

Saudi Arabia's Prince Turki Tells Washington: Stop the Double Standard

by Michele Steinberg

On Oct. 31, Saudi Arabia's Prince Turki al-Faisal, former head of Saudi intelligence, and son of the late King Faisal, delivered a blunt, and well-received policy address at the 17th annual conference of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, in Washington, D.C. The annual two-day NCUSAR conference is the most far-reaching of Washington's events on the Arab and Muslim world, bringing together a broad array of former and current U.S. diplomats, military officers, and former cabinet members, with extensive audience participation. This year's event included the Syrian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Imad Moustapha; former U.S. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft; former Commander in Chief of the Central Command (CENTCOM) Gen. Joseph Hoar (USMC-ret.); the last five U.S. ambassadors to Saudi Arabia, including Ambassador Chas. Freeman, head of the Middle East Policy Council; and an array of intelligence and policy experts who provided much insight, on three panels devoted to the Geopolitics of Israel and Palestine; Lebanon and Syria; and Iraq and Iran. Dr. John Duke Anthony, president of the NCUSAR, presided over the two-day event.

Following Prince Turki's speech, he took questions from the audience on a wide range of subjects, including recent statements by Israeli President Shimon Peres about the need for pursuing a comprehensive peace in the region, as laid out in the 2002 Abdullah Plan. Here is an excerpted transcript of the speech by Prince Turki as delivered on Oct. 31, followed by his reply to a ques-

tion on the nuclear issue put to him by EIR. Subheads have been added.

Kissinger Weighs In

Last September, at the Republican Party's National Convention, the former Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, in replying to a question about the United States' relationship with the Kingdom and the effect of oil on it, had this to say: "It is an issue that has defeated every administration that I've observed. I think everybody, if they were given truth serum, would recognize that this is an unviable system, and nobody has been willing to face the consequences of overthrowing the system."

And, what does Mr. Kissinger propose to remove this constraint to overthrowing Saudi Arabia? He proposes the following: "Of course, we ought to reduce our dependence on oil, and we know how to do it on two levels." He then describes how alternatives can be used, and he also describes how it was possible in the '70s to organize the consumers to act collectively in the face of what he calls a monopoly. He finishes by saying this: "And, if you could do the consumer group, then the relative position of the oil producers would rapidly decline, and then the issue of political evolution would be less fraught. If it didn't matter so much whether there was a period of uncertainty in Saudi Arabia, then you could tackle the problem in a different way than you can under present circumstances."

This, ladies and gentlemen, is from one who is considered the elder statesman of America. Not a very statesmanlike statement. Is Dr. Kissinger calling for the overthrow of the Kingdom? And for what? The next President and administration should discard such jingoistic propositions. America should resist the call made by many influential people and organizations to regard the issue of energy in terms of "them and us." There can never be energy independence because oil is a fungible commodity, bought and sold, in many cases and in-



Prince Turki Al-Faisal

stances, while the oil tankers are out at sea. It will also remain the cheapest source of energy for the foreseeable future. So, instead of calling for energy independence, the United States should take up the hand that King Abdullah has offered and join in a collective effort to meet this grave challenge. The United States should also stop deluding itself, if that is what Mr. Kissinger has described that Saudi Arabia can be overthrown.

When Mr. Kissinger is supposed to have threatened the late King Faisal with the prospect of no more customers for Saudi oil, the king is supposed to have said that, “We will go back to our tents in the desert and live on camels’ milk and dates. But, you, Mr. Kissinger, what will you do if there is no more oil?” This is probably an apocryphal account, but it is indicative of the Kingdom’s resolve to survive, regardless of what Mr. Kissinger believes or advocates.

Doublespeak

I now refer to a speech that Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs [James K.] Glassman gave at the Foreign Press Center briefing on July 15, 2008. In that briefing, Secretary Glassman said, and I quote: “The key goals today are to diminish the threat to America and the rest of the world posed by violent extremism and weapons of mass destruction, and to help people around the world achieve freedom. Now, those two goals are linked. As the National Security Strategy puts it, championing freedom advances our interest because the survival of liberty at home increasingly depends on the success of liberty abroad.” How true, Mr. Glassman. How about living up to those words and championing freedom for the Palestinians?

The Secretary goes on to say the following: “In the war of ideas, our core task is not to fix the foreigners’ perceptions of the United States. Those perceptions are important, but America’s image, indeed America itself, is not at the center of the war of ideas.” How extraordinary!

