

ROUTES TO POWER

THE RISE OF MBS AND MBZ

4.1 Immediate Circumstances: Ambitious Princes, Dynastic Advantages

Muhammad bin Salman Al-Saud and Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan's first major political appointments—in 2015 and 2004 respectively—appear to have been facilitated by several immediate, and to some extent comparable, circumstances. Most notably, beyond their own apparent ambitiousness and industriousness, MBS and MBZ were members of the most powerful emergent factions of their respective ruling families and were not opposed by any serious rivals.

MBS was not only fortunate to be the son of a newly installed king, but also the son of one of the most influential men in his country's history. Himself a son of the *de facto* founding king of modern Saudi Arabia (Abdul-Aziz bin Abdul-Rahman or 'Ibn Saud'), MBS's father Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud was also the most high-profile surviving member of the so-called 'Sudairi Seven'—a block of seven full brothers, including a former king and two crown princes, born to one of Ibn Saud's favourite wives, Hussa bint Ahmed Al-Sudairi.¹ Crucially, by the time of Salman bin Abdul-Aziz's succession in January 2015,² he had already served as governor of Riyadh for forty-eight years (from 1963 to 2011),³ as minister of defence (from 2011),⁴ and then as crown prince (from 2012).⁵ Moreover, as head of the royal

family's internal *Majlis al-Uthra* or 'Descendants' Council' (from 2000),⁶ he had also gained a reputation for being the 'chief whip who kept the sprawling Al-Saud in line'⁷ and the 'royal enforcer who punished princes'.⁸ He was in effect the 'disciplinarian of the royal family... locking up egregious offenders in his own private jail'.⁹

Entering his twenties in the mid-2000s, MBS had reportedly begun to work-shadow his father in the governor's office, where apparently 'the attentive young MBS saw how Prince Salman settled disputes and forged compromises, effectively learning the art of Saudi statecraft'.¹⁰ After a brief stint working at the Council of Ministers' Bureau of Experts research unit,¹¹ by 2011 MBS was understood to have been formally installed as his father's 'special advisor'. He was also serving as the secretary-general of the investments-focused National Competitiveness Centre,¹² and—by all accounts—had emerged as a key player in the running of the Riyadh Development Authority.¹³ Significantly, less than a year after Salman bin Abdul-Aziz's appointment as crown prince, MBS was given control over his father's court, which was seen at the time as 'effectively a gateway to power and influence'. He was then promoted to ministerial rank at just twenty-seven years of age,¹⁴ and was subsequently seen 'sitting in on meetings with foreign officials and silently communicating with his father'.¹⁵

MBS was widely regarded as Salman bin Abdul-Aziz's favourite son and—in a good example of *heiratspolitik*¹⁶—had already entered into a high-profile marriage with a daughter of one of Ibn Saud's other sons.¹⁷ He was also perceived by many Saudis as a loyal and traditional 'son of the land' on the basis of his exclusively Saudi education; he had declined the opportunity to study in the West and had instead chosen to read law at King Saud University, graduating fourth in his class.¹⁸ Indeed, as a former Western diplomat recalls, the late-twentysomething MBS was considered 'clever, rugged [and] understanding of the locals'.¹⁹ A former US official even remembers him standing up halfway across the room during Barack Obama's first visit to Riyadh to lecture the president on the nuances of the Saudi system and to offer a personal briefing on how everything worked.²⁰

According to those who knew MBS well at the time, he had already begun to acquire a reputation for being highly motivated and hard-working, if a little combative. At age twenty-six, for example, despite

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initially being banned by King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud from entering the Ministry of Defence on the basis that he was ‘disruptive’ and ‘power-hungry’, MBS was nonetheless soon asked to supervise and streamline the ministry’s spending. He was then later given other ‘special assignments for the Royal Court that called for sharp elbows’.²¹ As former colleagues have further noted, ‘MBS was regarded as particularly ambitious, with an eye on [his father’s] governorship of Riyadh and control of other government entities’.²² He was known for ‘working 16 hour days in a land with no shortages of sinecures’, and even ‘working from morning until after midnight most days’.²³

In this context, MBS was rapidly and substantially elevated following his father’s eventual succession as king, replacing him as the new minister of defence. He was also appointed Secretary-General of the Royal Court,²⁴ and within a week was named chairman of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs—a dynamic new entity intended to replace the old Supreme Economic Commission, spearhead economic development planning, and assume responsibility for the Public Investment Fund or ‘PIF’.²⁵ The dual announcement in April 2015 that Muhammad bin Nayef Al-Saud or ‘MBN’ would be the next crown prince, while MBS would be ‘deputy crown prince’, was in many ways a logical development, despite an ostensible controversy in that it involved the ousting of a sitting crown prince—King Salman’s younger half-brother Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud. By this stage, the ‘next generation’ MBN—one of King Salman’s most prominent nephews—had already held the recently rejuvenated position of deputy crown prince for three months.²⁶ Moreover, at seventy years old, Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz was the youngest of the ten other remaining sons of Ibn Saud.²⁷ There was therefore a practical need to modernize Saudi Arabia’s succession process from one based on straightforward agnatic seniority (where one brother replaced another) to one in which the most capable of the ‘third generation princes’ would be able to take over.²⁸

