



Message from the Chairman of the BBG Jeddah

In a previous letter to BBG members, I ventured to suggest that the face of Jeddah was changing as a consequence of the recent developments in the Middle East in general and the security concerns in Saudi in particular. I had in mind, especially, the Riyadh bombing. The point I was trying to make was that a number of British families with children had left Jeddah in the last few months – as to whether this is a temporary phenomenon or a permanent change, only time will tell.

The reason I mention this now, is that I received an email from one of our 'long time' members, for whom I have the greatest respect, taking issue with some of my conclusions and, suggesting, that those who returned after the summer found a host of familiar faces and a comforting, and confident routine, rather than a strange environment, as I implied. Indeed, a whole host of new families have actually come to Jeddah in the last few months. It was also suggested that we should be careful about creating an unduly pessimistic outlook.

I apologise if I have, inadvertently, given a very pessimistic view and I accept that the British community in Jeddah is 'regenerating'. I am sure that if you speak to those who have a broader perspective on these things (like the Schools or perhaps the Compound Managers) they will confirm that only a few families left and new families continue to arrive all the time. I can certainly confirm that social activity has picked up – you only need see the adverts for various events to realise this.

What I was conveying was a personal perspective – 'one man's point of view'. Of course, my perspective, by definition, is biased. This is how I see Jeddah at the moment. These messages are a sort of an Editorial that allows me to pontificate on various issues – they do not represent the official viewpoint of the BBG.

As many members will already be aware, we have an Iftar meeting scheduled for 17th November, 2003 at which our guest speaker is to be the new Ambassador, Sherard Cowper-Coles and his wife. We have an excellent evening planned and the event is being subsidised for members. As this is HMA's first visit to the BBG, we need a good turnout and I would urge you, therefore, to make every effort to attend the Iftar. We have opened up the event to spouses (and guests) as well. If you have not attended one of

these events before, please do come along as I can guarantee that you will enjoy the evening and meet friends that you have not seen for sometime.

I think a word about security is appropriate here. We are cognisant of the fact that there are security concerns and we have debated, at length, the advisability, or otherwise, of going ahead with this event and we feel that, on balance, we ought to go ahead. We have been assured of extra security by the authorities. HM Ambassador is satisfied with our arrangements. We shall certainly keep the situation under constant review.

The BBG / ABJ Sports Challenge is due to start soon. This year we are trying a different format to make the Challenge more enjoyable. The Challenge started off all those years ago as a means of social interaction with our American counterparts in a friendly and fun environment. Regrettably, the event has become a little too competitive in recent years and we (both the BBG and the ABJ) have lost sight of the 'friendly and fun' part of the Challenge. The intention this year is to keep the same number of sports but, in each sport, mix up the competitors so that each 'team' includes both ABJ and BBG members and, therefore, the competition is between Team A v Team B rather than BBG v ABJ. We shall scrupulously mix up the teams so that there is no BBG or ABJ 'team'. I think we shall still have trophies but for teams rather than BBG or ABJ. I trust that this will make for a more friendly event – we have not decided on a name but we shall call them something like 'BBG/ABJ Games' or 'The Anglo American Games' **Suggestions please!**

Finally, a reminder that nominations are still open for the new Committee. The existing Committee will step down at the next AGM and elections shall be held for a new Committee. All the existing members are offering themselves for re-election and if you would like to put yourself forward, please do so on the Nomination Form before the 17th November, 2003.

I look forward to seeing you at the Iftar!

Best regards

**Nasir Pasha
Chairman**