

From: David Adams
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 12:19 PM
To: David Adams <dadams@podestagroup.com>
Subject: Recent Saudi Op-Eds

All – Please forgive the blast email but I wanted to share two recent op-eds by senior Saudi officials. The first on Saudi economic reform is by the Vice Minister of Economy and Planning, Mohammed al-Tuwaiji. The second is by Major General Ahmed Hassan Mohammad Asseri, an adviser to Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister, and focuses on Saudi Arabia's continued fight against terrorism. Please let me know if you have any questions. Best, Dave

Forbes

OPINION: Saudi Embrace Of Economic Change Promotes Security, And Promise For Foreign Investors

Forbes

By Mohammed al-Tuwaiji

March 24, 2016

Mr. al-Tuwaijri is vice minister of economy and planning for Saudi Arabia. He previously was CEO of HSBC Holdings Plc Middle East.

For the past six decades, the U.S.-Saudi partnership could be summed up as "security for oil." Today, with oil prices on a five-year slide, the Kingdom recognizes that our own security rests on an unsustainable economic model, and so we embarked on an irreversible journey of reform.

On his recent visit to Washington, highlighted by a White House lunch with President Donald Trump, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman presented a new message for a Saudi leader. In the tradition of other Saudis who were staunch American allies, he promised to step up

Saudi participation in the global war against transnational terrorists. But as the architect of the Kingdom's comprehensive economic, social and political reforms, the Deputy Crown Prince also promoted Saudi Arabia as an investment destination for industries far beyond fossil fuels.

To prosper in a post-petroleum world and create new jobs for the 70% of our population who are 30 years or younger, Saudi Arabia is diversifying and partially privatizing our economy. As set forth in two plans for far-reaching reforms, Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program, we are privatizing many state-owned companies, introducing competition into previously protected sectors, eliminating subsidies for wealthy households and encouraging women to participate in the paying workforce.

A faster-growing and more resilient economy will empower Saudi Arabia to play a stronger role in resisting terrorism and containing expansionist powers such as Iran. For American companies and investors, a diversifying and privatizing Saudi economy offers once-in-a-generation opportunities.

So far, the media has focused on plans for the partial privatization of our iconic oil company, Saudi Aramco. But the reforms are reaching every sector of our economy. From my own perspective as a banker-turned-policymaker, four recent initiatives stand out:

First, the Citizen's Account program is compensating low- and middle-income families and individuals for the loss of government subsidies, for living costs such as water, fuel and electricity, which were slashed to reduce budget deficits. Eligibility is based on need and determined every month by a complex algorithm incorporating the incomes and ages of family members and adjusting for inflation. At least 5 million

Saudis have qualified for the program, with many registering online, including through their mobile phones.

Second, a new National Privatization Center will transfer 16 government agencies to private investors through IPOs and other transactions. Valued at about \$200 billion over the next four to five years, these agencies include enterprises as varied as airports, electric utilities, flour mills and sports clubs. Government will become a regulator and partner with the private sector, while new entrepreneurial owners will grow our economy and create jobs.

The main partner for these new companies will be the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), which finances projects to diversify our economy. One of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world, the PIF is increasingly active abroad as well as at home. The fund recently invested \$3.5 billion in Uber and is exploring other job-creating ventures in the United States, exemplifying how Saudi economic reforms can be a win-win proposition for both of our countries.

Third, international investors and partners are helping to develop our economy, from energy to chemicals, transportation and water desalination projects. Having launched the largest emerging markets bond in history, we now are preparing for the second bond issue.

On a month-long trip to Asia, Salman has already signed 16 agreements with Japanese businesses, as well as \$65 billion worth of investment agreements on his first day in China. We welcome American businesses to join Boeing, GE, GM, Microsoft, Cisco and leading energy companies that already have strong partnerships in our country.

Fourth, we are working with foreign investors and domestic entrepreneurs to create new jobs for young Saudis by developing new

industries, from tourism to entertainment, mining and mass transit. With more than 1.5 million Muslims making the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca every year and many also visiting the holy city of Medina, Saudi Arabia is a magnet for tourism and associated businesses, such as event management, logistics and catering.

In addition to tourism, Saudi Arabia is expanding sectors such as entertainment, where some 10,000 commercial licenses have already been granted to young Saudi entrepreneurs. Six Flags is planning to open its first park in our country by 2021.

In other job-creating ventures, Riyadh and other cities are building new underground metro systems. Mining for aluminum, gold and phosphates is joining oil and petrochemicals as key extraction industries.

Washington policymakers and American businesses face two overriding questions: how to win the war against terrorism and how to promote economic growth. Investing in Saudi economic reforms and opportunities serves both goals by strengthening a strategic partnership whose underlying goal is to eradicate extremism and forge a stable and prosperous Middle East.

