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FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah meets with Palestinian president

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the royal palace in Jeddah September 11. The two leaders discussed the need to resolve internal Palestinian differences and restart the stalled Middle East peace process.

Speaking to reporters in Jeddah September 12, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal said that King Abdullah places a great deal of importance on Palestinian unity.

Commenting on the upcoming international conference on Palestine proposed by President George W. Bush, Prince Saud said, "If this conference will not discuss serious topics aimed to resolve the conflict, put Arab initiative as a key objective, set an agenda that details issues as required and oblige Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, this conference will not have any objective and will turn into protracted negotiations."

Prince Saud also said that Saudi Arabia remains committed to the Makkah Agreement, and that there is no new Saudi initiative on Palestine.

Foreign Minister: Kingdom to open an embassy in Iraq "soon"

Saudi Arabia expects to open an embassy in Iraq "soon," Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal told reporters at a press conference in Jeddah September 12.

Last month, the Kingdom sent a delegation to Iraq to explore the possibility of reopening a Saudi embassy there. The delegation submitted a report, which has been under study.

Somali leaders sign landmark peace agreement in Jeddah

Somali leaders signed a landmark peace agreement in at the conclusion of a national reconciliation conference in Jeddah September 16.

Participants at the national reconciliation conference included Somali President Abdullah Ahmed, Speaker of Parliament Adam Nour, Prime Minister Ali Gedi, Chairman of the National Reconciliation Committee Ali Mohammed, tribal

sheikhs, and other representatives of the various factions. Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz also attended the talks.

In remarks at the signing ceremony, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz welcomed the agreement to end the infighting in Somalia and highlighted Saudi efforts to bring about a reconciliation. He also urged the Somali factions to follow through on the agreement

FOREIGN AID

Fifth relief plane concludes the Saudi airlift to Mauritania

Saudi Arabia concluded its airlift to Mauritania September 16. A total of five Saudi planes delivered 350 tons of relief aid to the flood-stricken African country, including foodstuffs, tents, blankets, carpets and medical supplies. The Kingdom has also granted $20 million in urgent aid to Mauritania to provide immediate relief to flood victims.