



FEBRUARY 5, 2008

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah discusses political crisis with Lebanese officials

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with the leader of Lebanon's Progressive Socialist Party Walid Jumblatt and Minister of Information Ghazi Al-Aridhi in Riyadh February 3 to discuss the current political crisis in Lebanon, which has been without a president since November 2007.

Cabinet calls on Muslim nations to foster unity

In a February 4 meeting chaired by King Abdullah, the Cabinet highlighted Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts to promote unity in the Arab world and Muslim nation, as well as its efforts to resolve the crises that threaten the development of both. It called on all Muslim countries to assume their responsibilities, commit to the values and principles of Islam and to seek unity of the Islamic nation.

Arab interior ministers hold counterterrorism meeting

The Council of Arab Interior Ministers met in Tunis January 30-31 to discuss security issues, in particular counterterrorism. In a final communiqué, the ministers condemned all forms of terrorism, stressed the importance of developing a joint Arab security system and called for the establishment of an international counterterrorism center. They also urged Arab interior ministries to support the security apparatus in Lebanon and Iraq.

Saudi Embassy in Chad evacuated and closed

The Saudi Embassy in Chad was evacuated and the mission closed after a bomb hit the residence of the Saudi ambassador in N'Djamena. Embassy staff and their families had gathered at the residence February 2 to escape armed clashes between the Chadian government and rebel forces when the bomb hit, killing the wife and daughter of one of the embassy's staff and injuring two children.

SAUDI ARABIA-US

Cisco to design network for King Abdullah Economic City

The San Jose-based tech giant Cisco Systems signed an agreement this week to design the infrastructure network for the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC). Cisco will provide consultancy and advisory services for KAEC and identify networking requirements for its infrastructure-related services. Located on the



Red Sea coast in Rabigh, KAEC is the single largest private sector development in the region.

Saudi Air Force participates in Red Flag exercise at Nellis AFB

The Royal Saudi Air Force is participating in the Red Flag air combat training exercise currently underway at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Red Flag is a realistic combat training exercise involving the air forces of the US and its allies, and is conducted on the Nevada Test and Training Range, north of Las Vegas.

King Saud University signs agreement with University of Iowa

On February 2, the King Saud University for Health Sciences in Riyadh signed an agreement for scientific cooperation with the University of Iowa's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases. The agreement covers areas of common education; training; joint research activities; contracts funded through grants; and development through international conferences and seminars.

ENERGY

OPEC keeps oil supplies unchanged

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has kept oil supplies unchanged at 29.67 million barrels, the *Arab News* reported February 2. Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi said he would have pressed for an output increase if it were needed but that global supply and demand were in balance. "The condition of the market is sound currently, supply and demand are equal and global reserves are fine," Al-Naimi said, as quoted in the *Arab News*.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi relief group completes 2,700 of 4,000 houses in Pakistan

The Saudi Public Assistance for Pakistan Earthquake Victims (SPAPEV) has completed construction of more than 2,700 prefabricated houses for families displaced by the October 2005 earthquake. A \$16.7 million contract was signed to construct 4,000 houses in Balakot, North-West Frontier Province in October 2006. The remaining houses are expected to be completed very soon.

