



OCTOBER 10, 2006

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

Prince Turki discusses Saudi-US relations at CSIS

In an address on Saudi-US relations at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington October 4, Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Turki Al-Faisal said that relations between the two countries are "stronger than they have ever been."

Prince Turki pointed out areas for improvement in the Saudi-US relationship. These include more people-to-people contact, more American representatives visiting the Kingdom, and better relations between Saudi Arabia and Congress. In addition, the discourse between the two countries should change, with more of a focus on constructive criticism rather than political rhetoric.

Turning to reform in the Kingdom, Prince Turki said that the Kingdom would reform at its own pace in line with its traditions and culture.

The ambassador also drew attention to the importance of reform in the US political system. "Your reform of campaign contributions is essential and needed yesterday, not tomorrow," he said.

On the Middle East peace process, Prince Turki expressed the hope that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent visit to the Middle East is a signal that the United States is taking a more active role in reviving the Middle East peace process. "We think that this may be a time for the United States to put its foot forward and do what it has been talking about within the framework of the road map," he said.

On Iran, Prince Turki said that he thinks it is a mistake for the United States not to talk to Iran. He also said he did not think there would be a sectarian civil war in Iraq because the links between Shias and Sunnis are deep-rooted.

Leading Saudi cleric warns youth against jihad in Iraq

A leading Saudi cleric has warned Saudi youth against traveling to Iraq for jihad, the Arabic daily *Okaz* reported October 5. In an interview with *Okaz*, Sheikh Abdullah bin Abdulrahman bin Jibreen said that youth who travel to Iraq for jihad endanger not only themselves but Islam, Muslims and Arabs as well. He stressed that going to Iraq for jihad is regarded as degrading and harmful to Muslims. He also encouraged those who are wanted by security forces in the Kingdom to surrender.



Interior Ministry: Militants released after they repented

Saudi Arabia has released a large number of militants and extremists after they repented, the *Arab News* reported October 5. Deputy Interior Minister Prince Ahmed bin Abdulaziz made the announcement in remarks at a ceremony for retired Interior Ministry employees October 4.

Prince Ahmed remarked that Saudi Arabia is continuing efforts to repatriate all of the Saudi detainees currently being held in the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, and that it hopes to do so soon.

FOREIGN AID

Fourth Saudi relief convoy dispatched to Lebanon

A relief convoy of 40 trucks loaded with foodstuffs and other supplies left Riyadh October 10 for Lebanon. It is the fourth such convoy dispatched by the Saudi Popular Campaign for the Relief of the Lebanese People. A similar convoy arrived in Lebanon October 4.

