The Arab Food Problem

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What would happen if food exporting countries decide to stop exporting food products to the Arabs? Or what would happen if oil is depleted and the Arabs find themselves without income to buy food? Most Arabs will starve to death.

With the present international food problems, some Arab countries such as Egypt are facing real bread problems that might develop into political crisis. One can see long lines of people in Cairo awaiting the turn to buy bread. In Palestine, people are paying a higher price for their bread, and making cuts on their consumption from other food stuff. But generally, the Arabs still can buy their food because they have money to do that.

In general, the Arab countries import around 75% of their food needs. some Arab countries are almost self-satisfied in this regard such as Syria, but several Arab countries import more than 90% of their food needs such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Arabs have a lot of money, but very little investment in agriculture. Syria has probably the least money, but the highest interest in agriculture; the UAE has the highest personal income, but the highest interests in gorgeous restaurants and high towers.

Around 80% of the Arab land is arid land. Part of this percentage could be reclaimed, and the rest is beyond the scientific achievements of the time. However, the 20% that is suitable is not properly exploited. In Arabia, there are large areas that could be exploited for both planting and animal husbandry such as the Sudan. Sudan is a very vast country with an area of 2.5 million km2. and 40 million people, and has many water resources. If Arabs direct their agricultural and farming investment in Sudan, they will be able to meet most of their food needs.

The Arabs had to face a great deal of embarrassment when, on the popular level, they called for boycotting Denmark due to the caricatures that humiliate prophet Mohammad. They discovered that the only alternative to their imports from Denmark is to stop consuming the imported commodities. It has been very hard for a nation that does not produce to change its consumption habits. The Danish prime Minister could not stay silent when he asked his people not to worry because the Arabs have no alternative but to import Danish commodities. The Danish still publish the caricatures and the Arabs just have verbal reactions.

Where does Arab money go? Most Arab money is actually wasted by the ruling class which is almost tribal. The ruling class has an unlimited access to the Arab wealth, and they are neither held responsible nor accountable, in the 21 century, Arab rulers still decide by themselves what to do with the nation's income. And since all Arab rulers are corrupt, most Arab money is lost in lust. Most Arab people don't know exactly how their rulers waste the money, but educated people who read the western press understand the dilemma.

An Arab prince once spent $100,000 on a birthday party for his cat. Another lost millions of dollars in one night on the gambling table, a third spent millions in a club for the nudes. There are thousands of Arab princes and princesses who just spend milliards of dollars on life enjoyment, at the time that millions of Arabs don't satisfy their basic gaily needs.

So many wealthy Arab countries and wealthy individuals invest their money in the Western countries. There is some investment in the Arab countries, but it is a tiny portion when compared with the Arab money poured into Western economies. Arab

rulers have wide differences among them, they hate each other and don't have mutual trust. They don't have visions on the national level, and care about their own feuds more than they care about the nation. This argument is extremely supported with these rulers' reaction to the ongoing international food problems. The international community has been on its toes due to the rising shortages, while Arab leaders have not been talking about any shift in their agricultural policies. Depending upon their oil money, they are apparently awaiting others to solve the problems. And afterwards, why they should care about the welfare of their own people?

Great leaders care and make the necessary plans. Our Arab leaders aren't great. But the problem is also with the people who don't react. As an Arab' I feel sad when I see the Koreans toppling their own government because of a beef issue while the Arab peoples don't react to so many accumulated tough issues. If Arab leaders aren't acting responsibly, the Arab peoples aren't defending their own rights.