



## **National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations**

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### **23<sup>rd</sup> Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference**

*Framing and Charting the Region's Issues, Interests, Challenges, and Opportunities:  
Implications for Arab and U.S. Policies*

**Washington, D.C.  
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#### ***KEYNOTE ADDRESS***

***Speaker:***

**H.E. Ambassador Adel A. Al-Jubeir** - Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States; Advisor at the Royal Court, Saudi Arabia.

*Remarks as delivered.*

**[Ambassador Adel Al-Jubeir]** [Greeting in Arabic] Thank you very much, John Duke Anthony, for your kind introduction.

Every year I have to push back when I participate in this conference about how you should not have overdone it. I don't believe I deserve the complements you have given me.

I want to let you know how pleased I am to be part of the 23rd annual Policymakers Conference. The theme of your conference this year is a fairly challenging one - "Framing and Charting the Region's Issues, Interests, Challenges, and Opportunities: Implications for U.S. and Arab Policies."

I believe if we want to go through the subject seriously we will be here for six months. I would like to discuss, however, the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia because I believe it gives insights into the U.S. relations with the region in general, as well as the challenges they face.

So if I may I'd like to talk a little bit about the history of our two countries, the relationship that is between them, the challenges that we faced over the years, how we overcame them, the opportunities we see, and how we deal with those opportunities going forward.

I think when we look back at the history of Saudi Arabia we start in the 1930 when your Army Corps of Engineers was building the Golden Gate Bridge, your U.S. business community was building a 6,000 bridge - or 8,000 depending on where in the U.S. it lands - bridge to Saudi Arabia.

You sent - your oil companies came, looked for oil - we were hoping they'd find water. They didn't. They found lots of oil. The business community was established in Saudi Arabia. Americans lived in the Kingdom, established roots in the Kingdom, and the relationship took off from there.

In the 1940s, the relationship took on a political dimension with the first meeting of the two heads of state of our two countries. King Abdulaziz in 1945 for the first time in his life left the Arabian Peninsula to meet with President Roosevelt on the U.S.S. Quincy at the Great Bitter Lake in Egypt. It was a relationship that cemented the political bond between our two countries, which has grown broader and deeper with every passing decade.

I think the military dimension of our relationship began in the early 1950s with the establishment of the U.S. foreign military assistance or foreign military sales

program to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. military mission was established in the Kingdom in the '50s, and this added another element to the bilateral relationship between our two countries.

When we look at our relationship over the years we see a partnership that protects the mutual interests of our people and our countries. We support each other, we reinforce each other, and that creates a synergy that allows our two countries to overcome many challenges, and some of those challenges have been very difficult to deal with.

In the 1950s and 60s, the revolutionary winds were sweeping throughout the Arab world. The monarchies were collapsing all over the Middle East, and yet the relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia was able to deal with those challenges, and first stop and then roll back the radicalism that was sweeping through the area.

In the 1970s, we worked very closely together to confront another threat, the threat of the Soviet Union. When we look at the map in 1975, or in the early 70s, the Soviet Union was in Egypt, in Libya, in Algeria, in Ethiopia, in Somalia, in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen, in Iraq, and it was all over. It was on a rampage in Africa and later on in Central America. And our two countries took it upon themselves to confront this danger and to roll back this danger. Over a period of ten years, twelve years, fourteen years we were able to defeat the Soviet Union, remove it from the Middle East, defeat it in Afghanistan, which ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990-91.

This was one of the high water marks in the history of our two countries. We also worked very closely together in 1990 to put together an international coalition of over 30 countries to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's occupation. We worked together in the 90s - in hindsight, not so well - to go after the terrorism that became al Qaeda. And after 9/11 our two countries have been very close partners and allies in the war against terrorism. We work very closely together to go after the men, the money, and the mindset that is behind this. And I believe that since the tragic events of 9/11 we have made great progress in putting the terrorists on the defensive, and in beginning to deal with delegitimizing the mindset.

