

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS

20TH ANNUAL ARAB-U.S. POLICYMAKERS CONFERENCE

“Dynamics of Recent Events in the Arab World: Framing the Arab and U.S. Responses”

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2011

RONALD REAGAN BUILDING & INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Gulf Cooperation Council Dynamics

Chair:

Dr. John Duke Anthony – Founding President and CEO of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Speakers:

Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla – Professor of Political Science, Emirates University (Abu Dhabi); lead author, “2008 Arab Knowledge Report.” (UAE)

Dr. Abdullah Al-Shayji – Chairman, Department of Political Science, Kuwait University, and author “Kuwait’s Ceaseless Quest for Survival in a Hostile Environment.” (Kuwait)

Mr. Jeremy Jones – Author of “Negotiating Change: The New Politics of the Middle East” and the forthcoming “Oman, Culture and Diplomacy”; Senior Associate Member, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations Distinguished International Fellow (Oman)

Dr. Thomas Mattair – Executive Director, Middle East Policy Council; former Research Scholar, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research; author, “The Three Occupied UAE Islands: The Tunbs and Abu Musa” and “Global Security Watch – Iran: A Reference Handbook.” (Bahrain)

Commentators:

Mr. Robert Lacey – Historian, and author of, inter alia, “The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Sa’ud” (1982) and “Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia” (2009). (Saudi Arabia)

National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations
1730 M St NW, Ste 503, Washington, DC 20036
ncusar.org

Remarks as delivered

[Dr. John Duke Anthony] We begin this session on an organization that we made brief reference to yesterday in passing remarks, how the Gulf Cooperation Council was little known and less well understood, and therefore hardly recognized and appreciated by Americans in general until almost a decade had passed since its creation. And that many for longer than that thought it had something to do with the Gulf of Mexico. So we know that in this year, it's thirtieth anniversary that it has been doing far more, even if seemingly in the shadows or low profile or low key on a deliberate procedural track than many Americans have been aware.

We have five speakers, all of them intimately associated not only with the existence of this institution but its strengths, its weaknesses, its limitations, and its achievements, its accomplishments, its dreams, its aspirations. But just to provide a context for it as a frame of reference, many unfairly compare it to or contrast it to the European Economic Union, aspects of which indeed its visionaries and strategic founders had in mind that they, too, might someday be able to achieve. And yet consider the following in terms of how arduous the odds were against their making a success in the immediate period after their establishment.

One. Death was on their doorstep in terms of the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted for eight years. September 1982-August of 1988. There was no such situation when NATO or the European Union were founded, and therefore the latter was easier than to found the GCC.

Secondly, there were preexisting regional institutions. The European coal and steel community, which provided lessons from which the GCC founders listened and learned greatly.

Thirdly, the EU founders were all assured of their external security through NATO, and the United States being a member of NATO. There's been no remotely comparable formal institutional arrangement between powers that could protect the GCC countries and the GCC itself.

And fourthly, those who founded the European Union did so in the aftermath of an economically, psychologically, and emotionally devastating second World War. Nineteen countries had been laid on their back by the forceful imposition of the German Fascist Nazi government's will.

The GCC countries did not have that either as an impetus to found themselves. So they've succeeded in spite of some seeming insurmountable odds to come into existence and to remain this long, and to thrive and be more robust than people are aware. This being its thirtieth anniversary, it is to date the longest, most successful Arab sub-regional organization working on regional-specific cooperation issues in modern Arab history.

Our first speaker will be Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, who is a professor at the National University in the United Arab Emirates in Al Ain. He's a much-published author. We've been

friends for three decades or longer. He's gotten his Ph. D from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla.

[Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla] Thank you, John. It is an honor to be in a panel chaired by you here. I deeply respect and admire all the good work you have been doing throughout this decade to promote a better understanding of the region and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

I'm also pleased that I'm back here to Washington where I did my Masters at the American University a Ph.D. at Georgetown University, and I met my wife in this city, too. So you could imagine how much I love Washington, D.C. Let me also admit that half of what I wanted to say has evaporated during the fifteen hour flight from Dubai to Washington. So you're going to end up with the important half, I guess, of my presentation.

I will limit myself to three thoughts. One will focus on the dynamics of the recent events in the region. The second is the impact of these events on the Gulf Cooperation Council states. And the third, if time allows and if I have time left, I will also have a comment or two on the implication for the American policy in the region.

So let me start with my first comment here. The year 2011 has been a good year for the Arabs. We've had bad years, we've had ugly years, we've had very few good years, and 2011 is one of those rare, good years for the Arabs. And 2011 is not over yet, but it has changed the political landscape in so many different ways. Changes that have been dreams to so many of us. Let me just mention a few of these real, deep changes that 2011 has brought to the Arab world.

The first change, which is very important, is that forces of change have been released in a massive way throughout the region. Forces of change have been unleashed in a way that we have not seen in decades, and have created new dynamism, and have brought to the region a new dawn.

Second, three bad guys have already left the scene. Three bad guys have already gone, two bad guys are in deep trouble, and many others are really on shaky ground. The days of corrupt dictators are over in the region, and that's good news for us.

Third, nearly one hundred and thirty million Arabs are freer today than they were at the beginning of 2011. Nearly one hundred and thirty million Arabs are today political emancipated. They were not just ten months ago. Eighty million of them are in Egypt alone. The combined energy that these free men and women are bringing to the region is going to create a better future, something that we have been striving for, for so long.

Four, the youngest democracy in the world today is born in our region. That was a dream we have always strived for. The youngest democracy in history, in the world, is today born in Tunisia, in the Arab world. And at least four countries, at least four Arab states are by all standards of democracy are today more democratic than they were just ten months ago. That includes Morocco for sure. That includes Libya for sure. That includes Egypt. And that includes also Jordan, possibly others on their way too. So the youngest democracies are

born today in the Arab world, not anywhere else. We have been waiting for this moment for decades.

More significantly, fifth, more important than all of the above is that the Arabs are in the driving seat, at least for once. And they have done all of this by themselves and on their own. They had to fight their own bad guys by themselves. And that's an immense source of pride for the three hundred million Arabs. We did it on our own this time. We didn't have to invite America. Thanks, God, this is made in the Arab world, it's not made in Washington or in America. That's very important and significant in understanding the historical momentum that the Arab world is going through today.

So this 2011 has been a good year for the Arabs. It even brought us a Nobel Peace Prize. It might also make it possible we will get the Time Magazine Man of the Year Award, and so many other awards coming along. So this has been a very interesting, very important moment in our history. I'll call it the Arab freedom moment. Many regions in the world have gone through that moment. It's been postponed for so long for this region. It is finally there. It is the Arab freedom moment. The popular phrase for it is the Arab Spring. From all that I can tell, this Arab Spring is still in its first fifteen minutes of the hour. It's not over yet. Much good news is yet to come, and many surprises should be expected before the end of this year. So all this talk about the end of Arab Spring and autumn and summer, et cetera. et cetera, is just a complete, total misreading of the things that are happening on the ground. The way I look at this is not that the glass is just half full; it is full to the rim. That's how I look at the events of the 2011. That's my first comment.

The second comment has to do with how the Arab Spring manifests itself in the GCC states, the Arab Gulf states. How the GCC responded, reacted to the changes in the region. Let me give you my few, brief thoughts on this question. They were definitely influenced by the events of 2011. However, the deep thinking, the official reading, the official discourse in the region is that the Arab Gulf states are different, and exceptional. That's the official discourse that you would hear resonating throughout the region, but the reality is different. The reality says the dynamics of the recent events have reached the Arab Gulf states in a massive way. And the governments in the Gulf are taking these challenges and these dynamics very seriously. They are not taking any chances, and they know from firsthand how deadly it could be, and they point out to Bahrain and, of course, Oman. But Bahrain's experience was tragic and deadly, and there was no way but to take these events seriously, as seriously as you could imagine. Despite the discourse, the official discourse that we are exceptional and we are immune, nobody's taking any of these changes lightly.

Now, as a result, there are winners and there are losers in the Gulf as a result of the winds of change. The Arab Spring has also exposed some weak points and some strong points in the Gulf. And finally, there were cases of the most impacted, and there were cases of the least impacted, and let me briefly go through some of these things and tell you how the landscape is shaping up, and how the Arab Gulf states were impacted and influenced by the events of 2011.

