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SAUDI ARABIA-US

Saudi ambassador continues outreach program in Northeast, Virginia

Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal continued his outreach tour this week with visits to New York City, the Boston area, and Richmond, Virginia. In his remarks, Prince Turki touched on a variety of issues, including Saudi-US relations, terrorism, oil prices and Saudi Arabia's role in the global community.

At Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York City, Prince Turki focused on Osama bin Laden and oil prices. The ambassador stressed that bin Laden has corrupted Islam, and that the Al-Qaeda leader's ideology is one of hate in which everyone is a target. Prince Turki called for greater international cooperation and the promotion of understanding among cultures to combat the common threat of terrorism. He also said that the Saudi people are galvanized to fight terrorism, and outlined a number of counterterrorism measures the Kingdom has taken, including implementing strict banking and charity controls to thwart terrorist funding.

On oil prices, Prince Turki reiterated that Saudi Arabia seeks to act as a steady and balancing force for global markets. He noted that the Kingdom has undertaken several initiatives to that end, including expanding production and refining capacity.

At the Fletcher School of Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts April 27, Prince Turki discussed the importance of the Saudi-US Strategic Dialogue, an initiative that aims to institutionalize relations between the two countries. "The Strategic Dialogue is intended to be the institution that transcends the ephemeral nature of individual relationships; it will be the means through which we can build on our successes, on our accomplishments, and even on our incremental gains," Prince Turki said.

In remarks at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia April 28, Prince Turki touched on Saudi history and culture, as well as the Kingdom's role in the global community. He noted the tremendous progress Saudi Arabia has made in recent decades, and stressed that the country will continue to actively participate in the global community in a way that is consistent with Saudi traditions. "The pursuit of successful and lasting change must be deliberate to be real," Prince Turki said.

In addition to these visits, Prince Turki delivered remarks on “The Middle East on the Global Agenda: A Saudi Perspective” at a conference of the International Peace Academy at the US Military Academy at West Point, New York May 2.

At West Point, Prince Turki underscored that Saudi Arabia is a stabilizing force in the region, and is cooperating with neighbors and members of the global community to work towards a stable and prosperous Middle East, particularly in the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iraq. He called on the Palestinian and Israeli governments to adopt the Arab Peace Plan, which was originally proposed by then-Crown Prince Abdullah, and noted Saudi efforts to bring about reconciliation among Iraqi factions.

“We know the problems we face today will not be solved overnight, but if we work to keep the solutions in place, they will eventually be reconciled. And if we pay attention to the basic needs of the people, we will avoid adding to tomorrow’s conflicts as well,” Prince Turki said. “Let us continue to promote cooperation and strengthen our collective will to bring about the hopes of all nations, in order for our people to prosper and benefit from mutual exchange.”

