

GULF ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

PARTICIPATING PANELISTS

H.E. Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba has served as UAE Ambassador to Washington since July 2008. Before his post in Washington he served for seven years as the Director of International Affairs for the Court of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and a senior counselor to HH General Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Ambassador Al Otaiba earned a degree in international relations from Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and also attended the Industrial College of the US Armed Forces at the National Defense University as an International Fellow

H.E. Ambassador Hamad Al Kaabi is the Permanent Representative (Designate) of the United Arab Emirates to the International Atomic Energy Agency and Special Representative of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for International Nuclear Cooperation. Ambassador Al Kaabi was trained as a nuclear engineer, earning his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Purdue University in Indiana. ■

UAE 1-2-3 Nuclear Agreement

H.E. Yousef Al Otaiba, UAE Ambassador to the United States, discussed the UAE's proposed civilian nuclear energy program at a CSIS Gulf Roundtable on January 12, 2009. He was joined by his colleagues H.E. Ambassador Hamad Al Kaabi, the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the International Atomic Energy Agency and Special Representative of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for International Nuclear Cooperation. Mr. David Scott, Executive Director for Abu Dhabi's Executive Affairs Authority, also gave remarks.

Growing energy needs are driving the United Arab Emirates' plans to develop a nuclear power program. Domestic hydrocarbons will be unable to satisfy the UAE's growing demand for electricity—the UAE already imports 60% of the natural gas it uses for electricity production—and the UAE believes that nuclear power represents the most economically efficient and environmentally friendly method of power generation. While this decision raises a variety of security and political questions, the UAE has committed itself to developing a transparent program that complies with international norms of safety and security.

The UAE projected the country's energy demand out to 2020. While demand has been growing at 6-7 percent per year for the last several years, the study predicted future growth rates of over 13 percent per year, driven in largest part by industrial demand. When asked how the global financial turmoil would affect the estimates, the officials noted that the fundamental requirements would remain, as most of the projects predicted to contribute significantly to demand are government-funded and are not affected.

In exploring ways to address these growing energy needs, the UAE's analysis looked at all potential options, including natural gas and renewable sources of energy. It concluded that domestic and imported natural gas alone would be unable to meet the UAE's needs. Given then the need to develop a portfolio of energy sources, nuclear power emerged as the best option given its economic and environmental profile. Not only does nuclear power produce no carbon emissions, but it even competes well with renewable energy sources such as wind in

THE GULF ROUNDTABLE SERIES

The CSIS Middle East Program launched the Gulf Roundtable in April 2007 to examine the strategic importance of a broad range of social, political, and economic trends in the Gulf region and to identify opportunities for constructive U.S. engagement. The roundtable defines the Gulf as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran. The roundtable convenes monthly, assembling a diverse group of regional experts, policymakers, academics, and business leaders seeking to build a greater understanding of the complexities of the region. Topics for discussion include the role of Islamist movements in politics, the war on terror, democratization and the limits of civil society, the strategic importance of Gulf energy, media trends, trade liberalization, and prospects for greater regional integration. ■

a lifecycle analysis, according to the study's conclusions. The UAE's timeline is for the first-safety-related concrete to be poured in 2012 and the first power reactor would be deployed in 2017. It plans to select private partners in a bidding process this year.

A number of steps have been taken in order to further the UAE's commitment to non-proliferation and transparency. It has pursued (and now signed) a 123 Agree-

ment with the U.S., which allows commerce in civilian nuclear energy between the two countries based on the UAE's commitment to norms of security, transparency, and non-proliferation. It has also volunteered to forgo the fuel enrichment cycle and fuel reprocessing as an assurance of its peaceful intentions. As a result, the government is currently exploring fuel leasing options. Finally, the UAE is a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; will sign the IAEA Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreement; will join the IAEA Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management, among others; and is convening an International Advisory Board of nuclear experts.

The discussion also emphasized the importance of the UAE's nuclear program to the United States. Given the growing power of countries and groups that oppose the United States' interests, the UAE believes the U.S. should view its pursuit of nuclear power as an opportunity to support and empower a moderate friend in an environment of growing extremism. Not only are the UAE's interests in the region aligned with those of the U.S., but the UAE is already a trusted partner, as evidenced by its possession of advanced U.S. armaments and defense systems, and the UAE, if anything, feels threats to regional stability even more acutely than the U.S. due its size and geographic location.

Despite concerns that the UAE could use its civilian nuclear program as a stepping stone to military program or that its pursuit of a nuclear program could trigger regional proliferation, the UAE has emphasized the peaceful intent of the program and its commitment to transparency. Further, the UAE's program could serve as a means of countering proliferation by providing a model to other nations of the viability of pursuing nuclear energy in a responsible manner: Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have also volunteered to forego the en-

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