

Headlines:

- Ka'aba Deserted on First Day of Ramadan
- Failed European Union Governance Complicates European response to COVID-19
- Oil Industry Continues to Suffer from Crash of Oil Price

Details:

Ka'aba Deserted on First Day of Ramadan

As Ramadan begins, Muslim rulers continue futile lockdown policies in imitation of the West, with a special emphasis on keeping mosques closed. According to the *New York Times*:

It was a rare moment in the 1,400-year history of Islam, and another sobering milestone in the march of the coronavirus.

On Friday, the first day of Ramadan, silence shrouded the Kaaba, the black cube-shaped structure that Muslims face while praying, as the virus cast a long shadow over a sacred month of fasting, prayer and socializing that is central to the faith of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims.

The sealed-off Kaaba, in the Saudi city of Mecca, and another revered site in nearby Medina were among tens of thousands of places in Muslim-majority countries where communal prayers have been banned and family gatherings curtailed, plunging worshipers into a Ramadan like no other.

Western countries have miserably failed to contain Covid-19, with lockdowns only greatly exacerbating the crisis. Epidemics are controlled by preventing geographical movement. The West kept international travel open long into the early spread of the disease; hundreds of private flights continue even now, and domestic travel has not been restricted at all. Meanwhile, they have forced their populations to abandon essential public life and remain at home. Muslim governments have copied this failed Western approach without considering that not only has Islam clearly prohibited geographical movement into and out of plague areas but that China and other East Asian countries adopted exactly this approach to control the initial outbreak. By restricting domestic travel, China was able to prevent its political capital, Beijing, and its economic capital, Shanghai, from being affected even though both are proximate to Hubei province, where the disease was first detected. Meanwhile, it is necessary to pursue public life with even greater vigour during such times in order to sustain essential social and economic activity on behalf of those unable to work. The masajid play an essential role in supporting this public life, and should have remained open for those who are healthy. Travel to the Kaaba may be restricted from areas of plague but there can be no reason to stop those living locally in Mecca from praying there.

It should not be surprising for Muslims to find that, in the absence of the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State and the rule of Islam, even praying in the masajid is not secured. The Prophet (saw) said: «لَيَنْقُضَنَّ عَزَى الْإِسْلَامِ عُرْوَةً عُرْوَةً فَكُلَّمَا انْتَقَضَتْ عُرْوَةٌ تَشَبَّثَ النَّاسُ بِأَلْيَتِي تَلِيهَا وَأَوَّلُهُنَّ نَقْضُ الْحُكْمِ وَآخِرُهُنَّ الصَّلَاةُ» **“The knots of Islam will be undone one by one, each time a knot is undone the next one will be grasped, the first to be undone will be the Ruling and the last will be Prayer.”**

Failed European Union Governance Complicates European Response to COVID-19

According to the *Guardian*:

Almost seven weeks after the World Health Organisation confirmed the pandemic, Europe remains in the frontline for the battle to contain the Covid-19 virus. Five of the six countries reporting most cases are in Europe. Seven of the 10 countries reporting most deaths are in our continent too. Yet Europe has struggled to make common cause against the virus. In particular, it has bickered over how to support the most affected European economies against the consequences of the lockdown. In spite of innumerable acts of cross-border solidarity on the medical front, the rich nations of Europe have proved reluctant backers of the continent's embattled poorer economies.

Certainly the West's failure to control geographic movement and instead lockdown entire populations in their houses has greatly compounded the coronavirus crisis. But Europe's response is also complicated by its division into multiple so-called nation states that must each follow their own detailed decision-making process instead of entrusting policy-making to a centralised body. The

European Union, rather than providing for centralised decision-making, has only served to reinforce the multiplication of the decision-making process in each of Europe's nation state capitals.

The concept of the nation state is Europe's invention. Historically, powerful states were governed centrally, expanding to incorporate ever greater territories. But Europe limited the territorial extent of its rulers, forcing imperialism abroad and bitter confrontation at home, within Europe.

Muslims must rid themselves of the Western idea of the nation state and rise to unify their countries under a single political leadership for all Muslims, presiding over a singular state encompassing all Muslim land.

Oil Industry Continues to Suffer from Crash of Oil Price

According to *Oilprice.com*:

WTI prices may have steadied somewhat after a wild couple of days, but the physical market for crude is still collapsing.

Energy stocks posted sharp gains on Thursday as WTI prices "surged" nearly 30 percent to...\$17 per barrel. The nascent rebound in oil prices has eased the immediate crisis, but before Monday, WTI in the teens would have been considered catastrophic; now it seems downright reasonable. Amazing what negative \$37 WTI will do to perceptions.

But the fact is that the global oil industry is still in dire straits. Refined products are grossly oversupplied and refiners are scrambling to store gasoline and jet fuel at sea, but tanker rates are spiking and available storage is dwindling. With no place left to go, refiners are curtailing output and in danger of shutting down. The more refineries that shut down, but the steeper the drop in crude demand.

The world's largest independent oil storage company, Royal Vopak NV based in Rotterdam, is just about out of storage capacity, according to Bloomberg. "For Vopak, worldwide available capacity that is not in maintenance is almost all gone and from what I hear elsewhere in the world we're not the only ones," CFO Gerard Paulides told Bloomberg.

The shut ins are mounting much faster than predicted just a week or two ago. But with the pandemic not expected to go away anytime soon, demand destruction could persist longer than just a few months.

"As global travel restrictions will largely stay in place in May 2020, gasoline demand will remain significantly depressed. Everyone along the supply chain is getting hammered right now, but refiners and traders exposed to gasoline are suffering the most," Rystad Energy Senior Oil Market Analyst Artyom Tchen said in a statement.

Rystad says that on average U.S. refiners will lose \$3 per every barrel of gasoline processed in March and April. "As the end-market for gasoline has only shrunk, refineries face the imminent issue of gasoline storage overflow. If refineries were to continue activity at March 2020 levels, this would result in gasoline storage reaching full capacity as soon as mid-May," Tchen said. "Instead, refiners are already scaling back operations in an attempt to avoid hitting the gasoline storage wall."

The oil crisis is only one more example of the West's mismanagement of Covid-19. Eager to provide cheap oil to the American public, US President Trump forced the Saudi regime into a bitter price war with Russia. After failure to agree on lower prices, it is evident that Trump instructed Mohammad bin Salman to massively increase oil production to crash the global market, while booking an extra flotilla of Very Large Crude Containers for American shores. It is well known in America that strong economic activity is essential to winning re-election, so Trump was making every effort for the US economy to run on maximum production during this 2020 election year. However, Trump badly miscalculated, as Covid-19 hit the US even before the Saudi oil ships arrived. With massive demand collapse in the middle of massive supply surge, the WTI futures contract plunged into the negative for the first time ever, as traders realised that with already near full storage there was nowhere for the oil to go.

With Allah's permission, the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) shall soon be established that will return the oil in Muslim lands to the status of a public property free of foreign political manipulation and commercial exploitation, managed instead for the benefit of the entire Muslim Ummah.