse osmosis. And Jordan proposes additional water transfers.

### Nuclear-powered 'Oasis Plan'

What is conspicuously absent from all three governments' reports is any mention of nuclear power. In fact, advanced designs for nuclear-powered desalination installations—strategically located along the proposed canal routes and coastal sites—could provide the increments of electricity and freshwater on the scale needed to create "oases" and corridors of development in this desert land. The map above shows schematically how this would look. For example, with the new man-made water resources, the modern day "gardens of Jericho" could showcase hydroponic and aeroponic greenhouses. Lyndon LaRouche, in consultation with others in the region since the 1970s, has called this the "Oasis Plan." Without nuclear power, LaRouche has repeatedly emphasized, no Mideast development plan can succeed.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres proposed locating nuclear power installations in zones that would serve as "islands of international cooperation," in his book *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993). Although chapters of the book served as the introduction to the Israeli government's Casablanca report, all mention of nuclear power was omitted.