



# ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA FACT SHEET

## **Saudi-U.S. Relations**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930s, when American businessmen first travelled to the Kingdom to help develop the country's natural resources. Today, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is stronger than ever. On issues of national security and economic opportunity, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is vital. The Kingdom remains one of America's closest allies and largest economic partners in the Middle East. American and Saudi security forces work together to root out terrorism. Saudi Arabia works together with the United States to open markets for American goods and create jobs for Americans. Our two countries continue to cultivate this partnership through a broad range of cultural and educational exchanges between our two countries. As the number of students and tourists traveling between our two countries continues to grow, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. will continue to expand their relationship in the decades to come.

### **Counterterrorism**

- Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have established two Joint Task Forces—one to combat terrorists, another to combat terror financing. Experts from both governments work side-by-side, sharing real-time information about terror networks.
- The Saudi government has increased the size, training and professionalism of its security forces, which are now seasoned by direct experience in Saudi Arabia. Saudi security forces have trained alongside American counterterrorism forces in the U.S. This experience and training has led to the arrest and conviction of hundreds of wanted terrorists and the destruction of most of the known terrorist cells in the Kingdom.
- The Saudi-U.S. Strategic Dialogue, a counterterrorism working group created following September 11, 2001, continues to help ensure the governments' efforts and resources are aligned.
- This year, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud met with U.S. Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan while President Obama met with the Assistant Minister of Interior for Security Affairs Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz. These visits are part of ongoing consultations and exchange of views between the two countries
- In October 2010, Saudi intelligence provided key information to American officials that foiled an attempted terrorist plot involving bombs heading to the United States that originated in Yemen. The bombs were found and defused before reaching their targets.

### **Trade**

- For the past four decades, the United States has been Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner, while the Kingdom is the largest market for American products in the Middle East.

- In 2008, bilateral trade between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. stood at \$51.54 billion.
- In 2009, U.S. food and agricultural exports to Saudi Arabia grew by 34 percent to \$969 million.
- In April 2010, the U.S.-Saudi Business Council, in cooperation with U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Commerce, organized the U.S.-Saudi Business Forum, which featured government officials and business leaders from both nations.

### **Cultural Exchange**

- In 2009, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in the Kingdom issued almost 70,000 visas to Saudis. The Saudi Embassy in Washington and Consulates in the U.S. issued about 65,000 visas to U.S. citizens. These are historically high numbers.
- King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) opened in September 2009 and is the first international university of its kind. The university established a digital library partnership with the U.S. Library of Congress in 2008 and has signed agreements with many U.S. universities. In its opening year, students from the U.S. made up 8 percent of the student body and there are 14 U.S. professors on the faculty.
- King Abdullah created the Saudi Student Scholarship Program in September 2006. The program is aimed at fostering the importance of human interaction at the most basic level. Qualified Saudi students are sent to attend colleges and universities around the world to learn, make friends and experience foreign cultures. Today, almost 40,000 Saudi students are studying in the U.S. under a government scholarship program established by King Abdullah in 2006. These students are being exposed to ideas and cultures that will shape and inform their lives in the years to come while Saudi Arabia benefits from their experiences.



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