He goes on to say: “The shorthand of this policy is diversion . . . the channeling of potential recruits away from violence with the attractions of entertainment,



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While British agent Sir Henry Kissinger demands a reduction in U.S. dependence on oil, Prince Turki points out that oil will remain the cheapest source of energy for the foreseeable future. Shown, oil supertankers in the Arabian Gulf.

culture, literature, music, technology, sports, education, business, in addition to politics and religion.” Further on he says: “There is a widespread belief in Muslim nations—about four out of five people believe this—that the United States and other Western powers are out to destroy Islam and replace it with Christianity. It’s a widespread belief. And this is the root belief that underlies much of the passive support for the violent extremism of al-Qaeda and similar groups. The flow of new recruits has not stopped.” End of quote.

I don’t see how he squares this statement with his previous one. Can you? How can you admit that the root cause that brings recruits into al-Qaeda is the view of America as a destroyer of Islam, and say at the same time that America’s image is not at the center of the war of ideas? I cannot understand this doublespeak.

In answering a question afterwards about how important it is to capture Osama bin Laden to win this war of ideas, the Secretary answers: “I don’t think it’s particularly important. And whether Osama bin Laden is killed or captured, I think is not of great consequence.”

I remember hearing President Bush say, “We will get bin Laden.” Every day that bin Laden lives, after the President’s promise, he gathers more prestige and an aura of invincibility. His image as the untouchable enemy of the greatest power on Earth is the best recruiting means for him. His cult enhances itself and presents itself as the champion of Muslims, whom the Secretary readily admits are convinced that the United States is

out to destroy them. Again, I cannot understand the doublespeak.

Finally, in answering the following question: The Djerejian report, among its other conclusions, concluded that no matter how good your public diplomacy is, it's ultimately policy that makes the difference, and that you can only improve what you are trying or you only achieve what you're trying to achieve to a certain degree, without addressing policy issues. The Secretary, who was a member of the Djerejian Commission, gave a long and rambling answer. He parries the question but does not answer it. . . .

How about a policy that addresses what the Secretary admits is a view among 80% of Muslims that America is out to destroy Islam?

Ladies and gentleman, America will get nowhere in the Arab and Muslim worlds until it radically changes its policy, by implementing it, rather than simply stating it. President Bush has said that he wants a contiguous, viable, democratic Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel. Do that. There is no need for further plans, or initiatives, or policies. They have all been addressed, dissected, and disseminated. All they need is implementation. I hope the next President does that.

A Message to the Next U.S. President

Now, I shall address the other issues raised in the panels.

On nuclear proliferation, the double standard is very much a factor in this issue. It was stated yesterday, that Iran has opposed every American effort in the area, and therefore should not be treated like others. Regardless of that, the reality is that the Iranian government's policy on nuclear enrichment is supported by the vast majority of the Iranian people. You have to address that public opinion by proposing, by the first step, to make the Middle East area free of nuclear and mass destruction weapons. This, ladies and gentlemen, does not reward a foe. Rather, it makes the foe unable to use the double standard to get support. . . . It also helps us, the friends of the United States, to point to the fairness [of the policy]. . . .

On Palestine, it is equally important to remember that there is a double standard towards them as well. The freely elected government of Palestine was summarily ostracized by the United States and Europe—by people who take every opportunity to lecture about espousing democratic processes. America even waged war to impose democracy on Iraq. How did that make

sense? For the sake of America's friends in the area, including Israel, instead of wearing kid gloves when dealing with Israelis, better to be wearing boxing gloves.

And on Lebanon, get Israel out of Shebah Farms and the other territories, *yesterday*, not tomorrow.

The final point that I would like to make to the next President, whoever it is: Pack your bags as soon as you are elected, and go to the Middle East and listen, and wonder what you hear, before political views and your advisors overtake you.

A Nuclear-Free Zone in the Mideast

Prince Turki was asked, by *EIR*'s Jeffrey Steinberg, in an on-the-record brief discussion following the panel, to explain how he would propose to implement a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, given that Israel already possesses an arsenal of an estimated 200 nuclear warheads, with delivery systems. Prince Turki explained that the United States could extend the nuclear umbrella that it now has over Japan, Germany, and other Western European countries, to include Israel. Thus, Israel would be under U.S. protection. In addition, the Prince proposed that the United Nations Security Council pass a resolution, assuring the sovereignty and security of all countries in the region, including Israel. With these guarantees in place, Israel could safely dismantle its entire arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Stop Religious Wars In the Middle East!

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