



Craig Whittaker MP

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Visit of Crown Prince Mohamm Ad Bin Salman of Saudi Arabia (EDM 865)

Thank you for contacting me about the recent visit to the UK by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman and EDM 865.

It is my view that maintaining a good relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to support their important programme of reform, which includes the lifting of the ban on women driving and attending sporting events, and allowing cinemas to operate in the Kingdom, as well as co-operating on tackling international challenges, such as terrorism.

A good relationship with Saudi Arabia also enables us to have frank conversations on matters where we both have concerns. I would like to assure you that while the Crown Prince was in the UK, talks were held on how to work together to end the tragic conflict in Yemen.

The UK and Saudi Arabia are clear that a solution to the conflict must ensure that Saudi Arabia no longer faces missile attacks from Yemen, many of which have targeted its major cities, including Riyadh. I am pleased that it was agreed to strengthen the UN inspection of shipping in order to ensure that all Yemeni ports remain open to the humanitarian and commercial supplies that Yemen's people so desperately need.

The UK will redouble our efforts to support the UN political process and Ministers are hopeful that counterparts from the US and the United Arab Emirates can be convened before Easter in order to make more progress towards a political solution which is absolutely necessary.

I am also very pleased to hear that Saudi Arabia will be developing a plan for the reconstruction of Yemen after any settlement of the conflict.

Enhancing our co-operation in tackling international challenges such as terrorism, extremism, the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen and other regional issues such as Iraq and Syria is beneficial for regional security and indeed our own security here.

As a Member of the Government, I am unable to sign the Early Day Motion.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP