

WEEK OF MARCH 4, 2002

**CROWN PRINCE ABDALLAH'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER
ANSWERS QUESTIONS**

TRACKING VICE-PRESIDENT CHENEY'S VISIT TO THE MIDEAST:
SAUDI CROWN PRINCE ABDALLAH'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER ANSWERS QUESTIONS

By

John Duke Anthony

(Washington, D.C. - March 10, 2002) U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney left today on the first leg of visits to some ten Middle Eastern countries over the next eight days. His journey comes at an important juncture in the relationship between the United States and key American allies in the region.

Among the issues of greatest focus to the host nations at this time are the following: the continuing war in Afghanistan and developments in Pakistan as well as India; the extraordinary escalation in the levels of violence between Israelis and Palestinians; the implications of Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdallah's recent proposal that Arab countries normalize relations with Israel in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from all Palestinian and Syrian lands occupied as a result of the June 1967 war; differing views on the merits of what former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered and did not offer the Palestinians at the abortive Camp David conference in July 2000; the feasibility or lack thereof of Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon's demands of Palestinians as a pre-condition to his government's resuming formal peace talks with Palestine Authority leader Yasser Arafat; the continuing call by Palestinians and their supporters for monitors placed on both sides of the fighting; and the adequacy and/or inadequacy of the Bush Administration's response to the Israeli-Palestinian impasse to date.

Additional topics of interest and at issue that are certain to surface if not also be clarified during the Vice President's visit to Saudi Arabia in particular are: the veracity of reports that either Saudi Arabian or U.S. officials have held discussions on the possibility of American military forces in the Kingdom withdrawing in the foreseeable future; the question of whether the troops stationed there are welcomed; the issue of whether the United States should confront Iraq militarily; the question of whether aspects of the Islamic faith as it is taught to students in Saudi Arabian schools encourages extremism; and the question of whether the Kingdom's leaders perceive the Bush Administration to be at odds with important segments of the American media over what to do with regard to Iraq.

It is rare that questions and issues as numerous, diverse, and relevant to current affairs as these are raised and addressed so forthrightly inside of ten minutes. But sometimes it happens, as it did when Saudi Arabia's Adel

Al-Jubair, Foreign Policy Adviser to Crown Prince Abdallah, was recently the guest on the Fox News show televised nationally on March 3. In its effort to provide documentation on cutting edge issues of the day regarding the region, GulfWire is pleased to provide a summary of the issues discussed. Fox News' interviewer was Tony Snow. The questions he asked are followed by Mr. Al-Jubair's responses.

(1) FOX NEWS: "Daniel Pearl's death [in Pakistan]; any thoughts?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "Horrible. We condemn it. I knew him well and found him to be straightforward, honest, balanced. Taking an innocent life in Islam is as if one took the life of all of humanity. We hope those responsible will be caught and punished";

(2) FOX NEWS: 'The Crown Prince's [peace process] initiative/proposal of ten days ago [summarized]. Your comment?

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "What you said by way of summarizing what the Crown Prince said in his interview with New York Times Reporter Tom Friedman was almost accurate. He also said that Israel must withdraw from Jerusalem, too. What is being proposed is not just peace but normalization, which is beyond peace. It's not a plan. It's a statement of a vision. It's still in the desk drawer of the Crown Prince. The proposal has received overwhelming de facto support from almost all the Arab leaders and from the Arab media as well. Whether the Arab League [Fox News had asked if the League would likely agree] agrees or takes it up is irrelevant in this light. The proposal has also been well-received by Kofi Anan and the United States;

(3) FOX NEWS: "I gather the [former Israeli Prime Minister] Ehud Barak [summer of 2000 Camp David] plan was not all that the Israelis made it out to be."

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "There were three different interpretations of the Plan: the U.S.'s, the Palestinians', and the Israelis' and [fourth] the media's interpretation, too. The Palestinians did not believe it allowed for a viable Palestinian state, with cantons here and there. The Israelis were against that view, believing that it was viable. What you had at the time it was proposed was the involvement of an outgoing U.S. President, and an Israeli Prime Minister running for re-election...;" [Fox News: "...people were moving too quickly..."];

CONTINUED COMMENTARY BY MR. AL-JUBAIR: "The [three-to-seven days'] cooling off period that Sharon demands is not realistic. We need to put monitors on both sides. People's homes are being demolished, their trees destroyed. Palestinian women are having to give birth on the side of the road because they cannot reach health care facilities. And Israelis are suffering, too. Israeli youth cannot go out to a mall, cannot go out for pizza to the pizzerias";

(4) FOX NEWS: "I gather that there is some thought as to whether what the Bush Administration has done is adequate."

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "It is often the case that a big power focuses on only one or two issues at a time. We realize that the United States was

focused on the war against terrorism. We appreciate the statements that Bush made [in October] and the ones that Powell made later in his [November] speech in Kentucky. One always hopes that people can do more, but we should give credit for what has been achieved thus far;"

(5) FOX NEWS: "Has there been talk by either U.S. or Saudi Arabian officials about reducing the roughly 5,000 American troops in the Kingdom?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "Absolutely not,"

(6) FOX NEWS: "Does the Kingdom want the U.S. troops there?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "Yes. The U.S. forces are welcome. They are enforcing UN resolutions towards Iraq. I don't think I could be any clearer than this";

[FOX NEWS: "No, I don't think you could...];

(7) FOX NEWS: "Should the United States confront Iraq militarily?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "No. Iraq is an issue of arms control, not terrorism. Let's not mix apples with oranges. Let's get the UN inspectors back in. Let's not jump to conclusions";

(8) FOX NEWS: [A question about the Kingdom's school system regarding] "What is 'Wahabism's' [sic] impact on Saudi Arabian students in terms of extremism..."

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "None. Islam is peaceful, tolerant, compassionate. It doesn't teach extremism. Usamah bin Laden is as representative of Islam as much as James Jones [the American religious leader who persuaded his followers to drink poisoned Kool-Aid] represents Christianity;"

(9) FOX NEWS: "[Can you say] whether Cheney in his visit is likely to try to seek the Kingdom's support for U.S. policy on Iraq?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "One can be sure that many issues will be discussed: the peace process, Afghanistan, terrorism, Iraq, Iran ...;"

(10) FOX NEWS: "I gather that you think the [Bush] Administration is at odds with much of what has been reported in the [U.S.] media on Iraq?"

MR. AL-JUBAIR'S RESPONSE: "What I mean to say is that the Administration's policy towards Iraq is still being formulated."

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