The fundamental, the important point to make here is that the impact has been uneven. It has not been even, it has been uneven throughout the region, and the Arab Gulf states have reacted differently to these winds of change. And I have at least three, broadly speaking, I have at least three categories to mention here of the kind of influence of the Arab Spring on GCC states. We have cases of the most impacted, we have cases of the partial impact, and we have the case of the least impact. Bahrain, of course, is the case for the weakest link in the Gulf, and the case where there is the most impact. Bahrain was hit very badly, and it went through a tragic experience of a sort, and almost everybody in Bahrain got bruised one way or the other. The government was bruised, the ruling family was bruised, the people were bruised, the Sunni, the Shia population were hurt. The country's reputation of a financial heart was hurt. So all in all, this experience was one of a tragic, bad experience on all levels for Bahrain. And Bahrain has proven to be the weakest link in the Arab Gulf. So we do have some weak points.

The events of 2011 has brought – the message that was brought to us was that this is not one homogeneous entity called GCC, but there are diversities in many cases, and there are weak points and there are strong points. Now unlike Bahrain, of course, Qatar was the least impacted. And it's proving to be the strongest link in the Arab Gulf states. Actually, if there are lists of top winners and top losers, Qatar is by far the top winner of all of the events of 2011. One could make even a case for the reverse: Qatar was almost always in the lead of the changes of 2011. And it proved that nobody from now on should underestimate the power of a small state in the new emerging Arab landscape. The power of the small state is great, and they are going to play an important role with the vacuum in the region for a credible leader. Smaller states have their chances to fill in this vacuum, and play a leading role, and Doha is today emerging as the political capital, and the diplomatic capital, and the media capital, and whatever capital that you can think of, for the new political landscape in the region. Cases of U.A.E., Oman, and Saudi Arabia, I put them in the category of partially impacted. If there is the most impact, the least impact, then U.A.E., Oman, and Saudi Arabia are among the cases of partial impact, and I don't really have time to go through all of them, but let me just say a word or two about Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia, the old Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is growing older by the day, okay, if you know what I mean. It is very old, and it is getting older by the day. Now, the impact on Saudi Arabia has been mixed. It's been difficult to pin it whether it's among the losers or the winners, but I think anything could go wrong in Saudi Arabia any time from now on. This is a case, in Saudi Arabia, where everything looks perfect, resistant to change, but all ingredients for revolution, for change, for uprising are also there too. So it's a mixture, it's a mixed package in Saudi Arabia. You have the classic case of political stagnation, lack of reform, corruption, high unemployment, et cetera. So all you need in the case of Saudi Arabia is a trigger of a sort, which has not been coming, and let's hope that it doesn't come, either.

Now, the different cases of winners and losers, the most impact and the least impact, points out to two conclusions. One, conclusion number one: despite the deep similarities between the six GCC states, despite the deep socio-economic and political similarities, we should not

lump them together. Each case is also a case in and by itself, and a special case, and a unique case, and has responded differently from the other cases.

Conclusion two: it is becoming clear that forces of a status quo are much more stronger in the Arab Gulf states than the forces of change. Forces of a status quo are very strong, and are very resistant, and hence I think you should expect continuity, not change. And I think even the public, even the public is not in a revolutionary mood in the Arab Gulf states, they are in a more reform mood. So you have forces of change, weak, versus forces of stability and the status quo, which is very strong, and the public is in no revolutionary mood just as the others are in the rest of the Arab world.

Finally, the third final conclusion in here is that, on the macro level, which I think Dr. Abdullah Shayji will cover next, is that the GCC as an organization has emerged as one of the big winners of the changes of 2011. As an organization, the GCC has become indispensable, has become so much a vehicle for group thinking and group acting for the six GCC states on military level and diplomatic level, and all levels that you can think of, and hence the GCC has emerged as a big winner. And I think it's now becoming a replacement even for the Arab League. It's taken the lead on almost all issues, and we could talk about that during the Q&A. So the GCC has proven itself to be needed more than any other time in its thirty-year history. And I think that all the GCC states appreciate now how important this GCC has become.

Let me go to my final remarks. I'm going to comment on the implications for you as foreign policy.

Of course the central question here is how did America deal with the Arab Spring, and was President Obama on the right side of history? These are good questions, we all talk about in the region, and I have a few comments to make on this.

First, of course, the initial Obama Administration reaction, like everybody else, was one of surprise, of course by the suddenness, the massiveness, and by the speed of change.

Second, eventually America became selective in its dealing with the changes that are taking place. Washington, I think, had in mind more than anything else Iran, and whether Iran's going to benefit from this or not. And I think it reacted accordingly. So there was a balance of power game going on, or mentality, that has dictated American response to the changes in the region. Eventually, finally however I think America showed inconsistency in its dealing with the events in the region. Not only selective, but inconsistent. In some places, Obama was on the right side of history, but often was completely on the wrong side of history. As a result, I think at least there are three final policy recommendations, if I may say, for Washington and the Obama Administration in dealing with the new realities in the Arab world.

Rule number one, the first thing that I think is important here is to avoid misreading the Arab Spring, because I hear a lot of cynicism, a lot of dismissiveness, and a lot of thinking

about doom and gloom and chaos in the region. That's a complete misreading of the event. And I think the reality is different.

Second, I think you need to be clearly, America needs to be clearly, unambiguously on the side of change. You need to trust, deeply, genuinely trust forces of change. You have been on the side of the status quo for too long. Washington supported political stagnation in the Arab world for too long, I think the time calls for America to be on the side of forces of change, and trust forces of reform.

Third, I think, and I heard this morning, in the opening session this morning, I think it is well advised, America is well advised to think of the Arab Spring as an opportunity, not just as a challenge. There's a great opportunity in this Arab Spring and the changes of 2011, and it's a big time opportunity, not business, or defense, or whatever – simple opportunities – there is an opportunity for a more moderate Arab world in the making. That's a huge opportunity. That's in your best interest just as much as it is in our best interest. There is an opportunity for not a democratic Arab world, but certainly for a more plural Arab world. That's an opportunity there that needs to be thought of. These are big time opportunities. The logic of the moment calls for optimism of the mind, optimism of the word, and optimism of the action.

Fourth, as I said, the youngest democracy in the world are being born in the Arab world today. So what the Arab world, what this younger democracy needs from the more mature democracy, if you have a manual as to how to build a stable democracy, FedEx it to us, fast, please, send it to us, DHL. We need that manual if you have one. You have two hundred plus years of democracy. Do you have a manual how to build a stable democracy? That's a challenge for you, okay. And I think we need that kind of manual if you really have it, and I don't think you do, but send it. If I see the mess there in Washington, maybe the place to see that democracy coming from somewhere else rather than there, but that is one challenge that is needed.

Finally, I think enough of being on the wrong side of justice. It's not enough to be on the right side of history, I think you need to be also on the right side of justice, which you have not been for the past fifty or sixty years, and that means addressing the Palestinian issue. I think what America needs candidly and frankly, what Washington needs, what Americans need to do is put this beast called Israel in leash. It is becoming really a dangerous player in the region. So enough of feeding this apartheid state called Israel. And I think, and I think Palestinians, of course, deserve a state of their own. And I think that your vote, the pending vote on the Security Council is going to send a wrong message. The blocking of the two hundred million dollar aid to the Palestinian authority is going to send a wrong message. So enough of sending wrong messages at this very crucial moment in our history.

Decisions, policies, actions taken in Washington are very important. They are going to influence the events in the region. And it is, I think, your choice. You can either be on the right side of history or wrong side of history, but it's going to be really terrible if you stay on the wrong side of justice for too long. The Arab world has changed in a massive way. The question is: will Washington change too?

Thank you very much.

[Anthony] Thank you very much, Abdulkhaleq. Our next speaker is Dr. Abdulla Al-Shayji. He's no stranger to many here. And he is a professor of political science and chairman of the department of political science at Kuwait University. He has his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. He was the American Affairs Advisor to the Speaker of Kuwait's Parliament. Right after the reversal of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait in 1990 the National Council sent Dr. Abdulla Al-Shayji on a nationwide tour to speak to audiences and media and business communities throughout the United States representing Kuwait. Dr. Al-Shayji.

