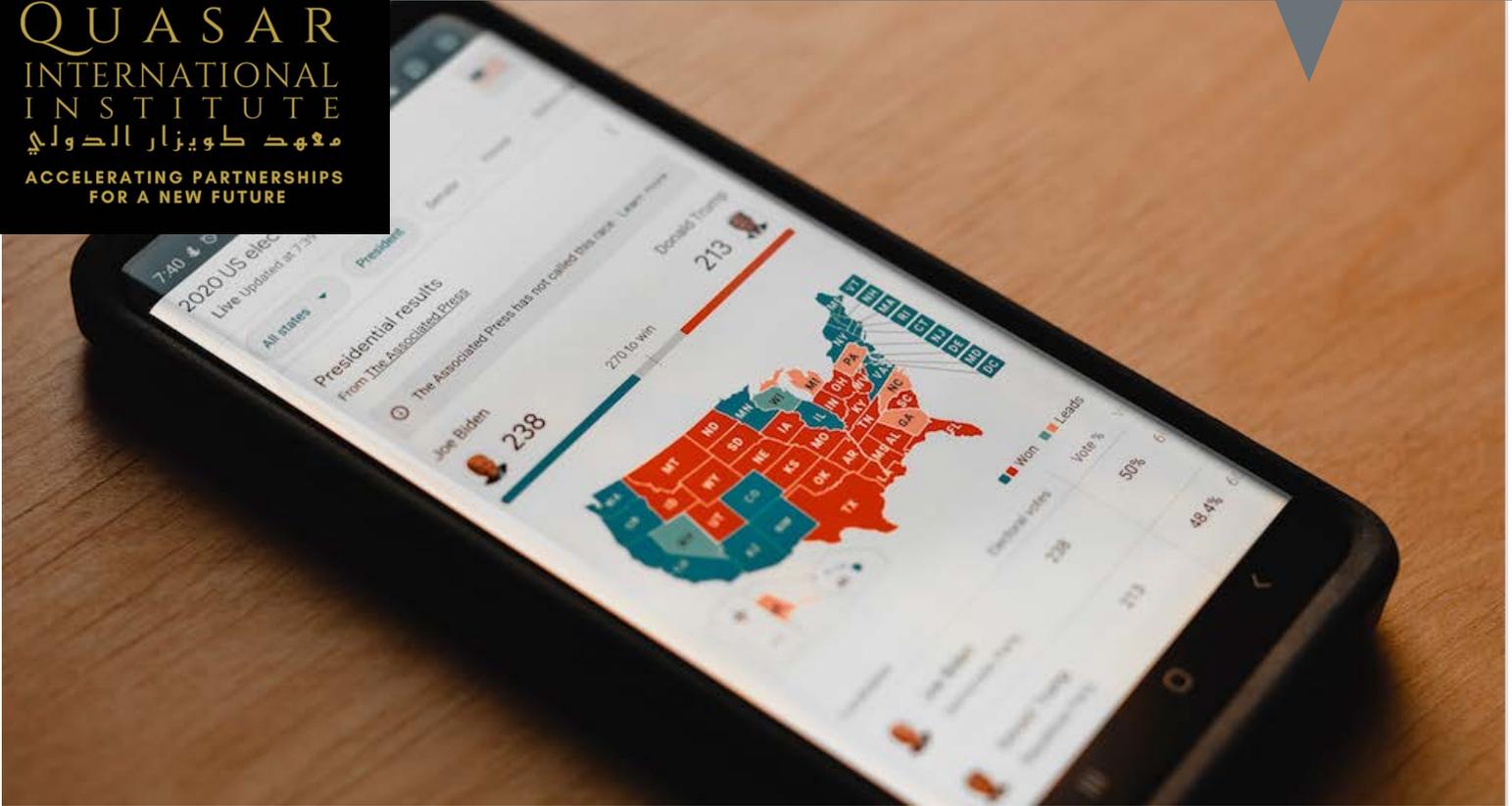


QUASAR
INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE
معهد كوازار الدولي
ACCELERATING PARTNERSHIPS
FOR A NEW FUTURE

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HISTORIC RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES: *HOW WILL THE US 2020 ELECTION AFFECT SAUDI ARABIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST?*

BY DR ZEYAD ALSHAMMARI

The whole world is watching the U.S. election to find out whether President Donald Trump will be re-elected as the Republican President for four more years, or whether, on the contrary, it will be the Democratic candidate, Former Vice President Joe Biden, who will win this election. **But how could a second Trump term or first Biden presidency affect Saudi Arabia and the Middle East?**

In fact, the long and strong historic relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has evolved over decades beginning in 1945. Seven Saudi Kings have visited the United States in a total of 10 visits, and seven U.S. presidents have made a total of 12 visits to Saudi Arabia. This relationship has evolved in three spheres: 1) Government-to-Government; 2) Business-to-Business; and 3) People-to-People.

