



SEPTEMBER 19, 2006

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah: Arab world will not witness a sectarian war

The Arab world will not witness a sectarian war in the region, as analysts have predicted, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz said in a September 16 interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Siyassah. The situation in the region looks more promising in the days ahead with Arab and international efforts underway, he said.

On Saudi-US relations, the King said that the ties between the two countries are strong, and that there is a mutual understanding on international issues. Saudi Arabia often advises the US administration on matters, and it listens to the Kingdom's views. American society is characterized by freedom of expression, and the Kingdom enjoys the chance to listen to what Americans have to say.

The King praised Palestinian efforts to form a national unity government, the key to the path to peace in the Middle East. He drew attention to the Arab Peace Initiative as an indication that Arabs seek peace. The King also said that recent oil surpluses are an opportunity for Gulf nations to build their economies and infrastructures for the prosperity of their people.

Crown Prince reaffirms support for Arab Peace Initiative

In remarks to Al-Ekhbariya TV news channel September 12, Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz said that the Arab Peace Initiative for peace in the Middle East is the way to a solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

ISLAM

Saudi Arabia urges the Vatican to clarify its stance on Islam

Saudi Arabia has called on the Vatican to issue a statement outlining its position on Islam and its teachings, as well as a clarification of Pope Benedict XVI's remarks about Islam at Germany's Regensburg University on September 12.

In a written message September 16, Foreign Minister Prince Saud expressed consternation over the Pope's remarks and the allegation that Islam was spread by the sword. He noted that the Pope's comments came at a time when the

Muslim world is doing its best to open real and effective dialogue with other religions and civilizations, especially Christianity.

OIC Information Ministers highlight joint media strategies

At their seventh session in Jeddah September 14, the Information Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) discussed joint media strategies to deal with misconceptions of Islam.

They agreed to prepare an action plan for coordinating with the international media and addressing some these misconceptions. The ministers also urged the Islamic media to promote diversity, pluralism and the principles of Islam, and recommended drafting a code of ethics for the Islamic media.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi aid arrives in Lebanon, Ethiopia

The Saudi Red Crescent Society is distributing 1,000 ready-made housing units in Lebanon. The units will be set up immediately upon arrival in cooperation with the Lebanese government. Also, the Saudi field hospital in Beirut is reporting that it has treated 33,721 patients since its establishment July 31.

Meanwhile, Saudi relief planes began arriving in Ethiopia September 15 to aid flood victims. Two planes carried 140 tons of aid, including 2,000 tents; 6,860 blankets; 400 rugs; and five tons of medical equipment. The aid is in addition to the \$1 million the Kingdom donated to Ethiopia through the World Food Program.

SPORTS

Saudi soccer team wins Learning Disability World Cup

Saudi Arabia defeated defending champions Holland 1-0 on a penalty kick to win the Learning Disability World Cup 2006 Germany on Saturday. The Saudi victory followed penalty kicks after a 4-4 tie in regulation and overtime play.

President of Saudi Youth Welfare and Saudi Football Federation Prince Sultan bin Fahd said after the match that he is very proud of the team and their performance and pledged to continue to help the team develop their skills," Prince Sultan said in an interview with the Arab News Sunday.

This is the fourth time the Learning Disability World Cup has been held. Holland won the tournament in 1994 and 2002, and England in 1998.

