

The Diplomat

Issue 35
July - August 2012



**Old Allies
Commit
to New Ties**



HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal
Foreign Minister

The GCC and the EU: Europe and Gulf Search for Solutions

The joint ministerial meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the EU was an important event. It comes in the context of an ongoing dialogue between the two bodies, aimed at serving the interests of our peoples and the development of our states.

We are engaged in an ongoing conversation, coordinating and exchanging views on many regional issues of concern to us all, in order to promote global security and stability.

It was perhaps inevitable that the Syrian crisis would dominate our discussion. The Syrian regime is using its savage killing machine to carry out crimes against its own people, in a war that has descended to violence well outside the bounds of international law and human morals.

This war demands that we act urgently to impose an immediate cease-fire and fully implement the plan put together by UN – Arab League joint envoy Kofi Annan.

Mr Annan's plan aims at a political solution to the Syrian crisis in a way that responds to the hopes of the Syrian people. If the regime continues to use violence then there will be no alternative but recourse to Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, and an international effort to prevent it from carrying out war crimes.

Another subject discussed was also linked to the Syrian crisis - the flow of weapons to the Syrian regime. A supply of arms gives Damascus an implicit licence to carry on killing without international sanction.

Standing idly by as the regime carries on killing would be morally indefensible. Our moral duty is to make every effort to supply the Syrian people with what they need to defend themselves and their children against the brutal use of power.

On another track, I would like to mention the efforts of the "3+3" and "1+5" groups, which are working to resolve the crisis over the Iranian nuclear programme in a way that guarantees the right of Iran and other countries in the region to use nuclear power in a peaceful way, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Saudi Arabia is irritated by the lack of an Iranian response to these efforts, beyond its avoidance of the issue. Making the Middle East a nuclear weapon-free zone is an extremely important aim.

The countries of the GCC object to Tehran's continued interference in our internal affairs. We reject Iran's ongoing occupation of three islands belonging to the UAE and the Iranian government's attempts to impose facts on the ground there.

I would like to thank the European governments that took part in the "Friends of the Yemen" conference in Riyadh in May. Their participation was a continuation of the support Yemen has received since the GCC initiative that led to a peaceful transfer of power in the country.

We are optimistic that both logistical and financial support will continue through development programmes in Yemen. The Yemen donors' conference, to be held in the Kingdom soon, will focus on supporting the Yemeni governments efforts to stabilise the country and nurture development. ☑



Issued by
Institute of Diplomatic Studies
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Saudi Arabia

General Supervisor
Dr. Nizar Bin Obaid Madani
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

Director General
Prof. Abdulkarim Aldekhayel
Institute of Diplomatic Studies

Advisory Board
H.H. Prince Ambassador
Turki bin Mohammad bin Saud Al Kabeer
The Deputy Minister for Multilateral Relations
H.H. Prince Ambassador
Khaled bin Saud bin Khaled
Minister Assistant
Ambassador Dr. Khalid I Al Jindan
Deputy Minister for Bilateral Relations

Correspondence to be sent to:
Institute of Diplomatic Studies
P.O. Box 51988, Riyadh 11553
Saudi Arabia
Tel. (01) 2199563
Fax. (01) 2011186
E-mail: alawad@ids.gov.sa

Disclaimer
Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily express the viewpoints of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor the Institute of Diplomatic Studies.



8 An Heir to the Kingdom: New Crown Prince Salman

12 An Extraordinary Soldier and Brilliant Statesman: Farewell to our Prince

Late Crown Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Arabia's longest-serving Interior Minister, who led Saudi Arabia's fierce crackdown against Al-Qaeda, organized crime and drug-trafficking, was a an extraordinary soldier and a brilliant statesman.

20 Kingdom Vows \$3.25 Billion in Aid to Yemen

An additional \$3.25bn in financial support for Yemen has been unveiled by Saudi Arabia. The investment - pledged by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal at the opening the "Friends of Yemen" conference in Riyadh on May 23 - will fund development projects, in line with the transition plan submitted by the Yemeni government at summit.



40 GCC Celebrates Rocky Road to Success

44 Rich Contents of Saudi History

The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah) has for 40 years faithfully recorded the economic, political and cultural history of Saudi Arabia. Its massive archives include over 1 million documents and 50,000 books, all stored electronically.

56 A Sporting chance: How Hosting World Events Can Make or Break a Country's Image

There seems to be only one certainty for states hosting major international sporting events: an anguished PR rollercoaster ride for the countries leaders from even before the crowds start arriving.

60 Saudi Tourism Proves a Timely Boost for Economy

Saudi Arabia is known for oil and gas but it has also been developing its downstream industry all these years. It has started to focus attention on the development of local tourism.



Saudi Arabia and Egypt: Old Allies Commit to New Ties

The visit of Egypt's new president Muhammad Mursi to Saudi Arabia has opened a new era in Saudi-Egyptian relations. It is a new step towards peace and security in the Gulf region and stability across the Arab world.

Mursi's visit, his first to a foreign country after he took office on June 30 this year, is also significant because the Saudi-Egyptian axis, perhaps the most important bilateral relationship in the Arab world, needs recalibration in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring.

The fact that Saudi Arabia was Mursi's first international port of call underlines the strong relations between the two countries and their peoples. Egypt enjoys

a privileged position in the hearts of the Saudi people because of its ancient history. Egypt has historically been a close ally of the Kingdom, and is a large country that plays an important role in the Arab region.

It was natural that security topped the agenda of Saudi-Egypt summit in Jeddah on July 13. Mursi reaffirmed his country's support for Gulf security.

"The security of Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, is part and parcel of the

security of Egypt and the Middle East," he said, after wide-ranging talks with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah. The talks covered prospects of expanding cooperation between the two countries, as well as major regional and international developments.

He said that his talks with King Abdullah were "fruitful and constructive... in the interests of the future as well as in the interests of the region and Egypt."

He said the King's attitude reflected his love for Egypt. "I felt this love in his every word and action," said Mursi, who was accompanied by a high-level delegation. The president underscored the deep-rooted historic relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

He expressed his love of Saudi Arabia and commended the good work done by its leaders. King Abdullah congratulated Mursi on his election as president of Egypt and wished him success in carrying out his duties, serving his religion, nation and the Islamic Ummah. Mursi thanked the king for inviting him to visit

Saudi Arabia and extending generous hospitality.

Mursi told the king that the Egyptians hold him in high esteem and admire his efforts in the service of the Arab people and the Ummah.

Mursi also met with Crown Prince Salman, Minister of Defense, who expressed his optimism about the future of Saudi-Egypt relations, which go back to the days of King Abdul Aziz, founder of the Saudi kingdom.

The two countries have long had close ties. Today, some 700,000 Saudis reside in Egypt or are sent by the Saudi government to study in the country. A number of Saudi businessmen have invested substantial amounts of money in the Egyptian economy. Saudi Arabia hosts around 1.7 million Egyptians who live in the Kingdom, working in various sectors.

Egyptian President Mursi pledged that he would remove all obstacles facing Saudi citizens in his country. He also reassured Saudis that their investments in Egypt, which are worth some \$27 billion, would be protected.

Egyptian President Mursi pledged that he would remove all obstacles facing Saudi citizens in his country. He also reassured Saudis that their investments in Egypt, which are worth some \$27 billion, would be protected.



There is no doubt that Egypt-Saudi ties are undergoing a transition, one that might be a rocky at times. The two nations have been close allies for decades, but a changing Egypt must begin to carve out its own space in the MENA region.

“We’ll tackle the problems facing Saudi investors in Egypt,” he said, according to diplomatic sources.

The sources said that economic issues figured high on the agenda of Mursi’s Jeddah talks, adding that Crown Prince Salman had suggested frequent exchanges of visits by officials and business leaders of the two countries.

“During his talks with President Mursi, Prince Salman raised a number of issues facing Saudi investors in Egypt and sought assurances from the Egyptian government that it would protect their investments,” Al-Eqtisadiyah business daily reported.

One source at the Egyptian Consulate in Jeddah said the two sides have agreed to resolve all problems related to building a causeway near Dhuba, and to hold further talks on the project, which would strengthen commercial ties between the two countries. The Kingdom has reportedly agreed to employ more Egyptian workers to make use of their expertise in various fields.

Referring to the need for stronger ties between the Kingdom and Egypt,

Yasser Ali, a spokesman of the Egyptian presidency, said the establishment of a democratic government in Cairo would bolster Egypt’s stability and help the country attract more foreign investment from neighboring countries, including Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom has already made it clear that it has left the Mubarak era behind and started a new chapter with the new leadership of Egypt.

Saudi Arabia has pledged \$2.7 billion to support Egypt’s battered finances after the uprising that toppled Mubarak.

“By choosing the Kingdom for his first visit abroad, Mursi recognized that the two countries are the pillars of Arab national security,” wrote the editor of Al-Riyadh newspaper, Yousuf Al Kuwaitlet, in a column following the visit. The Arabic language Al-Watan daily said that Mursi’s visit was a signal that Saudi Arabia and Egypt were ready to work together on critical regional issues, including the crisis in Syria.

There is no doubt that Egypt-Saudi ties are undergoing a transition, one that might be a rocky at times. The two

nations have been close allies for decades, but a changing Egypt must begin to carve out its own space in the MENA region. How Egypt walks the path of democracy, whilst maintaining regional stability, will determine the trajectory of its relations with the rest of the world, most notably with the Gulf states.

Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt enjoy a distinguished status on the Arab, Muslim and international levels. This position has provided the two countries with key influential capabilities in their foreign relations. On the Arab level, Cairo and Riyadh have been two poles of relations within the Arab regional system. They shoulder a big responsibility, carrying the aspirations of Arab nations from Atlantic Ocean to Gulf.

Warm Saudi-Egyptian ties serve all Arab countries. The policies of the two countries are similar on many regional issues, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause. This similarity reflects a congruence of principles and the strength of relations between the two countries.

The founder of the modern Saudi state, King Abdulaziz, realized the importance of Egyptian-Saudi relations. He was famous for saying: “Arabs are in need of Egypt and Egypt is in need of Arabs”. In 1926, Egypt and Saudi Arabia signed a friendship agreement, and in 1939, they signed the Construction Agreement in Riyadh, by virtue of which Egypt implemented construction projects in the Kingdom. Both countries played key roles in the writing of the Arab League charter.

King Abdulaziz paid an important visit to Egypt with the purpose of strengthening and deepening ties between the two countries. Saudi Arabia supported Egyptian requests concerning the evacuation of British forces from Egypt, as well as backing Egyptian positions within the Arab League, the United Nations and international organizations and gatherings. On 27 October 1955, Egypt and Saudi Arabia signed a joint defense agreement.

Bilateral cooperation was very clear during the tripartite aggression against Egypt in the 1956 Suez War. Saudi Arabia showed its full support to Egypt. On

August 27, 1956, Saudi Arabia extended \$100 million to Egypt after the United States withdrew its offer to build the High Dam at Aswan.

On commercial front also, the two countries have forged closer relations. The volume of Saudi-Egyptian trade is estimated to exceed \$7.4 billion annually. Egyptian exports to Saudi Arabia include iron and steel products, furniture, foodstuffs, raw materials, cereals, vegetables, fruits and electric and medical equipment. Egyptian imports from Saudi Arabia, worth around \$1.3 billion, include gasoline, butane, oil products, mineral oils and fuel, plastic and rubber products and other machinery.

Saudi investors have contributed almost \$200 million in issued capital to over two thousand companies in Egypt. Of these, 50 percent has been invested during the past five years. Meanwhile, Egyptian investors have contributed around \$221 million to 302 companies in Saudi Arabia. Saudi investments in Egypt are concentrated in the services sector, mainly in transport and logistics, health, education and counseling. Both countries have further evinced keen interest to promote closer trade and investment relations.

On the regional front, the two countries share a commitment to promoting a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace and to reigning in the ambitions of Iran. Egyptian and Saudi diplomats say that the common interests of both countries remain stronger than the differences over matters ranging from the future of President Mubarak to the fate of a man recently arrested with intoxicants at Jeddah airport.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt are both highly influential countries in the Arab world, with Egypt being the most populous Arab country and Saudi Arabia being a member of the G20. There was a brief diplomatic spat between the two countries during the disturbances of last year, but in May, the Kingdom’s ambassador returned to Cairo to resume his duties.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt have a shared history and shared cultural values. “Such a relation is neither an easy page of history to be tarnished, nor disputable,”

Warm Saudi-Egyptian ties serve all Arab countries. The policies of the two countries are similar on many regional issues, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause. This similarity reflects a congruence of principles and the strength of relations between the two countries.

said King Abdullah after he ordered the Saudi ambassador to return to Cairo following the visit of a huge Egyptian parliamentary delegation to Saudi Arabia in May. Egyptians have been linked with the Saudi people for a long time, he added.

In the recent past, the head of Egypt’s transitional military government, Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi, the Egyptian Cabinet and several political parties have expressed to King Abdullah their sentiments of respect for the Saudi nation. The first quarter of 2012 has seen a rush of official visits and an increase in the size of commercial exchanges between the two countries.

Commercial exchanges have increased by 50 percent, and are estimated at \$1.21 billion over the period. Saudi imports to Egypt have been valued at \$682 million, while the total value of Egyptian exports to Saudi Arabia reached \$528 million, in comparison to the same period last year when it recorded an average of \$800 million. In 2011, gross trade exchange reached around \$4.75 billion while total Saudi investments in Egypt were estimated at \$27 billion.

It is worth recalling the Kingdom’s support for Cairo at crucial times, such as during wars with Israel and following the January 25 revolution. The Egyptian community in the Kingdom is the largest Egyptian expat community outside Egypt, and it enjoys care and attention from the Saudi government. In a region that is fast splintering with threats from outside and inside, Saudi Arabia and Egypt need each other. ☑

An Heir to the Kingdom: New Crown Prince Salman

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz appointed his defense minister Prince Salman, as heir apparent, opting for stability and a continuation of cautious reforms at a time of challenges for the Kingdom. With such long and detailed experience in the administration of the complexities of a major city like Riyadh, which sits at the heart of governance in Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Salman brings to his increased responsibilities, a thorough knowledge and understanding of government.



This has already been demonstrated by the vigorous way in which he has taken up the demanding portfolio of the defense ministry. From this experience and dedication springs the strength of continuity and stability, which will help to guide the Kingdom in the coming years. Much has already been said of Crown Prince Salman's personal simplicity and modest tastes. It is very clear that his strong sense of duty has guided his long career at the center of government. International media always go to great lengths speculating on the "reformist" or "conservative" credentials of all senior Saudi figures.

It is a facile exercise, which entirely overlooks the remarkably consistent transformation that the Kingdom has been undergoing in the last 20 years, a transformation indeed which, under King Abdullah, has been accelerating as we continue to build a viable non-oil economy. New cities and industrial zones are being built in one of the world's largest ever expansions of infrastructure. Crown Prince Salman, as the man in charge of Riyadh and as a constant and close member of the country's government for many years, has been an enthusiastic supporter of this progressive change.

Indeed because of his achievements with the growth of the capital, he is eminently well-qualified to understand the challenges of the ambitious infrastructural program. U.S. President Barack Obama congratulated Saudi Arabia on King Abdullah's selection of his half-brother Prince Salman as the

Kingdom's new crown prince, saying that Washington looked forward to continued strong relations. "As governor of Riyadh and then minister of defense, Crown Prince Salman has served his country with dedication and honor over the past five decades," Obama said in a statement.

"I had the pleasure of receiving him at the White House this April and know that he is a man of deep faith who is committed to improving the lives of the people of Saudi Arabia and to the security of the region," said the US president. "The United States looks forward to continuing our strong relationship with Crown Prince Salman in his new capacity as we deepen the longstanding partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia," he added.

Saudi citizens have no doubt that because of a lifetime dedicated to the service of the nation and his immense experience dealing with the challenges and processes of government, Crown Prince Salman is well prepared to undertake his new responsibilities and to help ensure the future security, development and prosperity of the Kingdom.

Crown Prince Salman has built a reputation for pragmatism and is likely swiftly to assume substantial day-to-day responsibilities.

Since the death of King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, the country's founding father, the succession has moved along a line of his sons. Prince Salman becomes Abdullah's third heir after the deaths of two older brothers: Crown Prince Sultan last October and Crown Prince Naif, interior minister, recently. The swift decision came

Crown Prince Salman has built a reputation for pragmatism and is likely swiftly to assume substantial day-to-day responsibilities.

as no surprise; analysts had already said they expected Crown Prince Salman to continue the gradual social and economic reforms adopted by King Abdullah as well as Saudi Arabia's moderate oil pricing policy.

At stake is the future direction of a country that sits on more than one fifth of the world's proven global oil reserves. As crown prince, Prince Salman will have to tackle challenges ranging from an Al-Qaeda security threat to systemic joblessness at a time of unparalleled Middle Eastern turmoil, all set against a regional rivalry with Iran. "I would predict we will see more Saudi activity abroad, particularly considering what is going on throughout the Arab world today," said Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent Saudi journalist.

As crown prince, Salman keeps the defense portfolio and serve as deputy prime minister to King Abdullah. From 1962 until last year, Prince Salman served as governor of Riyadh, a position that gave him more contact with foreign governments than many other senior royals. He also maintained good relations with senior clerics and tribal leaders, meaning he has experience working with all the main groups that count in Saudi policy-making.



So far as Crown Prince Salman's biographical details are concerned, he is the 25th son of late King Abdulaziz and one of seven full brothers known as the "Sudairi Seven," after their influential mother Princess Hassa bint Ahmad Al-Sudairi. The seven included the late King Fahd and late Crown Princes Sultan and Naif.

Prince Salman's younger brother Prince Ahmed was made Naif's successor as interior minister after spending decades as his deputy. Prince Ahmed was always close to Prince Naif, but he was more involved in administrative matters, not security. He has vast experience here," Khashoggi said. Late Crown Prince Naif built a formidable security apparatus that crushed Al-Qaeda inside the Kingdom and is a vital element of a global struggle against Islamist militants.

His services arrested thousands of suspected militants and successfully infiltrated Islamist cells, but came down hard on political dissent. "Crown Prince Naif was not simply a lone figure on policies that have been pursued but was working as part of a consensus at the highest levels," said Robert Jordan, US ambassador to Riyadh from 2001 to 2003.

Although an Al-Qaeda campaign last decade was suppressed, its survivors took shelter in neighboring Yemen, where they have built the movement's most dangerous wing, dedicated to toppling the Arab governments.

Analysts lay the credit for the rout of Al-Qaeda from the Kingdom at the door of Crown Prince Naif's son, Prince Mohammed, whom militants came close

to assassinating in 2010. The continued threat from Al-Qaeda, and Saudi Arabia's central role in battling the organization, were underscored by an announcement in Washington recently that a bomb plot against Western targets put together in Yemen had been foiled.

So far as Crown Prince Salman's biographical details are concerned, he is the 25th son of late King Abdulaziz and one of seven full brothers known as the "Sudairi Seven," after their influential mother Princess Hassa bint Ahmad Al-Sudairi. The seven included the late King Fahd and late Crown Princes Sultan and Naif. In addition to Crown Prince Salman, remaining Sudairis include Prince Abdul Rahman, Prince Turki and Prince Ahmed, who was deputy interior minister before being assigned the portfolio.

