

Headlines:

- **The Muslim Ban Lives, and There's Worse to Come**
- **A Family Coup in Saudi Arabia**
- **Pakistan: Raymond Davis Reveals ISI Helped Him Escape**

Details:

The Muslim Ban Lives, and There's Worse to Come

Reading the Trump administration's new rules on who will be permitted into the United States from the six countries on Trump's Muslim ban conjured up South Africa's apartheid laws and worse. This is a bone-chilling glimpse into what the future may hold for America and Muslims in America. First off, we need to stop being PC about Trump's so-called "travel ban." It's ironic that Trump and his supporters who hate political correctness when they want to demonize minorities now want us to be PC about Trump's Muslim ban. The six-nation executive order by Trump is nothing less than the first step in Trump's path to achieving the "total and complete shutdown on Muslims entering the United States" that he promised his cheering supporters on the campaign trail — and that 65 percent of Republican primary voters wanted him to implement. These new guidelines spring from the misguided Supreme Court decision on Monday that allowed one part of Trump's Muslim ban to stand until the Court hears the case in full in the fall. That portion, Section 2(c), empowers Trump to ban anyone from six Muslim nations as long as the person has no "bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States." The Court explained that a "bona fide relationship" for an individual means, amongst other things, that they have "a close familial relationship" with someone living in the United States. Now comes Trump's version of "Sophie's Choice" where he is deciding who in your family can come to America. Under Trump's new rules, a grandma is not allowed in the United States because she is not viewed as a close enough relation. Nor are in-laws or grandchildren. (Parents and children will qualify.) None of this is about keeping us safe. That would be accomplished by a robust vetting system that investigates each person — not a ban that targets six almost exclusively Muslim countries drafted by a man whose campaign demonized Muslims. This is how hateful discrimination is legalized. If Trump's six-nation Muslim ban is upheld in full by the Supreme Court this fall, is there any doubt Trump will try to expand it to more Muslim nations in the future? (Of course, those Muslims who can help Trump make money will always be welcomed.) Polls show that there are virtually no limits to what Trump supporters would defend in regards to the persecution of Muslims. A 2016 Pew poll found that 64 percent of Trump supporters believe American Muslims should have less constitutional rights and be subject to more scrutiny simply because of our faith. A CBS News' South Carolina primary exit poll found 75 percent of Trump voters supported a total ban on Muslims entering the country. And a December 2015 poll of Trump supporters in North Carolina found 51 percent want to see U.S. mosques closed. Forty-four percent think Islam should be illegal. That's why Trump's Muslim ban and his new travel rules are so alarming. They are not designed to keep us safe — they are designed to feed his base more anti-Muslim hate. And given the

views of Trump supporters on Muslims, it's bone chilling to think where this may end up. [Source: Daily Beast]

It is only a matter of time before internment of Muslims and their expulsion from the US becomes a reality.

A Family Coup in Saudi Arabia

Who better to chronicle the unravelling story of the House of Saud? An ailing king breaks the delicate balance of the ruling family to promote his son — a young man whose vanity can be exploited by every breed of consultant and banker — over the trusted heir apparent. All this against the background of falling revenues from the kingdom's one source of wealth, hostility from neighbours and sometime friends, in the context of a region split by the revival of religious conflicts. The market reacted negatively to the news, marking the oil price down again with Brent crude slipping below \$45 a barrel. MbS (Mohammad bin Salman) has said that the oil price does not matter and by 2020 the kingdom's economy will be independent of oil revenues. No one believes that is really possible but if he does the prospect of Saudi allowing prices to fall further is serious. No other country has the power to cut production and exports to the degree necessary to rebalance an oversupplied market. The sole consolation is that we are only at the end of Act 1. There is much more news to come from Saudi Arabia. The fault lines are visible and the transfer of total power to MbS will expose them in the months ahead. The diversification of the kingdom's economy has been a national priority since at least 1980. Next to nothing has been achieved. The brightest and the best have left — men and, of course, women tired of being treated as second-rate citizens. The grand plans for diversification and modernisation produced by McKinseys and endorsed by MbS are not grounded in anything firmer than sand. There is a grand "vision" for 2030 but no delivery mechanism. Second, Saudi is isolated, except perhaps for a rather unreliable ally in Washington. Its actions in Yemen have heightened the tensions in the region to no great effect and have exposed the weakness of the kingdom's own defence forces. The resentment against the Saudi decision to allow oil prices to fall is intense and spreads across Opec and beyond. Third, and perhaps most dangerous for the House of Saud, is the internal break with the religious powers. Instead of the slow but deliberate process of reform and modernisation put in place by the late King Abdullah and Prince Nayef, there is now a crown prince whose grand vision leaves little space for religion. The only question is where the next step in the destabilisation will come from — the alienated part of the royal family? Iran? Isis or other fundamentalist groups who see in Saudi a crumbling state? Potential investors in the proposed partial privatisation of Saudi Aramco, which MbS believes is worth \$2.6tn, will now see political risks added to all the obvious commercial problems involved. If Aramco is to be sold, a deep and humiliating discount will be necessary. The stage is set for much more drama. The House of Saud is inherently weak with no democratic legitimacy and few genuine friends. Its key central purpose is its own survival and that implies above all the need for stability — something that until MbS came on the scene had been the hallmark of Saudi policy for the last century. History suggests that a power grab is not a manoeuvre that produces long-term success; it generates instability. The absence of legitimacy creates a vacuum that challengers will seek to fill. In the end, the imperative of survival favours those who can bring stability and order. [Source: Financial Time]

