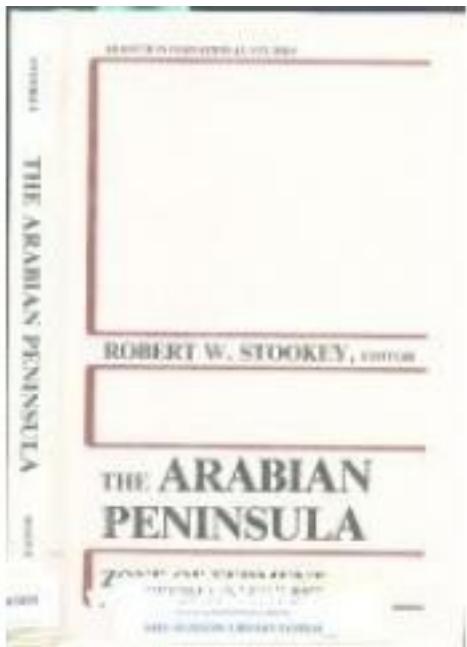


The Arabian Peninsula



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Considering its economic and strategic significance for our national interests, the Arabian Peninsula is not well known to the general public. Media reports and comment are at best sporadic and usually intensify only at moments of international tension when American interests appear to be in jeopardy. The public tends to regard the Arabs and Islam as their predominant religion, as backward, morally deficient, and threatening both economically and politically to the industrialized democracies. This perception naturally colors the popular interpretation of news and other discussions of the region. The question is not one of deliberately distorted reporting; our journalists sent to the area are mostly competent and conscientious. However, since access to these countries is difficult, broad and sustained coverage is impractical. Editorial conceptions of what

constitutes a good news story add a further
 element of selectivityUnderstanding the societies of the Arabian Peninsula
 requires an intimate acquaintance that relatively few outsiders have the opportunity or the inclination to acquire
 Since the days of our founding fathersAmericans have assumed that the
 principles on which our nationS political institutions are based are universally
 and eternally applicableWe have become convinced that if our manner of
 conducting public affairs were faithfully copied everywherethe common
 aspiration of all humanity toward peacematerial progressjusticeand civil
 liberty wold be realized throughout the WOrldWe tend to iudge another
 society according to its governmentS resemblance to our ownWe overlook
 the fact that our nation s principles evolved within a tradition of thought

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