CONCLUSION

Today, Petroleum is considered as a strategic commodity, without which no industrialized society can run smoothly and diplomacy over it, has become an international game in which all the countries of the world participate. In the present times, Saudi Arabia possesses the world’s largest reserves of oil, and largest oil production capacity. Saudi Arabia is the major driving force within OPEC and as the world’s largest producer is the most important oil supplier.

Before the rise of Islam, Arabia played a very limited role in history. But, the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula played the most important role in shaping the character of modern day Saudi Arabia. In the 16th century, under the nominal suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabian Peninsula remained an undeveloped tribal battleground. The Saud family began to bring unity to Arabia in modern times, and their efforts led to the successive creation of three Saudi states. An alliance between Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (a spiritual reformer) and Muhammad ibn Saud (a political leader and warrior) set the foundation for the first Saudi state in 1744. In the origin of first Saudi state, it was observed that in 1700 the Arabian Peninsula did not merit much attention.

Due to the extreme temperature, poor soil, aridity and lack of natural resources, none of the major powers was interested in the interior of Arabia and the focus was on preventing the rise of a unified Arabian state, only the Ottoman and the British intervened, primarily in coastal Arabia. In short, the Hijaz region of western Arabia was the primary interest of the Ottomans and the region was continued to be ruled by the Hashmite dynasty. However nominally sovereign, the Hashmites accepted the authority of the Ottoman Empire after 1517 and governed in the name of
Istanbul. Except during two short-lived periods, under the rebel Ali Bey (1770-1773) and during an era of Saudi rule (1803-1812), the Hijaz remained under the domination of Hashmite rulers, as Ottoman authorities, to the end of the nineteenth (19th) century. The eastern coast of Arabia, Hasa had become an Ottoman province from 1550; in 1670 Hasa had fell from Ottoman control. In addition, there was the famous revivalist movement of Ind Abd al-Wahhab i.e. Wahhabism which was based on tawhid (i.e. strict monotheism) and condemned various local practices. When Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was driven out from his own town, and landed in Dariyya, he was welcomed by the local emir, Muhhamad ibn Saud, who granted him protection.

Finally, the agreement or alliance which was concluded between the spiritual reformer and political leader and warrior and committed the Saud tribe to the Wahhabi version of Islam and laid the foundation for the first Saudi state in 1744 was also the first step in the rise of the first Saudi state. Many changes occurred due to the arrival of al-Wahhab, for example, Muhammad ibn Saud was the first ruler of the First House of Saud and the Wahhabi movement converted and influenced those who were desert warrior. Under the sign of Wahhabism, the traditional Bedouin war-fare transformed into a holy crusade and converted the neighbouring Najdi tribes. Beyond Diriyyah the expansion was possible only by the recruitment of a fighting force. Settled Najdis between the ages of 18 and 60 were its first recruits, the strength of the Saudi-Wahhabi force. Some accepted Wahhabism out of faith; others submitted to it out of fear. There were many additional successes and excluding Riyadh, ibn Saud brought much of Najd under his control and these successes turned into a conflict between the Wahhabis and the lords of Hasa, Najran and the Hijaz. In 1765, Muhammad ibn Saud died and at that time most of the Najd was under the control of
the Saudis. Muhammad ibn Saud was succeeded by his son, Abd al-Aziz. The Saudi dynasty expanded into Riyadh, Kharj and Qasim by 1792.

Four factors enabled the process of expansion. First, disunity and rivalry among local oasis amirs in Najd implied that the Saudis could steadily defeat them one by one. Second, internal clashes among members of the oases ruling groups weakened their confrontation and enabled the invaders to use rebels for their purposes. Third, the migration of the some tribes of Arabian Peninsula to more fertile regions in Syria and Iraq aided the conquest. Several tribal confederations fled to Mesopotamia under Saudi-Wahhab pressure. Finally, the sedentary population of Najd adopted Wahhabism peacefully and provided grassroots support for the expansion. After the death of Abd al-Aziz, his son, Saud comes into power. Saud was ruled from 1803-1814. The Saudis had taken over the Hijaz by 1806, with Mecca and Medina. Thus, in the early 1800s, the first Saudi state was at its peak.

