

If Canada is to advance its interests in the region during the coming decades, it is in our interest to target this rising generation in our diplomatic and public diplomacy activities. A prominent regional analyst, Kevin R. Taecker, observes: "One of the central issues facing the Gulf Co-operation Council region in its effort to join the global rules-based economy is that much happens at a very fast pace and with short time horizons. In the Arab world, doing business involves consideration not just for this generation, but for the next."⁴

In many ways, generational and technological change will increasingly intersect, as the freedom of expression inherent in satellite news coverage and the internet will dramatically reduce the impact of state censorship and media control. One American analyst, Winston P. Wiley, observes:

Over the last decade ... traditional monopolies over what their publics hear, read, and see have been eroded by competitive sourcesArabic language satellite broadcasting networks, like London-based MBC or al-Jazeera in Qatar, have become popular sources of news, information, and entertainment for significant segments of the public in a number of Arab countries. The arrival of the internet has bolstered the trend to some degree its spread nonetheless reinforces the trend toward greater and more varied flows of information in the region. ⁵

The growing importance of "new media" in the Gulf - satellite television and the internet - cannot be overestimated. These developments in mass communication technologies have a direct and immediate impact on the potential effectiveness of Canadian public diplomacy initiatives in the region, especially with the emerging generation. In the Gulf and Mid-East, perhaps more so than in other regions, unless a country has a satellite television presence projecting its news and "world view," it will become increasingly marginalized. Accordingly, the availability of Canadian satellite news to the region is one of the recommendations of this report.