[Dr. Abdulla Al-Shayji] Thank you, John. And finally I'm glad to join you in this important get together. I'm sorry I haven't been able to come for the last few years, although you've been inviting me all these years. I'm glad to be here. I'm glad to see all these faces to make new friends and to solidify and strengthen my relationship with other old friends.

One word before I start, I'd like also to pinpoint the role that John and the Council on U.S.-Arab Relations have been playing. We need more of this to bridge the gap and build more bridges between your country and the Arab world, especially with these tumultuous times and the landmark events and changes, rather than the suspicion that's still prevailing between the two nations, the Arab nation and the United States. There are a lot of misperceptions, misconceptions, and there are also facts on the ground that are not really helping, so more of these get-togethers and communication and annual conferences in the United States and other capitals in the Arab world are needed more than any time before.

I listened with interest to my friend Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla's excellent presentation, and I agree with most of what he said, and I would like also to add to what he said, a few points in the time allotted for me.

First of all, the Arab Spring as a term for the uprisings, we're still grappling with these names. I don't know what term to name what's going on. Is it an uprising? Is it a revolt? Is it an awakening? Any of these remarks are not important. What's important is that the emboldening of the Arab masses, finally woken up and faced the years of corruption and marginalization, and being oppressed by their own regimes.

This is a landmark and watershed event in the history of the Arab world. Probably in the last ten months, the Arabs have changed more than they've changed in the last sixty or one hundred years. The mass media events, the new technology, YouTube and Twitter and Facebook and the satellite channels that are being beamed to all these Arabs, even the poor Arabs who are illiterate and don't read, they could sense that this momentous change is probably, should be garnered, and should be used to the fullest.

The other point is that the change, as Dr. Abdulkhaleq has written in many columns, for the first time has come from within, from within the Arab world. Although there are those who subscribe to conspiracy theory, and I'm always upset when people come up to me and say

could you please tell us, how could you explain, you as a political scientist, all these events going on at the same time? Is it a Western conspiracy? Is it a CIA design to topple all these regimes? I say, well why would the CIA do this? I mean these guys who are the three bad guys who are gone and the two who are teetering on the brink of collapsing have been serving the stability issue for too long. So why would anybody in his sane mind shoot himself in the foot or in the head?

There are still those who are in a state of denial or those who do not subscribe that these changes have come from within. You don't need to entice or to convince or to conspire with people who are hungry, who are unemployed, who have lost hope, and who want a better future for their children to go and revolt, and to topple the bad regimes. It's very simple, but still some people don't believe that. So for the first time the change has come from within.

The second point that I would like to also highlight is that the media and the eccentric discussion and analysis of the Arab world from academia and from the Administration in Washington and other Western capitals have talked about two things. They have talked about the freedom deficit in the Arab world, and the Arab exceptionalism. Even Huntington when he wrote his Third Wave, and others who wrote democracy without democrats have not really, did not have the hope or the faith that the winds of change that have swept Greece and Portugal, and went to Latin America, and then to even Sub-Sahara Africa would even come to the Arab world. So because of that, there was this argument. So now there is a clear indication that the freedom deficit has been bridged. The Arab exceptionalism, the genes in Arabs do not make Arabs immune to the wind of change or to the change. We see the change, and we now for the first time in probably years, since the Arab civilization spread from Andalusia to China, the Arabs are not only those who have been influenced by, are now influencing factor. Even those who are demonstrating Occupy Wall Street cited that they were inspired by the Arab Spring. So we are with, the wind of change is not only affecting Arabs, but it's emboldening Arabs, and at the same time, it's inspiring not only Arabs, but even probably Persians, and even Chinese, and even in the United States has been the power of change and influence. So this is my first point.

My next point is that the GCC confronting traditional security challenges, future security challenges, the Arab Spring – if I want to call it spring, or revolt, or uprising, or whatever you want to call it -- I don't think we're going to agree on a term, but the term is not that important, and how to deal with it, and how it affected the GCC states, and I'm going to talk a bit about Kuwait. GCC states, as John said, are now celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year, back in May. The GCC is now really the eight hundred pound gorilla in the Arab world. GCC now is the leader of the Arab world by hands down. GCC has been playing a major role in major events in the Arab world for the last few years. We saw GCC leading role in dealing with, even before led by Saudi Arabia at the time, and now by Qatar, and I agree with Dr. Abdulkhaleq's point that Qatar is probably one of the biggest winners of the events now sweeping the Arab world.

But there are challenges, traditional challenges and also future ones. The Arab uprising does not represent a major challenge in my opinion to the Arab state, to the GCC states. Yes,

it influences people. Yes, it makes leaders squirm a bit and feel “what should we do?” But there are no forces to change the regime. Like the streets of the Arab world in the five countries that faced these uprisings, the slogan was [Arabic]. People power wants to do this, wants to topple the regime, wants to execute the president or the head of the state, but you didn’t hear that. Now I must admit to you that Bahrain is a special case because of its composition, population composition, because of meddling in Bahrain’s affairs by Iran, and stealing or hijacking fair demands by Bahrainis who feel they have been targeted or have been dealt with in not a fair and square way, and they need their equality to be equal with the other side of Bahraini society, but then it was hijacked by the Iranians, it really raised a red flag and alarm bells sounded all over the GCC states, and even beyond that. But there is not as, yes, the people, as Dr. Abdulkhaleq once again said, we’re not in a revolutionary mood. You cannot – I mean, come on – you cannot ask for a revolutionary change when you make fifty thousand dollars and they don’t pay taxes on an annual basis, and when you make all this money. But there is need now for the Arab leaders in the GCC states to really work harder on reform. Political, economic reform, equality, corruption. And we in Kuwait are in hot pursuit of this issue whether in the Parliament, or civic societies, or academia.

The other point is that now we are facing challenges. The U.S. is withdrawing in two months from now. And as I said yesterday in my question to the panel on Iraq, it really beats us in the Gulf states. Why would U.S. still do that? Okay, there is so far, there is commitment for the United States to withdraw, but at the same time you are emboldening Iran. And Iran is a menacing threat not only for the GCC states, but for the stability and security of the region as a whole. You lost almost five thousand soldiers in Iraq, thirty thousand injured. You have one point plus, a trillion dollars bill to pay for this adventure, and at the end of the day you just pack up and leave. So what are the consequences of this move? How do you allay the fear of your allies in the Gulf country while Iran has invested heavily in Iraq. It’s the jewel in its crown. And from now on, Iran would say that we won, the Americans have lost.

So this is a challenge that I think all the Gulf states are really fearing that it would only escalate, especially with Iraq is now a country in progress. Iraq is a failed state. We still have Yemen that is on the abyss facing, living on the edge, and anything could happen in Yemen. There is also the Middle East Peace Process that is teetering, and the United States really will not do itself a favor, neither it will do its allies a favor who have been embarrassed time and again by American stances vis a vis the Arab-Israeli peace process that need really to get attention, but unfortunately domestic politics in the United States, as Tip O’Neill said once, “All politics is local,” seems to be dominating the U.S. agenda overseas, and especially when it comes to the Arab-Israeli peace process, that the Gulf states have been working very hard to convince the Americans that you should do something. There should be a breakthrough in the peace process, and everybody was optimistic and happy to see Obama come to office, and speak strongly against even building settlements or expanding settlements, and then he ate his words in front of Netanyahu when he visited Washington. He caved in, and he even is now threatening to use the veto power to prevent a Palestinian state from existing, a symbolic thing at the end.

So we are witnessing a lot of changes in the region we are witnessing the GCC states changes. I'm glad to see also the succession went smoothly in Saudi Arabia. And that indicates that institutionalizing changes or succession is not the big issue that we read and we feared in the Western press. So GCC is now emerging as the leading power. GCC has been leading the Arab world in all the leading economic indicators. It has been leading the Arab world in terms of physical quality of life index. The soft power of the GCC states is a power to be reckoned with. It is now over one point three trillion dollars GDP, expected to increase to more than two point two trillion dollars by 2020, which makes it the largest economic zone in the region spreading from Spain to India. And that by itself carries with it a lot of might and a lot of influence and soft power. Also, the sovereign wealth funds that the GCC states own and manage and run is also something that the GCC states could use in order to help development and to help investment, and not only in the West, but also in other countries.

