

# Addressing global issues

## HRH PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL ABDUL AZIZ AL SAUD

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SAUDI ARABIA

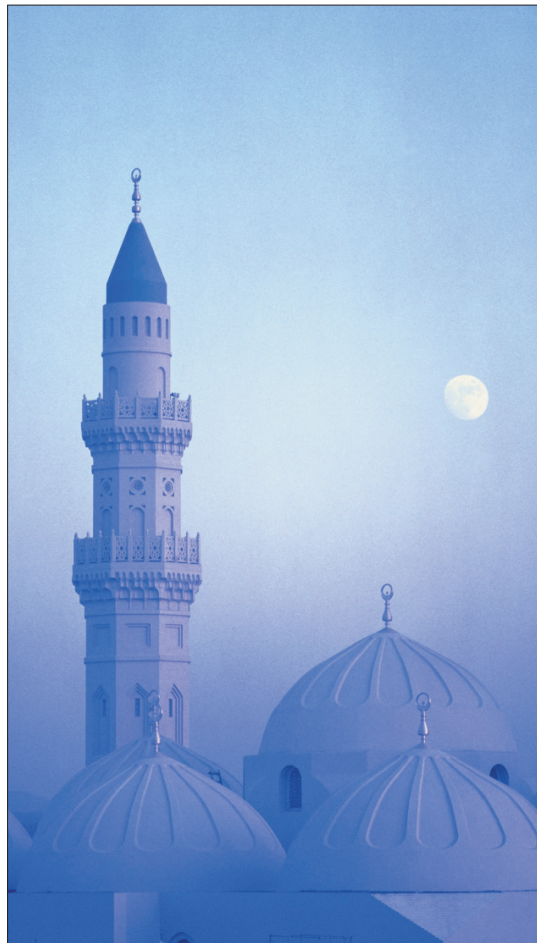


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has a bachelors degree in Economics from Princeton University. He was the deputy governor of Petromin from 1970-1 and deputy minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in 1971. He has been Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1975.

### How can the most pressing global political, economic and social issues be best addressed?

Our world is experiencing ever-accelerating political, economic and social changes, characterised by increased complexity. It is vital that we co-operate with each other now more than ever to manage the complex issues and changes with which we are faced. Balanced and healthy relations among countries, based on respect for international legitimacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, in a manner that guarantees justice and deepens mutual confidence and true partnership, are essential in achieving this. By promoting sound relations and understanding between countries, we will be best equipped to meet future challenges and to respond to them in a way that will be beneficial to the whole of humanity.



Qoba Mosque at dawn, Madinah, Saudi Arabia

### What is your assessment of the political and diplomatic situation in the Middle East?

Current circumstances in the Middle East are extremely dangerous. Israeli occupation of Arab lands continues to transform the whole region into multiple crisis zones accompanied by the dramatic suffering of Palestinians causing the spread of despair and extremism. One can add to this the threats to national unity and escalating civil conflicts that confront the legitimate authorities in other countries of the region.

### Is a new start and perspective now required?

Clearly there is a need for a fresh start to overcome the previous hurdles and obstacles. In this regard, the Arab Peace Initiative represents a unique and historical opportunity to re-invigorate the peace process, for it provides a general framework based on international legitimacy that enables all parties to negotiate fruitfully. All Arab countries, without exception, have committed themselves to achieve peace, security, recognition and normal relations among all the countries of the region on the basis of the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories of 1967. For the first time the Arab world commits itself to an agreed solution to the refugee problem.

### What is your view of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in the region?

We cannot ignore the serious threat to global peace and security which weapons of mass destruction continue to oppose – whether they are used in wars and intimidation between states or in case they fall into the hands of terror groups. Effective non-proliferation of these destructive weapons requires abandoning double standards. We therefore emphasise the importance of making the whole Middle East, including the Gulf region, free from nuclear weapons. Israel is the only country in the region which is known to possess weapons of mass destruction but is not subjected to any form of monitoring.

While we support the rights of all countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including acquiring knowledge and nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, we call all the countries of the Middle East to strictly respect their obligations under current international conventions and treaties that include specific safeguards to all nuclear programs. We hope that all countries co-

