

Headlines:

- **The UK Muslim Prison Population has Surged**
- **Saudi Arabia Is Redoing Reform Plan it Rushed Last Year**
- **China, Pakistan Take Swipes at Trump's Afghan Policy**

Details:

The UK Muslim Prison Population Has Surged

The unexplained increase in the number of Muslims in prison is a “worrying” trend and potential source of “social division”, a landmark report into racism in criminal justice has said. Labour MP David Lammy said the lack of data meant the fact the Muslim prison population had risen almost a 50 percent in a decade was unexplained, adding: “The lack of transparency undermines accountability.” The Muslim prison population is now 13,200. It means Muslims are 15 percent of all prisoners but five percent of the British population. In his report on race disparity in the criminal justice system, Lammy notes courts and prosecutors don't record defendants' religion and said this made it impossible to answer why the Muslim population had surged. The report, commissioned by David Cameron in 2016 and published on Friday, says: “This is a worrying trend and risks becoming a source of social division. We know far too little about what has been driving this trend. Are charging decisions, or trial outcomes affecting the numbers ending up in prison? Are large proportions of prisoners converting to Islam once they are in custody? We simply do not know. This gap needs to be taken seriously.” Equality and Human Rights Commission chairman David Isaac told HuffPost UK: “From our perspective, we'd want to understand if this is related to Islamophobia, but we simply do not know why this is happening. “This is why we need more transparent data published. Then we can see why it might be and what action should be taken to limit it.” Dr Haque said she had noticed an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment in prisons in recent years and said: “It wouldn't be surprising to me if that was happening across the criminal justice system.” “It's not happening within a social vacuum,” she told HuffPost UK. “I think that a lot of it is happening for the same reason that black people are being funnelled into the criminal justice system. “That's because of racial profiling, because of cultural stereotypes. Muslim men are being treated the same discriminatory way as black men by the authorities.” [Source: Huffington Post].

Unbridled Islamophobia has permeated all sections of the British society, hence it is not surprising to find a large proportion of Muslims in UK jails.

Saudi Arabia is Redoing Reform Plan it Rushed Last Year

The new version of the National Transformation Program will be “more focused” and have “clear governance,” according to an official document seen by Bloomberg referring to the program as NTP 2.0. The revamp of the plan won't change key fiscal or energy-related targets, but it's needed to match it with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's broader Saudi Vision 2030, according to the document. Saudi officials didn't respond to requests for comment. “This is probably a natural development in the sense that the NTP and the Vision were not developed in complete coordination,” said Graham Griffiths, a senior analyst for Control Risks in Dubai. “There is a bit of cause for concern in the fact that they rushed this out in the first place, and now they're having to redo it.”

The original NTP was designed to overhaul the Saudi bureaucracy as the world's largest oil exporter grappled with low crude prices, and set targets for each ministry to achieve by 2020. But it was overshadowed by the prince's Vision 2030, a broader blueprint for life after oil that calls for selling shares in state oil company Saudi Aramco and creating the world's largest sovereign wealth fund. Neither is affected by the NTP redraft. While Vision 2030 was announced first in April 2016, NTP had already been in development and was first mentioned in local media the previous December -- well before any public discussion of the prince's grand plan. That ultimately meant that the NTP had to be linked to Vision 2030 "in reverse," according to the document. The NTP later became one of 12 programs within Vision 2030 and as a result, many of the government agencies that were originally part of the program are no longer directly involved, including the energy, finance and housing ministries. The danger is that the government could get "caught in this cycle of constantly redrafting these strategy documents," said Griffiths at Control Risks. "You get involved in this kind of constant theoretical redrafting and outlining of goals and strategies and government structures and you never get around to doing actual concrete work." Workshops to prepare the new NTP started at the end of July and will continue until the end of October, with about half of the kingdom's ministries involved, according to the document. Visitors to the workshops in the basement of a luxury hotel in downtown Riyadh are asked to sign a pledge of secrecy. Civil servants and consultants are brainstorming over laptops, while men and women mingle freely, scribbling ideas onto notepads emblazoned with the Vision 2030 logo. [Source: Bloomberg]

Without deep reforms that change the nature of ruling into the Khilafah (Caliphate), the Saudi will be entrapped by their NTP and continue as servants of their Western master. Vision 2030 is fast becoming a vision of further bondage and slavery to Western powers.

China, Pakistan take Swipes at Trump's Afghan Policy

The top diplomats from China and Pakistan are taking swipes at President Donald Trump's Afghanistan policy as they called for new talks with the Taliban to resolve the 16-year conflict. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Friday that Beijing stood firmly behind its "ironclad friend" Pakistan, even though "some countries" did not give Islamabad the credit it deserved in fighting terror, a pointed reference to the U.S. Wang, who is hosting new Pakistani foreign minister Khawaja Asif on his first trip abroad, said China, Pakistan and Afghanistan will hold new high-level talks this year to push forward settlement negotiations even while the U.S. deploys thousands of more troops. Trump infuriated Pakistan last month when he accused Islamabad of providing terrorists safe haven and threatened to suspend aid. [Source: Washington Post]

The Pakistani leadership is again passing up an excellent opportunity to change the great game in its favour. By opening up a genuine front against America in Afghanistan, Pakistan will be able to help China turn the tide in the Asian Pacific region. America no longer capable of fighting two wars simultaneously, will have to decide, which war to fight, and is most likely to lose its international standing as well as allies.