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A Message from AGSIW Board Chair Ambassador Frank G. Wisner

As I page through the 2016 annual report of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, I am struck by the depth and breadth of the institute’s engagement on the most salient issues shaping the countries of this key geostrategic region, and the nature of their relationships with the United States. Through public discussions and private roundtables, blog posts and long-form analyses, media outreach and participation in seminars and symposia in the United States, Europe, and the Gulf region, AGSIW has remained faithful to its mandate: building bridges of understanding. It has done so by ensuring that American audiences hear directly from Gulf Arabs themselves: from young poets infusing a traditional art form with a 21st century sensibility; from seasoned diplomats articulating their countries’ foreign policy priorities; from scholars, energy experts, entrepreneurs, and activists, all of whom have a story to tell of a dynamic and changing region where U.S. economic, political, and national security interests are very much at stake.

At the same time, AGSIW has informed its growing constituency in the Arab Gulf states of key developments here in the United States with the potential to impact their lives in important ways. At its inaugural UAE Security Forum in Abu Dhabi – AGSIW’s first conference in the Gulf – the focus was cybersecurity. In Washington, the institute offered sustained analysis of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, legislation with enormous implications for the United States’ relations with its Gulf partners. This year also saw the launch of AGSIW’s Arabic-language website, which provides both timely translations of published analyses and original commentary.

Throughout the year, AGSIW’s website offered regular updates on youth initiatives through Millennial Gulf and the region’s political economy through Market Watch. The Gulf Economic Barometer invited readers to take advantage of an innovative tool to track key fiscal, monetary, and labor policy changes undertaken by Gulf Arab states.

There was much more that made 2016 an exciting and eventful year for AGSIW, and I invite you all to see for yourselves on the pages that follow. And, of course, I invite you to join us either in person or online in the weeks and months to come as we continue to shine a light on the historic challenges – and changes – defining the Gulf Arab states.

Sincerely,

Frank G. Wisner
A Message from AGSIW President Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba

As the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington approaches its second anniversary, I am reminded how fortunate I am to lead, at a moment of unprecedented and profound change in the region, an organization tasked with providing thoughtful, informed analysis of the events and trends that are shaping the future.

During 2016, even as we deepened our scholarly work through major initiatives like the Gulf Economic Barometer, the Gulf Rising series, the Vision 2030 series, and Millennial Gulf, we took important steps to strengthen our connection with the nearly 40 percent of our audience who come from the Arab world. We launched our Arabic website, featuring regular coverage of the U.S. presidential election, and hosted our flagship annual conference in Abu Dhabi: the UAE Security Forum.

We also took important steps in building professional partnerships, organizing workshops with Chatham House in London, and b’huth, the Dubai Public Policy Research Centre. In addition, we established private sector partnerships to solidify AGSIW’s financial foundation.

The 2016 annual report you have in your hands provides a summary of the year’s key milestones. My hope is that the report will demonstrate convincingly the value of examining the dynamic societies of the Gulf Arab states from multiple perspectives, and how this enriches the conversation between the United States and its partners in the region.

As always, our work was made possible with the support of our donors, our very accomplished board of directors, our extraordinary staff, and an informed and enthusiastic community of friends and colleagues.

If you haven’t done so already, I invite you to become an active member of that community, and I very much look forward to welcoming you to AGSIW.

Sincerely,
The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW), launched in 2015, is an independent, nonprofit institution dedicated to increasing the understanding and appreciation of the social, economic, and political diversity of the Gulf Arab states. Through expert research, analysis, exchanges, and public discussion, the institute seeks to encourage thoughtful debate and inform decision makers shaping U.S. policy regarding this critical geostrategic region.

Goals

• To build bridges of understanding between the United States and the Gulf Arab states on issues ranging from politics and security to economics, trade, and business; from social dynamics to civil society and culture.
• To be recognized as Washington’s primary source of credible and expert analysis about the Gulf Arab states and the complex issues that impact the region and U.S. interests.
• To provide a Washington platform for opinion leaders from the Gulf states to promote interaction with U.S. policymakers and the broader American public.

