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"GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES: WHAT FUTURE ARAB EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS?"

CHAIR:

Ms. Anne Joyce – Vice President, Middle East Policy Council; Editor, *Middle East Policy*.

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Mody Al Khalaf – Director of Social and Cultural Affairs, Saudi Cultural Mission, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Magali Rheault – Senior Analyst with the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies.

Ms. Maggie Mitchell Salem – Executive Director of Qatar Foundation International; former Regional Director for the MENA region at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems; first Director of Communications and External Relations for the Middle East Institute; former Foreign Service Officer, United States Department of State.

COMMENTATOR:

Mr. John Moran – Career Member of the U.S. Senior Foreign Service, United States Department of State; Distinguished Diplomat in Residence, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations.

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EDUCATION

[Ms. Anne Joyce] Thank you very much, and thank you to John Duke Anthony and the National Council for having this program. It's broad, deep and complex and it gives us all an opportunity to examine issues that aren't in the public debate all the time, at least from this perspective.

I think we have to be a little humble when we talk about education. We Americans tend to preach to others about it, as if it were the Philosopher's Stone, whereby you could transform base metals into gold. Not quite. Education is necessary but not sufficient. We also have to talk about what kind of education we're talking about. What is appropriate for any particular society? Are we talking about liberal arts education, critical thinking, technical training? There are many aspects to it and when you see our or unemployment rate at the moment, and the amount of discontent in our society about jobs and careers and so forth, we have a lot of questions to answer ourselves. How do we fit in our people into lives that are satisfying for them?

It's good to take this up during an election season too, because the rhetoric out there is very hostile. You can feel the resentment and also the ignorance in the political debate and it's very of painful, I think, for most of us.

In our field we also are aware that the political elites, the educated class, are often very guilty of groupthink and conventional wisdom. It's also the case, that of course, in the public debate there's a great deal of ignorance bandied about. So preaching to others about education is something I hesitate to do.

At any rate we have to all face the social divide that education sometimes produces and I think the backlash against the educated elite is inevitable. We see it in our own country and other countries as well. Before I forget to do this or if there was no time at the end I want to pick up on something that Chas Freeman, my former boss, said this morning. That is that public intellectuals should or have a duty to go out and try to mitigate hatred of Muslims which is everywhere in our society regrettably. So go out and reprove somebody for prejudice after this meeting.

Our panel today is wonderful and I know that because I watched the video of Dr. Mody Alkhalaf's talk from last year. It's really inspiring and wonderful. She will be our first speaker. I think I'll briefly introduce all of them right now and then they can speak in order. I'll let you read the more complicated biographical details. She's the Director of Social and Cultural Affairs at the Saudi Cultural Mission at the embassy here in Washington.

The next speaker will be Ms. Magali Rheault, senior analyst for the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. She does polling among Arab youth and more than that which I'm sure she'll tell you about. I think polling doesn't all involve why do they hate us.

The final panelist is Maggie Mitchell Salem who is well known to Washington audiences from her work at the State Department and the Middle East Institute. She is the Executive Director of the Qatar Foundation International in Washington and also in Qatar.

Our commentator will be John Moran who's the distinguished Diplomat in Residence at the National Council on US Arab Relations this year. He's a career member of the senior Foreign Service as well. It'll be his job to pick up on what the panelists have said and that and ask provocative questions. Your questions will be included of course at the end as well.

So I'll now turn the podium over to Dr. Mody Alkhalaf.

[Dr. Mody Alkhalaf] Salam Alaikum. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I'm honored to be here again among another distinguished panel addressing an audience of this caliber. My first public debut to Western audiences was in 2003 when I started writing for Arab News. Those articles were mostly critical, asking for social change, predominantly regarding women's rights. My Western audiences were very sympathetic and encouraging. The most frequent question I got was what's it like living in Saudi Arabia.

Like I said, asked with genuine sympathy. And to their surprise my instant answer was always with the same genuity, "Are you kidding me? I would not want to be anywhere else in the world." Why? I was living history, every day, literally.

Actually I'd give them an analogy. I'd also say for you to understand better because some people will criticize this. It was like standing in the exact center of a tornado, where you know that if you stand still it could kill you, but if you move in any uncalculated way it could be just as fatal. So the whole country was always calculating, moving, planning, keeping up to speed with the changes and the changes around the world.

Today this panel is on global education and employment challenges.

So much to say, so little time. So I'll focus on just how Saudi Arabia has met global education challenges and has tried to develop its human resources in an attempt to solve parts, and emphasis on parts of the rising employment challenges in the region.

