THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS


More than 800 participants representing the diplomatic, governmental, military, business, think-tank and academic communities turned their attention to the conference theme: "Transitioning the White House: Challenges and Opportunities for Arab-U.S. Relations." Coming just days before the presidential election in the United States, the conference examined a wide range of issues confronting Arab-U.S. relations. Participants considered how the new American president might seek to deal with the regional challenges and objectives he will inherit upon inauguration, how the global economic slowdown could impact the United States and Arab countries, and how the transition might present opportunities for reordered priorities and new directions in U.S. policies regarding the Arab world.

Conference speakers included former NATO Commanding General Wesley Clark (Ret.), dealing with Arab-U.S. strategic relations; United Arab Emirates Minister of Foreign Trade Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, examining regional developments and commerce between the United States and the Arabian Peninsula; media personality Ms. Mona Abu Sulayman, renowned co-host of Kalam Nawaem ("Softly Speaking") and Managing Director of the HRH Prince Awaleed Bin Talal Kingdom Foundation, offering perspectives on the changing demographics and cultural dynamics across generations; The Hon. Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., Middle East Policy Council President and former Assistant Secretary of Defense, who re-examined the successes and failures of U.S. foreign policy in the region in recent years; and Arab League Ambassador Dr. Hussein Hassouna, who examined how U.S. policies have been viewed in the Arab world and suggested steps forward that might be taken by the new U.S. administration.

A special highlight of the conference was a roundtable discussion with current U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ford Fraker, and three of his predecessors—Ambassador Walter Cutler (1984-1987), Ambassador Wyche Fowler (1996-2001), and Ambassador Robert Jordan (2002-2003). H.E. Houda Ezra Nonoo, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States, hosted an evening embassy reception for conference participants. Additional speakers included HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal Al Sa’ud, former Ambassador to the Court of St. James and to the United States of America; H.E. Marwan Muasher, Senior Vice-President for External Affairs at the World Bank and former Foreign Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as well as a former Jordanian ambassador to the United States; H.E. Imad Moustapha, Ambassador of Syria to the United States, and H.E. Ali Suleiman Aujali, Libyan Ambassador to the United States. Other sessions examined Arab and U.S. interests and key foreign policy objectives pertaining to Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Arab-U.S. defense

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Dr. John Duke Anthony, President and CEO of the National Council on U.S. Arab Relations

Ambassador Ford Fraker, Ambassador of the United States to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ambassador Dr. Imad Moustapha, Ambassador of Syria to the United States

HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal, Chairman, King Faisal Foundation, former Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States
cooperation, developments for the energy industry in a changing global economy, and the dynamics of the presidential campaign in the United States as seen through the eyes of Arab media specialists.

Dr. John Duke Anthony, Founding President and CEO of the National Council, served as host for the conference and moderated the proceedings. The Council is celebrating its 25th Anniversary (1983-2008) of promoting a relationship between the United States and its Arab world strategic partners, friends, and allies that rests on as solid and enduring a foundation as possible. The annual Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference is a central part of the National Council’s mission to educate Americans about U.S. interests and involvement in the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world.
Mr. Mohamed Elmenshawy, Editor in Chief, Taqrir Washington

H.E. Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Ambassador of the League of Arab States to the United States

General Joseph P. Hoar (USMC, Ret.), former Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command

Mr. Patrick Mancino, Vice President and Director of Development, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations