



SEPTEMBER 26, 2006

## ISLAM

### **King, Crown Prince congratulate Muslims on Ramadan**

On September 22, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz issued a statement congratulating Muslims on Ramadan. The two leaders urged Muslims to use the holy month as an opportunity to renew their commitment to the Islamic ideals of peace, justice and prosperity.

"The holy month of Ramadan comes at a time when the Muslim nation faces great external challenges. From time to time, it is afflicted with dark tumult and suffers from some of its people who have not deeply looked at the tolerance and ease of this religion. Islam is a religion of affection, mercy, tolerance, dialogue and effective participation in human civilization advancement," they said.

## FOREIGN POLICY

### **Foreign minister calls for cooperation to resolve regional crises**

In his statement to the 61st UN General Assembly September 22, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal warned that the situation in the Middle East is urgent, with multiple crises threatening regional stability and creating an environment in which terrorism and extremism thrive.

The key to resolving the multiple crises facing the region is to settle the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is at the heart of the Middle East problem, he said. The basis for a solution are clear, as expressed in President Bush's two-state vision and the Arab Peace Initiative. What is needed is to link this vision with a clear agenda and time frame, the foreign minister said.

There also needs to be a change in the way peace negotiations are approached. Unlike in previous negotiations, all of the final status issues – including Jerusalem, borders, refugees and mutual security – must be addressed. Only then can a breakthrough occur, he said.

On September 21, Prince Saud told the AP that there is a new "very significant" consensus among Arab countries for restarting the Middle East peace process.

### **Kingdom denies secret talks with Israel**

Saudi Arabia has denied reports in the Israeli and Qatari media that it held secret contacts with Israel about the recent aggression against Lebanon.



A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said September 26 that the reports were fabricated and baseless. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been plainly and transparently playing its national role, and it does not practice certain policies publicly and others secretly," the spokesman said. He added that the Saudi position on the Palestinian issue is outlined in the Arab Peace Initiative.

## FOREIGN AID

### **Convoys bring Saudi relief to Lebanon**

A convoy of 40 Saudi relief trucks arrived in Lebanon September 23. The trucks carried foodstuffs and medical supplies, which will be distributed throughout the country. A similar convoy arrived in Beirut last week, and the Kingdom will continue to dispatch such convoys in the coming weeks.

In addition, the Saudi Popular Campaign for the Relief of the Lebanese People signed an agreement of cooperation with UNICEF to provide medical, educational and development aid worth \$2.23 million for Lebanese schoolchildren. This aid includes vaccines, food and school supplies.

The Kingdom will also provide mumps and German measles vaccines to Palestinian children as part of an epidemic control program.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Saudi Arabia observes National Day**

Saudi Arabia observed its 76th National Day on September 23, marking the founding of the modern Kingdom by King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in 1932. In Washington, Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal hosted a special reception for National Day. Guests included US officials, members of Congress, Arab and Muslim ambassadors as well as leaders of the Saudi community.

During the celebrations, Prince Turki presented two distinguished awards: the 2006 Saudi-US Relations award to Arthur Thexton for his longstanding efforts to build friendship between Saudis and Americans, and the Employee of the Year award to Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anazi of the Saudi mission at the UN.