Saudi general: My country supports America's tough

stance against ISIS, terror and Iran

By Ahmed Hassan Mohammad Asseri
Published March 26, 2017
FoxNews.com

Leaders from 68 countries gathered in Washington for a meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh (ISIL) hosted by President Trump's administration this past week.

Saudi Arabia welcomes the new administration's attention to the Middle East and its support for America's friends who are fighting back against transnational terrorists such as Daesh and pushing back against Iranian interference in countries such as Yemen.

As Americans would say, "You've got our back." And America's support is indispensable as we stand together against a host of threats to regional stability.

While meeting with Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman – an architect of our country's economic, social, and governmental reforms – at the White House recently, President Trump enthusiastically endorsed the modernization drive that will make our country an even more valuable strategic partner. Similarly, our government welcomes the United States' long-standing support of the Saudi defense forces.

The new administration is also toughminded about the Iranian threat to regional stability, which was magnified by the recent nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers, including the United States.

Defense Secretary James Mattis and CIA director Mike Pompeo each describe Iran as the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, while Vice President Mike Pence has called the nuclear agreement "a terrible deal."

Saudi Arabia is prepared to work with the United States and its allies to restrain Iranian conduct, just as we have helped to stabilize the Arabian Gulf and its energy supplies since World War II. While the US-Saudi partnership is time-tested, reaffirming this relationship is a matter of strategy, not sentiment. Since

the Global Coalition's founding three years ago, Saudi Arabia has been an active partner from Day One, including sending fighter jets to the Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey to join the US-led air campaign against Daesh in Syria.

On the financial front, Saudi Arabia works closely with the United States to cut off funding for Daesh and Al Qaeda. Through real-time information-sharing, we cooperate with the United States to shut down the flow of funds from western banks to Middle Eastern extremists.

To ensure that charitable contributions don't subsidize terrorism, we prohibit Saudi mosques and aid organizations from transferring money outside our country.

We have also taken strong steps to stop unauthorized shipments of military equipment from leaving Saudi Arabia and to prevent people from crossing our borders to join Daesh in Iraq or Syria.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is mobilizing the Muslim world against the extremist threat to our religion. Under Saudi leadership, the 41-nation Islamic Coalition is equipping our countries to fight violent extremists by training our security forces and sharing information and intelligence.

Last March, in the largest joint military exercise ever in the Middle East, some 350,000 soldiers, 20,000 tanks and 2,500 warplanes from 20 countries joined together in "war games" in the Saudi desert to jointly train our security forces for operations against non-state armed groups.

Turning from the battlefields to the battle of ideas, the Islamic Coalition is encouraging educators and scholars as well as religious and political leaders to raise their voices against those who preach violence. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has created a center which operates 24/7 to analyze social media to identify and track terrorist efforts to recruit and activate new followers.

But non-state armed groups and radical preachers aren't the only threats. By conducting ballistic missile tests last month and meddling in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula and even the Gulf States, Iran is imperiling the stability of our region. Even more disturbingly, Iran is sharing ballistic missile technology with the extremist Houthi militia in Yemen and similar groups in other countries, thereby imperiling the security of the entire region.

In Yemen, which shares a 1,100-mile border with Saudi Arabia, Iran is supporting and arming the Houthi militia, modeled on the terrorist Hezbollah movement that has destabilized Lebanon. While making Yemen ungovernable, the Houthis are attacking Saudi Arabia, having fired more than 40,000 mortars, rockets and other projectiles at our towns, killing at least 375 civilians, closing more than 500 schools and displacing 24 villages and over 17,000 people.

In January, three Houthi suicide boats rammed a Saudi frigate off the western coast, killing two crew members and injuring three others.

Responding to this threat, Saudi Arabia leads a coalition of 12 countries fighting to reinstate Yemen's legitimate, internationally recognized government and restore peace and security to the country.

To be sure, Saudi Arabia prefers to promote stability through peaceful means, as we do by providing much-needed diplomatic and economic support to strategic allies such as Egypt and Jordan. But aggression, active destabilization and acts of terrorism, including Iran's infringements in Yemen, demand a military response.

From the Cold War through the War on Terror, the U.S. has helped Saudi Arabia strengthen our defenses through joint military training exercise and ballistic defensive weapons sales, making our country the largest customer of U.S. military equipment.

Today, we're working with the United States and its allies to defeat Daesh, Al Qaeda and Iranian-sponsored extremism and expansionism.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder for a secure and stable Middle East in a peaceful and prosperous world.

Major General Ahmed Hassan Mohammad Asseri is an adviser to Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister.

This material is distributed by Podesta Group, Inc. on behalf of the Center for Studies and Media Affairs at the Saudi Royal Court. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.



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