These developments and such an increase in authority brought the Saudis into conflicts with the Turks. To destroy the work of Muhammad bin Saud, his son and grandson and to put an end to the expansion of the Saudi state, Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt was invited by the Ottoman Empire and an army was sent by the Ottoman Empire to Arabia under the strong leadership of Muhammad Ali. After that, Muhammad Ali sent his son Tusun and Ibrahim Pasha to subjugate the Saudis and finally in 1818, Ibrahim Pasha conquered Diriyah and his forces totally destroyed the city. The Egyptians imprisoned Abdullah and removed to Istanbul where his captors beheaded him. This final assault ended the first Saudi-Wahhabi realm in the Arabian Peninsula. That same year, Riyadh was captured by the Egyptian/Ottoman forces and they established treaties with local non-Saudi tribes to conduct the policy and affairs of the state in the name of Muhammad Ali and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman
Empire maintained few garrisons in the main cities of the Najd-Riyadh, Shaqra, and Buraidah among them—but remained exposed to being attacked or harmed by Bedouin attacks outside urban areas. Apart from these, in Hijaz, people were celebrating and welcomed liberation from strict Wahhabi rule. Under Ottoman rule, the region brought back entertainment, music, and consideration for more liberal approaches to Islam. The Shia and Sufi Muslims were once again free to practice their distinguished religious belief. When we see the origin of the second Saudi state, then it was said that the birth, rise and fall of the second Saudi state followed the same pattern of the first Saudi state.

Third and present Saudi Arabia contains some brief history of second Saudi state, for example, after the death of Faisal, there were violent inter-family struggles in which various disagreements between the sons of Faisal rose, which weakened the House of Saud. Muhammad ibn Rashid, a tribal leader of the Shammar which was based in Hail, played a greater role in the decline of Saudi fortunes. He created a strong political body through which the greater part of Najd was rapidly covered and by 1871, after concluding a formal agreement with Turky, they captured Al-Hasa. In 1889, Abdul-Rahman bin Faisal, who was the third son of Faisal, succeeded in confirming the rule of the Saudi dynasty by taking the leadership of the family. At that time, Riyadh was the center of the authority of the Saudi family. The year 1891, proved to be a further setback for the House of Saud. Muhammad ibn Rashid captured Riyadh which was called the citadel of the House of Saud and completed his control of Najd. After this Abdul Rahman was pressurized to leave the city. After leaving the city, Abdul Rahman was settled for months with the Murra tribes at the Great Waste, which was situated in the outskirts of the Rub al-khali, called the Empty Quarter, with his son, Abdul Aziz, who was the future king of Arabia. Thus, the modern Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia marks its roots to the return of Abd al-Aziz al-Saud from exile and his successive founding of the present and third Saudi state.

Finally, on September 23, 1932, Ibn Saud created Saudi Arabia in its modern form and ordered officially that his country should be known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and by this the Kingdom officially dot its present name.

Apart from these, the early existence of Saudi Arabia was based on the suffrage of the British government, which had at the time of the collapse of the second Saudi state allowed the House of Saud to settle itself for years in Kuwait. The final Saudi conquest of the Arabian Peninsula was said to have occurred due to the withdrawal of British support from the Hashemites in Mecca. However, the Saudi Kingdom did not like to become another protectorate, falling under the power of the British Empire. Ibn Saud realized that his weak nation was vulnerable to more powerful Western Nations. So that he was quickly, accepted or supported the opportunities provided by the discovery of oil in the 1920s to established ties with the United States. Hence, it was said that from early times in Saudi Arabia’s existence, a relationship with the United States was seen by the Saudis as important, which was based on oil and security and considered as key to maintaining Saudis independence.

History shows that the initial ties with the United States did not originate from an interest in exploiting potential oil reserves, but to some extent from the activities that were ordinary. For example, in 1911, there was a short spell of fighting along the Persian Gulf in which ten of Ibn Saud’s soldiers were wounded and received treatment at an American hospital in Bahrain. There was a missionary facility of the Reformed Church. The pity and concern of the Americans and their skills impressed the Saudi ruler. He invited the mission to his Kingdom, for his treatment from facial
cellulitis. Apart from this, the King was also convinced by Charles Crane, Woodrow Wilson’s representative to the Middle East after World War I, that Americans were more kind and trust-worthy than the British.

