

## Headlines:

- **UK Right-wing Extremists Respond to Attack on Muslims by Urging UK to Cast Islam out of Country**
- **Saudi Arabia Rewrites Succession as King Replaces Heir with Son**
- **Trump Administration Eyes Hardening Line toward Pakistan**

## Details:

### **UK Right-wing Extremists Respond to Attack on Muslims by Urging UK to Cast Islam out of Country**

Right-wing extremists have responded to the Finsbury Park terror attack by urging UK citizens to “rise up and cast Islam out of their country.” Extremists also sought to defend the attack, in which a van ploughed into Muslims after late-night Ramadan prayers, by claiming: “This is war ... We have the right to fight back.” The social media posts were shown to The Independent amid anxieties that the British authorities are “way behind” the increasingly sophisticated tactics used by right wing extremists to radicalise followers online. Tell Mama, the anti-hate and Islamophobia group said that extremists are now covering their tracks by using untraceable mobile phones and (Virtual Private Network) VPN services that conceal their computer’s location – leaving the police unable to find them. They have also used less regulated social networks like the Russian-based VKontakte (VK) service to build up “spider’s web” networks of like-minded individuals who then support and radicalise each other. In December 2016 one extremist, thought to have been based in the West Midlands, responded to the Berlin Christmas market truck attack of December 2016, by asking on VK: “It’s time for Europe to act these vile creatures need flushing out of our homelands into the sea! Looking to join a group who is active in fighting Islamic invaders in Europe! I’m UK based but will travel to Paris and Germany, drop me a message!” Photographs posted on the extremist’s VK profile revealed him showing off his dagger, and posing in balaclava with the blade strapped to his belt. He also showed himself giving a Nazi salute. [Source: The Independent]

**The response of the far right is not surprising considering the daily diet of Islamophobia fed by the UK media to its population. There is now a real danger of violence between the Muslim community and the indigenous population similar to the race riots of the 1980s. Back then it was ‘colour versus whites’ but today its ‘UK society versus Islam’.**

### **Saudi Arabia Rewrites Succession as King Replaces Heir with Son**

King Salman of Saudi Arabia promoted his 31-year-old son, Mohammed bin Salman, to be next in line to the throne on Wednesday, further empowering a young and ambitious leader who has upended the ruling family at a time of deep Saudi involvement in conflicts across the Middle East. The king’s decision to remove the previous crown prince, Mohammed bin Nayef, 57, capped two and a half years of dramatic changes that have erased decades of royal custom and reordered the power structure inside the kingdom, a close American ally. And it came as Saudi Arabia was already grappling with low oil prices, and intensifying hostilities both with Iran and in its own circle of Sunni Arab states. In sweeping aside Mohammed bin Nayef, the king marginalized a large cadre of older princes, many with foreign educations and decades of government experience that the younger prince lacks. If Mohammed bin Salman does succeed his father, he could rule the kingdom for many decades. Prince Mohammed’s swift rise and growing influence had already rankled other princes who accused him of undermining Mohammed bin Nayef. But such complaints are likely to remain private in a ruling family that prizes stability above all else. The young prince, known as M.B.S., emerged from obscurity after his 81-year-old father ascended to the throne in January 2015. He has since accumulated vast powers, serving as defense minister, overseeing the state oil monopoly, working to overhaul the Saudi economy and building ties with foreign leaders, including President Trump. His supporters praise him as working hard to fulfill a hopeful vision for the kingdom’s future, especially for its large youth population. His critics call him power hungry, and fear that his inexperience has embroiled Saudi Arabia in costly problems with no clear exits, like the war in neighboring Yemen. Since the death of the founder of modern Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz Al Saud, in 1953, control of the absolute monarchy has been passed between his sons,

a system that raised questions about the future as the brothers grew older and began dying. Prince Mohammed bin Salman's rise has been meteoric. Since his father named him deputy crown prince, or second in line to the throne, he has spearheaded the development of a wide-ranging plan, Saudi Vision 2030, which seeks to decrease the country's dependence on oil, diversify its economy and loosen some of the conservative, Islamic kingdom's social restrictions. As defense minister, he had primary responsibility for the kingdom's military intervention in Yemen, where it is leading a coalition of Arab allies in a bombing campaign aimed at pushing Houthi rebels from the capital and at restoring the government. Prince Mohammed has looked for mentorship to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The two men have recently worked in tandem to isolate Qatar, accusing it of supporting terrorism, an accusation their small neighbor denies. The removal of Mohammed bin Nayef, who had warm relations with the emir of Qatar and his father, could make it even harder for the tiny nation to reach an accommodation with its neighbors, analysts said. And some wondered whether the young prince's assertiveness would further destabilize the region. [Source: *New York Times*]

**Prince Mohammed bin Salman's rise to the position of the crown prince could not have been possible without receiving the green light from America. It is evident now, that Trump's visit has set in motion an aggressive policy against combating Islam and Iran under the leadership of MBS.**

### **Trump Administration Eyes Hardening Line toward Pakistan**

President Donald Trump's administration is exploring hardening its approach toward Pakistan to crack down on Pakistan-based militants launching attacks in neighboring Afghanistan, two U.S. officials tell Reuters. Potential Trump administration responses being discussed include expanding U.S. drone strikes, redirecting or withholding some aid to Pakistan and perhaps eventually downgrading Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally, the two officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Other U.S. officials are skeptical of the prospects for success, arguing that years of previous U.S. efforts to curb Pakistan's support for militant groups have failed, and that already strengthening U.S. ties to India, Pakistan's arch-enemy, undermine chances of a breakthrough with Islamabad. U.S. officials say generally they seek greater cooperation with Pakistan, not a rupture in ties, once the administration finishes a regional review, due by mid-July, of the strategy guiding the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan. The discussions include officials from across the Trump administration, including the White House and the Defense Department, both of which declined comment on the review before its completion. But Pakistan's embassy in Washington warned against "scapegoating" Pakistan to explain the stalemate in Afghanistan, pointing instead to Afghanistan's own troubled internal dynamics. It also noted past Pakistani efforts to battle militants and expressed willingness to work with the United States and Afghanistan on border management. "Singling out Pakistan and pinning the entire blame on Pakistan for the situation in Afghanistan is neither fair nor accurate, nor is it borne out by the ground realities," said Abid Saeed, press minister at the embassy. Experts on America's longest war argue that militant safe havens in Pakistan have allowed Taliban-linked insurgents a place to plot deadly strikes in Afghanistan and regroup after ground offensives. Although long mindful of Pakistan, the Trump administration in recent weeks has put more emphasis on the relationship with Islamabad in discussions as it hammers out a regional strategy to be presented to Trump, who took office in late January, one official said. "We've never really fully articulated what our strategy towards Pakistan is. The strategy will more clearly say what we want from Pakistan specifically," the U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Other U.S. officials question whether any mix of carrots and sticks can get Islamabad to change its behavior. At the end of the day, Washington needs a partner, even if an imperfect one, in nuclear-armed Pakistan, they say. The United States is again poised to deploy thousands more troops in Afghanistan, an acknowledgment that U.S.-backed forces are not winning and Taliban militants are resurgent. [Source: Reuters]

**After 16 years of occupying Afghanistan, America's strategy is to manage the chaos and justify its presence in Afghanistan. Sometimes America intervenes to strengthen the Afghan government, and on other occasions, America allows the Taliban to regroup in Pakistani sanctuaries and continue their fight against the Afghan government. By doing so, America has maintained its presence in the country thereby keeping open the prospects of using Afghanistan to carry out operations against Iran, Russia, China and Pakistan.**