

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

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SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

PRINCE BANDAR DENIES "SECRET DEAL"

On April 19, Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan denied reports that Saudi Arabia would use oil policy to influence the U.S. elections, reiterating the Kingdom's long-standing policy not to allow oil shortages to occur in the marketplace.

Prince Bandar also denied reports that he was briefed on U.S. war plans in Iraq before Secretary of State Colin Powell was, or that he was informed about President Bush's decision to go to war during their January 2003 meeting. He told CNN's Paula Zahn that this briefing was similar to one he received from Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and General Colin Powell in 1990 following the invasion of Kuwait, pointing out that this is natural, since Saudi Arabia has a long border with Iraq.

TERRORISM

MORE SECURITY OFFICERS KILLED IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Four security officers were killed in two separate incidents along the Riyadh-Qasim highway early April 13, following a shootout in Riyadh the day before, in which another security officer had been killed. Subsequently, three booby-trapped vehicles and a car full of weapons were discovered. Eight suspects have been arrested in connection with these events.

FINDINGS ON SAUDI DEPARTURES AFTER 9-11

Staff findings at the ongoing 9-11 Commission hearings include the following: "Fearing reprisals against Saudi nationals, the Saudi government asked for help in getting some of its citizens out of the country. Each of the flights we have studied was investigated by the FBI and dealt with in a professional manner prior to its departure We have found no credible evidence that any chartered flights of Saudi Arabian nationals departed the United States before the reopening of national airspace."

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