



JANUARY 27, 2007

FOREIGN AID

Kingdom donates \$1 billion for Gaza reconstruction

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz announced January 19 that Saudi Arabia will donate \$1 billion for reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.

During the opening session of the Arab Economic, Developmental and Social Summit in Kuwait, the King stressed the importance of aiding Palestinians in Gaza and preventing further violence.

Condemning the “bloody, painful and brutal” attacks on Gaza, King Abdullah warned, “Israel must realize that the choice between peace and war will not be available all the time, and that the Arab Initiative on the table today will not be on the table for ever.”

Furthermore, the King called for Arab unity. “I plead with you to overcome our wounds and divisions,” he said, “and to take up a dignified position which history will not forget and of which our nation will be proud.”

Saudi campaign to fund UN relief projects in Gaza

Dr. Sa’id Al Harthi, the head of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Relief Campaign for the Palestinian People in Gaza, signed a cooperation agreement on January 25 with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA).

The Saudi campaign will provide the funding for an estimated \$6.5 million worth of development projects and other relief programs in Gaza, which will be carried out by the UNRWA.

“The agreement is a continuation of the cooperation between the campaign and UNRWA, which will provide all basic services for needy Palestinian families,” Al Harthi said.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Relief Campaign has received over \$60 million in donations to date. The campaign has also launched an aid convoy consisting of more than 70 trucks carrying 770 tons of basic necessities.

SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

King Abdullah receives telephone call from President Obama

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz received two separate telephone calls from U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on January 23.

During the conversations recent developments in the Middle East were discussed, as well as the mutual desire to enhance bilateral relations.

King Abdullah stressed the injustice of Israel's collective punishment of the Palestinians people in disregard of humanitarian values and international resolutions.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi economy is resilient in the face of global turmoil

During a three-day international conference inaugurated in Riyadh on January 25, Saudi officials offered assurances that the Saudi economy remains strong despite global economic turmoil.

During his remarks at the Third Global Competitiveness Forum, Minister of Rural and Municipal Affairs Prince Mitab bin Abdulaziz noted that Saudi Arabia continues to adopt the economic policies necessary to grow its economy. The government is spending money on basic services and projects to enhance productive capacity, he said. It is estimated that investment by the government and the oil sector will exceed \$400 billion in the coming five years.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) Prince Saud bin Thenayan Al-Saud affirmed that the Kingdom offers advantages to foreign investors seeking refuge from the global economic crisis. "This does not mean that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not been affected, as the Kingdom is part of the world; but the damage has been relatively less," he said. Prince Saud noted that SABIC has been less affected than other major corporations by the financial crisis because of its diverse investments.

Minister of Finance Dr. Ibrahim Al-Assaf noted, "When we look at countries of the world and compare the Kingdom's economy with the economies of these countries, we find ourselves among the best countries in the world with regard to the general budget of the state and the large reserves that support economic growth."

