

U.S. president criticized for fist bumping Saudi Crown Prince

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Washington, July 19 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden has returned from his trip to the Middle East, where he met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Friday. The two men greeted each other with a fist bump.

The meeting comes three years after Biden vowed as a presidential candidate to make Saudi Arabia a “pariah” for the state-sponsored killing of The Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul.

The publisher of The Washington Post, Fred Ryan, criticized Biden, saying: “The fist bump between President Biden and Mohammed bin Salman was worse than a handshake -- it was shameful. It projected a level of intimacy and comfort that delivers to MBS the unwarranted redemption he has been desperately seeking.”

During a press conference after their meeting, Biden claimed he had confronted bin Salman over Khashoggi’s murder. Biden said: “With respect to the murder of Khashoggi, I raised it at the top of the meeting, making it clear what I thought of it at the time and what I think of it now. And it was exactly — I was straightforward and direct in discussing it. I made my view crystal clear.” A top Saudi official later appeared to contradict Biden, saying that he never heard the president telling the crown prince he was responsible for Khashoggi’s murder.

During Biden’s visit, the Saudis agreed to increase oil production and to open Saudi airspace to Israeli commercial flights. The U.S. agreed to remove troops from Tiran, a strategically located island in the Red Sea, in a move that will help pave the way for Saudi Arabia to take control of the island.

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