



INTERGULF '98, BAHRAIN

Following is the report presented by John Freel at the conference held in Bahrain on 20th & 21st October

Good Morning Gentlemen,

I'm pleased to report to you that the Riyadh Group of British Businessmen continues to flourish and we are now in our 17th year of operation, with a membership which currently stands at around 200.

For those of you who are not familiar with our group, I have brought some literature to handout which forms part of our "new members welcome pack" and includes the contact details of our various committees.

In addition to an Executive Committee, the group has a very active Business Development Sub-Committee and several Special Interest Sub-Groups. The SIG's now involve over 70% of our members and they have become the nucleus within our group, since they provide a focus on individual members' specific business interests. Presently, the sectors covered by our sub-groups include Aviation, Business Services, Communications & I.T., Construction, Financial, and FMCG/ Industrial. Two of these sub-groups, the Comms / IT & FMCG/Industrial, have both been formed since I gave my report at the Intergulf Conference in Dubai last year.

The main group continues to hold bi-monthly "Embassy Briefings" wherein the RGBB and the Embassy jointly provide members with up-to-date information relating to commercial and political situations in both the U.K. and Saudi Arabia - this is a very popular forum with our members and is always well attended since it provides an extremely useful opportunity for regular interaction between the Embassy staff and our members. On occasions we have also been joined by our Ambassador - For example, earlier this month Sir Andrew Green gave us an interesting briefing on Crown Prince Abdullah's recent visit to the U.K. when he met with Her Majesty The Queen and Tony Blair.

Our Business Development

Sub-Committee is involved in various activities designed to promote British business in Saudi Arabia. These activities include a "Product Assessment" service which involves the BDSC assisting the Commercial Section of the Embassy in evaluating new U.K. products and services to identify potential matchmaking opportunities for U.K. companies and our members' companies. These assessments, incidentally, now form part of the "Market Information Reports" produced by the Embassy. Another initiative undertaken by the BDSC is "Interfacing with Potential Trade Missionaries". This is aimed at direct communications with U.K. companies who are undecided on joining a Trade Mission.

Prompted by U.K. Chambers of Commerce and the Embassy, the RGBB provides these companies with encouragement and advice on the potential business prospects in Saudi Arabia and makes them aware of the extensive local expertise available within our group, to assist them in their decision making.

We also continue to co-ordinate closely with the Commercial Section of the Embassy to assist them in maintaining a database of information which contains current and proposed major projects in Saudi Arabia. I'm sure that my fellow delegate Richard Northern (Commercial Counsellor in Riyadh) will confirm that our input to the project list has proved to be a valuable contribution towards producing this vital information tool, which I know is proving especially useful for briefing Trade Missions.

Our group continues to publish a quarterly Newsletter which we circulate to all our members and to our fellow BBG's throughout the Gulf region as well as various organisations in the U.K. We also continue to operate a "Privilege Card" system which provides

