



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

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**24<sup>th</sup> Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference**

*U.S.-Arab Relations at a Crossroads: What Paths Forward?*

**Washington, D.C.  
October 14, 2015**

***“WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS”***

***Speakers:***

**Mr. David Bosch** – Chairman, Board of Directors, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

**Dr. John Duke Anthony** - Founding President and CEO, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations.

*Remarks as delivered.*

**[David Bosch]** Your royal highnesses, excellencies, distinguished speakers and all of our honored guests, on behalf of the National Council on US Arab Relations and its Board of Directors welcome to this our 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Policymakers Conference. My name is David Bosch, I'm the Chairman of the Board and I have the special pleasure in welcoming everyone here today. We are really, really very pleased to see you.

I'd like to first thank our partner, the Ronald Reagan Building and its International Trade Center for making this prestigious venue available to us. I'd also like to thank the 50 leading corporations, the many embassies and all of the US government agencies that have also helped to sponsor this conference, and the many distinguished speakers that have made it possible for us to put together a program like this. Behind me you can see the names of the companies and the institutions that have supported the council on this conference.

Each year when I open this conference for the last several years it seemed as though the situation in the Arab World was a lot worse than the year before. I don't think the conference itself was responsible for that but there has definitely not been any improvement. I think last year well this year we have problems not only in Syria, Iraq and Libya but also we have a war going on in Yemen, and we have a refugee crisis of human displacement that is almost of epic proportions where people are trying to escape from danger in their hometowns and areas and having to leave those areas and go either to outside their country within another Arab country or even to try and escape from the Arab world altogether and taking dangerous trips across the Mediterranean or other overland to Europe.

I think there we face the specter or the fear that the states that were set up after colonial times and that have maintained order in the Middle East and prevented sectarian violence for the last 60 or 70 years seem to be deteriorating maybe breaking down and that we could face the specter of even more of this kind of sectarian violence and displacement of human beings with the tremendous human cost involved in that. So I think Americans today seeing this situation in the Middle East are disturbed and they are wondering: what could America do, what should it do, what should the role of the United States be in the Middle East?

In the title of the conference US Arab Relations at a Crossroads: What Path Forward? And we're very fortunate today to have such a distinguished group of speakers that can address these very serious issues but I would ask that you pay attention to what they say, ask questions. On each table there are these small 3x5 cards that you can write your questions on them and people will come around if you raise your hand and take them to the podium they will try to answer your questions in the Q&A sessions.

I would ask respectfully that when our speakers do leave the podium and go outside that you wait before you approach them, congratulate them and start a conversation

with them let them get outside the room so that the next group can get in and we can get started with the next session. So I would appreciate your help on that.

At this point I have the honor to introduce the founding President and CEO of the National Council, Dr. John Duke Anthony. Since forming the National Council in 1983 Dr. Anthony has taken something like 334 delegations of American university professors, congressmen, congressional staffers, federal and state leaders, military officers from the United States out to the Arab world where they get a chance to directly see the situation there, meet the people, talk to their counterparts and build direct relationships an invaluable program.

He also has written literally hundreds of articles, papers and published materials. He's taken, he's had scores of briefings up on Capital Hill and he has organized now 24 of these conferences. But please take a look at his bio in the booklet here, there is no way to adequately summarize Dr. Anthony's career and uniqueness.

I think one of the things that I find unique in John is that he's the only American that has been invited to all of the GCC Heads of State Meetings, Summit meetings since they started in 1981. He's also the only American that I know who's received a Knightship from the King of Morocco and I now the great pleasure to introduce the Founding President and CEO of the National Council on US Arab Relations, Dr. John Duke Anthony.

**[John Duke Anthony]** Thank you David. David Bosch in his characteristic self-effacement made no reference to himself or his esteemed family. Many people date America's special relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the meeting on February 14, 1945 between then King Abdul-Aziz know in the west as Ibn Saud with the then American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the Great Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal. That's erroneous and it's unfair and incorrect to the history. Of course it became more special then, but it was special before then from the late 20's and the early 30's his family and others were part of what is now termed medical diplomacy. From Bahrain once monthly American missionary doctors of the Arabian Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church of America would come over to Saudi Arabia and they would stay a week and they would treat those who were ill and needed medical health care services for free.

