

# SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

FEBRUARY 2017

## SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

### King Salman Receives Phone Call from U.S. Secretary of State

On Feb. 10, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz received a phone call from U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

King Salman congratulated the secretary on his recent appointment, and Sec. Tillerson commended the leadership of Saudi Arabia in working for stability and peace both in the region and around the world, stressing that it is important for the United States and Saudi Arabia to work together. Toward this end, it is critical to strengthen the military relationship, economic ties and cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

### Foreign Minister Underscores Strength of Saudi-U.S. Partnership

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir said that the U.S.-Saudi partnership is certain to strengthen in the future.

— Read more on page 2

## COUNTERTERRORISM

### Saudi Crown Prince Honored by U.S. for Counterterrorism Efforts

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, was honored with the Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal in recognition of his relentless counterterrorism efforts and commitment to international peace.

— Read more on page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- King Salman Receives Phone Call from U.S. Secretary of State . . . 1
- Foreign Minister Underscores Strength of Saudi-U.S. Partnership . . . 2
- Saudi Crown Prince Honored by U.S. for Counterterrorism Efforts . . . 2
- Security Forces Dismantle Four Daesh Cells . . . 3
- Saudi Security Reports on Successful 2016 Counterterrorism Efforts . . . 3
- Safeguarding Civilians in Yemen Remains Foremost Priority . . . 3
- UNSG: Saudi a 'Pillar of Stability' in Region . . . 4
- World Economic Forum Panel on Vision 2030 . . . 4

### NOTABLE QUOTE

*"We are surrounded by areas of conflict, and we were the first [nation] affected by terrorism from various sources, but we are equipped to combat terror in any place and under any circumstances."*

*Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior  
Feb. 10, 2017*

SAUDI ARABIA  
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SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

## Foreign Minister Underscores Strength of Saudi-U.S. Partnership

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir said that the U.S.-Saudi partnership is certain to strengthen in the future.

"The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have had a historic strategic partnership, if not alliance, since World War II; that relationship continues," said Minister Al-Jubeir, adding that the two countries have had extraordinarily strong people-to-people relations, which are also expected to continue in the years to come. "Our interests are aligned when it comes to the issues of the region," he stressed.

At a separate press conference in Riyadh on Jan. 24, Minister Al-Jubeir reiterated the importance of maintaining multi-faceted Saudi-U.S. cooperation, and

stated that Saudi Arabia looks forward to working closely with the new U.S. administration led by President Donald Trump.

"We are very, very optimistic about the Trump administration. And on working closely with it to deal with the many challenges, not only in our region, but in the world," he said.

In an address to the Munich Security Conference on Feb. 19, Minister Al-Jubeir said Saudi Arabia was optimistic about working with the U.S. administration. "We expect to see America engaged in the world. And we expect to see a realistic American foreign policy, and we look forward to working with this administration very, very closely," he stated.

COUNTERTERRORISM

## Saudi Crown Prince Honored by U.S. for Counterterrorism Efforts

Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, was honored with the Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal in recognition of his relentless counterterrorism efforts and commitment to international peace.

The medal was presented to Prince Mohammad by CIA Director Mike Pompeo at a reception following their meeting in Riyadh on Feb. 10.

Prince Mohammad stressed that the medal reflected the commitment, hard work and policies of the leaders of Saudi Arabia, led by King Salman and the Saudi security forces, and cooperation by the entire Saudi community.

The Crown Prince emphasized that the fight against terrorism is a shared international obligation requiring global cooperation efforts at all levels, including "in security, intellectually, in the media and militarily." He also emphasized that terrorism "has no identity and no religion," noting that groups that exploit groups as a pretext for violence and extremism have no legitimate relationship with the religion to which they seek to associate themselves.

In response to a question on Saudi-U.S. relations, Prince Mohammad said that attempts to drive a wedge between the two countries will fail. "Our relationship with the United States is historical and will continue to succeed," he said.

## Security Forces Dismantle Four Daesh Cells

In a successful counterinsurgency operation, the Ministry of Interior announced on Feb. 16 that four Daesh (ISIS) cells were dismantled and 18 terrorists were arrested.

