



NOVEMBER 13, 2007

## FOREIGN POLICY

### **King Abdullah holds historic meeting with Pope Benedict XVI**

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz held a historic meeting with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican November 6, the first ever between a Saudi King and a Pope. During the meeting, they discussed the importance of dialogue among religions and cultures to promote peace and tolerance. They also discussed the situation in the Middle East and emphasized the need to find a just solution to the conflicts in the region, especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

### **King Abdullah visits Germany, Italy, Turkey and Egypt**

This past week, King Abdullah paid state visits to Italy, Germany, Turkey and Egypt. In each country, the King held official talks on bilateral and international issues, with an emphasis on the Middle East peace process and Iraq. He also oversaw the signing of bilateral agreements of cooperation in a wide range of areas, including political, economic and education.

In Italy November 6, King Abdullah and Prime Minister Romano Prodi stressed the critical role of the US leading up to this month's peace summit in Annapolis. They also noted the importance of dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue in a way that prevents weapons proliferation and escalating tensions in the region.

In Germany November 8, King Abdullah and Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed issues including the situation in Palestine, the Middle East peace process and Lebanon. They agreed on the importance of an independent Lebanon without foreign intervention.

In Turkey November 9-10, the King met separately with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul. In their meeting, President Gul and King Abdullah stressed the importance of reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that includes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, as called for in the Arab Peace Initiative.

The King concluded his tour November 10 with a stop in Egypt, where he briefed President Hosni Mubarak on his visits to Britain, Germany, Italy and Turkey. They also discussed the Middle East peace process, Lebanon and Iraq.

## **King Abdullah urges peaceful resolution to Iran nuclear crisis**

In a November 8 interview with the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, King Abdullah called for a peaceful resolution to the standoff between Iran and the West over Tehran's nuclear file, and noted that the recent GCC proposal to establish a consortium that would provide uranium to the Middle East is within the framework of efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully.

"The world fears that Iran's nuclear program will lead to development of nuclear arms," he said. "Iran has announced that uses of its nuclear program are peaceful. If this is the case, we see no justification for the language of escalation, confrontation and challenge which only complicates matters more."

Commenting on the upcoming US-sponsored Middle East peace summit in Maryland, King Abdullah said the conference would be successful if it addresses core issues in a comprehensive manner.

On Iraq, King Abdullah stressed that national reconciliation is the only way for the country to achieve security and stability. Asked about Turkish threats to attack Kurds in northern Iraq, King Abdullah said that Saudi Arabia condemns all forms of terrorism or cross-border infiltration, and expressed the hope that Turkey and Iraq would work together to stop such acts.

## **SAUDI-US RELATIONS**

### **Saudi Ambassador opens internship program for Saudi students**

Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir has opened an internship program for Saudi students on scholarship in the United States, in cooperation with the Saudi Cultural Attaché's office. American companies participating in the program will open up their internship programs to Saudi students in the US, enabling the students to gain valuable work experience needed by Saudi companies. So far, eight companies have participated in the program.

### **Saudi Embassy hosts exhibit of 19th century Orientalist paintings**

Through the end of November, the Saudi Embassy in Washington is hosting an art exhibition of 19th century Orientalist paintings that will be open to the public. The exhibition, titled "19th Century Orientalist Paintings from the Collection of Terence Garnett," features 12 works by Jean-Léon Gérôme, Ludwig Deutsch and Gustav Bauernfeind from the private collection of Garnett, a noted technology investor and art collector.

After a private opening on November 8, the exhibition is open to the public during regular business hours from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm from November 9 to 30, 2007, except holidays. Entrance is free.



