

# Pence: CIA reviewing Khashoggi's death in Turkey

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Associated Press



AP Photo/Hasan Jamali

Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi speaks during a 2015 news conference in Manama, Bahrain.

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence said today that the death of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi “will not go without an American response” and that the CIA director was in Turkey to review evidence in the case.

Pence declined to discuss what punitive action the U.S. might take in response to the death of the Washington Post columnist and critic of the Saudi kingdom, who died Oct. 2 at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Saudi Arabia has said he was killed in a fistfight at the consulate.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan’s claim earlier today, Pence said, that “this brutal murder was premeditated — pre-planned days in advance — flies in the face of earlier assertions that have been made by the Saudi regime.”

Asked if the U.S. would sanction members of Saudi Arabia’s royal family if they were found to have been complicit, Pence said that’s a decision for President Donald Trump. He says the president will make a decision that reflects the values and national security interests of the nation and will also “make sure the world knows the truth.”

Pence said whatever U.S. response the president decides to make will keep in mind the importance of U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia — an alliance that he noted has been in existence since shortly after World War II.

He declined to say whether he had seen any intelligence that linked the Saudi crown prince to the killing.

“I know that when the CIA director returns, she

will be briefing the president, myself and our entire team on what the Turks have assembled,” Pence said about CIA Director Gina Haspel’s trip to Turkey.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who pulled out of attending an investment conference in Riyadh, met with Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman separately before the forum, according to Saudi state television.

Trump spoke Sunday with the crown prince, who is the son of Saudi King Salman.

“He says he is not involved nor is the king,” Trump told USA Today in an interview aboard Air Force One Monday en route to a political

rally in Texas. The newspaper said Trump declined to say whether he believed the crown prince’s denials. If their involvement was proven, Trump said: “I would be very upset about it. We’ll have to see.”

Members of Congress and former government officials have accused Riyadh of trying to cover up the truth behind Khashoggi’s death or hide any evidence that the kingdom, particularly the crown prince, authorized it.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who has been trying to coax Trump into ending arms sales to Saudi Arabia, said Monday that it’s “laughable” to believe the crown prince was

not involved in Khashoggi’s death.

Trump said any U.S. response should not involve scrapping billions of dollars in arms sales, which would hurt U.S. defense industries and eliminate U.S. jobs. “I don’t want to lose all of that investment that’s being made in our country,” he said.

Whatever the U.S. response, U.S. ties with its Gulf ally have hit rough waters. The Khashoggi affair also has threatened to upend the relationship of Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner with the crown prince.

The two men — both in their 30s, both trusted aides of older, familial leaders —

struck a bond last spring and consulted with one another frequently in private calls in the months that followed. The crown prince, who is known in diplomatic circles as “MBS,” has drawn some praise in the West for his moves to modernize the kingdom and criticism for his government’s arrests of rivals and critics.

Trump now plays down the relationship, saying the crown prince and Kushner are “just two young guys.” But their back-channel relationship unnerved many in the Trump administration and Washington foreign policy establishment who feared that the White House was

betting too big on the crown prince.

Kushner on Monday fended off criticism that the Trump administration was giving Saudi Arabia cover. He said administration officials have their “eyes wide open.”

“We’re getting facts in from multiple places and once those facts come in, the secretary of state will work with our national security team to help us determine what we want to believe, what we think is credible and what we think is not credible,” Kushner told CNN.

Even Trump, however, acknowledges that Kushner’s work on trying to craft peace between Israel and the Palestinians has been set back by Khashoggi’s death. “There are a lot of setbacks. This is a setback for that,” Trump told The Washington Post in a weekend phone interview.

Bruce Riedel, a former Middle East specialist for the CIA and National Security Council, said the Trump administration “desperately wants the Istanbul affair to go away and the MBS-Jared romance obscured.”

An administration official who regularly deals with Kushner pushed back against claims that Kushner and the crown prince are joined at the hip. The official was not authorized to discuss the relationship and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The official said Kushner — like other members of the administration, including Trump — believes Saudi Arabia should suffer some sort of consequence, but said Kushner also believes the U.S.-Saudi relationship “shouldn’t be blown up” because of the Khashoggi matter.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The area near the back of the space will be transformed into a new stage.

## Theater: ‘We all want to work together’

Continued from Page 1A

### Origins

Brown started the first Pier Pressure Productions in Astoria in 2010. The theater was open for just a year and had only two dark weekends — times when nothing was going on. Brown, now joined by musician, actor and general contractor Daric Moore, wants to bring a similar bustle to the new location, opening the space for more than plays, though drama will be the primary offering. They believe the new theater will complement other venues.

“We all want to work together in town,” Moore said. “None of the theaters offer the same stuff.”

They have a lot of work in front of them.

Moore estimates the first phase of construction to turn the empty space — previously home to an antique store — into a simple theater will cost around \$60,000. The second phase, lighting, could cost around \$40,000. Moore, with his construction background, is leading the build-out work, and many volunteers have stepped up, too. Brown and Moore plan to offer performances throughout the different phases.

“It’s interesting,” Brown said. “Astoria is a blue-collar town, but its face has changed so much because the fishing industry and the logging industry are pretty skinny

now. So it’s become, and probably always has been, what I say is an ‘artist town.’ We have so many kinds of artists.”

People who are drawn to theater as well as those who may have never considered it need somewhere to try it out, but Brown has seen a gap emerge in theater education through loss of funding and community support. She and Moore say live theater is crucial for a community.

During his time working on shows, Del Corbett, a former theater department director at the college and one of the creators of “Shanghai in Astoria,” saw people transform. Actors with little or no experience would take on more and more difficult roles.

“They developed control of themselves and basically, I’d like to think, control of their world,” he said, pointing to the example of one man who was going through rehab for alcoholism, decided to try out for a play and nailed the lead in one of Corbett’s more successful productions.

“I think it’s absolutely vital,” agreed Karen Bain, who taught in the college’s theater department and has been involved in local theater efforts. “Theater is a voice and it can offer a lot of different voices.”

She has been wracking her brain about how communities split along different social and political lines can find com-

mon ground. Right now, she said, people don’t seem to be hearing each other. But theater is all about communication, she said, and it brings people together.

“It’s a double whammy in what it can do production and performance-wise and what it can do interpersonally,” she said.

### Odd Fellows

Brown decided to go ahead with relaunching Pier Pressure at the urging of Odd Fellows Building owners Jesamyn West and Andrea Mazzarella and after Moore agreed to partner with her. The building is also home to the Astoria Arts and Movement Center; the addition of a theater seemed like a natural fit.

“The great thing about Pier Pressure and Susi Brown’s work is she’s never shied away from doing some challenging work,” said Edward James, who was born in Astoria but went on to work professionally in theater. He was the artistic director of Sylvia’s Class Act Dinner Theater in Portland for 13 years and performed at the new Pier Pressure’s inaugural event.

“I have a really high regard for this community, especially the community of older citizens,” James said. “What it seems to me is happening in this town right now is another generation of people is showing interest in taking over some of the endeavors.”

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