

JORDAN

Rice says Jordan's Security Vital to U.S.

AMMAN (Agencies/Jordan Times) — US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said during her visit to Amman that Washington will oppose any regional development that might endanger Jordanian interests.

“My government views Jordan’s security, prosperity and territorial integrity as vital,” Agence France-Presse quoted Rice as telling a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Farouq Qasrawi before meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah June 19th 2005.

“We will oppose any development in the region that might endanger your interests.”

Rice, who held meetings with Jordanian Foreign Minister Qasrawi and later with His Majesty King Abdullah II, praised Jordan’s reform as a “model” for

the region, particularly regarding the National Agenda.

“We’re very much supportive of Jordan’s economic and political reform,” she said, according to the Associated Press. She pointed to statements by US President George W. Bush, saying he “quite often cites Jordanian political reform.”

“We believe... the political reforms can serve as a model for what can be done in the region.”

The agenda of political and socio-economic reform plans for the next 10 years — expected to be drafted in September — “will strengthen grassroot democracy here in Jordan,” Rice said.

Her talks with King Abdullah focused on Middle East issues and bilateral ties, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Reiterating the importance of the US role in the region, King Abdullah told the secretary of state that her tour shows that Washington was concerned about establishing peace in the Middle East by encouraging the Palestinians and Israelis to resume negotiations.

Both sides agreed that Palestinian Authority should be financially supported to help President Mahmoud Abbas run Palestinian affairs.

The Monarch and Rice, meanwhile, saw eye-to-eye on the need to preserve Iraq’s unity and thwart attempts to destabilise the country.

Their talks also included bilateral relations and means to improve them as well as US assistance to Jordan’s development plans.

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Her Majesty Queen Rania and Media Leaders Reiterate the Need for Strategic Media to Promote Arab Women Issues

“Media can be an instigator of change,” Queen Rania told an audience of regional and international figures and media leaders, including world-renowned US actor, Richard Gere, during the “Women and Media” session of this year’s World Economic Forum (WEF), at the Dead Sea.

Queen Rania added that it is through creative and positive endeavors that the media can influence policies.

The Queen was speaking one day following the kick-off of an Arab Media Network for Human Development, responsible for addressing Arab women’s issues through the media and changing

current stereotypes affecting them, in a more strategic manner.

At the session, Queen Rania said that, in Jordan, numerous efforts and accomplishments have been made with respect to women’s participation in the development process, but change in mindsets should precede any attempt to facilitate change.

The session also included a discussion on issues such as women’s image in the media and ways in which it can better serve as a tool to portray women as leaders, experts and professionals.

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Civic Education Boosts Public Participation in Jordan

AMMAN — Director of International Programs at the US-based Centre for Civic Education (CCE) Richard Nuccio explained that civic education teaches students the skills to monitor the government and help them take part in the decision making process.

“Citizens need a certain skill set to be able to evaluate, analyze and assess what government officials are doing,” Nuccio told *The Jordan Times* on the sidelines of the five-day World Congress on Civic Education, which is to conclude today.

“Civic education prepares students for an active role in the society. When citizens become more aware of avenues for participation, the system works much better and the [government] becomes more accountable.”

He added that the civic education programme in Jordan is “creating a demand for responsiveness on the part of government.”

The Kingdom was the first Arab country to introduce pilot projects in civic education, establishing the Jordanian Centre for Civic Education Studies (JCCES), sparking a movement across the Arab world and leading to the formation of the Arab Civic Education Network, or Arab Civitas. The JCCES helped implement two international civic education curricula in primary and secondary schools.

The “Project Citizen” curriculum, which has also been taught at the University of Jordan, engages students in field activities, through which they learn the methods and

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National Agenda to Embrace Down-to-Earth Feasible Solutions for Kingdom’s Problems

AMMAN — When the Steering Committee for the National Agenda issues its report in September, it will not only clearly state the challenges facing the Kingdom, but also steer the country out of the current bottleneck, a senior official said on June 22.

The committee, whose membership is a combination of public and private sector figures, experts and politicians, is now designing remedial programmes to be implemented in accordance to a fixed timetable and using budget allocations.

Royal Court Minister Marwan Muasher said the National Agenda, unlike previous nationwide reform schemes, will avoid loose slogans and rhetoric to embrace down-to-earth feasible solutions for problems impeding the Kingdom’s progress.

Highlighting some of the issues the Kingdom has to deal with over the coming decade, Muasher said the country has to accept the fact that “the age of oil grants and foreign assistance is almost over.” Yet Jordan is challenged to achieve an economic growth of 9-10 per cent until

2015 and create more jobs. Citing estimations, Muasher said unemployment is expected to jump from the current 14 per cent to 20 per cent or even double by that time. Another issue is easing tax burden on citizens, the minister added.

The National Agenda will lead the country into a new age where there is more press freedom, health insurance for all, an independent judiciary, a more politically active public, political pluralism, active and powerful parties with clear-cut platforms and empowered women and youth.

The committee, which was established in February along with another that will redesign the administrative division map as part of the decentralisation plan, has devised work plans for its subcommittees that address the eight aspects of its mission. These committees are working to come up not only with ideas, but are also tasked with pointing out the government agency expected to implement the suggested plans, a time frame for implementation and an estimate of the cost.

by Mahmoud Al Abed, Jordan Times

Oracle to Open Office in Jordan

Oracle Corporation, the world’s largest enterprise software company, announced near the end of May 2005 that it will open a permanent office and training centre in Jordan.