According to Ministry Spokesperson Maj. Gen. Mansour Al-Turki, 15 of those arrested were Saudi nationals, two were from Yemen and one was from Sudan. All arrested were involved with varying aspects of Daesh operations, including the provision

of financial and logistical support, offering shelter, and assisting with recruitment, training and the development of explosive devices for known operatives who have launched attacks in Saudi Arabia.

Gen. Al-Turki stated that the operation underscored Saudi Arabia's forceful and decisive counterterrorism efforts and the ministry's commitment to bringing to justice any individual involved in extremist activity.

## Saudi Security Reports on Successful 2016 Counterterrorism Efforts

In January, Saudi security officials released data from 2016 on its efforts to combat terrorism in the country.

Saudi forces conducted eight operations that "foiled serious terrorist attacks." The outcomes of the operations included the protection of one million Muslims at the Prophet's Mosque, 60,000 spectators at the al-Jawhara Stadium in Jeddah and 400 civilians at al-Seef Restaurant and Café in Tarot.

The year also witnessed 190 arrests of Daesh-affiliated terrorists and the tactical prevention of a total of seven suicide attacks targeting mosques in the Eastern province.

In 2016, Saudi Arabia faced 34 domestic attacks from a number of extremist groups.

### REGIONAL SECURITY

## Safeguarding Civilians in Yemen Remains Foremost Priority

The Saudi-led Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen issued a statement on Feb. 13 restating its commitment to protecting civilians in Yemen and underscoring steps the alliance has taken to avoid casualties in the war zone.

Among the steps taken, the Coalition has launched an independent assessment team, fostered active partnerships with relief organizations and focused on safeguarding the country's urban centers to protect civilians and uphold international law.

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT),

established by the Coalition, is made up of military members, weapons experts and legal specialists. The group, which operates independently, reviews reports of Coalition activities that have led to civilian casualties and offers recommendations to improve operations to avoid future incidents.

Additionally, the Coalition has adopted the policy to issue repeated warning to Houthi militias and Ali Abdullah Saleh forces to evacuate cities prior to a Coalition air strike. The Coalition has also heightened its emphasis on safeguarding critical infrastructure and, as a result, civilian lives in Yemen's urban centers.

— Continued on page 4

**SAUDI ARABIA**  
**IN FOCUS**

The Coalition takes a collaborative approach by actively working alongside United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross to

minimize the possibility of harm to civilians, medical personnel, journalists and relief organizations.

### UNSG: Saudi a 'Pillar of Stability' in Region

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that Saudi Arabia was a "pillar of stability in the region" at a press conference in Riyadh, where he spoke alongside Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir.

is key in the fight against terrorism."

"Saudi's stability is a model for the pursuit of growth and change," Guterres said, also stressing that "cooperation between the United Nations and Saudi Arabia

Minister Al-Jubeir and Secretary General Guterres reported that they had critical and constructive discussions on possible political solutions for Yemen and Libya. Guterres expressed appreciation for the hospitality he received in Saudi Arabia and the substantive dialogue that resulted from the meetings.

**VISION 2030**

### World Economic Forum Panel on Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan commanded the attention of the World Economic Forum in January during a panel on the ongoing reforms and transformation of the country's economy and society.

reckoned with, along with encouraging our women and investing in them as they increasingly join the workforce," he said.

The session was hosted by Managing Director of the World Economic Forum Philipp Rosler and featured Saudi Arabia's ministers of energy, finance and commerce along with the BlackRock CEO Laurence D. Fink and Dow Chemical's CEO, Andrew N. Liveris.

Finance Minister Al-Jadaan said Saudi Arabia is committed to becoming more accountable and transparent as it moves to diversify and privatize many of its sectors, stating that there are "orders from our leadership to hold each ministry to its goals and cutting down on bureaucracy."

Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid Al-Falih characterized investment and privatization as key to the vision in moving the country forward.

Mr. Liveris drew on his 15 years of visiting the country. "I can confirm that Saudi Arabia has full transparency, as much as compared with our experience in the United States. This is especially apparent when we have multi-billion dollar dealings with the country," he stated.

"Two key parts toward that are our young population, who are ready to turn into a workforce to be



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# SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

MARCH 2017

## SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

### U.S. Visit of Deputy Crown Prince Focuses on Security, Economics

In his first visit to the United States under the new administration, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, met with President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to discuss the longstanding and strategic Saudi-U.S. relationship.

