



MAY 6, 2008

FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign Minister warns of worsening Middle East situation

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal attended a meeting of Arab foreign ministers with the Middle East Quartet Committee in London May 2. The meeting was held on the fringes of Quartet talks on the Middle East.

In an address at the meeting, Prince Saud warned that Israeli policies towards the Palestinians are causing the situation in the Middle East to worsen. In particular, he cited Israel's continued construction of settlements in Palestinian lands, its insistence on achieving security before peace, and Israel's green light from the international community to adopt whatever policy it wishes regarding the Palestinians.

He urged all parties involved to exert greater efforts to resolve the conflict, and called for constructive proposals to move the peace process forward.

The Cabinet also called for international action on the peace process this week. In its May 5 meeting, the Cabinet urged countries with influence to shoulder their responsibilities towards the Palestinian people. It called on the Quartet to turn its statements on Palestinian rights into reality and to confront Israeli policies such as settlement expansion and the separation wall.

King Abdullah, World Bank president discuss Arab development

King Abdullah met with World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick at the royal ranch in Jenadriyah April 30. Zoellick briefed King Abdullah on the various activities of the World Bank, and the King highlighted the importance of the Bank's contributions to Arab development.

Finance Minister Ibrahim Al-Assaf also met separately with Zoellick to discuss Saudi Arabia's relations with the World Bank and the Bank's efforts to deal with poverty in the region, in particular Palestine.

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

Saudi Ambassador hosts farewell tea for State's Saudi desk officer

Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted a farewell tea at the Embassy in Washington May 1 for Bob Jachim, the outgoing Saudi desk officer at the State Department. Jachim, who is transferring to a new post in Iraq, will be replaced by Brian McGrath.



In remarks on the occasion, Ambassador Al-Jubeir thanked Jachim for his work and for his efforts to promote Saudi-US relations.

Also this week, Ambassador Al-Jubeir attended the 25th annual board meeting of Saudi student clubs at the Cultural Mission in Washington May 3. He highlighted the Embassy's commitment to Saudi students in the US and its efforts to ensure that they are provided with the necessary facilities and services.

SAUDI ARABIA

Prince Nayef Arab Academy holds anti-trafficking workshop

The Prince Nayef Arab Academy for Security Sciences held a workshop on combating human trafficking May 3-7 in Riyadh. The workshop, which was organized in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, aimed to help participants acquire the necessary skills to fight human trafficking.

In remarks, UN adviser Dr Mohammed Yahya Matar said that Saudi Arabia plans to issue a draft agreement on combating human trafficking. The agreement will be based on the Shari'ah and will conform to international standards, he noted.

Saudi Arabia has already ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which includes human trafficking.

