

MIDDLE EAST MONARCHY

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Role of monarchy was removed in Europe after the French Revolution of 1789. The King of France was executed. Looking at French history one finds that monarchy was restored again.. The revolution of 1848 in France which inspired Karl Marx also targeted monarchy, but the parody of the French Revolution is that monarchy was revived when Napoleon declared himself as emperor.

The American revolution and the French Revolution are historically shown as stages when the dominating role of religion and monarchy in politics was diminished and it was replaced by the concept of the People's rule which was advocated by French philosopher Rousseau.

Before Renaissance in Europe religion also played an important role in politics. After Renaissance,, there was first a separation of monarchical role in Christian framework in Europe. It took a long time and many ups and downs before the separation between religion, monarchy and politics took place in Europe.

Monarchy still operates in parts of Europe in a formal decorative sense. The monarchy in Britain is an example. In the Middle East, monarchy operates in a strong manner linking modern methods of economic operation with hereditary privileges. Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are colourful examples of this factor.

Here are some documentary evidences on Saudi Arabia in support of this factor in politics.

Saudi Arabia represents a strange combination of feudalism,religious fundamentalism and modern eco-nomy of socalled free enterprise.In 1926 after a series of tribal wars Abdel Ibn Saud crowned himself as King and in 1932 he named the entire territory as Saudi Arabia.The modern form of feudalism is illustrated by the fact that Ibn Saud built for himself a marble palace in Riyadh costing \$4 million merely to plan and \$140 million to complete it.. Hundreds of princes and their relatives live at royal expenses at magnificent palaces.

It is the only state in the world that is titled as the property of a single dynasty. America would not have cared for its existence, if it did not have its oil resources. The Saudi monarchy supplies half of America's petroleum needs. The profits from oil supply is monopolised by the Saudi family tracing back to its founder. The family covers hundreds of people since the founder of the state himself married several times and all members of the family get lots of money from its oil revenues. Without the oil resources, the country would have turned into a strange,weird country neglected by America.

There are two recent illustrations of the odd linkage between feudalism and modernism, religious fundamentalism and free enterprise.

A recent report in the British media said that the British Ministry of Defence paid one billion pounds to Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia following Britain's big arms deal with the country. Britain's big arms dealer BAE Systems spent upto 120 million pounds a year into two Saudi accounts in Washington.

ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) operates the oil industry in Saudi Arabia. It started production of oil in Saudi Arabia in 1938 and continued the business since then. In 1951 it built a prestige railway for King Ibn Saud at a cost of over \$160 million US Government assists ARAMCO by providing tax benefits for their work in Saudi Arabia

Washington helps Saudi Arabia economically and politically and often justifies their operation.. During the cold war period, Saudi Arabia's status was supported on geopolitical and geoeconomic grounds. In 1957, American ambassador to Saudi Arabia praised the Saudi regime. King Saud, he said, is "a good king...who has the welfare of the people primarily in mind" (*Arabia Without Sultans* by Fred Halliday, 1975). When King Saud visited America in 1957 President Eisenhower took the unusual step of greeting him in person at the airport, a courtesy he had not extended to no other head of state up to that time.

American support for Saudi feudal monarchy continues today, often taking subtle sophisticated media manipulation. ARAMCO publishes a colourful magazine entitled "Saudi Aramco World" which claims to represent the cultures of the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Two excerpts from a recent issue of the magazine (January-February, 2007) show how it displays the positive side of the Arab and Muslim culture. A quotation from a British Muslim named Timothy Winter in an article entitled "The Art of Integration" said: Islam "makes room for the particularities of the peoples who come into it. The traditional Muslim world is a rainbow, an extraordinary patchwork of different cultures.all united by a common adherence to the doctrinal and moral patterns set down in Revelation."

The article deals with mosques in Britain with colourful pictures and a short note on their presence in China. "When Muslim Arabs first traveled to China nearly 1300 years ago, they were not in fact introducing an alien religion to an already long-established civilization. Rather.they called their Islam 'the Way of the Pure'—a name and an ideal that did not conflict with the Confucian beliefs prevalent in China at that time—and their early mosques looked like Chinese temples and pagodas".

In the context of the darker side of politics and economics currently operating in the Middle East,this type of commentary ignores the fact that US economic interests provide the material guidelines and Religion the ideological justification for current oligarchy.

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