So, first of all my country has been built on Five-Year Plans, developmental plans since 1960. We are currently in the ninth Five-Year developmental plan and it includes a whopping 385 billion in new spending. So how is Saudi Arabia going to utilize it the next five years? Well over 50%, fortunately, will go to developing our human resources, 19% to social and health, a little over 15% to economic resources, over 7% to transportation and communication and 7% to housing.

[PowerPoint slides]

This is how we deal with it on a pie chart. So I think Saudi Arabia is actually a fine example for a panel like this. Now of course higher education is key to the new developmental plan. We are increasing the capacity of universities to jump from 500,000 to a 1.7 million. We are increasing postgraduate students to 5% of all students and that's by diversifying our postgraduate programs. We are encouraging university collaboration with international institutions, and if any of you are

affiliated with universities here you must have been contacted by Saudi universities. We are increasing the number of local scholarships, which I shall be discussing a bit more later.

Now our first university was established in 1958. Between 1958 and 2002, which is about four decades, we had eight universities and then in just one decade, between 2003 and 2010, the number of universities in Saudi Arabia has tripled.

Here I'd like to make a stop at two of those universities. The first, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, KAUST, which I'm sure all of you have heard of. As a world-renowned research center built over 9000 acres, it has faculty and students from all over the world to do research, to study and to address global issues.

The second stop, and I'm a bit biased here, because I'm faculty at the second university, which is Princess Noura University. Princess Noura University is the first all-female university in Saudi Arabia. It's the largest in the region, it's built over, it's still being built actually, over 8 million square meters. It will be able to accommodate 40,000 female students. The campus will have of course administration buildings, educational buildings, it will have conference centers, a huge library, student and faculty housing, in addition to a hospital with 500 beds.

The private sector is also increasing in Saudi Arabia. It only started recently with the first university in 2000, but in one decade we have eight private universities excluding private colleges. When I was talking about local scholarships the government is funding students to study at these universities as well if they qualify.

Now key is building new facilities, and Ambassador Jubeir mentioned today that one way to tackle unemployment was to take the high school graduates and give them technical skills so that's another thing the country is focusing on. Currently we have 68 technical education institutions but within five years those numbers will increase to 24 or 25, sorry, more technical colleges, 28 technical institutions and over 50 industrial training institutes, and that also will help resolve some of the unemployment problems.

We are also encouraging innovation in science and technology. How? Well first of all over 240 million in grants for research every year, and establishment of 10 research centers, 15 university technological innovation centers and here we are collaborating with the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology and at least eight technology incubators, again in collaboration with the King Abdullah University and other universities.

Also included in this five-year plan is the extension of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. Now if some of you don't know what that is, it started in 2005 with an agreement between King Abdullah and President Bush to increase the number of scholarship students in the U.S. It was supposed to be a five-year program but in 2010 it was extended for another five years. So why is this program so important and why did I choose it to be the focus of this presentation?

Well the mission of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program is to actively develop and qualify human resources for two purposes: to be world competitive in the market and to be a high caliber basis for both universities, public and government, sorry, and private sectors.

To achieve that mission KASP or the King Abdullah Scholarship Program is offering scholarships in all of these degrees from bachelors all the way to do medical fellowships. And what field do you think we are sponsoring? Well predominantly it's going to medicine with all its branches, pure sciences and the medical sciences, but is that all our job market needs? Certainly not. It's also sponsoring engineering, computer sciences and business with all their branches as well.

How are these candidates selected? Well if you, and this is a question I get common from university officials, in particular. If you are an undergraduate student you have to have at least 90% on your high school diploma, 75% on your achievement which is the three years of high school and 70 on an aptitude test which is just kind of like an SAT here. If you are going for your bachelors but already have a two year diploma you would have to have at least a GPA of 3.5 and no more than five years since your last degree. If you're going for your postgrad then you would have to have a GPA of at least 2.7 and again no more than five years since your last degree. If you're going for Medical Fellowship Residency it's even simpler. All you have to do is get admission from an institute accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education. Now once these candidates are selected what happens? We send them almost all over the world, from the United States to Czech Republic in different numbers, to different degrees, of course.

Can you imagine the collective experience that these young men and women will have when they come back to their country? Okay, before the students go they are given a short orientation. They are told about their scholarship rights and responsibilities. It's just a three-day workshop in three main cities in Saudi Arabia so we cram in as much as you can. Information about the country they are going to, as much social and psychological preparation you can give a student in three days, and sometimes guest speakers are invited from the Ministry of Higher Education or even from the countries they are going to, or former students to share their experiences.