Far more contentious, however, were the circumstances surrounding MBN’s own ousting in June 2017 and MBS’s subsequent appointment as crown prince.²⁹ This had been partially predicted in a memorandum circulated by Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service in December 2015,³⁰ and was undoubtedly spurred by MBS’s growing

confidence and tightening grip over his father's Royal Court—which by then was the only prominent court, following the abolition of the Crown Prince's Court.³¹ The manoeuvre was nonetheless widely viewed as risky on the grounds that MBN was still assumed to enjoy a wide support base inside and outside the country. Not only a son of the once powerful Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud—another Sudairi Seven member who had served as minister of the interior for many years and had also briefly been crown prince³²—MBN himself had been minister of the interior since November 2012. In earlier roles, dating back to 1999, he had also been credited with developing Saudi Arabia's counter-terrorism programme.³³ Indeed, having survived four assassination attempts and having once been widely referred to as the 'Prince of Counter-Terrorism',³⁴ MBN was understood to be particularly well respected by Western governments and intelligence agencies. In 2009, for example, he was described by US diplomats as having 'beaten down Al-Qaeda' to the extent that 'operations in the US [government's] interest can be conducted in a highly effective and cooperative manner within the Kingdom'.³⁵ In 2016, he was awarded France's *Légion d'Honneur* for his 'efforts in the fight against terrorism and extremism', and a year later he received the CIA's George Tenet medal for his 'excellent intelligence performance, in the domain of counter-terrorism'.³⁶

Officially at least, MBS's side-lining of MBN was justified on the basis that the *Hayat al-Bay'ah* or 'Allegiance Council' had decided to meet and had come to some sort of decision. Established in 2006, it was comprised of Ibn Saud's remaining sons, or the eldest sons of those that had already died. King Abdullah had intended for it to institutionalize the royal family's traditional *bay'ah* or 'oath of allegiance' to new kings while also formalizing collective decision-making regarding the succession process, thus theoretically ensuring no king could ever unilaterally choose his own crown prince.³⁷ After a video appeared on Saudi television depicting MBS kneeling before MBN, kissing his hand, and then accepting a public pledge of allegiance,³⁸ MBS was very quick to emphasize the Council's role and even its democratic elements. Explaining in an interview that he could not have become crown prince 'without the vote among 34 voters representing King Abdul-Aziz's sons', he also claimed that 'I got the highest vote in the

history of Saudi Arabia, more than anyone before me... I got 31 from 34 votes of the Allegiance Council...so historically I made a record in approval votes among the royal family... I became officially crown prince'.³⁹ Meanwhile, in another apparent effort to underscore the Council's role, the Saudi state news agency reported that the decree announcing the change in succession also included a clause requiring future successors to hail from different branches of the family to those of their predecessors (thereby suggesting none of MBS's own sons could ever succeed).⁴⁰ As a senior Norwegian diplomat explained, officials claimed this clause was 'evidence' that 'the *Shura* principle—the indigenous Saudi Arabian version of democracy—still works'.⁴¹

As further details emerged, however, the idea that MBS had managed to seize power following a *de facto* 'soft coup' began to seem more plausible.⁴² Appearing to confirm earlier suspicions that the Allegiance Council had been in a weakened state for several years, and in fact had not even played a role in MBN's appointment, several claims were made that the Council had never actually met to consider MBS's takeover, and that any votes cast had either been communicated by telephone or collected by 'emissaries sent from the Royal Court'.⁴³ Moreover, there were suggestions that everything had been planned well in advance, as on top of scrapping MBN's court MBS had reportedly spent much of the previous two years 'crowding out bin Nayef's daily duties', having 'eliminated a council of advisors who answered to bin Nayef, depriving him of most of his professional staff'.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding official denials, apparently credible reports also began to circulate in the international media indicating that MBN's pledge of allegiance had been far from voluntary—that he had effectively been placed under house arrest, and his bank accounts had been frozen.⁴⁵ As a *New York Times* investigation at the time put it, MBN was 'held against his will and pressured for hours to give up his claim to the throne'.⁴⁶ A subsequent *New Yorker* probe based on Saudi and US sources then described how 'the night before [the coup]...bin Nayef had been summoned to a meeting with King Salman...at the palace, guards surrounded him, confiscated his phone, and demanded that he abdicate...bin Nayef refused'.⁴⁷

Though MBZ's earlier rise to power was more gradual, less dramatic, and attracted far fewer headlines, in many ways it was equally

forceful, determined, and sure-footed. Like MBS, MBZ was of course fortunate to be the son of an extremely powerful man; the late Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan was unquestionably the most important figure in the history of the United Arab Emirates. Taking over in 1966 (with some degree of British backing) from his eldest brother—the purportedly parsimonious and intransigent Shakhbut bin Sultan Al-Nahyan⁴⁸—the youthful and dynamic Zayed bin Sultan had become ruler of Abu Dhabi during a period of massive oil booms and fundamentally transformative socio-economic development.⁴⁹ Five years later, following Britain's elegiac retreat from the region,⁵⁰ and courtesy of Abu Dhabi's relatively greater oil wealth compared to its neighbouring sheikhdoms or 'emirates',⁵¹ Zayed bin Sultan was able to emerge as president of the hastily formed seven-member UAE federation, holding the position until his death in 2004.⁵² The UAE's first few decades were far from smooth-sailing, with weak federal ministries, constitutional crises, little military integration,⁵³ banking collapses in the poorer northern emirates (the 'unequal brothers'),⁵⁴ and the lack of a unified federal foreign policy.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, Zayed bin Sultan seemed to have the knack of turning most of the nascent state's internal disputes to his advantage so that by the end of his reign there was little doubt that whoever ruled Abu Dhabi would always rule the UAE.⁵⁶

