



Introduction by
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Chairman, FIRST
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It is an honour to be invited to contribute to this celebration by FIRST of the 2010 National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia remains crucial to the West. Her pre-eminence as an oil producer gives her a position in OPEC stronger than that of any other member. Saudi Arabia has sought to use this position in a far sighted way, aiming at a price and levels of production of oil which would give a good return to the producers without endangering growth in oil consuming countries. During the present volatile economic circumstances across the world, this balancing role of Saudi Arabia is hugely important, through difficult to play successfully. Secondly, for reasons of history, Saudi Arabia finds itself at the centre of the world's resistance to terrorism. Because of the Holy Places within her borders,

Saudi Arabia is a prime target for those extremists who criticise all Arab governments as corrupt and wish to destroy the precious links between the Arab world and the West. As a result Saudi Arabia, has suffered from terrorist attack. It is vital that we maintain the exchanges of information and the co-ordination of tactics which are needed to isolate and repel the terrorist threat.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has earned the reputation of a cautious reformer, seeing the need for change, but recognising that if reform is to be permanent it has to rest on the traditions and convictions of Saudis and cannot be imposed from above or dictated to from outside the country. **F**