



Headlines:

- **Muslim Father Ordered by Judge Not to Impose Islam on his Children**
- **Crackdown in Saudi Arabia Shows Prince Tightening Grip on Power**
- **US to Stay in Afghanistan For Never-Ending War**

Details:

Muslim Father Ordered by Judge Not to Impose Islam on his Children

A Muslim father whose three children are being cared for by a Christian foster family was told by a judge he must not "pressure" them about Islam. The unnamed 53-year-old has two sons and a daughter aged under 16, who have been living with the foster family since 2011. During that time, he has only seen them twice. In 2015, he signed a court document seen by the Manchester Evening News in which he agreed not to talk about Islam. The ban has since been softened, but only on the condition he talks about his religion in a "non-pressuring way". The man told the paper he was the victim of bigotry, but social services said the children's wellbeing is their "primary concern". The document from Salford Children's Services stipulates the man agreed "not to discuss the Muslim religion" with his children during any supervised contact. He told the Manchester Evening News he felt forced to sign the agreement, because he was desperate to see his children. "What's happening is xenophobia and bigotry," he said. "It's Stockholm syndrome. It's parental estrangement. "They are obviously feeding all kinds of ridiculous propaganda to my children and this is the end result." He has been to Manchester's family court 13 times to get custody of his children. At the last hearing, he was warned not to "pressure" the children into discussing Islam, as Salford Children's Services said they did not consider themselves Muslim. [Source: The Independent]

The court order is reminiscent of medieval Spain where successive monarchs engaged in forced conversion of Muslims into Christians. 500 years later in the bastion of enlightenment medieval practices are making a comeback in the UK.

Crackdown in Saudi Arabia Shows Prince Tightening Grip on Power

An unprecedented crackdown in Saudi Arabia shows Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is tightening his grip on a future seat on the throne while pressing ahead with his vision of a nation no longer singularly reliant on income from oil, experts say. Eleven Saudi princes, four cabinet ministers and dozens of other royal family members, military and government officials were being held Sunday in what state media described as a wide-ranging corruption probe. Among those arrested late Saturday was Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, 62, one of the world's richest people with extensive holdings in the West that include major investments in Citigroup, Apple and Twitter. Most of those detained were being held in luxury hotels in the capital Riyadh. "Nothing like this has ever happened before in the history of Saudi Arabia," said David Ottaway, Middle East fellow at the Wilson Center, a Washington, D.C., think tank. Ottaway added that the kingdom "is entering into uncharted waters with unknown consequences." The arrests came hours after announcement of a new, anti-corruption committee led by bin Salman, the state run-Al Arabiya reported. The arrests could aid efforts by the 32-year-old prince to consolidate power after his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, formally designated bin Salman as successor in June. Ottaway said the arrests show the prince is "ready to resort to any means" to take control of the oil-rich nation of 32 million people after the death of the 81-year-old king. The arrests come as Saudi Arabia prepares a public stock sale for 5% of the kingdom's mammoth state oil company Aramco. The crown prince hopes to produce \$100 billion to help finance Vision 2030, a plan to diversify the kingdom's economy away from oil. Ottaway said the arrests could curb international investor interest in Vision 2030. Before the sweep, President Trump lobbied Saturday for Aramco shares to be placed on the New York Stock Exchange. "Would very much appreciate Saudi Arabia doing their IPO of Aramco with the New York Stock Exchange. Important to the United States!" he tweeted. Hasnain Malik, global head of equity research for investment bank Exotix Capital, expressed little surprise in the crackdown. "As unprecedented and controversial as it may be, this centralization might also be a necessary condition for pushing the austerity and

transformation agenda," Malik said. King Salman issued a statement Saturday announcing formation of the corruption committee, citing "exploitation by some of the weak souls who have put their own interests above the public interest." [Source: US Today]

The Saudi king provided the committee with the power to issue arrest warrants and travel bans, freeze financial accounts and track the flow of assets and block their transfers. After having surrendered billions to the US in return for security, the Kingdom's 2030 Vision is no more than a consolidation of tyranny. By sidelining potential peers for power, King Salman is buttressing his rule under the guise of corruption while he squanders billions in the pursuit of propping up the US.

US to Stay in Afghanistan for Never-Ending War

The Trump administration has no intention of leaving Afghanistan, despite all of President Donald Trump's campaign bluster about withdrawing US troops and putting America first. According to Trump, he has now "studied Afghanistan in great detail, and changed his mind". What lies behind this about-turn is the view of the security establishment that in order to maintain US global dominance, having a plethora of US bases in Afghanistan is imperative. Geopolitically, Afghanistan lies at the heart of Asia, wedged between China, Pakistan and Iran - all countries the US wants to keep an eye on and may want to wage war against in the future. To withdraw most US troops from Afghanistan, as President Barak Obama had intended last year, would probably lead to the 450 US bases being overrun by the Taliban. If this were to happen, the US would lose its military presence in one of the most strategic locations in the region. Tensions between the US and Pakistan have escalated this year as the Trump administration tries to blame Pakistan for the failure of US policy in Afghanistan, accusing it of harbouring Taliban leaders and giving militants safe haven. As relations deteriorate, the US will want to monitor Pakistan. Then there is Iran, which lies to the west of Afghanistan and has become Public Enemy Number One in the eyes of the Trump White House. As Trump beats the drums of war with Iran, if the US is ever to launch a war against Tehran it would need US bases in Afghanistan, where it could deploy as many as 100000 US troops within two to four weeks. Any such military mobilisation would not be considered an invasion in terms of the US-Afghan bilateral security agreement. America's long-term strategic priority is also to contain China and Russia, and for that it believes it cannot do away with its military foothold in Afghanistan. The US has already been forced to hand back its only Central Asian airbase to Kyrgyzstan - the Manas Transit Centre, which served US operations in Afghanistan from 2001 as a "gateway to Afghanistan". The US has also closed 505 bases in Iraq. The view of the Pentagon is that the US needs bases to protect itself against future possible Chinese military threats. Moscow is growing increasingly wary of the US military presence in the region. President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to Afghanistan has said the US presence is a concern. Russia is all too well aware of the growing global infrastructure of US bases, which have exploded in size and scope. The bases are known as "lily pads", to frog-jump towards enemies. Russia understands that the US wants to project its power and create a worldwide network of frontier forts to maintain global dominance. In order for the US to defend its continued presence in Afghanistan, it needs to masquerade as "killing terrorists" and "training the Afghan security forces". That explains why the US dropped more bombs on Afghanistan in September than in any other month since 2010. "We are not nation-building again. We are killing terrorists," Trump declared. He has also increased the number of US troops on the ground from 8500 to 12500. The increase is mainly to adequately protect US bases that the Taliban had started to attack. But the US strategy in Afghanistan will backfire in the end. The bombing runs are largely indiscriminate, killing countless civilians and fanning hatred of what is seen as the American occupying forces. Most of bombs the US has dropped are on Nangarhar province, which is where they dropped the Massive Ordnance Air Blast on April 13. The cost of the blast was \$16 million and most of the victims were civilians. The notion that the US is merely using Afghan soil to test its military hardware is not lost on Afghans. The growing enmity between them and US forces explains why the Taliban have managed to reclaim significant territory. [Source: The Independent]

The idea that the US can make the Afghan security forces stronger so they can succeed is unrealistic. America's other strategic priority is to prevent the re-emergence of Khilafah Rashidah (righteous Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood, which the people of Pakistan are working hard to re-establish.