Now once these lucky students arrive in the countries they are supposed to be in what do you think they get? Well full tuition in any university, Ivy League or smaller ones. Monthly stipend. They get full medical and dental coverage. They get reimbursements for attending conferences, workshops and symposia. They get rewards even for high GPAs and publishing papers. If they are married and have children they even get financial support for spouse and children, and for spouses they get another scholarship for the spouse. And even annual round-trip tickets throughout the years of study to Saudi Arabia and back.

Every time I discuss the number of students worldwide, I remember that joke about the multimillionaire who was asked about his net worth and his answer was before you asked the question or after you asked the question, to signify how fast it increases. So when people ask me how many students we have I want to say before you ask the question or after you asked the question. According to MOHE stats, Ministry of Higher Education, as of September 2010 we had 98,000 students worldwide, but Ambassador Jubeir today mentioned there were over 100,000 and I agree with him totally. At the cultural mission here in DC alone we get an average 300 to 500 a week.

So are there students studying in Saudi Arabia, certainly. Students abroad are only 18.5% of higher education students. This is a short diagram to show you how much we've jumped since 2005. We had about 10,000 students and now it's 100,000 so in five years we've increased tenfold. We are fourth in the world in the number of international students studying abroad. And I think that's impressive from a country so young as ours. And then if you compare it to number of residents we are actually the second in the world following only Greece.

If you noticed in the numbers and the schedule a few slides back I had three types of scholarship students. One we call the sponsored students and those are the one that are fully covered by the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. The second, from their name, are self sponsored and they come here with the hope of getting a scholarship once they've finished the language program or start their academic degrees and most often than not that happens. The third type is the employed scholarship student and those are fully funded as well, but not by the King Abdullah Scholarship Program but by other sectors they come from like universities, or ministries or private businesses.

Based on degree level, if you're wondering, the majority of our students studying their bachelor's degree. So the majority is bachelors, followed by masters then by doctoral then by medical fellowships.

If you notice the division between male and female, females make up about 30% of scholarship students worldwide. If we break it down male and female by degrees, most males around the world are doing their bachelor's with 57% and females are equally working on their bachelor's and their masters, followed of course by doctoral residency and other programs.

What are the students mainly studying? The highest majority of students all around the world in the King Abdullah Scholarship Program are studying business followed by engineering and computer science. If you go down to the lower numbers in the lower specialties you'll find that they are doing journalism, mathematics, nursing, transportation.

This is no surprise to anybody. The top places where students are studying. The lion's share of course is the United States of America. We have students in over 1000 universities here, 30,000 in the U.S. alone. Followed by the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Malaysia, France, China and Austria, and I'd like to note here that I've taken out the Arab countries. Our students go to the Middle East as well and Arab countries in Northern Africa. The only continent I think we don't have sponsored students in is South America. But we're working on that.

So what are they doing in the country? Well they're getting a world-class education. In the United States for example. They are going to the top 10 universities, but is that all? They're breaking stereotypes and building bridges. They are taking every opportunity to teach about their country whether it's one-on-one or in classrooms or on international week on campus.

They are teaching about our attire it even the controversial abaya or the beautiful jalabiya. They are sharing our food the famous kabsa, and they're showing off their dance, by the way those are the George Mason students at the cherry blossoms in DC. And they are showing the world how

to write their names in our language. They are learning about American society and about the other countries that they are studying in. They're contributing with volunteer community service, visiting schools and nursing homes, sharing their compassion and their experiences. They are also raising the Saudi flag high and proud, alongside the American flag here and all other flags that they interact with.

In 2005 King Abdullah addressed the media explaining the reason for this program with these wise words, "For them to know the world and for the world to know them." In August of 2010 the media responded and acknowledged the wisdom and honor of this program by naming King Abdullah among the top 10 world leaders.

Thank you for listening.

[Joyce] Thank you very much Doctor Alkhalaf. That was excellent and although she went very fast it was comprehensible.

Okay since I had introduced Magali Rheault already she will come now to the podium and talk about the surveys that she has been conducted in the Arab world.

And I think she's using that PowerPoint as well.

[Magali Rheault] Good evening. It is my great pleasure to be here this afternoon to address this extremely distinguished audience and also to showcase some highlights from the research that we conduct at Gallup.

Anne introduced me by saying that I'm a pollster. I'm a little more than a pollster. I'm a social scientist and I work for the Gallup organization. Anne, you also mentioned "why do they hate us," and whether we can explore this. This is definitely a topic that my research center has explored. I'm just afraid that it would take basically more than the remainder of this panel and into tomorrow to fully explore these ideas with you.