Unfortunately, you deal with - you push back on one organization, another entity emerges. The dangers we see today in our region, and in particular after the events of 2011, are our region is going through major transformations - the events in Tunisia, in Egypt, and Libya, what we see today in Syria, in Iraq, Iran's quest for nuclear weapons and its involvement in the affairs of the countries in the region is a source of grave danger to all of us. The instabilities in

Afghanistan, the situation in Yemen, in Somalia – I can't say a handful and I can't say a plateful. That's a tableful.

Our two countries are working together to deal with the events in all of these areas in addition to terrorists and pirates. We're looking at the energy situation. We're looking at financial system around the world.

So in all of those areas I would say that our objectives are very closely aligned. There maybe some differences with regards to tactics and how we get there, but there is no doubt that we both want the same outcomes, and we're working very closely to achieve those outcomes. We will I believe come out of this – when the dust settles our region will be in a much better place than it was, we just have to ride through the storm and make sure that we maintain our focus and that we don't let up when it comes to confronting either aggression or confronting extremist ideology.

There is no space in our world for people who justify the killing of the innocent. There is no room in our faith as Muslims for anyone who kills the innocent because our faith teaches us that he who kills an innocent soul is as if he has killed all of humanity. There is no rhyme or reason to justify this. The images of decapitated heads being carried by children and shown on television are grotesque. No human being, no faith, no ethnicity, no nationality, no humanity would accept this. We certainly don't, and this is a danger that we are determined to eradicate by ourselves, with our friends, with the international community. We must rid our world of this scourge, and God willing we will.

Now, I think I covered most of the four themes I wanted to talk to you about, but I will talk a little bit about the opportunities we see, because I'm not a depressive person – I'm generally an optimist.

I think that the potential that our relationship has, the U.S.-Saudi relationship has, is tremendous. I look at the numbers and I'm astonished by how positive and how extensive this relationship has been.

Eight years ago we had 7,000 students studying in the United States. Today, we have over 120,000 with their dependents. This is just in the matter of eight years.

American investments in Saudi Arabia I believe in the past seven or eight years have doubled from what they were in the previous 70 years, if we exclude Aramco and investments in the oil sector.

The number of Saudis visiting the United States, the number of Americans visiting Saudi Arabia – record numbers. If I look at the interactions between our

two governments, across the board we have a relationship today that is institutionalized, that runs on all cylinders, and where our officials are working together at the working level and at the senior levels in areas from combating MERS all the way to missile defense, and everything in between.

This is unprecedented in the history of our two countries. I look forward in terms of the future and I see the 120,000 thousand students acting as another 120,000 bridges between our two countries for the rest of their lives. And I see them as ambassadors of Saudi Arabia to the U.S., and as ambassadors of the relationship to Saudi Arabia.

I look at the tremendous changes that are taking place in my country with regards to opening up the economic system, easing regulations for doing business, with regards to improving education, with regards to the tremendous investments that are being made in infrastructure, and I see a country that is poised for even greater economic growth and opportunity, which will benefit our citizens and which can benefit those who have confidence in the Kingdom and who are willing to come and invest in the Kingdom. I believe over the past 70 or 80 years American companies have been the most bullish of all international companies when it comes to Saudi Arabia because of the long-standing history between the two countries and between the two people.

So going forward I see a deepening, a broadening, a strengthening of that relationship at every level, whether it's the military, the security, the political, the economic, or most importantly the human-to-human relationship between our two countries.

So with that, like I said – keep your hopes up. I'm very optimistic. I believe the challenges, while grave and dangerous, can and will be overcome with resolve and with determination, and with strong cooperation between our two countries.

Every time the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have come together we have done wonders in terms of changing our region and by extension changing the world for the better, and I expect that this will continue and it will become stronger.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak here to you today. And John [Duke Anthony], thanks again for organizing this very important and wonderful conference.

Good luck to all of you and I hope you enjoy the rest of this conference.

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