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The Strategic Non-importance of Saudi Arabia to the United States

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Abstract

Saudi Arabia's vast oil reserves and location is not critical to the United States economically nor politically. After researching Saudi Arabia in reference the oil reserves, the fact is that the United States is not dependant on Saudi Arabia. The United States only receives approximately 11 percent of the oil it uses from Saudi Arabia (Country Watch, 2007). The United States currently has a small number of military members in Saudi Arabia with the mission to train the Saudi military. The United States is continually updating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with military equipment. To this day, we currently have no definite timeline to remove the United States military completely from Saudi Arabia. This research paper will prove that the United States is not dependent on Saudi Arabia's oil reserves or the location for economic, political and militarily gain.

Strategic Non-importance of Saudi Arabia

The Saudi government looks for ways to use oil revenues to finance a determined program of infrastructure and industrial improvements while modernizing the kingdom (Services, 2002). The kingdom is the largest oil producer in the world and currently holds approximately one quarter of the world's oil reserves. Saudi Arabia plays a key role in the world's economy due to the oil trade throughout the world (Sentinel, 2005). With the high price of oil, the kingdom has been able to rebuild and reform. This has enabled the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to modernize throughout the country. The kingdom has established a close strategic alliance with the United States when we were invited to have a presence to assist in the protection of the oil reserve in past years (Saudi Arabia a Country Study, 2007). The United States only purchases approximately 11 percent of its yearly usage from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Country Watch, 2007). For the United States, there is no economic and political gain with oil. Although the United States uses very little of the oil reserve of Saudi Arabia, the United States will always be a supporting force for training their military so Saudi Arabia can better protect the oil within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government depends heavily on the United States and private organizations for technical expertise and support in developing the country's human and mineral resources (Country Watch, 2007).

The politics and government agencies control the import and export of oil and merchandise. Saudi Arabia is the leading Arab consumer for American products worldwide. The American economy benefits including a variety of industrial goods from these exports to the Saudi government along with other nations over the globe. The Saudi Government's main income is from their oil reserve.

Petroleum is an integral part of the Saudi economy; Saudi Arabia is the world's largest

producer and exporter of oil. In recent decades the Kingdom has increasingly diversified its economy, and today produces and exports a variety of industrial goods all over the globe (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2007, ¶2).

Oil sales have allowed the government to modernize with the billions of dollars received from selling oil. This has made them very wealthy and paid off their entire public debt. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy goals are to maintain a security force and the country's high position within the Arabian Peninsula, protect the Arabian interest, and promote unity among Islamic governments (US Department of State, 2007). The kingdom also maintains supportive relations with other oil producing and major oil consuming countries.

The Saudi government is dependent on the United States for our military assets. The Saudi military at its lowest was dependent on the United States for military protection. The United States has for many years protected the kingdom with our military assets from the air, ocean, and ground forces. With all the outdated equipment that the kingdom was using, the United States granted the Saudi kingdom the opportunity to purchase some of our older military equipment. This material while older was still more modern than the military equipment of surrounding countries. The equipment sold was of high quality and more advanced than most surrounding countries. Saudi Arabia purchased F-15 Fighters, air to sea missiles, air defense weaponry, combat vehicles, and other military equipment (US Department of State, 2007). The United States also supplied the personnel to train the Saudi Arabia military on the equipment purchased which included the numerous man hours dedicated to the training. With support from the United States, Saudi's military has a greater chance for success defending their country against minor terrorist attacks from threats of neighboring countries such as Iran. The Saudi Arabia military has established a foundation and understanding of how their military should operate. This will

allow the kingdom to move in a forward direction and allow the United States to eventually leave for good. The United States does not have an interest in pulling out completely because it closes the door for possible future operations in theater.

The Saudi government for many decades has supported terrorism by giving financial support and allowing them to reside in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia's commitment to antiterrorism in the kingdom has been questioned by the United States and other countries on several occasions. The United States has current knowledge that within the kingdom resides many active terrorist cells (Country Watch, 2007). The Saudi government is constantly seeking independence from the United States ideology.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the king is traditionally chosen by the royal family in the past and this is still currently how this is decided by the royal family. This position stays with the royal family. Saudi Arabia is a country of contradiction and misperception.

Opposing View

The United States is dependent on Saudi Arabia for some aspects such as a strategic strong point with-in the Arab countries. Due to the history between the United States and Saudi Arabia, the United States will continue to be partners with them. Although, we do need these resources but the United States does purchase petroleum from different Organizations of Petroleum Exporting Countries. In many ways the nation has to keep Saudi Arabia as our friends due to their location in the Middle East.

The military does provide military support so the kingdom can expand its military with the knowledge they gain from the United States. The United States does rely on the Saudi government to allow us to remain there. This is a strategic stronghold for the United States in

the event that Iran would aggress against us. In this event, Saudi Arabia's location is the staging ground for the United States in future operations on their soil

Conclusion

In conclusion, as demonstrated by the evidence, Saudi Arabia has no strategic importance for the United States. The Saudi Arabia Government in the past required assistance from the United States in the protection of Saudi Arabia. Currently, the United States has been invited by the Saudi government to have a minimal force for the training of the Saudi military but this is not for protection of the kingdom. The United States sold military equipment to the Saudi government trying to ensure they were the most current and protected military within the Arab countries. This is in support of their military to ensure that they are able to operate the equipment that they purchased from the United States. The United States has supported the kingdom with military assets in many ways. The United States for many years has had an invitation from the Saudi Government to have a presence within the kingdom. Currently there are no plans in the near future for the United States to completely withdrawal. Our military for years has provided professional training to the Saudi military. Saudi Arabia has received invitations for many years for their military to come to the United States to receive training in the United States from our military schools to learn how our military operates in combat operations. The United States trains them so they can teach their military and have a better understanding of how to survive in combat along with being more self-sufficient themselves.

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