



MARCH 18, 2008

FOREIGN POLICY

King Abdullah gives annual policy address to the Shura Council

In his annual policy address to the Shura (Consultative) Council March 15, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz renewed Saudi Arabia's support for the Palestinian people and the peace process. He also expressed the hope that recent developments in the Palestinian situation would promote peace.

On terrorism, the King stressed Saudi Arabia's continued determination to confront Al-Qaeda, and praised security forces' success in dismantling its cells, choking its sources of financing and exposing the reality of the deviant thought.

King Abdullah also highlighted key aspects of Saudi Arabia's domestic policy, including the establishment of the Allegiance Commission to formalize the succession. The King also drew attention to Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve balanced development throughout the country, its heavy investment in public education, and its creation of organizations to protect consumers.

Crown Prince Sultan pays landmark state visit to Qatar

Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz paid a three-day state visit to Qatar last week. The visit boosted relations between the two countries, which have been strained in recent years.

During the visit, Crown Prince Sultan met with Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani for talks on issues including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Iraq and the Iranian nuclear issue. They also discussed ways of expanding bilateral cooperation.

In a March 9 interview with the Qatari newspaper *Al-Sharq*, the Crown Prince expressed the hope that the nuclear standoff between Iran and the US would be resolved peacefully and defended the right of GCC countries to acquire nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Prince Saud addresses the Islamic Summit in Dakar

In an address to the 11th Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit in Dakar, Senegal March 13, Prince Saud warned that time is running out to implement the commitments made at Annapolis, and added that the Kingdom sees only a continuation of Israeli aggressions against the Palestinians and a policy of collective punishment.



He urged the international community, the key players in particular, to actively move the peace process forward.

On Iraq, Prince Saud noted that relative improvement in the security situation has not been accompanied by progress at the political level. The Iraqi government must seek to achieve national reconciliation based on equality for all Iraqis without any sort of outside interference, he said.

The Saudi foreign minister said that Saudi Arabia looks forward to an effective Syrian role in resolving the political crisis in Lebanon. He also stressed the importance of combating poverty and called for Islamic unity.

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

King Abdullah meets with former ambassador Jordan

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with a US delegation led by former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Robert Jordan at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh March 16. Jordan also met separately with Assistant Minister of Defense and Aviation for Military Affairs Prince Khalid bin Sultan.

Strategic Joint Planning Committee meeting held in Riyadh

On March 17, Prince Khalid bin Sultan chaired the Strategic Joint Planning Committee (JPC) in Riyadh, attended by Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric S. Edelman. The JPC aims to enhance Saudi-US military interaction and to support the Kingdom's efforts to upgrade its military capabilities.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia donates \$1 billion to impoverished OIC nations

Saudi Arabia has donated \$1 billion to support impoverished Organization of the Islamic Conference nations. Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz made the announcement at a prize distribution ceremony in Madinah March 13.

Kingdom donates \$25 million to African Development Fund

Saudi Arabia has approved a \$25 million donation to the African Development Fund, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced. The funds are expected to be disbursed over a five-year period.

