



Headlines:

- **2017 could be the Worst Year for American-Muslims**
- **Saudi King's Son Plotted Effort to Oust His Rival**
- **Third American-Afghan war?**

Details:

2017 could be the Worst Year for American-Muslims

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) recently reported that the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes in the US rose 91 per cent in the first half of the year compared to the same period in 2016. A report published by CAIR states that the number of hate crimes spiked from the corresponding period of 2016, which was the worst year for anti-Muslim incidents since the civil rights organisation began its current documenting system in 2013. The number of bias incidents in the first half of 2017 also rose by 24 per cent on year. "The presidential election campaign and the [Donald] Trump administration have tapped into a seam of bigotry and hate that has resulted in the targeting of American Muslims and other minority groups," said Zainab Arain, the coordinator of CAIR's Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, reports The Daily Sabah. CAIR reports that the most frequent type of incidents, documented by CAIR in the second quarter of 2017 involved harassment, defined as a non-violent or non-threatening incidents. The second most common type of bias incidents were hate crimes and involved physical violence or property damage. "Twenty per cent of incidents occurred because of an individual being perceived as Muslim. A Muslim woman's headscarf was a trigger in 15 per cent of incidents," the report added. California University researchers released a similar report in which they found 196 incidents of hate crimes or discrimination against Muslims in 2015, a 78 per cent increase from 2014. FBI data showed 257 anti-Muslim related hate crimes in 2015, a 67 per cent rise from 2014. Human Rights Watch and the Washington Post have reported. This issue stems from two basic problems, first and foremost it is believed that many of the crimes go unreported, while other crimes are actually hoaxes with dubious political motivations. [Source: The Express Tribune].

This is unsurprising, as the US media constantly fuels vitriol against Muslims living in America and the state offers very little protection. With Trump in power, the attacks against Muslims are bound to increase in ferocity.

Saudi King's Son Plotted Effort to Oust His Rival

As next in line to be king of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Nayef was unaccustomed to being told what to do. Then, one night in June, he was summoned to a palace in Mecca, held against his will and pressured for hours to give up his claim to the throne. By dawn, he had given in, and Saudi Arabia woke to the news that it had a new crown prince: the king's 31-year-old son, Mohammed bin Salman. The young prince's supporters have lauded his elevation as the seamless empowerment of an ambitious leader. But since he was promoted on June 21, indications have emerged that Mohammed bin Salman plotted the ouster and that the transition was rockier than has been publicly portrayed, according to current and former United States officials and associates of the royal family. To strengthen support for the sudden change in the line of succession, some senior princes were told that Mohammed bin Nayef was unfit to be king because of a drug problem, according to an associate of the royal family. The decision to oust Mohammed bin Nayef and some of his closest colleagues has spread concern among counterterrorism officials in the United States who saw their most trusted Saudi contacts disappear and have struggled to build new relationships. And the collection of so much power by one young royal, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has unsettled a royal family long guided by consensus and deference to elders. "You may have now such a concentration of power within one branch and within one individual who is also younger than so many of the cousins and sons of former kings that it may begin to create a situation where the family is out of whack," said

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a fellow for the Middle East at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, who studies Persian Gulf politics. The insularity of Saudi Arabia's sprawling and phenomenally wealthy royal family is well known, often leaving diplomats, intelligence agents and members of the family itself struggling to decipher its inner workings. But since The New York Times reported last month that Mohammed bin Nayef had been confined to his palace, United States officials and associates of senior royals have provided similar accounts of how the elder prince was pressured to step aside by the younger one. All spoke on the condition of anonymity so as not to endanger their contacts inside the kingdom, or themselves. In response to questions from The Times, a written statement by a senior Saudi official denied that Mohammed bin Nayef had been pressured and said that the Allegiance Council, a body of senior princes, had approved the change in "the best interest of the nation." The statement said Mohammed bin Nayef was the first to pledge allegiance to the new crown prince and had insisted that the moment be filmed and broadcast. The former crown prince receives guests daily in his palace in Jidda and has visited the king and the crown prince more than once, the statement said. [Source: New York Times].

The Western media's portrayal of the coup as an indigenous initiative is woefully incorrect. Mohammed bin Salman could not be deposed unless the US gave him the green light. The West disposes of rulers, henchmen, and loyalists like discarded tissues. The same fate awaits all rulers of the Muslim world who serve their western masters.

Third American-Afghan war?

The decision by the Trump administration to bolster the presence of US troops in Afghanistan raises questions about America's getting into the third phase of its Afghan war. The number of additional troops is likely to be 3,000 to 5,000 in addition to the 8,800 or so American soldiers already engaged in the war that is in its 16th year. Intriguingly, there has not been any formal Afghan policy announcement by the US president. Instead, he has just authorised the Pentagon to take a decision on the surge figure, indicating the increasing US reliance on a military solution to the Afghan crisis. What is described by the White House as a stopgap measure ie 'setting troops levels', may push the US deeper into the Afghan quagmire in the absence of an exit plan. This decision to send additional troops underscores a reversal of the Obama administration's policy envisioning the complete withdrawal of US combat forces from Afghanistan; it is also a departure from Trump's own election pledge to not get militarily involved in foreign conflicts. Surely the troop surge was necessitated by the spreading Afghan Taliban insurgency causing an increasing number of military and civilian casualties in the war-torn country. The most recent series of terrorist attacks in Kabul are the deadliest since the US invasion in 2001. And the killing of more than 160 Afghan National Army soldiers in an attack on a military garrison in Herat, believed to be a more secure region, underlines the deteriorating security situation in the country. With a deteriorating security situation and a weak and divided government in Kabul unable to maintain its control over territory, the challenges that confront the US in Afghanistan now are somewhat similar to those faced in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. In fact, the situation has worsened with the conflict extending to both sides of the Durand Line dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan. Further exacerbating matters is the rise of the militant Islamic State group which has claimed many of the recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan that have taken a huge civilian toll. While the Trump administration is still in the process of reviewing its Afghan policy, there seems to be no clear thinking in Washington on exploring the possibility of a political solution to the Afghan crisis. The use of the 'mother of all bombs' cannot bring an end to this bloody war. The war will be further prolonged with more disastrous consequences — for Afghanistan and the region — if the surge in troops is not accompanied by intensified political and diplomatic efforts to bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table. The suggestion for reviving the Afghanistan-Pakistan-US-China quadrilateral forum sounds positive, but there is a need for a more proactive approach. [Source: The Dawn]

The best way forward for Pakistan is to abandon the paradigm of international relations hinged on the nation state thinking and to move towards the re-establishment of the Khilafah state (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood. Only then will the crusader war come to an end in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.