Saudi Arabia: The Khashoggi Spring

Regional Diary

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Besides the domestic divide, Prince Salman will have to face an assertive region and growing anti-Saudi sentiments in the US.

Turley and the Regional Politics

If the US has an own anger against Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the next major actor on the issue, has known to be guarded. Again, as in the case of US, Khashoggi’s murder has provided an opportunity for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. While the iron-fist scenarios during the 2000s are long gone, in Turkey, a Middle East Middle has been well analysed, the Erdogan-struggle for supremacy has never been adequately analysed or appreciated.

While Saudi Arabia has been attempting to present itself as the leader of Muslimumm, by being the custodian of the holy places, Turkey has also been staking the claim to the same. As a descendent to the former Ottoman empire, the modern-day Turkey also wants to project its great past and even wants to be the leader of the Ott.

Admitted to the above history, it is Turkey’s emphasis as a modern, democratic, constitutional and secular Muslim state, thus, will in itself assuage the back-dooring, Jihad supporting and Wahabi-led Saudi Arabia.

So, when the terrorist took place inside Turkey (though it was within the Saudi Arabian embassy), Erdogan saw this as a great opportunity. Selective looks from Turkey have been the source of great embarrassment for Saudi Arabia; those behind the killing finally could not hide from the fact that Khashoggi was brutally murdered within the Saudi embassy. Also, the looks from Saudi Arabia about the identity of killer sped leaving Turkey in separate planes made it clear that they were close to the King of Saudi Arabia. This has demolished the Saudi claim that it was a rogue operation without the knowledge of Prince Salman.

The Adventures of MBS

Financially, the Khashoggi episode could have been avoided had the Prince been less adventurous and more accommodating.

The King of Saudi Arabia, until MBS was appointed as the Crown Prince, was more of a royal conqueror, rather than a single individual family member. There was a broad consensus in the decision making amongst the different members of the royal family and the royal family inside Saudi Arabia.

Upon MBS appointment, the King of Saudi Arabia, became the sole decision maker and started to act on his own instincts.

Worse has been the MBS (also adventurous and isolated towards Qatar and Yemen). While Qatar has successfully managed, the Saudi situation politically and economically, Yemen and Lebanon have been the sore points. Especially the Saudi military campaign in Yemen has resulted in one of the biggest humanitarian crises within the Middle East. MBS in the middle of a war that he cannot win, nor can walk away. Hence, he wants a victory in Yemen so bad, that he could strengthen his position within Saudi Arabia. It is unlikely to let MBS have his success; so both the countries are engaged in a direct and indirect battle on the borders.

Prince Salman could have negated Khashoggi’s murder has created a real problem to MBS than his writings and interviews. Perhaps, he miscalculated, as he had miscalculated Qatar. And Yemen.

Regional Divide

Opposite, Prince Salman will have to face an assertive region and growing anti-Saudi sentiments in the US. After several decades of friendly relations with the US, Prince Salman has now to look at the US with caution.