So for this afternoon, for this evening I'm going to focus on entrepreneurship aspirations in the MENA region. I'm going to tell you how we go about doing this research, which some of you may already be familiar with, and then I'll be looking forward to hearing your feedback and your questions regarding this work.

Dr. Mody focused on one very specific country, and I think Maggie will focus on also another, the Qatar situation. I'm going to bring you the 10,000-foot view. We have a very, very diverse region from Morocco all the way to Yemen, that I really want to bring you the big picture view and from the angle of employment or lack thereof and looking at entrepreneurship and how entrepreneurship can be a pillar, a core pillar, to address this challenge and that the whole region is facing, which is job creation.

As many of you know about 30 percent of the Arab world is between the ages of 15 and 29. We have a huge demographic cohort; in fact the cohort is about 100 million strong. So this is actually the largest cohort to enter in history, to enter what will, at least try, to enter the labor force. It's certainly it is a demographic challenge but we can also see it as a demographic dividend. We

need to think about how can we make the switch? How can we go from the challenge to the dividend? One of the things that we can do is by looking at young Arabs as today's vital partners, if you like, with a stake in their society as opposed to viewing them as tomorrow's beneficiary for whom we need to find employment.

Basically this whole work is the subject of my research with the Center for Modern Studies and Gallup has been working in partnership with a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization called Silatech. Silatech was created in 2008., pursuant to the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah and Silatech's mission is to connect young Arabs with employment and enterprise opportunities in their respective countries. But before we can address this challenge at least in a successful way we need to measure it. That's exactly what we do at Gallup and our research focuses for this particular effort, initiative our research focuses on the voices is of young Arabs.

What we do is we measure their perceptions of basically the obstacles that they perceive in terms of being employed or creating a business, though we also want to better understand their aspirations and their dreams for a better future. This in turn, this whole entire body of research can and will inform policies and this is part of our dissemination efforts in terms of initiatives to remove these obstacles to employment and entrepreneurship in those countries.

I'm going to focus on highlights from our last report.

Just to give you a brief overview very, very briefly I'll talk about methodology and how it is that how do we carry out this research. We'll look at work preferences, whether people prefer, young people prefer, to work in the public sector or the private sector. We'll look at how young Arabs view entrepreneurship in terms of whether it's a good climate or not. How many young Arabs planned to start a business, what kind of demographic attributes and other attributes do we can we see in those aspiring entrepreneurs and then we'll look at two key areas, perceptions, attitudes towards business entry variables as well as business outcome variables. Then we'll take it all together and look at key learnings.

In terms of the methodology we cover pretty much every single country in the Arab League with the exception of Oman. In terms of Somalia, which is also, a member of the Arab League, we can't really be polling in Somalia for obvious reasons. There is one region of Somalia where we can safely send our interviewers because all of this work is actually done in face to face interviews, so in Somaliland we can actually send people without them being killed.

We use random probabilities samples, which simply means that every single person in the country based on your sampling frame have an equal chance of being selected for this survey. And as I just mentioned we conduct face-to-face interviews of Arab nationals. This is an issue for the GCC countries that have very large non-national populations and the cohorts are age 15 and older. We conduct at least 1000 interviews twice a year. So we end up with, and that's for every single country, so we have very large sample sizes that enable us to do some pretty interesting research.

We interview basically the whole gamut, rich people, poor people, the entire socio-economic spectrum. We're not only in urban areas. A lot of the times the survey research work that you

will see will only focus on urban areas because it's a lot easier. We don't do that. We really have more nationally representative samples that also cover the urban areas. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 to 4% depending on the country.

We know anecdotally that there is a preference for work for the government, as opposed to the private sector. Let's take a look. Let's see if we can measure this. In terms of all young Arabs so that's across all the countries that I reference, between the ages of 15 and 29 we can see that their twice as likely to say that they would rather work for the government than for a business. Now about a quarter say that either would be fine. Now what's really interesting is if you look at, among people who say they are planning to start a business in the next 12 months so we called them the aspiring entrepreneurs. It's still a preference, they are really leaning toward government employment as opposed to private sector work. So this is a pretty interesting look at things.

I promise this is the busiest slide you will see in the entire presentation. I didn't even put the numbers. I hate having lots of really busy things and numbers but here this is actually, and I'll just do some highlights. It really shows you that there is a lot of variation across the region. It really is reflective of the great diversity that you have across the greater MENA region. It is this preference for being employed by the government is highest in Kuwait where 90% of young people say they would rather work for the government and a business.