In terms of strategic importance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in both regional and global basis, there are also some reasons. For example, the Kingdom is said to be a leader in the Muslim and Arab world and custodian of the two most important holy cities of Islam i.e. Mecca and Medina. Apart from this, the Gross Domestic Product of Saudi Arabia has other importance, its proven oil reserves and oil production, an influential member of OPEC, and central to Gulf security and has the largest and most modern military and internal security equipment in the Gulf. The oil business of Saudi Arabia began with the United States and with an agreement in May 1933. This agreement granted exploration and production rights over some 360,000 square miles for sixty years to Standard Oil of California.

On March 4, 1938, the first major oil discovery took place and oil exports began the same year. Until World War II, this relationship did not develop a security dimension and even then the Gulf was seen by the United States as largely a zone of British strategies influence. On the foundation of the military, political and commercial understandings which were developed during and immediately following the World War II, the Saudi US diplomatic relations were established. The World War II reflects the special relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia and also the extent of Saudi Oil resources along with their importance to the war effort and beyond. It was also said that the meeting which occurred between King Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the U.S.S. Quincy, a state-of-the-art military cruiser that was anchored in Egypt’s Great Bitter Lake, would set the tone for the next fifty years of US- Saudi relations. In addition,
the United States is Saudi Arabia’s largest trading partner and Saudi Arabia is the largest United States export market, in the West Asia.

The issues which were raised in the meeting were a number of hard headed security issues, energy matters and the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. President Roosevelt left the meeting by promising two things to the King Abdul Aziz. The first thing was that in the United States basic policy in Palestine, the United States government would make no change without full and prior consultation with both Jews and Arabs. The second thing was the promise made by the President Roosevelt that he would never do anything that might prove hostile to the Arabs. President Roosevelt reconfirmed his pledge in writing on week before his death. Three years later, King Abdul Aziz viewed the recognition of the State of Israel by the United States as a direct betrayal of Roosevelt’s pledge.

At the end of World War II, the US-Saudi political relationship was born and during the Cold War it grew up. The first significant tension in the US-Saudi relationship occurred due to Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948 and US recognition of the State of Israel. From the 1950s onward, Saudi Arabia and the US pursued some common national security objectives, inspite of recurring differences of opinion over the most significant regional issue, the Arab-Israeli Conflict. The bilateral relation between the United States and Saudi Arabia was severely tested by the Saudi and US governments’ divergent responses to Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1948, 1967 and 1973. After the death of President Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, the responsibility to end the war and construct the peace was left to the President Harry S. Truman, when the war ended, there was the great reduction in the need for oil and air routes, which reflects the lesser priority of Saudi Arabia for Washington.
Apart from these, a mutual defensive pact was signed between the United States and Saudi Arabia in 1951. In this pact, the United States was committed to assist Riyadh and also the US was allowed to maintain an airbase in Dhahran which was firstly used during the World War II. Thus by signing the defensive pact under which American usage right at the Dhahran airbase was extended by the Saudi Arabia for five years in exchange for an expanded military training program which also enabled the Kingdom to buy American arms under the Military Assistance Act, the two countries moved still more closely together.

It was said that when Israel became a State in 1948, the US-Saudi differences over Israel began to develop. But, only after the 1967 War when Israel according to the United Nations acting in self-defence, attacked Arab States that appeared calm and confident to launch war, these differences clearly expanded. The West Bank and Gaza Strip was controlled and gained by Israel and the relationship between the US and Israel would soon become a de facto alliance.

The Saudi regime on June 6, the second day of that war, asserted that it would cut off all supplies to any State that aided Israel and this announcement by Saudi regime was done partly in response to popular demonstrations. The Kingdom stopped oil shipments to the US and Britain. But the boycott was undermined by a market glut which was given up completely by early September when it becomes too burdensome on oil producers. Until the 1973 oil embargo, the US and Saudi Arabia managed their differences over Israel fairly well.