Strategies

• Build long-term, cross-regional relationships that facilitate vigorous discussion of policies, issues, and trends by: sponsoring guest scholars from the Gulf, promoting academic exchanges between Gulf and American organizations, and mentoring American scholars to increase the pool of regional expertise.
• Provide credible expert analysis and timely policy recommendations by: hosting discussions and briefings with policymakers and experts from the United States and the Gulf region, producing policy analysis by resident and non-resident scholars, commissioning policy papers and op-eds by scholars from the region, and using traditional and social media tools to comment on current policy issues.
• Promote interaction between Gulf officials, opinion leaders, and the Washington policy community by: providing a platform from which these individuals can articulate for members of Congress, the administration, and the media a regional perspective on the issues most relevant to U.S.-Gulf relations.
Panel Discussions and Roundtables

**U.S. Foreign Policy and Regional Politics**

With Saudi-Iranian tensions enflamed at the outset of 2016, AGSIW responded with the panel *The Saudi-Iranian Confrontation: What Lies Ahead?* examining the regional implications of the diplomatic crisis.

Throughout 2016, with U.S.-Gulf relations increasingly strained, AGSIW explored questions surrounding the future of this relationship. AGSIW held several panels looking at key issues for the United States, including *Obama and the Gulf: Charting a Path Forward* and *The End of the U.S.-Saudi Special Relationship?* As Congress debated the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, AGSIW held the panel *JASTA: American Politics and U.S.-Saudi Relations* examining the implications of the act for U.S. foreign policy and the Gulf Arab states. AGSIW was also pleased to host former Saudi ambassador to the United States, Prince Turki Al Faisal, to discuss the Saudi view of JASTA.

With the future of U.S.-GCC relations uncertain, Gulf Arab states are energizing their roles in the international system. To examine GCC relations beyond the United States, AGSIW held the panel *Gulf Rising: The Emerging International Role of the Gulf States* to kick off the Gulf Rising series of roundtables and issue papers examining GCC relations with countries such as Russia, Egypt, and Turkey. AGSIW will continue examining these key relationships in 2017.

**Economy**

Addressing economic change in the Gulf Arab states remained a priority for AGSIW in 2016. Looking at the role of foreign workers in the GCC, AGSIW held the panel *Labor Dynamics in the Gulf*. AGSIW also hosted *Governance and the War Economy in Yemen* discussing the Yemeni central bank crisis and its implications on an economy torn apart by conflict. Examining the effect of the election of U.S. President Donald J. Trump on international markets, Christof Ruhl of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority joined AGSIW for a discussion on this issue and the current drivers of global economic performance and risks.

**Culture and Society**

In April, Saudi Arabia announced the launch of Vision 2030, a broad program to move the kingdom away from oil dependance. As one of the few Washington think tanks to examine the potentially vast implications of this plan on Saudi society, AGSIW hosted the panel *Vision 2030: A New Look for Saudi Arabia?* With changing economic dynamics rapidly transforming societies across the GCC countries, AGSIW hosted *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life* looking at urban development in Kuwait and *The Gulf Startup Revolution*, discussing the GCC venture capital ecosystem. Examining the implications of family law on women in the Gulf, AGSIW hosted *Personal Status Laws in the Gulf States*. 
Conferences

AGSIW kicked off 2016 with the institute’s first conference in the Gulf, the [UAE Security Forum 2016: Bridging the Cybersecurity Talent Gap](#) in Abu Dhabi, in partnership with Raytheon. In February, AGSIW held two conferences featuring notable academics and officials from the region, [National Identity and National Projects in the Arab Gulf States](#) and [Labor Dynamics in the Gulf Arab States](#). In September, AGSIW hosted the second annual [Petro Diplomacy](#) conference, focusing on challenges in the new energy world. AGSIW closed the year with the conference [Yemen after the War](#), in partnership with b’huth, the Dubai Research Centre.

