

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

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How Saudi Arabia can manage the murder case of Jamal Khashoggi? (1)

1. Outline of Khashoggi affair



On October 2, 2018, an incident had taken place at Consulate General of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul, Turkey. Jamal Khashoggi, Saudi Arabian journalist, was disappeared after he entered the building of Consulate General. He was once a prominent reporter of Saudi Arabian media. Although he was never an anti-government journalist, he issued an article criticizing the royal family of Saud. He was summoned by the authorities. Feeling danger on his

life, Khashoggi moved to the US leaving his family in Saudi Arabia. It is de facto political asylum. He became the columnist of the Washington Post. The then Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washington was Prince Khalid Bin Salman, the son of King Salman and a younger brother of Crown Prince Muhammad. He had been an Air Force pilot once.

Mr. Khashoggi visited the Consulate General of Saudi Arabia for the divorce procedure with his wife. He accompanied with a Turkish girlfriend who was going to be a new wife. He entered the building alone. She had been waiting in front of the Consulate General. However, girlfriend had suspicion that he did not come out no matter how long she waited him. She went to the police station and appealed the situation. She had been advised by Khashoggi that If he could not show up after passing considerable time she should report to the police¹.

In response to the inquiries from the local police, Saudi consular office explained that he went out from the back door. But no witnesses founded. When the police asked for further explanation, the consular office showed the video record of the surveillance camera that took a picture of the person wearing his clothes left from the back door. But there was no information about him furthermore. Police suspected that Mr. Khashoggi was still detained in the Consulate.

The media around the world became enthusiastic in this report. They speculated that Khashoggi had been detained inside the Saudi consulate or Saudi government secretly abducted him to Saudi Arabia. Turkish government was untouchable to the consulate premise due to diplomatic privileges. After collecting the related information, it turned out that nearly ten Saudis with the diplomatic passport arrived Turkey and entered the Consulate General few days ago².

Although the incident took place in a foreign consulate which was untouchable from the Turkish authority, Turkey government investigated with its prestige. An extraordinary tragedy occurred within Saudi territory. There was a recording tape showing the decisive evidence. The tape was leaked to the local media. It vividly showed what happened between Khashoggi and the officials from Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials intensely pressed and interrogated him in a room of the consulate. At the end of the tape, a moaning of a person who seemed to be Khashoggi was heard. After the silence for a while a person seemed to be the leader phoned to Saudi Arabia. He explained the result to his boss at home and asked for instructions³.

It would be sure that the conversation was recorded through tap which was equipped by Turkish intelligence agency. It is common sense of diplomacy to tap in the embassy or consulate. Tapping is common at any embassy. Therefore, it is also common that the embassy itself often provides a soundproof room to keep the secrets of conversations or meetings from the espionage by host country. In Khashoggi's case subject was the issuance of divorce certificates and he was a journalist. It might be the reason why an ordinary room was used instead of soundproof room.

Saudi officials continued ambiguous explanation, but finally they failed to conceal it. They explained that after the quarrel with Mr. Khashoggi they mistakenly let him die. The recording tape had told that the cause of death of Mr. Khashoggi was an intentional murder due to torture. But the Saudi side insisted on negligence.

Another question was raised about where Mr. Khashoggi's body was. The Saudi side explained that the body was cut in pieces and carried them out in embassy's vehicle. They handed the cutting pieces to collaborators of the Saudi government in Istanbul. They explained that they never knew aftermath. They never disclosed the name of the collaborators, the place of delivery, the delivery method and so on.

Concerned Saudi officials were subordinates of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman. So the international opinion concluded that the Crown Prince had to instruct the murder directly. But the Saudi government strongly denied and claimed that the incident happened by negligence. Crown Prince himself has kept silence in public and appealed for innocence by telephone with some foreign dignitaries like President Trump in US, who supported him.

I would like to verify this strange incident; the dealings of Saudi Arabia government, the response of the Turkish government and Qatar government which are severely in anti-Saudi campaign, and the reaction of governments of China or European countries.