When we focus on the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, it was observed that the war brought latent tensions in US-Saudi relations to the surface. The war also altered the prevailing political and economic dynamics of the US-Saudi relationships. It is
said that the 1973 October war sparked a new development in the world of oil. Oil was used as a political weapon for the first time and an oil embargo was declared by the Arab members of OPEC against the US, Holland and other countries in October 1973. Saudi Arabia, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, participated in the Arab oil boycott of the United States and Netherlands. Saudi Arabia, a member of the OPEC had joined other member countries in moderate oil price increases beginning in 1971. The price of oil rose substantially after the 1973 war and dramatically increasing the Kingdoms wealth and political influence.

Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries i.e. OPEC ended the embargo in March, 1974 because it believed that the embargo was not achieving its goal of ending US support to Israel and also hoped that the US might encourage the Israelis to withdraw from its occupied territories. With the lost patience due to the US-Israeli alliance, King Faisal had supported the embargo. The King had stated several months before the 1973 war that he did not believe a strong relationship with the US could continue to exist alongside American support to Israel. In public speeches and private meetings, the King linked Zionism to communism and he only reluctantly allowed American Jews, including Henry Kissinger who was the US Secretary of State to visit Saudi Arabia. In other words, after five months, on March 1974, the embargo was lifted. The US worked seriously for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied land and the King was satisfied.

President Carter brought with him when he assumed office an intense personal belief that the American interest were countered by the authoritarian governments. One finds an uncomfortable dissonance between American Idealist values and actual US policy toward the Kingdom even during the Carter administration.
The Saudi Arabian government supported anti-communist causes around the world in efforts during the Carter and Reagan administrations that often ran parallel to or that were coordinated with US policy. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the 1979 Iranian revolution helped fuel a decade of collaborative Saudi-US foreign policy efforts, including shared support for Saddam Hussein’s war against Iran and for anti-Soviet Mujahiddin fighters in Afghanistan. By selling sophisticated American weaponry to Saudi Arabia, President Reagan faced the first challenge. A significant portion of his time would be occupied by the bruising political battle, the fight over AWACS and F-15 upgrade. Saudi Arabia’s AWACS and F-15 enhancement request was by and large supported by the incoming Reagan administration like the outgoing Carter administration.

Apart from these, the strategic importance of oil and West Asian politics over it is another point in US-Saudi relationship. Today, most of the oil consumed in the world has moved from one country to another. In international trade oil is by far the largest single commodity, and in the world oil industry is one of the largest and most international of all industries. That is why oil is important. ‘Big Bang’ of the oil industry was the discovery and development of the super-giant fields of the West Asia. Before 1950, enough of them had been discovered and have made some countries and companies understand that they were on the edge of a new world of some kind for oil.

When we focus on the West Asian oil crisis, it is seen that it started from 1951. In 1951 nationalisation the production of Iranian crude was cut off and the refined products from Abadan; the shortage was swept away by increasing output in other Gulf countries, utilising excess capacity in American and European refineries, redistributing tankers, and redirecting the flows of oil. The 1956 crisis arose from the
closure of the Suez Canal and the blockage of the pipelines through Syria, production remained largely unchanged and the redirecting of tankers around the Cape together with an increased output in the Venezuela and United States made it possible to meet the needs of the Europe. The Canal was again stopped, the flow through the pipelines was temporarily blocked, and some of the Arab producers briefly imposed a partial boycott in 1967; but the companies were enabled to meet their obligations by the abundance of large tankers, and the massive increase in Libyan output. In both the 1956 Suez War and the 1967 Six Day War not only was the Suez Canal closed, with a consequent shocking effect on the international movement of oil but the Arab states also attempted to use their control over a large part of the oil production of the world as a weapon to assist them in their struggle. The situation arising in 1956-1957 from the closure of the Suez Canal, the damage of some of the pipelines from producing counties to the Mediterranean and the ban on shipping Arab oil to France, Britain, and certain other countries generated several serious consequences. In 1967 (after ten years) West Asian oil was even more important to most of the world’s industrial economies, for in the meantime low oil prices had promoted its replacement of coal to such a magnitude that oil had become the dominant industrial fuel in most countries.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as an intergovernmental and permanent Organization was founded in Baghdad, Iraq, in September 1960 with the signing of an agreement by five countries namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Venezuela. They were to become the Founder Members of the OPEC. Political events since 1970, in and between the major West Asian oil exporting countries have on several occasions caused sudden shifts in oil supplies that resulted in considerable moves in the oil price. This has been

In short, the oil price rise or decline, increase or decrease of export or import volumes, support or deal of OPEC members or other oil producing and exporting countries, various Gulf Crisis and Oil Shocks which were seen up to 1990s, also continues in 2000s. So that, the beginning of the 21st century observed increased insecurities in oil supply, political burden, monetary degradation and military involvements; a third oil shock has widely spread between 2003 and 2008. Distinct from the first two oil shocks, the third oil shock was related to unfit mix of awkward supplies, monetary debasement and geopolitical risk. Lastly, the shock of the 2008-09 global financial and economic crises differed largely among three countries grouping in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA): the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), developing oil importers, and oil exporters.

