

Saudi Crown Prince pledges \$600 billion in investments during call with Trump

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U.S. President Donald Trump (R) shakes hands with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

during a meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 20, 2017. (AP file photo)

Riyadh, January 24 (RHC)-- Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of the Arab kingdom, has told U.S. President Donald Trump that his country is prepared to offer to Riyadh \$600 billion in investments over the next four years.

Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency SPA said on Thursday that the crown prince, known as MBS, made the pledge aimed at expanding the Arab country's investments and trade with the United States during a congratulatory phone call with the new American president on Wednesday evening.

"His Royal Highness the Crown Prince affirmed the Kingdom's intention to broaden its investments and trade with the United States over the next four years, in the amount of \$600 billion, and potentially beyond that" if opportunities arose, SPA added.

During the conversation, bin Salman expressed the kingdom's enthusiasm for capitalizing on partnership and investment opportunities arising from the anticipated reforms of the new administration, which he believed could lead to "unprecedented economic prosperity."

The report, however, did not provide further details regarding the call or the specific nature of the reforms to which he was referring. The two leaders, who have maintained a strong relationship since Trump's first term, also discussed collaboration between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. to purportedly promote peace and stability in West Asia and combat terrorism.

Saudi Arabia earlier this week, noting that it followed Riyadh's agreement to make significant investments in purchasing American goods, including weaponry.

Trump, for his part, "expressed his appreciation and thanks" to bin Salman for "congratulations, and affirmed his keenness to work with the Kingdom on all that benefits the interests of both countries," SPA added.

The kingdom has been depending heavily on American military support that was markedly invigorated after March 2015, when Riyadh launched a war on neighboring Yemen. An estimated 150,000 people were killed as a result of the military onslaught.

The campaign also claimed the lives of more than 227,000 others, who lost their lives as a result of widespread destruction of the Arab Peninsula country's healthcare infrastructure during Saudi military attacks and a simultaneous Riyadh-imposed siege on the country that spawned a famine.

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