



OCTOBER 31, 2006

## SAUDI ARABIA-US

### **Prince Turki delivers keynote address at NCUSAR conference**

Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal delivered the keynote address at the National Council on US-Arab Relations' 15<sup>th</sup> annual Arab-US Policymakers' Conference in Washington October 30. He also participated in a panel discussion of the future of the GCC region.

In his keynote address, Prince Turki discussed Saudi constitutional evolution and the Allegiance Institution, established recently to formalize the royal succession. The Institution will consist of a committee of princes that will vote on the appointment of future Saudi kings and crown princes.

Prince Turki said that the new system is an evolution of the traditional Arab role of consultation in determining succession that dates back to the Caliph Omar, and that Saudi constitutional evolution has long emphasized the importance of consultation.

"Saudi Arabia has been progressing towards its own form of representative institutions. We have not reached the end of that path, but we have embarked on it with steadfastness and determination," Prince Turki said. "Most importantly, Saudi Arabia's constitutional evolution is homegrown and consistent with the traditions of its people and the tenets of Islam."

In the question and answer session after his address, Prince Turki reiterated that Iraq is an issue of primary concern to the Kingdom, and stated that the US and Iraq should work out the withdrawal of American troops together.

"I've continued to say since I've come here that since America came into Iraq uninvited, it should not leave Iraq uninvited," he said. "And by that I mean that the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government should engage with the United States in how and where and the wherewithal of the kind of relationship they will have with each other when American forces withdraw from Iraq."

Prince Turki echoed these remarks in an October 31 interview with CNN's Miles O'Brien. He also responded to President Bush's recent call for moderate Arab states to help stabilize Iraq by pointing out that Saudi Arabia has been providing aid and support to Iraq well before the president's request.

In an interview with CNN International's Jim Clancy, also on October 31, Prince Turki said that due to the shared history and tribal connections between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the situation in Iraq has had an immediate effect on Saudi Arabia. He added that the Kingdom's immediate concern is for its neighbor to achieve stability.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Saudi Aramco, Foster Wheeler sign agreement on Manifa project**

Saudi Aramco and the Clinton, New Jersey-based engineering and energy company Foster Wheeler signed an agreement today for the onshore project management consultancy and front-end engineering and design contracts of the Manifa oil field.

Located off the Saudi coast in the Arabian Gulf, the Manifa field has a capacity of 900,000 barrels per day of Arabian heavy crude. In addition to the crude oil, the Manifa project will process 120 million standard cubic feet per day of associated gas.

### **Bill Gates to address the Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh**

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz will sponsor the first Global Competitiveness Forum Series in Riyadh on November 8, 2006. Microsoft chairman and founder Bill Gates will deliver the keynote address at the event.

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) and Microsoft Arabia made the announcement October 28.

In his remarks, Gates will discuss the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on economic competitiveness in Saudi Arabia and the impact of the technology boom the Kingdom is currently experiencing. It will be Gates' first-ever visit to Saudi Arabia.

The Global Competitiveness Forum brings together global leaders in IT and economy to share their ideas and visions with Saudi businesspeople with the aim of enhancing investment competitiveness in the Kingdom and addressing challenges faced by local and foreign investors. It is being launched on the directive of King Abdullah.