Referring to the life and achievements of Crown Prince Salman, Jane Kinninmont, a Middle East and North Africa senior research fellow from London's Chatham House, said "the new crown prince may adopt a more reformist approach but with the constraints and red lines of the system... But don't expect change to come quickly or dramatically." "He will have an opportunity to take a

more constructive approach towards addressing the root causes of unrest," she said.

Crown Prince Salman had 10 sons, two of whom have died, and a daughter. One of his sons, Prince Abdul Aziz bin Salman, was appointed assistant petroleum minister in 2004. But his most famous son is Prince Sultan, the first Saudi to go into space when he joined the 1985 US Discovery mission. He is currently head of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities. Crown Prince Salman has also been a driving force for charitable activities in Kingdom and abroad.

His philanthropic services include the presidency of the Prince Salman Center for Disability Research, honorary presidency of the Prince Fahd bin Salman Charitable Society for the Care of Kidney Patients and honorary presidency of the Saudi Organ Transplant Center. The mission of the Prince Salman Center for Disability Research is to prevent disabilities and improve the quality of life for the disabled through research. It is based in Riyadh and conducts and funds high quality and comprehensive laboratory and field research on disabilities.

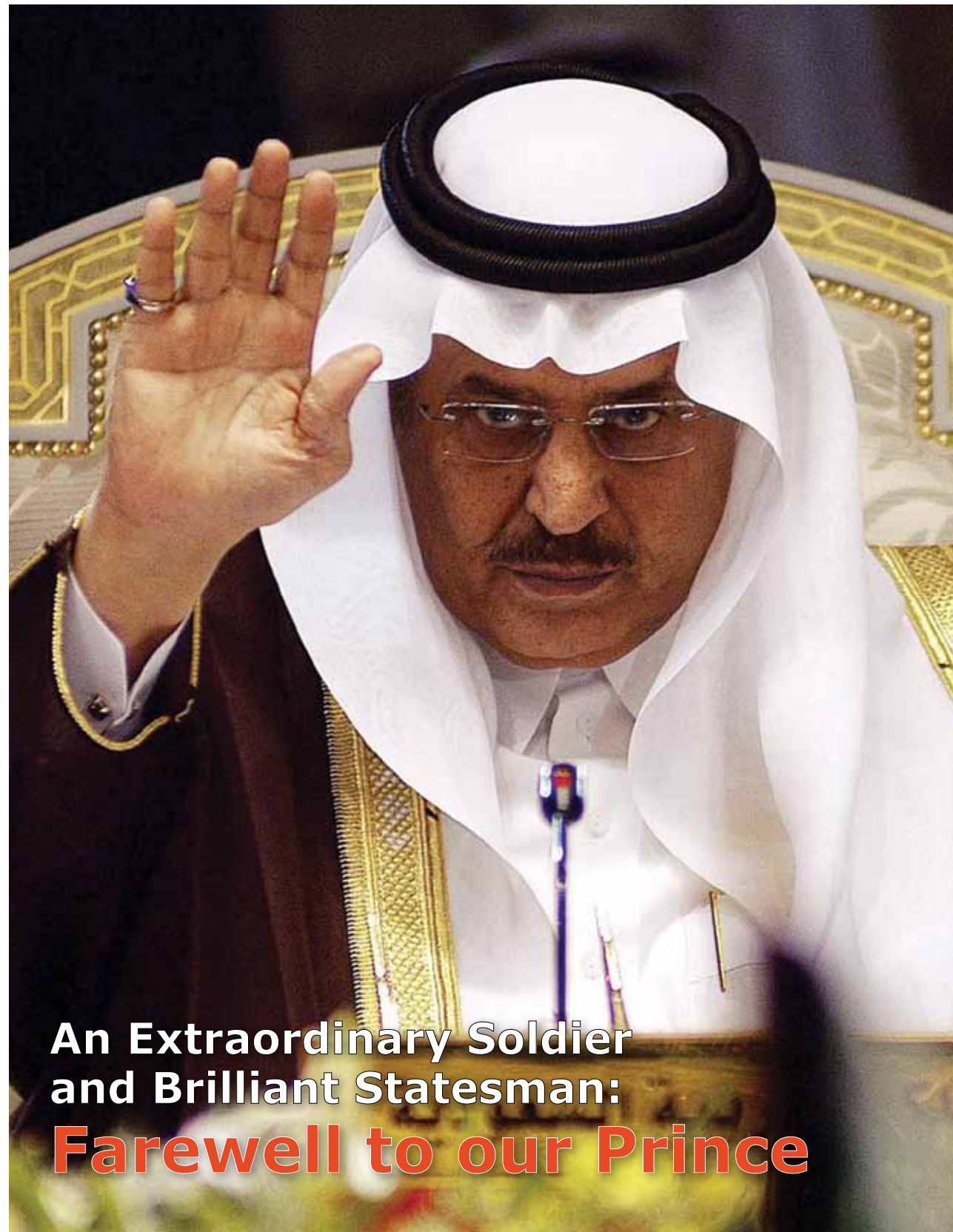
Prince Fahd bin Salman Charitable Society for the Care of Kidney Patients plans to become the biggest dialysis center in the Middle East, equipped with 140 machines to serve 800 patients daily. The prince is also the chairman of the Prince Salman Prize for the Memorization of Holy Qur'an for Boys and Girls in the Kingdom. The prince is also keen on promoting cultural activities serving as the chairman of the board of trustees of the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darrah), chairman of the board of trustees of the King Fahd National Library, and chairman of the Center for the History of Makkah and Madinah.

He is also the chairman of the board of directors of the Hamad Al-Jasser Foundation, honorary president of the Saudi Historical Society and honorary president of the board of trustees of the Prince Salman Prize for Business Youth.

For his humanitarian and other services, he has been awarded many medals and decorations including awards from Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Morocco, Palestine, the Philippines, Senegal, the United Nations, Yemen, and the King Abdulaziz Medal of the First Order.

His philanthropic services include the presidency of the Prince Salman Center for Disability Research, honorary presidency of the Prince Fahd bin Salman Charitable Society for the Care of Kidney Patients and honorary presidency of the Saudi Organ Transplant Center.

He is a recipient of several honorary degrees and academic awards, including an honorary doctorate from the Islamic University of Madinah, the Prince Salman academic award, an honorary doctorate from the Jamia Millia University in Delhi for his charitable and educational services and the Kant Medal by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in appreciation of his contributions to the field of science. His son Prince Faisal bin Salman is the chairman of the Saudi Research and Marketing Group (SRMG), the largest media organization in the Middle East. □



**An Extraordinary Soldier
and Brilliant Statesman:
Farewell to our Prince**

Late Crown Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Arabia's longest-serving Interior Minister, who led Saudi Arabia's fierce crackdown against Al-Qaeda, organized crime and drug-trafficking, was an extraordinary soldier and a brilliant statesman. Prince Naif's successful tactics and methods of combating terrorism are today held in high regard by the international community.

Prince Naif, who rose to become next in line to the throne on October 27 last year, following the death of Crown Prince Sultan, was head of the country's Interior Ministry from 1975 onwards. He was instrumental in international counterterrorism efforts, leading counterterrorism initiatives to root out Al-Qaeda and protect Saudi citizens.

Born in Taif in 1934, Prince Naif was a towering personality. His involvement in Saudi political life for nearly six decades demonstrated his wisdom in security affairs and helped steer this country on the road to peace and prosperity. During his 38 years as Interior Minister, primarily responsible for ensuring the safety and security of the Kingdom, he became something of an institution in himself.

His public life started when he became governor of Riyadh in 1953. He was appointed deputy Interior Minister in 1970, before being appointed Interior Minister in 1975. He was influential in defining the Kingdom's strategic security objectives, seeking to achieve security and stability region-wide, providing peace and security for citizens and residents of the Kingdom alike.

A report recently published by his ministry said Crown Prince Naif fought "against all means of crime to ensure the safety of Saudi society and its development."

"Reinforcing security cooperation with Arab countries to protect cultural possessions, supporting internal and external security, controlling crime, terrorism and drug smuggling and developing Arab security institutions were top on the agenda of the Prince," the report added.

The role of the Ministry of Interior carries formidable challenges. They include ensuring the safety of Hajj pilgrims, reinforcing security relationships with neighboring Arab countries and cooperating with the countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

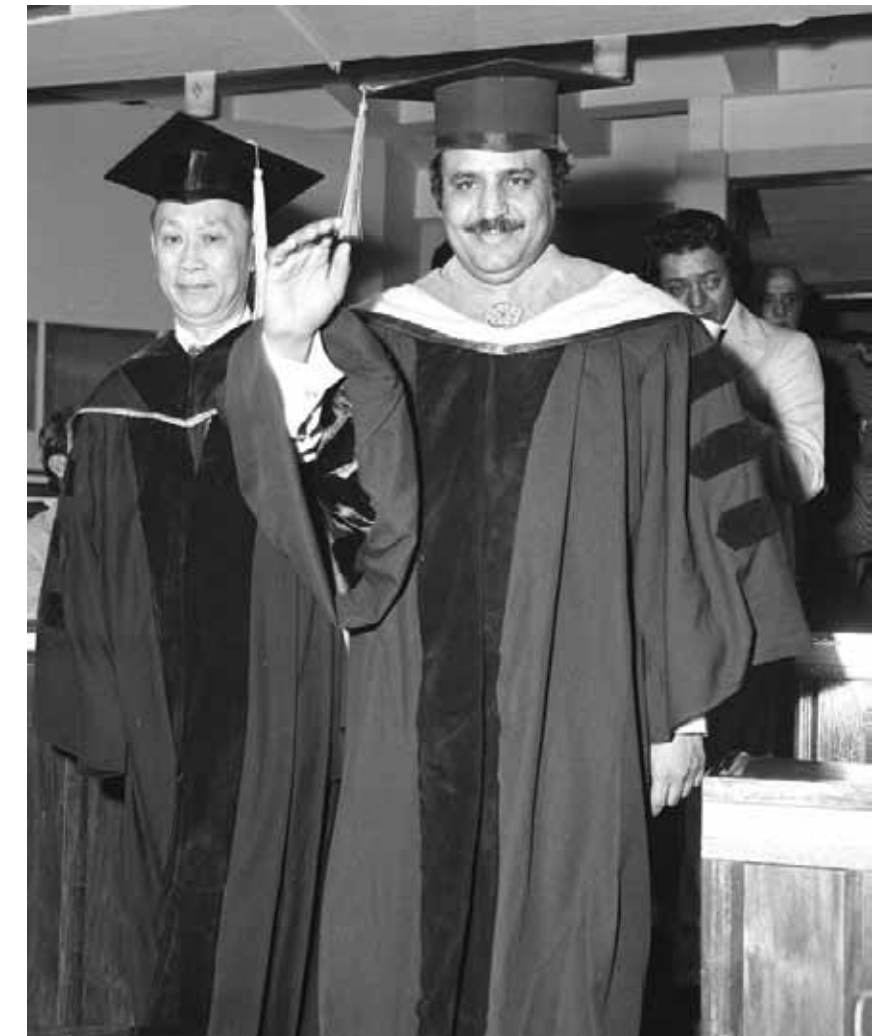
Prince Naif made untiring efforts to stamp out crime and drug smuggling, exchange security information with

strategic partners and to organize citizenship regulations and systems.

Prince Naif has clearly been hugely successful in combating terrorism in Saudi Arabia, forcing terrorist organizations to flee the country for neighboring Yemen and elsewhere.

The terrorist attacks that took place in Saudi Arabia in 2003 represent perhaps the sternest test faced by Crown Prince Naif as Interior Minister. His calm and collected handling of the crisis, and the subsequent successes he achieved in

Born in Taif in 1934, Prince Naif was a towering personality. His involvement in Saudi political life for nearly six decades demonstrated his wisdom in security affairs and helped steer this country on the road to peace and prosperity.





Prince Naif's tactics in the "war on terror" led political leaders and security experts to call on intelligence and security agencies around the world to benefit from the Saudi counter-terrorism experience.

combating Al-Qaeda in the Kingdom and in neighboring countries, earned him international respect. The Prince, who was in charge of the domestic security forces, built up his power in the Kingdom though a broader campaign to prevent the growth of Islamicist militancy and terrorism among Saudis.

The 9/11 attacks at first strained ties between Saudi Arabia and the United States. It was partly thanks to the visionary approach of Crown Prince Naif that the two started working together to stamp out the menace of terrorism. Prince Naif targeted terrorism financing in particular, dismantling charities that used to collect donations for Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network, whilst attempting to rehabilitate Saudi nationals caught in the clutches of religious extremism.

This visionary led to the establishment of Prince Mohammed Bin Naif Center for Counseling and Care (Munasaha program). The center today attempts to change the extremist ideologies and beliefs of those found guilty of terrorism-related offenses. This program brought Crown Prince Naif international accolades from countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Indonesia.

Prince Naif's tactics in the "war on terror" led political leaders and security experts to call on intelligence and security agencies around the world to benefit from the Saudi counter-terrorism experience. The core of the program is to reform the terrorists and ensure their return to the fold of the mainstream Saudi society and to the true nature of Islam. The program employs intensive religious instruction, as well as providing facilities for entertainment and sports.

Following rigorous debate, Islamic scholars and clerics, many employed by Saudi Arabia's universities, established the program under the supervision of Crown Prince Naif. Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation program was copied by several countries - Indonesia and Singapore have both established rehabilitation programs based on the Saudi model.

This program was a response to several terror attacks on the facilities and installations of the Kingdom in mid-2003. Militants struck targeted three residential expatriate compounds in the first of a string of assaults that later hit government buildings, the U.S. consulate in Jeddah and the perimeter of the world's largest oil processing facility in Abqaiq. Al-Qaida's branch in the

country even announced its intention to overthrow the Saudi government.

The attacks galvanized the government into serious action against the militants, an effort spearheaded by Crown Prince Naif. Over the following years, dozens of attacks were foiled and hundreds of militants killed. By 2008, it was believed that Al-Qaida's branch in the country was largely routed.

Militant leaders who survived and were not jailed mostly fled to Yemen, where they joined Yemeni militants in reviving Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Crown Prince Naif did not sit idle, but took a leading role in combating the branch in Yemen as well. In 2009, Al-Qaida militants attempted to assassinate his son, Prince Muhammad, who is currently the Deputy Interior Minister and the commander of counterterrorism operations. A suicide bomber posing a repentant militant blew himself up in the same room as the prince, but failed to kill him.

Prince Naif, who became the second deputy premier on March 27, 2009, served as Deputy Interior Minister since 1970. Hence, Crown Prince Naif was to some degree responsible for the security of Saudi Arabia for the last 42 years. He also headed the Arab Interior Ministers Council, which recently ratified many

security projects and agreements that serve the Arab Nation's security.

Prince Naif formulate policies that led to the announcement of Arab Security Strategy in Baghdad in 1984, the Arab Preemptive Security Plan in Tunisia in 1985 and the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, signed by the Arab Ministers of Interior and Justice in 1998. He was also influential in formulating an "Arab strategy draft against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances". He was the chairman of the Riyadh-based Naif Arab University for Security Sciences right up until his death.

His efforts resulted in the development of security departments including directorates general of civil defense, border controls and passports, public security, prisons, special security forces and narcotics control.

In 2007 Prince Naif helped establish a special authority called the Intellectual Security Department, within the Ministry of Interior. He extended special support for the establishing of the Prince Naif Chair for Intellectual Security at King Saud University in Riyadh in 2008, as well as funding the Prince Naif Chair for National Unity Studies at the Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in 2009.

Prince Naif, who became the second deputy premier on March 27, 2009, served as Deputy Interior Minister since 1970. Hence, Crown Prince Naif was to some degree responsible for the security of Saudi Arabia for the last 42 years.

Prince Naif encouraged and helped fund dozens of studies and research programs on extremism and terrorism. He also formed a working group of university professors to develop strategic plans for enhancing intellectual security in the Arab world. On the international level, he also supported efforts to ensure peace and security in Afghanistan, as well as carrying out relief operations for the Afghan people. He was instrumental in establishing the Saudi Committee for the Relief of Kosovo and Chechnya and providing relief for those affected by the Tsunami in Indonesia.

His role in providing relief for those affected by earthquakes, floods, famines in countries as far apart as Somalia, Pakistan and Indonesia will always be remembered alongside his fame as a soldier who worked for over four decades for the peace of his country and the security of its people. ☑



Egypt's Choice: World Watching New Leader

By Rob Pattinson

On June 24, Mohamed Morsi was announced as the first free-elected President of Egypt. Home to a third of the world's Arabs, the country has long been cultural and diplomatic leader, and a key strategic ally for the West. With uncertainty still surrounding what kind of regime will emerge in Cairo, all eyes were on Riyadh this month for the new premier's first official trip. The world was watching for the first indications of the new Egypt's approach to its neighbours. The Diplomat reports.

The Arab world's most populous nation has elected its own head of state for the first time in a free and fair election. But already pundits and politicians across the world are already asking, what does the new administration in Egypt mean for us?

Following Mohamed Morsi's victory June 24, President Obama was among the first to telephone and urge a broad political rule from the new leader –

a sign of how important the US sees Egypt to the balance of power in the Middle East.

A short time later Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a statement, outlining his desire to work with the new Egyptian government – an indication of what a seismic shift the Spring Revolution represented for the region, and in particular peace with its neighbours.

For regional leaders, such as Saudi, the region's delicate political balance and the question of Iran, in particular, was high on the agenda when Morsi flew to Riyadh for his first official engagement as president.

Abdul Aziz al-Husseini, a secretary in the nationalist Karama Party, described the visit as a logical step for Egypt's new president, describing Saudi Arabia as "one of the most influential countries in the Middle East due to its religious foundations and its economic strength."

Concerns have already emerged among Western pundits over Morsi's loyalty to the Muslim Brotherhood. Although his resignation from the party and public commitment to a broad political spectrum were his first actions, it is hard to ignore The Brotherhood's place as Egypt's oldest and most influential Islamist movement. Critics have already any identified residual allegiance from Morsi as a threat to women's rights, non-Muslims and western foreign policy interests in the Middle East.

The US is acutely aware a delicate balancing act must now be played between Morsi's popularity and mandate for rule, and the hard power, which still rests with Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). Where it had become

comfortable with the predictability, and cooperation of the Hosni Mubarak regime, it now faces the reality of holding little leverage over events in the country, and its political future.

The Obama administration's best chance of guarding Western interests, in relation to Egypt, could well lie with its influential partners in the region instead – and in particular Saudi.

Why is the West so concerned with Egypt?

For the last 30 years Egypt has been a key strategic ally of the United States in the Middle East. Its preoccupation with Egyptian influence on the Middle East's balance of power is clear in Congressional figures, which show the country been the second highest recipient of US foreign aid since 1979. Only Israel has received more.

Egypt shares a border with Israel, the United States' principal concern with the Middle East. Mubarak's observance of the 1979 Camp David peace accords has been a cornerstone of peace in the region. But Egypt has considerable value beyond this. Access to the Suez Canal remains crucial for Western commercial and military advantage. Airspace permission and general bilateral military cooperation have also been very necessary factors in US operations in the region, and in opposing Iran.

For the last 30 years Egypt has been a key strategic ally of the United States in the Middle East. Its preoccupation with Egyptian influence on the Middle East's balance of power is clear in Congressional figures, which show the country been the second highest recipient of US foreign aid since 1979. Only Israel has received more.

