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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Fw: Saudi Arabia ends effort to mediate in Lebanon (AP)

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Subject: Saudi Arabia ends effort to mediate in Lebanon (AP)

BEIRUT (AP) - Saudi Arabia's foreign minister says his country has abandoned efforts to mediate in Lebanon's political crisis. The decision is also a blow to the influence Washington was able to maintain in Lebanon through its key ally Saudi Arabia. Western-backed political factions are jockeying for power in Lebanon with the Shiite militant group Hizballah and its allies. In an interview January 19 with the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV, Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal said the Saudi king has decided he is "withdrawing his hand" from Lebanon. Lebanon is enduring a political crisis stemming from a UN court investigating the assassination of a former Lebanese prime minister. Hizballah is expected to face indictment.

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