

# SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

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## TERRORISM

### **CAR BOMB KILLS FIVE IN DOWNTOWN RIYADH**

A car bomb exploded near the General Directorate of Traffic in Riyadh on Wednesday April 21, resulting in the death of three security officers, a civilian employee and an 11-year old girl, and injuring 148, of whom 45 were hospitalized. In a press release that day, Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan referred to the attack as "a despicable act by a desperate group of criminals who are devoid of all Islamic and human values".

At the April 26 Cabinet meeting, King Fahd described it as "carried out by a deviant and blasphemous group under the firm grip of evil; people who seek, under a false pretense of religion, to destabilize order, jeopardize peace, wrench out the lives of the innocent, and wreak havoc in the country." The Cabinet affirmed that such criminal and deviant acts not only will have no effect on the strong unity that ties the people to their leadership, but will add greater solidarity in fighting terrorism, whatever its forms and methods might be. The incident drew strong condemnation within the Kingdom and worldwide.

### **FOUR SUSPECTS KILLED IN JEDDAH WERE ON WANTED LIST**

In the Al-Safa district of the City of Jeddah late Thursday April 22 and early Friday April 23, security forces investigating a planned act of terrorism were involved in shootouts that resulted in the arrest of one suspect, and the death of five others, one of them a suicide. One security officer was slightly injured; also injured was the driver of a car hijacked by two of the suspects in their attempt to escape. In addition to two vehicles identified as having been used in two separate ambushes on April 5 and April 9, in which two security officers were killed, quantities of weapons and explosives were seized.

Four of those killed have been identified as Ahmad Abdulrahman Saqr Alfadhli, Khalid Mobarak Habeeb-Allah Alqurashi, Mostafa Ibrahim Mohammad Mobaraki, and Talal A'nbar Ahmad A'nbari, all Saudi nationals, and numbers 23, 11, 25, and 13 on the most wanted list published on December 6, 2003.

Prince Nayef reiterated his appeal to all individuals of the deviant group to recant and surrender to authorities, stressing that all citizens are in the service of their religion and country, and that anyone who stands behind, helps or sympathizes with these criminals, is worse than they are.

## **OIL**

### **PRINCE BANDAR DENIES OIL PRICE LINK TO U.S. ELECTIONS**

Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan has again denied any connection between oil prices and the U.S. presidential campaign, reiterating the Kingdom's policy to try to keep oil prices at between \$22 - \$28 a barrel, since this is good for all economies, including the Saudi and the American.

### **OIL MINISTER SPEAKS OF ENERGY CHALLENGES**

Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali Al-Naimi, in an address in Texas on April 22 to the World Affairs Council of Greater Dallas, declared that the energy industry faces four major challenges: an unprecedented increase in global demand for energy; depletion of traditional fossil energy sources in certain major consumption areas; increased strictness in administrative systems; and the need for investment in new resources. He nevertheless expressed optimism in the future of the oil industry.

Addressing high gasoline prices in the United States, Minister Al-Naimi pointed out that low refining capacity was part of the problem, saying: "Even if OPEC were to raise output it would not necessarily translate into more gasoline for U.S. consumers. This is because the supply 'bottleneck' is created by the lack of U.S. refining capacity, not by the amount of available crude oil in the world markets."

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