
Counter-Terrorism International Conference

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
February 5-8, 2005



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“This conference represents the will of the international community to combat this crime in every aspect by fighting evil with justice, confronting deviant thought with wisdom and noble ideas, and challenging extremism with moderation and tolerance.”

HRH Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz,
Deputy Prime Minister and Commander
of the National Guard, February 5, 2005

OPENING ADDRESS



HRH Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard

Opening address by HRH Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard.

“Terrorism does not belong to any culture, or religion, or political system.”

In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

My Dear Brothers and Friends:

May God’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

It is my pleasure to thank you for accepting the invitation to participate in this historic gathering, and to welcome you, on behalf of my brother, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques – may God protect him – and on behalf of the Saudi people, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the land of peace and Islam, from which an eternal message of equality and friendship between all people was launched. In the words of the Almighty: *“O, Mankind, we have created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you before God is the one who is most pious.”*

This eternal call from our Almighty God represents the true spirit of Islam, a religion of peace, wisdom and righteousness, not the false slogans espoused by those outside the bounds of Islam who proclaim them from dark caves in order for the enemies of Islam to use them to create a distorted picture of our faith. The prophet of Islam - God’s peace and blessings be upon him - is a prophet of mercy, and Islam is a religion of mercy. It is therefore not possible that mercy and terrorism can co-exist in one mind, or one heart, or one house.

My Dear Friends:

The convening of this conference, which includes nations from various cultures, faiths and political systems, is clear testimony that terrorism, when it strikes its victims, does not differentiate between cultures, faiths or forms of government. Terrorism does not belong to any culture, or religion, or political system. It is a global crime perpetrated by evil minds filled with hatred towards humanity and consumed with a blind desire to kill and destroy.

This conference represents the will of the international community to combat this crime in every aspect by fighting evil with justice, confronting deviant thought with wisdom and noble ideas, and challenging extremism with moderation and tolerance.

“...I call upon all countries to establish an international center for combating terrorism where experts in this area can exchange information instantly in response to the demands of the situation and the need to prevent incidents – God willing – before they occur.”

It is important to recognize that terrorism is strongly linked to three other global crimes: arms smuggling, drug smuggling and money laundering. It will be more difficult for us to prevail in our war on terrorism if our war does not include a serious effort to confront the three other crimes.

My Dear Friends:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to suffer from terrorism and warn of its dangers. It has dealt with it vigilantly on the local, regional and international levels. We are fighting terrorism, those who support it and those who condone it. We will continue to do so until we eliminate, with the help of God, this evil. During this conference, we will present our experience in dealing with terrorism, and we also look forward to benefiting from your experiences in this area. I have no doubt - God willing - that our collective experiences will help all of us in the battle against terrorism. It is our hope that this conference will usher in a new era of international cooperation in the war against terrorism that will enable us to rid our world of this threat.

In this regard, I call upon all countries to establish an international center for combating terrorism where experts in this area can exchange information instantly in response to the demands of the situation and the need to prevent incidents – God willing – before they occur.

I realize that the danger of terrorism cannot be eliminated overnight, and that our war against terrorism will be long and difficult, and that terrorism is becoming increasingly violent and vicious as we tighten the noose around it. But I am fully confident - God willing - that the final outcome will be a resounding victory for the forces of moderation, tolerance and peace against the forces of hatred, extremism and crime, with the help of God Almighty, the ultimate supporter and protector.

Thank you, and may God’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Excerpts from a speech by HRH Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior at the opening of the first plenary session.

“The terrorist events that have been witnessed by [Saudi Arabia] have been perpetrated by a minority of miscreants who claimed that their crimes were motivated by religion. This is a patently false claim, because their crimes in reality have nothing to do with the true Islamic faith. In fact, they have just been the purveyors of a delinquent ideology that has lost its way and forsaken the tolerant teachings of Islam, feeding instead on alien ideas that have caused damage to human life and property....

“...In fact, terrorism is not just an act, but the product of an aberrant ideology that must be fought. That is why the onus of the responsibility lies with all societies, with all their institutions, to confront and combat terrorism since, just as the security institutions have their obligations, cultural - academic, mass media, and educational - institutions have a great responsibility to inculcate the right ideals and sound human values and to immunize societies against any delinquent ideas or evil deeds.”



HRH Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior



HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Excerpts from a daily press briefing by HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs on February 6, 2005.

“The delegates also agreed that any counter-terrorism attempt will fall short unless it is part of a collective effort on the part of the international community...They also called for an international strategy to combat terror through a unified and comprehensive system for exchanging information ...The Crown Prince’s call for establishing an international center for combating terrorism has been commended and welcomed by various countries.”

“The Kingdom had long ago started working on reviewing and revising as well as developing its curriculum to meet the demands of Saudi society. It was improved to conform to the needs of today’s generation and to upgrade the student’s knowledge and logic based on human causes and motives required of the new generation. We tried to eliminate any flaws or what might hinder progress and we tried to ensure that the new curriculum focuses more on understanding, humanity and tolerance.”

