Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

United Kingdom-Saudi Arabia Joint Communiqué

2018-03-10

From 6th to 9th March 2018, during the visit to the United Kingdom of His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the invitation of the Government of Queen Elizabeth ll. Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom confirmed and reinforced the relations between the two countries, and committed to developing a deeper and more strategic partnership to enhance mutual interests.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II welcomed his Royal Highness the Crown Prince at the beginning of his visit and invited him to lunch at Buckingham Palace. His Royal Highness extended to Her Majesty the regards of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

1. Strategic Partnership and support for Vision 2030

1.1 The United Kingdom confirmed its strong support for Vision 2030 and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s programme for economic diversity and social reform. The Kingdom will transform into a pioneering investment power and a strategic partner for the Middle East, serving as a focal point for dialogue with the rest of the world. The skills and potential of the Kingdom’s human capital will also be improved, releasing the capabilities and possibilities of all citizens of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The United Kingdom is committed to delivering expertise to support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in these vital reforms. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is confirming that the United Kingdom is a strategic partner in Vision 2030, acknowledging the advanced expertise and capabilities of the public, private, and non-profit sectors of the United Kingdom, in key sectors including: education, healthcare, culture, entertainment, financial services, technology, life sciences, innovation, energy, security, and defence.

1.2 The Crown Prince and the Prime Minister launched on the 7th of March 2018 the annual UK-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council as a key mechanism for discussing and developing all aspects of the bilateral relationship, including UK support for Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030; on security, defence and international humanitarian assistance; and on regional and international issues. Both countries committed to a detailed plan to deliver this agenda with further meetings in 2018.

1.3 The UK and Saudi Arabia committed to a long-term partnership to support delivery of Vision 2030 covering a range of fields including evaluating mutual investment opportunities in

and through the UK by the Public Investment Fund, bilateral trade, and public procurement with UK companies in Vision 2030 priority areas, including on: education, training and skills; financial and investment services; culture and entertainment; healthcare services and life sciences; technology and renewable energy; and the defence industry. Taken together these opportunities are expected to amount up to $100 billion over a 10-year period, from which PIF will aim to target direct investments amounting to $30 billion.

2. Education, health, culture and entertainment

2.1 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has paid tribute to the expertise and experience of the United Kingdom in different education sectors, from kindergarten to primary and secondary education, all the way through to higher education, as well as technical vocation training. An agreement was concluded on shared cooperation in the different fields of education, including bringing the benefit of British skills and expertise in supporting early years development. A Memorandum of Understanding that will enable a partnership in developing educational curricula and capacity building was also signed between the two countries and the United Kingdom appointed Sir Anthony Seldon as its Education Special Representative to support Vision 2030.

2.2 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acknowledged the extent of British expertise in healthcare and the two countries agreed to reinforce cooperation in this field through a Memoranda of Understanding. This will reinforce cooperation in the fields of training, primary health care, health investment, digital healthcare, and others that the two nations agreed. The United Kingdom appointed Sir Mike Richards as its Special Representative on Healthcare to support Vision 2030.

2.3 The United Kingdom has shown its interest in becoming involved with the large opportunities with have resulted recently from positive changes in the fields of culture and entertainment. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia confirmed its confidence in the leading role and deep-rooted experience that distinguishes the United Kingdom in the creative, cultural, and entertainment industries. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two sides for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport in the United Kingdom. The two sides signed an agreement on cultural cooperation, which will work to preserve tradition and expand cooperation in developing and protecting cultural content. The United Kingdom undertook to support Saudi Arabia’s investment in new cultural and entertainment projects across the country.

2.4 The United Kingdom welcomed Saudi Arabia’s goal, under Vision 2030, of promoting and reinvigorating social development to build a vibrant society, including strengthening families and providing proper education for all children. The United Kingdom welcomed and agreed to support Saudi Arabia’s goal of increasing the number of women and young people participating in the workforce – including in science, technology, engineering, maths, and

digital sectors. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its support to the recent reforms and announcements empowering women.

