

# Trump: No penalty for Saudi prince for Khashoggi murder

By DEB RIECHMANN  
Associated Press



AP Photo/Hasan Jamali  
Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi speaks during a press conference in 2014 in Manama, Bahrain.

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump declared Tuesday he would not further punish Saudi Arabia for the murder of U.S.-based columnist Jamal Khashoggi — making clear in an exclamation-filled statement that the benefits of good relations with the kingdom outweigh the possibility its crown prince ordered the killing.

The president condemned the brutal slaying of Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul as a “horrible crime ... that our country does not condone.”

But he rejected calls by many in Congress, including members of his own party, for a tougher response, and also dismissed reports from U.S. intelligence agencies that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman must have at least known about such an audacious and intricate plot.

“It could very well be that the crown prince had knowledge of this tragic event,” the president said. “Maybe he did and maybe he didn’t!”

In many ways, the statement captured Trump’s view of the world and foreign policy, grounded in economic necessity. It began with the words “America First!” followed by “The world is a very dangerous place!”

It came after weeks of debate over whether the president would or should come down hard on the Saudis and the crown prince in response to the killing of the Saudi columnist for The Washington Post who had criticized the royal family.

The U.S. earlier sanctioned 17 Saudi officials suspected of being responsible for or complicit in the Oct. 2 killing, but members of Congress have called for harsher actions,

including canceling arms sales.

Trump said “foolishly canceling these contracts” worth billions of dollars would only benefit Russia and China, which would be next in line to supply the weapons. Critics denounced Trump’s statement saying he ignored human rights and granted Saudi Arabia a pass for economic reasons.

Asked by a reporter if he was saying that human rights are too expensive to fight for, he responded, “No, I’m not saying that at all.” But then he switched the subject to the “terrorist nation” of Iran rather than any actions by Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. needs a “counter-balance” to Iran, “and Israel needs help, too,” he said. “If we abandon Saudi Arabia, it would be a terrible mistake.”

The mistake was Trump’s, said Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, contending the administration has “blind-ers on” in comparing Iran and Saudi Arabia.

“It’s a sign of weakness not to stand up to Saudi Arabia,” Paul said in an interview. “Sometimes when you have two evils, maybe you don’t support either side.”

Republican Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina senator who is close to Trump, also disagreed with the president’s

statement, saying America must not lose its “moral voice” on the international stage.

“It is not in our national security interests to look the other way when it comes to the brutal murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi,” Graham said.

Likewise, Rep. Adam Schiff, ranking Democrat on the House intelligence committee, said that to suggest that U.S. silence can be bought with arms sales “undermines respect for the office of the presidency, the credibility of our intelligence community and America’s standing as a champion of human rights.”

Trump’s statement, issued just before he pardoned the Thanksgiving turkey at the White House and left for the long holiday weekend in Florida, underscored his world view of putting U.S. interests — both financial and geopolitical — above all else.

He told reporters on the South Lawn that oil prices would “skyrocket” if the U.S. broke with the Saudis, and he was not going to “destroy” the world’s economy by being “foolish with Saudi Arabia.”

Asked about any personal financial involvement, he said: “Saudi Arabia has nothing to do with me. What does have to do with me is putting America first.”

# Americans and Canadians are warned not to eat romaine lettuce

By CANDICE CHOI  
Associated Press



AP Photo/Matthew Mead  
A Caesar salad with romaine lettuce. Food regulators are urging Americans not to eat any romaine lettuce because of a new food poisoning outbreak.

NEW YORK — Health officials in the U.S. and Canada told people Tuesday to stop eating romaine lettuce because of a new E. coli outbreak.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it is working with officials in Canada on the outbreak, which has sickened 32 people in 11 states and 18 people in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

The strain identified is different than the one linked to romaine earlier this year but appears similar to last year’s outbreak linked to leafy greens.

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said the agency doesn’t have enough information to ask suppliers for a recall, but he suggested that supermarkets and restaurants should withdraw romaine until the source of the contamination can be identified. People are also being advised to throw out any romaine they have at home.

The contaminated lettuce is likely still on the market, Gottlieb said. FDA wanted to issue a warning before people gathered for Thanksgiving meals, where the potential for exposure could increase.

“We did feel some pressure to draw conclusions as quickly as we could,” he said.

In Canada, officials issued similar warnings to the two provinces where people were sickened. They said there was no evidence to suggest people in other parts of the country had been affected.

Most romaine sold this time of year is grown in California, Gottlieb said. The romaine lettuce linked to the E. coli outbreak earlier this year was from Yuma, Arizona. Tainted

irrigation water appeared to be the source of that outbreak, which sickened about 200 people and killed five.

The FDA’s blanket warning in the current outbreak is broader and more direct than the ones issued in the earlier outbreak, said Robert Whitaker, chief science officer for the Produce Marketing Association. In the earlier outbreak, the warnings about romaine from Yuma might have been confusing, he said.

Whitaker said the industry group told members they should cooperate with the FDA and stop supplying romaine lettuce, especially since people have been told to stop buying and eating it.

No deaths have been reported in the current outbreak, but 13 people in the U.S. and six in Canada have been hospitalized. The last reported U.S. illness was on Oct. 31, while and the most recent illness in Canada was early this month.

Tracing the source of contaminated lettuce can be difficult because it’s often repackaged by middlemen, said Sarah Sorscher, deputy director of regulatory affairs at the

Center for Science in the Public Interest. That can mean the entire industry becomes implicated in outbreaks, even if not all products are contaminated.

“One of the problems with produce is that it can be very hard to trace back,” she said.

She said washing contaminated lettuce won’t ensure that harmful germs are killed.

Infections from E. coli can cause symptoms including severe stomach cramps, diarrhea and vomiting. Most people recover within a week, but some illnesses can last longer and be more severe.

Health officials have also been reminding people to properly handle and cook their Thanksgiving birds amid a widespread salmonella outbreak linked to raw turkey. Last week, Hormel recalled some packages of Jennie-O ground turkey that regulators were able to tie to an illness.

But unlike with romaine lettuce, regulators are not warning people to avoid turkey. Salmonella is not prohibited in raw meat and poultry, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees raw meat, said cooking should kill any salmonella.

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