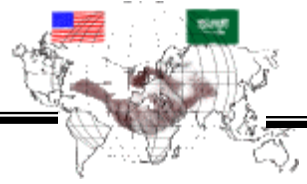


Saudi-American Forum



SAF Item of Interest

December 21, 2004

Writing Congress: A Concerned Citizen Speaks Out

Editor's Note:

Last year the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act (S.1888/HR 3643) was introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate. The bill seeks to place sanctions against the kingdom for not cooperating with the United States in the war on terror. It was referred to committee and continues to attract sponsors -- H.R. 3643's last sponsor was added October 7, 2004 and S. 1888's last sponsor was added September 30, 2004.

The Saudi-American Forum added the bill to the SAF Action Center where interested subscribers and other visitors to the Web site can review the legislation and comment on it to their elected representatives in Washington. A recent user of the SAF Action Center took time to write her Congressman about the Accountability Act and provided a 'cc' to the SAF. With her permission we have reprinted her letter to Congress here.

The writer, Lisa L. (who asked to have her last name withheld) mentioned that she is a member of the U.S. military who has served recently in Afghanistan and Iraq, flying military missions, and has been stationed in several Arab Gulf countries. We wish to thank her for sharing her observations with other members of the Saudi-American Forum.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the SAF Action Center is an interactive feature of the Saudi-American Forum for your use. It serves as a versatile tool for you to stay up to date on issues addressing US-Saudi relations, as well as any other issue before Congress. It provides you a vehicle to contact your elected representatives in Congress, members of the President's Administration, and national and local media outlets. Please feel free to use the Action Center to share your views on US-Saudi relations with political leaders and the media but also use it for any other issue that you would like to bring before your officials and the press. Also feel free to 'cc' the Saudi-American Forum -- that function is an option when you address an email in the Action Center. We will always contact Action Center letter writers before sharing it with other SAF subscribers.

To visit the SAF Action Center **CLICK HERE**.

<http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/ActionCenter/index.htm>

Writing Congress -- A Concerned Citizen Speaks Out

Dear Congressman,

I am a member of the military, who recently returned from various locations in the Middle East. I became very aware that Saudi Arabia is a critical ally of the United States. I understand that due to the misinformation put out by our press, many people believe, without research, that Saudi Arabia is our enemy.

I am writing to ask you to oppose the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003 (S.1888/HR 3643), which is a legislative initiative put forth by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Representative Anthony D. Weiner (D-NY). It is a betrayal to our allies in Saudi Arabia, who have been steadfast supporters of the United States in the war on terror.

While the political situation and our relationship to the Saudi royal family is incredibly complex, it would be an absolute mistake to place sanctions on our allies -- particularly when they are working so hard to support us and fight our mutual enemies! We must not destabilize their economy as it would only play into the hands of our enemies.

The political gain from sanctioning "our enemy" would not be worth the long-term negative effects to our national security. To clarify, increased sanctions yield increased social and economic instability, which yield increased terrorist recruits. Please protect our national security in a logical, long-term, effective way.

Seeking to sanction Saudi Arabia for non-cooperation ignores the facts, weakens our partner in the war on terror and lessens the likelihood that Americans will be safer. The Saudi Arabia Accountability Act is incompatible with statements made by President Bush and other knowledgeable government, intelligence and law enforcement officials praising the Kingdom's terror effort.

Among the most recent statements in this regard was Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's comments, "Saudis have been going after these terrorists and trying to tear them out, root and branch, and in the process they've also lost several of their policemen and SWAT members. I think they are really going after it."

Americans who are in a position to know the truth have repeatedly underscored the cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States. Louis Freeh wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* Op-ed that "the FBI's investigation [Khobar Tower bombing] only succeeded because of the real cooperation" with Saudi diplomatic and intelligence officials." In September 2003, U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow went to the Middle East and met with Crown Prince Abdullah. Afterward he said, "I've got an absolute sense that there are no holds barred in going after the money and the terrorists."

The Accountability Act does not reflect the reality of the situation in the kingdom -- where Saudis and Americans have been squarely in the crosshairs of Al-Qaeda and have been working together to fight them.

Among the actions Saudi Arabia and the United States have taken in the joint war on terrorism: questioned thousands of suspects, arrested more than 600 individuals, broke up a number of Al-Qaeda cells, seized large quantities of arms caches, extradited suspects from other countries, and set up joint task forces. Meanwhile, our friends in Saudi Arabia -- serious about preventing and defusing extremism -- have studied the questions of textbook and curriculum reform and are acting.

In conclusion, I hope that you take immediate action to halt further consideration of this potentially disastrous bill. The Saudi Arabia Accountability Act serves to disparage a strong ally and friend. The elected officials who drafted this legislation clearly do not understand the facts -- that Saudi Arabia's continued cooperation in the war on terror is essential for victory. Attempts to undermine and negatively portray the Kingdom are not the way to ensure future cooperation.

Sincerely and Respectfully,
Lisa L.

=====

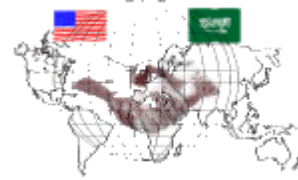
ABOUT THE WRITER

This letter was written by a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, who has flown military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has been assigned to duty in various Arab Gulf countries. This letter was submitted to her Congressional Representative and 'cc-ed' to the Saudi-American Forum via the SAF Action Center. It is reprinted here with her permission.

To visit the SAF Action Center **CLICK HERE**.
<http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/ActionCenter/index.htm>

ABOUT THE SAUDI-AMERICAN FORUM

The Saudi-American Forum is an information service designed to provide you timely information -- background and current issues - - impacting the Saudi-U.S. relationship.



The Forum is a resource for Americans who value the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia and who want to act in response to erroneous and misleading depictions of the relationship in the media and elsewhere. The Forum is a vehicle for stakeholders in the Saudi-U.S. relationship to contribute their experiences and their ideas and opinions on the issues of the day.

The Saudi-American Forum is a FREE service provided to the public by the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. The Forum consists of a web site and an email information service.

Visit the web site at: <http://www.saudi-american-forum.org>

CONTACT INFORMATION

You can contribute your ideas and feedback to the Forum through use of the "Feedback" form on the website or through direct email to the Forum at: info@Saudi-American-Forum.org

Thank you for your support of the Saudi-U.S. relationship and the Saudi-American Forum.