

**HRH Prince Khaled bin Sultan**

Canada Club, Toronto.

12 June 1995

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your kind words of introduction...

And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for inviting me to address you today.

It is an honor, as well as a real pleasure for me to be here.

**The reputation of your country stands high in the world.**

I am truly **thrilled** to be in Canada and to be visiting this **great city** of yours.

You may be surprised to hear that, as I traveled here, I was reflecting on how much Canada and Saudi Arabia -- your country and mine -- have **in common**.

\*\*\*For example, we are both fortunate in having **great natural resources**.

Out in the West, among your many other resources, you have large reserves of oil and gas.

I believe, we too, in Saudi Arabia, can claim to have some oil and gas!

But what we **don't** have -- and what I must confess we envy - - is your great abundance of **water**.

You have more water than almost any country in the world!

I was astonished to read somewhere that your *per capita* consumption of water was 10 times that of the United States -- and theirs is already very high!

Ours is a **dry** country, and for us water is the most precious of all resources. We are making great efforts to preserve every drop.

But let me go on about what we have in common.

\*\*\* Like you Canadians, our people in Saudi Arabia think of themselves as **good citizens** -- law-abiding and God-fearing citizens.

Like you, our people detest violence.

**You** have one of the lowest crime rates in the world, and so do we.

\*\*\*Mind you, our two countries have something else in common -- which we should not be so proud of -- and that is a **tendency to over-spend**.

I understand that you have been running some deficits in recent years -- and so have we.

We are both rich countries, and with sound management, these problems can, **and will**, be overcome.

\*\*\*I would submit, however, that **the most important thing we have in common is a profound attachment to peace**.

Canadians have won a **world-wide reputation as peace-keepers**.

I would say that peace-keeping has become part of your national identity!

You are known in the world as champions and defenders of peace.

To mention only one or two examples, you have helped keep the peace in **Cyprus** for many, many years and, in **Bosnia** -- the graveyard of so many reputations -- **your record has been more than honourable**.

I know that some of your men have been taken hostage by the Bosnian Serbs -- a poor reward for your humanitarian efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We, too, in Saudi Arabia, do not glory in war.

We are not a militaristic nation.

We may disagree with our neighbours from time to time, but we bear them no ill-will.

We want to live at peace with all of them.

**That is our challenge today -- how to reach an honourable and fair accommodation with all our neighbours.**

Our wealth and our strategic position -- and above all our guardianship of Islam's holiest shrines -- confer on us a **special responsibility** to preach peace and moderation to the whole Middle East region.

You might think it odd that a retired general -- a man who has spent much of his adult life in the armed services -- should talk so much about peace.

The truth is that soldiers love peace more than anyone, because they know something about the horrors of war.

**War is an obscenity!**

Unfortunately, however, there are some occasions when war cannot be avoided.

**There are occasions when one has to stand and fight** -- as was the case in the Gulf five years ago when we faced a brutal and unprincipled aggressor.

In the Gulf War, we had no alternative but to fight.

**War was forced upon us.**

By seizing Kuwait, Saddam threatened our independence and that of our Gulf neighbours.

He threatened to overturn **the whole regional order.**

**He had to be stopped!**

Had he not been stopped, he would have dominated the whole Arab Gulf and its vast oil reserves.

He would have been in a position to dictate policy to all of us.

**Believe me, it is in no one's interest to allow a single power to dominate a region of vital importance to the whole industrialised world.**

But let me make clear to you that our quarrel was with Saddam himself, and not with the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi people are our neighbours, our brothers. We have to live with them.

It was with a heavy heart that we were forced to make war on them.

It is not in our interest to make permanent enemies of the Iraqi people.

We hope and pray that the time will soon come when the tyrant passes from the scene, and when normal relations can be resumed with Iraq -- **a great Arab and Muslim nation which has an essential role to play in the regional balance of power.**

In making these remarks let me say that I am speaking to you in a **personal capacity** -- as a retired general and a budding author -- and not in any way as an official representative of my government or of the Saudi Royal Family.

As you may know, the immediate occasion for my visit to Toronto is the publication this month by HarperCollins of my book, *Desert Warrior*.

I hope you will find it interesting and useful.

