



JUNE 3, 2008

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

King Abdullah, Treasury Secretary discuss economic cooperation

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz met with US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson in Jeddah May 31 for talks on a range of economic issues.

Saudi officials present at the meeting included Finance Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al-Assaf, Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) Governor Hamad Al-Sayyari, and Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir.

Finance Minister Al-Assaf also met separately with Paulson to discuss enhancing bilateral financial, economic and investment cooperation.

Secretary Paulson visited Saudi Arabia as part of a trip to the Gulf region to reiterate the US commitment to open investment and for meetings on a broad range of regional and global economic and financial issues.

The United States is Saudi Arabia's top commercial partner. The volume of trade between the two countries is \$42.7 billion, and the volume of Saudi exports to the US total \$32 billion. In addition, there are 423 Saudi-US joint investment companies with capital investment of nearly \$10 billion.

Finance Minister: Riyal to remain pegged to the US dollar

During a joint press conference with Treasury Secretary Paulson May 31, Finance Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al-Assaf said that Saudi Arabia has no intention of ending the Saudi riyal's peg to the dollar.

"We have repeated more than once that we have no intention to disengage the riyal and the dollar. We consider the interest of the Kingdom when we take a decision regarding the exchange rate," the finance minister said.

Al-Assaf also reiterated the Kingdom's support for stable oil markets, and noted that current high prices are not beneficial to producing or importing countries.

GE Energy wins \$500 million in contracts for projects in the Kingdom

The Saudi Electricity Company (SEC) signed contracts worth \$500 million with Atlanta-based GE Energy to supply gas turbines and generators for power plant projects in the Kingdom, according to a May 29 press release.

The first contract involves supplying gas turbine-generators for the 960-megawatt expansion of the Rabigh power plant on the Red Sea coast. Another



contract is for gas turbines to be used by four SEC power plants in Jizan, Qunfutha, Al-Jouf and Tabuk.

Saudi Embassy hosts reception for Woodrow Wilson Center

The Saudi Embassy in Washington held a reception June 2 for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Board of Directors and the Wilson Council, the Center's national advisory group. On behalf of the ambassador, Director of the Saudi Information Office Nail A. Al-Jubeir briefed the Board and the Wilson Council on Saudi-US relations and hosted a luncheon in their honor.

FOREIGN POLICY

Cabinet reviews developments in Lebanon, Palestinian, Iraq

During its weekly meeting June 2, the Cabinet discussed a number of key regional issues. On Lebanon, it expressed the hope that ongoing negotiations would lead to the formation of a national unity government based on independent decision with the goal of protecting the country.

The Cabinet called on Palestinian factions to unify so that they can withstand external efforts to divide the Palestinians, their land and identity. On Iraq, it affirmed the Kingdom's support for preserving Iraq's unity, Arab nature and a national government that is representative of all Iraqis.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi relief airlift to Myanmar concludes

The Saudi humanitarian airlift to Myanmar concluded May 31 as the fifth and final plane arrived in Yangon Airport carrying more than 70 tons of relief materials. The airlift began on May 25 to provide much-needed relief supplies to the victims of Cyclone Nargis. In total, the airlift delivered 370 tons of supplies.

SAUDI ARABIA

King Abdullah appoints Al-Othaimeen as Minister of Social Affairs

On May 28, King Abdullah appointed Dr. Yusuf Al-Othaimeen to the post of Minister of Social Affairs. Al-Othaimeen previously served as secretary-general of the King Abdullah Foundation for His Parents on Housing Development. He succeeds Abdulmohsen Al-Akkas.

