

2. Commentaries On Camp David Prospects

The days leading up to the Camp David summit have produced some crucial predictions as to how that summit will turn out.

Among the most portentous statements were those made by the leaderships of Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union, on Aug. 22 and Aug. 30 respectively. (For excerpts from the Soviet statement see THIS WEEK.)

This interview with the influential Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia appeared in the Kuwaiti daily *As-Siyasah* on Aug. 22. The text is from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

Q: I said to Prince Fahd, "Following your highness' visit to Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the public impression was that a summit conference (of the Arabs) was imminent and that President Sadat's initiative was about to be declared a failure. However, everyone was surprised by your recent statements in support of the Camp David summit."

A: We have supported the Camp David summit with the aim of bolstering optimism and raising hopes. When we expressed such support there was evidence that this summit would be the decisive and final meeting; the story will either end in the interest of peace or the door will be closed finally.

The Arabs have given much and have been extremely flexible. The time has come for the other side to give. We believe it is now up to the United States to be firm and decisive. We, the Arabs, have nothing more to give. Therefore the Camp David meeting in my opinion will be the decisive meeting, either positively or negatively.

Little confidence has been generated that the White House has any sense of how to cope with the dangers mounting around Camp David. One of the few positive signs, and one which the international community will watch as a possible signal of firmness developing in the White House toward the Israelis, was outlined by the Hearst chain's Boston *Herald-American* newspaper, in an article by foreign affairs editor John P. Wallach on Aug. 31:

House Majority leader Jim Wright, a Texas congressman with close ties to President Carter, has floated what appears to be an Administration-supported peace plan for the Middle East. The trial balloon calls for total demilitarization of the West Bank to create a homeland for the Palestinian people.

Wright, in open letters to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, also proposes that Israeli forces be permitted to "maintain observatories ... on the high ground of the West Bank and Golan ... as a guarantee of Israeli's future security."

The timing of Wright's initiative seems particularly important. Although he makes clear he does not speak for the Carter Administration, his proposals have surfaced only days before the beginning of the Camp David summit, Sept. 5.

The Texas Democrat calls on both Egypt and Israel "to sign a pact of nonaggression" and to "invite other nations to join in." But the most revealing part of his letter to both leaders concerns the future of the occupied West Bank.

A State Department View of Israeli, U.S. and Soviet Positions

In a recent interview an authoritative State Department source had these comments on the goals of the U.S. Administration at Camp David:

Q: What do you expect from the Camp David meeting?

A: What we are working for is for Israel to agree to give back the West Bank; not all of it, of course, but most of it. We need their commitment to the fact that the West Bank is indeed Arab land. If that is done, Sadat will make compromises on territory in return. He won't say it himself, but it will be worked out in the committees. In other words, on security grounds Sadat will allow Israel to maintain certain security requirements, once Arab sovereignty is acknowledged. This goes for the West Bank and for Sinai.

Q: And the Palestinians?

A: We are seeking Palestinian self-determination as a principle.

Q: But the Administration now only talks about partial self-determination.

A: That's what we say. But when we say "Palestinian rights," we mean full self-determination, and the Israelis know it.

Q: What about the Soviets? What is their attitude toward Camp David?

A: The Soviets will make a lot of noise, but they are not really opposed. Sure, they will call for Geneva. But what alternative do they really have? They know Geneva won't work now.

The only *real* objection they have is to the stationing of U.S. troops in the Middle East. But that isn't really under any serious consideration.