

LE CERCLE

21st February 2012

HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz
Vice Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124
Saudi Arabia

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Your Highness

I am writing to invite you to speak to the Foreign Affairs Group, Le Cercle, of which I am Chairman. A number of our participants have asked if I would ask you to address us at our next meeting.

The meeting will be held in Rabat, Morocco from the evening of Thursday, 28th June to mid-day on Sunday 1st July 2012 at the Amphitrite Palace Resort and Spa, Skhirat Plage 12050 Skhirat, Morocco. The Amphitrite Palace is located beside the Royal Summer Palace, 25 minutes from Rabat and 50 minutes from Casablanca.

If you are able to accept this invitation to talk to Le Cercle, I would be pleased for you to speak on a subject of your own choosing. I appreciate that your schedule is extremely busy so we will do our utmost to be flexible on the timing for addressing our group.

Past Speakers

Those who have addressed our group have included John Bolton, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Louis Freeh, HE Benazir Bhutto, Yegor Gaidar, Mrs Gandhi, HE Shaukat Aziz, Alan Greenspan, Rt Hon William Hague, Tsutomu Hata, Ambassador John D Negroponte, Richard Perle, David Rockefeller, Donald Rumsfeld, Justice Scalia, General Norman Schwarzkopf, HE Anatoly Sharansky, Manmohan Singh and The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher. I attach a fuller list for information.

At meetings last year, we were privileged to hear talks from, amongst others, Senator George Mitchell, Dr Henry Kissinger, Senator Chuck Hagel, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Dan Meridor, The Hon Richard Armitage, Senator Wyche Fowler, Prof Victor Kovaldin of the Gorbachev Foundation, Army General Nikolai Malomuhz, Security Advisor to the President of Ukraine and Urmaz Paet, Foreign Minister, Estonia. I think you can see from these that we are a serious-minded group that seeks in-depth analysis and discussion.

The Meeting Theme

In terms of a general theme for our meeting, what I would like to explore at our conference are the implications in our currently very unsettled world, of the American 'reorientation' of global objectives, from the Trans-Atlanticism of the past fifty years or more, to the now clearly declared objective that the next century will be the American Pacific century. Cutting through the rhetoric of this – for a start, the Pacific has always been a major US strategic consideration – there is no doubt that this new emphasis will have an effect on US economic and military commitment in Europe, in the Middle East, in Africa and possibly also on the Eastern part of South America.

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LE CERCLE

At a time of US defence spending reduction, the equation becomes one of zero-sum where increased commitments in the Pacific will not be achieved without reduced commitments on the Trans-Atlantic front. The impact will inevitably be felt first upon Europe and NATO. It will almost certainly carry over to the Middle Eastern region, to Africa and to Central Asia. Each of these areas is already facing substantial problems with global implications, and yet there are currently no signs of any real will on any part to face up to the challenges which will emerge.

This therefore seems to me to be an ideal moment to consider the impact of reduced trans-Atlantic US influence, to try to understand the nature of the new Pacific challenge, to explore what the options are on the eastern side of the Atlantic stretching into the Middle East, Africa and beyond to redress the US withdrawal, and if possible to come forward with bold and new thinking about what might take its place.

At the moment it is a new blank sheet of paper and I would hope that over our gathering we might come to some conclusions and suggestions. It would add enormously to our potential for doing so if you felt able to contribute as a speaker to our deliberations.

About Le Cercle

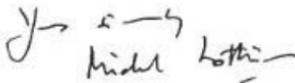
The meetings of Le Cercle are held under strict Chatham House rules. There is no Press and everything that is said is off the record. We have never had any problems with that. Normally our meetings are attended by about eighty to a hundred people.

Le Cercle was founded in the 1950s by the former French Prime Minister Antoine Pinay, and Konrad Adenauer, the former German Chancellor. The group is largely European and American – Members of Parliament, diplomats, members of the intelligence community, commentators and businessmen from over twenty-five countries. We meet twice a year, once in Washington DC, and once elsewhere to review topics of interest, mostly foreign policy but also some domestic issues.

Our group has no political views. We have had speakers of all political persuasions and we welcome participants from all points of the political spectrum.

As we are an organisation with limited resources, unfortunately we cannot pay fees but we would be happy to pay your expenses and accommodation for you.

It would be a great privilege and honour to have you join us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lothian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

LORD LOTHIAN
CHAIRMAN