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



“Any statements made by leaders of terror organizations that threaten our facilities will always be taken seriously. We have taken additional security measures...in the last three to four months to make sure that our facilities, which were already well protected, will be even more protected so that no terrorist will succeed in damaging (even) slightly our facilities.”

**Dr. Ali bin Ibrahim Al-Naimi,
Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources**



“It is high time for the ulama [Muslim scholars], and all thinkers, intellectuals and academics, to shoulder their responsibility towards the enlightenment of the people, especially the young people, and protect them from deviant ideas.”

**Shaikh Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh,
Minster of Islamic Affairs,
Endowments, Call and Guidance**



“There are two things to remember about reform. First, a genuine reform is one that is homegrown and responds to the real needs and demands of the society. Such a reform always goes hand-in-hand with the values that govern the behavior of individuals and groups, and cannot be attained through importing ready-made models. Second, the success of a reform presupposes a well-thought-out and gradual approach rather than the pursuit of an abrupt change. Experiences worldwide, and notably in the Arab world, prove that any attempt to develop communities through revolution and coups produces only destruction.”

**Dr. Ghazi bin Abdulrahman Al-Qusaibi,
Minister of Labor**

DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Excerpts from the address to the Counter-Terrorism International Conference by Ms. Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the U.S. President and Homeland Security Advisor

On behalf of the President, I want to extend our warm and heartfelt appreciation to the Saudi Arabian government for hosting this event. So recently after hosting pilgrims from around the world making their hajj and so close to historic municipal elections, the leadership and commitment the Saudis have shown towards finding practical and effective ways to fight terrorism are commendable. And I must say, the courage and bravery of all Saudi counterterrorism forces, most especially Mabahith, is laudable and no doubt a source of enormous pride for all citizens of the Kingdom. Here in Saudi Arabia, many lives have been lost, and more have been wounded in the fight against evil. To the injured and to the families of the killed, I say 'thank you' - as a result of your sacrifice, the world is safer...

...In working closely with the Saudi leadership over the past few years, together we have developed some key lessons about combating terrorism. I would like to share some thoughts on the critical elements we have identified to fight and win the fight against terror from our close cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

Leadership, intelligence gathering and sharing, crisis management, international cooperation, operational skill and capacity, basic police work, financial acumen, forensic capacity, cultural and religious understanding, and media and information strategies are all part of the long list that each country must cultivate and tailor to meet its own needs.

The most important of these, as we have learned in recent years and across our 60-year relationship, is leadership and the shared vision between leaders on how to fight against the scourge of terrorism. In this context, even before the horrific attacks in Riyadh on May 12, 2003, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia had been increasing counterterrorism cooperation in the wake of 9/11. The events of May 12 provided added impetus to that cooperation and we have witnessed first-hand the comprehensive Saudi approach to the war on terror. Shortly after May 12, Saudi Arabia's King, Crown Prince and other senior leaders declared that terrorism would not deter efforts toward reform and development, and that all of Saudi society had a role in countering extremists and their espousal of hate and their indiscriminate use of violence.

Saudi Arabia's leaders understand that the Saudi people expect law enforcement and security forces to find and capture violent extremists. Safety and security for the entire society come before attempting to change the hearts and minds of those planning or carrying out terrorist acts. There can be neither negotiation nor accommodation with those who advocate capturing, maiming and killing innocents.

“The world cannot succeed in defeating global terrorism without Saudi Arabia’s victory over terrorism and extremism on its own soil. We stand with the Saudis in that fight and this conference is a testament to their commitment – to their dedication to combating terrorism.”



AFP Photos

Ms. Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President and Homeland Security Advisor

The world cannot succeed in defeating global terrorism without Saudi Arabia's victory over terrorism and extremism on its own soil. We stand with the Saudis in that fight and this conference is a testament to their commitment – to their dedication to combating terrorism.

While the media has focused on terrorist acts and the violent confrontations, we have noted that much more is happening in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government and media have begun to educate Saudis about the dangers of extremism. Parents, educators, and government and religious leaderships are playing an increasing role in speaking out against extremism. Greater efforts are necessary, however, if we are to succeed in eradicating terrorism from the Kingdom and the world.

In a broader context, I believe that Saudi Arabia's efforts to improve the economy, commerce, education and political participation will in time provide other, constructive outlets for young Saudi citizens. That effort will be the foundation stone to the Kingdom's long-term strategy in defeating terrorism and reinforcing a sense of optimism and hope.

Defeating terrorism demands strong leadership, shared responsibility and accountability, and a commitment to change. We recently witnessed successful, democratic elections in Iraq. These follow closely on free and fair elections in Afghanistan and the West Bank and Gaza. These events - if allowed to resonate - are a measure of dramatic change. We are also seeing an historic change in the Israeli/Palestinian situation, one that can lead to the fulfillment of President Bush's vision of two states living side by side in peace and security...