2. Saudi King & Crown Prince: The game is over!



Saudi Arabia's international credibility has shattered in the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, which has become an unprecedented scandal. Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MbS), who has been suspected of being directly involved in the case, was hit by a violent headwind⁴. Saudi government took the attitude to blanket the case and make the end as soon as possible.

Saudi government repeatedly explained that the incident was happened accidentally and MbS did not involve at all. Eleven officials were immediately repatriated, ignoring the Turkish authorities' request for interrogation⁵. And in November 2018, public prosecutor announced that 5 out of 11 suspects would be sentenced death penalty. Their names, however, have not been revealed.

In February 2019, Turki Aldakhil, who was a general manager of Al Arabi TV, flunky of MbS and one of the keyman of the incident, has been nominated as the ambassador to UAE⁶. Furthermore, Prince Khalid, the son of King Salman and younger brother of MbS resigned from the ambassador to the United States. The departure clearly meant to avoid investigation on him. According to the report, Prince Khalid was consulted by Mr. Khashoggi to go to Istanbul when they were in Washington. The prince confirmed Khashoggi's schedule and reported it to Riyadh. Therefore it was sure that Prince Khalid to be concerned in the case.

And on March 1, 2019, public prosecutor declared that the investigation was over⁷. Two days later, six Supreme Court Justices were appointed under Royal Decrees⁸. The appointments of new judges might have to lead to intentional judgement. There was also a ridiculous report by foreign correspondent that Saud Al-Qahatani, who was the top MbS advisor and seemed to hold the key to the case, has never been called in testimony⁹. Not only the names of the defendants but also the witnesses, were not disclosed. Everything shows the intentions of King Salman and MbS, who are rushing to close Khashoggi's case.

3. US Trump: Keep the card for good deals!

Mr. Khashoggi, the victim, was a journalist who contributed the Washington Post to critical articles about Saud royal family. The US media and Democratic Party asked for the truth. But President Trump praised MbS for being a wise and strong man¹⁰ and insisted that Saudi Arabia would not betray¹¹. When the brutal murder was revealed, the President was surprised to say, "It's awful!" However, regarding to MbS's involvement, he tweeted "It's estimated innocent! Trial is a domestic issue within Saudi Arabia!"



It is said that President Trump supports MbS because of the ultra-large arms contract which was signed when MbS visited to the United States in March 2018. However, it is necessary to take into account another factor of recent movements between the two persons. MbS has a strong connection with Jared Kushner who is a Jewish husband of the daughter of the President. Kushner is trying to utilize the relationship with MbS for his

Middle East peace plot. President Trump appointed Kushner as a special envoy for the Middle East peace talk, seeking mediation in favor of Israel. The President is trying to draw popularity of Evangelical Christians in US, who are the biggest wing of Trump supporters.

According to the scenario, Kushner visited Saudi Arabia in February 2019 and met with King Salman and MbS¹². In the meeting, Kushner had to persuade King and MbS not to lead the Arab opinion to protest against President's two decisions; To relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem and to ratify the sovereignty of Israel in Golan Heights. Compensation of the deal would be to defend MbS from international criticism related to the Khashoggi's murder case.

The Golan Heights was occupied by Israel in Six-Day War (Third Middle East War) in 1967 and annexed to Israel in 1981. The world community did not recognize the annexation. Arab and Islamic countries picked up the annexation for uniting in anti-Israeli campaigns. Iran and Turkey were the forerunners. In the past Saudi Arabia also advocated as the leader of Muslims and made anti-Israel speech at the Arab Summit or OIC. Kushner might force King Salman not to stand up as the obvious opponent. He made use of the Khashoggi's case for the deal with MbS.

It should be interesting that one comment was disclosed by UAE. It was a statement of the Foreign Minister saying that Arab countries should take an open attitude towards Israel to promote Palestinian peace¹³. UAE used to keep pace with Saudi Arabia on regional issues. UAE sometimes acts as the voice of Saudi Arabia, which is difficult to express real intention due to the big economic or diplomatic influence in the region. This statement is understandable taking the situation into consideration. It might guess that Kushner forced the UAE to say so.