"I would like to commend again the historical and strategic relations between our two countries witnessing further development in all fields," stated Prince Mohammed in a cable to President Trump upon his departure on March 17.

Following the March 14 White House meeting, the White House reaffirmed the importance of the relationship, characterizing it as "strong, broad and enduring."



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- U.S. Visit of Deputy Crown Prince Focuses on Security, Economics 1
- Foreign Minister Expresses Confidence in Administration in Interview with Fox News 2
- Energy Minister: Saudi-US Relations Are in Alignment 2
- Saudi Arabia Participates in Counter Daesh Coalition Meeting 2
- Saudi Arabia Supports America's Tough Stance on Terrorism, Iran 3
- Saudi U.N. Delegation Hosts Yemen Coalition Experts 3
- Saudi Arabia Leads Efforts to Support Yemen's Health Sector 3
- Saudi Women Are Redefining Their Roles 4

### NOTABLE QUOTE

*"I believe that no two countries are working as closely in fighting terrorism, and in particular ISIS, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This has been the case for a number of years. We are intensifying our efforts."*

- Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, March 23, 2017

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SAUDI-US RELATIONS

## Foreign Minister Expresses Confidence in Administration in Interview with Fox News

On March 23, Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir held an exclusive interview with James Rosen of Fox News.

In response to questions about President Trump, Minister Al-Jubeir remarked, "I believe that he has vision. I believe that he understands the importance of having America playing a big role in the world. We support that."

Minister Al-Jubeir also commented on the state of security in the Middle East, emphasizing that Iran has

intensified its covert actions and military activities in the Middle East following the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"I believe they [administration] will be less forgiving of Iran's violations of the missile accords, its threats to maritime security in the Bab el-Mandab area, and in the Strait of Hormuz. I believe they will be very strict in enforcing the nuclear agreement to the letter," he said.

## Energy Minister: Saudi-US Relations Are in Alignment

In an interview with Bloomberg's Kathleen Hays on March 16, Energy Minister Khaled Al-Falih commented on the Saudi-US relationship following the meeting with Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed and President Trump. Minister Al-Falih was part of the official delegation.

"The visit gives us a chance to refresh, renew and revive that relationship and take it to a higher level, which has been achieved by near-perfect alignment

on geopolitical, security as well as economic points of views," said Minister Al-Falih. "That has been strengthened even further by the great rapport and bonding that was created between President Trump and HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman as well as between the ministers and the delegations on both sides as we establish channels of communication, cooperation and driving the issues that are important for our two countries."

COUNTERTERRORISM

## Saudi Arabia Participates in Counter Daesh Coalition Meeting

Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir participated in a ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition Against Daesh (ISIS) in Washington on March 22, once again emphasizing Saudi Arabia's commitment to standing with its international partners against terrorism across the world. Saudi Arabia was one of the founding members of the coalition.

Minister Al-Jubeir held a separate meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson the day after the meeting took place.

"I believe that no two countries are working as closely in fighting terrorism, and in particular ISIS, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This has been the case for a number of years. We are intensifying our efforts," Minister Al-Jubeir told reporters.

The conference, he stated, "was huge success and reinforced the determination of the civilized world to take on this evil and to defeat it."

## Saudi Arabia Supports America's Tough Stance on Terrorism, Iran

In an op-ed on FoxNews.com on March 26, Adviser to the Saudi Defense Minister and Spokesman for the Saudi-led Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen Brigadier General Ahmed Asseri asserted Saudi Arabia's commitment to supporting America's tough stance against Daesh, terrorism and Iran.

"While the US-Saudi partnership is time-tested, reaffirming this relationship is a matter of strategy, not sentiment," wrote Gen. Asseri.

Gen. Asseri emphasized that the Saudi-U.S. partnership is indispensable as the Kingdom confronts a host of

challenges in the region, including putting an end to Iranian interference in Yemen, cutting off terrorist financing, combating extremism, and promoting maritime security.

"We stand shoulder-to-shoulder for a secure and stable Middle East in a peaceful and prosperous world," he concluded.

Gen. Asseri also highlighted the efforts the Kingdom is taking in mobilizing the Muslim world against terrorism and extremism, describing the 41-nation Islamic Coalition created under Saudi leadership.

