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US WEIGHS MORE MILITARY AID FOR SAUDIS OVER YEMEN WAR

MATTIS SAYS US WANTS 'STRONG' SAUDI ARABIA, WARNS OF YEMEN 'HEZBOLLAH'

Min 19°
Max 34°
High Tide 07:12 & 16:57
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conspiracy theories

PETTY PROBLEMS

By Badrya Darwish
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Lately, I've noticed that since the past few years, corruption and petty bribery have become a way of life in Kuwait. We never experienced this in Kuwait in the previous decades. Corruption is now endemic in the public sector. When you go to process any paperwork - which is your right and required by law - it is the duty of the employee, whoever he or she is, to do it. But you feel that they are not encouraged to accomplish your task efficiently and quickly, unless you bring a small present or pay something. This is what is called petty bribery.

At a glance, you say OK - KD 5 or KD 10 - what's the big deal if I finish my paperwork quickly and avoid delays and the repeated comings and goings and wasting time, because this is what happens. You run to 100 departments to sign a paper and many times they tell you come back tomorrow or in the afternoon or after an hour. But if you know how to 'adjust' things, paperwork can get done more quickly, at the same moment.

This is where the danger lies. It starts like this, and slowly it becomes required. The employee psychologically starts to feel like it's not his duty to do this work - he needs an incentive outside of his salary. And he starts building his life on that 'extra' coming from here and there.

If you think about societies where petty official bribery takes hold, you will be saddened. They are impossible to improve. Many Third World countries suffer from a terrible infestation of petty bribery. The problem spreads quickly amongst employees and results in hindering advances in the society and efficiency on all scales.

I'm worried for the generations to come, because if this grows and continues to spread - it looks like it's escalating, not stopping - then the next generations will adopt it as the norm, a natural way of life or process. No ethics, no principles, no religion - whatever you want to call it. I don't think any religion approves of bribery, be it Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. But me, as a Muslim, I know for a fact that bribery is totally forbidden and is a sin. According to a Sahih Al-Bukhari hadith, Abdullah bin Amur narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Allah cursed the briber (rashi) and bribe-taker (murtashi)."

EMIRATES TRIMS US FLIGHTS OVER WEAK DEMAND

DUBAI: Emirates, the Middle East's biggest airline, said yesterday it is cutting flights to the United States because of a drop in demand caused by tougher US security measures and Trump administration attempts to ban travelers from Muslim-majority nations. The decision by the Dubai government-owned carrier is the strongest sign yet that the new measures imposed on US-bound travelers from the Mideast are taking a financial toll on fast-growing Gulf carriers that have expanded rapidly in the United States.

Dubai was one of 10 cities in Muslim-majority countries affected by a ban on laptops and other personal electronics in carry-on luggage aboard US-bound flights.

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RIYADH: Saudi King Salman meets US Defense Secretary James Mattis yesterday. — AP

RIYADH: The United States is considering ways to boost military support for the Saudi-led fight against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen, believing military pressure is needed to prod the militants into a negotiated end to the conflict, US officials said yesterday. The US already is helping the Saudis by providing intelligence and aerial refueling of their combat aircraft. But the coalition, which also includes the United Arab Emirates, has failed to defeat the rebels known as the Houthis. The rebels seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen in 2014.

International calls for an end to the conflict are intensifying amid rising casualties. Health groups warn the Arab world's poorest country is on the brink of famine. But the Trump administration is considering how to help the Saudis advance their campaign, according to officials, who briefed reporters on condition they not be quoted by name. The assistance could involve more intelligence support but won't include a commitment of US ground troops, they said, adding that any moves would reflect the administration's effort to aggressively counter what it sees as Iran's malign influence across the region.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who met King Salman and other top Saudi officials Tuesday and yesterday, has complained about Iran sending missiles to the Houthis, who've then used them to fire across the Yemen's border into Saudi Arabia. "Everywhere you look, if there's trouble in the region, you find Iran," Mattis said after his meetings yesterday. "So right now what we're seeing is the nations in the region and others elsewhere trying to checkmate Iran and the amount of disruption and instability they can cause."

Before visiting Riyadh, Mattis said the administration's goal in Yemen was to help arrange a United Nations-brokered peace negotiation. A prospective coalition attack on the Houthi-held port of Hoedida, Yemen, has been put off amid concern it would cut off international relief supplies. US officials said yesterday work is underway to determine how to retake Hoedida without hurting aid efforts.

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PANEL FINALIZES SPORTS LAW

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's youth and sports committee and the government yesterday agreed on a draft sports law aimed at lifting the 18-month international suspension on Kuwaiti sports. Rapporteur of the committee MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli said the panel discussed with State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan the final details of the draft law after reviewing a government draft and six proposals by lawmakers.

He said it was agreed that the government will send a copy of the draft legislation to the International Olympic Committee before it is sent to the Assembly for approval. Fadhli expected that there will be no objection from the IOC, since its opinion is included in the draft law, adding that the legislation was prepared in such a way that it complies with international sports charters and at the same time does not contradict with the Kuwaiti constitution and laws.

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