



SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign minister calls for Arab action to end Palestinian infighting

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal has called for Arab action to end the infighting among Palestinians and warned that the current situation threatens the Palestinian cause.

Prince Saud made the remarks in a keynote address at the 130th meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo September 8.

The Saudi foreign minister called for a unified, decisive Arab stance against those who “shed Palestinian blood and deepen the Palestinian division,” adding that this requires a single Palestinian authority and government that controls the military and security forces.

Prince Saud remarked that previous efforts to resolve the Palestinian rift have failed because individual interests and international intervention that encourages division have taken precedence over Palestinian unity.

On other regional issues, Prince Saud said that Arab countries have nothing but good intentions and a desire for cooperation with Iran. He reiterated the Kingdom’s support for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction as well as the right of nations to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

He also welcomed positive security developments in Iraq and the formation of a national unity government in Lebanon.

ENERGY

Giant Khursaniyah oil field begins production

The Khursaniyah oil field in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province has begun pumping 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) of light crude, the *Saudi Gazette* reported September 5. The output from the Khursaniyah field is the largest single increment in global oil production for several years.

Production from the giant field had been delayed from its original start date of December 2007. Saudi Arabia is investing nearly \$90 billion of its oil revenue in the oil industry. By 2009, the Kingdom hopes to increase oil production capacity to 12.5 million bpd and double its refining capacity to 6 million bpd.



In related news, the Cabinet on September 8 approved the extension of the concession held by US oil giant Chevron in the neutral zone shared with Kuwait.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia provides relief aid to Mali

Saudi Arabia has provided urgent relief aid to Mali, which has been suffering from drought and a locust infestation that is threatening crops. The aid, which includes 3,667 tons of rice, was handed over to Malian officials at a ceremony in the capital of Bamako. In November 2007, a Saudi airlift delivered relief supplies to Mali after the country was stricken by flooding and torrential rains.

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

Saudi Ambassador hosts iftar in Washington

Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted an iftar for Arab and Muslim ambassadors at the Saudi Embassy in Washington September 2. Muslim leaders and members of the Saudi community in Washington also attended the traditional Ramadan event. The holy month began on September 1, 2008.

SAUDI ARABIA

Human Rights Commission to open women's branch in Riyadh

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) this week announced that it will open a women's branch in Riyadh to handle cases of human rights violations against women and children, the *Arab News* reported September 4.

The new branch aims to create awareness about the laws relating to women and children through campaigns. It will have a team of specialists in psychology and sociology, who will handle complaints relating to violence, sexual harassment, arbitrary divorce, rape and personal cases.

In related news, a new organization has been established in Saudi Arabia to monitor domestic violence and child abuse. The Committee of Social Protection consists of various government departments that will act in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs.