

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ARAB-U.S. POLICYMAKERS CONFERENCE**

*“Arab-U.S. Relations: Going Where?”*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2010**

**RONALD REAGAN BUILDING & INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**WELCOME ON BEHALF OF HRH PRINCE TALAL BIN ABDULAZIZ AL SA’UD**

**HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Sa’ud** – Chairman, Arab Open University Forum; Chairman, Transpacific Broadcast Group International.

Dr. Anthony, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests:

On behalf of my father, Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz, I would like to say what a great pleasure it is to be here today on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Arab-US policymakers conference sponsored by the National Council on US-Arab Relations.

For over 27 years, Dr. John Duke Anthony and the National Council on US-Arab Relations have been at the forefront of promoting friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of the

Arab world and the United States through an array of educational and exchange programs, and we thank him for his extraordinary work and commitment to mutual understanding between the United States and the Arab world.

This year also marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the seminal meeting between my grandfather, King Abdulaziz al Saud, and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was during this visit, characterized by a particularly friendly and respectful chemistry between the two, that the tone of friendship, which has been a mainstay of US-Saudi relations ever since was born.

Today, conferences such as this one deal with the array of challenges and opportunities emanating from the Arab world and continue in that spirit of mutual respect. I have every confidence that the perspectives and opinions shared among us during this conference will only serve to complement and deepen our understanding of the Arab-United States dynamic.

This year's conference could not come at a more timely moment. As we speak, the Arab and Islamic Worlds face an array of complex security, developmental, political and economic challenges and opportunities of concern to all nations.

Before I go any further, I should emphasize that the United States and the Arab states seek the same goals: regional stability and security, economic prosperity, open markets, and an educational system that prepares young men and women for a knowledge-based economy. These goals are in everyone's interest, and the majority of Arabs of all ages, from Morocco to the Gulf, earnestly wish to be part of the international nexus of advanced economies, with the knowledge, linguistic skills and appreciation of other cultures that membership in this elite community connotes and supports.

I say this because most of the news coverage in the west focuses on that slim minority within a very small minority. Such consistent misrepresentation of the Muslim world in the Western media harms not only us; indeed, it has the potential to damage your interests as well. Such reports can easily create false dichotomies in the public mind that can lead to unwise foreign policy choices and courses of action. Of course, we all know the principal geo-political challenges facing the Arab world and the United States at the current juncture, and I know that you are discussing these issues intensively during this conference. Both the US and the Arab League support the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the continued expansion of settlements and the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and livelihoods imperil the

negotiations that will make peace possible. Regarding Iran, the Arab nations of the Gulf are deeply concerned about Iranian nuclear intentions and the direct threat to regional security and stability we believe current Iranian policy represents. And like the United States, all Arab states want an Iraq that is stable and representative of its entire population.

But we Arabs face challenges from within as well, including a burgeoning youth population and the responsibility for creating jobs for these young men and women, who will soon represent the largest demographic in the region. This is no easy task. For example, just forty-five years ago, most Saudis were illiterate and lived the nomadic life their fathers had followed for centuries. Today, our people live and work in a modern economy with a first-class infrastructure, and our literacy rate for people in their forties and below is in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. We are very proud of this enormous progress, and yet clearly it is not enough.

In addition to educating our people, we must give them the skills, knowledge, and perspectives that will allow our country to move to a knowledge-based economy with an understanding and appreciation for people of other cultures. This is what the overwhelming majority of our people want, and it is what leaders in Saudi Arabia and other Arab states understand we must provide. We will accomplish this task, God willing, but it will take time and enormous resources. Yet no one should doubt our commitment to this work, so vital to stability, prosperity and peaceful relations with all nations and people of the world.

And this of course is why conferences such as this one are so important, as it provides all of us an opportunity to exchange information, perspectives and concerns. It is therefore my father's and my own earnest wish that this 19<sup>th</sup> annual Arab-US Policymakers Conference make a substantial contribution to understanding the complexities of the Middle East and America's relationship with it. I thank you again for this opportunity to say a few words on my father's behalf, and wish you all success. Thank you very much.

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