Despite MBZ not holding any formal political or dynastic positions for most of his father's life—his two elder half-brothers Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan were crown prince and first deputy prime minister respectively⁵⁷—MBZ was nevertheless well-liked and trusted. He was actively encouraged to spend his twenties and thirties building a career in the military. Notably, after graduating from Britain's Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1979—an experience which some suggest may actually have propagated anti-British sentiments in him⁵⁸—he went on to qualify as a helicopter pilot, and by the late 1980s had been appointed commander of the UAE's small air force. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 (and impressed by the US's apparent steadfastness),⁵⁹ he personally obtained official federal government approval for the US Air Force to carry out practice bombing runs in Emirati airspace. He also orchestrated the UAE's agreement to pay the US Department of the Treasury \$4 billion to help finance the Operation Desert Storm

liberation campaign, pushed for UAE units to join the coalition (in both air and ground operations), and soon began to sign off on many of the UAE's multi-billion-dollar arms procurements.⁶⁰ In 1992, aged just thirty-one, he was officially installed as chief of staff of the UAE's armed forces, below only his father as supreme commander and Khalifa bin Zayed as deputy supreme commander.⁶¹ Meanwhile, MBZ had also been entrusted with overseeing the UAE Offset Programme Bureau—now known as the Tawazun Economic Council⁶²—which was responsible for ensuring that foreign arms contractors ploughed at least some of their revenue back into the UAE's domestic economy.⁶³ He then successfully supervised the negotiations for the Dolphin Gas project, which eventually led to the importing of Qatari natural gas into the UAE and Oman,⁶⁴ and in 2002 founded the fast-growing Mubadala Development Company—a government-backed entity tasked with promoting economic diversification.⁶⁵

With such a track record and increasingly renowned for his ambitiousness and tenacity, by this stage MBZ was already regarded as a major future force, not only in Abu Dhabi but across the entire federation. Moreover, beyond his professional and personal reputation, MBZ also seemed to have emerged as the *de facto* chief representative of what was becoming the ruling family's most powerful faction. Indeed, in a Sudairi Seven-like situation, MBZ was the eldest of six full brothers, the largest such bloc amongst Zayed bin Sultan's nineteen sons. They were the children of Fatima bint Mubarak Al-Qitbi, who by then was widely considered to be Zayed bin Sultan's favourite wife and Abu Dhabi's informal 'first lady'.⁶⁶ Importantly, as with MBZ, the rest of the *Bani Fatima* or 'Sons of Fatima' were all coming of age and beginning to occupy influential positions of their own, thus crowding out Khalifa bin Zayed and Sultan bin Zayed—neither of whom had any full brothers. In 1992, for example, the second eldest, Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, had already been appointed minister of state for foreign affairs. Though officially this made him the deputy of the Ajmani minister for foreign affairs,⁶⁷ Hamdan was considered by many to be second only to his father in formulating the UAE's foreign policy. In 1996 he increased his standing even further when he was made second deputy prime minister and chairman of the UAE's Red Crescent Society—one of the largest and best-resourced charitable

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organizations in the Middle East. In parallel, the third full brother, Hazza bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, had been installed in 1992 as chairman of the state security service at just twenty-six years of age, and was then awarded the rank of general in 1996. Meanwhile, the fourth brother, Tahnun bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, was becoming similarly influential as director of the ruler's private department, which gave him direct, daily access to his father. Arguably even more powerful was the fifth brother, Mansur bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, who in 1994 became chairman of the International Petroleum Investments Company, a major Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund, and then took over the running of the well-resourced foreign aid Agency—the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development. Significantly, in 2001 Zayed bin Sultan even created a new position for Mansur bin Zayed—minister of state for the presidential office—thus making him his main interface at the federal level. The sixth brother, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, also secured an early foothold in federal government; in 1995, he was made undersecretary to the minister of information and culture, and in 1997 became the actual minister, aged just twenty-four.⁶⁸

In this context, few seemed shocked when Zayed bin Sultan announced in late 2003 that MBZ was to become deputy crown prince, thus preventing Khalifa bin Zayed from ever choosing his own crown prince.⁶⁹ There was equally little surprise when MBZ was declared the new crown prince almost immediately after Zayed bin Sultan's death in November 2004 and Khalifa bin Zayed's formal succession as ruler of Abu Dhabi and president of the UAE.⁷⁰ Also as expected, within a month MBZ was appointed chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, thus taking over from Khalifa bin Zayed as the *de facto* emirate-level prime minister, and in January 2005 he was installed as the deputy supreme commander of the UAE's armed forces—below only Khalifa bin Zayed, who had replaced their father as supreme commander.⁷¹ Though certainly much more discreet than MBS's later side-lining of MBN, the much anticipated transferral of executive powers from Khalifa bin Zayed's court to MBZ's court—which appears to have taken place in early 2007—amounted to much the same thing. No one was left in any doubt that MBZ had informally emerged as the undisputed ruler of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.⁷² As the US ambassador to the UAE described in a diplomatic cable soon after,

although ‘officially [MBZ] is the crown prince of the emirate of Abu Dhabi...and his only federal title is deputy supreme commander of the armed forces’, he was ‘[now] the key decision maker on national security issues’ and ‘the man who runs the United Arab Emirates’.⁷³

4.2 *Wider Determinants: Charisma and Youth*

Beyond the immediate circumstances contributing to MBS and MBZ’s early career successes, several wider determinants also appear to have helped smooth their paths to the top. Among these, the most discussed both inside and outside the region have been their carefully managed charismatic blends, and the broader symbolism of their relative youth.

Certainly with respect to charisma, those who have met MBS have depicted him as a ruler with ‘sheer force of character’ and as ‘a long-awaited leader’ on the basis that ‘Saudi hasn’t seen someone of his charisma since his grandfather, King Abdul-Aziz’.⁷⁴ He is said to possess ‘self-confidence bordering on bravado’,⁷⁵ and is ‘not soft...he has a lot of charisma...he makes you feel like you’re super important when you’re talking to him...he really puts on a charm that is unmistakable’.⁷⁶ People also describe a mischievous streak and a fondness for jokes;⁷⁷ he is a ‘benevolent youth’ whose ‘fellow students would gather around him and recite poems of praise, calling him *Kareem*—the generous one—for sponsoring the lavish parties’.⁷⁸ Perhaps just as importantly, beyond his reported penchant for combat video games, he has been portrayed as something of a real life ‘hard man’,⁷⁹ earning the moniker *Abu Rasasa* or ‘Father of the Bullet’ after supposedly once sending an uncooperative government official an envelope with a bullet or two inside.⁸⁰ Reportedly, he has ‘brazenly used his status’ when visiting wealthy businessmen, strong-arming them into investing in his own personal fund.⁸¹ He is also often depicted by the Saudi media as a ‘warrior prince acting decisively in his country’s interests’.⁸²

