HIGH AND DRY

The Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Program for Strategic Research and Studies (PMBF Program) at the University of Central Florida co-sponsored a conference along with the Hollings Center for International Dialogue from May 14-18, 2014. The conference, entitled “High and Dry: Addressing the Middle East Water Challenge,” was held in Istanbul, Turkey. The conference was the first major international undertaking for the PMBF program. It featured more than 30 experts from nine countries specializing in Middle East water issues, with significant focus on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council—looking at the challenge itself, as well as possible solutions and their global applicability. Water-related issues pose an acute problem not only regionally, but in all corners of the globe, including Florida. Participants included experts from the public and private sector, business and academia, political analysts and those with scientific backgrounds. The conference featured in-depth discussions of specific regional areas of interest, as well as detailed exploration of possible solutions based on the type of challenge, available resources, economic development plans and diplomatic approaches. The PMBF Program and the Hollings Center will be organizing follow up events in Saudi Arabia and the United States as part of an ongoing PMBF water initiative.

Photography by: Ulaş Tosun

PMBF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Middle Eastern Studies Program

The Middle Eastern Studies Program at the University of Central Florida (UCF) is designed to foster teaching, research and scholarship of the Middle East and Muslim world in particular. The program has a strong focus on the religious, political, historical and social forces shaping the region. The program offers an interdisciplinary minor that provides students an overview of Middle Eastern civilization and a detailed study of its most important features. As a partner of the Middle Eastern Studies Program, PMBF would encourage interested UCF students to find out more about the minor by visiting its website: http://middleeasternstudies.cah.ucf.edu/
Howard Diamond:

On April 7, 2014 the PMBF Program, hosted former congressional staffer Howard Diamond. At the event, Mr. Diamond spoke about the intricacies and inner workings of Washington politics. Diamond used the example of U.S. policymaking on Middle Eastern affairs to illustrate his point—time management and knowledge are key.

Howard Diamond is the former Deputy Chief of Staff for Representative Gary Ackerman (D-NY) who served 14 terms in Congress. Mr. Diamond spent more than a decade working on Capitol Hill and held such titles as Democratic Staff Director for the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia. Before working in Congress, Diamond was a senior research associate at the Arms Control Association, a Washington-based think tank focusing on arms control and nuclear proliferation.

Admiral Mohammed Abdulaziz:

Admiral Mohammed Abdulaziz, Arab Republic of Egypt’s Military Attaché to Washington D.C., visited UCF on April 16, 2014. He attended a lunch with faculty and staff, as well as a roundtable discussion with students, where he discussed the many intricacies of the situation in Egypt. Admiral Abdulaziz provided a comprehensive view of Egypt’s past and present, while remaining optimistic about the future.

PMBF Oral History Projects:

The PMBF Program is currently in the process of filming two Oral History Projects. The “American Experience in Saudi Arabia” explores the American experience in the Eastern Province, focusing primarily on individuals now residing in Florida who previously worked for Saudi Aramco. These individuals lived and worked in the Kingdom during times of profound social, economic and political change.

Our second initiative entitled the “Saudi Student Experience in America,” was designed with the aim of orally recording the experiences Saudi students face when enrolled in degree programs in the United States.

Both projects involve a series of in-depth interviews. The University of Central Florida intends to publish the interviews in various forms, including in a monograph, booklet and on film. These interviews will be posted shortly on our website.

For more information on our past events and speakers, please visit www.ucf.edu/pmbfprogram