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The Great White Father Comes to Saudi Arabia

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The Great White Father came to Saudi Arabia last week to harangue some 50 Arab and African despots on the glories of Trumpism, democracy and the need to fight what the Americans call terrorism.

Having covered the Mideast for many decades, I cannot think of a more bizarre or comical spectacle. Here was Saudi Arabia, one of the world's most repressive regimes, hosting the glad-handing US president who hates Islam and the Mideast with irrational passion.

I was amazed to learn that Trump's speech to the Arab and African attendees had been written by pro-Israel ideologue Stephen Miller, a young senior White House staffer from California who is an extreme Zionist. How very bizarre.

Not only that, Trump's daughter and son-in-law, who are also strongly pro-Israel, were with him. So too was the powerful commerce secretary, Wilbur Ross, another ardent pro-Israel cabinet member with whom I spent a weekend last year. Billionaire Ross performed the traditional Saudi sword dance with skill and verve.

Listening to Trump and Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, blast Iran as the font of terrorism provided another big joke. Trump's tirade against Tehran was delivered in Saudi Arabia, a feudal monarchy that holds no elections, cuts off the heads of some 80-90 people annually, and treats women like cattle. While claiming to be the leader of the Muslim world, the Saudi

royal family funds mayhem and extreme Muslim obscurantism through the region. The current wave of primitive violence by some self-professed Muslims – ISIS being the leader – was originally funded and guided by the Saudis in a covert struggle to combat revolutionary Iran. I saw this happen in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Let's recall 15 of the 19 men who attacked the US on 9/11 were Saudis.

Iran has the freest political system in the Mideast (except for Israel). Iranian women have rights and political freedoms that are utterly unknown in Saudi Arabia. Iran just held a fair and open national election in which moderates won. Compare this to Saudi Arabia's medieval Bedouin society. I was once arrested by the religious police in Jeddah just for walking down a street with an Egyptian lady.

Today, US and British equipped Saudi forces are laying waste to wretched Yemen, the Arab world's poorest nation. As a result of a Saudi air, land and sea blockade, the UN now reports that famine has gripped large parts of Yemen. US and British technicians are keeping the Saudi air force flying; the US and Britain supply the bombs.

President Trump arrived with a bag of \$110 billion worth of arms (some already approved by the Obama administration), and a promise of \$350 billion worth in ten years. There was nothing new about this arms bazaar: for over a decade the Saudis have bought warehouses of US arms in exchange for keeping oil prices low and fronting for US interests in the Muslim world. Most of these arms remain in storage as the Saudis don't know how to use them.

Many of America's most important arms makers are located in politically important US states. The Saudis were so deeply in bed with the Republicans that their former ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar, was known to one and all as 'Bandar Bush.' Saudi money and influence has flowed far and wide across the US political landscape. That's how the Saudis get away with mass killing in Yemen, funding ISIS and ravaging Syria with hardly any peeps of protest from Congress.

By now, it's perfectly clear that the long secret relationship between Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates has finally come into the open. Israel and its rich Arab friends all hate Iran, they oppose Palestinian rights, and fear revolution in the Arab world.

The two most reactionary Arab states, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are now close allies, though they compete over who will lead the Arab world. Neither despotic regime has any right to do so. Trump lauded the Egyptian dictator Abdel Fattah al-Sissi who overthrew Egypt's first ever democratically elected government (with Saudi help), gunned down hundreds of protestors, jailed and tortured thousands. Suspects in Egypt are routinely subjected to savage beatings and anal rape.

As I tried to explain in my second book, 'American Raj,' the brutal, corrupt regimes we westerners have imposed on the Arab world and Africa are the main cause of what we call 'terrorism.' So too the wars we have waged in the region to impose our will and economic exploitation. It's blowback, pure and simple. So-called terrorism is not at all about Islam as our politicians, led by Trump of Arabia, falsely claim.

But no shoes were thrown at Trump by his audience. They were too scared of their heads being cut off by our democratic ally.