

Saudi Intelligence Operations are set to be Restructured

Khaleej Times - 19 January, 2008

Saudi Arabia's intelligence operations are set to be restructured so as to be able to cope with international information challenges, according to Prince Muqrin, head of the Presidency of General Intelligence.

“Saudi Intelligence will compete with international intelligence agencies. This requires that we restructure our work to cope with global information and knowledge,” he told a Press conference in Riyadh recently.

Prince Muqrin said that Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz had given him explicit instructions to develop and restructure the intelligence agency according to the needs of national security.

“King Abdullah's words were candid and vivid: ‘People have moved and we should not remain still’,” he quoted the king as saying. “Our research has shown that the world in the new millennium is moving towards space security,” he said, and added that it was important for Saudi Arabia to be a ‘participant’ rather than a ‘consumer’ in information technology relating to national security.

Prince Muqrin said the government of Saudi Arabia has issued legislation that serves the electronic domain. “This new environment obliges us in the Presidency of Saudi Intelligence to cope with such changes and study their effects on national security on a wide-scale,” he said.

He added that there was a link between the usage of modern technology and the political, social, economic and security situations worldwide. He explained that the Saudi Intelligence was cooperating with intelligence agencies abroad. “We do not live alone in this world. Globalisation requires that we work together for the good of the international community,” he said.

He added that the kingdom had been cooperating with other intelligence bodies exchanging vital information in the war against terrorism. “I do not think that any intelligence body would accept that harm be in the way of another country as a result of terrorist activities,” he said. “The presidency is ‘open’ to society and works for the benefit of citizens and the country,” Muqrin said.

Last month, a four-day conference, titled ‘Information Technology and National Security’, was organised by the Presidency. In a statement issued on the eve of the conference, Prince Muqrin termed the event a historical first in the annals of the Saudi intelligence since the event coincided with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Presidency of General Intelligence.

A number of experts, researchers, academics and persons concerned with information technology and national security from across the world participated in the conference. Nearly 38 scientific research papers were presented at the conference.

Prince Muqrin called on Saudis to do more to help the government monitor Internet usage to help fight militancy. "We want to teach citizens how to monitor things on the Internet. Mom and dad must pay more attention to their kids," he said.