The new office will provide technical and presales support to the company’s customer base in the region, whereas the centre will provide consulting services to customers across Europe with a focus on the telecommunications market and wireless applications.

Sergio Giacometto, Oracle’s executive vice president for Europe, Middle East and Africa, said the purpose of building in Jordan is to get Jordanian university grad-

uates contributing to the region’s and world’s information technology revolution.

The new office will initially employ 20 local specialists, but the total number of employees will rise to about 50 in the next few months, Giacometto said. “This is not a sales office, we are here to invest in the people,” he added.

“With information technology at the heart of the government’s economic strategy, we expect Jordan’s importance as a centre for research and innovation to grow. We will deploy the latest in e-learning technology at the Oracle centre and provide students with practical skills that they can use to aid the transformation that is taking place in this country,” concluded Giacometto.

By Rami Abdelrahman, The Jordan Times

15 U.S. Students Begin Six-Week Program at University of Jordan

AMMAN (JT)— A group of University of Jordan students on June 6th joined 15 of their peers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) at the launch of a programme designed to enhance intercultural understanding.

The six-week programme, held for the first time at the UJ, will include lectures and seminars on Arab and Islamic history and modern Arab culture.

The programme, which will be held every summer, provides an opportunity for visiting American students to interact with their peers and be exposed to the accurate and true image of Islam, Ahmad Majdoubeh, International Relations and Program Director, said.

In addition to the lectures and seminars, visits have been arranged for the group to several places in the Kingdom including the Parliament, press and media institutions, and archaeological sites, he added.

The team of US students is accompa-

nied by Edward Curtis, a professor specialised in Middle East studies from the UNC-CH, who will be delivering lectures on Arab history and the Islamic civilisation.

“The students will not only read books but also visit historical sites to see first-hand what they are studying, and this will help them better understand the history of the Arabs,” Curtis said. For example, when studying about the Umayyads, they will visit their castles in the desert, he added.

Moreover, they will be dealing with the Arabs themselves, learning through their partners about their history, civilisation and religion, Curtis added.

He also highlighted that what distinguishes the Kingdom in the world was democracy, inter-civilisations dialogue and respect for others opinions and culture.

By Ghazal, Mohammad, Jordan Times

Civic Education

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procedures used in the local political process. The second curriculum, “Foundations of Democracy,” focuses on the concepts of authority, privacy, responsibility and justice, allowing students to consider the values underpinning the institutions of government.

Nuccio said Jordan should create channels to enhance a broader political participation by the public.

As part of Jordan’s reform plans, His Majesty King Abdullah formed in February the Steering Committee for the National Agenda to set guidelines for the development process over the coming decade. King Abdullah also announced a decentralisation plan to give active citizens greater opportunities for involvement in the decision making process by directly electing their municipal councils.

“Political development should start at the grassroots level, then move up to decision making centers, and not vice versa,” the King said in an address to the nation in January.

In his comments to the congress Saturday, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Khalid Touqan said civic education “is just one of many efforts... being exerted to make democracy part of daily life” in Jordan.

Global Village Amman 2005

Summer of 2005 will be one to remember forever. Jordan is hosting the most stunning event, where countries around the world are participating side by side in the “Global Village” 2005.

Last year’s visitors as well as many more are eagerly awaiting this family oriented event. To roam around villages of the world enjoying the scent, taste, tradition of each of the 27 participating countries. Egypt, Iran, Morocco, Syria, Kuwait, China, Thailand, Palestine, U.A.E., England, Spain, Sudan, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia, Cambodia, Bahrain, Qatar, Turkey, Japan



and Australia.

Each of the pavilions will be beautifully architected, in representing their culture and tradition. A global business center, where visitors can buy products in a bustling atmosphere... Traditional art from the Middle East, Handicrafts from Asia, National products from Africa, Europe and many more.

You can also enjoy the taste of international dishes from cuisines around the world in

the Global Village Restaurant area.

Falafel, Shawarmah, Sushi, Kushari, Mansaf, Djeebodjal catering to multitudes of tastes.

The Main Theater will host nightly

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Rice Says

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“We have no better friend than Jordan, a good friend, a strategic partner in the shared vision of peace and stability and increasingly a shared vision of reform in this region,” she said.

“We value [our] friendship with the Jordanian people,” she added, praising the Kingdom as a “strategic partner” in the fight against terrorism.

Queen Rania
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Summing up the discussion, Queen Rania emphasized that the tools are in place to enable us to accelerate the change process and that the media should be employed more strategically to provide the right attitude, project the right content and therefore set the grounds for the right changes.

Global Village
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concerts for famous singers, exciting activities, and folklore performance. The Fun Fair is shipped from England, it certainly will guarantee the most discerning fun and entertainment with its unique thrilling rides. 10,000 to 15,000 visitors entered the village daily in the summer of 2004. Join us and enjoy this remarkable 30-Day touristic event in a ride around the world at the "Global Village." A village that has the world in it.

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JORDANinFIGURES

Challenging Figures: Unemployment Stands at 13.4%— DoS

The Department of Statistics (DoS) on June 24 released the results of a survey conducted in February on poverty and unemployment in the country. According to the survey, which covered a sample of 15,000 families distributed fairly across the country, unemployment stands at 13.4 per cent - 12.3 per cent among males and 19.7 per cent among females.

The survey also reveals that 37.1 per cent of the population is under the age of 15, and only 5.9 per cent over the age of 60.



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