

Faysal & May, dear friends,

At the end of each calendar year I let the year pass in my mind. I know that I also speak for Vera, that our four days journey visiting Lebanon as your guest will be an unbreakable recollection in our mind.

The impressions have been overwhelming.

This picture, for instance, illustrates us, besides the good looking gentleman, that the female cones on the left side of the canopy of the tree have a far greater presence than the male cones on the right side.

It reminds me of Faysal's modest observation: 'May is far more important in Lebanon than I am.'

What our visit has brought about is that it has created a greater interest in the political situation in the Middle East through the stories Faisal told us and also by having read Zena's book 'Beirut I Love You'.

In the New Year I will give a more extensive reaction on the contents of the book. The Int NYT d.d. 26/12 had a frontpage article about the humiliation of your prime minister by the SA administration. I couldn't obtain a digital version of the article. The situation remains worrisome.

Other topic: This month you must have spent lots and lots of time in negotiating with investors in [SevenUp Bottling Company Plc.](#) to close deals of selling their investments to the holding of 7Up.

Of course I am curious if you have achieved your objective? In the affirmative case, (talking about 'happiness') you are a happy man !!

What ever the out come, I take it, you both have a well deserved ski-holidays 'en famille' in Courchevel/France.

We have been invited to celebrate the rights of passage to the year 2018 at friends here in Amsterdam. We will be with 12 persons and will pass the time playing bridge.

Our treat for the party is oysters.

Permit me, also on behalf of Vera, to wish you both and the family a very Happy New Year i.e. **365 sunrises in good health ! and big hugs for 2018 from Vera & Aadje**