



MAY 13, 2008

## FOREIGN POLICY

### **Saudi Arabia warns against escalation of violence in Lebanon**

Saudi Arabia expressed deep concern at the recent escalation of violence in Lebanon and warned that conflict would only benefit foreign extremists.

"The Kingdom calls on parties standing behind the escalation to reconsider their calculations and to realize that the involvement of Lebanon in a blind strife will not achieve victory for any party except for the foreign forces of extremism which have been disrupting all sincere and honest efforts to end the political crisis in Lebanon," a Saudi official said in a May 8 statement.

Saudi Arabia issued a second statement May 8 calling for an urgent extraordinary meeting of Arab League foreign ministers to discuss the situation in Lebanon. The meeting was held in Cairo on May 11, with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal leading the Saudi delegation.

### **Foreign Minister urges Lebanese to commit to Arab League initiative**

At a May 13 press conference in Riyadh, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal reiterated the Kingdom's concern at the ongoing violence in Lebanon and urged all Lebanese parties to commit to the Arab League initiative to resolve the crisis.

Asked if the crisis in Lebanon has had a negative impact on Saudi-Iranian relations, Prince Saud replied: "If Iran was supporting the coup that took place in Lebanon, this would affect its relations with all Arab countries, if not all Islamic nations."

### **Cabinet condemns violence in Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen**

On May 12, the Cabinet condemned the ongoing violence in Lebanon and welcomed the Arab League's appeal for a cease-fire in Lebanon and expressed support for the delegation that will be dispatched to Beirut.

Turning to Sudan, the Cabinet denounced the violence that erupted Saturday when rebels from Darfur launched an attack on Khartoum and expressed support for the Sudanese government's efforts to achieve peace and security. It also called for an end to the violence in Saadah, Yemen and urged Djibouti and Eritrea to resolve their differences peacefully.

During the meeting, King Abdullah briefed the Cabinet on his talks with Quartet Middle East envoy Tony Blair in Riyadh May 11. They discussed the latest developments in the Palestinian issue and international efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the region.



## FOREIGN AID

### **AGFUND donates \$50,000 to Myanmar relief efforts**

The Riyadh-based Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Developmental Organizations (AGFUND) on May 10 announced a donation of \$50,000 to the relief efforts in Myanmar. The funds will be provided in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Saudi scholar urges teachers to warn students against traveling to Iraq**

A member of the Committee of Senior Ulama (Religious Scholars) has stressed the importance of warning Saudi youths about the dangers of traveling to Iraq.

During a meeting with faculty of the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh May 6, Dr. Saleh Al-Fawzan urged the faculty to help students steer clear of deviant ideologies, and encouraged them to make the students aware of the dangers that such ideologies pose to Islam and to the nation. He also advised the faculty to notify the authorities if a student insists on traveling to Iraq.

### **Minister of Islamic Affairs urges imams to tackle terror, extremism**

Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance Saleh Al-Ashaikh has urged imams and Friday preachers in Saudi Arabia's mosques to deal with the topic of terror and extremism in their speeches, the *Arab News* reported May 10.

"A preacher should know that it is his religious duty to speak out against terror and misguided ideologies as he is aware of what the Shari'ah says on the matter," Al-Ashaikh said, as quoted in the *Arab News*.

## SAUDI-US RELATIONS

### **Prince Nayef Arab Academy signs accord with Johns Hopkins**

The Riyadh-based Prince Nayef Arab Academy for Security Sciences signed an agreement with Johns Hopkins University May 12 involving joint scientific research and programs as well as the exchange of scientific publications.

