

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

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REFORM

CROWN PRINCE STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF MODERATION

On January 3, 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah received the scholars and thinkers who participated in the Second National Forum for Intellectual Dialogue that took place last week in Makkah. He stressed the importance of following Islamic moderation in both public and private lives, underlined the rights given to women in Islam, and urged people to be patient and not rush into quick decisions. Some 60 intellectuals, academics and religious scholars, including women, took part in the four-day forum.

TERRORISM

ARAB INTERIOR MINISTERS DISCUSS TERRORIST THREATS

At the 21st session of the Arab Interior Ministers Council in Tunis on January 4, Prince Nayef declared that security responsibilities for Arab countries require protection not from foreign danger but from local threats arising from deviant and extremist thinking. He declared that it is to be regretted that such terrorists claim to be defending Muslim doctrines, while on the contrary, they are defaming Islam.

AID

SAUDI ARABIA SENDS AID TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN IRAN

Since December 27, 2003, fourteen Saudi relief planes have left with relief materials, including a field hospital and a medical team, for the victims of the earthquake in southeastern Iran. Meanwhile, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has agreed to provide Iran with U.S. \$400 million in reconstruction aid for the devastated region.

KINGDOM HANDS OVER AID TO PALESTINIAN OFFICIALS

On January 4, 2004, the Saudi Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People handed over ambulances, fire trucks, buses, and medical equipment and supplies to the Palestinian Ambassador to the Kingdom. Meanwhile, food baskets donated by the Committee are being distributed to 17,250 needy families in Gaza. Services so far extended by the Committee to the Palestinians now stand at U.S. \$194,123,924.

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