



NOVEMBER 6, 2007

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah begins official visit to Italy

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz arrived in Rome November 5 for a two-day state visit to Italy. It is the second stop on a tour that began with a visit to Britain and will also include Germany and Turkey.

Saudi-Italian relations date back to 1932, when Italy opened a consulate in Jeddah. Today, Italy is one of Saudi Arabia's largest trading partners. In 2006, Saudi imports from Italy totaled \$2.6 billion, while its exports reached \$5.3 billion.

Prior to arriving in Italy, King Abdullah spent a few days in Geneva on a private visit. While in Switzerland he met with Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey to discuss regional and international issues as well as areas of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Minister: National reconciliation only way to resolve Iraq crisis

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal participated in an expanded meeting of Iraq's neighboring countries in Istanbul November 3. The meeting was also attended by Egypt, Bahrain, permanent members of the UN Security Council and representatives of the G-8.

In a speech delivered at the meeting, Prince Saud stressed the importance of maintaining the unity, independence and sovereignty of Iraq, as well as noninterference in its internal affairs. He noted that despite some positive developments the situation in Iraq remains at a standstill, hampering reconstruction efforts and threatening regional security. A comprehensive national reconciliation is the only solution to the situation, the prince remarked.

While in Istanbul, Prince Saud met separately with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon to discuss regional and international issues.

Foreign Minister: GCC has offered to provide uranium to Iran

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal has said that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations are willing to establish a body to provide enriched uranium to

Iran. The GCC's move aims to defuse the standoff between Iran and the West over Tehran's nuclear program.

Prince Saud made the remarks in a November 1 interview with the London-based Middle East Economic Digest.

The GCC plan envisions building a plant in a neutral country, such as Switzerland, that would provide enriched uranium to Middle Eastern countries as needed. It would also ensure that none of the enriched uranium would be used for weapons of mass destruction, Prince Saud said.

The Saudi foreign minister said that Iran is considering the offer. "We hope the Iranians will accept this proposal. We continue to talk to them and urge them not only to look at the issue from the perspective of the needs of Iran for energy, but also in the interests of the security of the region," he said.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia sends humanitarian aid to Darfur, Pakistan

The Saudi Red Crescent Society sent humanitarian aid to Sudan's Darfur region on October 30. The aid consisted of 12 ambulances; 168 tons of medical supplies; 69.7 tons of medical equipment for the establishment of 14 health centers and eight clinics; 4,000 school bags; agricultural equipment and supplies for farmers; 4,000 tents; 14,000 carpets; six vehicles; blankets and sewing machines.

The Society is also implementing a vaccination campaign against polio, establishing a sewing training center for women, digging and rehabilitating 98 wells, and installing a water desalination facility in Darfur.

With many refugees from Darfur staying at camps in Chad, the Society is providing 23 tons of medical supplies and equipment for the hospital in the eastern Chadian town of Abeche. It has also established a health center with four clinics in Chad.

On November 3, the Kingdom donated relief aid for victims of flooding in the Pakistani region of Baluchistan. The aid includes 1,000 waterproof tents, plastic mats and sheeting, quilts, stoves, and 5,000 food packets.

