



OCTOBER 6, 2009

SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

King Abdullah receives telephone call from President Obama

King Abdullah received a telephone call from President Barack Obama on September 29, during which the leaders discussed bilateral relations and regional and international developments. President Obama also congratulated the Saudi monarch on the opening of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), describing it as one of the edifices of knowledge in the world.

GAO commends Saudi efforts to fight terrorism and terror financing

In a new report assessing the Kingdom's anti-terror efforts, the United States' Government Accountability Office (GAO) finds that Saudi actions have "disrupted Al-Qaeda's terrorist network within Saudi Arabia." Furthermore, progress toward the "goal of building an active U.S.-Saudi antiterrorist coalition" is "on target."

According to the GAO, "Between 2003 and 2008, U.S. and Saudi officials report the Saudi government arrested or killed thousands of terrorism suspects." Those officials, it adds, "also report progress on efforts to prevent financial support to extremists, citing, for example, the Saudi government's regulations on sending charitable contributions overseas, and the arrest and prosecution of individuals providing support to terrorism."

The GAO report commends Saudi government and religious leaders for issuing strong condemnations against terrorism and implementing extensive media campaigns against extremist thought. It also praises the 2005 establishment of the Saudi Financial Investigation Unit, which monitors suspicious transactions in an attempt to thwart terrorist-financing.

The report concludes by reiterating its strong support for Saudi efforts, stating, "Saudi Arabia is pursuing terrorism financiers and cooperating with the United States to counter terrorism-financing. . . . Since 2005, several targets to assess progress of the U.S. government's counterterrorism and antiterrorism financing collaboration with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been met."

Ambassador Al-Jubeir hosts National Day reception

Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted a reception at the Embassy in Washington on September 30 in honor of Saudi Arabia's National Day. The event gave guests the opportunity to experience Saudi food and culture. Saudi students in traditional dress were on hand to answer questions and share information.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Interfaith conference held in Geneva

Under the patronage of Swiss President Hans-Rudolf Merz, an international conference began September 30 in Geneva within the framework of the "Initiative for Interfaith Dialogue" launched by King Abdullah. Organized by the Makkah-based Muslim World League (MWL), the two-day event brought together representatives from religions and cultures around the world. King Abdullah previously sponsored the International Islamic Conference for Dialogue, held in Makkah in June 2008, and the World Conference on Dialogue, held in Madrid in July 2008. The recommendations of those summits were presented in November 2008 at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue in New York.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Red Crescent delivers thirty ambulances to Darfur

Thirty ambulances provided by the Saudi Red Crescent Society (SRCA) were delivered to Darfur on October 5 as part of the Kingdom's effort to strengthen healthcare services in the Western region of Sudan. The Executive Director of Relief Work in Sudan, Dr. Alian Al-Jabri, reported that upon arrival, the ambulances immediately went into service. The Kingdom is implementing an aid project in Darfur that will eventually establish twenty-one health centers, twenty-one integrated water stations and a number of food security programs.

Saudi relief plane leaves for Indonesia

A Saudi relief plane left Jeddah on October 5 for Jakarta carrying emergency humanitarian aid to the victims of the earthquake in Indonesia. The assistance is in line with the directives of King Abdullah to provide relief aid for the victims of the natural disaster.

