

# Technology aiding terrorist tendencies among Arab youth



Speakers and audience at the fifth Forum on Democracy and Free Trade at the Ritz Carlton Doha.

DOHA: Technology has become a source of terrorist and extremist tendencies among the youth in the Arab region, according to Sheikh Ahmed Al Fahad Al Sabah, Minister of Energy in Kuwait.

He was speaking at a session on education at the Forum on Democracy and Free Trade which began at the Ritz Carlton yesterday.

"Technology without a teacher will be dangerous. Now technology has become a source of many strange thoughts adopted by our youth and the cause of their extremist tendencies," Sheikh Ahmed said.

While calling for development of education and the curricula, he said the process is not confined to educational materials but includes all educational operations including teaching methods and the role of

without women getting their rights and playing a leading role in the society.

Dr Joushaina Al Issa from the Qatar University presided over the session. Mohammed bin Khalid Al Mana, Chairman of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI), in his welcome address said the Forum had become one of the most successful international conferences which aims to strengthen the democratic thought in a neutral and rational way.

He said the conference has changed the classic concept of democracy, which has now got broader concepts. Democracy is now considered as a general environment in which nations can co-exist and create a balancing relationship between political, economical, social and cultural relations. Now

between democracy, development, free trade and cultural heritage, he added.

Karren Kerrigan, advisor of women's issues in the US State Department, stressed the increasing need for transfer of knowledge and the significant role it plays in the development of educational institutions. Knowledge is power and is highly important to attain a good educational system, she noted.

Kathleen Q Abernathy, commissioner of the US Federal Communications Commission, praised the initiative of the Emir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in promoting and spreading democracy in Qatar and the care he has given for education and its importance in building democratic societies.

She spoke on the importance of Internet as a means of

educational system and creating economic opportunities. She noted that fast spread of internet is breaking geographical boundaries and reaching all

parts of the globe. Juhaina Al Issa said the technological know-how received by the developing countries is below their ambitions and the challenge may

be in the quality of technology available in the third world. Eric Raoult, Mayor of Raincy, France spoke of teaching democracy in schools while Frances Guy, Head of Engaging

with the Islamic World Group, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK spoke about the importance of spreading democracy through education.

-THE PENINSULA

## Broader Middle East, democracy discussed

DOHA: Issues related to the concept of the broader Middle East and democracy in the region came up for discussion at the fifth Doha Forum on Democracy and Free Trade in the earlier sessions of the day.

Abdul Kareem Al Iriyani, former prime minister of Yemen, in his speech said the issue of a greater Middle East was a broader vision that had several aspects. This initiative of a greater Middle East, he said, was in response to a desire expressed by a country that was outside the region. The Middle East before 9-11, he said, is different than what it is today. He asked if the countries that were sponsoring the broad-

results of this region when it practises genuine democracy and whether any country seeking democracy in this region could remain aloof from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Hans Weschel, director of the US Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), in his speech noted that US President George W Bush was directly involved in formulating American policies that support democratic movement in the Middle East and the world.

The US, he said, would not force democracy in the Middle East but Washington will continue to seek ways and sup-

developing a free media, free elections and independent judiciary as well as educational systems that can prepare youth and especially women to play a role in the democratic society.

Daniel Goulet, a senator from France, in his presentation at this session, said he had headed scores of parliamentary delegations that visited Arab countries and hence, he was acquainted with all countries of the Middle East region. He said the Arabs had lost their confidence in western countries because the Middle East region was split into five separate zones by colonial powers after World War-II.