I'd like to talk about Kuwait in my final few minutes, if I have. Kuwait has been going through a lot of changes. In the last six years, we have had seven cabinets. There has been a power struggle between the opposition-led Parliament and the government, and especially the Prime Minister.

Kuwait is probably the most immune from the Arab Spring, if you want to call it. Kuwait, I mean all the talk that now is going on, we need democracy, we need freedom, we need openness. We've had it in Kuwait for the last fifty years. Kuwait was the first country in the GCC states before even the establishment of the GCC in the Arabian Gulf to have a constitutional assembly to draft the constitution back in 1962. Tunisia just had it last week, last Sunday. We had the first written constitution in 1962. We had the first elected parliament in 1963. Since then, we have thirteen elected Parliaments. We have expanded the voting rights from sixteen thousand electors in 1963 to four hundred thousand today. We have one of the highest voters turnout, at times eighty percent, while in the United States you have barely in the thirties. So we do not want the Arab Spring to, I mean the Arab Spring will not change much for Kuwaitis. Now, what Kuwaitis have been demonstrating for and have been sitting in over is only to cut down on government services. They need better services. They need more reform in the government. They need the Prime Minister to be elected from the Parliament, not from the ruling family for instance. We have also corruption is very ripe, unfortunately, in Kuwait, but there is a lot of transparency. There is a lot of demands for transparency. There is a lot of criticism for the Prime Minister, for leading senior members of the ruling family, which in the other Gulf states for them this seems to be so alien and too much maybe to bear. But Kuwait has been accustomed to open press, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and to demonstrate and to show an open debate, especially in Parliament and Diwanis, sitting in homes for prominent Kuwaitis and even for now average Kuwaitis to have male gathering to discuss issues.

I just want to end with a few remarks. Kuwait is not really in a danger of sweeping change that has been sweeping the Arab world. But Kuwait is really leading the Arab GCC in terms of democracy representation. Now, the fear is that here, the Kuwait model of democracy and representative politics that is now coming up to about half a century, fifty years, as a

harbinger of reform, and political participation has been damaged or injured by what our GCC brethren have been witnessing going on in Kuwait. I was just last week in Abu Dhabi. Our annual [meeting of] columnists of al Etihad newspaper in Abu Dhabi, and while we were there, there were some Gulf scholars from Bahrain, from Qatar, from Saudi Arabia, and everybody told me, what's going on in Kuwait? I mean, you have the most advanced democracy in the region, and yet you are deadlocked? I call this the pangs of political reforms and democracy. But now they are turned off by our democracy, and probably some of them said we told our sheik that we don't want Kuwait democracy. Kuwait democracy is like you know deadlocked. It's always belligerent. They have no reform, economic development, mega projects to show for it because it's deadlocked in endless debate and argument, and tit for tat calculations that's really grinded Kuwait into a halt. So, yes, probably that is the downside of Kuwait democracy or laboring this democracy. But at the end of the day the Gulf countries and Kuwait in particular, I think will be better off by the movements that have been now sweeping the Arab world.

In Kuwait probably it will just be emboldening the youth to demand, to be tougher in their demands for reform and for power to change the Prime Minister. But in the other GCC states, I do not think the winds of Arab Spring will be critical for the rulers of the region, or for the masses who are not really subscribing to full-fledged change of their regimes, since they think by and large that they are not being the short end of the stick.

Thank you very much.

[Anthony] Our next speaker is Jeremy Jones who runs his own strategic consultancy firm. His primary client for the past quarter century has been the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He's intimately connected with the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies. His book "Negotiating Change" in many ways envisioned, pre-conceived the movements that have come in the last nine, ten months. He has another one coming out on "Oman, Culture and Diplomacy," later this year. He's the only person who's not Arab and not American, but who is a senior National Council Distinguished International Affairs Fellow. That's no small thing, because he's a bridge between the British and Arabia in the Gulf, who know Arabia and the Gulf far better than Americans, and there are many standards of measurements there. But he's also a bridge to the United States, and he's a bridge to the Arab world as well. Jeremy Jones.

[Jeremy Jones] John, thank you very much for that very generous introduction and for having me back here. And it is interesting to see how things move on. I remember the first time I came to this conference in 2004. The atmosphere was very different, and indeed if our keynote speaker yesterday, Chas Freeman, made the remarks he made yesterday back in 2004, I'm not sure he would've got out of this building alive, so things have changed, which I welcome. I'd like to focus on Oman. It's been my great privilege to work with Oman and the Omanis 33 years, most of that time as an advisor to the government. My participation here is in a personal capacity. I'm not speaking officially for the government of Oman.

Oman is surely the least well known of the GCC countries. I'm fairly confident that even in this room with all the expertise that there is present, there's actually only a handful of

people who know Oman well, probably no more than five or six. So in Muscat, in the country two weeks ago, there was an election for the majlis. The turn out was seventy-six percent. One thousand one hundred and thirty-three candidates fought for the eighty-four seats in the majlis. I have all the data on the election. If anybody wants the numbers please ask me, I'd be very, very happy to share them.

Analyzing the figures, there are two themes that are particularly evident. In urban areas, the themes seem to be participation. So for example, in one wiliyat there were forty-eight candidates just for one seat in the majlis, and in fact the winning candidate only got eight percent of the vote. Another twelve candidates got over five percent of the vote, and indeed the twenty-fourth place got one percent of the vote, so very evenly squared.

In rural areas, it was very different. For example, in Hayma, there were twelve candidates. Ninety-nine percent of the vote went to the first two candidates. The third place candidate got one vote, and the other nine candidates got no votes at all. Now, what was going on here? I think there were deals being brokered. In other words, people promoted their candidacy to get some leverage, they got the leverage they wanted, and then they told their supporters to go vote for the other guy. It's very interesting look at these indigenous political processes that in some way echo the sort of democratic politics that we're used to, and in some ways it's very different. It certainly wasn't an election for the less traditional candidates. For example, I have a friend who's a leading public intellectual in Oman, who's been widely quoted in international press coverage of Oman through this year, and you know, he got eleven votes. A woman who's a lawyer, who advertised widely in the local press, which will have cost her quite a bit of money, she got twenty-eight votes. It's people in the traditional social networks who got support, and it's the traditional social networks that really guided the outcome.

The beginning of this year in January, Secretary Clinton visited Oman, and in a town hall meeting she spoke very generously about Oman's development achievement. She in particular referred to the United Nations Development Report of last year, which sought to assess the development progress made by each member state of the U.N. over a forty-year timeframe. It so happens that Oman came first, and Secretary Clinton was kind enough to say that if they could bottle whatever it is that makes Muscat work, it would be a good thing to take to other places.

Why is it that we know so little about Oman? Well, as a famous Norwegian anthropologist put it, Frederick Bart, he said, "It's the ideology of politeness." In traditional Omani society, any form of self-promotion is abhorrent, it's impolite. And this actually impacts on the way his Majesty the Sultan conducts policy. He doesn't like to boast. The government is told not to boast, not to promote.

And so there's a great deal that simply isn't known. I mentioned the election that happened a couple of weeks ago. The first majlis election took place in 1991. There were also elections in '94 and '97, and all those three elections were indirect elections. The first direct elections took place in 2000, and there have been direct elections under a universal franchise in 2003, 2007, and just two weeks ago.

So the democratization theme has been active in Muscat for quite some time. I'd like to speak briefly about the philosophy of Sultan Qaboos. Somebody the other day suggested to me that he's been the only strategic thinker in the region since Yitzhak Rabin, which is an interesting way of looking at it I believe. Qaboos has been energized by the Arab Awakening. After, I think only three weeks after Secretary Clinton's visit at the beginning of the year, there were demonstrations in Soha, in the north, and also in Salalah in the south. Very regrettably, three people lost their lives, and the government responded actively and quickly, in some ways that we can understand readily, for example the majlis has been granted stronger legislative powers. For example, radio and tv have been made independent of government, and indeed one big feature of the local radio this year has been phone ins. I have a friend who owns a radio station that was running these phone ins, which really gave anybody access to the public domain who was simply prepared to pick up his phone.

