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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: (Reuters) Saudi king's health "very reassuring" - minister

RIYADH (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, who is being treated in New York for a blood clot which complicated a slipped disc, has started rehabilitation and his health is "very reassuring", the kingdom's health minister said on November 28. The remarks by Abdullah al-Rabeeah to state television came after the king, who is around 86 or 87, underwent surgery on his back on November 24 which the royal court said was successful. Prince Nayef, Abdullah's half-brother and interior minister, said on Saturday the king had been walking after the operation. Pictures by state media before Abdullah's departure and upon his arrival in New York showed the king sitting in a wheelchair. Abdullah asked Crown Prince Sultan to run the country in his absence. Sultan, thought to be in his mid-eighties, has had unspecified health problems in the past two years. The Gulf Arab state controls more than a fifth of the world's crude reserves, is a vital U.S. ally, a major holder of dollar assets and home to the biggest Arab bourse.