### REGIONAL SECURITY

## Saudi U.N. Delegation Hosts Yemen Coalition Experts

Saudi Arabia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York convened a series of meetings from Feb. 27 to March 2 with military leaders, relief organizations and U.N. organizations to promote the security and stability of Yemen.

A delegation of military leaders from the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, headed by Saudi

Major General Misfer Al-Ghanem, met with John Ging, operations director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Representatives of UNICEF, the UN Environment Program, the UN Population Fund, the UN Department of Safety and Security, the World Bank and the World Food Program (WFP) were also in attendance at the meetings.

### HUMANITARIAN AID

## Saudi Arabia Leads Efforts to Support Yemen's Health Sector

The Riyadh-based King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief) is leading international efforts to rehabilitate the health sector in Yemen and provide life-saving care to injured and ill Yemenis.

The health system in the country has been nearly destroyed since the Houthi militias and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh usurped power in 2014.

KSRelief - established in May 2015 - has carried out more than 50 projects in health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation in Yemen, valued at more than \$208 million and benefiting 24.5 million Yemeni citizens. The organization also treats the injured in Yemen by providing medical services and treatment devices.

— Continued on page 4



## IN FOCUS

KSRelief has partnered with the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to train 3,153 health workers to manage acute malnutrition and opened 854 centers for a therapeutic nutrition program. KSRelief mobile health teams have treated over a quarter of a million children suffering from acute malnutrition in Yemen and has provided immunization and postnatal care to over 1.2 million children through the country.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), KSRelief has also provided basic services, including diabetes and cancer treatment, and supported the operation of emergency rooms by providing hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel to 88 hospitals and 19 health facilities throughout the country.

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### Saudi Women Are Redefining Their Roles

On March 8, a group of Saudi women marked International Women's Day by unveiling a campaign to highlight the changing role and economic potential of women in the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia is in the midst of a great transformation. Government reforms are diversifying the economy, revitalizing the cultural scene and modernizing the educational system. Saudi women are in the vanguard of this transformation.

"It is the right time...we are more aware of the importance of women's participation in jobs, in

different sectors," Princess Lamia bin Majed Al Saud, secretary general of Alwaleed Philanthropies, told Thomson Reuters Foundation. Alwaleed Philanthropies is a charity that supports programs and policies to empower women.

She added, "Women have achieved a lot in our country and we are very proud of this, achievements the outside community does not know about. Like any other country we have obstacles, we acknowledge that...but we are doing our best to make it better."



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**Saudi Arabia Dismantles Four Daesh Cells**

WASHINGTON [Feb. 16, 2017]—Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior announced today a successful counterinsurgency operation that led to the dismantling of four Daesh (ISIS) cells and subsequent arrest of 18 suspected terrorists.

According to Ministry Spokesperson Maj. Gen. Mansour Al-Turki, 15 of those arrested were Saudi nationals, two were from Yemen and one was from Sudan. Gen. Al-Turki said that all arrested were involved with different aspects of Daesh operations, including providing financial and logistical support, offering shelter, and assisting with recruitment, training and the development of explosive devices for Daesh operatives known to have launched attacks in Saudi Arabia.

The operation was carried out over a five-day period. Arrests were made in Qassim, Makkah, Madinah and Riyadh provinces. Security forces seized automatic weapons and two million Saudi riyals in cash (\$533,000) during the raid.

Gen. Al-Turki said the security operation underscored the Kingdom's forceful and decisive counterterrorism efforts and his ministry's commitment to bring to justice anyone involved in extremist activity.

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**CONTACT:**

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**U.S. Honors Saudi Crown Prince for Counterterrorism Efforts**

WASHINGTON [Feb. 11, 2017] – Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, was awarded the Central Intelligence Agency's George Tenet Medal for his relentless counterterrorism efforts and commitment to international peace. The medal was presented to him by the CIA Director Mike Pompeo at a reception following their meeting in Riyadh on Friday.

In expressing his appreciation for the honor, Prince Mohammad stressed that the medal is a symbol of the commitment, hard work and policies of the leaders of Saudi Arabia, led by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the Saudi security forces, and cooperation by the entire community.