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY AS A STRATEGY

While Government-to-Government and Business-to-Business relationships have largely been strong, in the People-to-People sphere, the relationship between Americans and Saudi citizens has often been rife with stereotypes, fear, and a lack of understanding.

To begin with, no matter who wins the election, if the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can focus on this historical relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, and can invest in nonpartisan cooperation and collaboration, that can be a productive path forward to maintain peace, security, and prosperity. One little recognized yet centuries old approach is Science Diplomacy. Science Diplomacy is the use of scientific collaborations among nations to address common problems and to build constructive international partnerships.

By focusing on Science Diplomacy, the Kingdom can build its soft power, strategic partnerships, ability to compete economically in the 21st Century, and help make the 2030 Vision a realistic possibility. Science Diplomacy can support the Kingdom's goals for Space exploration, Sustainability initiatives like eco-tourism, and Health pandemic prevention.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

DR. ZEYAD ALSHAMMARI

Quasar International Institute is a nonpartisan educational nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting peace, prosperity, and a sustainable future for us all. Our goal is to fight hate, build peace, and foster people-to-people exchanges and relationships.

"THIS ELECTION REPRESENTS SUBSTANTIAL RISKS, BUT ALSO IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE KINGDOM & THE MENA REGION."

I invite you to join me in achieving these goals and fulfilling Quasar's mission. We welcome diverse views and we hope to hear from you.

RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES OF A TRUMP PRESIDENCY

In his first term, President Trump focused on strengthening relations with Saudi Arabia, but his second term is likely to be different because of Trump's goal of developing diplomatic negotiations with Iran. Trump wants to be the first President in American history to solve the Iran-U.S. conflict. In this case, Saudi Arabia will face current and future challenges regarding U.S. policy on Iran given Trump's prospective second-term priorities in the Middle East. These represent significant risks.

At the same time, four of Trump's published priorities for his second term are focused on Space Exploration, and NASA initiatives like the Artemis mission to the Moon will become signatures for his administration. The Kingdom could utilize Science Diplomacy to focus on Space Exploration & Technology, and partner with nonpartisan nonprofits who can work with the U.S. Democrats and Republicans to build both Government, Business, and People-to-People collaborations around Space initiatives between Saudi Arabia and the U.S.



RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES OF A BIDEN PRESIDENCY

If instead Biden is elected, he will also engage in American diplomacy and negotiations in the Middle East as well. With a Biden presidency, Saudi Arabia will be in a position where it will need to rethink and reconsider some aspects of its relations with the U.S. Things will change in the MENA region if Biden is elected, and most likely, one of the first changes will be that the U.S. will withdraw its tacit support for the Kingdom's war in Yemen.

At the same time, the Kingdom could find it a great advantage to utilize Science Diplomacy and partner with nonpartisan nonprofits who can work with both Democrats and Republicans to assist Saudi Arabia with this re-evaluation. Ensuring that the U.S. and the Kingdom have effective way of maintaining their historic relationship and conducting diplomacy despite any divides will be key. Science Diplomacy can be a very effective way of building Saudi Arabia's soft power by demonstrating the Saudi commitment to innovation, technology, and science, and showcasing the Kingdom's strong and visionary leadership in these key drivers of prosperity and security in the 21st Century.



THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The U.S. election shows that the American people are very divided, but united in being highly energized voters. It is projected that 159.5 million Americans voted in this election, which is the largest number of voters in any presidential election in U.S. history. Americans also tended to choose conservative or moderate candidates in the primaries and general election, and voters in the election seemed to largely reject a more progressive, liberal approach. If Biden wins, it will be because he appealed to moderates.

In many ways, the U.S. electorate was almost evenly divided. Early exit polls seem to show 66% felt climate change is a serious issue. A majority want to preserve Obamacare and believe wearing masks is a public health responsibility, not a personal choice. These preferences may push Democrat and Republican interest in developing scientific and technological collaborations focused on climate change and healthcare.

Both campaigns also focused on internal, domestic policies that reflect the lack of appetite among Americans right now for the U.S. to engage in conflicts abroad or expansionist aims. A focus on promoting Saudi Arabia and MENA peace and security is another potential area of mutual benefit which could benefit from scientific and technological collaboration.