The Saudi regime has only survived because of Western interference and support. With the West in decline and the resurgence of Islam at an all time, Act 2 may have a different ending than what the backers of MBS expect.

Pakistan: Raymond Davis Reveal ISI Helped Him Escape

On March 16, 2011, Davis was released after the families of the two killed men were paid \$2.4 million as blood money. Judges then acquitted him on all charges and Davis immediately returned to the United States. In his memoir, titled *The Contractor: How I Landed in a Pakistani Prison and Ignited a Diplomatic Crisis*, Davis talks in detail about his experience in Pakistan. In the last chapter, Davis claims that “ISI ... orchestrated my exit. Several guards led me out of the courtroom through a back entrance. ... One of the men opened the door, stepped out into a courtyard, and scanned the horizon ... once he’d cleared the area, I was waved through door and directed to the SUV idling in the courtyard.” In the SUV, he met Dale Rush, a doctor from the US Embassy, and a Pakistani man who introduced himself as a colonel. The driver was also from the US Embassy. The SUV drove him to an airport where a dual-engine Cessna was waiting for him at the runway, with its engine running, and all set to take off. Davis says that (then) US ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, also was in the plane that flew him to Kabul because “with the ambassador onboard the plane, the Pakistanis would not dare mess around with by denying it clearance to take off”. Davis claims that the US administration wanted to bring him out of Pakistan because it had plans to take out Osama bin Laden and knew that it would be impossible to get him out once that operation was carried out. “The reason for the US government to get me out sooner rather than later was growing increasingly urgent, and the reason was even more secretive than the efforts to get him out,” he writes. Davis also highlights the role that former CIA director Leon Panetta and ISI’s former director general Ahmed Shuja Pasha allegedly played in securing his release. He also briefly mentions former Pakistani ambassador Husain Haqqani. “No two characters in this unfolding drama worked farther below the waterline than ... Panetta and ... Pasha,” he writes. Davis introduces Mr Panetta as a longtime Washington insider but claims that President Obama’s decision to appoint him head of the CIA in January 2009 was “a bit of a surprise” as he had “very little experience in the military and intelligence communities. Gen Pasha, however, was “nearly his opposite”. Gen Pasha “began serving in the Pakistan Army in 1974 and climbed all the way up the military’s ladder”. Davis writes that relations between the CIA and ISI were already tense and “my situation escalated it to an even higher level”. Davis claims that his book had been approved by the CIA after major redaction, which delayed it by more than a year. Yet, the CIA allowed him to keep the passage where he talks about Gen Pasha sitting in a courtroom in Lahore and texting the proceedings to Mr Panetta. Davis also refers to another report, which says that this plan was devised during a meeting between Gen Pasha and Ambassador Munter. “The Pakistani military was also rumoured to have had a hand in it. So, too, President Zardari and Nawaz Sharif.” [Source: Dawn]

The top military brass has a long history of betraying Pakistan and its citizens to please America. Look at the fate of Aafia Siddiqui who was apprehended and handed over to the Americans by Musharraf.