Now the US is dealing with a new proposition. Founded in 1928, The Muslim Brotherhood (known in Arabic as al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen) originated with the purpose to Islamize society. There have already been indications it will not support the peace process and will even hold a referendum on the 1979 accords.

The biggest US concern is Egypt could become dominated by religious rule and even allied with Iran. Steven Cook, from the USA's Council for Foreign Relations (CFR) recently noted how Mubarak had used The Brotherhood to



The military – the world’s tenth-biggest – has dominated modern politics in Egypt. It is believed to control between 30 and 40 per cent of the Egyptian economy and has already dissolved much of the power Morsi was expected to claim. All in the span of one very bad week this June, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and its allies dissolved parliament, reinstated martial law, and decreed a constitutional addendum stripping the presidency of many of its powers.

“stoke the fears of successive American administrations and, in turn, secure Washington’s generous diplomatic, political, and financial support.”

However, the country is expected to make moves towards a new constitution as a priority. Establishing an Islamic state based on sharia is at the center of the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology, although they have made recent commitments to gradual and peaceful Islamization. The question of how much emphasis Islam will be given will be a chief concern for Western diplomats seeking to establish ties with the new regime.

Whether hardline Islamism will transmit into Morsi’s policies must remain to be seen. It will also rely, crucially, on how much influence the military allow him to have. The real power in the country still rests with Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi. The chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Scaf), has, in effect, ruled Egypt since Mubarak left office on 11 February 2011, and poses diplomats with an equally puzzling prospect.

How should the world approach the new Egypt?

The military – the world’s tenth-

biggest – has dominated modern politics in Egypt. It is believed to control between 30 and 40 per cent of the Egyptian economy and has already dissolved much of the power Morsi was expected to claim.

All in the span of one very bad week this June, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and its allies dissolved parliament, reinstated martial law, and decreed a constitutional addendum stripping the presidency of many of its powers.

Questions are already being asked over whether the West should continue to prop up Egypt’s generals. With hopes the president and SCAF will be able to reconcile their aims surely it would be prudent not to separate the two. Withdrawing aid from the military would be withdrawing aid from Morsi, and most crucially, ordinary Egyptians. With serious question marks remaining over Morsi’s ability to kickstart the ailing economy, removing US aid could risk being used as a convenient excuse – demonising Western interference. This issue could be short-circuited for the Obama administration if SCAF, used to dealing with the West under Mubarak -

and appearing to still sit in the driving seat -continue leaning towards Washington.

Israeli pundits have already urged their own leaders, and the US, to reach out to Morsi. One writer even suggested: “This is the moment to reach out a hand to Morsi and to offer him whatever help is possible. If he disappoints, the outstretched hand can be taken back. However, if there is no outstretched hand in the first place, Egypt’s resentment against the United States, Israel, and the West as a whole will be further deepened.” It is clear Israel are not taking their reshaped neighbour for granted.

Other Middle Eastern states will also be forced to reappraise their relationship with Cairo. As a regional leader Saudi led the way by hosting Morsi, in July. The significance of his decision to make Riyadh his first official visit was not lost on commentators who saw it as somewhat of a reassurance for concerned players in the region. One American writer saw it as a “symbolic visit intended to signal the restoration of the grand regional alliance between Cairo and Riyadh and to reassure Egypt’s military that the country’s Muslim Brothers will play by the established rules.”

The crucial influence of Saudi

Revolution is a process, not an event, which continues to unfold once the unwanted rulers are toppled. These shifting sands mean outside parties, eager to get a foothold in the new regional power balance can do little but stand on the sidelines and watch as Egypt determines its own future.

The only hope can be Egyptian needs will come first. Leaders acting on this rationale will at least be easier to predict and build diplomatic relationships with.

Going forward there must be cautious observation, not intervention, from other countries. There must be no attempt to rush the change and it is important the West avoids convenient hypocrisy throughout the process. As Mehdi Hasan observes in the British left-leaning political magazine, *The News Statesman*: “It took the USA 89 years, between independence in 1776 and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, to abolish slavery. Here in the UK, there was a 96-year gap between the first Reform Act of 1832, which extended the franchise to property owners, and the sixth Reform Act of 1928, which gave women the vote on the same terms as men.”

If Western fears over a hardline, Islamised Egypt, or a military state unwilling to open international dialogue, are to be avoided, the role of regional allies such as Saudi will be crucial. The Kingdom’s status as a diplomatic power, and intermediary has grown in stock over recent years. The country has also shown how religious conservatism and military might can be combined with responsive rule.

Morsi’s decision to quickly cement the strong links between Cairo and Riyadh should have acted as a reassuring sign he understands the delicate balance of power in the region – and will prove a more adept political leader than few have so far given him credit for.

Saudi’s leadership at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) puts it in a strong position to build on the early relationship it has secured with Morsi and create strong ties with its allies across the region.

Where Saudi has taken the first tentative, and crucial steps, many will now look to follow. They could do worse than follow the warm and positive approach Riyadh has shown can work with the new Egypt. ☑



Kingdom vows \$3.25 Billion in Aid to Yemen

An additional \$3.25bn in financial support for Yemen has been unveiled by Saudi Arabia. The investment - pledged by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal at the opening the “Friends of Yemen” conference in Riyadh on May 23 - will fund development projects, in line with the transition plan submitted by the Yemeni government at summit.

Prince Saud urged other nations to follow suit after it announced massive aid for country, one of the Arab world’s poorest.

“To ensure Yemen’s security and stability, the kingdom will provide \$3.25 billion to support development projects there which will be agreed upon with the Yemeni side,” he said.

“The Yemeni government is exerting courageous efforts, but without the help of its brothers and friends, Yemen will not be able to solve the crises it is facing,” said Prince Saud, describing the Riyadh meeting as “positive.”

“Support for Yemen includes providing expertise and help in all fields including economy, security and military,” he said.

Yemeni Prime Minister Mohammed Basindawa pleaded for aid for his country, rocked by an uprising that began last year and forced former president Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down this February. Yemen’s Minister for Planning and International Cooperation Mohammad Al-Sady, who attended the Riyadh meeting, said only 26 percent of the population has access to potable water and only 42 percent has access to electricity.

He pointed out that the 2011 uprising resulted in a deterioration of basic services.

“The events had the worst impact ever on the national economy, leading to budget challenges due to a sharp decline in revenues, aggravating the humanitarian suffering, and near collapse of the Yemeni economy,” he said. He added that unemployment is Yemen’s biggest challenge. Some 52.9 percent of the country’s youth are jobless, while the country’s overall unemployment stands at 44.4 percent.

A report by Yemen’s Development Research Centre of Economic and Social

Studies gave an even gloomier picture. Inflation rose to 24 percent in January, compared to 13 percent in December 2010. Economists have warned that high inflation would undermine economic recovery and hinder sustainable growth. The country’s best hopes are in the political and economic support to bridge this transitional period and balance the country’s budget.

“We are confident that you realize the danger and sensitivity of the situation in Yemen. We seek your help, don’t fail us,” urged Sady, saying his country needs about \$10 billion in urgent aid. The UN and other organizations requested some \$455 million in humanitarian aid to help Yemen recover, but so far only 43 percent has been delivered. Ongoing conflicts in the country’s north and south are exacerbating the crisis.

Saudi Arabia is helping fund a massive aid and assistance program for Yemen. Prince Saud said that two agreements worth \$105 million were signed in the health and power sectors. But Yemen urgently needs more aid. Sanaa is planning development projects

Saudi Arabia is helping fund a massive aid and assistance program for Yemen. Prince Saud said that two agreements worth \$105 million were signed in the health and power sectors. But Yemen urgently needs more aid.

as part of a 2012-2013 program aimed at reviving the economy and stabilizing the country.

The plan includes several projects in the fields of economy, politics, humanitarian assistance and reforms.

“There is a need to urge international donors to do more for Yemen,” said another Saudi official, adding that as many as seven aid groups have warned that Yemen was on the brink of a “catastrophic” food crisis. They have urged the international community, including the Gulf states, to bolster efforts to help the country.



In 2011 the economic, social and security challenges in Yemen have intensified, leading to a sharp decline in economic activity and discouraging both investment and the delivery of aid. The government of Yemen has prepared a phased program for building stability and development in 2012-13 as part of a plan to restore political, economic and social stability.

“At least 10 million people, some 44 percent of the population, do not get enough food to eat,” said the agencies in a joint statement, adding that one in three children was severely malnourished.

Sady in a separate interview said that there is “an urgent humanitarian need” for cash, estimated at \$470 million. This would go to help more than 500,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Abyan and Saada provinces on the far southern and northern edges of Yemen.

Said said investment projects, “important as they are, can be postponed, but not humanitarian aid.” Aid agencies say that in the past two months alone, more than 95,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, bringing the total number of IDPs to more than half a million.

The Friends of Yemen meeting in Riyadh discussed this humanitarian crisis and the consequent need for food aid and medical care. The high profile event, aimed at mobilizing the support of the global community, was attended by

GCC countries, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Malaysia, China, Germany, France, Denmark, India, the United States, Japan, Turkey, Spain, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Russia, Korea, Australia, the Netherlands, Italy, Indonesia and major international organizations.

All the countries agreed that Yemen is facing a critical situation due to a combination of economic and humanitarian crises, a precarious political situation and the possibility that security could deteriorate.

In 2011 the economic, social and security challenges in Yemen have intensified, leading to a sharp decline in economic activity and discouraging both investment and the delivery of aid. The government of Yemen has prepared a phased program for building stability and development in 2012-13 as part of a plan to restore political, economic and social stability.

Saudi Arabia is supporting the government of Yemen to this end. This is not the first time that Riyadh has helped out its Yemeni neighbors. At the recent London Donors’ Conference, Riyadh

allocated \$1 billion for development projects in Yemen through the Saudi Development Fund (SDF). The Kingdom has also supported the energy sector in the country.

The US delegation to the Riyadh meeting was led by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman. Feltman said: “We are firmly of the belief that Yemen’s and our success in stabilizing the Yemeni economic situation and overcoming the humanitarian crisis will be the single most important factor in determining ultimately whether the GCC Initiative and its vision for political transition succeeds or fails.”

“Bilaterally or through multi-donor efforts, the international community must partner with the government of Yemen and the Yemeni private sector to promote basic development programs, economic reform and the strengthening of both domestic and foreign direct investment opportunities in Yemen,” he said.

The Riyadh conference will be followed soon by a donors’ conference

in London. Yemen and Saudi Arabia are coordinating efforts to attract international support for the conference.

Economic expert Mohammed Al-Maitami said that the upcoming conference would cover more than the economic situation.

“The political situation is crucial as well,” he said. “The conference will focus on supporting the transitional government, the national dialogue, drafting a constitution, security, water, and other humanitarian issues regarding displaced people and refugees.”

The conference will enable the international community to renew its support to help Yemen through this transitional period, as it implements the GCC initiative that brought an end to the fighting that started last year. But a senior official of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council told the Riyadh gathering that efforts to deliver desperately needed humanitarian relief were being “seriously hampered by the

At the recent London Donors’ Conference, Riyadh allocated \$1 billion for development projects in Yemen through the Saudi Development Fund (SDF).

(political) crisis” in Sanaa. Aid efforts were “dependent on the restoration of stability at both the security and economic levels.”

It is difficult to assess the potential of aid and relief operations until stability returns to Yemen. Relief and restoration efforts could easily be hampered by tribal battles, terrorism and civil unrest, which could still flare up despite the best efforts of the international community. According to the UN World Food Program, such factors have placed nearly five million Yemenis, or a quarter of the population, in a situation of “serious food insecurity”⁷



Saudi Arabia Takes it Fight to the Terrorists

Since the monster of terrorism reared its ugly face in the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, Saudi Arabia has stood firm with its Western allies. Its policy has been simple - taking on terrorists abroad and on their own turf.

Fighting terrorism became a national priority under the late King Fahd in the wake of the attacks, and has stayed high on the agenda of King Abdullah.

On June 3, King Abdullah called for a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism at a meeting of the UN Counter-terrorism Center's advisory board, held in Jeddah.

"The fight against terrorism is a common international responsibility requiring the highest degree of coordination and cooperation among members of the international community,"

he said in a speech delivered on his behalf by Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal.

He also reiterated the Kingdom's condemnation of all acts of terror from any quarter.

"Saudi Arabia has emphasized on several occasions and at international forums its condemnation and denunciation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whoever its perpetrators might be, and has announced its full readiness to join the international efforts to combat terrorism," the king said.



He said that in order to uproot terrorism under the umbrella of the UN, it is important to define terrorism and address its root causes before mapping out an effective strategy.

"This stance reflects the Kingdom's consistent and continuous policy against international terrorism and its perpetrators," he added.

King Abdullah described terrorism as a major threat to international peace and security. He thanked the United Nations for setting up the Counterterrorism Center (UNCCT) in New York on Sept. 19, 2011, in response to a proposal made by the International Counterterrorism Conference in Riyadh in 2005. Saudi Arabia donated \$10 million to the establishment of the UNCTC.

The Saudi leader thanked UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for attending the Jeddah meeting. "I am sure that his wisdom, experiences and cooperation will contribute to the success of the meeting," he added.

The UNCTC is not a substitute for international institutions involved in combating terrorism on an international level, but it will play a complementary role in coordinating these efforts and in line with the procedures laid down to prevent and combat terrorist activities, the King said.

Ban Ki-Moon said he appreciated the commitment and generosity of King Abdullah, whose support was crucial for making UNCCT a reality.

"The center has attracted considerable interest," he said.

The UN Secretary-General also emphasized this point during the second meeting of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism in Jeddah on June 3.

He observed: "It was not long since the Centre was established within the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force at the United Nations Headquarters. But in that short span of time, the Centre has generated great interest among counter-terrorism practitioners and policymakers, and attracted strong support from Member States."

"The presence of so many Permanent Representatives and senior officials from capitals here today is further testimony to the breadth and depth of that backing. I once again thank the Government of Saudi Arabia for its initiative in establishing the Centre, and to all of you for helping to develop it," he added.

Since their first meeting held in New York on April 2, 2012, the Advisory Board

The fight against terrorism is a common international responsibility requiring the highest degree of coordination and cooperation among members of the international community," he said in a speech delivered on his behalf by Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal

members have provided valuable input to the UNCCT in combating terrorism. The Secretary-General summed up their contributions - development of national and regional counter-terrorism strategies; support for integrated capacity building assistance; countering the financing of terrorism; promoting dialogue and understanding between communities; protecting human rights while countering terrorism; promoting and protecting the rights of victims of terrorism.

The Advisory Board emphasized that terrorism is one of the most significant challenges facing the international community. They stressed that it is a



The Advisory Board members also discussed ways of enhancing international cooperation, sharing counter-terrorism best practices, exchanging expertise and developing effective training programs. The members reiterated the need to respect human rights and the rule of law while trying to counter terrorism.

scourge that recognizes no borders or faith, and that it threatens peace and security of the international community as a whole.

It was underscored that the threat of terrorism should be countered through comprehensive national and regional strategies, keeping in mind the Member States' national and regional priorities and international obligations.

These strategies could be developed in conformity with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the United Nations General Assembly through consensus in September 2006.

The Advisory Board members also discussed ways of enhancing international cooperation, sharing counter-terrorism best practices, exchanging expertise and developing effective training programs. The members reiterated the need to respect human rights and the rule of law while trying to counter terrorism. They mentioned that the UNCCT could play an important role in the effective implementation of a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

This point was also stressed by Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal in Jeddah.

"The UN strategy to address global terrorism, adopted by all member states,

is the cornerstone of a global collective response to terrorism," Prince Saud said.

One may ask why the proposal mooted in February 2005 by then Crown Prince Abdullah, during the reign of King Fahd, remained in cold storage for six years before being adopted on September 19 last year. The answer is related to political developments in the Middle East during that period.

Israel had officially withdrawn from the Gaza Strip in September 2005 ending its military rule, although it retained control over Gaza's airspace and coastline.

The Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas protested against the Israeli restrictions on air, land and sea, which affected Palestinians both on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. When Hamas retaliated against these sweeping restrictions, Israeli forces launched a brutal counter-attack known as "Operation Cast Lead," which drew international condemnation.

The US supported the Israeli argument of "self-defence", portraying then country as a victim of terrorist attacks launched by Hamas. The US media toed the same line, with spin doctors blaming the Palestinian leaders for stalling the peace process.

Since then, the definition of "terrorism" had remained a sticking

point, with the West backing Israel, which claimed to be the victim of terror attacks by Hamas and others. Arab leaders, on the other hand, described Palestinian acts as resistance against a brutal occupation.

International conferences held in Riyadh and elsewhere after the 2005 meeting in the Saudi capital avoided any reference to the Saudi proposal. But later people began to realise the gravity of the situation, following terror attacks launched by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban from Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan, which targeted India along with Britain and other western countries.

More recently, Iran's reported involvement in the assassination of an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi early this year also succeeded in diverting attention from Israel's use of excessive force and illegal settlement activities in occupied Palestine while highlighting the situation in other countries.

That the Saudi proposal has finally been accepted by the international community is a tribute to the far-sighted approach of King Abdullah, although the world has yet to agree on a universal definition of terrorism.

Saudi Arabia has always championed the cause of a united front against terror. On February 7, 2005, a cabinet meeting

held in Jeddah and chaired by the late King Fahd called for greater international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

"The whole world must stand together against the masterminds of terrorism and deviant groups to defeat their goals and vested interests," the Council of Ministers said in a statement.

The cabinet meeting also backed the call made by then Crown Prince Abdullah for the establishment of an international anti-terror center to exchange information and pre-empt terrorist attacks.

Back in November 2001, Saudi Arabia authorized Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal or his deputy to sign the UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

Terrorists often exploit socio-economic and religious issues to support their own agenda. The advisory board addressed these concerns when it called on the stakeholders to map out their own strategy relevant to their situation. In the Kingdom's case, for example, a mix of high GDP per capita and a high rate of unemployment have proved a difficult combination to manage.

The large number of jobless Saudi youths constitute a vulnerable section of

The UN strategy to address global terrorism, adopted by all member states, is the cornerstone of a global collective response to terrorism

society who can be manipulated to fund and support terrorist activities.

Saudi Arabia's GDP grew from around \$373 billion in 2007 to \$577 billion last year, an increase of 55% in four years, when other countries went through economic recession during this period.

The latest five-year plan seeks to create 1.22 million jobs, while the number of job seekers, including both Saudi men and women, is expected to be around 1.12 million, or less than the total number of available jobs. Unemployment in Saudi Arabia stood at 10.5% in mid-2009, the latest official figure available.

As part of a national strategy to address these concerns, in May 2010, then Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Prince Naif endorsed a government plan to combat terror.

"Imams and preachers in mosques have a significant role in creating awareness among citizens and expatriates against ideological and religious extremism," Prince Naif said at the time. ☑

The Diplomat

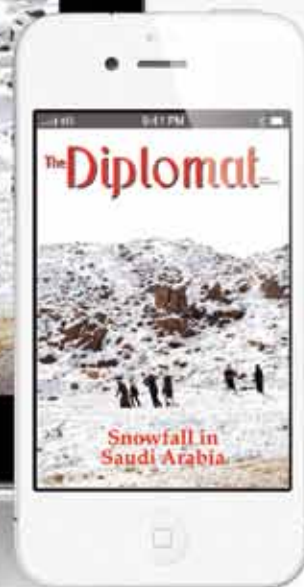


Read your
magazine
now on

iPad

&

iPhone



<http://itunes.apple.com/sa/app/diplomat-magazine>



New Settlement Homes in Occupied West Bank are Deeply Troubling

A peaceful resolution to the Palestinian conflict is nowhere in sight as world leaders continue to condemn Israel for having drawn up new settlement plans in the West Bank.

“Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s plan to add hundreds of new settlement homes in the occupied West Bank is ‘deeply troubling,’” UN Middle East envoy Robert Serry said recently.

The statement of Serry, the UN’s Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process, reiterated “the international community’s view that all settlement construction, whether on private Palestinian land or elsewhere in

occupied Palestinian territory, is contrary to international law.”

“The latest announcements, including adding 300 units in Beit El settlement, deep inside the West Bank are deeply troubling,” Serry added.

The statement came a day after Netanyahu pledged to expand the Beit El settlement after MPs voted down a bill which would have saved five buildings in one of its neighborhoods from demolition.



Once you place physical facts on the ground which make it impossible to deliver what everyone has for years agreed is the ultimate destination, then you do immense damage," referring to how settlements impede efforts to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel

The Knesset vote, which saw 69 MPs oppose the legalization bill against 22 in favor, effectively ended legislative efforts by the settler lobby and its right-wing supporters to avoid court-mandated July 1 removal date.

However, Netanyahu warned after the vote that he would not allow people to "use the legal system to harm the settlement movement," and announced plans to add the 300 new homes to Beil El, which is near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

"Beit El will be expanded, the 30 families families will remain in Beit El, and 300 new families will soon join them," he said.

Earlier this year, Britain had also condemned Israeli settlements as a "deliberate vandalism" of efforts to establish a Palestinian state, and warned that time was running out for the peace process in the Middle East.

The comments on Jewish settlements by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, and on the peace process by Prime Minister David Cameron, bolster Palestinian President Magmoud Abbas as negotiators attempt to revive peace talks.

Clegg's comments were some of Britain's strongest yet on the Middle East's most intractable conflict.

"Once you place physical facts on the ground which make it impossible to

deliver what everyone has for years agreed is the ultimate destination, then you do immense damage," Clegg said during a visit to London by Abbas, referring to settlements impeding efforts to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"It's an act of deliberate vandalism to the basic premise upon which negotiations have taken place for years and that is why we have expressed our concerns as a government in increasingly forceful terms," British Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said.

Abbas was on a tour of Europe while negotiations from both sides undertake initial discussions on resuming full talks.

The exploratory discussions began early this year and followed a long break in negotiations after Abbas suspended talks 15 months ago over Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank where Palestinians want to found a state.

All parties to the talks have accepted the ultimate goal of a "two-state solution" which would see a Palestinian state established alongside Israel. The sides remain divided over its borders, the fate of squandering a previous, partial moratorium that it placed on settlement expansion.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Israeli lawmakers in



Jerusalem that Palestinians were not serious about the peace talks.

"I am willing to get into the car right now and travel to (the West Bank city of Ramallah), but the truth must be told, it is Abu Mazen (Abbas) who is the one who is not willing to meet," he said.

Palestinians say settlement-building moves the goalposts while talks are under way and gives Israel incentive to stall.

"We think time, in some ways, is running out for the two-state solution unless we can push forward now, because otherwise the facts on the ground will make it more and more difficult, which is why the settlement issue remains so important," Cameron said.

In February last year, Britain and almost all other members of the UN Security Council backed a resolution condemning settlement building as illegal and a major obstacle to peace. However, the resolution was voted down by the United States, which says it wants Israel to stop settlement construction but believes international condemnation is not helpful.

Israel said that it would keep certain settlement blocs under any peace deal in accordance with the understandings reached in 2004 with then-US President George W. Bush.

Abbas welcomed the comments by Britain's deputy minister. "This is exactly what we had wanted to hear officially from the government of the United Kingdom," he said.

"Of course, time is of the essence; there must be speed... Settlements have to stop in order for us to be able to continue our negotiations; to come to some sort of a solution," he added.

Clegg said the Arab Spring had ushered in a period of change that could make negotiations more fruitful. "If there was any time for real progress, then it is now."

Abbas said he had received new proposals from Netanyahu, but that Palestinian negotiators were still scheduled to meet their Israeli counterparts two to three more times.

The "Quartet" of international peace mediators-- the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations-- wants the two sides to state their positions on the borders and security arrangements of a future two-state solution.

The Vatican had likewise slammed the Jewish state's new settlement plans, saying that Israel cannot use the biblical concept of a "promised land" or a "chosen people" to justify new settlements in Jerusalem or territorial claims.

In February last year, Britain and almost all other members of the UN Security Council backed a resolution condemning settlement building as illegal and a major obstacle to peace.

"We have mediated on the situation of the holy city of Jerusalem. We are anxious about the unilateral initiatives that threaten its composition and risk to change its demographic balance," said a Vatican synod in a statement issued much earlier.

US-brokered peace talks have stalled because Israel rejected appeals for temporary moratorium on settlement construction in the occupied West Bank which had expired. Since then, Israel has announced to build another 238 homes in two East Jerusalem neighborhoods, provoking condemnation from Palestinians and world leaders.

In a separate part of the document-- a section on cooperation with Jews-- the synod fathers took issue with Jews who use the Bible to justify settlements in the West Bank which Israel captured in 1967.

"Recourse to theological and biblical positions which use the Word of God to

The concept of the promised land cannot be used as a base for the justification of the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of Palestinians,” he added. “The justification of Israel’s occupation of the land of Palestine cannot be based on scriptures

wrongly justify injustices is not acceptable,” the document said.

Many Jewish settlers and right-wing Israelis claim a biblical birthright to the occupied West Bank, which they call Judea and Samaria and regard as a part of historical, ancient Israel given to the Jews by God.

Asked about the passage at a news conference, Greek-Melchite Archbishop Cyrille Bustros, said, “We Christians cannot speak about the promised land for the Jewish people. There is no longer a chosen people. All men and women of all countries have become the chosen people.

“The concept of the promised land cannot be used as a base for the justification of the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of Palestinians,” he added. “The justification of Israel’s occupation of the land of Palestine cannot be based on scriptures.”

Responding to the synod’s view, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said theological disputes over the interpretation of the holy scriptures disappeared with the Middle Ages, adding, “It doesn’t seem like a wise move to revive them.”

The synod’s concluding message repeated a Vatican call for Jerusalem to have a special status “which respects its particular character” as a city sacred to the great monotheistic religions-- Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Jerusalem remains a key issue in the dispute. Palestinians want East Jerusalem for the capital of a future state. Israel has annexed the area, a move never recognized internationally, and has declared Jerusalem to be its “united and eternal” capital.

Israel did not include East Jerusalem as part of its 10-month building freeze, although most plans there had been put on hold. East Jerusalem was also captured by Israel in 1967.

While recognizing “the suffering and insecurity in which Israelis live” and the need for Israel to enjoy peace within internationally recognized borders, the document was more expansive and detailed on the situation of Palestinians.

It said Palestinians “are suffering from the consequences of Israeli occupation: the lack of freedom of movement, the wall of separation and the military checkpoints, the political prisoners, the demolition of homes, the disturbance of socio-economic life and the thousands of refugees.”

It urged Christians in the region not to sell their homes and properties. “It is a vital aspect of the lives of those who remain there and for those who one day will return there.”

It condemned terrorism “from wherever it may proceed” as well as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and discrimination against Christians.

Palmor echoed the synod’s call for Christians to remain in the Middle East. “Israel is the only country in the Middle East where the number of Christians has increased over the years, and naturally warmly welcomes their presence,” he said.

World leaders’ disapproval of Israeli new settlement plans is not without justification. Israel’s plan will threaten Bedouin land and culture.

A stench of rubbish wafts over the Palestinian town of As Sawahira from the al-Abdali dump. The vast tip sprawls over an excavated hillside on the outskirts of the town and receives a constant stream of trucks carrying waste from nearby Jerusalem.

Israeli authorities are proposing to relocate 2,300 Bedouins from the surrounding hills to this site as part of their push to resolve “the Bedouin problem.” Simultaneously, plans are proceeding through the Israeli parliament

to move further 90,000 Bedouin from their ancestral land in the Negev desert in Israel’s south to government-planned townships.

The Israeli administration argues that a move to purpose-built communities will lift the indigenous population from unacceptable depths of poverty. Across Israeli-controlled territory, Bedouin communities argue that their culture, along with centuries-old ties to land, is being wept aside to make way for Jewish expansion.

Around 250 Bedouins from the Jahain group already live on the fringes of As Sawahira dump, moved here by the Israeli authorities 15 years ago from land

now occupied by the Ma’ale Adumim settlement. Their modest homes and huts are overlooked by piles of rubbish on one side and the Kfar Adumim settlement on the other.

“I’m sure the dump is very damaging for our health, but the Israelis moved us here-- we had no choice,” says Abu Jahalin, 70. He has heard of the plans to move thousands more Bedouins to the dump. He points to the proposed site with his walking stick, explaining that it will run all the way from the top of the hill, where his sheep graze, to the piles of rubbish.

Abu Jahalin says there is not enough land to feed the animals: “They (the Israelis) will wall off the whole area so there will be nowhere for us to graze our animals. I’ll probably end up feeding them at home. I’ve had to sell off most of my flock (of sheep) already to pay animal feed.” From a flock of more than 200, he has only 40 sheep left.

Khan al-Ahmar is one of the 20 Bedouin communities in the E1 area outside Jerusalem that are scheduled to be evacuated. Bedouin families have lived in this village since 1951, after they fled refugees from the Negev during Israeli war independence.

They live in the West Bank, but their land is controlled by the Israelis as it falls within Area C. The EU is funding Oxfam to run development programs. The Palestinian Authority is drafting a strategy to address their needs-- but, ultimately, their fate is in Israeli hands.

In 1975, Israel declared the area a close military zone. Today, almost every structure has been issued with a demolition order. A spokesman for the Israeli civil administration confirmed it is negotiating with the E1 Bedouins to move them and is investigating the dump as a possible relocation point.

“We are waiting for the results of an investigation into the health impacts of living on that site,” Major Guy Inbay says. “I know they don’t want to move but because they are living illegally, we have to find a better option within the law. Why not? Because now we want to enforce the law.”

Unlike Jahalin, Bedouin groups in Negev have cultivated their land since the 16th century. They are also Israeli citizens and yet 35 of their 46 villages are not recognized by the state. As a result, the 90,000 residents live without basic services such as water, electricity, healthcare, education or paved roads. And they are not allowed to build permanent structures. ☑



Assange Under Spotlight Again as Syria Emails Exposed

The saga of Julian Assange continues. Founder and public face of Wikileaks, a transparency outfit that has repeatedly rocked the diplomatic community by leaking secret official documents, Assange is making headlines again.

Fearing deportation to Sweden on allegations of sexual assault and from there to the United States to face espionage charges, Assange has sought political asylum in Ecuador. He has taken refuge inside the South American country's embassy in London while his application for political asylum is being processed.

Meanwhile, WikiLeaks has begun publishing what it calls the "Syria Files". The collection of emails includes more than two million messages between officials in the Syrian regime, along with companies that work with Damascus. It includes correspondence with the

Ministries of Presidential Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Information, Transport and Culture.

The Syria Files are likely to put Wikileaks, and Assange himself, back on front pages around the world once again.

The Man and his Network

The story of Wikileaks has always been intimately linked with Assange. He has reportedly described himself as "the heart and soul of this organization, its founder, philosopher, spokesperson, original coder, organizer, financier, and all the rest."

The website started publishing leaks, received from whistle-blowers via its



secure server, in late 2006. Since then it has accumulated a database of more than 1.2 million documents, and repeatedly hit the headlines around the world.

Early on, it exposed expenditure on the Afghanistan war and the level of corruption in Kenya. Then in early 2010, it released footage from an American helicopter, showing the killing of several civilians, including two Iraqi journalists working for Reuters.

In July of the same year, WikiLeaks released more than 76,900 documents about the War in Afghanistan that had not previously been in the public domain. This was followed by a package of almost 400,000 documents called the Iraq War Logs. Later, the site published 779 secret files relating to prisoners detained in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Assange's fame – and notoriety – was growing. The media storm around him hit its peak in 2010, after Wikileaks made public over 250,000 US diplomatic communiqués. The secret cables included harsh criticism of various countries, political moves relating to tension in the Middle East, and policies surrounding the War on Terror.

By working in tandem with several large media outlets, Wikileaks guaranteed maximum impact for what

By working in tandem with several large media outlets, Wikileaks guaranteed maximum impact for what it dubbed “Cablegate”. The leaks, and Assange himself, made global headlines

it dubbed “Cablegate”. The leaks, and Assange himself, made global headlines. **Terrorist or Media Hero?**

Overnight, Julian Assange became a household name across the world. US Vice President Joe Biden called him a “high-tech terrorist” and some US politicians even called for his assassination. Top US officials said the leaks could harm national security and compromise international diplomacy.

The scandal stirred up an intense debate about whether Wikileaks did the world a service by opening up government to scrutiny, or exposed innocent people to danger by exposing sensitive information.

Assange won accolades from freedom of speech campaigners and began to build a large network of supporters. Wikileaks was given several awards, including The Economist's New Media Award and Amnesty International's UK Media Award.

Meanwhile, Bradley Manning, a US soldier, was arrested for allegedly leaking material to Wikileaks. He has now been in jail for over 770 days without trial. Wikileaks and its founder were now clear targets for a massive backlash.

In Washington, prominent politicians called the group a “terrorist organization” and demanded that Assange be prosecuted under the Espionage Act, which can carry the death penalty. Former Republican Presidential nominee Michael Huckabee called for those who leaked the cables to be assassinated.

WikiLeaks members have since complained of harassment and surveillance by law enforcement and intelligence organizations. Some have been detained and had their computers seized. Two lawyers for Assange told The Guardian they believed they were being watched by the security services.

US officials have said publicly that the FBI file about the investigation has now reached 42,135 pages.

Paypal, Visa and MasterCard all stopped processing donations to the website, prompting revenge attacks by the Anonymous group of internet activists. The Anonymous network called on supporters to attack the websites of companies which opposed Wikileaks.

In October 2011, Julian Assange said the financial blockade had cut



WikiLeaks' revenues by 95%. He said the organization was suspending publishing operations to focus on fighting the blockade and raising new funds.

WikiLeaks was well and truly in the diplomatic firing line, but Assange had his own battles to fight.

Diplomatic Fallout?

Around the time of the Cablegate release, two women in Sweden accused him of rape and sexual assault. Assange maintains the sexual relations in Stockholm were consensual and that the allegations against him are politically motivated.

He was arrested in London and spent several days in prison before being released on bail. The Swedish authorities issued a European Arrest warrant against him, and he lost a court battle to avoid extradition to Sweden.

His legal campaign in Britain came to a dead end when the UK supreme court upheld a ruling that his extradition to Sweden was legal. After being sent a letter from the police, requesting that he surrender himself to a police station, he was advised against complying.

Instead, he applied for political asylum in Ecuador, and took up residence at the South American country's embassy in London. He said in a statement that he fears that once in Sweden, he would be extradited to the US to face trial for

espionage. He is now waiting for his application to be processed.

His supporters have produced a CD album to help him raise funds for future legal campaigns.

Assange's case involves many actors, including the governments of Sweden, the UK, Ecuador and the United States. It may yet cause diplomatic ripples beyond the waves caused by Wikileaks.

Assange's lawyer has publicly criticized the Swedish legal system. A statement on the Wikileaks site points out that Swedish authorities have refused to interview Julian in London as would normally be the case, and that once he was in Sweden, Mr Assange will likely be detained without charge.

Susan Benn from the Julian Assange Defense Fund told journalists that Assange's seeking refuge in the embassy should not be considered any sign of disrespect for the UK.

“Under both international and domestic UK law, asylum assessments take priority over extradition claims. The issues faced by Mr Assange are serious. His life and liberty and the life and liberty of his organization and those associated with it are at stake,” she said.

Onwards for Wikileaks

Yet Wikileaks shows little sign that it is close to shutting shop. Eighteen months ago, the Syrian regime launched

The scandal stirred up an intense debate about whether Wikileaks did the world a service by opening up government to scrutiny, or exposed innocent people to danger by exposing sensitive information

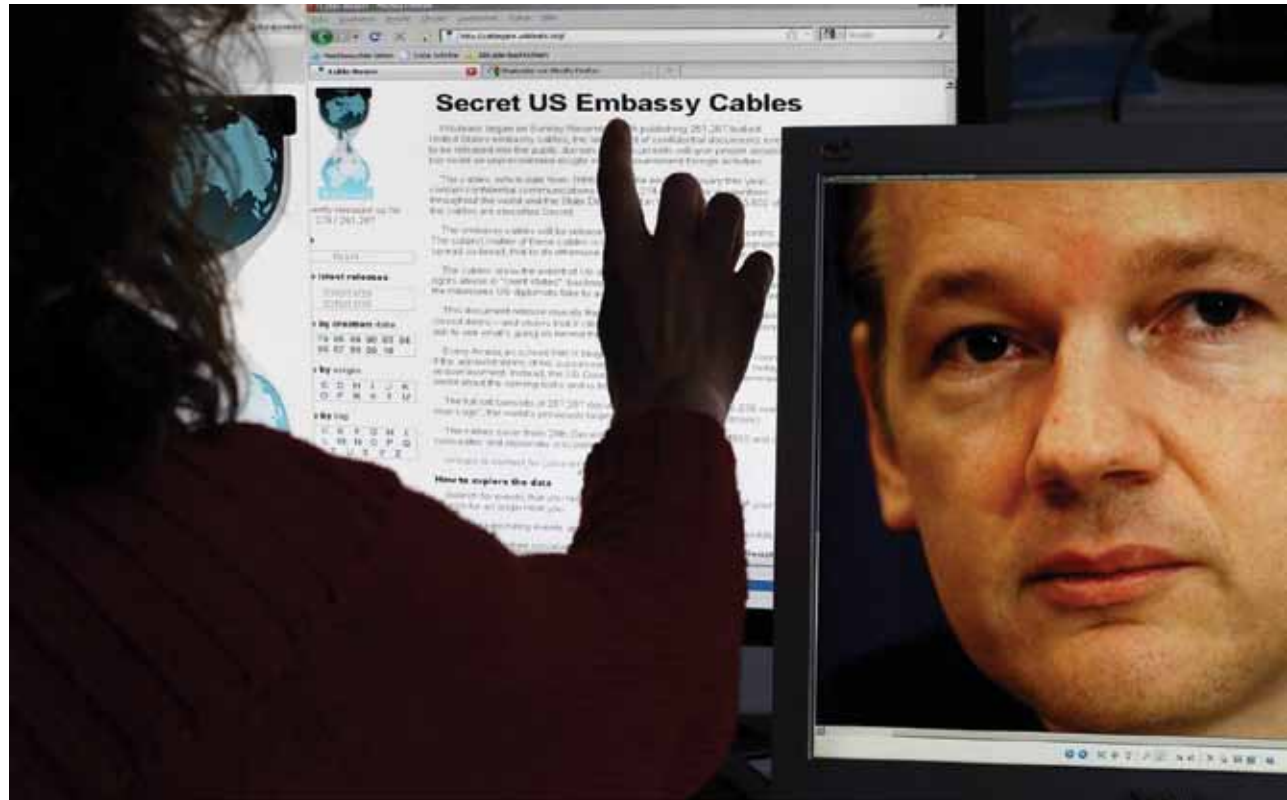
a bloody crackdown on opposition demonstrations. The violence quickly escalated, and current estimates are that up to 15,000 people have been killed.

