

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARAB AMERICANS

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Poster

Thank You, Egypt, We Needed That

A Commentary

By Nicholas von Hoffman

Dear Abdullah:

How's things in Cairo? They must be pretty good after you guys finally learned how to get it on with the Israelis. You've gone up an easy 10 points on the American macho meter. Jimmy the Greek is laying odds that one of you Arabs is going to be good enough to play in the National Football League.

If it happens, your guy ought to come equipped to throw his forward passes with one of those Russian SAM-6 launchers. Even though they're looking at your ball club with new respect here, they're even more impressed with the hardware the Russians gave you. From what we've been reading you and/or the Russians can total the American tactical air force and score a complete wipe-out on any kind of tank we know how to make. You would think that people might be asking our Pentagon some irritated questions about how they spent so much money to develop equipment so inferior to the Russians, but no, the prevailing opinion seems to

be that your SAM missiles are another example of Arab perfidy.

Boy! Do you guys have a bad reputation here! If you win you're going to be branded as aggressors and if you lose they'll say you're not being realistic about the new boundaries. All kinds of senators are giving every kind of speech about what an international outrage and a violation of civilized law it is for you Egyptians to invade Egypt. They do have a point there, Abdullah. You Egyptians have been occupying Egypt since the time of the Pharaohs, so why not give somebody else a chance?

Another thing that is not helping you in the polls is this oil situation. You may not know it but your refusal to sell us your oil is generally considered blackmail. Please don't write back and ask me how that differs from the American refusal to sell machinery and such stuff to Cuba. The point is that we are a super power and you are not. Furthermore, you are

accepting an enormous amount of war goods from the Russians which, since we're a nation in the steely grips of detente, annoys us almost more than we can say. The fact that we won't sell any guns to you but only to your enemies is the sort of specious argument that could only come from an Arab.

In addition, our oil companies are irked at you for trying to squeeze them out of their middle-man operation on sales of your oil to Europe and Japan. Our taxpayers are going to be even more irked when they get that \$2 billion dollar bill for replacing all the bullets and shells the Israelis shot off at you in defending themselves against your attacks. If you would stay the hell out of your country it would be a material help for us in fighting inflation.

You are also not going to win any votes with the forthcoming heating fuel shortage which they are already blaming on you. When the brown-outs and the cold furnaces hit Boston and Minneapolis our politicians are going to come roaring in their chauffeur-driven-eight-miles-to-the-gallon Cadillacs and do a job on you. Please don't write back, Abdullah, to tell me that camel dung makes good fuel. That makes as much sense as your telling me last summer that you Arabs stay cool without electricity by teaching your dromedaries to rotate their tails rapidly.

We may avoid a fuel crisis by cutting down on consumption. There's a big drive on for that in Washington. A number of high administration officials have been seen telling their assistants to roll down the windows so they could congratulate pedestrians for not wasting fuel. White House aides, admirals, generals and cabinet muckity-mucks have been setting an example by limiting the size of their motorcycle escorts and rationing helicopters. We're all being urged to adopt a spirit of wartime self-sacrifice which may be why not much gas is getting in farmers' tractors and why we may not be able to swap you any oil for wheat next year.

In the long run your vicious tactics may save our country. People are predicting that walking will return as a prime means of locomotion. Already a number of community colleges and adult education centers are offering classes in walking. Political scientists are speculating that you Arabs may have found a way out of our perennial school busing crisis for us and cardiac specialists are worried that a prolonged drought at the gas pumps may cut their business even more drastically than Exxon's.

Some visionaries are suggesting that an indefinite continuation of your war with Israel will do more to clean up the air in our metropolitan areas than the catalytic converter or the Environmental Protection Agency's nonexistent emission control standards. For that reason, the ecology lobby is lining up with Sen. Scoop Jackson, the Pentagon and the Israelis.

Opposed to you and dedicated to peace and justice in the Middle East are the motel people and the drive-in restaurant crowd who want to make it possible for their customers to continue littering the countryside with hamburger wrappings.

Anyway, if you and the Israelis keep killing each other, I think we'll have a nice country here. My best to all your wives and the kids.

William Raspberry

A 31

Blackmail—Or Diplomacy?

Why is it "diplomacy" when the United States uses its national resources as leverage in its foreign policy and "blackmail" when the Arabs do the same thing?

We hear the Arab oil embargo described so frequently and so matter-of-factly as blackmail that we start to take it as undisputed fact. But when American wheat or American war materiel or American technology or even American military strength is proffered or withheld in order to influence the diplomatic postures of other countries, it seems the most reasonable thing in the world.

Why the inconsistency? Is it simply a question of whose ox is gored? Or is it frustration over an obvious dilemma in U.S. policy formulation: How to side with Israel against the Arabs without making the Arabs angry?