While such attributes have yet to be fed into a state-sponsored cult of personality, there are certainly signs that MBS and his advisors have sought to showcase and publicize what they believe to be a powerful personal mix of charm, unapologetic straightforwardness, and—where necessary—forcefulness. He has granted numerous interviews, including several with the international media, and undeniably comes

across as relaxed, candid, strong-willed, and in some cases even humorous.⁸³ He is of course enormously wealthy and privileged; reported purchases include a \$300 million French chateau,⁸⁴ a \$450 million Da Vinci masterpiece,⁸⁵ and a \$550 million yacht.⁸⁶ Perhaps aware of the need to make his audience—and presumably, Saudi citizens—more comfortable, he has used such media opportunities to emphasize his fairly modest lifestyle, charitable disposition, and genuine appreciation of the arts. Speaking on *60 Minutes*, for example, he prefaced that ‘I’m a rich person, not a poor person... I’m not Gandhi or Mandela’, before going on to explain that ‘what I do as a person is to spend part of my personal income on charity... I spend at least 51 per cent on people and 49 on myself’.⁸⁷ Likewise, in conversation with *Time* magazine he contended that ‘being rich is not a crime’, while also revealing that ‘actually I love art’ and stating his belief that ‘any human with good taste must admire art’.⁸⁸

MBZ has rarely granted media interviews or attended major international events,⁸⁹ and he seems comfortable with a much lower personal profile than MBS. Still, there is much to suggest that he and his team have also sought to build a strong charismatic façade. Seeking to demonstrate MBZ’s political acumen, for example, in 2008 the Abu Dhabi Centre of Information Affairs published a book entitled *Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan: The Era of Prosperity and Excellence*. The volume, which included sections detailing MBZ’s key decisions and statements, did much to underscore his supposedly wise and generous style of leadership, and his willingness to promote a ‘UAE renaissance’.⁹⁰ Similarly, his official website began to carry a selection of visionary quotes alongside pictures of him meeting a range of citizens, including engineers, soldiers, children, and those with special needs.⁹¹ Since then, in parallel to his regular weekly *majlis*, at which regular citizens can air their grievances, a well-publicized ‘Majlis Muhammad bin Zayed’ forum has been launched, providing MBZ with a vehicle to personally host and entertain very high profile international dignitaries, including Nobel prize laureates and leading philanthropists. It has apparently become ‘a central ritual of Emirati social and political life’.⁹²

Beyond MBZ’s own obvious ‘warrior prince’ credentials, courtesy of his military career, he has clearly also tried to portray himself as

something of a down-to-earth man of the people. Despite reports that his weeklong wedding had been the ‘priciest to date’ at a rumoured cost of \$100 million,⁹³ the rebranding of the UAE’s key trunk road from ‘Emirates Road’ to ‘Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Road’,⁹⁴ and the naming of a large new Abu Dhabi neighbourhood as ‘Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed City’ (now the most popular villa district⁹⁵), in his person he does not seem to carry any airs or graces. Notably, he claims he once worked humbly as a waiter in Morocco living on scraps—as part of some sort of character-building experience organized by his father—and on more than one occasion he has invited foreign scholars with strongly divergent views to spend time with him in Abu Dhabi. He has frequently been described by those who have met him as very personable, discreet, and unostentatious, with a penchant for ‘going off script’, ‘flouting princely decorum’, and for driving around ‘at the wheel of his [own] white Nissan Patrol and showing up unannounced in local restaurants’.⁹⁶ Moreover, as the US ambassador to the UAE recalled in a 2009 diplomatic cable, not only was he quite different to the ‘distant and uncharismatic personage’ of Khalifa bin Zayed, but ‘MBZ [was] proud of the fact that despite having had the option of a life of privilege, he rose through the ranks of the UAE’s armed forces, earning his wings as a helicopter pilot...[he] retained a common touch that appeals to Emiratis’.⁹⁷

As for the importance and advantages of relative youth, in MBS’s case there were evidently significant domestic and international dimensions beyond the need to supplant Saudi Arabia’s fast crumbling agnatic succession system. Besides the simple fact that the dynasty was running out of living sons of Ibn Saud, a particularly rapid and recent series of deaths of elder statesman had undoubtedly begun to ring alarm bells across the country.⁹⁸ Not only had King Abdullah himself died in January 2015, but he had previously buried two of his own crown princes and supposed heirs in quick succession: Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, who died in 2011 after serving as minister of defence for forty-eight years,⁹⁹ and Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, who died in 2012 after thirty-seven years as minister for the interior.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in July 2015—after MBS’s appointment as deputy crown prince but before his installation as crown prince—the veteran former minister of foreign affairs, Saud bin Faisal Al-Saud, had also died.¹⁰¹

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By the time MBS arrived on the scene, Saudi Arabia was also experiencing an unprecedented youth bulge. According to World Bank estimates, in 2015 nearly 26 per cent of the population was believed to be under the age of fifteen—a better measure than alternatives such as ‘under the age of thirty’, given the large number of working age expatriates in the country. Saudi Arabia thus had proportionately an even greater juvenile population than famously youthful countries such as Tunisia, Iran, and even Turkey.¹⁰² In this context it was widely assumed that the gap between the country’s septuagenarian and octogenarian ruling elites and the bulk of the citizenry was becoming ever wider, and that there were likely to be significant grassroots demands for a younger, more representative generation to take the reins. Indeed, writing from an anthropological perspective, in his 2014 study on Riyadh’s joyriding sub-culture Pascal Ménoret revealed an extremely listless and frustrated youth population.¹⁰³ Likewise, Mark C. Thompson has since described in his work on identity politics in Saudi Arabia how the majority of young male citizens felt that society was changing very quickly, but that their opinions were rarely taken seriously by older generations.¹⁰⁴

