



AUGUST 21, 2007

FOREIGN POLICY

Kingdom decries “repugnant” remarks by Syrian vice president

Saudi Arabia issued a statement August 17 denouncing recent remarks by Syrian Vice President Faruq Al-Shara, in which he characterized the Kingdom’s role in the Middle East as paralyzed.

“With great surprise, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has closely taken notice of the repugnant remarks recently made by Mr. Faruq Al-Shara, Syria’s Vice-President, implying a number of lies and contradictions which aimed at defaming the Kingdom,” the statement said.

Saudi Arabia rejected the idea that it has not done enough for Arab and Muslim unity, and reaffirmed its support for any meeting that aims to unify ranks and strengthen Arab solidarity.

It also rejected Al-Shara’s claim that Syria had engineered the Makkah Agreement between Hamas and Fatah. The statement noted that the entire world witnessed Saudi Arabia’s invitation to the Palestinian leadership to hold talks in Makkah, the progress of the talks and the resulting power-sharing agreement.

Saudi Arabia stressed that it is interested in maintaining its relations with Syria, and that if those relations were to suffer, it is not the fault of the Kingdom.

During its weekly meeting on August 20, the Cabinet reiterated that serving the Muslim nation and enhancing its security, stability, development and unity have been priorities in the Kingdom’s foreign policy. It also called for joint Arab action in order to confront local, regional and international challenges.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia sends urgent relief aid to Sudan and Mauritania

Saudi Arabia announced August 17 that is providing humanitarian aid to Sudan and Mauritania, which have suffered recently from heavy rain and flooding. The Kingdom is airlifting foodstuffs, medical and other relief items to both countries, on the directive of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz.

In addition, Saudi Arabia is granting \$20 million in urgent aid to each country in order to meet victims’ immediate needs. The grants will be implemented in



coordination with the Saudi Red Crescent Society, international aid organizations, and the respective local authorities.

Saudi aid to flood-stricken Bangladesh continues

Saudi relief planes are continuing to transport urgent humanitarian aid to Bangladesh as part of the airlift ordered by King Abdullah. Three planes have arrived in Dhaka to date carrying hundreds of tons of food stuffs, medical supplies, tents, carpets and blankets. Saudi Arabia has also provided Bangladesh with a \$50 million grant to meet flood victims' immediate needs.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi authorities expand HIV/AIDS awareness campaign

Saudi medical authorities are expanding their HIV/AIDS awareness campaign to mosques throughout Saudi Arabia as the holy month of Ramadan approaches, *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported August 16. Launched last year, the campaign has targeted places where large numbers of people gather, such as airports, markets, recreational centers and universities.

According to the director of the national program to fight AIDS, Dr. Sana Flimban, campaign organizers have reported a positive response from the public.

KAUST names Woods Hole as its first research partner

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology announced August 15 that the Massachusetts-based Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution will be the first partner in its global collaborative research program.

As part of the partnership, three initial areas of research will be established at KAUST: coral reefs; coastal hydrography; and fisheries and aquaculture. Woods Hole will also consult on the design of laboratory support and dock facilities for the KAUST Marine and Ocean Research Center.

Expected to open in September 2009, KAUST aims to be a world-class graduate research university that will support scientific discovery and human advancement. Ocean research is especially important because KAUST's campus on the Red Sea includes 19 million square meters of protected marine sanctuary.