3. Trade, investment and the private sector

3.1 The United Kingdom recognised the substantial potential for Saudi Arabia as a global investment powerhouse and committed to work with Saudi Arabia to meet Saudi objectives on industrialisation and human capital development. The Public Investment Fund recognised the United Kingdom as a highly attractive investment location and a gateway to the world, with London as a global city unrivalled in its international reach. The Public Investment Fund agreed to work closely with the British side to identify mutually beneficial inward investment opportunities in the United Kingdom and beyond, consistent with Saudi Vision 2030 and the United Kingdom's own investment priorities. The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia further agreed to establish co-chaired Private Sector Groups to support the expansion of the key sectors identified in Vision 2030, including on privatisation and corporatisation, asset management, real estate, life sciences and technology.

3.2 The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia recognised the importance of a successful listing of Saudi Aramco as part of the Kingdom's economic reform agenda. The United Kingdom underlined its support for the development of Saudi Arabia's financial services industry and Saudi Arabia praised the United Kingdom's support for plans to increase the size, depth and development of the Kingdom's capital markets, affording the Saudi stock exchange, Tadawul, the international status it deserved. Saudi Arabia endorsed the status of London as the premier global financial centre, providing unparalleled access to the global investors and expertise in financial and related professional services. The London Stock Exchange Group agreed with Tadawul on a programme of capacity-building and training measures to assist in developing the exchange.

3.3 The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia launched the first Ministerial United Kingdom-Saudi Arabia Energy and Industry Dialogue. A Memorandum of Understanding on clean energy was signed, with Saudi Arabia recognising United Kingdom's experience and expertise in clean growth. The United Kingdom expressed strong interest in Saudi Arabia's giga-project NEOM, and Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom agreed to work together to identify ways to use British expertise and innovation, including from the private sector, to develop NEOM and build in-country skills, capacity and expertise in Saudi Arabia. The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia agreed to share British expertise on growth hubs and business accelerators, with Saudi Arabia recognising the investment potential and opportunities from entrepreneurs and innovators in both countries, as well as the opportunities offered by investment in Saudi Arabia.

3.4 The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia welcomed the significant number of major new commercial deals that were agreed during the visit expected to total over $2 billion, creating

and securing jobs and prosperity both in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.

4. Security and defence

4.1 The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia reiterated the importance of the defence and security relationship for mutual security and regional stability. They celebrated a defence partnership of over half a century of cooperation on issues such as countering terrorism, developing joint capabilities and strengthening regional security. Both countries stressed the importance of continuous strong collaboration in defending their national security and fighting terrorism and its funding as well as on areas of defence. They affirmed that this cooperation was decisive in saving lives in the two countries, as well as in other areas of the world, and they pledged to deepen their cooperation and broaden their partnership in facing new challenges. This would include strategic cooperation in areas of cyber security, where a framework agreement on strategic cooperation in cyber security between the 2 countries was signed.

4.2 The two countries expressed their resolve to intensify their efforts to combat terrorism and extremism until its roots were eradicated and its funding exhausted, especially by exchanging information and understanding the different methods that extremists and terrorists use to influence vulnerable people, and working together to protect people from negative terrorist campaigns that terrorists use to spread extremism and conduct recruitment online. The United Kingdom expressed its support for Saudi Arabia’s efforts and leadership in promoting tolerance and inter-faith dialogue, including the development of initiatives related to fighting extremism, including the establishment of “Etidal”, which represents a global center of excellence for countering extremist narrative. The two nations committed to sharing best practices and identify opportunities for joint projects to counter terrorist propaganda, including in the English language.

4.3 The United Kingdom has expressed their appreciation to the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in countering terrorism and terrorist financing by announcing the establishment of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition with Riyadh as a centre consisting of 41 Islamic countries. The United Kingdom also expressed pleasure to be the first supporting country signing an agreement of collaboration with the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition in its initiative to combat threats from terrorism and violent extremism in four working sectors: Media, Counter-terrorism, Military and Ideology. The United Kingdom also welcomed the establishment of the International Centre for Targeting Terrorism Funding in Riyadh.