...We come from more than 60 countries and international organizations. We are the product of different cultures, different religions, different educations, different forms of government and many different experiences. But today I invite you to put differences aside and seek common ground. Each of us here is a son or daughter, husband or wife, father or mother. And so like you, I am here to learn how I might make the world safer for my children and someday for their children.

RIYADH DECLARATION



The Counter-Terrorism International Conference held in Riyadh, February 5-8, 2005, issued a final communiqué on February 8, known as the 'Riyadh Declaration.' The following is a summarization.

The Riyadh Declaration stresses that no international effort will be capable of effective confrontation with the phenomenon of terrorism unless there is cooperation and a comprehensive strategic perspective to deal with it. Within this framework, the countries and organizations support and adopt the proposal of Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, referred to in his opening address to the Conference, for the establishment of an international center for combating terrorism. A task force has been formed to crystallize this proposal.

The communiqué praised the spirit of understanding and cooperation that prevailed during the Conference and the unanimity of vision and stance concerning the danger of the phenomenon of terrorism and the necessity of confronting it by long-term, united, and organized international efforts. These efforts must respect the principles of the United Nations, particularly those regulations governing human rights that enhance its inherent role, in adopting a comprehensive and multilateral approach. The Conference affirmed that terrorism constantly threatens peace, security and stability, and that there is no justification whatsoever for terrorist acts, which are always condemned whatever their circumstances or alleged motives might be.

The Declaration emphasized the importance of enhancing the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, and multilateralism, becoming acquainted with other peoples, bringing cultures together, rejecting any clash of civilizations, and combating any ideology that calls for hatred, instigates violence, or justifies the terrorist crimes that are denounced by all religions and laws.

The Conference affirmed that terrorism has no particular religion, race, nationality or geographical area. In this context, it stressed that any attempt to link terrorism with any religion is helpful only to the terrorists.

The countries and organizations participating in the Conference emphasized their commitment to the United Nations resolutions that relate to combating terrorism, calling on the international community to condemn terrorism, combat it by all means available, and confront it in every way in accordance with the United Nations Charter, since terrorist acts threaten international peace and security.

The Declaration stressed that the United Nations is the basic platform for the enhancement of international cooperation against terrorism, that the relevant UN Security Council resolutions form a firm and comprehensive basis for combating terrorism internationally, and that

all countries should fully comply with these resolutions. It called on all countries to join, ratify and implement the twelve international treaties on combating terrorism.

The Declaration called for the promotion of self-effort aimed at expanding political participation, achieving sustainable development, meeting the requirements of the social equilibrium, and activating the role of civil institutions, in order to confront the circumstances that are conducive to the spread of violence and deviant ideas. It emphasized the role of the mass media, civil institutions and educational systems in forging strategies to confront terrorist allegations and encouraging the press to set down guidelines for information and news reports.

The Conference demanded that the United Nations develop criteria to facilitate non-profit, charitable and humanitarian organizations in carrying out their roles organizing relief work, and to prevent their exploitation in illegal activities.

The Declaration called for cooperation at national, bilateral, and regional levels among specializing bodies in the fight against not only terrorism, but money laundering, trafficking in weapons and explosives, and smuggling drugs, in order to exchange their expertise and experience, including training, and ensure their effectiveness in confronting terrorist links to organized crime. It stressed the need to strengthen international measures aimed at preventing terrorists from possessing weapons of mass destruction and to support the role of the United Nations in this respect, including full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540. It called for supporting and assisting countries, upon their request, in the field of combating terrorism particularly in providing equipment and training and building up their capabilities.

The countries and organizations participating in the Conference called for the development of legislation and measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting the laws of asylum and immigration in order to obtain a safe haven in certain countries or use the territories of these countries as bases for recruitment or training, or for planning, instigating or launching acts of terrorism against other countries.

The Declaration emphasized the importance of spreading virtuous human values and the spirit of tolerance and coexistence, urging the media to refrain from publishing information materials that call for extremism and violence.

ATTENDING NATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Algeria
Arab Republic of Egypt
Argentina
Australia
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Denmark
Ethiopia
France
Greece
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Islamic State of Afghanistan
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kingdom of Bahrain
Kingdom of Morocco
Lebanon
Malaysia
Pakistan
People's Republic of China
Philippines
Republic of India
Republic of Yemen
Russia

Singapore
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
State of Kuwait
State of Qatar
Sudan
Sultanate of Oman
Syria
Federal Republic of Germany
Tajikistan
Tanzania
The Netherlands
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
United States of America
Uzbekistan

African Union
Council of Arab Ministers of Interior
European Union
Gulf Cooperation Council
Interpol
League of Arab States
Muslim World League
Organization of the Islamic Conference
United Nations – First Delegation
United Nations – Second Delegation

Host:

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
601 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037
Tel: (202) 337-4134 Fax: (202) 944-5983
www.saudiembassy.net