Unsurprising therefore, MBS’s rise was reportedly very popular with this increasingly important demographic, who he himself described in April 2016 as the ‘real energy and most important advantage [of Saudi Arabia]’.¹⁰⁵ As Bloomberg’s correspondents put it at the time, ‘the ascendance of [MBS] is of acute interest to the half of the population that’s under twenty-five, particularly among the growing number of urbane, well-educated Saudis...accustomed to watching the levers of power operated carefully by the geriatric descendants of the kingdom’s founding monarch’.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the BBC noted that ‘[MBS’s] popularity soared, especially among the predominantly young population who [were] tired of being ruled by men more than half a century older than them... [he] is the first national leader young Saudis can relate to’.¹⁰⁷ The *New Yorker* concluded that ‘in a country long ruled by aging kings, MBS [is] young, tall, and transparently ambitious’,¹⁰⁸ while Karen Elliot House described him as having a ‘relentless energy almost unique in the modern history of this somnolent society... [with its] cast of aged and often infirm royal rulers flickering across the screen’.¹⁰⁹

There is little doubt that the rise of MBS was also seen as something of a buffer against any potential second wave of the mass protests and uprisings that had gripped most of the Arab world in 2011, and Iran in 2009. As a relatively wealthy state which had proved itself capable of massively and swiftly increasing public spending,¹¹⁰ Saudi Arabia had managed to thwart the majority of such activity within its borders, excepting a poorly attended ‘Day of Rage’, a few isolated incidents in the capital, and a more localized, sectarian insurgency in its eastern province.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, given that the social movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and elsewhere had focused not only on economic disparity, but also sought the ousting of unelected elderly dictators,¹¹² there was undoubtedly an uncomfortable awareness in Riyadh and other Gulf state capitals that things would need to change.¹¹³ As discussed, in June 2013 the sixty-one-year-old ruler of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, had already stepped down in favour of his son Tamim, who was thirty-three. Though the abdication-succession was likely also a function of other surrounding factors (including the Egyptian *coup d'état*¹¹⁴), the mainstream—and official—interpretation was that Doha had decided to promote ‘young leadership’. Hamad bin Khalifa declared that ‘the ambition of the coming generation is a priority... the time has come to open a new page in the journey of our nation that would have a new generation carry the responsibilities with their innovative ideas and active energies’.¹¹⁵

MBZ was more than a decade older than MBS at the time of his installation as crown prince, and there was no particularly alarming Emirati youth bulge on the horizon (about 19 per cent of the population was under the age of fifteen in 2004¹¹⁶). Even so, his relative juvenescence still seems to have mattered. Zayed bin Sultan was undoubtedly much admired across the UAE by the time of his death, but the final years of his reign were objectively a poor advert for octogenarian rule.¹¹⁷ Abu Dhabi’s development had largely stagnated and was obviously being outstripped by what was happening up the road in Dubai under the *de facto* rule of its own dynamic crown prince, Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum or ‘MBR’.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Khalifa bin Zayed may only have been fifty-six at the time of his formal succession as ruler of Abu Dhabi, but he was already thought to be in declining health, and several subsequent complications which required lengthy absences from the UAE further

strengthened MBZ's position.¹¹⁹ Certainly, though MBZ was already well established by the time of the 2011 Arab uprisings, there had long been a sense that the UAE was 'ahead of the game', at least regarding the need for more youthful leaders. As the US ambassador to the UAE put it in 2009, 'MBZ [has become a] leader not just in the UAE, but more broadly in the Middle East, where he is seen as a particularly dynamic member of the generation succeeding the geriatric cases who have dominated the region for decades'.¹²⁰

4.3 Wider Determinants: Economic Crises, Fresh Approaches

As another important determinant, MBS and MBZ's initial ascents coincided with periods of relative economic paralysis in Saudi Arabia and the UAE—or more specifically Abu Dhabi—and corresponding demands for more energetic economic leadership and major new development strategies.

In Saudi Arabia, the interval between MBS's appointments as deputy crown prince in April 2015 and then crown prince in June 2017 was a time of great alarm and uncertainty. Not only had overall joblessness risen to 12 per cent,¹²¹ but youth unemployment was nearly 29 per cent, with little prospect of young Saudis finding jobs outside the bloated, oil revenue-financed public sector.¹²² Meanwhile, and as discussed, the 'shale revolution' in the United States and subsequent oil price plunge from June 2014 onwards coincided with quickly increasing—and export limiting—domestic energy demands in Saudi Arabia. These factors, combined with what seemed to be an unknown but indisputably high 'breakeven price',¹²³ had led to Riyadh running an unprecedented budget deficit in 2015, equivalent to more than 15 per cent of GDP.¹²⁴ Amidst OPEC predictions that oil would not reach \$100 per barrel again until at least 2040, and following reports that Saudi Arabia had already withdrawn more than \$115 billion from its reserves in order to cover the shortfall,¹²⁵ the IMF warned that the state had only five years of financial assets remaining.¹²⁶ Dramatically, CNBC's analysts even predicted Riyadh would 'go broke' by summer 2018,¹²⁷ and the *Telegraph* warned that 'if the oil futures market is correct, Saudi Arabia will start running into trouble within two years...[and] will be in existential crisis by the end of the decade'.¹²⁸

