

Headlines:

- **Saudi Arabia to Invest \$64bn in Entertainment**
- **Indonesian Universities Ban Niqab over Fundamentalism Fears**
- **Victory 'is not Possible' — Pakistani Official Implores U.S. to End War with Afghan Taliban**

Details:

Saudi Arabia to Invest \$64bn in Entertainment

Saudi Arabia says it will invest \$64bn (£46bn) in developing its entertainment industry over the next decade. The head of the General Entertainment Authority said 5,000 events were planned this year alone, including those by Maroon 5 and Cirque du Soleil. Construction of the country's first opera house has also begun in Riyadh. The investment is part of a social and economic reform programme, known as Vision 2030, unveiled two years ago Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The 32 year old wants to diversify the economy and reduce the kingdom's reliance on oil, including by increasing household spending on culture and entertainment. General Entertainment Authority chief Ahmed bin Aqeel al-Khatib said: "In the past, investors would go outside the kingdom to produce their work, and then showcase it back in Saudi Arabia. "Today, change will happen and everything related to entertainment will be done here." "God willing, you will see a real change by 2020." [Source BBC]

Currently on a visit to Britain, Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman (MBS) is seeking British expertise to set up a new entertainment industry in Saudi Arabia that will manufacture Western values on mass. Rather than spearhead the campaign to secularize Saudis the money could be well spent in ending the war in Yemen, liberating Syria or protecting Rohingya Muslims. But MBS wants to turn Saudi Arabia into another Dubai.

Indonesian Universities Ban Niqab Over Fundamentalism Fears

A pair of Indonesian Islamic universities are pushing female students to ditch niqab face veils -- with one threatening expulsion for non-compliance -- as concerns grow over rising fundamentalism in the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation. Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University said it issued the edict this week to more than three dozen niqab-wearing students, who will be booted from school if they refuse. Although niqabs are common in ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states, they're rare in secular Indonesia, where around 90 percent of its 260 million people have traditionally followed a moderate form of Islam. For many Indonesians, the niqab -- a full veil with a small slit for the eyes -- is an unwelcome Arab export and some associate it with radical Islam, which the country has wrestled with for years. The school, based in Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta, has some 10,000 students. Another Yogyakarta-based institution, Ahmad Dahlan University, has also introduced a new prohibition on the niqab out of fears it might stir up religious

radicalism, which has seen a resurgence on many of the nation's university campuses. There will be no penalty for those who refuse, it added. "But during exams, they cannot wear it because officials have to match the photos on their exam ID with them, which is hard if one is wearing the niqab," university chancellor Kasiyarno, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, told reporters Wednesday. Indonesia's reputation as a bastion of progressiveness and religious tolerance has recently been tested by a government push to outlaw gay and pre-marital sex. The conservative lurch comes as once-fringe Islamic political parties move into the mainstream. "We are a state university... we've been told to spread moderate Islam," the school's chancellor Yudian Wahyudi told a press briefing this week. [Source: Daily Mail]

Rather than exposing the West for the fallacy of secularism and its attacks on Islam, Indonesian authorities are looking inwards to secularize Islamic practices. By doing so, the Indonesian authorities are no different than their Western counterparts, and Muslims in Indonesia must stand firm to protect their Islam.

Victory 'is not Possible' — Pakistani Official Implores U.S. to End War with Afghan Taliban

The United States must abandon any hope of winning the war in Afghanistan on the battlefield and seek a peace deal with the Taliban, Pakistan's top national security official said Tuesday. "End the suffering of Afghanistan and of its people. Let us seek the closure of the conflict instead of winning it," Pakistani National Security Adviser Nasser Khan Janjua, a former army general, said during an exclusive roundtable with reporters in the Pakistani capital. President Trump's blueprint released last summer for the Afghanistan conflict, now in its 17th year, called for an escalated American military effort to force the radical Islamist Taliban to the bargaining table, but Mr. Trump questioned the idea of negotiations after a string of deadly Taliban and Islamic State strikes this year. The State Department says the U.S. government backs a peace process proposed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Feb. 28 that would allow the Taliban to organize as a political party if it agrees to end its insurgency and joins the political process. The U.S. has consistently rejected the Taliban's demands for direct talks between Washington and the terrorist group and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan. Mr. Janjua called for the U.S. to forgo any hope of military victory amid reports that the U.S.-backed government in Kabul controls less than 60 percent of the war-torn country in the face of a resurgent Taliban. "It is not possible for the U.S. to win back 44 percent of Afghanistan," he said, speaking at Pakistan's National Security Division headquarters. "Let us resolve [the war] politically. Let us reconcile. How long do we want to continue to fight in Afghanistan?" [Source: Washington Times]

The only way for Pakistan to force America out of Afghanistan is to establish the Khilafah (Caliphate). Only the Khilafah upon the method of the Prophethood will end Western interference in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and unite the two countries.