



JUNE 26, 2007

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah visits Europe, the Middle East

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz paid state visits to Spain, France and Poland this week. The King is currently on a five-nation tour that also includes stops in Egypt and Jordan.

During the visits, the King held talks with Spanish, French and Polish leaders on regional and international issues, particularly the situations in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq as well as bilateral issues. The Saudi-French talks devoted special attention to the situation in Lebanon.

The King also oversaw the signing of bilateral agreements of cooperation in various areas with each country. While in Spain, he inaugurated a Saudi-Spanish fund for infrastructure investment. The fund will have a capital of \$5 billion and will be financed almost exclusively by the private sectors of both countries.

King Abdullah is scheduled to visit Egypt on June 26 and Jordan on June 27 for talks about key issues in the Middle East.

Foreign minister addresses key regional issues on CNN International

In a June 19 interview with CNN International's Michael Holmes, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal expressed Arab support for the legality of President Mahmoud Abbas, and noted that the Arab League is taking steps to diffuse the crisis.

Asked what the United States could do to improve its standing as an honest broker in the Middle East, Prince Saud replied, "Do what the president has said to do – establish a Palestinian state, independent and viable, next to Israel, to live in peace with Israel. That's what the United States can do."

Turning to Iraq, Prince Saud highlighted the importance of implementing the benchmarks that had been announced by the Iraqi government. "If this program is implemented, and quickly enough, we think that there's a chance for Iraq to be a peaceful country and live at peace with its neighbors," he said.

The foreign minister also reiterated Saudi Arabia's support for a Middle East region free of nuclear weapons, and said Iran has assured the Kingdom that it is not seeking nuclear capability.

In related news, the Cabinet expressed regret about the continuing internal strife among the Palestinian factions during its June 25 session. It called on the Palestinian groups to put their national interest and unity above all else and spare the Palestinian people further tragedy.

Cabinet approves UN protocols on organized crime

On June 25, the Cabinet approved two protocols related to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. One protocol aims to combat human trafficking, particularly concerning women and children. A second protocol addresses the smuggling of migrants via land, sea and air.

The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. Saudi Arabia ratified the convention in January 2005.

SAUDI ARABIA

Interior Minister urges imams to confront deviant ideology

Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz has urged imams to confront deviant ideology as part of the Kingdom's fight against terrorism. Prince Nayef made the remarks during a meeting with over 600 prayer leaders and imams in Jeddah June 21.

He noted that there are at least 14,000 Friday mosques (mosques at which Friday prayers can be performed) in various parts of the Kingdom that provide an opportunity for imams to expose the deviants and their ideology. Prince Nayef also said that Saudi security forces have foiled 90 percent of terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia.

