

Dubai proclaims Bush visit a holiday

by UPI

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - U.S. President George Bush Monday praised Dubai and its leadership and said he wants residents to understand they have the respect of the United States. Before heading for Saudi Arabia, Bush attended a roundtable discussion with young Arab leaders. "I'm most impressed by what I've seen here," Bush said, adding, "I also want you to understand something about America: that we respect you, we respect your religion and we want to work together for the sake of freedom and peace. Dubai declared a public holiday for Bush's visit, part of a multi-country sweep of the Middle East to support the peace process. All roads in the city-state were closed as Bush and his entourage were treated to cultural displays including young girls dancing to Arabic music. The president then attended a roundtable of the Young Arab Leaders group at the Burj Al Arab Hotel, where he referred to the main purpose of his Middle East trip. Dubai is a staunch U.S. ally and provides a port to U.S. military ships. Bush was scheduled to depart for Saudi Arabia later Monday in the weeklong trip that began Wednesday in Israel.

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