It is partly the story of my life so far, and partly an account of the Gulf War in which I served as Joint Forces Commander in a 'parallel command' -- a unique command structure which, I believe, may well serve as a model for future multinational coalitions.

The ground war to free Kuwait took just 100 hours. My book took almost three years to write. Believe me, it is easier to fight a war than to write about it!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me now to share with you some thoughts about the problems of security in the Arab Gulf and about the current situation in the Middle East.

Let me begin by making two general points -- they are in fact two broad conclusions which I derived from the Gulf War.

\*\*\* The first is the **great importance** we in Saudi Arabia attach to our relationship with the West -- with the United States, Canada, Britain, France and our many other Western friends.

\*\*\* The second is the **absolute centrality** of Saudi Arabia in the defense of this region.

Let me say a word or two about each of these points in turn.

Our relationship with the West is **our single most important strategic asset**.

It is based on vital common interests which we both need to defend. These interests include the political stability of the Gulf region and the security of oil.

There are few places in the world where Western interests overlap so intimately with those of the local states and peoples.

Which brings me to my second point.

**Saudi Arabia is the key to Gulf security.**

Without our ports and air bases, without our logistical assets and material wealth, without our strategic depth -- Saddam Hussein would probably still be in Kuwait.

The war proved that we are the West's paramount ally in the region -- I repeat, **paramount ally**.

As I explain in my book, **the war to free Kuwait could not have been fought without us** -- or only with the greatest difficulty.

**Today, the stability and security of the whole Gulf coast, from Kuwait to Oman, is wholly dependent on the stability and security of the Saudi hinterland.**

Ladies and gentlemen,  
One of the reasons I wrote my book was that I was anxious to warn against complacency.  
I wanted to sound an alarm.  
I wanted to make sure that next time -- if there is a next time -  
**- we will be ready to confront the crisis when it arises.**  
I believe two things need to be said.

The first is that war is, by its very nature, **unpredictable**.  
In this world, there is no such thing as total security.  
One must always be ready for surprises -- usually unpleasant ones.

Who could have predicted the invasion of Kuwait, or the collapse of the once-mighty Soviet Union, or the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, or the Oklahoma bomb?

The truth is that no one can tell who will be the next enemy or where the next blow will fall.

We can be sure of just one thing -- **that the next crisis will not be like the last one.**

The conclusion I draw is that we, in the region, must **not** take the Gulf War as a model for possible future conflicts in our region.

The Gulf War was unique.

It was a high-tech, high-speed, high-performance, push-button war waged by a Superpower against a relatively small, and almost totally passive, Third World state.

It was quite unlike the many other wars and uprisings we have seen in our region -- and **I believe it is most unlikely to be repeated.**

Above all, **the war demonstrated that the United States will intervene with overwhelming force -- only when its vital interests are threatened.**

But what if its vital interests are **not** threatened -- as in Bosnia, for example?

**Then the locals have to make do on their own.**

Which brings me to my second point.

We, in the region, have to take careful note of the **changing mood in the United States**.

The last few months have seen a revolutionary change in America's **domestic agenda** brought about by the new Republican majority in Congress.

**In U.S. foreign policy, too, we seem to be witnessing a profound change** -- if not a retreat from the world's problems, then at least a **narrower definition** of U.S. national interests.

In addition, current and projected cuts in the U.S. defense budget may in future limit the capability of the United States to project force overseas.

We might face a situation in which, for one reason or another, our friends might be unable or unwilling to rush to our aid.

What if there was a danger of large-scale casualties?

What if we faced a terrorist campaign, or an over-spill from a regional clash?

What then?

I believe that these dangers and uncertainties should cause us to do two things:

\*\*\*first, to adopt a posture of **great strategic flexibility**;

\*\*\*and secondly, to upgrade our forces so as to achieve **immediate combat readiness**.

Nothing less will do.

As the major partner in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia needs to take the lead in organising our joint defenses. **No one else can play this essential role.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me now to say a few words about the current situation we face in the region -- and in particular a few words about Iran and about the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Over the last 15 years, ever since the emergence of the Islamic Republic, **Iran has not been an easy neighbour to live with.**

There have been moments of great tension, especially during the eight-year Iraq-Iran war.

From time to time, Iran continues to direct hostile propaganda at us, with the apparent intention of undermining our position at the very heart of the Muslim world.

