

Saudi-American Forum



SAF Item of Interest

January 23, 2004

Joint U.S.-Saudi Action Announced to Fight the Financial War on Terror

Editor's Note:

This Saudi-American Forum Item of Interest addresses the announcement made by U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, John Snow, that the United States would work jointly with Saudi Arabia to freeze the assets of four branches of the Al-Haramain charity organization.

The following is a transcript of Mr. Snow's statement as well as the remarks made by Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah. The statements were made on January 22, 2004. Links to related news stories are also included in this item of interest.

Prepared Remarks of Treasury Secretary John Snow to Announce Joint U.S. and Saudi Action Against Four Branches of Al-Haramain in the Financial War on Terror

Thank you very much for being here today.

I am very pleased to announce that the United States and Saudi Arabia have joined together today to take action against four branches of the Al-Haramain organization. Today's designation is another important victory in our ongoing war against the spread of terrorism and terrorist financiers and another demonstration of our partnership in the war against terror.

The four branches of Al-Haramain that we are singling out today have not only supported the plotting of despicable acts of terror, but they have done so by exploiting countless individuals who believed that by supporting Al-Haramain, they were, in fact spreading good will to many in need of a helping hand.

The four branches of Al-Haramain have cloaked themselves in the virtue of charity, only to fund and support terrorist organizations around the world - such as the al-Qaeda network.

These four branches located in Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Pakistan have ignored past orders to cease their operations.

By designating these organizations under the President's Executive Order Number 13224, and joining with Saudi Arabia to call on the United Nations 1267 Sanctions Committee to designate these groups as well, we bring to bear the full weight of the international community.

We will continue to vigilantly work to ensure that these groups will no longer be able to disguise

themselves as legitimate and benevolent organizations in order to undermine peace and freedom.

We know generous givers to charities provide hundreds of millions of dollars to improve the lives of countless people around the world.

We will not interfere with the noble work of legitimate charities.

But donors need to be assured that their contributions are being used for their intended purposes -- and not to fuel the activity of terrorists.

Make no mistake; this administration will continue to take aggressive actions, both domestically and internationally, to ensure that charities are not being abused by terrorists or other criminals.

Just days ago, during the State of the Union address, President Bush stated that our greatest responsibility is the active defense of the American people.

Twenty-eight months have passed since September 11th, 2001 -- over two years without an attack on American soil. As the President said, it is tempting to believe that the danger is behind us. But the terrorists continue to plot against America and the civilized world.

However, we too are on the offensive against the terrorists who started this war. We're tracking al Qaeda around the world, and nearly two-thirds of their known leaders have now been captured or killed.

As part of the Administration's offensive against terror the President mentioned during his national address, the Treasury Department is confronting networks that funnel money to terrorists.

The United States, Saudi Arabia, and our other partners around the globe have spoken out loud and clear – terrorism has no place in a civilized world. We will continue to work with Saudi Arabia and all our allies in the war against terror to seek out those who bankroll terrorist organizations and shut them down.

Thank you very much.

Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury

Statement by Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Crown Prince
[in Washington DC, at the U.S. Department of Treasury press conference where Saudi Arabia and the United States jointly designated four Al-Haramain branches as financiers of terrorism]

Thank you Mr. Secretary.

Today's announcement is an important one, because it represents another victory in the war against terror. It also reflects the extent of the strong cooperation between our two

governments. Both of our countries are targets of Al-Qaeda, and as a consequence both the Saudi and the American people live under the threat of terror attacks. Today we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in this war against evil.

The Kingdom is locked in a mortal combat with a vicious and cruel enemy we are determined to defeat. The objective of Al-Qaeda is to destabilize our country, overthrow the established order, and replace it with a Taliban-like regime that can control the cradle of Islam and a quarter of the world's oil.

But they will not succeed. This is a war that we will not lose. We owe it to our people to rid our country and the world of the scourge of terror. And, with the help of God Almighty, we shall succeed.

We have arrested over 600 terror suspects; many of the top Al-Qaeda leaders in the Kingdom have been killed or captured. And scores of cells and training camps have been uncovered and destroyed before they could do any harm to the innocent.

But this is not enough. We are not only going after the terrorists, but also the money and the mindset that support them or condone their actions, regardless of where they exist.

In addition to the designations we are making today, we have also taken bold steps to change our laws to ensure that no funds intended to help those less fortunate end up in the hands of evildoers. Charity is noble, and a requirement of our faith. And donors must be assured that the money they give to help others is not diverted for evil purposes.

Saudi Arabia is also taking aggressive action to purge extremist thought from our society. Our faith, Islam, is a religion of peace and tolerance and inclusion. King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah have pledged to uproot the sources of extremism wherever they may exist. And with the help of God Almighty, we shall do so.

Today's designations are a visible result of months of hard work by Saudi and U.S. officials from across many departments. They are the result of the close cooperation that exists between our two countries, which – contrary to the pontifications of some observers – has actually been strengthened since September 11. Today, Saudi authorities and their U.S. counterparts work side by side in teams dedicated to fighting terrorism and unraveling the worldwide financial networks that support it. Where we once shared information across oceans, we now share it across a desk. The effectiveness of our cooperative efforts is unprecedented and has led to today's actions. And we expect more to come.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the Bush Administration and the many vigilant members of the Saudi and American law enforcement and intelligence agencies, as well as officials from the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency and the U.S. Treasury Department for their tireless efforts. The sacrifices these brave individuals have made allow us to enjoy the benefits of security and peace.

Related News Stories

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"Treasury Announces Joint Action with Saudi Arabia Against Four Branches of Al-Haramain in the Fight Against Terror Financing," Press Release by the U.S. Department of the Treasury

<http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/js1108.htm>

"Department of the Treasury to Announce Joint Action with Saudi Arabia in the Financial War on Terror," Media Advisory by the U.S. Department of the Treasury

<http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/js1106.htm>

"Saudi Arabia and the United States jointly designate four organizations as financiers of terrorism," Press Release by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, D.C.

<http://www.saudiembassy.net/2004News/Press/PressDetail.asp?cIndex=182>

"U.S. and Saudis Act to Freeze Charity's Assets," by Edmund L. Andrews, *New York Times*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/23/politics/23SAUD.html>

"U.S. freezes Saudi charity assets," by Elise Labott, CNN online

<http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/01/23/saudi.charity.assets/>

"U.S., Saudis seek to freeze assets," by Jeannine Aversa, *The Guardian*, UK

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uslatest/story/0,1282,-3656259,00.html>

"U.S., Saudi Arabia target Muslim charity," by Mark Matthews, *The Baltimore Sun*

<http://www.sunspot.net/news/nationworld/bal-te.saudi23jan23,0,2459549.story>

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