This July, Wikileaks began publishing the Syria Files. According to the website, this collection of more than two million emails from Syrian political figures, ministries and associated companies will expose the truth about the conflict.

“The Syria Files shine a light on the inner workings of the Syrian government and economy, but they also reveal how the West and Western companies say one thing and do another,” says the website.

Assange said the material would expose not only the Syrian regime but also other players, such as the New York PR company that tried to help the Syrian government “brand” its reforms last year, even as the regime carried out a brutal crackdown.

“[The material] helps us not merely to criticize one group or another, but



Assange said the material would expose not only the Syrian regime but also other players, such as the New York PR company that tried to help the Syrian government “brand” its reforms last year, even as the regime carried out a brutal crackdown

to understand their interests, actions and thoughts. It is only through understanding this conflict that we can hope to resolve it.”

This echoes similar statements the Wikileaks website makes about its aims:

“Publishing improves transparency, and this transparency creates a better society for all people. Better scrutiny leads to reduced corruption and stronger democracies in all society’s institutions, including government, corporations and other organizations.”

Assange admits that Wikileaks’ practice of posting unfiltered classified information could lead the website to have “blood on our hands.” However, he argued that the potential to save lives outweighs the danger to innocents.

The impact of Wikileaks has been huge. For the diplomatic community, Wikileaks poses a challenge: how to build relationships based on confidentiality when it has never been easier for hackers and minor officials to leak private top-level correspondence?

Wikileaks specializes in enabling whistle-blowers to make public sensitive information via a secure server that allows them to remain anonymous. By

exposing government secrets in this way, Wikipedia claims it has created “a new model of journalism.” As a non-profit organization, it does not compete with other media organizations, but works cooperatively with other outlets to bring stories to the maximum possible number of readers around the globe.

Yet Wikileaks is only one of many new threats to government monopolies on information. Other social networks such as Twitter and Facebook have made it easier than ever for activists to swap information, organize protests and to expose government and corporate secrets.

Time will tell whether the new model Wikipedia has created will survive. Ecuadorian officials are examining the allegations of sexual misconduct in their review of Assange’s application. British and Swedish authorities are awaiting Ecuador’s decision. Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa, who has often been at odds with Washington and offered Assange asylum in 2010, has said that his government will take its time considering the activist’s asylum application.

Meanwhile, the work of Wikileaks continues. ☑

الدبلوماسية العربية



[نقرأ العالم لنرى الصورة الكاملة]

دورية متخصصة يصدرها معهد الدراسات الدبلوماسية
بوزارة الخارجية بالمملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة الخارجية
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



معهد الدراسات الدبلوماسية
Institute of Diplomatic Studies

للإشتراكات والإعلانات،
يمكنكم التواصل معنا
على الهاتف: +٩٦٦ ٢١٦١٦١٥ | تحويلة ١١٨
إدارة النشر:

دار تغريد المعاني للنشر والتوزيع
DAR TAGHREED ALMAANI For Publication & Distribution



BRICS: Building for Economic Success

Dr N. Janardhan

Declining economic growth in the BRICS states - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – may not make it an obvious time to sing praises of the evolving economic bloc. But their current growth rates are still beyond anything being achieved in the West.

For those cynical or sceptical about BRICS as a formidable economic force of the 21st century, try indulging in a newly-coined phrase and book – “Breakout Nations” – by Ruchir Sharma of Morgan Stanley, which is creating a buzz in the biz world.

But, before getting entangled in catchy phrases (BRIC in 2001 was also a banker-economist’s phrase – Jim O’Neill of Goldman Sachs), it is important to see BRICS beyond its economic identity.

Like it or not, BRICS’ relatively good economic performance has given these countries ample scope to pedal

a political agenda. If calibrated well, it can serve as a viable alternative to the current world order.

Either way, the writing on the wall is clear – the West’s hegemony over the global economy is a thing of the past. By the same logic, its political influence in global affairs is on the decline, and is likely to recede further.

As a sample of their effectiveness, compare the outcomes of this year’s BRICS and G8 Summits. While the former ended on a note of tangible optimism, the latter ended with “artificial hopefulness”.

The BRICS shift from an economic to political grouping in 2009 has had an insightful effect on the shake-up of international relations. The proposal at the 2012 summit – to start a development bank – not only challenges the World Bank regime, but the politics surrounding it too.

While the global economic crisis and reforming the international financial institutions have been topics of focus during BRICS meetings in the past, the bloc’s leaders have also been focussing on food, energy and climate change issues, which have assumed a political tinge. They have also called for greater say on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

For those who cite their political inexperience, two of the BRICS countries are permanent members of the UNSC; all are members of the G20, NAM and G77; and each is a key member of their respective regional groupings.

At the end of the first summit in 2009, the group’s leaders urged a “multipolar world order”, and creation of “conditions for a fairer world order”. These assertions were construed as “a diplomatic code for a rejection of US’s position as the sole superpower”.

But China has stressed that BRICS is an “ad hoc political club” of developing

economies, with no political agenda to become an anti-US bloc.

It is important to note that BRICS is not an exclusive or closed group. It has already expanded, with South Africa’s inclusion. As we move on, why not expand it further by including other thriving economies, which are searching for a voice in world affairs, and even rename the bloc appropriately?

With efforts to reform the United Nations meeting resistance from the waning powers, this could be the only way that rising economic powers can transform into influential political actors.

A few countries that fit this bill include South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and some of the Gulf countries, among others. (“Breakout Nations” include Indonesia, Poland, Philippines, Nigeria, Turkey, South Korea and Thailand.)

As much as this list includes allies of the United States, BRICS must conduct itself in a way that they are encouraged to join the bloc for its potential and not be discouraged because of a perceived conflict of interest with that of the United States.

The real strength of BRICS or any similar organization in future would not lie in its exclusiveness, but in its

The BRICS shift from an economic to political grouping in 2009 has had an insightful effect on the shake-up of international relations.

inclusiveness. In fact, the bloc should be open to include the United States at some stage.

While it may be premature to write the epitaph of the West’s economic, political and security influence, it would be immature not to explore viable alternatives. In this, some of the BRICS countries’ quiet and unassuming growth and influence could be their greatest virtue.

What all this means is that any new alternative must not be viewed as a competitor with the United States. It should be viewed in the spirit of cooperation in a ‘post-US world’, which is necessarily not an ‘anti-US world’.

Dr N. Janardhan is a UAE-based political analyst, an honorary fellow of the University of Exeter, UK, and author of “Boom amid Gloom: The Spirit of Possibility in the 21st Century Gulf (Ithaca, 2011). ☑



A Coming of Age: GCC Celebrates Rocky Road to Success

By Ghazanfar Ali Khan

The 31st anniversary celebrations of the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Abu Dhabi on May 25, 2012 highlighted its achievements since its launch from Abu Dhabi on May 25, 1981. Since then the Council has come a long way. It has integrated six Gulf countries into a unified bloc of politics, economics, defense, healthcare, education and culture. Today, thanks to the GCC's unified regulatory framework, Gulf citizens can move freely across borders, invest in property and other assets, and easily access healthcare and education.

Over three decades of serious teamwork has resulted in a firm established entity with the support of leaders and a population that believed cooperation and unity was the basis for sustainable development and stability, resulting in many achievements. They include the formation of the Gulf

Common Market in 2008 and GCC Power Grid agreement signed in 2009.

The GCC also took major steps in the economic and development fields in 2010, when it decided to establish the Development Project Financing Program with a capital of \$ 20 billion for 10 years,

half of which was to be designated for development projects in Bahrain, and the other half for projects in Oman.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah sought to put these relations a notch up when he proposed on the anniversary occasion that the GCC should move from a co-operation to a union of six countries to further strengthen their relations. Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Abdulatif Al-Zayyani referred to King Abdullah's proposal in Abu Dhabi on May 25 this year, when he said that the proposal would soon become reality. A final decision would be taken at the GCC summit to be held in Riyadh in December.

The establishment of the council reflects the dreams of the respective leaders of the Gulf countries and their firm belief that the organization could play a vital role in the growth and development of the region and their people. The GCC has either come up or surpassed their expectations despite challenges along the way. It has remained a durable, cohesive and solid bloc despite attempts by some external forces to destabilise the region.

After all, the six-member bloc has increasingly become stable over time due to compatibility of interests, especially in terms of regional and international groupings. Against this backdrop, it has entered its fourth decade by taking some important steps toward coordination, cooperation and integration between its member states.

They include GCC citizenship for the Gulf nationals, equal opportunities in pre-university education, health services, free treatment in government hospitals, medical insurance coverage, property ownership, removal of customs duties, GCC railways project, GCC inter-electricity network, GCC common market, co-operation in internal security and defence, among other measures.

Within this framework, the Directors General of Customs of GCC countries held their first meeting of the Customs Unions Authority at the GCC General Secretariat's Headquarters in Riyadh. The Director General of Saudi Customs, Saleh Al Khiliwi, who also chaired the meeting, said the GCC States leaders had decided at their 32nd meeting held in Riyadh in December 2011 to set up a single authority for the Customs Union before it starts implementing the process from June this year.

The Customs Unions Authority has now been assigned to complete the formalities of the GCC Customs Union, and authorize the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation

Committee to adopt its system, aimed at upgrading the level of their cooperation to the union phase. Al Khiliwi said that the union phase will achieve strength and sustainable stability in the region, and also realize the Gulf citizens' aspirations to preserve and promote their interests. The starting point of this exercise was to have a customs union, but it could not materialize by the cut-off date in 2003

As the situation stands, the Authority will set up special tasks force for the transition phase. The member states will also have to form specialized committees to do the ground work for the first entry ports in all GCC States. Only then will the establishment of the GCC Customs Union take its final shape on January 1, 2015. The GCC countries are still working to boost the process of joint work to promote further integration between member countries, the GCC chief pointed out.

Also on the economic front, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) held its first meeting with the Federal Customs Authority and the Federation of the UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry last month to discuss the financial and economic integration of the GCC at its headquarters in Dubai.

Headed by Ebrahim Hassan Rashid Al Jarwan, Head of GCC and Arab Countries at MoF, the meeting was in line with efforts to enhance GCC economic activities, follow up on the workflow of the Gulf Common Market and the GCC Customs Union, the MoF said in a statement. The meeting also discussed obstacles facing the private sector due to the lack of financial and economic integration in the GCC member countries and proposed mechanisms to overcome the obstacles.

Despite these challenges, the Gulf Common Market came into being on January 1, 2008. With a combined economy of \$715 billion, the GCM has acted as a magnet for foreign investment (FDI) in the region, a large part of which found its way into the property market. FDI in the GCC grew from \$6.1 billion in 2003 to \$60.1 billion in 2008 (nearly ten-fold increase in five years). Saudi Arabia and the UAE accounted for 82% of the total FDI during 2003-08.

However, the onset of the subprime mortgage crisis in the US in 2008 that snowballed into a global financial crisis had a profound impact on the construction and real estate sectors in the GCC. As a result, the GCC economies got mired in recession when crude prices (which touched an all-time high of \$147 per barrel in July 2008) fell

After all, the six-member bloc has increasingly become stable over time due to compatibility of interests, especially in terms of regional and international groupings. Against this backdrop, it has entered its fourth decade by taking some important steps toward coordination, cooperation and integration between its member states.

to \$35 per barrel by December 2008 before hovering in \$ 80-\$95 range at present amid fluctuations during the period. Overall, they could cushion the impact of the global recession better than other countries thanks to their oil wealth.

The GCC had also unveiled plans to achieve currency union by 2010. However, a final decision has been put on hold. "For all the sense more GCC integration makes, the challenges to a European Union-like structure is fraught with questions, challenges and potential pitfalls," said an editorial of the Abu Dhabi-based "The National" newspaper, which often reflects the views of UAE authorities.

GCC economic chief Mohammad Al-Mazroui said the common market would increase investments and trade between member countries. "It will also strengthen the position of member states in free-trade talks with the European Union," he said. Some 35.1 million people live in the GCC, although citizens of the member states represent around only 60 percent of the total population, the remainder being expatriates. In addition to allowing the free flow of capital, the common market gives GCC nationals freedom of movement, residency and employment — in both private and public sectors — in all six countries.

The outcome of the GCC economic integration showed that the UAE was at the forefront of GCC countries in GCM. According to the statistical data for 2009 released by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) on August 29, 2010, the UAE was ahead of other member countries in terms of unifying all economic and commercial rules and regulations. The report issued by the GCC and Arab Countries Affairs Department at MoF also showed an increase in the number of GCC nationals residing in the UAE from 5,608 in 2008 to 7,650 in 2009.

The Gulf Common Market offers equal opportunities for all GCC citizens, including the right to work in government

By and large, GCC countries have achieved measurable success in integrating their economies. But there are challenges along the way posed by Iran's aggressive stance in the region, its interference in the internal affairs of the GCC bloc and, above all, its continued occupation of the islands belonging to the UAE.

and private institutions in member states, buy and sell real estate and make other investments. They can also move freely between the countries and have access to education and health benefits, according to the communiqué issued on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the GCC.

Participants dealt with restrictions on real estate ownership for the purpose of investment and giving preference to local or GCC products regardless of the quality and price. They highlighted the absence of unified and binding GCC laws, different accounting systems for companies, legislation gaps and lack of uniformity in implementation.

Even so, governmental loans granted to GCC nationals to establish industrial projects rose to Dh20 million in 2009 as compared to Dh5.5 million in 2008. GCC nationals who own property in the UAE rose to 22,706 in 2009.

Over 1,884 licenses for professional and commercial activities were granted to GCC nationals. Seven commercial GCC banks were operating in the UAE in 2009, the same number as in 2008 when it increased by three banks from 2007. Trade between GCC member states currently accounts for just around 10 percent of overall foreign trade. This should increase to 25 percent in the next two years, said Issam Fakhrou, president of Bahrain's Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

As many as 3,080 GCC nationals were working in UAE's private sector in 2009 compared to 2,117 in 2008 while 605 were working in federal governmental entities and 1,932 in local governmental bodies. 207 GCC nationals were employed in UAE's semi-government sector in 2009.

On the political front, the GCC Secretary-General observed that the GCC leaders are deeply concerned over the challenges facing the six-member group. "The GCC considers that any attack on a member country as an attack on all," Al-Zayani said, adding that any act of aggression against a member state would require greater coordination to protect the security and stability of the region. Spelling out the challenges ahead, the GCC chief said they include Israel's illegal occupation of Arab territories despite UN resolutions, and Tehran's interference in the internal affairs of member countries, its continued occupation of the UAE islands, its insinuations to use force and expand its influence in the region.

He stressed the need for strengthening GCC's cyber security as part of its efforts to

combat terrorism and violence. To this end, global information network was being used for smuggling, triggering riots and carrying out terrorist operations. "Gulf security is essential to promote world peace and stability," he added.

Politically, the GCC exerted all efforts to support Arab state issues and regional stability. It has also helped Yemen in overcoming its civil unrest and restoring stability and security. On May 10 last year, the GCC took a historic step at its 13th Consultative Meeting in Riyadh when its Supreme Council welcomed a request by Jordan and Morocco to join the bloc.

In the field of security and defense, the GCC's leaders signed the Joint Defense Agreement and the GCC Defense Strategy in 2009. Expectations had been running high ahead of a special summit to be convened in Riyadh, but a decision was put off until the GCC summit in December this year. As the situation stands, there has not been much progress on this front since 1984, when the GCC created an embryonic collective defence force - the Saudi-based Peninsula Shield. The GCC has failed to expand the force; Oman's 1991 proposal to set up a 100,000-strong joint military body was turned down.

As an initial step, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain had signalled their readiness to announce a bilateral union, but even that limited move failed to materialise. Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal said threats from Tehran were unacceptable. He also criticised Iranian "provocations" over three occupied Gulf islands that are claimed by the UAE. Prince Saud also accused Iran of routinely backing the Shia-dominated opposition in Bahrain.

In the field of healthcare, Gulf nationals are eligible to receive facilities as those meant for the local citizens. The hospitals have also achieved uniformity in their standards. This was reflected in the statement issued by the Executive Board of the GCC Health Ministers Council in Riyadh on 24 June this year when it commended the Saudi Health Ministry for being largely responsible for the number of Saudi hospitals to earn the US-initiated Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation and certification recently.

The Joint Commission International has been working with health care organizations, ministries of health and global organizations in over 80 countries since 1994. JCI's focus is on improving the safety of patient care through the provision of accreditation and certification services as well as through advisory and educational services aimed at



helping organizations implement practical and sustainable solutions.

"The region has shown admirable growth in the past decade, yet that growth represents the efforts of six individual states, rather than a coherent and aligned group operating as an integrated economic entity," said. "More comprehensive integration has the potential to boost the region's economy much as it did for the EU," he added.

On the educational front, the number of GCC students in UAE schools rose to 16,463 in 2009, an increase of 987 students from 2008. Of these, 12,892 GCC students were in public schools and 3,571 in private schools. Some 3,589 GCC nationals benefit from insurance protection in 2009, an increase of 597 from the previous year.

Despite efforts to bring about uniformity in their educational standards, the result has not been a uniform success in terms of implementing the rules and regulations. Accordingly, Saudis studying in Bahrain have been asked by the island's Education Ministry to contact them before pursuing higher education in the country. The advisory followed the discovery of several private universities which had been warned of closure for flouting higher education laws. It was also the result of some GCC

states' refusal to recognise degrees obtained by their nationals from some of Bahrain's private universities last year.

The six countries are also mobilizing their efforts to form a common power grid in the interest of sharing power supply for regional development. In line with this strategy, the GCC Committee of Water and Electricity Unity meeting is implementing the recommendations of GCC leaders made during the 14th consultation meeting held in Riyadh last May. According to Assistant Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Shibli, the committee's meeting explored the possibility of setting up joint power and water security in the Gulf countries. The meeting reviewed previous studies regarding water linkage and the position of GCC countries in this regard for working out a modus operandi in this regard.

The assistant secretary-general also said that the meeting reviewed the Secretariat General's memorandum on water security in the GCC countries to draw up a long-term comprehensive Gulf strategy for water, considering Abu Dhabi's water announcement issued during the 31st session of the GCC Supreme Council. The meeting also decided to take advantage of the research studies conducted by

universities and national research centers on this issue.

Abu Dhabi highly recommended serious and vigorous steps for a long-term water strategy, to be forwarded to expert committees who could send out directives and consider all related issues. The announcement linked water security to diversity of energy and food security and fixed them as strategic priorities for the GCC countries.

By and large, GCC countries have achieved measurable success in integrating their economies. But there are challenges along the way posed by Iran's aggressive stance in the region, its interference in the internal affairs of the GCC bloc and, above all, its continued occupation of the islands belonging to the UAE. Media reports indicate that Israel is waiting for an opportunity to exploit the situation by instigating trouble in the region.