The American government obviously has a special feeling for Israel. Israelis reflect many of the virtues Americans find important: hard work, national cohesiveness, clever use of technology. And Israel has a natural constituency in America's substantial and influential Jewish population.

But Israel hasn't any oil. The first

set of facts makes it virtually impossible for America to remain truly neutral in any major Arab-Israeli conflict, quite apart from questions of which side is right. The second extracts a price for American non-neutrality.

Instead of dealing realistically with the fact that choosing sides is never free, the government keeps trying to have the best of both worlds: Israeli amity and Arab oil.

None of this is to suggest that I like the Arab oil embargo. I shudder as much as the next man at the prospect of fuelless winters and curtailed pleasure driving and industrial lay-offs and economic recession and all the things that could follow a long-term embargo.

Nor do I contend that America should contemplate exchanging sound moral principle for heating oil. But I do say that it seems reasonable for the Arab nations to use what ever leverage they have to correct what they consider injustice to them. I do say that the embargo seems a reasonable way to try to establish a dialogue to that end between their government and ours.

The Arabs (to some degree because of American policy) have found it diffi-

cult to establish dialogue and meaningful negotiations over questions that are of profound importance to them.

That, one gathers, was one of the key reasons they chose to go to war with Israel the last time around: not because they are still committed to erasing Israel from the map but because, without war, there was little world pressure on Israel to give up the Arab territory it has occupied since the 1967 war, in defiance of United Nations resolutions.

Well, the latest war failed to achieve that limited goal, and one of the reasons it failed was that the United States continued to supply arms to Israel until the Arab military advantage was dissipated.

So finally, the Arabs said, in effect: Instead of arming Israel while pretending neutrality, why don't you use your good offices to get Arab-Israeli negotiations unstuck? And if you can't see your way even to doing that, we'll use the only leverage we have: our oil.

That doesn't sound to me like blackmail, and the problem with calling it that goes far beyond semantics; it tends to make the search for realistic solutions more difficult.

Israelis Support Withdrawal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEL AVIV, Nov. 21—

For the first time an Israeli public opinion poll has found a majority in favor of withdrawal from all or nearly all occupied Arab territories, provided this leads to lasting peace.

Fifty-three per cent of those interviewed were in favor of withdrawal according to the poll by the Institute of Applied Social Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

But most of those interviewed also believed that such concessions would not guarantee peace. Eighty-three per cent thought there would be a new war with the Arabs in a year or two.

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Nominees Stymied by Sen. Helms

Senate confirmation of about 40 executive branch nominations and nearly 4,000 military promotions is being delayed by a solitary Republican objection to a Nixon nominee.

Freshman Sen. Jesse A. Helms (R.N.C.) says he is waiting until the House Internal Security Committee holds hearings on the President's nomination of Helmut Sonnenfeldt to be under secretary of the Treasury.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), who made known several weeks ago that he would delay all other nominations in hopes of prying Sonnenfeldt's loose, may attempt to break the impasse today.

The Senate is to recess Wednesday evening for Thanksgiving, returning next Monday.

Sonnenfeldt's nomination was held up for months in the Senate Finance Committee for an investigation of charges that he was a security risk because, as a top aide to Henry A. Kissinger he leaked secret data to the Israeli government.

Sonnenfeldt denied the charges, and the Senate committee finally cleared him for a floor vote, but Helms put a "hold" on it, a senator's prerogative. The House hearings scheduled for the first week in December, "are needed to clear up these matters," Helms said yesterday.

Since Sonnenfeldt's nomination to the Treasury post, Kissinger has succeeded William P. Rogers as Secretary of State, and the new secretary reportedly wants Sonnenfeldt to join him there. But, to save face, Sonnenfeldt backers are insistent that the Treasury nomination not be withdrawn, that he be confirmed for that job before he moves to the State Department.

For instance, I have heard it suggested three times in the past couple of weeks that Arab oil ought to be "internationalized" and distributed by the United Nations or some such. If somebody proposed "internationalizing" South African diamonds or Cuban tobacco or American wheat, you'd laugh in his face.

To the degree that the embargo involves abrogation of contracts with international oil companies, it is reasonable to seek relief—financial or otherwise—from international sources.

But "blackmail" suggests that America and Europe have a God-given right to Arab oil—no matter what disposition the Arabs' own interest dictates. And that is the part that just does not make any sense.

Two paths seem far more reasonable. The first is for America to be as self-sufficient as possible, for fuel and everything else. The second is to use the embargo not as an excuse for promoting more anti-Arab bitterness among Americans but as the basis for dealing honestly and fairly with Arab grievances.

It seems a natural for the U.S. government's resident genius, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.