The 1991 Gulf War once again showed the coincidence of Saudi and U.S. interests. The intention of Iraqi control of the majority of the world’s oil was intolerable to the United States, whose policy in the Gulf for decades had laid on the concept of approach to oil at reasonable prices. For Saudi part, the Kingdom fear was more proximate: they did not want to be the next victim of Iraq (Saddam Hussein). Hence, the massive effort that was first Operation Desert Shield and finally Desert Storm came into being, deploying 100,000 of U.S. and allied forces and untold amounts of military equipment into the Kingdom with the permission of the Saudi government. Another time, Saudi and American interests coincided. The first U.S. military forces arrived in the Kingdom within a week of Saddam’s invasion, in response to a Saudi request for American troops to protect against a possible Iraqi attack. The United States, in the months that followed, put together an extraordinary
coalition of forces to take back Kuwait under President George H.W. Bush. In the end nearly six hundred thirty thousand allied troops from all over the world, were part of Operation Desert Storm including the Middle East. None of this could have been done without the cooperation and support of the Saudi government, which granted military fight support as well as basing rights for allied troops. The Saudi contribution was precious, and was an armistice exercise in international cooperation as well as a clear illustration of the importance of the U.S. – Saudi relationship. Saudi Arabia was an important member of the allied coalition that in 1991 expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and for the next twelve years it hosted more than five thousand American military personnel, maximum of them from U.S. Air Force Units that imposed a no-fly zone over Southern Iraq – ‘Operation Southern Watch’. However, the American military presence aroused resentment among many Saudis; especially those leaning toward Islamic fundamentalism and produced both regional and domestic criticism of the Saudi leadership for allowing non-Muslim militaries to be stationed in the Kingdom, where the two holiest places in the Islamic religion are situated. By mutual U.S. - Saudi agreement in August 2003, almost all American military personnel were withdrawn from the Kingdom, but the two countries continue to perform military exercises and joint training activities.

A complex set of regional politics did not let both countries to always have identical policies and views, but whenever a vital need arose, the Saudi Government did not back out from giving necessary support. During the Gulf War I, for example, for removing Iraqi troops from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia willingly offered base facilities to the US-led coalition. Then again, during the 2003 American unilateral military operations to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power, the Kingdom hesitated
to give political support, yet did not oppose the use of Saudi facilities and soil by the U.S. military.

Over the past half century one of the main threats to regional peace and stability has been the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, (which laid wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982). Every Saudi ruler since King Abdul Aziz has defended the rights of the Palestinians for self-determination and a homeland based on the principle of land for peace. The Kingdom has encouraged various American administrations to become actively involved in ending the conflict, and leaders from the two countries have been in regular communication to find a solution to the crisis. The first attempts to find a just and lasting settlement to the conflict was one of the King Fahd’s 1981 eight-point plan to put an end to the conflict and give the Palestinians an independent state. The Arab Initiative for Peace suggested by then – Crown Prince Abdullah in 2002 repeats the Road Map to Peace put on the table by the United States of America; both proposals call for an independent and sustainable state of Palestine existing beside with the state of Israel.

Then-Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abd al Aziz in March 2002 proposed a peace initiative asking for normalization of Arab relations with Israel following the conclusion of a complete Israeli-Palestinian peace accord and the formation of a Palestinian state. The 2002 initiative paralleled and formed upon the August 1981 eight-point plan offered by then Crown Prince Fahd bin Abd al Aziz and then supported by the Arab League. Continuing political developments and violence prohibited further consideration of the 2002 Saudi proposal for a number of years. The heads of state of most of the Arab League countries met on March 28-29, 2007, in Riyadh and reconfirmed their support for peace proposal of King Abdullah, as accepted by the Arab League in 2002.
In spite of these, the bilateral relationship between USA and Saudi Arabia took a nosedive when the fact came to light that 15 of 19 terrorist hijackers on September 11, 2001 were Saudi nationals. Opposition to everything Saudi became rampant among Americans and the United States media.