Should that happen, everyone, including Israel, would be a loser. The lessons of the two Gulf Wars show clearly that it does not pay to fish in troubled waters, as the US has learnt to its cost in Afghanistan and Iraq which, according to conservative estimates, have cost Washington \$3.7 trillion and \$3.7 trillion respectively with no end in sight. ☑



Rich Contents of Saudi History

The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darrah) has been recording the economic, political and cultural history of Saudi Arabia for the last 40 years. Its massive archives include over one million documents and some 50,000 books, all stored electronically. In a wide-ranging interview, Dr. Fahad Al-Sammari, Darrah's secretary-general, spoke in-depth about the new initiatives being undertaken to preserve the Kingdom's rich heritage for future generations. He outlined the importance of Darrah's various projects with special reference to the cultural initiatives of the Kingdom at a time when the Arab world is facing domestic and regional challenges.

What role does Darrah play in supporting the scientific research community in the Kingdom?

Darrah is the first official entity concerned with the preservation, retrieval and preparation of historical documents and manuscripts for researchers. It was set up by a royal decree in 1972 (1392H) to record the history of the country and the Arabian Peninsula as far back in time as

possible. The organization was named after the founder, King Abdul Aziz, to recognize his remarkable achievement in establishing a modern state based on Islam in the face of major international developments prevailing at the time, and transforming it into a country that could stand on an equal footing with other civilized nations. Darrah aims to enrich scientific research by organizing symposia and specialized

forums. It also collects and stores books, whether original, translated or revised. It also gathers research and historical studies on the humanitarian values and heritage of the Saudi state, the Arabian Peninsula and Islam. Darrah's vision is to boost national values and cement national cohesion. These goals are derived from a national history that outlines the loyalty and passion prevailing in Saudi life.

Last year marked the 40th anniversary of Darrah. How has the organization developed over the years?

Darrah has passed through two stages. The first stage covers the period before Prince Salman became Darrah chairman. Darrah then developed its activities and size in line with the development of government organizations. Its administration was overseen by specialists interested in such work. The second stage started when Prince Salman assumed the chairmanship of Darrah in 1995. He is known for his intense commitment and interest in everything to do with national history and is, above all, considered to be a leader of historians.

Prince Salman's philosophy and unique vision is that our history is the key to nation building and dealing with today's issues. When he took over, there were qualitative and quantitative developments in Darrah's activities, goals and responsibilities. The scope of its work and projects was significantly expanded. As envisioned by Prince Salman, Darrah became a scientific forum for many diverse views on the history of Saudi Arabia and the region. His involvement and passion has ensured that it has now become the leading Arab and Islamic documentary institution. From the outset, Darrah's national message was clearly understood by all citizens who took the opportunity to deposit historic documents in their possession. A total of over 1 million documents have been collected since the start of the project.

What is the significance of the Prince Salman Prize and Grants for studies on the history of the Arabian Peninsula, now in its fourth year?

The success of the Prince Salman Prize and Grants, from the very beginning, is a result of generous allocations from his own funds. It has become the most important scientific prize in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to support historical, scientific and cultural scholarships. Prince Salman has always stressed the importance of linking current generations with the history and heritage of their fathers and grandfathers. The awards encourage researchers to generate new or creative ideas or revive previously delayed projects. It has become a sought-after prize for scholars because it adds major value to their careers.



Dr Fahad Al-Sammari
Darrah Secretary General

How does the prize work in realizing its scientific and research objectives?

The scientific prize is awarded based on careful assessment of the research and in terms of strict criteria (including) whether the work is of a pioneering, visionary nature. The development process is a fixed goal of Prince Salman, and informs the prize and all Darrah projects and scientific work. On the directives of Prince Salman, a higher commission to oversee the prize was set up, chaired by him. This body includes a number of historians, intellectuals and officials who are conversant with history, antiquities and geography.

The commission is assigned to study research, ideas and proposals referred to it by the scientific committee. There is also a general secretariat that lays down future plans and supports the prize. The prize has undergone various changes to its structure and awards, with some branches either dropped or added. Non-Saudi researchers and universities have also been given the chance to compete for the awards on the

One of the major goals of Darrah is protecting our national history. We are proud of this cultural treasure, from which we draw strength and inspiration.

grounds that the history of the Arabian Peninsula is not limited only to Saudis. All these changes will allow the prize to grow and enrich the scientific movement in general.

How is Darrah helping to develop a greater sense of citizenship in the country?

One of the major goals of Darrah is protecting our national history. We are proud of this cultural treasure, from which we draw strength and inspiration. The national history provides us with cultural references amid the world's diverse



Darah has a memorial hall that is visited frequently by young students. It contains collections of (the life and work of) King Abdul Aziz, highlighting the historical value of his leadership. Darah is working on collecting books, studies and research. It already has over 300 items documenting various achievements. Darah is also ready to serve any scientific, cultural or festival activity.

cultures. It is for this reason that Darah, on the directives of Prince Salman, has a permanent presence at national festivals, including national day celebrations.

Additionally, Darah is used to support Saudi celebrations abroad by providing resources through its cultural attachés. Darah has never been absent from the National Festival on Culture and Heritage (Janadriyah) because it represents a national forum that brings Saudi heritage to the forefront, restores communication and recalls popular memory.

Darah has a memorial hall that is visited frequently by young students. It contains collections of (the life and work of) King Abdul Aziz, highlighting the historical value of his leadership. Darah is working on collecting books, studies and research. It already has over 300 items documenting various achievements. Darah is also ready to serve any scientific, cultural or festival activity.

What progress has Darah made in setting up facilities for women researchers, and what is the aim of this initiative?

The center involves a two-pronged approach. The first part entails the construction of a building for the Princess Sarah Al-Sudairi Center for Women's Research at the Darah premises, and technical preparations for offices to ensure privacy and smooth communication with other units. The second part is aimed at receiving proposals for an effective administrative structure at the center. The center will be the women's version of Darah.

We're looking forward to documenting the history of women in the Arabian Peninsula in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. This will cover all social, cultural, economic and nation building efforts of women. We also plan to have the center support and sponsor scientific functions through lectures, symposia and studies.

Darah plans to launch a project to document social, cultural and economic developments in the Kingdom. What do you hope will be gained from this project?

The project was recently launched at a workshop organized by Darah at its premises by a number of specialists who have academic experience in this area. The workshop, and other workshops to follow, is aimed at visualizing the actual launch of the project, based on local, Arab and international best practice, and experiences of similar mega projects. Generally speaking, the project is aimed at documenting social, economic and cultural developments through visual and non-visual means. The project will hopefully provide a more complete and comprehensive picture of the Kingdom's history and society at large.

Will the project include non-Saudi residents in the Kingdom?

Accurate historical data always remains a target for Darah, from whatever source. Therefore (non-Saudi) residents will be among the groups targeted by the project, particularly if they have documented information and have an interest in documenting their lives within the Saudi

community. We will be interested in documents, photos or personal notes, and memoirs of social affairs.

In fact, much of the information on the history of Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, was derived and quoted from foreign Orientalists and their books. Correct and sound information is a common aim of all heritage projects, regardless of nationality and culture. Darah has already recorded certain information from some Arab and non-Arab residents, within the framework of the Kingdom's oral history project.

Darah and Jamia Millia Islamic University, India, recently signed a memorandum of understanding on scientific cooperation. What is the aim of this memorandum, and do you think that scientific agreements are effective?

This agreement falls within a series of agreements signed by Darah with a number of reputable scientific institutions around the world, including Oxford University (United Kingdom), the Center of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (Kuwait), the National Center for Documents (Yemen), the Heritage Center (Turkmenistan), and the National Center for Archives (Sudan).

Jamia Millia Islamic University is among the most reputable universities in Asia and a leading religious education institution in the Islamic world, in addition to its well-known Arab and Indian Cultural Center. One major part of the agreement is related to launching joint scientific activities, serving the common history between Saudi Arabia and India and historical sources of Arab and Indian relations through seminars, lectures, and the exchange of visits between researchers.

The agreement also includes the establishment of a scientific chair for documenting Arab-Indian relations and other forms of scientific cooperation of common interest between the two sides. Agreements, in general, pave the way for rapid communication and cooperation, which is one of the requirements of scientific research.

Can foreign researchers cooperate with Darah on projects or scientific publications?

Serving the history of the Arabian Peninsula with in-depth research is open to all because there is a common history between nations and peoples because of their business, social and cultural relations. Therefore, the opportunity is available for constructive cooperation that satisfies the needs of researchers and serves Islamic and Arab history projects at the foundation. Darah has already cooperated with a number of historians in different countries on various subjects.

One of Darah's key projects is the organization of royal symposia. Those interested in history are eagerly awaiting the major symposium on the history of the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd. What preparations have been made in this regard, and what is the importance of this event?

The royal symposia are important because we, together with researchers and narrators, document the community politically, socially, culturally and economically through the decisions of the king. We also document and disseminate his achievements. The royal symposium on the history of King Fahd, which is to be held soon, will be a major milestone considering the many people who will be participating.

The reign of King Fahd was a long period extending over more than two decades that saw key local and foreign policy developments. The Scientific Committee has proposed adding specific themes to this symposium covering all events such as the Lebanese crisis, the Afghan Jihad, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The personal history of King Fahd will always remain high on the agenda of this series of seminars because it is an extension of the history of the founder (King Abdul Aziz) in terms of his policies and approach to running the country.

Are qualified residents eligible to participate in this grand symposium?

Yes. Participation is open to all regardless of nationality, age or qualifications. The most important criteria in this context are the novelty of the topics, innovation, proper documentation, and the scientific methodology applied in the research.

Darah recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Saudi Aramco to document the history of the discovery of oil in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. What is the nature of this agreement?

The MoU was signed under the patronage of Prince Salman. This memorandum is composed of two parts. The first tracks all stages covering the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia and its impact on Saudi social, economic and cultural developments. The project is set to begin soon after the formation of a joint working group between Darah and Saudi Aramco, and will run for three years. It plans to document the contribution of Saudi Aramco, one of the world's biggest companies, to Saudi society. The second part of the memorandum is ensuring cooperation with the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (KACWC) at Saudi Aramco for the exchange of experience and training in areas related to

Accurate historical data always remains a target for Darah, from whatever source. Therefore (non-Saudi) residents will be among the groups targeted by the project, particularly if they have documented information and have an interest in documenting their lives within the Saudi community. We will be interested in documents, photos or personal notes, and memoirs of social affairs.

archiving, restoration and preservation of documents and manuscripts. The project falls within the bigger project of Darah aimed at documenting social, economic and cultural developments in the Kingdom.

We are aware of the specialized scientific activity of Darah, but what about cultural activities, and the possibility of exploiting the Internet to keep abreast of new ideas?

Scientific activity is a major part of culture. Darah is constantly involved in the cultural scene through a number of specialized publications concerned with Arabic language, literature and heritage. In its capacity as a publisher, Darah has joined other institutions at local and foreign cultural events and fairs such as the Riyadh International Book Fair, Okaz Festival, Janadriyah Festival, sponsorship of photo exhibits and contribution to seminars and cultural forums. Also, most importantly, attracting and encouraging intellectuals to undertake historical research. With regard to new ideas, Darah has, from the very beginning, acknowledged the importance of the Internet in communicating with scientific institutions, researchers and those interested in scientific activity all over the world. Accordingly, Darah has received a flood of e-mails with new proposals on projects in different languages.

Darah has completed the electronic version of its library, including donated books, to become the first Saudi library to have computerized over 50,000 books on the history of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula. Darah also maintains two big centers that provide technical support for Darah projects, including the Digital Center for Saudi History and Saudi Center for Geographical and Historical Information. All these elements show how computer technology is being used. Darah is a home for all those individuals with positive and authentic ideas. ☑



King Abdullah Building Bright Future for Saudi

It's an educational renaissance unprecedented in Saudi history. King Abdullah's personal commitment to access to learning will not only see a staggering increase in higher education facilities, but a tangible improvement in the quality of education across the Kingdom. The landmark development also represents a construction boom comprising seven mega cities and several new portals of learning for male and female students.

In April this year, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah inaugurated the first phase of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz City for Female Students and a number of other education projects. The goal is to create world-class higher education infrastructure across the country and to boost higher education and research capacities in the process. King Abdullah also laid the foundation stone for the second phase of the higher education project, under which several colleges worth some

\$21.7bn will be founded in various regions of the Kingdom.

As Minister of Higher Education Dr Khalid Al-Anqari has said, "This major step, backed by King Abdullah, will help to support higher education projects in the Kingdom which, in turn, will help to improve the teaching, learning and research environment."

A total of 18 higher education cities and academies will be built separately for male and female students in regions

including Jizan, Baha, Najran (near the northern borders), Tabuk, Jouf, Hail, Shaqra, Majmaah, Taibah, Qassim, Taif and Kharj.

In addition, the programme will include the construction of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz City for Female Students at Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, female hostels at King Saud University (Riyadh) and Umm Al-Qura University (Makkah). There will also be efforts to maintain quality control and management of higher education institutions in the Kingdom.

The Ministry will construct 167 new colleges for male students, 161 colleges for women, 11,000 housing units for academic and non-academic staff, and 100 hostels for students. All these facilities will cater to the needs of over 50,000 students at any given time. The new projects also include the building of 12 new university hospitals with a total capacity of 3,800 beds in regions across the Kingdom.

A new network will also be created among higher education institutions to facilitate the exchange of ideas among them.

The Kingdom has been investing heavily in the education and training sectors over the past few years. This year's national budget provides for a 135 percent increase in education spending. Saudi

Arabia has approved the Ninth Five-Year Development Plan (2010-2014). Over half the plan's budget is earmarked for human resources development, with priority given to creating a knowledge-based society.

The national plan also envisages boosting the intake of universities to 1.7 million students. An important element of the plan is to expand and diversify the post-graduate program, with a major emphasis on innovation in science and technology. Other initiatives announced a few months ago include the establishment of 10 research centers, 15 technological innovation centers in association with King Abdullah City for Science and Technology (KACST), and at least eight technology incubators at KACST and other universities. The government will also continue to promote collaboration between universities and international companies to enable Saudi students to pursue higher education abroad.

In April, the Ministry of Higher Education organized a four-day international exhibition and conference in which hundreds of universities from various countries participated. Britain alone had 75 participants, while the US had 69 universities at its stand. Other major exhibitors were Canada, Australia, Russia and New Zealand, along with several European countries.

This major step, backed by King Abdullah, will help to support higher education projects in the Kingdom which, in turn, will help to improve the teaching, learning and research environment

From the Far East, 34 Chinese higher education institutions participated in the event, along with 23 Malaysian universities. Saudi students had exposure to the full range of courses and various facilities on offer across the world.

This kind of conference is part of the Kingdom's policy of strengthening links with higher education institutions abroad. In 2007, King Saud University (KSU) in Riyadh signed memoranda of understanding with 11 Nobel laureates, including scientists and economists, who offered their services to KSU under a program to strengthen the Kingdom's science and technology sector.

The laureates included Dr. Louis Ignarro (Medicine, 1998), Dr. Richard Schrock (Chemistry 2005), Dr. Thomas Schelling (Economics 2005) and Dr. Muhammad Yunus (Peace 2006).

In a two-page advertisement published in local Arabic newspapers,



King Saud University (KSU) in Riyadh signed memoranda of understanding with 11 Nobel laureates, including scientists and economists, who offered their services to KSU under a program to strengthen the Kingdom's science and technology sector

KSU said its Nobel Laureates Program was aimed at promoting science and technology, boosting research and development, spreading a culture of science and entrepreneurship in society, and transforming the Kingdom into a knowledge-based economy.

Other objectives behind the program, the first of its kind in the Arab world, include enhancing the university's research and consultancy capabilities, encouraging innovation by teaching staff, students and researchers, and allowing students to interact with Nobel laureates in order to benefit from their knowledge and expertise.

The university called upon companies, banks and public organizations to make use of the university's Research & Consulting Institute, a unique project founded by King Abdullah and manned by experts, including Nobel Prize winners.

Accordingly, the university unveiled plans to launch a major R&D program with the support of the business community.

The university called on "princes, princesses, businessmen and women, banks and companies to finance research chairs in areas such as medicine, pharmacology, engineering, science, computer science, architecture, agriculture, food, water, gas, oil, economy, business administration, law, political, information, society and private education."

Individuals were asked to contribute around half a million dollars in the first

year and \$250,000 annually for three or more years, while companies and banks were asked to contribute around \$1m in the first year and \$500,000 annually for three or more years to fund the positions.

In return, the university is offering various incentives. The chair will be named after the contributor and his or her name will be inscribed on a golden plaque on the chair's workshop and printed in all published research works.

"Priority will be given to the contributor in making use of the research and consultancy services of the chair," the university said. The contributor will also be given the honor of presenting a plaque during events related to the chair.

These initiatives are already bearing fruit. In June 2010, King Abdullah unveiled the first car entirely designed and built in Riyadh. The SUV, Ghazal 1, was built by engineers at King Saud University (KSU) and designed in collaboration with major companies including Motorola, Mercedes and Magna Canada.

"This car is designed for use on all roads and terrain, even in difficult conditions, while the car's interior is designed to provide comfort for passengers," Professor Said Darwish of KSU's industrial engineering department, said. The car is expected to make its debut on the automobile market in Qatar either by early 2014.

The KSU said its research and development program was also aimed at making optimum use of its expertise and facilities. The university has more than 3,000 teaching staff and researchers in its higher education departments, along with about 10,000 students. Currently, the Kingdom spends only 0.50 percent of its GDP on research & development. This figure is expected to rocket to over \$8.6 billion as part of its 20-year National Science and Technology Plan.

Given the importance of innovation and its role in the diversification of the economy, KACST teamed up recently with Stanford Research Institute International (SRI), one of the largest research institutes worldwide, to hold a major workshop on "The five disciplines for innovation" in Riyadh. The Badir Program for Technology Incubators (BPTI) represented KACST at the workshop.

The event was held at KACST's headquarters and at the Incubator Initiative for Biotechnology (IIB) at King Fahad Medical City. The workshop was meant to educate the participants on the importance of innovation and its impact on the local economy. It also showed how to identify and nurture promising

ideas with market potential, and translate them into innovative products with the help of venture capitalists and mentors. It emphasized the need to create an environment conducive to the growth of entrepreneurial culture.

The workshop showed interesting examples of innovation and discussed ways to develop feasible propositions for customers and companies. It also introduced SWOT analysis, a method of exploring strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and working out the best course of action in a given set of circumstances. The workshop also included a session on how to overcome barriers to innovation, the use of best practices that achieve tangible results in the application of creative ideas.

The workshop again demonstrates the Kingdom's commitment to strengthening its knowledge economy as well as promoting the development and localization of technology in the Kingdom through collaboration with major universities.

A new way forward in Medicine

King Abdullah's leadership and his vision of education have nurtured a new spirit of research on the medical front. The College of Medicine at Imam University in Riyadh recently organized a five-day conference called the Saudi International Medical Education Conference (SIMEC2012). In a keynote address, Sultan Meo, a medical doctor at King Saudi University, noted that during the golden age of the Islamic era (700-1700 AD), the Muslim World produced many of history's finest scientists and technologists.