You go all the way but down to say, we will stop at Somaliland. Here you have a completely different picture, because we have 14% of Somalilanders between the ages of 15 and 29, who say that they would rather work for the government. 74% of them say that they would rather work for business. So when you are in the bottom part it's not like everybody wants to work the first work for the private sector and the perfect example of this is Libya where we have 13% of young Libyans who say that they would prefer to work for the government. But then you have about a third, it's actually 33% who say that they would prefer to work it in the private sector, and then you have almost half, 46%, who say either. So it's really a very varied picture. What I've circled on the slide is Lebanon. Lebanon is basically the country that divides this entire list between above Lebanon is where people the majority at least the majority of young people would rather work for the government and below Lebanon is the minority, below 50%, who would rather work for the government.

That's it. No more pain. We're going with the next one.

Okay if we have this leaning toward government work we know that obviously government employment provides more stability, more security and that sort of thing but it is also important to look at attitudes toward entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. Are they positive, negative, neutral? So let's take a look.

Across the region again among young Arabs between the ages of 15 and 29, we have pretty solid, pretty strong majorities who, for the most part, have pretty favorable opinions of entrepreneurs. They also tell us that their communities are good places for rising aspiring entrepreneurs to launch their business. So overall it's a pretty positive picture.

I want to show you, we asked this question are you planning to start a business in the next 12 months and this is a proxy for really measuring people who have thought about what it means to be a business owner and have done some of the homework to make this a reality in the next few months.

So across this set of countries that we surveyed in the Arab League, 15% of young people say they're planning to start a business in the next year. Now looking at a number like this in isolation doesn't really help us, so I want to bring you the view from the United States. It didn't go very well, okay you can't see it I don't know why, but it is 4%. So 4% of Americans between the ages of 15 and 29 say they plan to start a business in the next 12 months. So there may be, obviously different reasons for this, but we have much greater interests in entrepreneurship across the Arab League.

Let's look at differences across groups of countries. So here we group the countries according to their GDP, national GDP information, with the high income countries being of course the GCC countries, middle income countries being places like Syria, Algeria and the like, and then the low income countries which would fall into Mauritania, Somaliland, Sudan and so forth.

So we see here that there is actually a lot a variation depending on where people live. Where the highest, the proportions of people who are more likely to want to start a business don't come from the poorest countries but actually from the more middle-income countries.

So what do aspiring entrepreneurs look like? Not surprisingly we can see that men are actually far more likely, almost twice as likely to say that they want to start a business compared to young Arab women. For men, business creation intentions are highest in the countries that are highlighted there, it's at least 30% of them. I'm not going to read the list. For women we have at least 30% again in those four countries and as you can see there is some overlap.

What other attributes can help us define aspiring entrepreneurs in the region? Well we know that they're more likely to be employed and to be employed full time. That's very important to know. We also know and this is not only Gallup research, there it is an entire body of research, looking at the relationship between entrepreneurship and civic engagement, and this is borne out by our research as well, where aspiring entrepreneurs are far more likely to say that they volunteer their time or that they have helped a stranger in the past week. One last point on this slide, which is extremely important, is that the people who are most likely to be creating a business are also the people who are most likely to leave their countries permanently.

Okay, I promised we would look at business entry items versus business outcomes items, so here we go.

In terms of business entry we see that in terms of looking at feeling confident that I can find the people qualified to do the job that I need to be done in my business, we have a pretty strong majority of people of young people who say so. The picture doesn't look as good when we look at two other extremely important aspects to launch a business and that's the paper work that's necessary to create a business at least in the formal economy and also access to capital and more specifically access to a loan, to start their business. So there is a lot of work that needs to be done

and there is some variation across countries but this is actually pretty true in all the countries where we do this research. So lots and lots of efforts will need to go into removing these obstacles so the perceptions can improve.

Now in terms of business outcomes the picture is a little bit better than for business entry variables but as you can see here we have 59% of young Arabs who say that they trust their assets and property will be safe at all times. This is a pretty important business outcome with 34% who say no. Then we have less than half, 48%, who tell us that they would trust the government to let them, to let their business be very profitable and 42% say no. So here there is an opportunity for government policymakers to work on these issues to be improving these perceptions.

Taking it all together looking at a summary of the research and I just, in the time that I have, and I can see that I am even getting less time now, we know that we can see that entrepreneurship is definitely a critical component to be addressing the challenge of the youth bulge.

We also see that a majority of young people prefer to work for the government but there was a fairly large proportion of people who were undecided so that could be an opportunity to, I say here, sell the benefits of being an entrepreneur.

