

Headlines:

- **The Scandal has Spiraled Out of Trump's Control**
- **Saudi Arabia to Allow Foreigners Mixed-Gender Sharing in Hotel Rooms**
- **PM Imran Khan Cautions Kashmiris in Pakistan Against Crossing LoC**

Details:

The Scandal has Spiraled Out of Trump's Control

As last week came to a close, Donald Trump was confronting the most serious crisis of his presidency, as Democrats moved forward with impeachment hearings in a serious scandal over his pressuring Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 election. Seven days later, the scandal is even more serious, but it has metastasized. This is no longer a controversy about a whistle-blower complaint, an American ally in eastern Europe, and the president. It is now an all-encompassing scandal, involving many of the top officials in the Trump administration pressuring countries around the world, from Australia to Ukraine and China to Great Britain. What has changed is not the facts, but what the public knows. It's clear now that the president, his vice president, and several of his top, Senate-confirmed aides—as well as his personal lawyer cum private foreign minister, Rudy Giuliani— have spent significant time over the past year trying to pressure foreign governments into producing stories that can aid in Trump's reelection, Thursday morning on the White House's South Lawn, Trump told reporters that China should mount a probe: "They should investigate the Bidens, because how does a company that's newly formed—and all these companies—and by the way, likewise, China should start an investigation into the Bidens because what happened in China is just about as bad as what happened with Ukraine." There is no evidence to back up his charges. The moment was breathtaking, because Trump, under threat of impeachment for asking a foreign country to interfere in the 2020 election, opted to ask a foreign country to interfere in the 2020 election, with cameras rolling. Once again, there's a quid pro quo on the table. China and the U.S. are fighting a trade war and are engaged in tense negotiations about trade policy, giving Beijing every reason to mount a probe to curry favor with Trump. As it turns out, this wasn't Trump's first request to China to investigate the Bidens. CNN revealed Friday night that in a June call with President Xi Jinping, Trump had brought up Biden. Trump also promised Xi not to bring up pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong during trade negotiations, which explains Trump's bizarre silence on the demonstrations but spotlights his conciliatory negotiating approach and his lack of commitment to democratic principles. Meanwhile, the scandal's reach continues to expand around the globe—and across the Cabinet. Trump pressured the prime minister of Australia to investigate the origins of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, according to The New York Times. Trump also pressured British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (who also needs American support, and a bilateral trade agreement, as he pursues Brexit) for help discrediting the investigation, according The Times of London. Administration officials have also made mysterious trips to Italy to—well, it's not entirely clear what's going on there. (The Washington Post reported that back in 2017, Trump told Russian officials he didn't care about Moscow meddling in American elections.) [Source: The Atlantic]

Trump's abuse of power has gone global, but the Republican Party refuses to budge. By doing so, the tiff between the GOP and the Democrats underlines the

fallacy of Democracy. A similar fiasco is being played out in the UK over Brexit. Democracy appears to be rapidly declining and receding across the globe.

Saudi Arabia to Allow Foreigners Mixed-Gender Sharing in Hotel Rooms

Saudi Arabia will allow foreigners of both genders to share hotel rooms without proving they are related after the conservative Muslim kingdom launched a new tourist visa scheme to attract holidaymakers. Women, including Saudis, are allowed to stay at hotels on their own in a big break from previous regulations. The moves appear to pave the way for women to travel without male guardians and for unmarried foreign visitors to stay together in the Gulf state, where sex outside of marriage is banned. The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage confirmed a report on Friday by Arabic-language newspaper Okaz, adding: "All Saudi nationals are asked to show family ID or proof of relationship on checking into hotels. This is not required of foreign tourists. All women, including Saudis, can book and stay in hotels alone, providing ID on check-in." Saudi Arabia threw open its doors last week to foreign tourists from 49 countries as it tries to grow that sector and diversify its economy away from oil exports. As part of the move, it decreed that visitors need not wear all-covering black robes but should dress modestly. Alcohol remains banned. Saudi Arabia has been relatively closed off for decades and until recently unrelated men and women, including foreigners, could be severely punished for mixing in public. Strict social codes have been relaxed in recent years and previously banned entertainment has flourished. But an influx of tourists – the authorities are aiming for 100 million annual visits by 2030 – could push boundaries further and risks conservative backlash. [Source: TRT World]

The spectacular speed at which Muhammed bin Salman (MBS) is introducing Western values and trouncing Islamic norms is astounding. Encouraging zina in hotels is the latest mischief promoted by MBS with the silence of the sultan's scholars.

PM Imran Khan Cautions Kashmiris in Pakistan Against Crossing LoC

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan urged 'any one' from crossing the LoC (Line of Control) and into Indian-administered Kashmir as they will be playing into the hands of the Indian narrative - in turn hurting the Kashmiris' struggle. On his 67th birthday, Khan took to Twitter to remind the world of the 'inhumane' curfew of over two months in India's Kashmir. Realising that sentiments are high among the people of Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, the PM requested citizens to not cross the LoC - through Pakistan-administered Kashmir - to provide humanitarian aid or support for Kashmiri struggle as it will be playing into the hands of India, whose narrative he claimed is to label the indigenous Kashmiri struggle as 'Islamic terrorism' driven by Pakistan. He warned that such actions by any one in Pakistan will give India the excuse to attack across the LoC. Earlier last month, PM Khan's fiery speech at the UN warned of a nuclear war between the two countries if the United Nations did not play its role in resolving the situation. [Source: Khaleej Times]

Despite the huge pressure put on the Pakistan armed forces by the citizens of Pakistan, Khan remains adamant on his no war stance. Dejected by Khan's reluctance to liberate occupied Kashmir, the people of Pakistan have taken it upon themselves to cross the LoC. Ironically, it is Khan's no war stance that is likely to encourage Modi to annex Azad Kashmir. What is required is for the Pakistani army to be mobilized, so that India takes Pakistan seriously and revokes Article 370.