

**Lebanonwire, May 31, 2002**

<http://www.lebanonwire.com/0205/02053104DS.asp>

## **Saudi-Lebanese relations revisited in commemoration of regional ties**

### **Seminar maps history of kingdom's support**

The various hats worn by Saudi Arabia in its relationship with Lebanon, particularly in seeking a solution to the 1975-1990 civil war, were the focus of the second day of a seminar examining relations between the two nations on Thursday.

The Lebanese University's faculty of literature hosted the final day of the conference, held jointly by LU and King Abdel-Aziz University to mark the 20th anniversary of the ascension of King Fahd Bin Abdel-Aziz.

Discussing Saudi Arabia's diplomatic efforts prior to the Taif Accord, **LU's dean of education, Abdel-Raouf Sinno** said that the countries enjoy close relations due in part to the thousands of Lebanese who travel to Saudi Arabia for work or the yearly Hajj pilgrimage.

In return, Lebanon serves as a market for capital investments and a summer vacation locale for many Saudis.

"Between 1975 and 1981, Saudi Arabia was actively involved in efforts to end the war, introduce reforms in the (Lebanese) system, and settle disputes between the Lebanese and Palestinians without undermining the Palestinian resistance or the sovereignty of Lebanon," Sinno said.

He added that prior to the 1989 Taif accord, the Saudi government offered humanitarian and financial support before and after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

He indicated that the Taif Accord itself was backed by Saudi Arabia due to fears that "the bloody 1988 presidential elections might present a danger to stability in the region."

In October 1989, the Lebanese Parliament, meeting in Taif, Saudi Arabia, endorsed the accord for national reconciliation, which restructured the political system by transferring certain powers of the Maronite presidency to a Cabinet divided equally between Muslims and Christians.

Taif also mapped out a security plan for extending government sovereignty over all of the country's territory.