

## **Foreign driven reforms are not welcome**

**Khaleej Times –**

06 December, 2006

There is consensus in the Arab world that foreign-driven reforms are not wanted, Lakhdar Brahimi, former special adviser to the United Nations secretary-general, told delegates at the Arab Strategy Forum.

“There is consensus in our region that most of our regimes are not performing well. Very serious reform is needed. This concern has reached the governments and they recognise that they need to reform,” Brahimi said at the second day’s plenary session on “The Future of Arab Regimes: Stagnation and Change”.

“But there is also consensus that foreign-driven reforms and agenda are not wanted. They do not work and are not welcome,” Brahimi declared to applause from the audience.

He also stated that the success or failure of a regime is based not on the length of time it has served, but on what it is seen as having done for the people and the country.

Brahimi referred to the fact that Gamal Abdel Nasser, former president of Egypt, came to power in a coup, but acquired legitimacy by what was perceived as success when he nationalised the Suez Canal. “But one of the failures that we do not speak much about these days is our failure to support the people of Palestine. Our regimes have all but given up on Palestine and Palestinians have been abandoned to face their own regrettable and condemnable internal divisions,” Brahimi said, in a hard-hitting address that drew strong reaction from the Arab Strategy Forum delegates.

“Another failure was that we did not do much, if anything, to prevent the invasion of Iraq and today the situation in Iraq is really unbearable for the people of Iraq and extremely dangerous for the region. But again, our regimes are not doing anything,” said Brahimi.

He referred to Lebanon saying: “For 33 days the people of Lebanon were subjected to a systematic enterprise of destruction. Our regimes were absent.”

Despite the failures, Brahimi said that though the objective of unifying the Arab world was not any more on the agenda, this should not exclude cooperation and working together in the economic field