We must clearly remain **extremely vigilant** in our dealings with that country.

But, although we sometimes find Iran dangerously unpredictable, **I do not think it is either wise or practical to seek to isolate it.**

We may dislike its behaviour, but we cannot put it in political quarantine.

Iran is our neighbour across the Gulf. It is a large and important Muslim power. We cannot pretend it is not there. **We have to live with it.**

I personally have some doubts about the wisdom of the policy of **'dual containment'** which lumps Iraq and Iran together -- and threatens to push them into each other's arms.

**This would constitute a far greater threat than either of them pose separately.**

Instead of 'dual containment', I would therefore recommend 'dual engagement', and even in due course 'dual rehabilitation.'

In more general terms, I would urge you not to fall into the trap of seeing Islam as the new enemy of the West to replace Communism.

We must not forget that Islam and the West have interacted fruitfully for centuries -- and must continue to do so.

The world in which we live is today **profoundly interdependent. We all need one another.**

There should be no room in our world for **hostility** between the West and the vast, diverse world of Islam which comprises more than one billion people!

Although Saudi Arabia itself is an oasis of calm, it does not exist in a vacuum. Our Gulf region cannot be insulated from the unsettled conflicts around us.

Clearly, a major preoccupation for us is the still unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict.

Great strides towards peace have been made, but much remains to be done.

I very much welcome American efforts to advance the peace process and I fervently hope it will result in fair and balanced agreements in which the interests of all parties are addressed.

I am very heartened by the latest news of something of a thaw on the Israeli-Syrian track.

**I believe that the Arabs, in their great majority, are now ready for an honourable peace with Israel. They are ready to accept Israel as a player in the Middle East system, even as an important player.**

**But they cannot accept it as the dominant player.**

It seems to me that, for Israel to be truly welcome in the Middle East family, it must do a number of important things:

First, once a comprehensive peace is in place, Israel should **give up its nuclear arsenal.**

There can be no lasting peace without that.

Correct me if I am mistaken, but are we wrong to seek to remove weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East?

Once they have made peace, why should the Arabs continue to live in the grim shadow of Israel's bomb?

Remember the crowded geography of the region. Several Arab capitals are within only a few minutes flying time from Israel!

**The Arabs feel that Israel's nuclear arsenal threatens the national security of the entire Arab world.**

This Arab anxiety is not always well understood in the West.

I know that Canada supported the indefinite extension of the N.P.T.

**But for the Nuclear Treaty to be eternal, it must be universal.** There can be no exceptions.

Believe me, the continued existence of Israel's nuclear arsenal is bound to drive other countries in the region to seek to acquire a deterrent of their own.

**There can be no lasting security for Israel at the expense of the insecurity of its Arab neighbours.**

I feel I must, in this distinguished forum, say a few last words about **Jerusalem** -- which is another major obstacle to a lasting Arab-Israeli peace.

Jerusalem is holy not only to Jews, but to Christians and Muslims as well.

No Muslim -- and no Arab, whether Muslim or Christian -- can accept the permanent loss of East Jerusalem.

I would urge you to impress on your Israeli friends the **real danger** of a policy of annexing land in and around East Jerusalem.

**If Israel persists with this policy, I predict it will be a source of conflict for generations.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

In an age of long-range missiles, which might one day carry nuclear, chemical or biological warheads, security must be based on **political accommodation** with one's neighbours.

As I said at the beginning, the challenge we face in how to live at peace with **all** our neighbours.

We must seek to create a **stable political environment** in which the vital interests of every state in the region are understood and addressed.

**The new Middle East of which we dream is one in which no country is excluded and none is allowed to dominate the others.**

Ours is a turbulent region, still in the grip of an arms race. True peace and disarmament are, unfortunately, still a long way off.

As I explained, there are great security anxieties in our region due in part to the dangerous military imbalance between the various players.

**I firmly believe that in the search for peace Canada can - - and should -- play an important role.**

Everyone trusts and respects you.

You have acquired a fine reputation as **peace-keepers**. You should, I believe, now play a role as **peace-makers** -- and add to your reputation!

The truth is that we, in the Middle East -- a region torn by ancient and deep-rooted conflicts -- need all the help we can get from our friends.

**And Canada stands high among them.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for inviting me to address you and for allowing me to share my thoughts with you today.

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