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In this context, the opportunity for MBS to present himself as something of a saviour and the architect of a new ‘Fourth Saudi State’¹²⁹—or the ‘New Saudi Arabia’, as per an officially endorsed book featuring MBS’s face on the cover¹³⁰—was undoubtedly enormous, especially given that the ‘old guard’ appeared to have failed to steady the ship. Rather than making any attempt to drastically overhaul the Saudi economy, their only significant response to the post-2014 situation had been to increase oil supply unilaterally in order to gain market share, as they had done in the mid-1980s¹³¹—working on the assumption that a short period of extremely low prices would be enough to ‘crush US oil frackers’ and put many of their new higher-cost competitors out of business. As the chief executive officer of the Saudi Arabian National Oil Company put it, ‘supply and demand and the rules of economics will govern...it will take time for the current glut to be removed’.¹³² Though many smaller US companies were indeed operating on wafer thin margins and the number of rigs did decline rapidly, some remained highly active as new efficiencies were found, and costs began to fall—by over 30 per cent, on average.¹³³ Thus, despite the overall ‘rig count’ having dropped from 1,609 to just 536 by January 2016,¹³⁴ overall US production had only decreased by about 2 per cent from the previous year, and by summer 2017, it had begun to rise again.¹³⁵

Fast responding to the perceived crisis, in April 2016 members of MBS’s team admitted to the international media that Saudi government spending had previously gone ‘berserk’ under King Abdullah’s reign, with ‘roughly between \$80 to \$100 billion dollars [about a quarter of the entire budget] of inefficient spending every year’, and controls on major contracts effectively suspended. Going further than the IMF, CNBC, or the *Telegraph*’s predictions, they even claimed that the country could have gone broke by early 2017, but that MBS had immediately ‘cut the budget by 25 per cent, reinstating strict spending controls’.¹³⁶ At the same time, but more ambitiously, a ‘Saudi Vision 2030’ strategy was launched with the stated aim of ‘growing and diversifying the economy’.¹³⁷ This ‘vision’ closely mirrored the policy recommendations of a December 2014 IMF briefing note,¹³⁸ and appeared to follow up on earlier statements from MBS that foreign ownership shares in private sector Saudi companies could increase from 75 to 100 per cent. He had also been promising

that there would soon be ‘new opportunities for foreign banks to enter the kingdom’,¹³⁹ and reportedly had been engaged in ‘quiet planning’ for a ‘major restructuring of... government and economy aiming to fulfil...his generation’s “different dreams” for a post carbon future’.¹⁴⁰ Thus in many ways, Saudi Vision 2030 was to epitomise the previously discussed ‘late rentierism’ or ‘internationalization of Gulf capitalism’,¹⁴¹ with the strategy’s overall emphasis being on the need for rapid economic liberalization, greater global integration, and a fundamental ‘de-petrolization’ of the Saudi economy.¹⁴² Specific proposals included a series of ‘Future Investment Initiative’ conferences,¹⁴³ a new \$500 billion ‘Neom’ economic free zone on the Red Sea,¹⁴⁴ and a pioneering international tourism industry.¹⁴⁵ More pointedly, its officially stated objectives also comprised the boosting of foreign direct investment, the generation of alternative private sector employment opportunities, a drastic reduction in the government’s dependency on oil export revenue, and a significant diversification of the country’s economic base.¹⁴⁶

Though superficially similar to earlier and often stumbling schemes presented by other Gulf states,¹⁴⁷ Saudi Vision 2030 and its offshoots—including a shorter term ‘National Transformation Programme’¹⁴⁸—was nonetheless apparently regarded by most citizens as rather ground-breaking, and as an absolutely essential step in the right direction. Moreover, even if MBS’s January 2016 announcement that Saudi Aramco itself would seek foreign investment via a public offering was, as described, soon undermined by data transparency issues¹⁴⁹ (and despite the international media speculating that many Saudis would see it as ‘selling off the family silver’¹⁵⁰), the radical nature of the proposal—which involved channelling the proceeds through the PIF into Saudi Vision 2030 projects¹⁵¹—also seems to have had modest popular backing.

Certainly, beyond Saad Abdulrahman Al-Karni’s recent social media study—which found that 53 per cent of Saudi tweets on Saudi Vision 2030 were positive, compared to 23 per cent negative and 24 per cent neutral¹⁵²—the interview data collected for this volume appears even more supportive. Notably, 96 per cent of incumbent / former Saudi state functionaries and 78 per cent of other Saudi stakeholders largely agreed that ‘Saudi Vision 2030 is necessary for

the future well-being of the country'.¹⁵³ Meanwhile, 68 per cent of incumbent / former Saudi state functionaries and 56 per cent of other Saudi stakeholders largely agreed that 'the proposed Saudi Aramco public offering is necessary for the future well-being of the country'.¹⁵⁴ Among the detailed responses, one interviewee stated that 'before Vision 2030 there was no feeling that the government had a plan for digging the country out of its hole', while another remarked that 'the Aramco IPO [initial public offering] seems the most obvious way to raise the capital we need'.¹⁵⁵ The broader survey data collected for this volume shows that 71 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that 'Saudi Vision 2030 is necessary for the future well-being of the country', while only 15 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, 59 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that 'the proposed Saudi Aramco public offering is necessary for the future well-being of the country', while 30 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.¹⁵⁷

Though the economic situation in Abu Dhabi and the UAE at the time of MBZ's November 2004 appointment as crown prince was far less chaotic, with oil prices actually rising and a fast shrinking budget deficit,¹⁵⁸ there were nonetheless several very serious concerns which many felt had been left unaddressed for too long. There was the aforementioned sense that Abu Dhabi was generally being 'left behind' in relation to MBR's increasingly magnificent Dubai—MBZ even admitting Dubai as being 'a step ahead of us' and acknowledging 'it's good to have a challenge'.¹⁵⁹ Beyond this, though, there was a growing fear that the emirate's largely undiversified, oil export-dependent economy was rapidly overheating. With few domestic investment opportunities and an ever-growing money supply, overall inflation was believed to be 11 per cent, while food price inflation was thought to be between 15 and 20 per cent.¹⁶⁰ As a local businessman lamented at the time, 'the need for opening new investment outlets is dire in order to control inflation and maintain economic growth earnings'.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the fast-growing population in Abu Dhabi, which had shot up from just over 600,000 in 1995 to nearly 1,000,000 in 2004,¹⁶² combined with a limited housing stock, had led to almost hyperinflationary rent increases and in many cases an acute shortage of suitable accommodation, even for Emiratis.¹⁶³