His Majesty sent personal messages to the people active in radio encouraging them to expand and promote the use of these phone ins as a way of conducting national dialogue. Other measures that the government took in response to demonstrations are more difficult for us to make sense of. For example, there was an immediate commitment to create fifty thousand new jobs. Now, whether those are going to be meaningful jobs and so on and so forth is obviously an issue. Some of the demands of the youth are hard to make sense of. They press for forgiveness of personal debts. They press for the lowering of exam pass blocks. As one of the university vice-chancellors put it to me, he said sure we're going to do that, but we're going to make the questions a little bit more difficult.

So there is naivete and the process of development is a very long-term process. Forty years ago, illiteracy in Oman ran at over ninety percent. And from that very low base, it's simply unrealistic to expect to have a highly educated technocratic population just forty years later. Education is a multi-generational task, and this is something that of course is not understood by the youth. They've got university degrees. They believe they're competent to straight into some little management, white collar job. Well, regrettably, it just isn't the case. It's simply not the case.

Educational standards are not yet at a level for the indigenous population to form its own technocracy. This is something that's going to take time. The Omani Basic Law, which is essentially a short constitution, was promulgated in 1996. Because of the Omani distaste for boasting, I'm sure, I'm well aware that its contents are simply not known. There are three articles that I find particularly interesting. Article 9 grants the right to all citizens to take part in public affairs. Article 11 asserts that the economic system for the state shall be the free market. To my knowledge, it's the only constitution in the world that actually specifies an economic system. Article 33, this is very interesting. There's long been a canard among ignorant commentators about Oman that political parties are banned. That's the conventional belief. It's simply not true. Article 33 of the 1996 basic law grants the freedom to form associations on a national basis. I had the opportunity to interview Sultan Qaboos some years after that, and I asked him whether it was his intention with Article 33

to create a space in which political parties could develop. And he confirmed that yes, indeed, that was his intention.

So, the philosophy of Qaboos. I think a formative moment for him was actually the big changes in Europe at the end of the 1980s. He saw what was going on. He realized that the whole world was now in a television age, that if the people next door had a better way of life, there's no way you could keep that secret from your people. This is what led him to introduce the political development measures of the 1990s. Because of its Indian Ocean history, Oman has been a country for four thousand years. Its people have traveled around the Indian Ocean rim for all that time. This means that culturally, there's a deep cosmopolitanism, and this informs Qaboos' way of thinking. Relations with Iran are excellent. I believe the Omanis are one of the very few foreign interlocutors of Iran that are able to get beyond the President's office and into the Supreme Leader's office. That's what you have to be able to do if you want to do business successfully with Iran.

Also Oman has excellent relations with the United States. Privately, the people I talked to in the U.S. tell me there's nobody in the region who they trust more or respect more than Qaboos. Now, the U.S. should make more use of this channel. Only the other day the hikers were released from Iran, which obviously we were delighted by. But there are other issues being discussed, whether there's some steps the United States could make that could be helpful to getting a dialogue going. Oman believes that for stability in the Gulf region, Iran has to be part of the picture; you can't wish Iran away. It is a big power in the region. This is a fact of life, and the best way to deal with your enemy, as you all know, is to make him your friend.

So I hope that's of interest, and thanks again for having me, and I would urge the United States to make use of the channel that Oman offers.

Thank you.

[Anthony] Thank you very much, Jeremy. Our next speaker is Dr. Thomas Mattair, who is the Executive Director of the Middle East Policy Council. It's one of the leading sister organizations in the field with regards to the cause we seek to serve. It produces a quarterly magazine, "Middle East Policy," which is far and away the best in terms of Arabia and the Gulf in its essential focus, but it has other emphases as well. He has written the definitive book on Iran's occupation of the three U.A.E. occupied islands that I commend to any of you. I believe you can make arrangements for its purchase at our book sales area there. He also is the author of "Gulf Security Watch," a reference handbook. Tom Mattair.

[Dr. Thomas Mattair] Thank you. Thank you John and Joe. And the Middle East Policy Council respects everything that your organization has done in the last thirty years.

I have a challenging assignment and perhaps not a lot of time, so let me just start. The King of Bahrain who came to power in 1999 has introduced a lot of reform over the past decade: political, economic, and social reform. He's introduced a two chamber parliament. He has diversified and liberalized the economy, and not only made Bahrain the banking center, for

example, but has also tried to reduce foreign employment and increase employment opportunities for his own people. And there has been a relatively free press and speech and education and health care available. And these reforms have been noted favorably by many international actors, and someone just referenced the U.N. Development Report, which reported positively about Bahrain. But these reforms have not gone far enough, or fast enough, for many in the population, particularly for the Shia, who do constitute the majority. And there certainly is more to be done, but I would say that being a Shia is not a bar to advancement. There are Shia in the legal profession, Shia in the medical profession, in the corporate boardrooms, Shia receiving government-sponsored scholarships, Shia working in the government, particularly in the Ministry of Health, and in the upper chamber of the parliament, which is appointed, and the Minister of Oil is Shia. That is not an inconsequential post, because that represents twenty-five percent of their gross domestic product.

The uprisings in February were inspired in part by what seemed to be successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, but clearly they were also a manifestation of disappointments over the past decade, particularly on the part of the young who need more employment and need more housing, and who want political opportunity, for example, more power in the hands of the lower chamber of the parliament.

King Hamad's offer of two thousand six hundred and fifty dollars to every family, his offer to liberalize media laws, which were already relatively liberal, and to replace some cabinet ministers were not enough for the protestors. And when the government responded with excessive force on February 17th killing five protestors, then the more extreme political societies in Bahrain began calling for the end of the Khalifa dynasty and the introduction of a democratic republic. And those would be al Haq which is a Shia Islamist group, and al Wafa, another Shia Islamist group.

After this tragic event, King Hamad did meet some of the demands of the protestors. He withdrew the military from the streets. He withdrew the police from the Pearl Roundabout. He offered a national dialogue to be conducted by his son, the Crown Prince. And although the press said that al Wafaq, the largest Shia Islamist political society, had rejected entering the talks, the fact of the matter is that there were talks, and al Wafaq did participate in them in March, and the Crown Prince made a number of offers of reform, and basically – I can't list all of them – but the gist of them was to give more power to the lower house, to give the house more oversight over cabinet appointment and behavior of cabinet officers, to provide more equal opportunity for services to the Shia majority, and al Wafaq rejected those terms. Al Wafaq took the terms to their spiritual leader, Isa Qassem, and said would you approve these, and he said no. More about that later.

Was this a purely domestic affair? Certainly the grievances, the disappointments are real enough and need to be addressed. And certainly more research will need to be done on this, but there are some pieces of evidence that are beginning to lead to a conclusion that there was some Iranian involvement.

First, of course, there's the Iranian media, the twenty-four hour television broadcasts in Arabic, and the media from Hezbollah -- al Mannar -- and Shia Islamist media from Iraq. And that was for the most part voiced by Hadi Al Mudarissi, who is a Shia who was involved in the 1981 attempt to overthrow the monarchy. He's an Iraqi Shia. I have had heard government officials say that they had discovered unusual amounts of Iranian currency in the hands of protestors who were arrested.

One particular Saudi analyst, Nawaf Obaid, has said that Gholam Shakuri, this individual who's alleged to have been involved in a plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador, was someone known to the Saudis as a Quds force officer, and that they have telephone intercepts of him in February this year trying to direct the opposition in Bahrain.

So, there are reasons to be very skeptical in this town after what we've been treated to since 9/11, and more documentation would be appreciated, but there's some evidence starting to pile up. The opposition made a number of pretty significant mistakes in my opinion. As I said, they rejected the terms offered by the Crown Prince, and in mid-March they began to block access to the financial district of Manama, which would've choked off a segment of the economy that accounts for twenty-three percent of the gross domestic product, and then they also marched on the Rifah residential neighborhood, which is the neighborhood where the ruling family lives, and there were clashes there because the security stopped them from approaching the compounds. And that was a mistake, if you were a member of the ruling family you would think that was a red line, and you might make a phone call asking for the GCC to intervene, and they did. As I said, there was also at that very time, al Wefaq was rejecting the terms offered by the Crown Prince, and at that point John Vinocur of the New York Times wrote in the International Herald Tribune that an unnamed senior official traveling with Secretary Gates in the Gulf said that U.S. intelligence had evidence that Iran was attempting to influence al Wefaq to reject the terms offered by the Crown Prince.

