



### **Personal Statement 1**

I have always had a passion for giving back and making a difference in people's life where possible. Although becoming an army soldier was not an interest of my family at the beginning. However, it has become clear for my father and mother that this career allowed me to make a difference on local and regional levels. I now seek to take the next step in my career by obtaining a Masters degree, which I believe would help me to make contribute significantly in leading the transformation efforts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Giving back to the community has always been part of my upbringing. I remember accompanying my father to help workers by providing monetary assistance, food, and sanitary items for poor workers, both Muslims and non-Muslims. As a family and individually, we continue to assist those in need, especially the forgotten or underserved portions of the population without a support network. For example, I had an opportunity to travel to Guinea with my family to dig wells and build shelters in remote parts of the country. These lessons were internalized and became part of my own moral compass as I grew older. The experience was both humbling and gratifying and left me with a sense of wanting to do more on a wider scale, both nationally and internationally.

When I began my military career, things were a little difficult for me as my family was not a military family, and my father did not accept this decision. However, I felt that it was the best way to make a difference, and after two years and many long spirited discussion, he relented and reluctantly allowed me to join the Air Force. I immediately joined, and through dedication, hard work, and long hours hitting the books, I demonstrated my aptitude and quickly rose through the ranks. I worked in the Air Force for seven years until I was selected to work in the Ministry of Defense, where I have been assigned as the member of the team working on



## Personal Statement 2

establishing the new National Security Center. When the recent transformation efforts began in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I was excited to work in the Ministry of Defense Transformation program and worked hard until I was hand selected to attend the course of Staff. The educational experience was pivotal as it gave me an initial basis and knowledge of the interface between international relations and national security. I used this knowledge to publish two papers on National Security, one was on regional developments and the repercussions on national security and the other was on the use of Soft Power in National Security. In addition, it provided a prism to view my experiences in giving back on a local and international level. For example, I clearly saw the connections between international and local economic, environmental issues, security, and gender issues in Guinea, and that they would require whole of government response versus private entities, such as my family efforts mentioned earlier. I have never seen so clearly what I want for my future.

The Saudi Arabian society is going through a wide ranging transformation, and I want to be a part of this transformation, especially in National Security policy and international affairs. More accurately, I want to be more than just a part of the transformation – I want to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and make a lasting impact by significantly contributing to this transformation on a local, regional, and international scale. I realize this path will be hard – personally, academically, and professionally – as the path toward change must be carved out from the unknown wilderness. However, similar to what my father and family would do, I want to do the right thing and provide help despite the potential difficulties. With my moral compass pointing towards the direction of always giving back and making a difference, I know that I can significantly participate in leading this change. I request that your institution would provide me with the tools to assist me in this journey.

**Al Bilasi, Mohammed Zayed**

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