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FOREIGN AID

Saudi airlifts bring urgent relief aid to Sudan and Bangladesh

This week, Saudi Arabia dispatched two cargo planes laden with relief supplies to Sudan to aid victims of heavy rains and flooding. The first plane arrived in Sudan on August 24 carrying 104 tons of foodstuffs, carpets and blankets. A second plane arrived two days later with 75 tons of foodstuffs, tents and blankets.

The airlift is part of a Saudi aid package to Sudan that was announced last week. The package includes a \$20 million grant to meet victims' immediate needs.

The Kingdom has also undertaken an airlift to Bangladesh, which is likewise suffering from heavy flooding. The fourth Saudi plane in the airlift arrived in Dhaka on August 22 with more than 85 tons of foodstuffs, tents and blankets. Three previous planes were dispatched from Riyadh over the last two weeks.

Saudi aid to Pakistan includes relief aid, housing construction

More than 300 tons of Saudi relief goods were scheduled to arrive in Pakistan this week to help victims of the recent flooding in Baluchistan and Sindh Provinces. The consignment of aid includes 12,500 packages of foodstuffs, 1,000 tents, 3,000 blankets and 1,000 plastic sheets. It was due handed over to Pakistani authorities upon arrival in Karachi.

In related news, a Saudi relief organization announced August 22 that it is nearly halfway finished with the construction of 4,000 prefabricated houses for the victims of the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. The Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) has built 1,800 of 4,000 houses in Balakot, North-West Frontier Province.

A \$16.7 million contract was signed to construct the houses in October 2006. In addition to the houses, SPAPEV plans to construct 30 secondary schools in the Bagh and Balakot areas as well as 30 large mosques and 90 small mosques.

After the deadly 2005 earthquake devastated regions of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia was the single largest donor to relief efforts with aid in excess of \$573 million.



SAUDI ARABIA-US

More than 13,000 Saudi scholarship students are currently in the US

On August 23, Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted a luncheon for Saudi students at the Embassy in Washington. In remarks, the ambassador wished the students success in their studies. He noted that they are the Kingdom's true ambassadors, and as such urged them to get to know the American people.

There are currently more than 13,000 Saudi students enrolled at campuses across the United States on scholarships sponsored by the Saudi government, as of August 2007. About 20 percent of the students are women, a number is expected to increase to 25 percent.

The students are in the United States as part of a government scholarship program established by King Abdullah in September 2006 as a result of his meeting with President Bush in 2005. As part of the program, the King created 80,000 scholarships at all levels worldwide for scientific specializations required by the labor market, especially medicine, engineering, computer science, mathematics and physics. Up to 25,000 Saudi students are expected to come to the US for their studies.

