

BRITISH AMBASSADOR RECEIVES KNIGHTHOOD FROM HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth graciously bestowed a knighthood in the New Year Honours list on the British Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sir William Patey. Sir William was made a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George. Sir William will formally receive the honour in a ceremony with HM the Queen when she will place her sword on each of his shoulders in an ancient ceremony. Sir William Patey KCMG and Lady Patey use their titles with immediate effect.

Sir William has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Sir William joined the Diplomatic Service straight after graduation, and initially worked on the Rhodesia Desk. Sir William then went to the FCO's Middle East Centre for Arabic Studies in Lebanon to study Arabic. After one year he went to Abu Dhabi as Commercial Attache and was then posted to the British Embassy in Tripoli to work in the Political Section. After a few years in London, where he worked successively on the Libya/Syria Desk and the Iran/Iraq Desk, he was sent to Australia as Head of the Political Section at the British High Commission in Canberra. Returning to London in 1992 he was appointed Deputy Head of United Nations Department. He then spent two years as an Overseas Inspector before being posted to Riyadh as Deputy Head of Mission and Consul General from 1995 to 1998.

On his return to London Sir William was appointed head of the Middle East Department where he served from 1999 to 2002. In 2002 he was appointed Ambassador to Sudan during the negotiations for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Khartoum and the southern rebels (SPLA). In June 2005 he was appointed Ambassador to Iraq and served there for 14 months, during the drafting and passing in a referendum of the new Iraqi Constitution. He left Baghdad at the end of July 2006 and until his appointment as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia in April 2007 he served as the Director of the Comprehensive Spending Review programme in the Foreign Office.

The Order of St Michael and St George is awarded to men and women of high office, or who render extraordinary or important non-military service in a foreign country. It can also be conferred for important or loyal service in relation to Foreign



and Commonwealth affairs. The Order's motto is *Auspicium melioris aevi* ('Token of a better age').

The Order was instituted in 1818 by the Prince Regent (later George IV). At first, the Order was conferred upon those holding high position and commands in the Mediterranean. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, due to the expansion of the British Empire, the Order was then extended to those who had given distinguished service in the Dominions and Colonies, as well as foreign affairs generally. Today the Order consists of the Sovereign, a Grand Master (currently The Duke of Kent), and includes three classes: 125 Knights and Dames Grand Cross (GCMG), 375 Knights and Dames Commander (KCMG and DCMG), and 1750 Companions (CMG).

Reflecting on his honour Sir William said: "This award reflects the importance that Britain attaches to its relationship with Saudi Arabia and the importance of the work done by the three British diplomatic posts in Saudi Arabia. I am grateful to Her Majesty the Queen both for this high honour and for the privilege of serving as Her Ambassador in Saudi Arabia."