At the same time there are widespread perceptions of important business entry and outcome of barriers that exist. Finally and very importantly it appears that those who are the most committed to being entrepreneurs are also the ones who are the most likely to emigrate and this seems to suggest that business formation may not benefit their countries of origin.

Thank you very much.

[Joyce] Thank you, Magali Rheault.

We will turn to Maggie Mitchell Salem next.

[Ms. Maggie Mitchell Salem] Good evening and let me just figure out how to work this, do I have start first. Sometimes I think marrying Dells with Macs is a lot harder than anything else we are discussing.

In the meantime, while the presentation is coming up, I just want to say good evening to everyone here and who has stuck it out through the end of day one of a two-day conference.

I'd also like to note that the organizers did an excellent job of putting together this panel because it turns out that each of us are focusing on a very different but complementary area and so my compliments to the first two speakers.

I'm actually not going to focus entirely on Qatar, in fact I'm not focusing on Qatar at all. I'm focusing on a new organization which has the good fortune, but also the misfortune, of having the same name as a very large organization based in Qatar, and that is the Qatar Foundation.

The Qatar Foundation International is based in Washington, D.C. and is something very different although benefiting from the work and from the vision of Her Highness, Sheika Mozah, who is the head of the Qatar Foundation and who founded this institution as well as the Silatech.

The mission of Qatar Foundation International, you can see it there and read it at your leisure. You can also find this on our website at QSI.org. The mission of Qatar Foundation International is to build bridges; between young people, younger than the ones that I think have been focused on so far. We are focusing on middle and high school age students. Because we firmly believe that if you wait until someone turns 18 you might have waited too long. We are trying to bring cross cultural programs to young people in the U.S., in other parts of the world, and yes, Qatar as well and bring them together to learn, to lead, to listen, to find out about the other before they go to college, and for them to have ideas of the world and their place in the world at a much younger age.

The freedom of information means that a 10-year-old can know as much as I do and I consider that my eight year old knows a lot more about bugs than I'll ever know, so information is there but as we know information has no meaning without context, without giving it something much richer than the words on a page. And we also all know that information can be distorted and if you give young people a chance to interact with each other at young ages and give them a chance to see the world and be a part of it, we think that that can make a significant difference.

So that's what we are trying to do and I would just read the part that talks about our vision which is of a world that embraces and respects diversity, values life long learning and empowers individuals to take action to shape their future. That's what we are trying to do with these young people in our inaugural programs.

A word about our donor, just to clear up any misunderstanding. Our donor unlike us was founded in 1995. We are operational for the past 18 months. So we are young and still growing and still taking in ideas and creating programs. It was founded by the Emir and the head of the foundation in Doha is Her Highness, and their mission is complementary to ours but different. Enough about our donor.

These are the areas in which we are operating. Global learning is the one that focuses on bringing young people together through programs focusing again on middle and high school aged students. These are programs that I'll discuss a little bit later. Community engagement. Community engagement is an integral part of everything we do. It is not only a programmatic pillar it is a cross cutting theme for us. We believe that all participants in our programs should give back some of what they benefited from and that's not just presentations when they go back home but giving their time as part of our programs. So we have a volunteer service component to all of the programs that we design.

Global public health is a new area that we're still working on. Scholarships of course if you are in middle and high school you are looking at going to college, we want to provide opportunities for young people who meet a set of criteria that we are still forming from all parts of the world to benefit from the educational opportunities that are available in Doha at Education City but also at other institutions around the world. So stay tuned for scholarships.

And special opportunities is our area to foster new ideas that may not fit into any of the other areas that we cover because we really do believe that there are ideas out there that we may not have thought of and if they come to us and we think they fit our overall mission then we are interested in considering them. So that's a word about us, just to give you some thoughts.

The crosscutting themes, I discussed one before which is volunteerism but others include collaborating with the best organizations in the field. We don't want to own any of the space that were in. We can't reach every young person in the world and we know that there are other people out there including some of the names behind me who are equally interested for other reasons, in reaching young people and designing programs that engage them effectively, whether it be in academic disciplines or just as people who can have a conversation and not scream. And if there's anything that we can do at the end of this if we can produce people who can disagree and walk away and shake hands, in the atmosphere are we all live in, that's been alluded to before, I think that would just be a huge coup. Enough of the soapbox.

We support multiyear programs recognizing that the programs we are engaging in require a long-term commitment. We seek areas, ways to incorporate our programs with appropriate technology. Again this goes to my earlier point that we cannot, not only can we not reach everyone, we can't fly them all over the world, much as we'd love to throw them all on Qatar Airways planes and take them where ever they would like to go. It's not going to happen. It's costly. So how else can we reach young people and put them together without actually putting them in the same room.

