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FOREIGN RELATIONS

Saudi King and Indian PM issue Riyadh Declaration

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh held official talks at the King's Palace in Riyadh on February 28. Afterwards, the two leaders issued the Riyadh Declaration, entitled "A New Era of Strategic Partnership," in which they heralded "the steady expansion of Saudi-India relations." They noted their intention to increase the current level of bilateral cooperation to a "strategic partnership covering security, economic, defense and political areas."

On the topic of terrorism, they declared that tolerance, religious harmony and brotherhood, irrespective of faith or ethnic background, are part of the basic values of both countries. They renewed their condemnation of terrorism, extremism and violence, affirming that they pose a global threat and are not linked to any race, color or belief. The two sides advocated interfaith dialogue and agreed to enhance cooperation in the exchange of information relating to terrorist activities, money laundering, and narcotics and arms and human trafficking.

Crown Prince and Yemeni PM reaffirm bilateral ties

Crown Prince Sultan and Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Mujawar chaired the 19th session of the Saudi-Yemeni Coordination Council held in Riyadh on February 27. The Crown Prince reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to assisting Yemen's development process and mobilizing international support for it. Crown Prince Saudi are bound by the "ties of faith, neighborhood, kinship and common destiny" and said that both countries must work together to achieve a comprehensive security along their common border. King Abdullah, the Crown Prince added, wished that "all powers be directed to building schools, institutes and hospitals to improve education, health and living standards of the citizens of both countries." Crown Prince Sultan stressed that King Abdullah made it clear that there is no room for complacency with whoever intends to tamper with the security and stability of the Kingdom.

Kingdom funds \$114.8 million in Yemeni development projects

The 19th session of the Saudi-Yemeni Coordination Council concluded on March 1 in Riyadh with the signing of a number of bilateral agreements. Minister of

Finance and Chairman of the Saudi Development Fund (SDF) Ibrahim Al-Assaf and Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdul Kareem bin Ismail Al-Arhabi signed four agreements providing financial aid for Yemen. The grants include \$40 million for water and drainage projects for urban areas; \$50 million for financing the 5th Energy Project; \$20 million for the Hudeidah Central Hospital; and \$4.8 million for equipping workshops and laboratories for the faculties of engineering and education at Taiz University.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

U.S. administration praises Saudi intellectual property protection

The White House announced on February 25 its decision to eliminate Saudi Arabia from a watch list of countries that do not adequately protect intellectual property rights. In a statement, United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk explained that the Kingdom was removed from the Special 301 Watch List after it made "significant progress in improving protection for intellectual property rights during the past year." He added, "Over the last several years, Saudi Arabia has stepped up its enforcement actions, strengthened its legal framework, and demonstrated a commitment to fostering innovation and creativity . . . This is a credit to the hard work done by Saudi Arabia, as well as to our close bilateral cooperation." Commenting on the decision, Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah bin Ahmed Zainal said that it confirms the progress achieved by the Kingdom over the past 12 months in promoting the protection of copyrights. He attributed the achievement to the continuous instruction given by King Abdullah to governmental bodies in Saudi Arabia to provide the greatest possible protection to intellectual property rights.

FOREIGN AID

IDB extends \$5 million for Haitian school reconstruction

Dr. Ahmad Mohammed Ali, President of the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB), has announced that his institution will extend \$5 million in aid for the reconstruction of Haitian educational facilities. Hundreds of schools were destroyed earlier this year by a massive earthquake that devastated the island nation.

