

Saudi Leadership Mocks Biden for “His Mental Acuity” - WSJ

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The Wall Street Journal, citing sources close to the Saudi government, reported that Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman commented to his close team on perceived blunders committed by United States President Joe Biden. More interestingly, according to the report, the crown prince was not afraid to insult the elderly US president either.

The relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia seems to be far from reaching a stable point. This is at a time when the West is seeking an agreement that will allow it to stem the rise in energy prices. Relations between the two nations are cooling due to OPEC+’s refusal to boost oil production despite the meeting between Biden and the crown prince in July.

It was hoped that Washington’s request to the Saudi-led OPEC+ would see inflation reduce in the energy market, weeks before the total embargo on Russian gas and oil in Europe is applied, which will likely aggravate prices even more.

In the midst of this tension, The Wall Street Journal revealed that there is a direct mockery of the US president from the Saudi upper echelons as he constantly suffers from memory lapses, confusion and various errors that have called into question his mental clarity. According to the outlet, Mohammed bin Salman has questioned Biden’s mental abilities and said that he prefers former President Donald Trump.

The sources said that “members of the Saudi government have been privately mocking US president Joe Biden and his mental acuity.” The same sources added that the Saudi leader told his advisers that he has not been impressed by Biden since he was vice president during the Obama administration.

For his part, since he took office, Biden refused for over a year to speak with the Saudi crown prince. According to the news report, at their meeting last July, members of the Saudi government felt that Biden did not want to be there.

Geopolitical and economic forces have been driving wedges in the US-Saudi relationship for years, but the feud between Biden and the prince has deepened tensions. According to Aaron David Miller, a veteran US diplomat in the Middle East and current fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank, the relationship between Washington and Riyadh has rarely been so acrimonious.

“Rarely has the chain of broken expectations and perceived insults and humiliations been greater than they are now,” Miller was quoted by the WSJ as saying. “There’s almost no trust and absolutely no mutual respect.”

Likewise, the WSJ pointed out that the decision of OPEC+ to reduce its oil production by up to two million barrels per day was a decision that, from the perspective of the Biden government, brought the Saudis closer to Russia. The Saudis, for their part, see an opportunity to assert their own interests in a world in which the US is not the undisputed superpower.

Following the article’s publication, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan denied that the crown prince had ever mocked Biden.

“These allegations made by anonymous sources are entirely false. The kingdom’s leaders have always held the utmost respect for US presidents, based on the kingdom’s belief in the importance of having a relationship based on mutual respect,” said Prince Faisal.

However, it is recalled that in April, a state-owned Saudi TV channel [aired a comedy skit](#) of Vice President Kamala Harris having to constantly correct Biden and keep him awake.

Saudi-US ties have been strained since OPEC+ announced a huge oil production cut earlier this month to shore up oil prices despite US pressure. The US president warned Saudi Arabia on October 11 that it would face “consequences” in the wake of production cuts that come as the world struggles to cope with high energy prices due to the war in Ukraine.

The decision by OPEC+ undermines the EU’s plans to impose a cap on the price of Russian oil. The Democratic party are especially annoyed with the production cut as it comes before the crucial midterm elections next month.

Although Saudi Arabia said that the production cut by two million barrels per day was not aimed at driving up prices and was taken to stabilise the oil market, it does not contribute to the alleviation of energy prices in the West and therefore the cost-of-living crisis. These factors will have a negative impact for the Democratic Party in the midterm elections, which makes it the most immediate issue Biden has with the Saudis. And although the Saudis denied mocking Biden, there are very few who would actually believe this.

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