



FEBRUARY 28, 2006

## TERRORISM

### **Saudi security thwarts terrorist attack on oil facility**

Saudi security forces foiled an attempted Al-Qaeda terrorist attack on the Abqaiq oil facility February 24. Two suspicious cars attempted to drive through a side gate when security forces exchanged fire with the two cars, which exploded near the entrance. Damage to the facility was limited to a minor fire that was immediately extinguished, and production was not impacted in any way. Two members of the security forces were killed in the attack, as were two terrorists.

Following up on the Abqaiq attack, Saudi security forces raided an Al-Qaeda safehouse in Riyadh on February 27. Five militants were killed in the raid, and three of them were linked to the Abqaiq attack. A sixth terrorist was arrested in a separate raid in Riyadh on the same day.

Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal said that the failed attack shows the Kingdom can protect its oil facilities. "All our oil facilities have various perimeters of defense and we've deployed more than 15,000 men to protect the oil facilities, along with other technical and high-tech detection systems to protect the oil facilities," Prince Turki said in a February 28 interview with CNN International's Zain Verjee. "This latest attack has proven that we can do that."

The Kingdom's Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al-AsShaikh, who also chairs the Senior Commission of ulema (religious scholars), denounced the Abqaiq attack and said that it reveals the hatred of the terrorists, who are hiding behind religion. The Grand Mufti condemned Al-Qaeda's actions, which are contrary to Islam and forbade anyone from harboring or cooperating with them.

### **Five most wanted terrorists killed, including Al-Qaeda leader**

Since February 24, five militants on the Kingdom's list of 36 most wanted terrorists have been killed. Three of the most wanted militants were killed in a February 27 raid on an Al-Qaeda safehouse in Riyadh. They were identified as Al-Qaeda's leader in Saudi Arabia, Fahd Aljuwair, No. 2 on the list; Ibrahim Almateer, No. 11; and Abdullah Alshammari, No. 15.

Two additional militants on the list were killed during the failed attack on the Abqaiq facility. They have been identified as Mohammed Al-Ghaith, No. 8 on the list, and Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri, No. 9.

## SAUDI-US RELATIONS

### **King Abdullah and Secretary Rice hold talks in the Kingdom**

King Abdullah met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the king's farm near Jenadriyah February 22 for a wide-ranging discussion that focused on bilateral relations, as well as international issues including the Palestinian situation, the Middle East peace process, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and reform in Saudi Arabia.

In a joint press conference with Secretary Rice following the meeting, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal highlighted the deep Saudi-US friendship and the determination to further strengthen relations between the two nations.

### **Commerce Secretary praises the Kingdom's economic reforms**

On a visit to Riyadh February 26, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez noted the longstanding commercial partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States and suggested that further economic reforms would strengthen and diversify the Saudi economy.

"Saudi Arabia is entering a new age. And we stand to help the Kingdom diversify its economy as it expands its manufacturing and services sectors, and unleashes greater entrepreneurship," the secretary said in a breakfast hosted by American businessmen in the Kingdom.

## ISRAEL-PALESTINE

### **Foreign Minister stresses Kingdom's commitment to Palestinians**

In his joint press conference with Secretary Rice February 22, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal stressed the Kingdom's commitment to both the peace process and the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

"Saudi Arabia assured its full commitment to the peace process in the Middle East and the importance of respecting the free will of the Palestinian people without hastily prejudging the situation," Prince Saud said. "We denounce Israel's withholding of the due funds of the Palestinian Authority. We wish not to link the international aid to the Palestinian people to considerations other than their dire humanitarian needs."