And lastly we emphasize cross-cultural collaboration and diversity. So our programs. What are we actually doing, what are we doing with these young people in places like DC, Doha, Boston, Portland, Honolulu and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

We are teaching them Arabic, obviously not the ones in Doha. We are also providing them with science and technology programs that the teachers engage on as well as the students and in doing all of this -- none of this is unique let me just point this out. Teaching Arabic and investing in science and technology programs is actually a well-worn path and again one that many of these organizations are investing in.

What we're trying to bring to this is a bit of a different angle and that is having teachers in Qatar and teachers in the U.S. talk to each other. Some of the concerns are the same. Teachers have to do a lot, often with very little training. How can they work together to build a curriculum that engages their students and we've already organized with the help of Cisco some tele-presence meetings, putting these teachers together to do just that. And we're looking forward to having many more of these.

For the students. We did take students from DC and Boston to Qatar during their spring break after they'd been studying Arabic for six months. They met with Qatari students from sister schools. We have a network of schools and Qatar public schools so that we are reaching Qatari students and not just expatriates, and a boys and a girls schools because, if you know it the thing about Qatari public schools, they are gender segregated. So each school had two sisters schools

and Qatar. The students met and interacted and then we took all of those students to DC and Florida for a science trip in July. It was astonishing to watch these kids who had had a week to interact previously and actually the girls had a little less time than the boys did. To watch them all together for 10 days and to see the sort of community that they built and I can tell you, and I know I'm in a sympathetic audience, if you could've built a bubble over those young people and protect them from the insanity around them it would have been a wonderful thing. Because for a moment in time it didn't matter what label they wore. They were kids. They had differences and that was good because we don't want everyone to look and sound the same. We want them to be different, but we want those differences to be respected and it was a really wonderful environment.

The kids noticed that the adults had a really hard time with some of this because there were some Qatari teachers and American adults on the trip. The kids did fine, so good news. Evolution might just work. But in noticing the tensions between some of the adults and some of the conversations that were taking place two of the young Qataris came up, well actually one young Qatari and one young Boston student who'd become very, very good friends decided that the kids needed just that bubble to operate in and to talk about that difficult issues that are out there.

The idea that as one of the young Qatari boys said to me, "But, Miss, the Qatari girls aren't suppose to swim in the public pool." This is when we were at Disney World and all of the American girls, all the boys were in the pools swimming together and I notice that the Qatari girls wanted to go in. But they couldn't go in when that whole group was there. And so I asked them all to leave and they did and they were very gracious about it but the young Qatari boy said I would not let my 13-year-old sister swim in this pool. And I said, I understand, but this is their choice. I'm not going to tell them what to do, some will, some won't and that is it their choice.

I can tell you quite honestly that it was a very difficult conversation for me because my response, and I have spent a lot of time in the Middle East, but my response would have been typically American but that's not fair. That's not an issue of fairness, it's an issue of cultural standards. And so I realized in thinking through my response, that I would not have been responding in a way that made sense. We would have been speaking on different levels. So when two students came to me with the idea of developing an online forum, where the kids could talk about some of these issues, we are calling it the "tough stuff" on the forum, but also fun things like games and books they like and movies they've seen. One of the Qatari girls I think is going to grow up to be "House" if any of you watch "House." She's amazing.

So to give them that protected zone, and we are going to be expanding it carefully because when you build a protected space, any of you who are on Gulf 2000 know that often what you think is a safe area is actually not very safe and people expose each other's comments and that's not right. So again hoping that kids can do better than adults, we are going to carefully vet who joins the community. But that's what they built, that was their idea and we are incredibly proud of them. Again that goes to that fourth special opportunities category that QFI has.

When we see a good idea we like to try to encourage it and this is one that most definitely fit our mission and we are very proud of Damon and Fahad, who are both now on their way to

Alexandria Egypt for a Young Civil Leaders Conference, Civil Society Leaders Conference, so we're just thrilled with them.

This is just a little blurb from Fast Company which did an article on this online forum that we built and they said it perfectly. Participants on both sides come from demographics that are likely to be future influencers. It's not every American teenager whose able to travel to Qatar or Saudi Arabia or any other country in the Middle East. And it's not every resident in Qatar who can travel to America. I myself benefited from a Fulbright and went to Syria, never having stepped foot outside of the United States ever. This was in 1990 when Hafez Al Assad was [Arabic phrase] but he was [Arabic phrase] caught up with him.

It was an amazing experience, but again I was 21-22, so I've now completely dated myself. I'm glad that Her Highness had the vision to create an organization that could carry out a program like this, for younger people. Because it's too late to wait till you're 21 or 22 to see the world, or at least experience differences in the world if you can't see it directly.