4.4 The two nations have signed a number of MoU’s to deepen and broaden cooperation between them and enhance the Kingdom’s industrial defence capabilities, noting that this was being achieved through technology transfer and capability development, training, and building a partnership in research and development on a national and industrial level, and

providing technical advisory to the development program of the Ministry of Defence in Saudi Arabia. As a central part of this, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom signed a letter of intent

to finalize discussions for the purchase of 48 Typhoon aircrafts.

4.5 The two countries agreed to increase cooperation on aviation security. The United Kingdom expressed its appreciation of Saudi Arabia's partnership in aviation security and in countering the continuing terrorist threat, fulfilling commitments under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2309. The United Kingdom underlined the importance of the recently signed Department for General Authority of Civil Aviation Priority Action Plan to work together to further develop aviation security standards.

5. International issues

5.1 The two countries agreed to continue to co-operate closely on international security, national development, and humanitarian issues. The United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed cooperation agreements to enable the strengthening of responses to regional and global humanitarian and development challenges. As part of this partnership, the two sides pledged £100 million of joint funding to support livelihoods and economic prosperity in the Horn of Africa and East Africa.

5.2 The two countries stressed the importance of Iran's adherence to the principles of good neighboring behaviors, and not interfering in the internal affairs of countries in accordance with international norms and the United Nations Charter.

5.3 The two countries discussed Yemen:

The two countries confirmed the importance of reaching a political solution to the crisis in Yemen on the basis of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the Yemen National Dialogue and UN Security Council Resolution 2216, so as to ensure Yemen's security and territorial integrity. They expressed their strong support for the recently appointed UN Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths. The 2 nations agreed to stay in regular contact, and conduct intensive discussions around this.

The two countries agreed that any political settlement must result in an end to security threats to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, other regional states, and to Red Sea shipping, as well as see an end to the Iranian support for militias and a withdrawal of Iranian elements and Hizbollah from Yemen.

The two countries agreed to continue to work together to address the humanitarian crisis, building on Saudi Arabia's efforts, including Saudi Arabia's recently announced Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations plan. Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its commitment to

disburse its pledge to the UN Appeal. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment since November to work together to strengthen the inspection mechanism of the UNVIM to ensure that all Yemeni ports can remain fully open to commercial and humanitarian supplies, according to relevant United Nations' resolutions. They agreed on the importance of the international community to pressure the Houthi militias to allow unimpeded humanitarian access in areas they control, whilst taking all appropriate measures to implement the arms embargo pursuant to paragraph 14 of UNSCR 2216 (2015). They agreed to work together with international partners including the UN to agree on a mechanism for paying public sector salaries across the country. The United Kingdom welcomed Saudi Arabia's recent establishment of an office for Yemen reconstruction in Riyadh to develop reconstruction plans to be implemented following a political settlement. The United Kingdom sees this as an important expression of Saudi Arabia's commitment to the long-term development of all of Yemen.

The United Kingdom welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's continuing commitment to ensuring that the Coalition's military campaign is conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law.

5.4 On other Middle East issues the two sides affirmed the following:

Middle East Peace Process: The two countries reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution based on the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant UN Resolutions.

Iraq: The United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia congratulated the Iraqi government on their progress and success against ISIS. The UK strongly supports the improvement in relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of Iraq, including the reopening of border crossings and trade routes, the resumption of direct flights and its support to rebuild Iraq.

Syria: The two countries reiterated their support for the UN led Geneva Process and for a political solution based on

Geneva I declaration and UN Security Council resolution 2254

. They agreed on the need to implement urgently a ceasefire, as called for

UN Security Council Resolution 2401

, in order to allow the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid and medical evacuations.

Lebanon: The two countries agreed to work together to support the Lebanese Government and to work together to counter Hizbollah's destabilising role.

Libya: The two countries expressed strong support for the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy to establish peace in Libya.

5.5 The two countries reaffirmed their commitment to enhanced co-operation between the UK and Gulf Cooperation Council; and the implementation of the

joint communique agreed between the UK and GCC States

in December 2016.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/united-kingdom-saudi-arabia-joint-communique