



MARCH 4, 2008

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah meets with Jordanian king, Palestinian premier

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with King Abdullah II of Jordan February 27 for talks at the royal ranch in Jenadriyah, near Riyadh. They discussed Palestine, including the blockade of Gaza, as well as the political crisis in Lebanon and Arab efforts to achieve national reconciliation there. Both leaders underscored the importance of preserving Iraqi security, unity and sovereignty.

On February 29, King Abdullah met with Palestinian Prime Minister Salem Fayyad in Jenadriyah for talks about the situation in Palestine. During the meeting, Prime Minister Fayyad also thanked King Abdullah for his support for the Palestinians.

Saudi Arabia condemns Israeli actions in Gaza

Saudi Arabia this week condemned Israeli actions in Gaza and reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people.

In a March 2 statement, Saudi Arabia denounced the killing of children, women and elderly, the destruction of houses, and the intimidation by the Israeli military machine. These actions flout international law and contradict Israeli assertions that it desires peace, the statement said. The Kingdom also condemned the threats by Israel's deputy defense minister to inflict a holocaust on Gaza.

Saudi Arabia called on the international community, in particular the Quartet and countries concerned with achieving peace, to end the mass killings and destruction of livelihood of the Palestinians. The Kingdom will relentlessly pursue efforts to ensure Palestinian unity and will contribute to Palestinian reconstruction, the statement said.

Foreign minister briefs the Shura Council on key regional issues

On March 2, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal briefed the Shura (Consultative) Council on the Kingdom's foreign policy. The foreign minister also discussed Saudi Arabia's efforts to stabilize the situations in Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon as well as the upcoming Arab Summit.

During his briefing, Prince Saud characterized the Saudi-US relationship as a strategic one based on supporting mutual interests and issues of concern.

SAUDI ARABIA



Saudi authorities arrest 28 Al-Qaeda militants

Saudi authorities have arrested 28 militants of different nationalities linked to Al-Qaeda, the Ministry of Interior announced March 3. An investigation by the security services revealed that the militants had received orders to rebuild the terrorist organization and launch a terror campaign in Saudi Arabia.

According to the Ministry, the militants' preparations had reached an advanced stage, including identifying hideouts, forging documents and making arrangements for an organized internet campaign to spread their deviant ideology. In addition, the militants were preparing to recruit youths and send them to other regions to engage in terrorist acts.

Saudi authorities also found a message from Al-Qaeda number two Ayman Al-Zawahiri on the memory card of a mobile phone carried by one of the militants. In the message, Al-Zawahiri identified its bearer as a "trusted brother" and urged the militants to raise money under the pretext of assisting needy families in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Ministry said that the militant had obtained the memory card from another person who visited Makkah from abroad.

New Minister of Commerce and Industry appointed

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz issued a decree March 3 relieving Hashem Yamani of his post as Minister of Commerce and Industry, at his own request. King Abdullah also appointed Abdullah bin Ahmed Zainal to the post of Minister of Commerce and Industry. Zainal previously served as Minister of State and member of the Cabinet.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi airlift to Tajikistan concludes

The eighth and final plane in a Saudi airlift to Tajikistan arrived in Dushanbe February 29. The plane carried 5.5 tons of relief assistance, including blankets, carpets and foodstuffs.

The Saudi airlift to Tajikistan began February 17 to aid people affected by severe cold weather there. In total, eight planes delivered 80 tons of relief supplies. The Saudi relief package to Tajikistan also included a \$10 million grant.

