



APRIL 17, 2007

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah delivers annual policy address to the Shura Council

In his annual policy address to the Shura (Consultative) Council April 14, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz said that the region is at a critical stage with various crises, a situation that requires doubled efforts of Saudi diplomacy.

The Palestinian situation remains the primary crisis in the Arab world, he noted. The King also expressed concern over Lebanon's internal strife and the ongoing bloodshed in Iraq. In addition, he extended an offer to Somalia's warring factions to meet in Saudi Arabia to discuss their differences.

The crisis over Iran's nuclear program has been added to that list of crises, the King said. He expressed the hope that the Iranian crisis would be resolved peacefully and reiterated the Kingdom's position advocating a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

On oil issues, King Abdullah said that Saudi Arabia seeks fair oil prices that take into consideration the interests of consumers and producers, and highlighted the Kingdom's intent to expand its production capacity to meet global demand.

King Abdullah also expressed Saudi Arabia's determination to fight terrorism in all its forms "until this deviant group comes to its senses or is uprooted from Saudi society."

Riyadh meeting results in Sudan-UN agreement on Darfur

On April 15, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz was informed by Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir that Khartoum had signed a joint agreement with the UN and the African Union (AU) to determine the responsibilities of AU and UN forces in Darfur. The agreement is a result of the March 28, 2007 meeting of the concerned parties convened by King Abdullah on the sidelines of last month's Arab Summit in Riyadh.

Kingdom condemns bombings in Algeria, Morocco

Saudi Arabia condemned the two suicide bombings that took place in Algeria and Morocco on April 14 as "criminal acts that contradict the teachings of Islam and all human values." In its statement, the Kingdom also offered its condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the governments and peoples of both countries.



Embassy offers condolences on Virginia Tech shooting

Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel Al-Jubeir has extended his deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the April 16 shooting at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, as well as to all those affected by the tragic event.

Cultural Attaché Dr. Mazyed Almazyed traveled to Blacksburg April 17 to attend a convocation in memory of the victims and to condole the university community.

No Saudi students were injured in the Virginia Tech shooting. Through the Cultural Mission, the Embassy directly contacted each student as well as the Saudi Student Club and the international students' office at Virginia Tech to confirm that all of the Saudi students enrolled at the university were safe.

SAUDI ARABIA

Six Saudi satellites launched into space

The Kingdom has successfully launched six satellites into orbit, the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology announced April 17. The satellites were launched from the Baikonur Base in Kazakhstan on a Russian-Ukrainian missile, bringing the total number of Saudi satellites in orbit to 12. Most are used for communications.

Saudi Arabia begins massive education overhaul

Saudi Arabia has launched a major overhaul of its educational system, the *Arab News* reported April 17. The projects, worth an estimated \$3.1 billion, emphasize improving the educational environment, developing extracurricular activities, teacher training, and curriculum development.

In other educational reforms, Minister of Higher Education Dr. Khalid Al-Anqari announced plans to establish more universities for women, which will be managed by women. The first of the universities will open in Riyadh April 17.

Conjoined twins from Cameroon to be separated April 21

A separation surgery will be performed April 21 on conjoined twins from Cameroon, on the directive of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. Over the past two decades, doctors at Saudi hospitals have performed 12 successful separation surgeries for conjoined twins from countries around the world.