Ambassadors Forum

In 2016, AGSIW furthered its mission to provide a platform in Washington for Gulf political and opinion leaders. In February, AGSIW hosted [Omar Saif Ghobash](#), UAE ambassador to Russia, for a roundtable discussion on UAE-Russia relations. With the surprise election of Donald J. Trump, AGSIW launched the [New Administration](#) series of roundtables, hosting GCC ambassadors for discussions on the implications of changing U.S. policies for each Gulf country. The series began in November with [Yousef Al Otaiba](#), UAE ambassador to the United States, and will continue in 2017.
Cultural Events

AGSIW is making a name for itself as a center for cultural and intellectual events focused on the Gulf region. In June, AGSIW hosted RIWAYA: Spoken Word Poetry from the Gulf with poets from Kuwait and the UAE. AGSIW also hosted its second annual Iftar, welcoming guests from Gulf and other Arab embassies, the U.S. government, organizations working on U.S.-Arab relations, and students. In September, AGSIW held a student open house, featuring American and Gulf speakers who shared their journeys studying abroad and how they have utilized social media to tell their stories.

On the Hill

Demonstrating AGSIW’s integral role as a source in Washington of credible and expert analysis about the Gulf Arab states, AGSIW Board Member Bernard Haykel testified in front of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in February at the hearing Inside the Mind of ISIS: Understanding Its Goals and Ideology to Better Protect the Homeland. In April, AGSIW Executive Vice President Ambassador Stephen A. Seche discussed the U.S.-Saudi relationship at a panel discussion with the Project on Middle East Democracy at the Russell Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill.
More than a hundred leaders from across government, academia, and the private sector gathered for the inaugural UAE Security Forum in Abu Dhabi, AGSIW’s first conference in the Gulf. The forum brought focus to a key topic of global and national security: cybersecurity and the gap that exists in talent needed to ensure the security of sensitive information and critical infrastructure. The event was organized and hosted by AGSIW to help focus on the current state of cybersecurity in the UAE and the need to broaden the cyber workforce. Raytheon, a global technology and cybersecurity firm, sponsored the forum as part of its global efforts to help develop professionals to meet the challenges of this dynamic domain.
Petro Diplomacy

A protracted period of dramatically lower oil prices has ushered in momentous challenges for Gulf Arab states and oil producing countries around the world. AGSIW hosted its second annual daylong energy conference, Petro Diplomacy: Challenges in the New Energy World, focusing on key drivers of the oil price outlook, upstream oil investment strategies, economic and energy policy reforms in the GCC, and the impact of lower prices on foreign policy agendas at the regional and global levels. To conclude the day, AGSIW held a public forum to present highlights and recommendations from the day’s discussion.
Papers

Over the course of 2016, AGSIW publications prioritized timely issues such as evolving foreign policies in the Gulf, economic transformation, and the status of women in the GCC countries. Publications such as What’s at Stake for the Gulf Arab States in Syria? by AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Hussein Ibish and The Interventionist Turn in Gulf States’ Foreign Policies by AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Karen E. Young focused on GCC regional policies and interventions in regional conflicts. AGSIW also tackled changing economic dynamics and oil markets in papers such as Past Imperfect, Future Tense: Iran’s Oil Industry Post-Sanctions by Diane Munro and Economic Diversification Plans: Challenges and Prospects for Gulf Policymakers by Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. AGSIW Visiting Scholar Hala Aldosari examined personal status laws across the GCC countries and their impact on women in The Personal is Political: Gender Identity in the Personal Status Laws of the Gulf Arab States.
Conference and Workshop Reports

Following conferences and workshops, AGSIW publishes reports to capture key insights and analysis from the discussions. The UAE Security Forum conference report looked at the state of cybersecurity in the UAE while the Petro Diplomacy conference report examined the changing dynamics of energy markets. AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Kristin Smith Diwan discussed Gulf national identity trends in National Identity and National Projects in the Arab Gulf States conference report, while the Yemen after the War conference report highlighted various conceptions of what Yemen would look like post-conflict. AGSIW launched the Gulf Rising series with the workshop and ensuing report The GCC View of Russia: Diminishing Expectations. In December, AGSIW published another report based on the Gulf Rising workshop Egypt-GCC Partnership: Bedrock of Regional Security Despite Fissures.
A blog that seeks to encourage thoughtful debate about the politics, economy, and culture of the Arab Gulf states and policy toward them, written by expert and emerging voices from the region and beyond.

