



AUGUST 7, 2007

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

King Abdullah meets with Secretaries of State and Defense

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Jeddah July 31 for talks about the situation in Palestine, particularly the need to reach a just and comprehensive peace in line with UN Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

They also conferred on developments in Iraq and reaffirmed its right to maintain its sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and national unity. On other issues, they stressed the need for Lebanese parties to support efforts to resume a national dialogue and to respect the legitimate political process. They also discussed counterterrorism cooperation and the nuclear file.

Prince Saud: Kingdom welcomes conference on Palestine

In a joint press conference with Secretaries Rice and Gates on August 1, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal said that during her meetings in Saudi Arabia Secretary Rice briefed Saudi officials on President George W. Bush's initiative to hold an international peace conference on Palestine this fall.

"We are interested in a peace conference to deal with the substantive matter of peace, the issues of real substance and not form or non-substantive issues. If that does so, it becomes of great interest for Saudi Arabia. And should we then get an invitation from the Secretary to attend that conference, we will look very closely and very hard at attending," he stated.

Turning to Iraq, the Saudi foreign minister expressed concern over the ongoing security and political deterioration there and its potential threat to regional security. Saudi Arabia expressed the hope that it would be able to work closely with the Iraqi government on security measures, especially dealing with terrorist activity, he said.

On a diplomatic level, Prince Saud stated that the Kingdom has decided to send a delegation to Iraq to assess establishing a Saudi embassy there.

The Saudi-US talks also addressed the crisis in Lebanon and ongoing tensions there. Both countries called on the Lebanese parties to put national interest first, resolve their political issues via dialogue and avoid foreign intervention.

On the issue of Iran's nuclear file, Prince Saud said that the Kingdom reiterated its support for resolving the current conflict with diplomacy.



The Saudi foreign minister also expressed satisfaction with Saudi-US cooperation in counterterrorism, and the importance of continuing such cooperation.

Secretary Rice, Arab foreign ministers meet in Egypt

Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates arrived in Jeddah from Sharm El-Sheikh, where Secretary Rice met with eight Arab foreign ministers to discuss key regional issues, including restarting the Middle East peace process, the situation in Iraq, Lebanon and terrorism.

In a statement released after the July 31 meeting, Secretary Rice and the Arab ministers reaffirmed their commitment to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East and agreed to coordinate efforts to promote regional peace and stability. They also reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution for ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

FOREIGN AID

Kingdom donates medical aid to Lebanon, dates to Djibouti

Saudi Arabia donated 37 tons of medical supplies to the Lebanese army on August 6. The aid was handed over by a delegation from the Ministry of Defense and Aviation.

Also on August 6, Saudi Ambassador to Djibouti Abdulaziz Ala'aifan handed over 100 tons of dates to the government of Djibouti on behalf of King Abdullah.

ISLAM

Hajj pilgrims to begin arriving October 21

Pilgrims for the upcoming Hajj season will begin arriving in Saudi Arabia on October 21 (10 Shawwal), according to Deputy Hajj Minister Hatim Qadhi. The Hajj is tentatively set to begin on December 17 and Arafat Day is tentatively scheduled for December 18, depending on the sighting of the moon. At least 1.5 million pilgrims are expected to arrive for the pilgrimage, the *Arab News* reported this weekend.

