

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE
INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE
ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA
IN WASHINGTON, DC

DECEMBER 6, 2005

SAUDI ARABIA-US

Prince Turki calls for enhanced Saudi-US cooperation

Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal called for a continued focus on promoting strategic cooperation between the US and Saudi Arabia and enhancing cultural understanding between the two nations in an address to the US Army War College December 1.

Prince Turki noted key areas in which the US and Saudi Arabia share a responsibility in promoting peace and stability – Iraq, Afghanistan and the Arab-Israeli conflict. On Iraq, Prince Turki noted that the Kingdom has made “every effort” to ensure that the US campaign there is successful. Concerning the Israelis and the Palestinians, Prince Turki said that the US must continue to support disengagement from the West Bank and Gaza, and that Kingdom will continue to help.

There must also be a continued focus on Saudi-US relations, Prince Turki said. He cited the creation of the Saudi-US Joint Strategic Dialogue as helpful in facilitating Saudi-US cooperation in fighting terrorism – the most common threat faced by both nations. He also called for improving cultural understanding between Saudi Arabia and the US through educational exchanges and the media.

Prince Turki presents his credentials to President Bush

His Royal Highness Prince Turki Al-Faisal presented his diplomatic credentials to President George W. Bush at the White House December 2. Acceptance of the credentials confirms Prince Turki’s position as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America.

King Abdullah meets with US congressional delegations

King Abdullah met with US Homeland Security Advisor Frances Townsend in Riyadh November 30. The King also met with a US congressional delegation, led by Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE), that included Sen. John Sununu (R-NH), Rep. Vic Snyder (D-AR) and Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA).

TERRORISM

Saudi authorities arrest 17 suspected Al Qaeda terrorists

Saudi security forces arrested 17 suspected Al Qaeda terrorists in simultaneous raids throughout the Kingdom, the Ministry of Interior confirmed December 3.

Saudi authorities verified that some of the suspects participated in terrorist acts, while others are suspected of sympathizing and collaborating with Al Qaeda.

The raids included the search of 12 residential sites in Riyadh as well as raids in Al-Kharj and Majmaah. Security forces also seized weapons, ammunition, electronic media, publications and assorted documents. No one was injured in the operation, the official said.

FOREIGN AID

Foreign Ministry confirms Saudi aid to Pakistan

On November 30, the Saudi Foreign Ministry confirmed the following aid to Pakistan, following the October 8 earthquake: A sum of \$10 million was provided in immediate assistance to the affected areas. A further \$187 million has been pledged for reconstruction, to be administered by the Saudi Development Fund (SDF). In addition, a nationwide fundraising campaign has raised the equivalent of \$168.7 million.

SDF has also extended \$262.5 million in concessional loans for development projects over a five-year period, and has agreed to guarantee the equivalent of \$187.5 million in non-oil Saudi exports related to reconstruction efforts.

Immediately following the quake, a Saudi field hospital was dispatched, and an ongoing airlift has delivered thousands of tons of relief assistance. The Kingdom has also donated dates to the World Food Program for distribution in Pakistan.

IRAQ

Crown Prince Sultan appeals for Iraqi unity

In remarks to the press November 30, Crown Prince Sultan appealed to the Iraqi people to unite for the benefit of their nation. Saudi Arabia is confident that reason will prevail and that Iraqis will restore stability and security to the country, he said. The Crown Prince also noted that the political experiment in Iraq is difficult, but that he hoped Iraqis would be able to overcome it.

MUSLIM WORLD

Priority of the OIC summit is restructuring, says Foreign Minister

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal said December 5 that the goals of the upcoming Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit, which begins in Makkah on Wednesday, include restructuring the Islamic nation and restoring its self-confidence after a series of crises caused disillusionment among Muslims.

* * *