In the Palestine peace talks, it is almost certain that Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel are currently exchanging information closely under the table. They are in the same boat showing their own strength and weakness respectively. For Saudi Arabia, the strength is the dominance of the world oil market and the purchase power of US arms, and the weakness is the darkness of MbS.

4. Turkey with a loud laugh at Saudi own goal



Reaction of foreign countries to the Khashoggi case was a clear disgust and disdain for Saudi Arabia. It looked like a football game in which Saudis scored an own goal after a poor play. Spectators were disgusted at watching Saudi players and coach who were in disorder in the ground.

Turkey called for Saudi Government to turn over the criminals because the incident took place at Istanbul in their country¹⁴. At the beginning, Saudi Arabia explained that they had left the body of victim to the collaborators of Saudi government in Turkey. Turkish side embarked on the investigation. But the explanation of Saudi Arabia was blown hot and cold. Turkish investigation was stuck. The crime occurred inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul where Turkish sovereignty could not reach. Saudi side quickly repatriated the criminals with diplomatic privileges¹⁵. There were no countermeasures for the Turkish government.

However, the news to disclose the facts have been leaking out through world medias one after another, which would come down to the truth¹⁶. One of them was related to the disposal of Khashoggi's body. It was said that a large incinerator with a heat resistance of 1000 ° C was installed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The body was burned for 3 days and 3 nights. Everything was burned to ashes. The evidence was completely disappeared. The solution was referred to a court in Saudi Arabia. But the trial in Saudi Arabia was completely done behind the closed door. Moreover, the Supreme Court justices were replaced just before the trial. Saudi government is now under darkness. It might not imagine that MbS would appear in the court. MbS's entourage who is considered to know the full details of the case has also run away. The truth of the incident will never be disclosed.

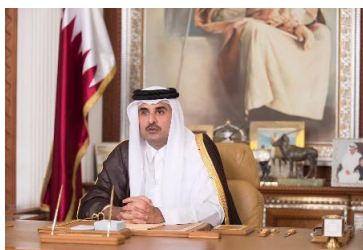
The Turkish government is now unlikely to investigate the case. However, it does not mean that the suspicion of MbS becomes clear. It deepens suspicion furthermore. The purpose of Turkish government is to make use of MbS's allegations at most. It is likely that the Turkish government has more confidential information than already released. The Turkish government must play its best card not only for the Saudi government but also for the President of the United States, who protects MbS.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been competed each other in two phases of historical religious leadership and contemporary political initiative. In the historical aspect, they compete the leadership of Sunni Islam. And they compete the contemporary regional alliance in political and economic fields. In the religious field, Turkey once dominated the Sunni Islamic world as the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary Saudi Arabia which holds two holy mosques of Makkah and Madinah makes a boast of being custodian(guardian) of two holy mosques, another title of the King of Saudi Arabia. In terms of political scene, Saudi Arabia with the backing of the United States recognizes itself as the leaders of Arab countries. And in terms of economic scene, Saudi Arabia

shows the power of oil money. On the other hand, Turkey, which boasts the largest economy in the Middle East has strengthened its relations with Russia. In Syria they defeated against IS (Islamic States) and made the Assad regime in victory. And most recently Turkey annoyed the US in the arms deal with Russia¹⁷.

Turkey disguised Saudi Arabia in the Khashoggi case and at the same time utilized the dark image of MbS. Turkey encourages Egypt as the leader of Arabs and intervenes the alliance between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Anyway, the Khashoggi case is an miserable own goal by Saudi Arabia. For Turkey, it is enough to look at drowning Saudi Arabia "as time goes by".