**Highlights from the Bridge**
- “What Trump’s Election Could Mean for the Gulf Arab Countries” by Hussein Ibish
- “Royal Women in the Gulf: Agents of Change or Defenders of the Status Quo?” by Hala Aldosari
- “Russia’s Regional Ties Grow at Saudi Expense” by Mark N. Katz
- “Who Is Sunni?: Chechnya Islamic Conference Opens Window on Intra-Faith Rivalry” by Kristin Smith Diwan
- “Yemen at a Crossroads: End the War or Watch It Metastasize” by Stephen A. Seche

A bimonthly series reporting on youth-led initiatives in the realms of culture, politics, technology, and entrepreneurship in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The goal of Millennial Gulf is to elevate the voices of youth in the GCC and to deepen understanding of their concerns and aspirations.

**Millennial Gulf Highlights**
- “Sharing Their Journey: U.S. and Gulf Students on Blogging, Social Media, and Life Abroad”
- “Embrace Doha: Generating Cross-Cultural Dialogue in Qatar” by Samyah Alfoory
- “Saudi Students Welcome Vision 2030” by Mark C. Thompson
- “What if Arabistan?” by Fatima Abo Alasrar
- “Rai Institute: A New Approach to Political Activism in Kuwait” by Reham Jambi
Market Watch Highlights

- “Transactional Partnerships To Define Foreign and Economic Policy in the Gulf”
- “Gulf States are Torn Between Economic Sense and Military Ambition”
- “The Gulf’s Entanglement in Egypt”
- “Smart(er) Money in the Gulf”
- “The Perfect Storm: Labor Markets and Economic Downturn in the Gulf”

Launched in 2016, the Gulf Economic Barometer monitors initiatives taken by Gulf states as they seek fiscal, monetary, and labor policy changes to meet the challenge of reduced state revenue from natural resources.
AGSIW has developed sustained strategies of engagement with the media through print, broadcast, and social media. The institute has built a wide network of contacts and as a result has become a go-to source for prominent media outlets looking for cutting edge analysis. The media outlets below have each cited AGSIW scholars and publications.
In an effort to promote interaction among Gulf Arab officials, opinion leaders, and the Washington policy community, AGSIW launched AGSIW.org in Arabic in early 2016. The Arabic website complements the English website, but broadens outreach and online engagement with an Arabic speaking audience, specifically in the Gulf states. In addition to timely translations, AGSIW.org in Arabic also features original Arabic commentary, including analysis from veteran journalist and AGSIW Non-Resident Fellow Hisham Melhem following the 2016 U.S. presidential election and examining the dynamics of the new administration, with a focus on U.S. foreign policy.
Since AGSIW launched in early 2015, the number of AGSIW.org visitors, page views, and sessions has doubled and continues to grow. AGSIW has garnered a global audience as well – 37 percent of website traffic comes from the six GCC states. AGSIW’s email listserv has grown at an annual rate of 50 percent. Key subscribers include representatives from the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, analysts from the U.S. Treasury and State Departments, Capitol Hill staffers, World Bank economists, notable academics from the Gulf and United States, and GCC foreign ministry officials.

AGSIW continues to expand our social media presence, with our Twitter following increasing by 184 percent in 2016. Many mainstream media outlets in the United States and the Gulf take note of AGSIW’s work via social media: Journalists from The New York Times, CNN, The Washington Post, Gulf News, and more follow AGSIW online. AGSIW’s YouTube channel serves to bring our high-level programming to a wider international audience. We additionally livestream our programs to ensure strong virtual attendance for events.

As AGSIW grows, we will continue to explore new ways of expanding our global online outreach efforts through social media, video content, and more.
2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

Programs and Publications

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By the Numbers

- The Bridge: 76
- Market Watch: 29
- Millennial Gulf: 25
- Newsletters: 50
- Panel Discussions: 13
- Interviews: 70
- Media Mentions: 72
- Outreach Activities: 38
- Conferences: 5
- Roundtables: 11
- Cultural Programs: 3
The institute is keen on making the Gulf region’s diverse voices heard and understood more widely in Washington, and vice versa. It seeks, ultimately, to promote an open and frank dialogue on key security issues between the people and governments of the United States and those of the Arab Gulf states.

**Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba**, President
**Ambassador Stephen A. Seche**, Executive Vice President
**Michael W. Wanyama**, Chief Financial Officer
**Kristin Smith Diwan, PhD**, Senior Resident Scholar
**Hussein Ibish, PhD**, Senior Resident Scholar
**Karen E. Young, PhD**, Senior Resident Scholar
**Kevin Fagan**, Senior Office Administrator
**Tyler Rousselle**, Administrative/Financial Assistant
**Raymond E. Karam**, Senior Director, Programs and Outreach
**Bouchra Lawrence**, Program and Outreach Coordinator
**Mary Casey-Baker**, Director, Publications and Digital Media
**Tamara Kamel Majlaton**, Digital Media Coordinator
The institute’s board of directors is made up of highly distinguished individuals from the United States and the Arab Gulf states. The board provides overall direction and supervision of the institute through its president, who reports to the board. The board plans to continue to expand and diversify its membership.

Abdel Monem Said Aly, PhD, Founding Director and Honorary Chair; Chairman/CEO, Regional Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo
Ambassador Frank G. Wisner, Chair of the Board; Foreign Affairs Advisor, Squire Patton Boggs
Fatima Al-Shamsi, PhD, Vice Chair of the Board; Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administrative Affairs of Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba, President, Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington
H.E. Yousef Al-Ebraheem, PhD, Advisor, Diwan of the Emir of Kuwait
H.E. Fatima Al Jaber, Chief Operating Officer, Al Jaber Group, Abu Dhabi
F. Gregory Gause, III, PhD, Professor of Political Science, Texas A&M University
Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm, Jr., Kuwait Professor of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Affairs, George Washington University
Nabil Habayeb, CEO, GE in the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey
Bernard Haykel, PhD, Professor of Near Eastern Affairs, Princeton University
General (Ret.) John P. Jumper, Former Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Vice Chairman, Hills & Company
George R. Salem, Strategic Advisor, DLA Piper
Khaled Sifri, CEO, Emirates Investment Bank
**Revenue**

- Grants and Contributions: $3,114,020
- Interest Income: 798
- In-Kind Contributions: 3,012

**Total Revenue**: 3,117,830

**Expenses**

- Program Services: 2,531,897
- General and Administrative: 593,928

**Total Operating Expenses**: 3,125,825

**Net Assets**

- Change in Net Assets: (7,995)
- Net Assets at Beginning of Year: 3,630,605

**Net Assets at Year End**: $3,622,610
AGSIW partnered with several leading organizations in 2016 for programming.

**Raytheon**
“UAE Security Forum 2016: Bridging the Cybersecurity Talent Gap”

**b’huth, the Dubai Research Centre**
“Yemen after the War”

**EOG Resources**
“Petro Diplomacy: Challenges in the New Energy World”

**Chatham House**
“Gulf Geopolitics Forum”
AGSIW President Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba and Mishael Al Gergawi, founder of the Delma Institute; Panel discussion on the implications of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act with AGSIW Board Member Bernard Haykel (far left), AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Hussein Ibish, The Atlantic’s Senior Editor David Frum, and National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations International Fellow Fahad Nazer; AGSIW Founding Director Abdel Monem Said Aly delivers remarks during a roundtable on GCC-Egypt Relations; A panel discussion at the inaugural UAE Security Forum in Abu Dhabi, held in partnership with Raytheon; H.E. Razan Al Mubarak discusses the work of the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi
AGSIW President Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba (right) and H.R.H. Prince Turki Al Faisal, former Saudi ambassador to the United States, discuss the Saudi view of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act; Mohammed Baharoon of b’thuth presents a summary of the discussion of the conference, “Yemen after the War”; AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Hussein Ibish interviews Khaled Almaeena, editor of the Saudi Gazette, on the Saudi National Transformation Program (Center, Left to Right) AGSIW Visiting Scholar Hala Aldosari speaks at a Middle East Institute panel at the Johns Hopkins University; Poets from the UAE and Kuwait perform during “RIWAYA: Spoken Word Poetry from the Gulf”; (Bottom, Left to Right) Aldosari speaks with guests at AGSIW’s student open house; AGSIW Senior Resident Scholar Karen E. Young moderates the public panel of the conference “Petro Diplomacy: Challenges in the New Energy World”
معهد دول الخليج العربية في واشنطن
لبناء جسور التفاهم