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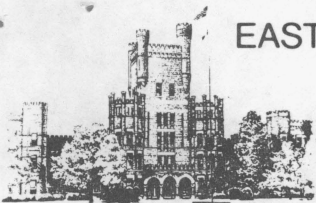
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EASTERN PROFESSORS GAIN MIDDLE-EAST INSIGHT

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University professors John Faust and Harold Nordin have returned from recent travels to the Middle East, as part of the Joseph J. Malone Faculty Fellows Award for Arab and Islamic Studies. They were among 30 social science professors to receive the award, sponsored by the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations.

While in their respective countries, each professor had a wide range of appointments and briefings on political, historical, economic, and cultural issues.

Faust, a professor of Political Science, traveled to Iraq and the United Emirates. He described the situation in Iraq as "very tense."

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"These people have been at war for eight years. Even now, they are under an armed truce with Iran rather than a negotiated treaty--the basic issues have not been resolved. This is a country that had suffered tremendously," he said.

Americans need to realize the importance of events taking place in the Mid-East, Faust continued. "We have been mesmerized by the conflict. Iraq is a very important country both historically and in contemporary terms. With the exception of Israel, it is the most powerful Mid-Eastern country in terms of military force."

In addition, he said, 70 percent of the world's oil reserves lie in the Arab (Persian) Gulf. By the year 2000, nearly all remaining oil reserves will be controlled by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and the Gulf States.

Nordin, a professor of Economics, journeyed to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. He noted that, like Iraq, Saudi Arabia will "play an increasingly important role in the future because they have such a valuable resource. They're discovering oil faster than they're pumping it," he said.

Striking features of the country included the extremely low crime rate, a result of the Saudis' religious convictions, said Nordin, and their environmental concern. "It's the cleanest country I've ever been in," he said. "You always see people cleaning the streets."

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Unlike the U.S., Nordin observed, Saudi Arabia is a very closed society. No one except Saudis may become citizens, and visitors must be invited to the country, he said. "Yet," he continued, "they like the U.S.; they would rather deal with us than with any other country."

Both Nordin and Faust described the efforts of the countries to modernize and industrialize. Also, both professors remarked that the people were friendly and welcomed the American visitors.