

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 275

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 19, 2005

Received

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Referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education
curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Whereas the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, were carried out by 19 hijackers, including 15 Saudi Arabian nationals;

Whereas since September 11, 2001, multiple terrorist attacks have occurred inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that were carried out by Saudi nationals;

Whereas Saudi nationals have joined the insurgency in Iraq, carrying out terrorist activities and providing financial support;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia controls and regulates all forms of education in public and private schools at all levels;

Whereas Islamic religious education is compulsory in public and private schools at all levels in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the religious curriculum is written, monitored, and taught by followers of the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, the only religion the Government of Saudi Arabia allows to be taught;

Whereas rote memorization of religious texts continues to be a central feature of much of the educational system of Saudi Arabia, leaving thousands of students unprepared to function in the global economy of the 21st century;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has tolerated elements within its education system that promote and encourage extremism;

Whereas some textbooks in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, ignorance, and anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views;

Whereas these intolerant views instilled in students make them prime recruiting targets of terrorists and other extremist groups;

Whereas extremism endangers the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region, and threatens global security;

Whereas the events of September 11, 2001, and the global rash of terrorist attacks since then, have created an ur-

gent need to promote moderate voices in the Islamic world as an effective way to combat extremism and terrorism;

Whereas the report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States stated that “Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism”; and

Whereas the ascension of King Abdullah to the throne in August 2005 presents a new opportunity for education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

3 (1) urges the Government of Saudi Arabia to
4 reform its textbooks and education curriculum in a
5 manner that promotes tolerance and peaceful coex-
6 istence with others, develops civil society, and en-
7 courages functionality in the global economy;

8 (2) urges the President to direct the Secretary
9 of State to use existing public diplomacy channels,
10 international visitor exchanges, professional develop-
11 ment, and educational reform programs, including
12 those under the Middle East Partnership Initiative
13 and the Broader Middle East Initiative, to focus on
14 the issue of educational reform in Saudi Arabia in

1 accordance with the objectives enumerated in para-
2 graph (1);

3 (3) expresses extreme disappointment with the
4 slow pace of education reform in the Kingdom of
5 Saudi Arabia;

6 (4) urges the President to take into account
7 progress in meeting the goals outlined in paragraph
8 (1) when determining the level and frequency of
9 United States bilateral relations with the Govern-
10 ment of Saudi Arabia; and

11 (5) requests that the Secretary of State exam-
12 ine the educational system in Saudi Arabia, monitor
13 the progress of the efforts to reform the education
14 curriculum, and report on such progress, in classi-
15 fied form if necessary, to the appropriate congres-
16 sional committees.

Passed the House of Representatives December 19
(legislative day, December 18), 2005.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.