I'm about halfway through this, but I think I'll finish fast if I can.

Why would al Wefaq reject this when its leader is reputedly a moderate who supports democracy? You would have to look at the speeches and the publications of their spiritual leader, who extols Khomeini, the Iranian revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran's political system, the principle of Velayat-e Faqih, the rule of the jurisprudence, and who disparages democracy for an understanding of why they would reject those terms.

The other GCC states were observing all this, and the wealthier ones provided economic assistance to Bahrain so that it can stabilize the political system, and address the economic grievances that had been building up, and then they introduced the Saudi Arabian National Guard and U.A.E. police, and then the King introduced a state of emergency, and we know the tragic events that followed. There were deaths. There were arrests and firings and revocations of scholarships, and harsh sentences. There will be, there is a Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry of international jurists who will be reporting in about three weeks on the cause of the unrest and the reaction of the regime to the unrest, particularly at this time, and we'll find out if anyone is particularly responsible for what

happened on February 17th or afterwards. And I don't know. We will find out if someone ordered it. But I was once a professor at Kent State, and that university has never recovered from May fourth, 1970. One thing we know is that the President of the United States did not call the commander of the National Guard and order him to shoot the protestors, the students on their campus. And neither did the Governor of Ohio order it. We now have recent elections to replace the al-Wefaq members who resigned from the parliament. They were boycotted. There wasn't a good turn out.

Opposition has now introduced what they call the Manama Document, which lists their demands, and these demands are by their own admission in the document very similar to what the Crown Prince offered in March and what they rejected in March. But he has less political capital now than he did in March, and it's not clear that they'll be able to get the same terms now. The Sunnis thought they were too generous.

The regime is making some efforts to reinstate people to their jobs, to their scholarships, to retry people. I won't go into all that, but it's all there. And I have just a moment to say something else about the GCC. For the GCC states that intervened, Iran was a major factor. They were not going to permit Iran to establish another base of influence similar to what they have already established in Iraq. In part, they didn't want this to spill over and influence their own Shia populations to rise up, but I think that's a minor consideration compared to Bahrain itself. And we're not going to know the full extent of Iranian involvement for some time, but certainly Iran would've seen a victory for the organized, well-funded political societies with an agenda, who would take this away from the people in the street. Iran would've seen this as an opportunity to extend their influence and something they could exploit, and the intervention was meant to take that opportunity away from Iran. Critics have said their intervention exacerbated the situation and created a sectarian conflict. It was already a sectarian conflict. Al-Wefaq is not a secular, it may be the most moderate of the Islamist parties there, but it's not a secular liberal party. It's a Shia Islamist party. And the sectarian dimension is illustrated by the fact that you have Shia people like Al-Malaki condemning the Sunni monarchy for its behavior.

The most important thing to consider right now is what opportunities will be presented to Iran, and what set backs will be suffered by the GCC if Bahrain does not take advantage of this stability that has been restored and introduce real serious reform? That is something that the Middle East Policy Council President Emeritus Chas Freeman said yesterday, it's time for reform. But here is a question: how much reform can the regime offer, and at what pace, so that there is greater popular participation and greater access to services without strengthening the hands of forces that would use democratic processes to introduce ill-liberal, intolerant, anti-democratic, anti-GCC, anti-American policies? That's the question the Bahrain government has to answer. And as for the GCC, the last thing I'll say is although it has said in large that Saudi Arabia was leading a counter-revolution, that's not enough, it doesn't go deep enough. I think that Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states were also making geo-political calculations, not just about how to preserve their own regimes and systems of government, they're making geo-political calculations about how to curb and contain Iranian power in the region.

Thank you.

[Anthony] Thank you, Tom. And I hope and I believe that many who do focus on Bahrain in the Gulf realize how difficult it is for any friends of Bahrain to speak candidly about the realities and the dynamics there. So that we found one, we are immensely grateful to you, Tom, for enlightening us.

Our last speaker is Robert Lacey, no stranger to this audience. Producer of prodigious volumes of writings, not just on Arab related issues, but historical and biographical figures as well. Robert Lacey.

[Robert Lacey] Thank you, John Duke. It's a great pleasure to be here, and a thank you to all my fellow participants in this panel, having shed so much light on the GCC. I have a few comments of my own prepared in this context. I think most of them have already been covered. I thought I would dwell in my brief eight minutes on the news.

What happened last night in Saudi Arabia. The election. The first ever election by the Allegiance Council. The first sign, well not the very first sign, but a sign of progress in Saudi Arabia, reform, of Crown Prince Nayef, and what that means for the future of Saudi Arabia, for us in the West, and also for the GCC as well.

There's been a lot of apprehension expressed about Prince Nayef. He is a conservative. He controls, as Minister of the Interior, the notorious religious police who seem to inspire such fear in the West, and very little fear actually among Saudis. And it seems to me as I look back at the history of Saudi Arabia, this is very much in a pattern. There's a real pattern of western apprehension and I would say scaremongering about the new candidates who rise to the top in Saudi Arabia. There are always warnings about the Crown Prince way back when I started writing my book, the Kingdom. People said that Crown Prince Khaled, the successor to King Faisal who took over so dramatically after Faisal's assassination, that he would be a rubber stamp, that he'd be an inanity. He was a nice old guy put there by the family. Well that didn't prove to be the case. He proved to be quite a decisive ruler who made a very important impact after the seizing of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, and dealing with what followed from that.

Everybody said Crown Prince Fahd would be a western playboy. Well in fact under King Fahd, you saw more religion and less westernization in Saudi Arabia than before. Now that was very much a response to events in 1979. When it comes to Crown Prince Abdullah, with his stutter, he was supposed to be notoriously anti-American. Well look at what has happened. For start, he employed an American speech therapist to get rid of the stutter. I think there should be a film about King Abdullah called the "King's Speech," because that's quite a story in itself. Now, there are more Saudi students in America than ever before. That's thanks to the King Abdullah Scholarships to such a degree that the religious extremists are now saying in Saudi Arabia that it's a sin if you take up these scholarships. It's become a big domestic issues because they can see the changes that King Abdullah is trying, and will certainly, and is accomplishing through the vast numbers of young Saudis who come to this country. And look at this arms deal that we've had discussed so

frequently today. The biggest arms deal in history. It's quite knocked the British and the French and the Germans, all of us out of the box, and as everybody has said, it is more than just a matter of money. It represents a very, very long-term commitment on the part of King Abdullah and thus of Saudi Arabia to the Saudi-U.S. commitment.

So where does that leave us with the much feared Prince Nayef? He is a conservative. There's no doubt about that. And in that of course, he is like most Saudis. Before the Arab Spring or whatever we're going to call it, the British Embassy, we can take a little credit for this, working I think with the Polish Embassy, a few months before decided they would like to do a survey on Saudi attitudes towards change. An opinion poll if you like. And the figures were roughly this: twenty percent of Saudis said that they would like more change, twenty percent said that things were just about okay, and sixty percent said there had been too much change. They didn't want anymore Westernization. There are already enough cheeky kids not paying attention to their parents. There are already enough women who are dressing in provocative ways and using these newfangled mobile phones to make secret dates. They didn't want Saudi Arabia to become more westernized. They're very proud they lived in a country where there are no old peoples homes, where old people live at home and are revered. Incidentally, that's a very important point to remember when we in the West and the Western media consider that just because a man has become old he should be kicked aside and the younger generation should move forward. Well that is not how Saudi Arabia works. You just have to go there to see it, to see the enormous respect that is given to older people by the younger generation throughout society and in the workings of the Royal Family.

So, what does this tell us about what Prince Nayef is likely to be? He, as I say, he represents the conservative strand in society. I, as a Brit, like to see what is now happening in Saudi Arabia. I mean it's become formalized now, but it's been the case for some months with the sad illness of Prince Sultan. What you've got in Saudi Arabia is just the same as Britain. You've got a conservative-liberal alliance at the top of the government. King Abdullah is the liberal, and Prince Nayef is the conservative. And I hear from people in Riyadh that the two of them actually, far from being at loggerheads, work very well indeed together.

Who was it in the Royal Family who pushed through the Allegiance Council, which last night in fact voted in Prince Nayef. Well I hear from people who were at those meetings, when there were many Princes saying well, let's leave it for a bit. And of course there was the argument that the so-called Sudeiri seven, or six, or five as they now are, wouldn't like the whole family voting. It was Prince Nayef who said no. We don't push this off until the next meeting. It's a good idea, at least let's have a little vote – I don't think he said this – let's have a little bit of real democracy in Saudi Arabia, those are votes that count. He said let's push it through, and so it was pushed through.

Another thing, when King Abdullah announced recently, surprised everybody with rights for women. The principle of rights for women so much more important than why can't women drive. Women will come to drive in Saudi Arabia. I'll come back to that later. Women will certainly drive in Saudi Arabia. The important thing that King Abdullah has established, and yes I think he did take advantage of the Arab Spring.

We heard of Sultan Qaboos being energized by the Arab Spring, and using it to bring in more reforms. That's just what's happened in Saudi Arabia. The package in March, the enormous welfare and housing and reform package, King Abdullah took advantage of what was happening in the Arab world to go the Ministry of Finance who are always telling him you can't risk devaluing the Riyal, we've got to be very careful, we've got to keep a surplus. He said look, the time has come to spend some money, and to spend some money in ways that will benefit everybody. And he pushed it through.

One of his reforms as I say was the principle of rights for women. And it was wonderful to watch Vox Pops on Saudi Arabia, because all the women were delighted. Oman is not the only country that has Vox Pops and phone ins, we have them in Saudi Arabia. And the women naturally were delighted by the vote. The men were not so sure. The men would say things like, King Abdullah is a very wise king. I'm sure he knows what he's doing. I'm sure he's taken good advice. All this sort of thing. They wouldn't dare, I'm not saying it's full democracy in Saudi Arabia, they wouldn't dare to denigrate or criticize the King, but it showed very clearly that the King once again was ahead of many people in the population. Many men were not happy with it. Many men remain unhappy with it. Members of the ulema have criticized it and are not happy with it.

What happened? Prince Nayef came out, and loyally and sincerely and genuinely said, this was right, this was Islamic, this was the way ahead for Saudi Arabia. So that, I feel, is a very good example of this conservative-liberal alliance moving along, and I believe will move Saudi Arabia even faster along the path of some of the reforms we've been hearing about today. I think it's a little time before we see a Saudi parliament arguing quite like we see in Kuwait, but who knows. There are many Saudis who say well, that's not the first step.

John Duke asked us to keep our remarks to eight minutes, so you can all say something. I'm going to stop at that point. I will just make one prediction. I will predict that it will be in the reign of King Nayef, and I'm not wishing in any way the end of King Abdullah, but it will be in the reign of this conservative that women drive in Saudi Arabia.

Thank you very much indeed.

Dr. John Duke Anthony

Dr. John Duke Anthony is the Founding President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations and currently serves on the United States Department of State Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy and its subcommittees on Sanctions and Trade and Investment. For the past 38 years, he has been a consultant and regular lecturer on the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf for the Departments of Defense and State. He is former Chair, Near East and North Africa Program, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State as well as former Chair of the Department's Advanced Arabian Peninsula Studies Seminar. A life member of the Council on Foreign Relations since 1986, Dr. Anthony has been a frequent participant in its study

groups on issues relating to the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf regions and the broader Arab and Islamic world. Most recently, Dr. Anthony has been elected to the Board of Advisors of the Yemen College for Middle Eastern Studies.

In addition to heading the National Council, consulting, lecturing, and serving as an Adjunct Faculty Member of the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM) since 1974, Dr. Anthony has been an Adjunct Professor at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies since 2006. There, he developed a course for graduate students on "Politics of the Arabian Peninsula," the first such semester-long academic course to be offered at any American university. In 2007, he was Visiting Lecturer at the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies. In 2008 he was the Distinguished Visiting Professor at the American University in Cairo's HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin 'Abdalaziz Al-Sa'ud Center for American Studies.

In 1983, Dr. Anthony received DISAM's Distinguished Achievement Award, one of three granted to American Middle East specialists in the Institute's history. In March 1989, the Kappa Alpha Order's National Executive bestowed upon him its Distinguished Public Service Award for Excellence "through a strenuous and useful Life of Service to others." In 1993, he received the U.S. Department of State's Distinguished Visiting Lecturer Award, one of three awarded over a span of 25 years in recognition of his preparation of American diplomatic and defense personnel assigned to the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf states. In 1994, he received the Stevens Award for Outstanding Contributions to American-Arab Understanding. On June 21, 2000, H.M. King Muhammad VI of Morocco knighted Dr. Anthony, bestowing upon him the Medal of the Order of Ouissam Alaouite, the nation of Morocco's highest award for excellence. In May 2008, he was presented the first-ever Local Giants Leadership Award by the Rotary Club of the Nation's Capital.

Dr. Anthony is the only American to have been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1969-1970). In 1971, he was cosponsored by the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Department of State as the sole American scholar to observe at firsthand the process by which the British ceased administering the defense and foreign relations for nine Arab states lining the coastal regions of eastern Arabia and the Gulf. His long experience in Yemen led to Dr. Anthony being asked to serve as an international observer in all four of Yemen's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Dr. Anthony is the only American to have been invited to each of the Gulf Cooperation Council's Ministerial and Heads of State Summits since the GCC's inception in 1981. (The GCC is comprised of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). Since 1986 and continuing until the present, Dr. Anthony has accompanied more than 200 Members of Congress, their chiefs of staff, defense and foreign affairs advisers, and legislative and communications directors on fact-finding missions to the Arab world. From 1996 until the present, he has also served as the principal scholar-escort for delegations to various GCC countries, Egypt, and Yemen comprised of 132 officers assigned to the staff of the Commander, U.S. Central Command, including Generals J.H. B. Peay III,

Anthony C. Zinni, Tommy Franks, John P. Abizaid, Admiral William Fallon, and General David Petraeus.

Dr. Anthony is the author of three books, the editor of a fourth, and has published more than 175 articles, essays, and monographs dealing with America's interests and involvement in the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world. His best-known works are *Arab States of the Lower Gulf: People, Politics, Petroleum*; *The Middle East: Oil, Politics, and Development* (editor and co-author) and, together with J.E. Peterson, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of the Sultanate of Oman and the Emirates of Eastern Arabia*. His most recent book, *The United Arab Emirates: Dynamics of State Formation*, was published in 2002.

In addition to being the founder of the Annual Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference, now in its 20th year, Dr. Anthony has been a founder, board member, and Secretary of the U.S.-GCC Corporate Cooperation Committee; founding President of the Middle East Educational Trust; co-founder of the Commission on Israeli-Palestinian Peace; founding President of the Society for Gulf Arab Studies; co-founder and board member of the National Commission to Commemorate the 14th Centennial of Islam; and founder and former chairman of the U.S.-Morocco Affairs Council. In 2006 he was elected Vice-President and member of the Board of Directors of the International Foreign Policy Association in Washington, D.C.

After the completion of his U.S. Army active duty military service, the Commonwealth of Virginia granted Dr. Anthony a four year State Cadetship Award which allowed him to enroll at Virginia Military Institute (VMI), where he received his Bachelor's Degree in History. At VMI, he was elected president of his class all four years in addition to serving as president of the Corps of Cadets' General and Executive Committees during his First Class Year. He later earned a Master of Science Degree in Foreign Service (With Distinction) from the Edmund A. Walsh Graduate School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where, in addition to holding one of three University Scholar Awards, he was inducted into the National Political Science Honor Society. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations and Middle East Studies from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C., where he held a National Defense in Foreign Language Scholarship for Arabic, was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, and was appointed to the full time faculty in 1973 while still a student. For nearly a decade, Dr. Anthony taught courses on the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf States at SAIS. He has been a Visiting and Adjunct Professor at the Defense Intelligence College, the Woodrow Wilson School of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia, the Universities of Pennsylvania and Texas, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, and a regular lecturer at the National War College.