"We, God willing, continue to confront terrorism and extremism everywhere, and with thanks to God we have managed to thwart many terrorist plots," he said. "We are surrounded by areas of conflict, and we were the first [nation] affected by terrorism from various sources, but we are equipped to combat terror in any place and under any circumstances."

Prince Mohammad also stressed that the fight against terrorism is a shared international responsibility.

"Combating terrorism is an international obligation that requires global cooperation in efforts, at all levels, to confront it, in security, intellectually, in the media and militarily, remembering that such a cooperation shall be in accordance with the rules of international law and the founding principles of the UN, the first of which is equality of sovereignty," he said. Prince Mohammad said that "terrorism has no identity and no religion," noting that religious, political and social groups that exploit faith as a pretext for extremism and violence have no legitimate relationship with the teachings of the religion, with which they seek to associate themselves.

In response to a question on Saudi-U.S. relations, Prince Mohammad reiterated the long-standing Saudi view that the strong ties between the two countries have great strategic value and constitute a force for peace and stability in the world. He said that attempts to drive a wedge between the two countries will fail.

"Our relationship with the United States is historical and will continue to succeed," he said.

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**CONTACT:**

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**Security, Fighting Terrorism Covered in Depth During U.S. Visit  
of Saudi Deputy Crown Prince**

WASHINGTON [March 17, 2017] – The security of the United States, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, and cooperation against terrorism, were discussed in depth during the Washington visit of Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.

Prince Mohammed returned to Saudi Arabia today.

“I would like to commend again the historical and strategic relations between our two countries witnessing further development in all fields,” stated Prince Mohammed in a cable to President Donald Trump upon his departure.

Prince Mohammed met with President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence at the White House on Tuesday. During the meeting, they reaffirmed the importance of the Saudi-U.S. strategic partnership, which the White House termed “strong, broad, and enduring.”

The leaders stressed their determination to strengthen their cooperation in the economic, commercial, investment, and energy fields.

On March 16, Prince Mohammed met with Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis at the Pentagon to review progress in the bilateral defense relationship, including the two nations’ efforts to confront the most pressing security challenges to the region, such as Iran’s destabilizing regional activities and the ongoing campaign to defeat Daesh (ISIS) and other terrorist organizations.

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**Saudi Foreign Minister: Iran Is the Biggest State Sponsor of Terrorism**

WASHINGTON [Feb. 19, 2017] – Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir said that Iran was the “biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world.” He made the remarks today in an address before the Munich Security Conference. Minister Al-Jubeir cited several covert, political and military actions carried out by Iran to buttress his argument.

He also outlined the Kingdom’s view of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the crises in Syria and Yemen and said Saudi Arabia was optimistic about working with the U.S. administration to resolve many of the crises in the region today.

“One of the biggest factors I think that will help to resolve many of these challenges is the new American administration,” said Minister Al-Jubeir. “We expect to see America engaged in the world. And we expect to see a realistic American foreign policy, and we look forward to working with this administration very, very closely.”

Minister Al-Jubeir said that Iran is a destabilizing force in the region and “remains the biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world.” He said, “The Iranians do not believe in the principle of good neighborliness or non-interference in the affairs of others. This is manifested in their interference in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan.”

The foreign minister noted that Iran was the only country in the region that has not been attacked by either Al-Qaeda or Daesh.

“We look at the region and we see terrorism and we see a state sponsor of terrorism that is determined to upend the order in the Middle East,” he said. “The Iranians are the only country in the region that has not been attacked by either Daesh or Al-Qaeda. And this begs the question why? If Daesh and Al-Qaeda are extremist Sunni organizations, you would think they would be attacking Iran, a Shiite state. But they have not. Could it be that there’s a deal between them that prevents them or causes them not to attack the Iranians? This is a question that we keep asking ourselves.”

Minister Al-Jubeir said Saudi Arabia is hopeful that Iran will change, but that Iran ultimately will be judged by its actions, not its words.

“When the Iranians send weapons in violation of UN Security Council resolutions to the Houthis in Yemen, that’s an action,” he said. “When the Iranians send Shiite militias to fight in support of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, that’s action. When the Iranians plant terror cells in Bahrain and in Saudi Arabia and in other places, that’s action. The action is more important than the words.”

