



Crown Prince Mocks Biden As Mentally Challenged Amid Crashing US-Saudi Relations

Description

Just when you thought the Saudis couldn't humiliate the Biden administration any more, the *Wall Street Journal* reports that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman **is reportedly talking massive trash about the US president behind closed doors.**



*Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's 37-year-old day-to-day ruler, **mocks President Biden in private, making fun of the 79-year-old's gaffes and questioning his mental acuity**, according to people inside the Saudi government. He has told advisers he hasn't been impressed with Mr. Biden since his days as vice president, and much preferred former President [Donald Trump](#), the people said. –[WSJ](#)*

What ever would give MbS [that impression](#)?

Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan has denied the report – saying “**These allegations made by anonymous sources are entirely false,**” adding “The kingdom’s leaders have always held the utmost respect for U.S. presidents, based on the kingdom’s belief in the importance of having a relationship based on mutual respect.”

That said, the two leaders haven’t been on good terms since even before Biden took office – with Biden calling Saudi Arabia a “pariah” while on the 2020 campaign trail over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, adding that **he saw “very little social redeeming value in the present government in Saudi Arabia.”**

Then, after refusing to speak with MbS for over a year (teleprompter issues?), Saudi officials present at a July meeting in Jeddah indicated that Biden clearly didn’t want to be there, and was **not interested in policy discussions.**



“The interactions with the Biden administration were so bad for the first two years that one visit was insufficient to propel Saudi to walk away from” its oil alliance with Moscow, according to David Schenker, a senior State Department official under the Trump administration and now a fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank.

As the *Journal* further notes, **the US-Saudi relationship has been strained for years, but the animosity between Biden and MbS has ‘deepened the tension, and it is likely to get only messier.’**

In his first weeks in office, the president froze Saudi arms sales, reversed a last-minute Trump administration decision to label Yemen’s Houthi rebels a foreign terrorist organization, and published the intelligence report on Mr. Khashoggi’s killing which Mr.

Trump had previously dismissed. -WSJ

“Rarely has the chain of broken expectations and perceived insults and humiliations been greater than they are now,” said veteran US Middle East diplomat Aaron David Miller, who now works at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “There’s almost no trust and absolutely no mutual respect.”

In perhaps the biggest ‘f-you’ to the Biden administration, the Saudis led OPEC+ in a production cut **despite the US asking them to delay the decision until after midterms** – which the Saudis revealed in a [scathing letter](#) nearly two weeks ago.

BREAKING: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia confirms Biden attempted to coerce them to postpone oil cuts until after the midterms, announce they have rejected his quid pro quo pic.twitter.com/MGNRbZVrRk

— Good Night Poso (@JackPosobiec) [October 13, 2022](#)

Now, the White House says Biden wants to review whether the Saudi relationship is serving US interests, while Saudi officials have indicated the same.

*In the Biden administration’s view, **the Ukraine war is a decisive historical moment that requires countries to choose a side, with the OPEC+ cut putting the Saudis closer to the Russians**. The Saudis see an opportunity to assert their own interests in a world where the U.S. isn’t the undisputed superpower, saying they can support Ukraine and work with Russia in OPEC+ at the same time.*

Saudi officials say they are frustrated the relationship is still viewed through the narrow lens of oil and security. Riyadh has framed the recent OPEC+ decision as vital to its core national interests, a technical decision that they say was needed to prevent a precipitous drop in crude prices. Prince Mohammed now sees high oil prices as perhaps his last shot to use the kingdom’s natural resources to modernize the Saudi economy and build a post-oil future. -WSJ

“Our economic agenda is critical to our survival. It’s not just about energy and defense,” said bin Farhan in a recent interview. “It may have been 50 years ago but **that certainly is not the case today.**”

December looms

In less than two months, **three events of major significance for global energy markets will occur**; OPEC+ will meet, the EU will discuss an embargo of Russian oil, and the G-7 will discuss capping the price of Russian crude.

According to Saudi government insiders, a production increase is on the table if the market loses Russian oil because of the EU embargo or G-7 price cap. US officials are skeptical, and say that this will be a key litmus test for where the kingdom stands regarding the west vs. Russia.

“The American bet is that the Saudis need the United States and will come around, and the Saudi bet is the opposite,” said Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, adding that the White House **has ignored the personal nature of US-Saudi ties.**

And according to Steven Cook, a Middle East expert with the CFR, “When you’re dealing with a country that’s basically run by five people, **it has to be on a personal level.**”

Meanwhile, **‘One drastic option on the table: Saudi officials have said privately that the kingdom could sell the U.S. Treasury bonds** it holds if Congress were to pass anti-OPEC legislation, according to people familiar with the matter. Saudi holdings of U.S. Treasuries increased to \$119.2 billion in June from \$114.7 billion in May, according to U.S. Treasury data. Saudi Arabia is the 16th largest holder of U.S. Treasuries, according to federal data.’

“It’s hard to imagine either side saying ‘All right, let’s put this back together,’” said Cook.

by Tyler Durden

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