Dr. Anthony is married to Cynthia Burns McDonald, Director of the Washington, D.C. Office of the American University in Cairo, and has twin sons.

Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla

Dr. Abdulla is a Professor of Political Science at United Arab Emirates University and the lead author of the 2008 Arab Knowledge Report. He was a member of the Dubai Cultural Council, the General Coordinator of the Gulf Development Forum, Research Center Director at AlKhaleej newspaper, Editor of the Gulf Strategic Report, Editor of the Journal of Social Affairs, member of the Global Agenda Council on Population Growth 2008-2009, and a recipient of the Cultural Personality of the Year 2005 Award.

Dr. Abdulla's research interests include political changes in the Gulf and broader Arab world, Gulf security, contemporary issues of the Arab Gulf States, and international relations. He has authored over 40 articles, including "Dubai: An Arab City Going Global," and "Political Reform: The Case of the UAE" (2006). Dr. Abdulla is also the author of several books, including "Narrative of Politics (2006) and "The Gulf Regional System" (2007).

For more information: www.uaeu.ac.ae

Dr. Abdullah Al-Shayji

Dr. Al-Shayji is Professor of International Relations and Chairman of the Political Science Department at Kuwait University. He is a specialist in Gulf and U.S. Politics and served as Special Advisor to the Speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament and to its Foreign Relations Committee from 1992-1996. Dr. Al-Shayji also served as Counselor and Head of the Kuwait Information and Media Bureau at the Kuwait Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon from 2001-2004.

Dr. Al-Shayji has been a Lecturer since 2005 at Kuwait's Mubarak Alabdullah Joint Command and Staff College where he addresses senior army officers from Kuwait and sixteen other countries. He is also a Lecturer at the Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute within the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an institution that trains Kuwaiti diplomats entering the Foreign Service.

A founding and charter member of the Gulf Research Council in Geneva, Dr. Al-Shayji is a member of the Advisory Board of a committee in Kuwait's Bureau of National Security tasked with drafting a comprehensive Kuwaiti national security strategy. The author of "Kuwait's Ceaseless Quest for Survival in a Hostile Environment" in Arabic. Dr. Al-Shayji has published over thirty articles focused on gulf security, political development, democratization, the Kuwaiti National Assembly, and Arab Gulf issues in numerous journals.

Dr. Al-Shayji has conducted studies regarding U.S. strategy in the Gulf region, NATO initiatives, Kuwait and GCC-Iraq relations, and GCC-Iran relations, and has attended, participated and chaired panels in over seventy conferences around the world. Dr. Al-Shayji also organized and led the first group of 12 Kuwaiti "opinion-makers" composed of

leading academic, think tank and media personalities that visited NATO headquarters in Brussels on an invitation from NATO's Public Diplomacy Division to discuss the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with the GCC states.

Dr. Al-Shayji is a regular media guest and analyst whose views have been aired in many news outlets and satellite television networks in the Arab world and in the West. He is also a columnist for several Kuwaiti, GCC and pan-Arab newspapers.

Dr. Al-Shayji holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts degrees from Oklahoma State University.

For more information: www.kuniv.edu/ku

Mr. Jeremy Jones

Mr. Jones runs a consultancy based in Oxford, UK. For 25 years his principal client has been the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman. He is also Senior Associate Member of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, UK and a Distinguished International Affairs Fellow at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. In the latter capacity, he has lectured to U.S. diplomatic and defense personnel in training or active service at the National War College, the United States Naval Academy, the Department of State's National Foreign Affairs Training Center, a delegation of U.S. Central Command officers and other participants in a National Council study visit to the Sultanate of Oman, and students and faculty at other institutions of high education as well as management, staff and special guests at nongovernmental organizations specializing in America's relations with the Arab countries and the Islamic world.

Mr. Jones has two books about Oman due out in the next 12 months. His previous book, "Negotiating Change: New Politics in the Middle East," published in 2007, now looks highly prescient against the background of the Arab Spring.

Mr. Jones was a Research Fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government from 2004 to 2007, working with the Belfer Center's International Security Program and Dubai Initiative. Since 2004, he has published in the "Middle East Journal," the "Journal of Islamic Studies," the "Harvard International Review," and the "Baltimore Sun."

Mr. Jones is a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge University in Great Britain. He has completed major research reports for public sector clients in the Middle East, including "The Democracy Project." He has also provided strategic consultancy on international relations, infrastructure development, health services policy, information technology, political organization, and planning in Oman, Yemen, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, including work with the World Bank and various UN agencies.

For more information: www.oxcis.ac.uk

Dr. Thomas Mattair

Thomas Mattair is Executive Director of the Middle East Policy Council. He has taught at Kent State University, the University of Southern California, the University of California at Riverside, and Cornell University. He also served as the director of research at the Middle East Policy Council from 1992 to 1995. From 1997 until 2003 he was a research scholar at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, where he researched and wrote "The Three Occupied UAE Islands: The Tunbs and Abu Musa." The book is a study that examines, among other topics, Iranian military capabilities and intentions in the Gulf. His most recent book, "Global Security Watch — Iran: A Reference Handbook" (Praeger Security International, 2008) is a comprehensive study of Iran's foreign relations. Choice Reviews Online calls it "a must read for policy makers, Middle East scholars and students, and those wishing to have a better understanding of the U.S.'s relationship with Iran." He has published and lectured widely in the U.S., Europe and the Middle East and serves as a consultant to governments and business firms on security and economic issues in the Gulf. He is an honors graduate of Harvard and holds a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. He is a past recipient of Harvard Law School's Mark de Wolfe Howe Fellowship, the Ambassador Rodger Davies Memorial Fellowship, and fellowships from the Earhart Foundation. He is an ex officio member of the Board.

Mr. Robert Lacey

Mr. Lacey is a British historian noted for his original research, which gets him close to – and often alongside – his subjects. He is the author of numerous international bestsellers. After writing his first works of historical biography, "Robert, Earl of Essex," and "Sir Water Raleigh," Mr. Lacey wrote "Majesty," his pioneering biography of Queen Elizabeth II. Published in 1977, "Majesty" remains acknowledged as the definitive study of the British monarch, a subject on which the author continues to write and lecture around the world, appearing regularly on ABC's "Good Morning America," and CNN's "Larry King Live."

"The Kingdom," Mr. Lacey's study of Saudi Arabia during the 1970s – early 1980s oil boom, published in 1981, is similarly acknowledged as required reading for businessmen, diplomats and students throughout the world. To research "The Kingdom" Mr. Lacey and his wife Sandi took their family to live for eighteen months beside the Red Sea in Jeddah. His repeated trips into the desert in order to understand its place in Saudi Arabia's cultural life and economic development earned him the title of the "method actor" of contemporary biographers. In March 1984 Mr. Lacey took his family to live in Detroit, Michigan, to research and write "Ford: The Men and the Machine," a best seller on both sides of the Atlantic.

Mr. Lacey's other books include biographies of the gangster Meyer Lansky, Princess Grace of Monaco, and a study of Sotheby's auction house. He co-authored "The Year 1000 – An Englishman's World," a description of life at the turn of the last millennium. In 2002, the Golden Jubilee Year of Queen Elizabeth II he published "Royal" ("Monarch" in the United States), hailed by Andrew Roberts in London's "Sunday Telegraph" as "compulsively readable," and by Martin Amis in "The New Yorker" as "definitive."

In 2005 Mr. Lacey returned to Saudi Arabia to research and write a sequel to "The Kingdom," the critically acclaimed "Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia," intended to bring the story of Saudi Arabia up to date. This work has been praised by the Financial Times as "a book of startling insights ... Lacey's sympathetic engagement with the struggles, triumphs and defeats of average Saudi men and women makes an important contribution to building greater understanding between Saudi Arabia and the West."

Mr. Lacey is an alumnus of Bristol Grammar School and a graduate of Selwyn College, the University of Cambridge. He began his writing career as a journalist on the "Illustrated London News," and later, "The Sunday Times."

For more information: www.robertlacey.com