In his presentation, entitled "Medical education in the Muslim world: where do we stand?", Dr. Meo noted that the Muslim World has a vast geographical spread and a population of approximately 1.27 billion people. In addition, many Arab countries have significant natural resources and other strategic advantages.

Dr. Meo noted that spending on science, technology and R&D in the Muslim world is only around 0.2 percent of GNP. Only a few states are shifting towards a scientific culture that adopts modern tools for achieving technological progress, particularly in the field of medicine.

Meo observed that the number of research institutes in the Muslim world, as a proportion of institutes of higher learning, is less than the global average of 1.4 percent. Such a poor showing on the research front is, he said, inexcusable given the resources available.

Moreover many biomedical and medical education journals in the



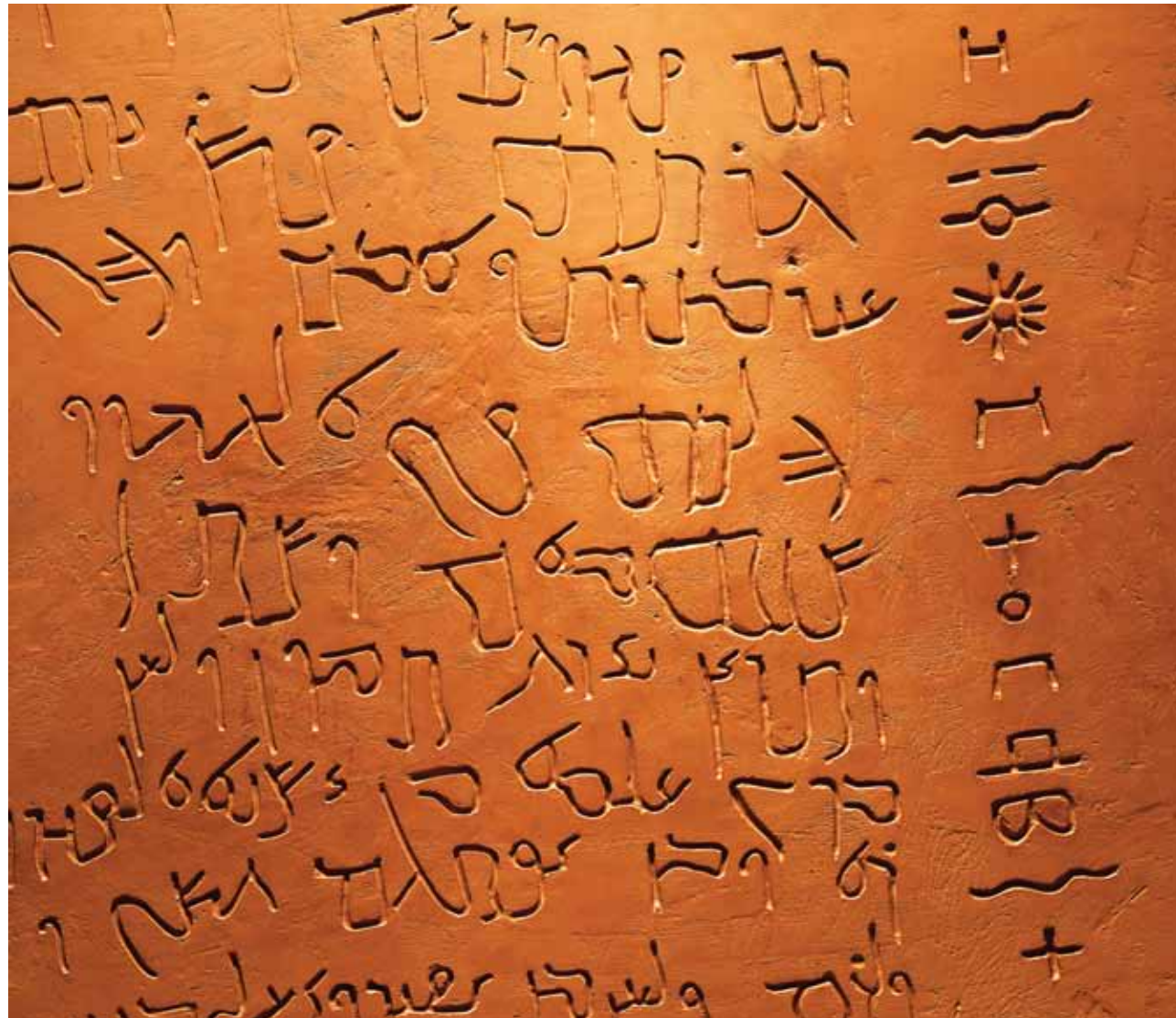
Muslim world do not provide on-line access via major global databases. This keeps researchers in other countries in the dark on research in the Muslim world, restricting the scope of any potential cooperation.

KACST President Abdullah Al Suwayl that since Saudi Arabia began registering patents in 1989, some 17,270 applications have been lodged, resulting in 2,900 registrations.

Al Suwayl said this underlined the Kingdom's keenness to promote a spirit of entrepreneurialism. However he noted that processing time alone takes two and a half to three years – although this is in line with global standards.

Despite these challenges, it is clear that King Abdullah's trail-blazing moves are intended to take the Muslim world through a new Renaissance. Education will play a crucial role in promoting this new culture of entrepreneurship. ☑

King Abdullah's leadership and his vision of education have nurtured a new spirit of research on the medical front. The College of Medicine at Imam University in Riyadh recently organized a five-day conference called the Saudi International Medical Education Conference



Wusum: Art that Rocks!

By Ghazal Saif

O, how strange are the deserted campsites and their long-gone inhabitants!

And how strangely time changes all!

The camel of youth walks slowly now;

Its once quick pace is gone; it is bored with traveling.

Jarir ibn 'Atiya- 8th C

How does it feel to behold a mark of affiliation, identity or some distant meaning on a rock? Today there are around 1200 identified rock art and inscription sites and over 3936 Wusum or tribal symbols like- '!' (tears); 'T' (falcon); 'r' (stick), that can be traced from Neolithic to present day Saudi Arabia. By fathoming some of them one can eavesdrop on the syllables of a conversation that commenced epochs ago. As remoteness of cosmic bodies is narrated by reflected light, so Wusum whisper of hunting, dancing, fighting, ownership and identity in 'ancient life' through a panoply of petroglyphs depicted on rocks of the Kingdom.

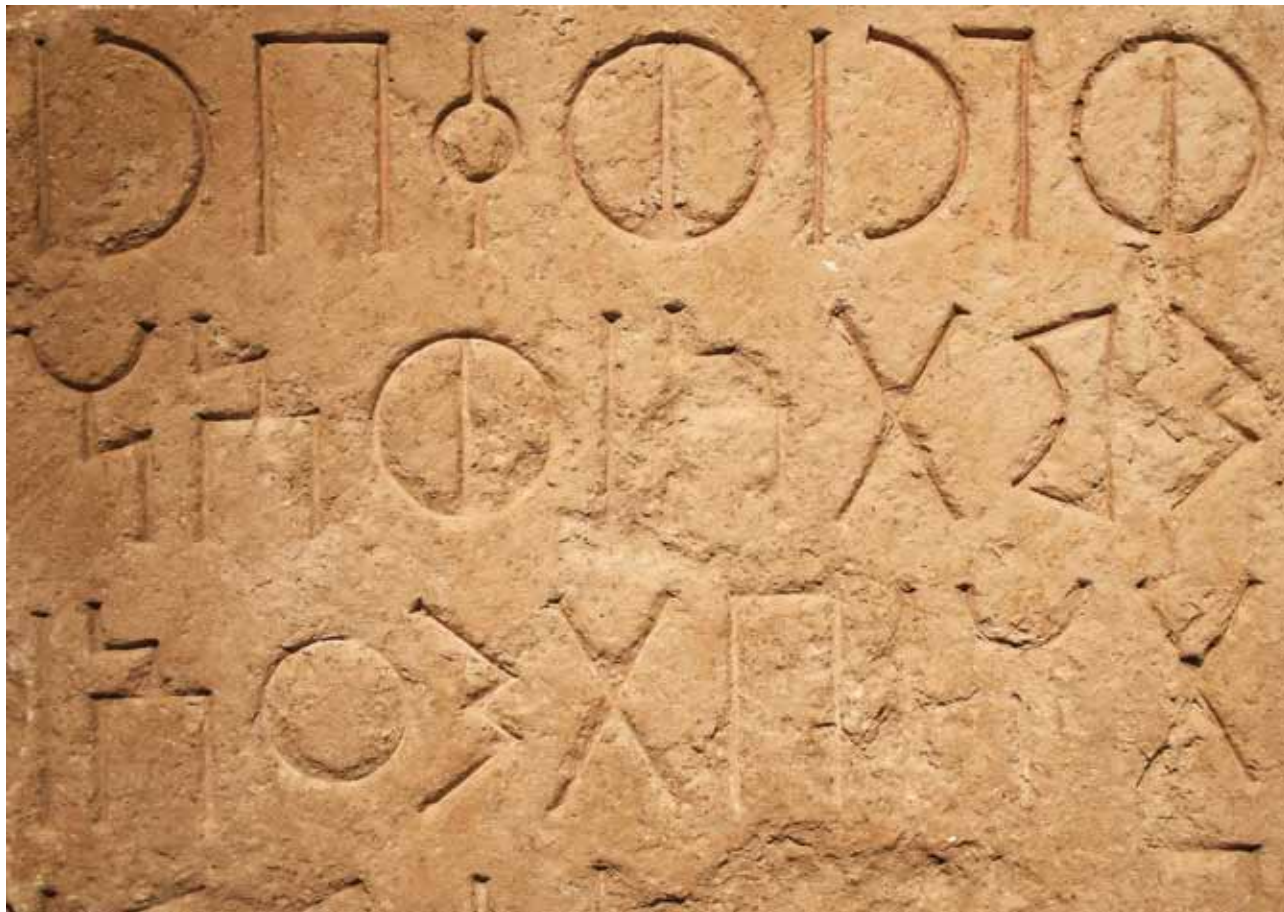
They can be seen in large numbers at Jubbah, Hail, Sakkaka, Tabuk, Tayma, Al-Ula, Jabel Arafa, Wadi Kafu, Najran, Wadi Tathlith, Quwaiyah, Shuwaymas among other places. Though basically a tribal symbol, the Wasm (singular of

Wusum) is generally associated with camel branding. Albeit, recent studies have revealed their connection with cattle and a way of life, that existed way before camels began their romance with the Beduins. They also establish that camels, contrary to common belief, were domesticated first in the north, some 3500 years ago in late Bronze Age, and not the south of the peninsula,

Rock art was the first source of communication in prehistoric Arabia. Both the idea of writing in Arabia and use of Wusum find their root in rock art. Take yourself back some nine to seven thousand years and imagine a tribe marking cattle and sites with geometrical and other motifs and you'll have before you: the first local method of establishing territory.

'Long before the origin of writing, the pristine Arabs living in the desert, the 'Bedouins', were practicing rock

The Wusum are the most interesting aspect of rock art. They are not one of the many human or animal figurines before which you can stand and appreciate a bygone artist. They are coded signs and symbols seeded with dense geometric and graphic complexity and that is what makes them the most rocking aspect of the practice.



The power of symbols always leaves me astounded. It is the most potent 'technology', in the postmodern sense of the term, that we have invented. We continuously learn them and perform as their subjects, beyond the walls of the classroom.

art for recording events, stories and messages', says Majeed Khan. Dr. Khan is an authority on the subject and has been working in the area for nearly three decades. He was part of the first study commissioned by the Ministry of Antiquities and Museums on comprehensive archeological, rock art and epigraphic survey of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 1984.

The Wusum are the most interesting aspect of rock art. They are not one of the many human or animal figurines before which you can stand and appreciate a bygone artist. They are coded signs and symbols seeded with dense geometric and graphic complexity and that is what makes them the most rocking aspect of the practice. This is not me just trying to pull in vocabulary from pop culture to sauce up my write up, au contraire I have sound scientific and anthropological reason to feel this way.

You see, the word 'FEEL' is made of three symbols 'F', 'E', and 'L' and when assembled in the above order, hold a certain definition. This is not the interesting part. The interesting part is that we all agree that it holds 'that' definition. It shows our social unity on the matter and presumes we have a system to arrive on such a unity or reinforce it. Similarly the Wasm, as a tribal symbol, could not have been created unless it was a collective affair, unless the society consisted of a system of social and tribal unity. Therefore it is more telling of the past and its people than what replicas of human and animal figures convey.

Paul Bahn, a leading scholar of prehistoric art, puts the significance of the Wusum rather more succinctly, 'it gives humankind its true dimension by showing that even from the earliest

times, human activities hold meanings other than those of a purely utilitarian kind'. Therefore it was not just an invention for protecting territory and marking cattle, it was the beginning of sharing thoughts, recording abstract 'ideas' and creating meaning!

Those working in the field within the Kingdom confirm this, 'It is evident that the Wusum were purposefully created far back in Arabian prehistory as a means of transmitting to various target population symbolically encoded information about ethnic and tribal affiliation and identify- as a matter of fact, they were our first intellectual creation'. It is also believed that some Wusum have similarity with the form of ancient Arabian writing, such as Thamudic (Bedouin writing), Lihyanite and Aramaic.

The power of symbols always leaves me astounded. It is the most potent 'technology', in the postmodern sense of the term, that we have invented. We continuously learn them and perform as their subjects, beyond the walls of the classroom. Long before a speed-breaker or a red light- we slow down- it is a technology, a shared symbol, which stands in place of a traffic police personnel. Thus a symbol can make us police ourselves.

The Beduins are no different in reading, interpreting and obeying their symbols or Wusum. As per traditional Bedouin law, 'no one finding such property as protected by marking, although lying isolated in the desert without any guard, will take it. In case of sudden death of an individual in the desert, their belongings are to be taken away by someone who buried them and the Wasm of the deceased as well as that of the burier are to be depicted on the grave stone. So that the belongings or camels of the deceased could be recovered by their heirs, if they found the grave'!

As a system, the Wusum have a very intricate and beautiful detail in the way they operate. Let us take the most popular object of their marks- the camel. A Wasm can be depicted on:

right or left of the neck; right or left of the rumps; any part of the front or hind legs; on or under the ears; on the nose; on the chest or on the head. What is fascinating is this- as each tribe strictly adheres to a specific symbol, it also marks its Wasm on a specific part of the body of the camel and 'never changes its place'. Likewise all members of the tribe strictly follow the same scheme! For example the Wasm of Al-Saud, the Saudi Royal family is depicted on the upper left thigh of the camel.

Why a tribe adopts a particular Wasm is still a mystery. Dr. Khan writes, 'When I enquired of some Sheikhs or older people of various tribes, they could not give me any specific reason for adopting a certain motif as their Wasm'. So, either there is no story behind the choice or the anecdotes that could give us a clue, are lost in abyss of history.

Tribes often use their symbols as composites, often combining one or two different motifs. Thus, if 'Ø' is an eye and this '!' tears, then a tribe could put the eye on top of the tears and their symbol would read 'Tears and an eye'. This can depict anything from ownership to territorial boundaries to camping sites to tribal affinity to migration routes. Some Wusum even have a legendary 'association with some tribes of the past for their bravery'.

Similarly, symbols of different tribes on a signal rock near a well or springs etc, could be a place mutually used by those who engraved on the sites- thus serving as a document of agreement in a non-literary environment. Even today you can see them, not just on rocks and camels, but also depicted on objects of personal use like knives, swords, weaving objects, tents, hand made pottery and other belongings.

The scholarship in the Kingdom on rock art is increasing. As Abdurraheem Hobrom, one of the first to undertake postgraduate studies on the subject at Riyadh's King Sa'ud University, put it, 'People are recognizing the significance of the shared legacy and heritage of rock art. Our ancestors created these works, and we need to understand

The scholarship in the Kingdom on rock art is increasing. As Abdurraheem Hobrom, one of the first to undertake postgraduate studies on the subject at Riyadh's King Sa'ud University, put it, 'People are recognizing the significance of the shared legacy and heritage of rock art. Our ancestors created these works, and we need to understand them.'

them'. The government is also putting renewed effort into the area to attract young blood. Not long ago, 'provincial representatives of the Ministry of Education discussed the country's rock-art heritage in presentations to schools throughout Saudi Arabia's 13 provinces'.

Robert Bednarik, founder of the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations (IFRAO) believes Saudi Arabia to be one of the richest regions in the world for rock art and 'yet until now this has not been realized internationally'. This is true, as the 1998 Cambridge Illustrated History of Prehistoric Art mentions Saudi Arabia, only as a blank.

However, Bednarik's words swiftly fill in this blank, 'Saudi Arabia is taking on a pioneer role. This could lead to better things in terms of rock-art studies in other Arab countries, and opting for a scientific approach rather than one of interpretation, makes eminent sense. It's also appropriate as the Arabs were at the forefront of scientific tradition and innovation in the past'!

I do appreciate pastures, but then I am tempted to ask: is history deserted deserts? Juris Zarins, who worked on the Wusum in the 70s, quizzed too, 'throughout the world, scholarship has always slighted deserts. Even the ancients despised the desert people. This has carried over into the modern world'. I am happy to say, not any more. ☑



A Sporting chance: How Sporting Events Can Make or Break a Country's Image

By Rob Pattinson

There seems to be only one certainty for states hosting major international sporting events: an anguished PR rollercoaster ride for the countries leaders from even before the crowds start arriving. Host the Olympics or the football World Cup and you can be assured the whole world will be watching and scrutinizing your every move for the three weeks it takes for the each winners medals to be decided. And for that whole period your country's reputation is on the line.

Succeed and your international stock can soar. Think of the Sydney Olympics, in 2004, the 2006 football World Cup in Germany, or the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. These states turned their tournaments into

living adverts for their culture, economy, and tourism, even their weather. The television audiences came away eager to visit and tell their friends they can't wait to visit the Sydney Harbour Bridge, or the Brandenburg Gate and the next time



they go skiing the only destination they will consider is Canada.

The fans, who follow their sports stars across the world come home boasting: "Yes, I was there. Yes, it was great. Yes you really need to go. Yes, next time you're looking for a business partner, go there."

Fail and your country can be left fighting an unwelcome stigma for months, or even years to come. Think South Africa in 2010. The frustrating drone of vuvuzelas still echoes across the world. The quality of football in that World Cup wasn't great either. Were the players struggling in the heat. Audiences are left wondering: "Perhaps it's too humid to visit South Africa?" The general feel of the tournament transfers into the common view of the country.

Greece is still remembered as the country that very nearly forgot to finish building its stadium before the games. India's facilities were finished but falling apart when national teams began arriving for the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Just look at Britain now. With just two weeks before the London 2012 Olympics, UK ministers were panicking over unrepaired roads, forecasts of bad

weather, and an embarrassing lack of immigration facilities, which threatened to leave international visitors cooped up in airports for extended periods as they waited to enter the country.

The impact on a country's brand - good or bad - is undeniable. But with such a small margin between glory and ignominy, why do states all clamour, at such great expense, to host these events? Why do leaders expose their countries' international brands to a knife-edge?

The answer is simple, no-one believes their country will 'fail'. Country leaders only see the success stories, the tourists pouring in, the investors pouring in, the money flowing in and the influence growing. It's a simple socio-political economic formula all governments calculate and come up with the same answer - 'let's bid to be hosts'. The lure of international events lingers, even though the real economic returns of hosting are far from proven, not least versus the heavy capital outlays.

