



MAY 12, 2009

FOREIGN RELATIONS

GCC leaders gather in Riyadh for consultations

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz hosted the 11th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Consultative Summit in Riyadh March 5. The gathering was attended by top GCC officials, including Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Salman al-Khalifa, Omani Deputy Prime Minister Fahd al-Saeed, U.A.E. Vice-President Sheikh Mohammed Al-Makhtoum, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Sabah, and Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani. Political, security and economic issues were reviewed.

At a press conference, GCC Secretary General Abdulrahman Al-Attiyah announced that Riyadh has been chosen as the headquarters for the new GCC Monetary Council. Addressing the impact of the global financial crisis on GCC countries, Al-Attiyah stated, "The economies of our countries are immune as certain measures have been taken by the GCC states, contributing to alleviating the repercussions of this crisis."

Arab Health Ministers meet in Riyadh to discuss swine flu

The Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Health Ministers held an extraordinary session in Riyadh May 5 to discuss the swine flu outbreak. Addressing the gathering, Saudi Health Minister Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah reported that Saudi Arabia has taken precautionary measures to confront the disease. An integrated national plan has been formulated, based on the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Executive Bureau issued the "Riyadh Declaration" in which the ministers stressed the importance of integrating Arab efforts to confront swine flu.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

Foreign Minister receives delegation of U.S. mayors

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal received a delegation of U.S. mayors in the Riyadh on May 10. The delegation, led by Mayor Phil Gordon of Phoenix, includes the mayors of ten U.S. cities. Prince Saud and the American officials discussed ways of strengthening Saudi-U.S. cooperation. The trip was organized by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington in cooperation with the U.S.

Conference of Mayors. The purpose of the visit is to strengthen Saudi-U.S. economic ties and to help American leaders better understand the politics and culture of a key ally in the Middle East.

Saudi official hosts meeting of Energy City Mayors in Houston

Jamal Al-Mulhim, the Under Secretary for Reconstruction and Projects of Eastern Province, convened a two-day meeting in Houston beginning May 5 that brought together the mayors of 14 "energy cities" around the world. The primary goal of the gathering was to promote the exchange of experience and information on energy-related fields. Among the cities represented at the meeting were Houston, Aberdeen, Calgary, Halifax, Perth, Malabo, Port Harcourt, San Fernando and Luanda.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia donates \$25 million to rebuild Nahr Al-Bared refugee camp

The Saudi Development Fund (SDF) signed an agreement in Amman May 6 with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to finance the rebuilding of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon. The SDF will provide a total of \$25 million to the agency. "The contribution of the Saudi Fund will complete financing for the reconstruction of the infrastructure and the housing units...thus enabling around 500 displaced families to return to their newly-reconstructed houses and businesses in the camp..." a statement from UNRWA said. The Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, home to 27,000 Palestinians, was destroyed in the summer of 2007 during fighting between the Lebanese Army and Palestinian militants.

CULTURE

Kingdom donates \$3 million to World Scout Foundation

Saudi Minister of Education and President of the Saudi Arabian Boy Scouts Association, Prince Faisal bin Mohammed, delivered a \$3 million donation to King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, Honorary Chairman of the World Scout Foundation, at a May 8 ceremony in Boston, Massachusetts. The donation will support the Gifts for Peace program, an initiative created in November 2001 under the patronage of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. The initiative is the World Scout Foundation's key centennial program for all Scouts to tackle local issues and make a difference in their communities. It includes Scouts from more than 100 countries. This latest donation brought the Kingdom's total contribution to Gifts for Peace to approximately \$7 million.