They did this year after year after year after year after year in the 20's two decades before the 1945 meeting and the point where the word got around that this was being done and King Abdul-Aziz was alleged to have asked "Who are these Americans?" and the answer was that these are people who are in stark contrast to other powers, that are colonial powers in the region that have come here for their own designs and to take something and derive benefit for there economies and societies.

It was with this atmosphere of receptivity and propitiousness of the moment that Standard of California which became Chevron one our largest supporters by the way

was asked to sign the first American concession with the defacto minister finance Abdullah Suleiman. So that gives you better background, better context, better perspective to view this relationship than the one that people often have of it being a series of gas stations not countries.

David Bosch's family was part of that for nearly a quarter of a century if not longer. His father was one of two medical doctors in the Sultanate of Oman, in the entire country that's is all they had. His mother was a schoolteacher of the Omani youth, which had less than a hand full of schools. So it is that kind of legacy that was before air conditioning and it was before oil that has been a lubricant and part of the glue and adhesive of this relationship that is as much a part of this relationship as much as what the media would suggest.

Now the National Council is in the education business and I just tried to offer something in the educating, edifying manner. Our vision is a firmer foundation for this relationship than has ever existed, than exists now, no one needs to debate that, or its likely to become a lesson on both sides worked to make it happen. And the people we are, we are not enough good people but we are the people we are and we are trying to do the right thing, at the right time for the right reasons, sit in the right way with the right results the best we can.

But we do so only in the context of the resources we have, human resources, financial resources; this is true for every non-governmental non-profit organization. This is a reason why we left pledge cards here and there, we have never done that before but many conferences do that so we are in that vein.

Now David Bosch grew up in Arabia, as did some of our staff. In fact all of our staff come from one program that he didn't mention but is our flagship program and we have some participants in it here. It's called the Model Arab League just like the Model United Nations, only 22 countries instead of 193.

What are we trying to do? Train a better generation of leaders than all of us older folks are who didn't have such an opportunity. What skills? The following: to train a young person to debate in 45 seconds, you may think that's cruel, and atrocious and unrealistic but it is not unrealistic. This is actual, feasible and practical, and to speak clearly, forcefully and rapidly for effect not just to speak per say, and to write clearly and rapidly both under atrocious deadlines, cruel deadlines, brutal deadlines that too is part of reality there. And to edit quickly, and clearly and rapidly and effectively and to learn parliamentary procedure, I don't know it but if I were in public affairs and wanted to be in a elected or appointed office I better learn it or I would not be able to participate effectively.

And so we train students in that and also how to draft resolutions. Again it would take quite a task for me to do so, I know I could do so, but not with these but we train the youth to do it rapidly and effectively and with ease in order to be successful more than those who don't participate in something like this.

And we train them to work in committees. I was maybe 40 years old before I learned that real policy in this country is made in committees, the votes are only the ones we see on televisions, and the committees are behind closed doors to and inaccessible most often to the public as such. But how to work in a committee with 21 others, boastful, arrogant, forceful, argumentative, mainly, exclusively or cooperatively in a spirit of compromise, and give and take, and trying to listen carefully and willing to be changed from what one hears and learns from listening there.

And so we train students in that as well as to work in coalitions. One can be the best representative of Lebanon or Morocco and have studied for months and know its positions with their eyes closed but be not effective at all unless they find 10 other delegations to stand with them and not just any delegations.

From the best of these we have 36 scholarships that we provide annually to take these students to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman with their faculty advisors from the Model Arab League. Those institutions that don't have faculty advisors do not participate in this, which is a shame. Young people deserve to have education, training and leadership development skills. So this is our flagship program and we are doing nothing more and nothing less than to try to fulfill an education mission.

Now segue very quickly to our keynote speaker. He has a keynote speaker for numerous years. He is always in demand to come back. We have an arrangement where we don't talk about bios they are all in your book, we don't waste time doing that, it takes time from the speakers it takes time away from the questions and answers period.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Chas Freeman.

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