As in Saudi Arabia, there was also growing unease regarding unemployment—though again, less alarmingly so. Overall joblessness in the UAE was only 3 per cent, but youth unemployment had been steadily increasing and by 2005 stood at over 8 per cent.¹⁶⁴ Crucially, many of the unemployed youths were believed to be ‘voluntarily unemployed’ Emiratis who had not yet found public sector employment (which offered easier conditions and a high ‘reservation wage’),¹⁶⁵ and who were instead content to live on rentier state subsidies rather than trying to work in the expatriate-dominated private sector. Indeed, reports circulating at the time suggested that the majority of those claiming benefits were degree holders and ‘able-bodied and capable of work’.¹⁶⁶ Though a long-recognized problem—numerous ‘labour nationalization’ programmes had been launched over the years,¹⁶⁷ and even Zayed bin Sultan had once remarked he ‘could not understand how physically fit young men can sit idle and accept the humiliation of depending on others for their livelihood’¹⁶⁸—nothing seemed to be working and the situation was worsening. As Fatma Al-Sayegh noted, previously ‘young Emiratis had no difficulty in finding a job... in fact, “unemployment” was totally foreign’, however the private sector increasingly ‘sought to employ Asians and non-Arabs because they were much cheaper to hire...in no time, the private sector was dominated by foreign workers’.¹⁶⁹

Abu Dhabi’s deepening balance of trade deficit was also disquieting. Imports were thought to exceed exports by about fifty-fold, and there were consequent qualms over the future competitiveness of nascent domestic non-oil industries. According to official data, in 2003 more than \$350 billion of Abu Dhabi’s total non-oil trade of about \$500 billion comprised of consumer imports, while another \$140 billion was made up of re-exports, mostly destined for Iran and India. Only the tiny remainder constituted ‘genuine’ exports, mostly destined for Saudi Arabia and India.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, notwithstanding Abu Dhabi’s enormous hydrocarbon wealth, by this stage the emirate and other parts of the UAE were expected to soon face significant energy shortages. Eighty-five per cent of Abu Dhabi’s power plants were gas-fuelled,¹⁷¹ so hopes had initially been pinned on the Dolphin Gas project. Nonetheless, Dolphin was never expected to fully accommodate Abu Dhabi’s future gas needs,¹⁷² and there was soon a

realization that other long-term measures were needed. In fact, by the time MBZ gained greater executive powers in 2007 the UAE's domestic gas consumption had already begun to outstrip production. A number of major energy-intensive development initiatives had also started to stall, including various construction projects in the capital and an urgently needed Abu Dhabi-financed desalination plant in the emirate of Umm al-Qawain.¹⁷³

In this context MBZ soon became associated with far-reaching efforts to shake-up Abu Dhabi's economy, and was able to position himself as a necessarily vigorous and corrective force. After establishing (and chairing) the new Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development in 2006, with a mission to 'provide a platform for government and private sectors to work together to achieve sustainable economic growth and diversification',¹⁷⁴ his team's initial 'Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda' soon morphed into a new strategic initiative: 'Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030'.¹⁷⁵ This quickly led to a dramatic streamlining that brought the number of Abu Dhabi civil servants from 64,000 down to just 7,000,¹⁷⁶ and represented a significant departure from business as usual in the oil exporting emirate. As with MBS's later Saudi Vision 2030, it seemed to symbolize an evolving, adaptive form of rentierism. Notably, its stated objectives included 'a large empowered private sector', 'integrating Abu Dhabi further into the global economy by attracting foreign as well as local investment', and 'the creation of higher value employment opportunities, especially for nationals'.¹⁷⁷ The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism played an important supporting role, launching its own masterplan 'aligned with the strategic blueprints of the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030', which was intended to raise dramatically tourism's non-oil GDP contribution.¹⁷⁸ MBZ's Mubadala Development Company soon also emerged as the vanguard of a new type of Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth activity. Investing in several technology-focused multinationals, mostly in the aerospace,¹⁷⁹ electronics,¹⁸⁰ ship-building,¹⁸¹ and defence industries,¹⁸² with the explicit objective of then establishing joint manufacturing ventures in Abu Dhabi, Mubadala's strategy was intended as a further means of boosting foreign investment and growing the emirate's non-oil economy, while providing citizens

with an additional layer of career choices—even if they were not strictly speaking in the private sector.¹⁸³

Cognisant of the looming domestic energy crisis, Mubadala was also made responsible for spearheading efforts to diversify Abu Dhabi's international hydrocarbon interests by acquiring a range of foreign companies. These included the Singapore-based Pearl Energy, which held concessions to exploit a number of East Asian gas fields,¹⁸⁴ and a number of smaller exploration firms operating in North Africa.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, other Abu Dhabi entities were encouraged to buy into overseas operations, including the Abu Dhabi National Energy Company,¹⁸⁶ which acquired stakes in North Sea and Canadian oil concessions (and even in a French renewables company),¹⁸⁷ and the International Petroleum Investments Company, which began to invest in Kazakhstan's gas industry.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps most radically of all, in 2008 MBZ's team announced their intention to establish a civilian nuclear energy industry in Abu Dhabi.¹⁸⁹ With four planned reactors, the stated objective was for nuclear power to meet 25 to 30 per cent of the emirate's total energy needs by 2020,¹⁹⁰ and for the industry to receive international approval by formally seeking a US '123 Agreement' for peaceful nuclear cooperation.¹⁹¹