With that , QFI in the future. We are very happy, you can see the last line because I too am being cut off so you can go home and have dinner. Or go to the Iraqi Consulate.

We are actively seeking partners and ideas and ways of working with others. We don't own the landscape. You have some idea of what we're interested in doing but all of this going to the title of the conference, "Going Where." I can't speak to U.S.- Arab relations on the political space, but I can say having watched these kids and again, its not a Gallup's sample size, and I don't know that we randomly sampled very well, but we took inner-city kids and kids from Qatar we put them together and they went places, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially. So I have a lot of hope and I think the Saudi ambassador is quite correct. This is a resource. I have four kids so I can also say it's a challenge, but the young people are a resource and they'll surprise us if we give them the chance to think and be and build that world that I think we'd all rather live in.

So, with that good evening. Thank you.

[Joyce] Thank you very much, Maggie. We are running out of time and John Moran will be our last speaker. He'll do some summing up and perhaps some commenting, asking questions. We will not have time for questions from the floor but Dr. Anthony has said that the National Council will put the questions online that have been submitted.

[John Moran] Good afternoon. I'll be very succinct in my role as commentator to this distinguished panel. If I may I'd like to touch on the issue that some of our previous speakers, and certainly Dr. Alhalaf and Dr. Rheault, brought up today and that is the burgeoning youth population in the Arab world and its implications, not just economic implications, but indeed strategic implications as well.

This is a particularly important challenge for Saudi Arabia as many of us have noted and it is a difficult issue to address in light of the very large expatriate population throughout the Gulf, but particularly in Saudi Arabia. If I recall correctly according to a 2009 Saudi's census there were approximate 18.7 million Saudi citizens and 8.4 million expatriate workers, which of course is a

very large percentage of the population. I don't know if that's correct but I'm sure Dr. Anthony will correct me if it's not.

I remember, I've served twice in Saudi Arabia, most recently in Riyadh. But when I was in Jeddah in the 1990s in our consulate there, the conventional wisdom among the expatriate community was that Saudis were not willing, for complex cultural and social reasons, to take entry-level positions, hourly positions in the services industry. I remember one expatriate telling me that there was a syndrome called "SIC" -- Saudi in Charge, whereby you had Saudis in senior management positions but not many in junior management positions and virtually none in entry level or indeed hourly positions.

I think this has been conventional wisdom for some time so I was very surprised when I returned to Saudi Arabia as Public Affairs Counselor in 2008 to find so many young Saudis working in Starbucks, working in grocery stores, and doing a very good job, being very well integrated into the workplace, and with their Saudi and non Saudi colleagues. I don't want to overstate that trend but the certain pragmatism that I've noticed among both the Saudi leadership and the Saudi population. There is not a cultural, from what I saw, previous position not to take these entry level jobs positions. And I think that's something that perhaps bodes well for the country's effort to implement Saudiazation, as they call it, and find jobs for this youthful demographic bulge in the population.

I'd like to touch on, also the efforts in education which my colleagues have addressed. If there is one thing, I've served in seven Arab countries, if there is one commonality I found among all of them, it's the absolute obsession with education for their children. This is something that cuts across class lines, it cuts across sectarian divisions. It's something that liberals, progressives in Saudi Arabia have in common with conservatives, and that is they see education on a pragmatic sense as something that will better the life of their children.

I think this is again something important in looking at work for youth in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Arab world. The Saudis, my impression is are approaching this problem in the same way they did the challenge of industrialization, as you know they went very, very quickly from a pre-modern economy to a very modern infrastructure and they did this by taking an innovation here from outside, a model from there, and bringing it in, assuring that it was within their own cultural context, but it bespeaks a very non ideological approach to dealing with problems, again a very pragmatic approach.

I think there is a good possibility and I would say we in the U.S. Embassy when I was there were fairly optimistic about it the direction of Saudi educational reform. Often I get the impression people view it as the leadership trying to impose modern values, values of tolerance and understanding, mutual understanding among cultures on a population that is not ready for it. But in fact, from what I've seen the population is very interested, again obsessively so, in education. I think they generally agree with the approach of the Saudi government in that regard.

[Joyce] Thank you all very much and I think you all know where to go now. I'll turn the podium over to Admiral Bernsen who will say goodbye.

[Admiral Bernsen]

Thank you Ms. Joyce and the panel it was marvelous, very interesting for all of us. This ends our session today. It's six o'clock as you know if you've read the program you are all invited to the Iraqi Consulate.

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