

The speech of

HRH Prince

Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud

Crown Prince, Deputy Premier, Minister of  
Defense and Aviation and Inspector General

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

At the institute of Southeast Asian Studies

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In The name of God the most Merciful Companion

Your Excellency Mr Goh Chok Tong, Senior Minister  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

Peace be upon you, and good evening,

In addressing this distinguished audience, I would like to start by expressing my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the friendly government and people of Singapore for their generous hospitality which I and the accompanying delegation have received.

I am also pleased by expanding the bilateral cooperation between our two countries, as we signed yesterday a number of agreements and memoranda pertaining to trade cooperation, investment promotion and guarantees, bilateral, political consultation and establishing a Saudi Singaporean business council.

Mr. Chairman:

We are in a new era of Asian Arab cooperation. The relations between the countries of the two regions are witnessing an excellent development. The volume of commercial exchange has tripled in the last few years. The tourism business is seeing increasing numbers as well.

The recent visits of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz to a number of Asian countries states has come to emphasize the support of Saudi Arabia to this trend. Your friendly states' initiative in starting dialogue between Asia and the Middle East last year was aiming at the enactment of ties, the deepening of mutual understanding and the support of opportunities for bilateral cooperation to serve common interests.

Through the world community, this initiative would contribute to achieving more development and modernization for the human civilization, facing the challenges posed by globalization and to serve international peace and security.

Before exploring available opportunities for the enhancement of the Arab – Asian cooperation, I would like to point out that the success of development programs and the increase in common economic interests will lessen the sharpness of tensions among states and will drive away the danger of conflicts. Understandably, any tense and unstable situation in any part of the world will negatively affect other parts. This, in turn, will lead to slowing the development rate and will surely hamper development program.

The increasing rate of development in the economies of a number of Asian and Arab countries, makes it incumbent on us to enhance the bilateral cooperation in all areas and maximizing the benefits from available opportunities in order to achieve common interests.

In the area of trade exchange and investment between the two regions, there is an expectation for achieving great development . There is a developing segment of people with middle income which will definitely contribute to a constant increase of commercial volume between the two regions.

In the area of investment, there are a number giant projects which are being executed or planned in the two regions

In this context, it is important to mention the expedient programs of privatization in a number of Arab and Asian countries. For example, right now in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, huge programs in this field are being executed which are either totally owned by the private sector or gradually moving from rent to own. This includes sectors like water desalinization and treatment, electricity generation, gas exploration and use, exploring and manufacturing minerals, telecommunications, air transportation, airports and sea ports. This is beside what the private sector offers in various areas.

Mr. Chairman:

The development of resources and the economic prospering are the two main aspects for a better future in the developing countries. In this regards, I would like to proudly mention the unique experience of the friendly Republic of Singapore. Hers is a distinct model of development by all measures. The Republic of Singapore, along with a number of Asian countries with similar achievements, are well positioned to contribute in this field through cooperation with countries that are planning to develop their economies.

In this respect, the development of the human resources performance must have the priority in development programs. There is no doubt that cultural exchange and cooperation in various academic, professional and technological aspects will support the economic development in our countries. It will also contribute directly to the improvement of the living standards of our nations.

Mr. Chairman:

Based on the responsibility of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and her influential position in the world oil market, the Kingdom she has worked constantly to fulfill its promises in stabilizing the world oil markets in order to support the development of the world economy. Hence, the kingdom has started executing an ambitious program to increase its production capacity to meet the increasing demand for oil. This program costs over fifty billion US dollars. When this program is fully developed, the production capacity will reach 12 million and a half barrels a day. The program includes, among other things, a big expansion in abilities for oil refining inside as well as outside the Kingdom.

Based on the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia has worked on establishing the International Energy Forum and hosting its general secretariat in Riyadh. The purpose is to become the platform for discussing the possibilities and opportunities of cooperation and dialogue between the

consuming and producing countries whether from OPEC or not. We are hopeful that the whole world will gain the maximum benefit from this forum.

Mr. Chairman:

After addressing the possibilities of Arab- Asian economic and commercial cooperation, let me briefly talk about the most important challenges facing us. As I mentioned earlier, our contemporary world makes it incumbent upon us to unit our international efforts in facing these challenges. In the Middle East, for example, the Arab Israeli conflict is still waiting for a just and comprehensive solution within the international legal framework. We are so hopeful that this will take place according to the initiative put forward by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz which was adopted by both the Fourteenth Arab Summit in Beirut in 2002 and the Road Map. We are aspiring for security and stability in Iraq, its unity and independence within secure borders so as to be able through the participation of all its groups to stand up and occupy its proper place in the Arab and world community.

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Friends:

The disease of terrorism is one the most important challenges facing us all now a days. Fighting terrorism is no longer a domestic matter that can be dealt with within one's borders. It has become one of the objectives of the world community. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in all the world forums, has emphasized its strong rejection and condemnation of all forms of terrorism. Terrorist actions are in grave violation of the teachings and values of Islam. The kingdom has strongly expressed her determination to continue to exert all possible efforts in combating this disease and whoever helps in financing or inciting terrorism.

In this respect, Saudi Arabia has called for an international conference to fight terrorism. This conference took place in Riyadh

in 2005 and issued important recommendations among which was the proposal of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz to establish an international center for combating terrorism which we hope the United Nations will adapt.

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Friends:

In view of the fast unfolding of events and developments in the world community, we are so in need of uniting our international efforts and working hard to instill the concepts of dialogue. We are in dire need of raising the level of understanding and communication among nations and civilizations. We need to spread the culture of peace, affirm the principles of justice, tolerance and equity among people and nations. Indeed, we dearly need to reject violence, injustice and all forms of racial discrimination.

The moral values standing on these great principles which are enjoyed by our two friendly nations beside their development experiences and overcoming challenges will make us so certain that the future of our relations is very promising. We are sure that the relations among the countries of both regions will see more development and be flourishing in all fields.

In the end, I would like to extend my thanks for all of you. You have been kind to attend. I would like also to thank the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies for kindly inviting me to meet you all this evening.

May peace be with you.