

ACTION NEA-00

INFO LOG-00 AID-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DODE-00 DOEE-00 DS-00
 UTED-00 VCI-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01
 L-00 M-00 VCIE-00 NSAE-00 ISN-00 NSCE-00 OIC-00
 OMB-00 PA-00 PER-00 PM-00 GIWI-00 PRS-00 P-00
 SCT-00 ISNE-00 DOHS-00 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00 TRSE-00
 EVR-00 NCTC-00 FMP-00 R-00 ECA-00 IIP-00 SCRS-00
 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00
 SWCI-00 /001W

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P 281502Z JUN 06
 FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9065
 INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
 AMCONSUL JEDDAH

RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLAS RIYADH 005172

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, KDEM, KISL, PGOV, PHUM, SOCI, SA
 SUBJECT: VISIT BY COUNCIL ON AMERICAN ISLAMIC RELATIONS
 (CAIR) TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF: ABU DHABI 2127

1. (U) Following up on a similar visit to the UAE in May (reftel), a delegation from the U.S.-based Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in June. On June 22 the group paid a courtesy call on the Embassy to discuss the organization's issues and outreach strategies. In the Ambassador's absence, DCM received the group, along with the PA Counselor and Poloff (notetaker).
2. (SBU) Prior to coming to Riyadh, the CAIR group visited Mecca and Jeddah. Although they apparently were not received at the highest levels of the SAG, the group assured the Embassy that "King Abdullah knows CAIR very well" and receives regular updates on the group's projects. After recalling the success of their visit to the UAE in May, the group predicted that they would be back in the region by fall to visit Kuwait and Qatar. The group also mentioned that they had been well-received in Washington by senior State Department officials, including Secretary Rice and Undersecretary Hughes.
3. (U) The core delegation consisted of CAIR Board Chairman Dr. Parvez Ahmed, Executive Director Nihad Awad, and Communications Director Cary (Ibrahim) Hooper. Accompanying them were former U.S. Representative Paul Findley and Don Myers, a former DoD official now with Hill and Knowlton public relations.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

4. (U) During their hour-long meeting in the Embassy, the group presented various projects that CAIR is working on to counter negative stereotypes about Muslims in the U.S. ("Islamophobia"), linking their work to concern over growing anti-Americanism in the Middle East. One of the current CAIR projects they discussed was the presentation of "accurate books about Islam" to schools and libraries in the U.S.

5. (SBU) Mr. Don Myers, representing Hill and Knowlton, gave a short demonstration of a CAIR-funded media campaign to support CAIR's overall information outreach effort. According to Myers, this private campaign will emphasize both grassroots outreach to improve American non-Muslim understanding of Muslims and the encouragement of political engagement by American Muslims. The multi-year broadcast and print campaign is to be entitled "Let the Conversation Begin" and is aimed at countering negative stereotypes about Muslims within the broad American public.

6. (SBU) One admitted reason for the group's current visit to the KSA was to solicit \$50 million in governmental and non-governmental contributions. PA Counselor noted that private outreach activities can provide valuable support to USG efforts to build mutual understanding overseas but cautioned that USG Public Diplomacy (PD) funds cannot be used or associated with efforts to target American audiences. The delegation was interested to hear of the Embassy's PD exchange and activities within the KSA and offered to help support them in any appropriate way. The group did not share, however, any details of their success or lack thereof in fundraising within the KSA.

OBERWETTER

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