

### Book Review

## ***Political Power & The Arab Oil Weapon: The Experience of Five Industrial Nations***

*Roy Licklider, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988, pp. xv + 343.*

Licklider selected an interesting topic and in spite of the logistical problems that face such a study, he has done a remarkable job. His book is a wealth of information and a record on a very contemporary issue.

It is history which is still unfolding. The "oil weapon" was a treasure in the Arab arsenal. They used it and realized its worth. The deployment of the "oil weapon" by the Arabs also showed them how helpless they were although they thought the "lifeline" of the industrial world—oil—was under their control.

Licklider's book is seemingly weak in many areas because he has had to depend on personal interview. It is not unusual for politicians and others to deny statements or remarks made in such conversations. Also, Licklider appears to be acting as "gatekeeper" by seeming to use only that portion of the information he gathered which comfortably satisfies his thesis.

The author has included some useful observations. For instance he has mentioned that Japan apologized to Israel for the Lod Airport incidence and sent a delegation to the Arabs to apologize for apologizing to Israel. These and many facts related by Licklider demonstrate now immoral the industrial nations are especially in the case of Britain—the real father of the Zionist entity. But more importantly such happenings reflect the helplessness of the Arab countries: they knew that the industrial nations were deploying double standards but they swallowed these bitter pills because they did not have any alternatives.

Licklider's book also brings into focus an important aspect of world politics which is that no one can win an argument using a single weapon. The Arabs had but oil to deploy. They did not fathom the reach of the doctored Christian mind that has made people believe in the righteousness of the creation of a state for the Jews. In fact this belief is so strong that the West considers it a "moral" duty to support this entity without harboring any moral qualms about the Palestinians diaspora.

The "friendly" and "non-friendly" labels granted to the industrial countries by the Arabs is another manifestation of their weakness. It is clear from facts gathered by Licklider that although the Arabs fired their shot they did

not want to kill their enemy because in this case the good health of this enemy was the very basis of their survival.

The skimpy results that emerged from the use of the "oil weapon" also bring out the fact that in spite of all that was said the Arabs were not united nor did they constitute a central force.

Like a good journalist Licklider has not made any subjective statement but the "facts" he revealed demonstrated that Arab powers, in spite of their seeming independence, were subject to U.S. coercion—rather Zionist coercion through the agency of Henry Kissinger, a German-born Jew. It would make an interesting study to look into the role of Kissinger during the oil crisis. It was Kissinger's role in connection with the unfolding of the Watergate scandal that forced Nixon to hand over U.S. foreign policy to Kissinger.

The picture that emerges is that the U.S. shepherded the industrial powers through their relationships with the Arabs and these industrial powers are so very dependent on the U.S. In effect, we see industrial powers acting in cohesion like a galaxy around their big star, the U.S. We also see how personal interests of legislators, (leaders like Trudeau) affect policy.

In his book, Licklider has noted certain "pro-Arab" shifts in policies of the industrialized nations. To this reviewer these "shifts" seem meaningless. As a matter of fact, these nations only carried out some "Band-Aid measures" to help satisfy the Arab masses and shore up the regimes in Arab lands yet continued to carry out their pro-Zionist policies which were and are tied to their internal and external strategic, economic, and political interests. The fact is that the major players in this game, the Gulf states, are family run affairs which are much more concerned about retaining their seat of power than restoring the rights of the Palestinian people who are not looked at very fondly by most of them. This internal paranoia is encouraged and cultivated by the industrial powers who stand to gain from it economically and politically. Therefore, we see that these weak "shifts" were really "gains."

Licklider's book makes good reading especially for Muslim political scientists. They should be able to derive many lessons from it. While it tells them, from a Western pen, of the immorality of the industrial powers, it also tells them about the weakness in the Muslim armor. It tells them about the fact that the oil weapon has not helped in any way to "humanize" Muslims because whatever "concessions" or "shifts" have been carried out, they were very superficial and done only to make immediate gains.

The author's bibliography is impressive. One wishes that he would have included an agenda about his interviews to bestow authenticity as to when and where the discussions were carried out.

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