So, with country brands seemingly in need of a boost, Poland and the Ukraine had nothing to lose when they hosted the Euro2012 football championships, last month...or so they hoped.

The impact on a country's brand - good or bad - is undeniable. But with such a small margin between glory and ignominy, why do states all clamour, at such great expense, to host these events? Why do leaders expose their countries' international brands to a knife-edge?

On the pitch both teams gave impressive accounts of themselves. Ukraine, and their 35-year-old footballing doyenne Andre "Sheva" Shevchenko led them to an opening match victory over Sweden. Poland wowed their home crowds with sensational goals in their opening two games, securing a memorable draw against 'old foes' Russia.

But, as previous international sporting events have shown, events away from the pitch are what the media feeds on. What both host countries appeared to forget was sporting events and politics can rarely be separated.



German chancellor, Angela Merkel, also said she and her cabinet would not attend German games played in Ukraine, unless the country's human rights situation improved. President of the European commission, José Manuel Barroso, and Viviane Reding, the EU commissioner for justice, closely followed suit.

The Polish half

Among the good news of 'better than expected' facilities, and slick organisation by football's European governing body, UEFA, it was the flash points, which made the headlines.

Perhaps it was a detail overlooked by organisers, but the day Russia and Poland were due to meet, 12 June, was also the Russia Day - marking the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Federation in 1990. As a source of modern Russian pride, it was perhaps not surprising the nationalistic symbolism of its football side became the focal point for celebrations.

But in a move, seen considered provocative by the Poles, Russian fans arranged to march through Warsaw, across one of the city's main bridges to the ground. After the unwelcome occupation of the city, and country, by Soviets, and a residual bitterness and distrust, the gesture led to clashes after the 1-1 draw at the national stadium.

What started as energetic exchange of chants spiraled into violence when Polish police fired warning shots then used water cannons to disperse the rival fans. Up to 100 fans were arrested and

ten people were hospitalized - and the grim scenes of the clashes were beamed to homes across the world.

In isolation the violence could have been compartmentalized as a 'one off,' or the passion of the occasion spilling over into the streets. But the reality was Poland already held a reputation for football violence, underlined by an undercover BBC documentary broadcast in the weeks leading up to the tournament. It showed anti-Semitic chants and gestures and organized fights as commonplace in Polish and Ukraine domestic league grounds. The countries had looked to discredit the reports as muck-raking after they were revealed. But the violence has left the international community wondering if their was more truth in them than the host countries were prepared to admit.

The Ukraine half

Fewer fans the usual seemed to make their way into the Ukraine for the group matches. Relatively expensive travel and accommodation, as well as a perception of 'difficulty' in accessing the country appeared to deter supporters. Only a few hundred French and around five thousand English fans made their way

to Donetsk for the England, France fixture, which would ordinarily be a huge ticket seller.

Visitors were impressed with the facilities and services in the country, despite breakdowns on the new high-speed trains. The friendliness and responsiveness of the Ukraine people, coupled with the rich East culture of Kiev and the countries other cities seemed to charm all who made their way there.

But the countries spell in the limelight had drawn inevitable scrutiny of its fragile democracy. Analysts were quick to point out, to a now interested world, the Putin-style kleptocracy of President Viktor Yanukovich's regime. But the real glare of attention emerged when European ministers and commissioners announced their decision to boycotting games.

The UK government confirmed its ministers would boycott the games in protest at the "selective justice" facing jailed Ukrainian Yulia Tymoshenko.

German chancellor, Angela Merkel, also said she and her cabinet would not attend German games played in Ukraine, unless the country's human rights situation improved. President of the European commission, José Manuel Barroso, and Viviane Reding, the EU commissioner for justice, closely followed suit.

Yanukovich has refused to release Tymoshenko, the former prime minister, despite weeks of EU pressure. She was jailed for seven years in October after what her supporters say was a politically motivated show trial. The ugly diplomatic fall-out over her imprisonment was a far from ideal prologue to the tournament for the Ukraine.

Last gasp winner?

The impact of brand of hosting international sporting events is unavoidable. The Ukraine and Poland both suffered high profile blows to their images during the recent tournament. However, both were hardly celebrated as squeaky clean, democratically strong nations. There may have been high profile problems, but nothing that wasn't expected. And - except for a small number of Russians, who could well have instigated trouble themselves - none of the issues effected visiting fans.

Celebrated and 'successful' sporting events are rare. To catch the cultural zeitgeist of all countries around the world at the same time is largely unachievable. To pull off a tournament, which impresses



most of them also involves an element of luck.

As an open-minded European citizen and keen football fan, who took the time to visit Poland during the tournament, there were three clearly identifiable positives, which the country, and the Ukraine should take away with them.

1. For better or worse, both countries have proven they can stand alone, and have thrown off the shackles of the Soviet Hosting a major international event will never be as difficult again. They've done it. Some wondered whether it would work, but both countries pulled their resources together and made the tournament work. Their politics and security services may have come in for criticism, but no one has been left in any doubt the citizens of both countries are committed to a successful future with the West.

2. The improved infrastructure is there to stay. The improved stadia, rail services and roads couldn't be missed. The open space and lack of planning regulations, a hang-over from the Col War days, appears to have made fast, straight and impressive transport links all the easier to implement. The European Championships gave both countries

Celebrated and 'successful' sporting events are rare. To catch the cultural zeitgeist of all countries around the world at the same time is largely unachievable. To pull off a tournament, which impresses most of them also involves an element of luck.

the deadline looming on the horizon to finish the projects, which their citizens and returning tourists will benefit from, for years to come.

3. UEFA were right to take the tournament to Eastern Europe. European politics has been a sophisticated and evolving melting pot ever since the ascension of the former Eastern bloc countries, made even more complicated by the recent troubles of the Euro currency. Few of the new member states could compete with their Western counterparts economically, but football has always been a great leveler. Poland and the Ukraine showed they can keep with the best teams in Europe and their fans can safely celebrate alongside groups from across the world. ☑

Saudi Tourism Proves a Timely Boost for Economy

Saudi Arabia is known for oil and gas but it has also been developing its downstream industry all these years. It has started to focus attention on the development of local tourism.

Prince Sultan bin Salman, president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA), said this while delivering a speech at the 4th session of the T-20 Minister of Tourism meeting in Mexico last month. Prince Sultan made his remarks during his participation in the 2nd session of the Travel and Tourism Council of North America.

SCTA works closely with various parties and relevant partners to achieve the vision and mission of local tourism in line with the principles of Islamic values and cultural and environmental realities of the Kingdom.

The SCTA president said that tourism is "one of the most important factors for economic development and the fastest growing sector in the world," and that tourism has become the fastest growing sector in terms of job creation, and has become a major factor for the development of the world economy.

He also commented on the role of tourism in the social and economic development of Saudi Arabia by focusing attention on the citizen as the major and strategic target of the tourism development process, explaining that over the last 18 years, the key task of the SCTA since its inception is the creation of appropriate jobs for the Saudi youth.

The move is not only to make it as a source of revenue but also to create job opportunities since more and more Saudi youth who need jobs after graduating college.

In a report, SCTA said that jobs created in the tourism sector totaled 491,768 in 2010, up 2.7 percent from 478,979 the previous year.

Jobs occupied by Saudis reached 128,027 in 2010, up 25.7 percent from 123,098 the previous year.

The report indicated that the number of domestic tourism trips in 2010 reached 22,780 million, in which tourists spent more than SR31.324 billion.

In 2010, the average of daily expenditure per tourist reached SR268, up 59.1 percent from SR168 the previous year, while the average of residence reached 5.1 nights in 2010 compared to 6.2 nights the previous year.

On tourism festivals, the report said that the number of festivals reached 32 in 2010 with a total number of visitors



reaching 9.895 million. The visitors spent SR7.712 billion with an average of daily expenditure per visitor reaching SR305 compared with 27 festivals the previous year with an average daily expenditure per visitor reaching SR268.

Moreover, hotel room occupancy rate increased to 59.2 percent, and hotel beds 52.5 percent in 2010 compared with 54.6 percent for rooms and 50.4 percent for beds the previous year. Furnished flats occupancy rates also increased to 54.2 percent for flats and 44.2 percent for beds in 2010 compared with 49.8 percent for flats and 43.4 percent for beds in 2009.

The share of tourism sector in gross domestic product (GDP) estimated at 3.6 percent in 2010. The tourism sector in GDP compared with non-crude products rated 7.5 percent while it rated 12 percent compared with gross production of the Saudi private sector.

It is obvious, therefore, that tourism is an engine of growth for the Kingdom, which has stepped up efforts to develop it.

Lately, it announced that it would develop and promote

Tabuk as a major tourist destination, where snow could be found. Tabuk is in the northwestern province. In addition to snow, Tabuk is also known for other tourists attractions like mosques, fortresses and the Hejaz railway station dating back to the Ottoman Empire. In Tabuk region, a number of important archaeological sites can be found, including Al Bidaa. It has deserts

Tourism has become the fastest growing sector in the world in terms of job creation, and has become a major factor in the development of the world economy

continental weather with hot summers and mild winters. Rainfall in Tabuk falls in the winter months from November to March and precipitation ranges between 50-150 mm with some not uncommon snow every 3-4 years. Around 500 B.C., Tabuk town (then known as Taboo) was, together with Al-Ola, the capital of the prosperous Al-Ayaneyan. Around Tabuk, a great battle took place in the time of Islamic prophet Muhammad.

Mada'in Saleh, also called Al-Hijr or Hegra, is another famous local destination. It is a pre-Islamic archaeological site located in the Al-Ula sector, within the Al Madinah Region. A majority of the vestiges date from the Nabatean kingdom. The site constitutes the Kingdom's southernmost and largest settlement after Petra, its capital. Traces of Lihyanite and Roman occupation before and after the Nabatean rule, respectively, can also be found in the area, while accounts from Qur'an tell an earlier settlement of the area by the tribe of Thamud in the 3rd millennium BC. In 2008, UNESCO proclaimed Mada'in Saleh as Saudi Arabia's first World Heritage Site.



Mada'in Saleh, also called Al-Hijr or Hegra, is another famous local destination. It is a pre-Islamic archaeological site located in the Al-Ula sector, within the Al Madinah Region. A majority of the vestiges date from the Nabatean kingdom. The site constitutes the Kingdom's southernmost and largest settlement after Petra.

Not to be missed is Diriyah in Riyadh, the Kingdom's capital city. Diriyah is a town in the northwestern outskirts of the capital city. It was the original home of the Saudi royal family and served as the capital of the first Saudi dynasty from 1744 to 1818. Today, the town is the seat of the Diriyadh Governorate which includes the villages of Uyayna, Jubaya, and Al-Ammariyyah, among others, and is part of Arriyadh Province. The Turaif district of Diriyah was declared World Heritage Site in 2010.

The ruins of the old city of Diriyah lay on either side of the narrow valley known as Wadi Hanifa which continues southwards through Riyadh and beyond. Consisting almost entirely of mud-brick structures, the ruins are divided into three districts-- Ghussaibah, Al-Mulaybeed, and Turaif, set on top of hills overlooking the valley. Of the three, Turaif is the highest, and its bottom is easily accessible to tourists by foot. Part of the city wall, running along the edges of the wadi and also made of mud-bricks, are still existing along with some short observation towers. The modern city is built at a lower altitude at the foot of the hill upon which Turaif is located. To the north of the town, inside the valley, are a number of gardens, palm groves, small farms and estates. A dam known as Al-Ilb lies further north.

Among the rebuilt structures are the Bath and guest house, the Qasr Nasr, the Saad bin Saud Palace (finished by the early 90s), Burj Faysal (a wall tower renovated in the 80s), major sections of the wall

surrounding Turaif sections of the outer walls and some watch towers surrounding the wadi. Outside the Turaif district, on the opposite side of Wadi Hanifa, the region of the mosque of Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulwahab has been completely remodeled, leaving only some of the more recent original structures standing to the north of the complex building on the site of the historic mosque.

The "Turaif Development Plan" – which aims to turn the district into a major national, cultural and touristic center before turning the complete site into a modern open air museum documentation and necessary investigations, including excavations especially in places that may need to be remodelled-- is planned in three major phases. These include the Al-Imam Mohammad bin Saud Mosque and Salwa Palace; Ibraheem Ibn Saud Palace and Fahad Ibn Saud Palace; and Farhan Ibn Saud Palace, Torki Ibn Saud Palace and Qoo'a Al-Sharia'a (eastern court of Salwa Palace).

Once finished, there will be a new visitors center as well as documentation center. Four new museums are planned for the district: A museum for war and defense (as this was the site of a major siege in Saudi Arabia); museum of horses; museum for social life and museum for commerce and finance.

Although the location is sometimes identified with an ancient settlement mentioned by Yaqut and Al-Hamadani known as "Ghabra", the history of the

Diriyah proper dates back to the 15th century. According to the chroniclers Nejd, the city was founded in 1446-1447 by Mani Al-Mraydi, an ancestor of the Saudi royal family. Mani and his clan had come from the area of Al-Qatif in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia, upon the invitation of Bin Dir', who was then the ruler of a group of settlements that now make up Riyadh. Bin Dir' is said to have been a relative of Mani' Al-Mraydi, and Mani's clan is believed to have left the area of Wadi Hanifa at some unknown date and were merely returning to their country of origin.

Hail is another tourist attraction. It is located in the center of the northern part of Saudi Arabia and found between 25 and 29 degrees latitude and 38 and 42 degrees longitude. The province is surrounded by five administrative provinces that include Al- Jouf, Northern Borders, Tabuk, Madinah and Qassim.

Hail is known for its strategic location since it connects the north to the northeast and passengers from all over the Kingdom pass by Hail on their way to Makkah. It covers an area of approximately 11,283 sq. km, or approximately 6% of the total land area of the Kingdom. Hail's climate is continental. Day temperatures are very warm and can reach an average of 30-34 degrees Celsius during summer but cool down after sunset to more mild temperatures. Winter temperatures, on the other hand, are very cool and decrease to 5-15 degrees Celsius during winter. And may fall down to below zero temperatures.

Rail falls during winter and spring. Winds drift with an average speed of 10 km per hour. Spring is the best season for visiting Hail when climate is mild and rainy. It is known for its diverse topography as it consists of valleys, mountains, sand and rock formations. Hail's main topography features can be classified into Al Hammad area which is known for its calcerous hills and deep valleys; Nfoud desert that covers an area of 40,000 sq. km. and makes up approximately 1/3 of the area; sand formations which cover vast areas such as A'roug Almadhoor. It is located west of the Dahna desert, which is one of the most important grazing areas in the region and the best place for camping in the summer, and finally, rock formations located to the western part of Hail and cover about 1/3 of the province. It is one of the most famous tourism sites in Hail and contain the most prominent mountains such as the mountain of Salma, Ajja, Heden, Ruman, Louf, Khashab, Aqab and other prominent mountains.

Moreover, Hail is rich in handicrafts and industries. Traditional souks and shops reflect local customs, beliefs and traditions that are based on Islamic rules and regulations.

"In Hail, you can enjoy traditional literature such as poetry, stories, narratives, and legends and acting. You can also enjoy different sports activities such as horse riding, horse and camel racing competitions, and hunting using falcons and saluki dogs," said a local official.

Hail is also rich in traditional clothes and jewelry as well as in traditional dishes that are famous not only in the Kingdom but also in the neighboring countries as well.

The same local official added, "Hail is also rich in beautiful natural sites represented in the mountains, deserts, and the botanical and zoological life, although animals are rare in many areas. There are some caves, craters and beautiful plateaus with great scenery and soft breeze."

Hail is also famous for diverse sports activities related to the beautiful nature of this area, such as hiking in the Ajja

Mountains, as well as for hunting in different seasons. Those who prefer dune driving (Ta'Ees) can enjoy the Nfoud sands.

"In Hail, you can practice horse riding that people of Hail are famous for, and gun firing provided that you use special shotguns licensed by proper authorities in the Kingdom," the official said.

But there is more in visiting Hail. There are also shopping centers where there are many international brands of textiles, clothes, jewelry, makeup, electronics, and handicrafts. There are also traditional souks and shops that sell many traditional items such as Dallah (coffee pot), incense burners, and many traditional handicrafts. Hails is also known for its traditional cookie (Clayjah), red pepper, mint and many other popular traditional dishes. ☑



By Dr. Turki Alawwad
Editor-in-Chief

Public Diplomacy: A New Science or another Face of Propaganda?

The importance of new kinds of international political communication such as public diplomacy and “country branding” is growing rapidly.

The aim of these methods is to improve foreigners’ perceptions of a country. Wars today go beyond the military and economic, into the sphere of public opinion. The media machine has turned into a means of domination, making the media an important strategic battleground.

Perceptions of countries, in which the media plays a large part in creating, may help those countries solicit support when they face moments of crisis.

To be clear on the meaning of “public diplomacy”, it is important to differentiate it from propaganda. Some academics and practitioners of the former argue that it is a new, refined form of the latter. Others see public diplomacy as a discipline in its own right, separate from propaganda.

Use of the term “public diplomacy” in the place of “propaganda” does not mean that the two are synonymous. Propaganda usually implies a deliberate attempt (usually on the part of a government) to make the public think or act in a particular way. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, aims to build a dialogue between the government and the public. The distinction between the two can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, public diplomacy relies on indirect methods of communication, whilst propaganda is more direct. One reason many public diplomacy campaigns fail is that they use methods that are too direct. The recipient – that is, the public – rejects the campaigns, seeing them as brazen propaganda. Accusations of spinning propaganda are the surest sign that a public diplomacy campaign has failed.

Secondly, public diplomacy focuses on the long term, whereas propaganda campaigns tend to aim at making a quick impact in the short term. The American government’s Second World War campaign to shake the German and Japanese peoples’ confidence in their governments ended with the close of the war. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, should have a long-term impact that outlasts the campaign itself.

Thirdly, public diplomacy aims to create a dialogue between peoples. It does not treat people as passive recipients. Propaganda, on the other hand, only tries to influence people – not to understand them.

The “recipient” of public diplomacy campaigns is at the same time a collocutor and a participant in a dialogue. Therefore, those running a campaign must be very familiar with the other side before they even start designing their strategy. Propaganda, of course, is a one-way channel that does not attempt to engage the recipient beyond the short-term goal of influencing his or her behavior or thinking.

Public diplomacy gives the recipient the opportunity to engage with the message and build a dialogue. This also gives the campaigner the chance to understand how the recipient sees the message, allowing him or her to “tweak” that message in order to make it more palatable and appropriate for the audience.

The fourth distinction is that public diplomacy is an art aimed at creating mutual understanding and promoting co-existence. Respect for other peoples and their cultural differences is key to a successful public diplomacy campaign.

After all, the underlying aims of public diplomacy are to build mutual understanding and familiarity, rather than undermining people’s trust in their government or confidence in their own culture. This is unlike propaganda, which uses lies, rumors and attacks on both the cultures and governments of other countries in order to fulfill short-term goals.

Finally, the sources of propaganda are usually hidden. Propagandists do not generally announce their ownership of campaigns. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, comes from a known source. A government sending messages to the people of another country should not be shy to make public that it is the source of those messages. After all, this kind of dialogue is not underhand, like propaganda. Rather, it is both ethical and necessary. ☑