WHAT THE KINGDOM CAN DO NOW

The Kingdom can partner with nonpartisan nonprofits focused on Science Diplomacy to help develop its workforce and support STEM education, as well as foster investments in food security, water resource management, and reducing the impact of climate change. Partnering with and sponsoring such nonprofits can make the historic relationship between the Kingdom and the U.S. much stronger by strengthening the connection not only between Governments, but also between the people of Saudi Arabia and the American people. These American people have enormous influence as evidenced by their votes in this historic election.

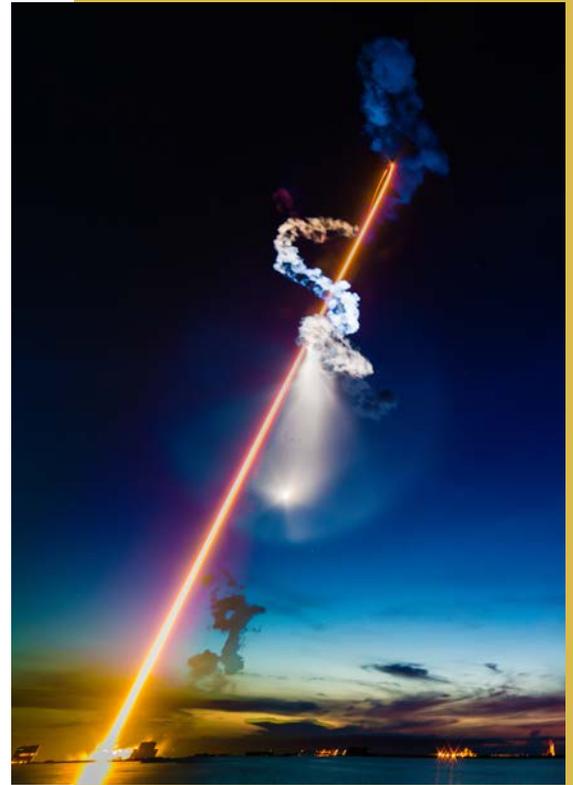
Fostering goodwill, understanding, and strong People-to-People connections between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. can help ensure the U.S. government under either Trump or Biden will focus on policies that continue to protect Saudi Arabia. It can also help ensure the U.S. president and Washington look forward to engage in productive strategic dialogue with Riyadh to revitalize the historic relationship, and prevent paid lobbyists and pressure groups from having influence over Washington's policies and actions.



BRIDGING DIVIDES WITH TRUMP OR BIDEN

Whether Trump or Biden are ultimately elected President, the Kingdom and the U.S. should utilize Science Diplomacy to bridge divides and create constructive avenues for dialogue and cooperation. Both the Kingdom and the U.S. share mutual interests in Space Exploration & Technology, Sustainability, and Health, as well as an interest in promoting economic prosperity and maintaining security.

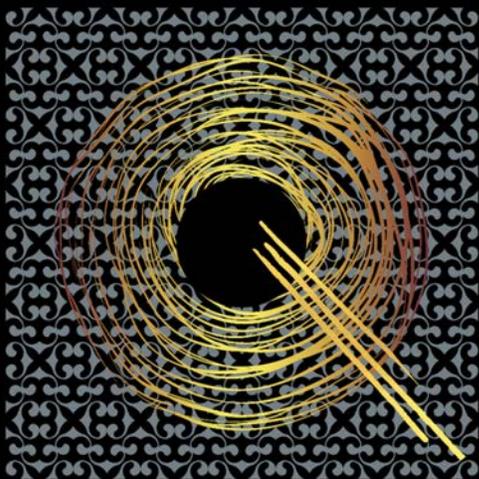
With its focus on U.S.- MENA relations, Quasar International Institute has adopted Science Diplomacy as a key strategic approach to help strengthen and maintain the relationship between the U.S. and MENA region, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Science Diplomacy can take the form of a Space Club for high school students in the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and other MENA countries. It can also take the form of a series of virtual seminars on Science Diplomacy from historical, geopolitical, and scientific perspectives. From developing programs for students and professionals, to convening conferences and publishing insights, Quasar is committed to bringing Science Diplomacy to building peace, prosperity, and a sustainable future for all.



OUR MISSION

We build international understanding, peace, and cooperation through people-to-people exchanges, experiential learning, leadership development, and travel focused on learning about and engaging in projects in key emerging sectors essential to our collective future.

Quasar is a nonpartisan educational nonprofit dedicated to building understanding and building bridges. Located in Washington, DC, Quasar focuses on developing cooperation, collaborations, and strategic partnerships. Quasar works to enhance U.S. awareness, knowledge, and understanding of Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world, and we enhance MENA awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the U.S.



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