



SAUDI ARABIA

*and*

THE UNITED STATES

**FACT SHEET: SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS**

MAY 2017

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930s, when American businessmen first traveled to the Kingdom to help develop the country's natural resources. Today, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is stronger than ever.

On issues of national security and economic opportunity, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is vital. The Kingdom remains one of America's closest allies and strongest economic partners in the Middle East. American and Saudi security forces work together to root out terrorism.

Saudi Arabia works with the U.S. to open markets for American goods and create jobs for Americans. Our two countries continue to cultivate this partnership through a broad range of cultural and educational exchanges. As the number of students and tourists traveling between the two countries continues to grow, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. will strengthen their relationship in the decades to come.

In May 2017, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz welcomes President Trump and leaders from the Islamic World for three major summits – the Saudi Arabia and U.S. summit, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and U.S. summit, and the Arab Islamic American summit. The foundation will be laid for a new beginning in these important relationships and the promise of greater cooperation and understanding.

This historic encounter follows the March 2017 visit by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Washington to meet with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. During that visit, the leaders announced their commitment to strengthen U.S.-Saudi cooperation in the economic, commercial, investment, and energy fields.



## Counterterrorism

- Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, was awarded the Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal for his relentless counterterrorism efforts and commitment to international peace, demonstrating the strength of cooperation between the Saudi Ministry of Interior and the CIA.
- Saudi Arabia is among the coalition nations of Operation Inherent Resolve conducting airstrikes against Daesh (ISIS) in Syria.
  - Saudi Arabia has announced that it is ready to send ground troops to fight Daesh in Syria as part of the U.S.-led coalition.
- Saudi Arabia, the United States and Italy are co-chairs of the Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG). The CIFG was established in 2015 with the aim of enhancing the sharing of information and developing coordinated countermeasures to disrupt ISIL's financing.
- Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have established two Joint Task Forces—one to combat terrorists, another to combat terror financing. Experts from both governments work side-by-side, sharing real-time information about terror networks.
- Recent joint actions to disrupt terror financing include:
  - October 2016: Imposed sanctions on two individuals and a business over links with Hezbollah in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Treasury.
  - March 2016: Imposed sanctions on leading terrorist individuals and entities with ties across Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, disrupting the fundraising and support networks of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.
  - April 2015: Disrupted the financing and operations of Al-Furqan Foundation Welfare Trust, which is the successor entity to the Afghan Support Committee and Revival of Islamic Heritage Society branches in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both were designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists and listed on the United Nations Al-Qaeda Sanctions List in 2002.
  - In 2011, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Intelligence helped foil a plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.
  - In 2010, Saudi intelligence provided key information to American officials. The information helped foil an attempted terrorist plot involving bombs heading to the United States that originated in Yemen.
- The Saudi government has increased the size, training and professionalism of its security forces, which are now seasoned by direct experience in Saudi Arabia. Saudi security forces have trained alongside American counterterrorism forces in the U.S. This experience and training has led to the arrest and conviction of hundreds of wanted terrorists and the destruction of most of the known terrorist cells in the Kingdom.
- The Saudi-U.S. Strategic Dialogue, a counterterrorism working group created following September 11, 2001, continues to help ensure the governments' efforts and resources are aligned.



## Defense Cooperation

- Saudi and U.S. defense forces regularly participate in joint exercises to advance shared interests in regional security.
- Saudi Arabia is the largest U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer, with nearly \$100 billion in active FMS cases.

## Trade and Investment

- Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 lays out a path for increased trade and investment with the United States.
- Saudi Arabia is 12th largest trading partner of the U.S. while the U.S. is the second largest trading partner of Saudi Arabia.
- U.S. exports to Saudi Arabia in 2016 totaled \$18 billion. Total bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$35 billion in 2016.
- The U.S. has the highest share of FDI stock in Saudi Arabia.
- Approximately 10,400 jobs were created in the U.S. as a result of Saudi investments in the country.
- In April 2017, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted the U.S.-Saudi Arabia CEO Summit to facilitate discussions on a new partnership for job creation under Saudi Vision 2030. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson delivered remarks at the event, reaffirming that "[U.S.] support for a strong and steady partner on economic cooperation remains as firm as ever."

## Education

- The late King Abdullah created the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2006. Saudi Arabia sends more university students to the U.S. than it does to any other country.
- In 2016, more than 65,000 Saudi students were studying in the United States.
- King Abdullah University of Science and Technology opened in 2009. This international research university established a digital library partnership with the U.S. Library of Congress in 2008, and has signed agreements with many U.S. universities. This is one of many educational partnerships between the two countries.