5. Qatar counterattacks Saudi Arabia



Qatar has been under diplomatic severance and economic sanctions from Saudi Arabia and other three Arab countries since 2017 because of its support for the Muslim Brotherhood¹⁸. The impact on Qatar was by no means small. Without natural gas, Qatar would have fallen on Saudi Arabia's knees sooner or later. Isolated from the GCC union, Qatar changed the way of its existence to cooperate with Turkey and Iran. This would have been a miscalculation for Saudi Arabia which was in conflict with two countries.

For Qatar, which faced difficulty in diplomacy, the Khashoggi case was a one chance in a million. Qatar has uncovered the truth of the case one after another through Al Jazeera TV and other government controlled media. One of the reports, as mentioned above, was on the incineration of dead body of Mr. Khashoggi. Qatar condemned Saudi Arabia referring to the news on its own coverage or leaked news from the Turkish authorities and Western media like the US Washington Post. Naturally, the Saudi media does not cover such foreign news, nor officially publish the report related to the trial. The information by Qatar is the best choice to follow Khashoggi case.

It could not be denied that some of the news by Qatari media might be fake ones and some of them have malicious intention against Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, it is no doubt that Qatar has satisfied in a series of revelations to counterattack Saudi Arabia and to appeal in international society. The country is also accelerating its departure from Saudi Arabia in other fields by leaving OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) dominated by Saudi Arabia¹⁹. From now on Qatar may annoy by bringing over Oman and Kuwait which do not necessarily keep pace with Saudi Arabia.

As same as Turkey, Qatar is enough to look at drowning Saudi Arabia "as time goes by".

6. What will happen in the future?

Khashoggi case would fade out day by day because politics and diplomacy are turbulent in the Middle East. That is just as MbS wants. The Saudi government itself is trying to make the case to be the game-over. Even the United States, Turkey and Qatar, there will be little advantage even if the truth is revealed. After that, each country trade the case in favor of its own country by rattling its saber in front of Saudi government (and MbS). It would be possible for the media or an international human rights organization to blame the Saudi government or MbS without showing clear evidence. But such means could not last in the political scene. The principal of justice based on freedom, equality and human rights is not applicable for international politics and diplomacy.

To recover the lost credit, on the other hand, MbS will make efforts to show up his presence at international conference or develop bilateral diplomacy with oil-poor countries. One of the bilateral diplomacy was his recent official visits to Pakistan, India and China²⁰. Regarding the international conference the G20 Summit, of which Saudi Arabia is a member, considered to be a place of appeal for MbS. This year's G20 Summit will be held in Osaka, Japan and next summit will be held in Riyadh on November 21-22, 2020²¹. Saudi Arabia is the host country of Riyadh Summit. It seems that MbS is aiming for a complete comeback to the international arena at the Osaka Summit in June 2019. Therefore, MbS must think that he should be introduced to the leaders of each countries by Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Abe in the coming G20 as the next host country. However, among G20 leaders, MbS's ally is only US President Trump. Many other leaders are suspicious of MbS. They, therefore, might be reluctant for bilateral talks with him. MbS seems to be a troublemaker of PM Abe²².

More serious problem is the development of domestic economy in Saudi Arabia. MbS launched Vision 2030 and its related mega projects. The import of technology and capital from foreign private enterprises and participation of domestic private entities are indispensable for realization of mega projects. However, concerning the relationship with the private sector, corruption exposure case in 2017 and the Khashoggi case in 2018 became the obstacle to cooperate with them. Private business owners in Saudi Arabia distrust with MbS due to the corruption case and incline to be cooperative. Foreign private business owners dislike the dirty image of MbS and hesitate to invest and transfer technology to Saudi Arabia²³.

It is reported that foreign financial institutions rushed to the issuance of bond by Saudi Aramco. Someone says that Western companies are coming back to normal as before. This is merely the attitude of the financial sector, which obey the nature of money only. They are almost irrelevant to the justice and ethics. But it is quite different in other business sectors like manufacturing. They have to be royal to the public opinion or consumers.

Please tell us your comments and opinions on this matter.

By Areha Kazuya

E-mail: Arehakazuya1@gmail.com

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