

Saudi Purge: MBS follows Sisi and Erdogan to Concentrate Power and Save America

News:

The US president has backed Saudi Arabia's corruption purge initiated by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman against influential princes, military and business elites. "I have great confidence in King Salman and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, they know exactly what they are doing," Trump tweeted on Twitter. "Some of those they are harshly treating have been 'milking' their country for years!". [1]

Comment:

The dramatic arrest of famous Saudis, which includes prominent princes, business figures and media personalities [2], combined with the helicopter crash carrying Prince Mansur [3] and other senior officials has fueled speculation that Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) aborted a coup. Whatever the reason maybe one thing is abundantly clear that 2030 Vision for the Kingdom bears all the hallmarks of American efforts to restructure the country through King Salman and his son Muhammed.

Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May this year has proved ominous and marks the beginning of a multi-fold transition plan that concentrates power in MBS's hands [4]. The first leg of this plan consisted of a security pact between King Salman and the US. In exchange for billions of dollar, the US conditionally agreed to support the Salman faction of the Saudi family. The recent innocuous visit of Trump's son in-law points to a green light from the Trump administration for Salman to take such bold measures. The purge of senior royalty and other personalities under the guise of removing corruption is intended to dispense with decades old traditions of sharing power between different factions. Salman's endeavors to accelerate the concentration of power with Muhammed signals that the frail king is doing his utmost to ensure a smooth transition of power to the crown prince before he abdicates.

The second aspect of America's transition plan for Saudi Arabia is to hasten the secularization of Saudi society. The recent announcement to let women drive, attend sporting events and the lifting of the ban on concerts and other activities that encourage promiscuity is just the tip of the iceberg. The muzzling of the Wahhabi establishment by MBS underscores his determination to embark on his version of "modernizing Islam", which essentially is a version of Islam palatable to Washington.

The third facet of America's transition plan is to rob Saudi Arabia of its wealth through the absolute liberalization of the economy and the complete surrender of economic sovereignty to Washington and American multinationals. Just as MBS was prosecuting the purge, Trump tweeted to remind the Saudi heir apparent that the country's golden goose Aramco should be privatized on the New York stock exchange. In fact so keen is MBS on privatization that in October he proclaimed NEOM—new Saudi mega-city—will be the 'first capitalist city in the world', with IPO possibility before or after 2030 [5].

Undeniably, the rate of structural changes unleashed by king Salman and MBS after Trump's visit emphasizes their urgency to break free from the past, and submit Saudis under a new era of totalitarianism not witnessed before. Nonetheless, the newfound winds of despotism have travelled Saudi from elsewhere in the region. Under America's tutelage, Sisi and Erdogan have erringly concentrating power in their hands—albeit for different reasons.

Sisi has justified his absolutism under the pretext of protecting democracy, and Erdogan has defended power grab under the guise of protecting the state from coup plotter. MBS is following their example and is blatantly masquerading his power expansion through a phony war on corruption. MBS's purchase of a \$500m yacht and his father's \$100m lavish holiday in Morocco hardly qualify to wage war on corruption, while Saudis face abject poverty [6].

After the failure of Bush's greater democracy initiative and Obama's fleeting dance with Islamists in power, the US has done a volte-face under Trump. What is happening in Egypt, Turkey and now Saudi Arabia is an unequivocal admission that there is no room for any expression of Islam amongst the Ummah only subjugation to western liberalism.

In the short-term these changes may prove depressing for the Muslims, however, in the end such American initiatives spell the end of Western domination. This is because the West for the past hundred years has tried everything to remove Islam from the hearts and minds of the people but has failed on every occasion. By resorting to the means of overwhelming force—either through support for autocrats or through military might— America has clearly demonstrating that the West is intellectually bankrupt and unable to compete with Islam or even offer viable alternative to Khilafah Rashidah (righteous Caliphate) which the Ummah yearns for.

The Middle East once a bastion of stability for America is now a desolate abyss of destabilization and anxiousness— much to do with its own handiwork. America has not only lost control over the Ummah, but its appointed time of super-power status is nearing its end. Yet a handful of people realise this and understand that societal change is a paradox— good and evil coexist and in times of extreme darkness, Allah (swt) grants victory to whom He (swt) wills.

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّنَّهُمْ الضَّرَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَرَأُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ﴾

“[But] do you think that you could enter paradise without having suffered like those [believers] who passed away before you? Misfortune and hardship befell them, and so shaken were they that the apostle, and the believers with him, would exclaim, "When will God's victory come?" Oh, verily, God's victory is [always] near!” [TMQ Al Baqara: 214]

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