

“Black list” of European Countries supplying help for Israel’ from the Corriere della Sera (22 October 1973)


Caption: On 22 October 1973, the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera expresses concern at the decision adopted by the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) to block all deliveries of petroleum to the European States supporting Israel during the Yom Kippur War.

Source: Corriere della Sera. dir. de publ. Ottone, Piero. 22.10.1973, n° 41; anno 13. Milano: Corriere della Sera. "Lista nera dei paesi europei da cui arrivano aiuti a Israele", auteur:Petta, Ettore , p. 22.

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‘Black list’ of European Countries supplying help for Israel

Black list to be compiled in Cairo? — The dramatic developments in the situation rule out a resumption of negotiations in Vienna on the price of crude oil — The measures taken by the Arab nations might cost Italy a thousand billion lire a year

From our correspondent

Vienna, 21 October

The West may well be on the brink of an unprecedented economic crisis that could also radically change the way events unfold in the Middle East. Faced by the Arab countries' decision to impose an oil embargo, which at this point directly affects only the United States and the Netherlands, the Western countries will rapidly have to choose between two alternatives: to accept the Arab *diktat* and renounce any kind of support for Israel, or to react with extreme vigour (which could have dangerous consequences) and take into consideration the view expressed by the Secretary General of NATO, Dr Joseph Luns, that the oil boycott could be interpreted almost as 'an act of war'. There would also be a third possibility, namely that of waiting for the situation to develop. To wait and see, however, would be possible only if the Middle Eastern conflict were of short duration, but unfortunately there are no signs at the present moment — apart from Henry Kissinger's talks in Moscow — to support such a conjecture. In the Vienna offices of OPEC, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the atmosphere was very noticeably unsettled today. It is clear that OPEC is currently controlled by the Gulf States and that the Organisation's other members have no say in the matter. The situation is such that we can rule out tonight the resumption of negotiations between OPEC and the Western oil companies on the price of crude oil. The oil price has been relegated to secondary importance before the fait accompli of the embargo, against which the oil companies are currently defenceless.

The Cairo daily *Al-Ahram* has proposed that the boycott should be extended to all countries granting military bases to the Americans involved in supplying aid for Israel and has announced that it will compile a 'black list' of countries displaying more or less open sympathy towards Tel Aviv.

It is reasonable to believe that many Western European countries will find their names on this list. In the present situation, a decision on what approach to adopt towards the Arab countries' obvious policy of blackmail can be taken only by the Governments and no longer by the oil companies, even though some Arab countries had also intended to provoke a conflict between the major oil companies and their respective Governments.

In Vienna, an oil company representative has today called attention to the fact that Saudi Arabia has appointed itself as the spokesman for a more radical policy, given that it possesses the necessary resources to guarantee that the decision to boycott the United States and to reduce oil supplies to other countries is applied. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is a shareholder in ARAMCO (the group extracting 95 % of Saudi Arabian crude oil) and one simply cannot see how the US companies (Standard Oil of California, Exxon, Texaco and Mobil) could oppose the wishes of the Saudi Government.

It is obvious that Saudi Arabia's key role in supplying Europe and Japan must lead, as intended by its Government, to stronger pressure by the Western nations on the United States. On the other hand, the 1 500 American ARAMCO employees have already conveyed a message to President Nixon, appealing to him to adopt a neutral position in the conflict and to refrain from supplying arms to Israel. The message was handed over at the White House before the news of the boycott had been made known. The situation has escalated since, despite assurances by the Western countries that they have enough reserves to survive even a prolonged crisis. But already there is talk of possible rationing and the Netherlands Government has adopted measures restricting oil supplies to the large German refinery of Wesseling, close to Cologne.

According to estimates from informed sources, the Arab nations' decisions might cost Italy, for example, 1 000 billion lire per year. In 1972, 63 % of Italy's total crude oil imports originated from Persian Gulf

Countries.

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