It is very difficult to find out just how serious this worsening is from the US side since Washington is speaking with many diverse and conflicting say. Though, this is having two effects in the Kingdom. First, there is great and growing hatred at the US way of behaving given Saudi Arabia’s faithful role in stabilizing the oil markets since 1986 and its support for American military actions against Iraq. A bill in July 2003 to place the Kingdom on the official list of state supporters of terrorism attracted 191 votes in the US House of Representatives, simply now short of a majority. This produced a major shock in Riyadh. Second, there is a combined effort to try and pursue support from elsewhere, if only as an uprising policy. Thus the Kingdom has been working to develop relations with the European Union. After the terrorist bombings in Riyadh and Dammam in 2003 and 2004 respectively, the bilateral relationship began to regain its balance. The strategic picture in the Gulf region was changed by the Iraq war of 2003, removing the need of Washington to maintain big air force units in Saudi Arabia. The United States announced in April 2003 that it would withdraw the air force unit that had been stationed in Saudi Arabia since the end of the Gulf War. Only small American military training missions remained in the Kingdom as of July 2006. However, lately two countries have identified points of convergence. Counter-terrorism is one such another point between the US and Saudi Arabia.
Thus, it has been observed that today:

1. In our industrialized society, Petroleum plays an important role and oil diplomacy is an international game.

2. In international trade, oil is by far the largest single commodity, and in the world, oil industry is one of the largest and most international of all industries.

3. The oil business of Saudi Arabia began with the United States and with an agreement in May 1933.

4. Among various incidents or events which occurred between the United States and Saudi Arabia, the most important is the meeting between King Abdul Aziz and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 14 February 1945. The issues which were discussed in the meeting, almost most of them were resolved except the Palestine issue. The conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine would not resolved by both countries. Apart from this, the U.S- Saudi relations become worse when the U.S recognized the State of Israel. It is also observed in every Arab-Israel conflict, U.S supported Israel. Now, it is seen that the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis increased and it cannot be resolved only by one or two countries. It is the problem of the whole world and can be resolved by uniting the whole world including Palestinians and Israelis.

5. Apart from this, the 1991 Gulf War showed the coincidence of Saudi Arabia and U.S interests and that the role of Saudi Arabia in the 1991 Gulf War was precious.

6. In spite of this, the bilateral relationship between USA and Saudi Arabia took nosedive when the fact came to light that 15 of 19 terrorist hijackers on September 11, 2001 were Saudi nationals. But after the terrorist bombings in
Riyadh and Dammam in 2003 and 2004 respectively, the bilateral relationship began to regain its balance.

Counter-terrorism is another point between the U.S.-Saudi Arabia relationship:

1. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have formed two Joint Task Forces – one to fight against terrorists, another to fight against terror financing. Experts from both governments work alongside, sharing actual information about terror networks.

2. The Saudi government has increased the magnitude, training and skill of its security forces which are now tested by direct experience in Saudi Arabia. Saudi security forces have trained together with American counter-terrorism forces in the United States. This training and experience has led to the arrest and imprisonment of hundreds of wanted terrorists and the devastation of most of the known terrorist units in the kingdom.

3. A counter-terrorism working group ‘The Saudi-U.S. Strategic Dialogue’, created following September 11, 2001, continues to help confirm the governments’ efforts and resources are united.

4. Saudi intelligence in October 2010 provided key information to American officials that blocked an attempted terrorist area involving bombs heading to the United States that commenced in Yemen. Before reaching their targets the bombs were found and defused.

Cultural exchanges between the two countries have also increased. For example, the US Embassy and Consulates in Saudi Arabia issued almost seventy thousand visas to Saudis in 2009, in September 2009, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) opened and is the first international university of
its type, in September 2006 King Abdullah created the Saudi Student Scholarship Program.

Hence it appears that points of convergence between the two countries far outweigh points of divergence and the relationship appears to be growing healthier.