

Saudi Arabia Promises Billions to the UK

News:

Muhammed Bin Salman's whirlwind tour to Britain is proving to be a huge bonanza for the beleaguered government of Theresa May. Both conservatives and the opposition have repeatedly questioned May's promises of riches accompanying Brexit. The myriad of deals announced by the Saudi monarch in waiting will no doubt boost May's narrative on Brexit, and stymie criticism of Saudi policies in the region.

Comment:

During his three-day visit to Britain, Crown Prince Muhammed Bin Salman (MBS)—the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia—announced a flurry of deals. Britain and Saudi Arabia closed a trade and investment deal worth \$90 billion. A representative from Prime Minister Theresa May's office said, "This is a significant boost for UK prosperity and a clear demonstration of the strong international confidence in our economy as we prepare to leave the European Union [1]." Saudi Arabia pledged another \$13.8 billion to buy 48 multi-role Typhoon jets from BAE systems [2] and dangled another \$100 billion by promising to consider listing 5% of Aramco worth \$100 billion [3] in either London or New York. To cap off his visit, MBS signed a \$130 million aid package [4] to fund the coffers of British aid efforts around the world.

The enormous amount of money pledged together with the purchase of fighter planes raises some serious questions about MBS's intentions. MBS could have used the money to halt the war in Yemen and rebuild its cities. Alternatively, he could have funded a new campaign to stop the tyranny of Bashar Al Assad or prevent further massacres of Rohingya Muslims. All of these actions would have bought MBS international. Instead, MBS opted to use billions of dollars looted from the Saudis to prop-up the ailing government of Theresa May.

It is well known that since Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom has embarked on a new course. MBS has instigated a series of measures to secularize and westernize his people on an unprecedented scale. He has also pledged billions of dollars to America in exchange for the security of his regime. However, America's thirst for Saudi money does not stop there. To safeguard America's geopolitical interests, it appears Trump is using Saudi Arabia's riches to weaken Europe.

The Trump administration desire to weaken the EU and its view Britain's exit from the union indispensable. Nevertheless, May is having a torrid time convincing the skeptical UK electorate about the economic benefits of Brexit. MBS's largesse will bolster support for Brexit ahead of Trump's looming trade war with the EU. In return, Trump expects Britain forgo coup attempts against MBS by reining in all pro-British elements in the kingdom. Perhaps the removal Saudi Arabia chief of staff was an implicit manifestation of a deal reached between Britain and US ahead of MBS's visit.

The barefaced intervention of Western powers in Saudi Arabia has turned the once citadel of Islam into the bastion of evil schemes. Unless, the Muslim Ummah re-establishes the Caliphate (Khilafah) the nefarious plans of the colonialists and their agents will never end.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Abdul Majeed Bhatti

References:

[1] "Britain and Saudi Agree \$90 Billion Trade Deal". 2018. *Arab News*. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1261706/business-economy>.

[2] Tovey, Alan. 2018. "BAE Systems Agrees Long-Awaited Saudi Order of 48 Typhoon Jets". *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/03/09/bae-systems-poised-unveil-long-awaited-saudi-order-48-typhoon/>.

[3] "Aramco Chair Sees London 'In Contention' For International Listing". 2018. *Sky News*. <https://news.sky.com/story/aramco-chair-sees-london-in-contention-for-international-listing-11281538>.

[4] McVeigh, Karen, and Hannah Summers. 2018. "'A National Disgrace': Fury Over £100M Aid Deal Between UK And Saudi Arabia". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/09/national-disgrace-fury-over-100m-aid-deal-between-uk-and-saudi-arabia>.