



AUGUST 15, 2006

ISLAM

Cabinet denounces linking Islam with fascism

The Saudi Cabinet has rejected linking Islam with fascism, and pointed out that the authoritarian political movement is in fact the product of Western culture.

"The Cabinet stated that terrorism is neither a religion nor a nationality and warned of the dangers of accusing Muslims of terrorism and fascism without regard to the illustrious history of the Islamic culture," the Minister of Culture and Information Iyad Madani said in a statement following the weekly Cabinet meeting on August 14. "What Islam is accused of today, such as fascism, is in the first place a product of Western cultural heritage."

In August 10 remarks after British authorities foiled a terrorist plot to bomb several US-bound jetliners, President George W. Bush said, "The recent arrests that our fellow citizens are now learning about are a stark reminder that this nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation."

FOREIGN AID

Convoy of Saudi relief trucks dispatched to Lebanon

Saudi Arabia dispatched a convoy of 30 relief trucks to Lebanon on August 13. The trucks are carrying 580 tons of foodstuffs and 80 tons of medical supplies including an ambulance, Acting President of the Saudi Red Crescent Society Dr Saleh Al-Tuwaijeri said. He added that similar convoys would be dispatched to Lebanon in the next few days. The aid is in line with the Kingdom's ongoing assistance to the Lebanese people.

Saudi hospital in Beirut treats over 3,000 patients

The Saudi field hospital in Beirut has treated more than 3,000 Lebanese men, women and children wounded in the current crisis, the Arab News reported August 14. Part of Saudi Arabia's ongoing humanitarian assistance to the people

of Lebanon, the hospital was set up July 31 to provide much-needed medical assistance to those suffering as a result of the Israeli strikes on Lebanon.

The fully-equipped facility is able to conduct both minor and major operations, and includes laboratories as well as ambulances. The Kingdom recently increased the hospital's staff by adding 18 physicians, 15 male nurses, 12 pharmacists, five emergency technicians, eight X-ray technicians and three lab technicians. The hospital, which is supervised by the Saudi Red Crescent Society, will remain in Lebanon as long as it is needed.

FOREIGN POLICY

Cabinet focuses on crisis in Lebanon, terrorism

In its weekly meeting chaired by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the Cabinet expressed support for the Lebanese government and its approval of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for a cease-fire and an increase in UN troops in southern Lebanon. The Cabinet emphasized that the Israeli attacks on Lebanon and the Palestinian territories demonstrate that the region's problems cannot be solved by military force. The countries of the region must promote unity among their various factions to avoid spreading violence, it noted.

King Abdullah makes a historic visit to Turkey

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz made a historic state visit to Turkey August 8-11, the first by a Saudi king since 1966. During the visit, Saudi Arabia and Turkey signed several key agreements to promote cooperation in political, economic, investment, transport and other areas.

King Abdullah also held talks with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Ahmed Sezer on bilateral cooperation and international issues, including the crisis in Lebanon, the situation in Iraq, counterterrorism cooperation and the rights of Muslim minorities in Europe.

King Abdullah and Prime Minister Erdogan also laid out a plan for economic relations between the two countries. They pledged to remove barriers and provide support to Saudi and Turkish businessmen in order to boost trade and increase investment ties.