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**Saudi Foreign Minister: The Multi-Faceted U.S.-Saudi Relationship Remains Strong**

WASHINGTON [Jan. 24, 2017] – During a news conference in Riyadh today, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir reiterated the importance of the multi-faceted U.S.-Saudi relationship. Minister Al-Jubeir discussed the long-standing ties between Saudi Arabia and the United States in the fields of international security and counterterrorism, economics and investment, and people-to-people cultural exchanges.

Minister Al-Jubeir stated that Saudi Arabia looks forward to working with the new U.S. administration led by President Donald Trump. He explained that the Kingdom is largely in accord with President Trump's stated policies, including containing Iran, defeating extremists such as Daesh (ISIS) and restoring the U.S. presence in the world.

"We are very, very optimistic about the Trump administration. And on working closely with it to deal with the many challenges, not only in our region, but in the world," said Minister Al-Jubeir.

VIDEO: <http://bit.ly/2j2jRB8>

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**CONTACT:**

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**Strengthening U.S. Ties, Holding Iran to Account Are Among Priorities for Saudi Arabia,  
Says Foreign Minister**

WASHINGTON [Jan. 18, 2017] – Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir underscored the strength of Saudi-US relations, addressing continued and expanded areas of cooperation.

“The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have had a historic strategic partnership, if not alliance, since World War II; that relationship continues. We expect it to broaden and deepen and grow stronger. Our interests are aligned when it comes to the issues of the region,” said Minister Al-Jubeir. “We have very, very strong people-to-people relationships with the U.S., and I expect that this will continue.”

Minister Al-Jubeir said that Iran must be held accountable for its support of terrorism, violation of ballistic missile arrangements and for its interference in the affairs of the countries in the region. “Iran has been single-handedly the most important supporter of terrorism in the region. Iran has supported, created and supported Hezbollah. Iran has harbored terrorists,” said the foreign minister. “Virtually every country in the world has been attacked by Al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS) except Iran. Why?”

On the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Minister Al-Jubeir stressed that the Arab Peace Initiative remains on the table. “Our hope is that there will be enough courage and enough political will on both sides to be able to move to settling this longest conflict in our region,” he said.

In response to a question about the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), Minister Al-Jubeir noted the legislation has undercut the foundation of sovereign immunity, turning “the international order into the law of the jungle.”

“Our hope is that wisdom will prevail and the Congress will do the right thing and make the adjustments,” the foreign minister added. “The country that has the most to lose from dilution of sovereign immunities is the United States itself. And American officials know this. Because America has the largest footprint in the world, they operate all over the world. They’re fighting wars all over the world. They provide weapons to countries all over the world. If that principle is eroded, then the US could be sued in virtually every country in the world.”

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**Saudi-Led Coalition in Yemen: Safeguarding Civilians Remains Foremost Priority**

WASHINGTON [Feb. 13, 2017]—In a statement issued today, the Saudi-led Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen restated its commitment to protecting civilians in Yemen and underscored the steps the alliance has taken to avoid casualties in an ongoing war zone. Among those steps, the Coalition has launched an independent assessment team, fostered active partnerships with relief organizations and focused on safeguarding Yemen's urban centers as part of a concerted effort to protect civilians and uphold international humanitarian law.

The Coalition's Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) is composed of military members, weapons experts and legal specialists in humanitarian rights. The independent group reviews reports of Coalition activities that are known to have led to civilian casualties, and offers recommendations for ways to avoid future incidents.

Among the instituted mechanisms, the Coalition said that it has adopted—and has been following—the policy to issue repeated warnings to Houthi militias and Ali Abdullah Saleh forces so that they can evacuate cities prior to a Coalition air strike. The Coalition also has heightened its emphasis on safeguarding critical infrastructure and, as a result, civilian lives in Yemen's urban centers.

The Coalition said that it works alongside United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross as part of a collaborative approach to minimize the possibility of harm to civilians, medical personnel, journalists and relief organizations.

The Coalition cited an August 2016 United Nations report that accused Houthi militias and coup forces of consistently violating the Geneva Convention by using civilians as human shields. Moreover, the Coalition stated that rebel forces use child soldiers and use revenge killings and illegal detentions to terrorize Yemen's population.

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