As with MBS's proposals, MBZ's economic planning seems to have been welcomed in the UAE, with the interview data collected for this volume suggesting that 95 per cent of incumbent / former Emirati state functionaries and 90 per cent of other Emirati stakeholders largely agreed that 'Abu Dhabi's recent economic plans have been necessary for the future well-being of the country'.¹⁹² Among the detailed responses, one interviewee noted that in her ministry 'things really started to turn around after [MBZ's accession] and there was a real sense of moving forward very fast'. Another commented that 'I am sometimes a bit worried by the pace of change but there is no doubt we needed to change things around if we are to survive when the oil runs out'.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, the broader survey data collected for this volume shows that 76 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that 'Abu Dhabi's recent economic plans have been necessary for the future well-being of the country', while only 11 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.¹⁹⁴

4.4 *Wider Determinants: Repairing Reputations*

Just as they were able to emerge as the drivers of urgently needed new development strategies, MBS and MBZ also appear to have benefited significantly from commitments to deliver ‘clean breaks’ from predecessor regimes—or at least, elements within them—long accused of aiding and abetting international terrorist organizations. Indeed, the interview data collected for this volume indicates that many in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been deeply concerned, with 73 per cent of incumbent / former citizen state functionaries and 87 per cent of other citizen stakeholders largely agreeing that ‘the overall reputation of Saudi Arabia / the UAE (as appropriate) has been put at risk by historical associations with extremists’.¹⁹⁵ Among the detailed responses one Saudi interviewee bemoaned that ‘this country always had a problem with Bin Laden and his gang and that stains us in the eyes of many all around the world’, while another claimed that ‘everyone is suspicious of us, it’s like they think we are a terrorist state’. Likewise, one Emirati interviewee expressed the view that ‘we really needed to move on from the past, like all the Gulf states’, while another remarked that ‘unfairly the UAE is often guilty by association with Saudi Arabia...that needed to change’.¹⁹⁶ Mostly supporting these points, the broader survey data collected for this volume shows that 68 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the overall reputation of Saudi Arabia / the UAE (as appropriate) has been put at risk by historical associations with extremists’, while only 16 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.¹⁹⁷

In MBS’s case, there seems little doubt his rise was seen by many in Riyadh as an important opportunity for substantial reform and a necessarily new approach. On the one hand he may have lacked the extensive counter-terrorism experience of his side-lined cousin, MBN, but on the other hand he was something of a *homo novus* with his reputation as yet untarnished, and with the nature of his mostly development-focused early career trajectory having kept him at a safe distance from the kinds of compromising *realpolitik*—or perhaps in some cases ideologically motivated—relationships associated with some of his older relatives.¹⁹⁸

Indeed, by the time of MBS’s first major appointments it had arguably become more necessary than ever for such a fresh stance. In 2007,

the US Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the Department of the Treasury had already stated, 'If I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the funding from one country, it would be Saudi Arabia'.¹⁹⁹ A year later he doubled down on his conclusions, telling a US Senate committee that Saudi Arabia was still the leading source of funding for Al-Qaeda along with 'other extremist networks'.²⁰⁰ Likewise, diplomatic cables written in 2009 by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other US officials had noted that 'donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide', and that 'Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Laskhar-e-Taiba, and other terrorist groups'.²⁰¹ In particular, the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca was said to remain 'a vacuum in [Saudi] security' with cash-rich pilgrims still flowing freely in and out of the country.²⁰² Similarly, in 2013 the Directorate-General of External Policies for the European Parliament had reported that 'Saudi Arabia has been a major source of financing to rebel and terrorist organizations since the 1970s' and had predicted that the number of 'indoctrinated jihadist fighters' would continue to increase.²⁰³

Making matters worse was the rapid territorial expansion of the so-called 'Islamic State' in 2014, which saw the extremist and seemingly well-resourced Sunni organization capture the second-largest Iraqi city of Mosul and further extend its control over the Syrian governorate of Raqqa.²⁰⁴ These events meant that fingers inevitably began to be pointed at affluent sympathizers in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. After all, a report published by a bipartisan US congressional panel on the subject of the Islamic State's pre-2013 incarnation, the 'Islamic State of Iraq',²⁰⁵ had already concluded that 'private Saudi citizens are giving millions of dollars to Sunni insurgents in Iraq and much of the money is used to buy weapons, including shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles'.²⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the Associated Press's correspondents had also cited one-to-one interviews held with truck drivers in Iraq who 'described carrying boxes of cash from Saudi Arabia into Iraq, money they said was headed for insurgents', while Iraqi officials were quoted as saying that '\$25 million in Saudi money went to a top Iraqi Sunni cleric and was used to buy weapons...through the black market'.²⁰⁷

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Just weeks after the June 2014 fall of Mosul, a former director of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, Richard Dearlove, told an audience that he had no doubt wealthy Saudis had 'played a central role in the Islamic State's surge into Sunni areas of Iraq and Syria'. Going further, he claimed there had been a Riyadh-led Sunni sectarian plot, revealing that a very senior Saudi official had once warned him that 'the time is not far off in the Middle East...when it will literally be God help the Shia'.²⁰⁸ In October 2016, a two-year-old item of correspondence between Hillary Clinton and her presidential campaign manager, which presumably drew on classified material, had then entered the public domain and was subsequently reported on by the international media. In the context of a plan to provide greater US support for the embattled Free Syrian Army, Clinton had suggested that 'we need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to ISIL ['the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant'] and other radical Sunni groups in the region'. Moreover, Clinton had proposed that such actions would put 'the Qataris and Saudis... in a position of balancing policy between their ongoing competition to dominate the Sunni world and the consequences of serious US pressure'.²⁰⁹

A 2017 report published by Conflict Armament Research, a European Union and German government-funded organization which had documented more than 40,000 weapons recovered from the Islamic State since 2014, seemed to back Dearlove and Clinton's assertions further. The report contended that the group's arsenal went 'far beyond [those weapons] that would have been available...through battlefield capture alone', and concluded that 'Iraq and Syria have seen Islamic State forces use large numbers of weapons, supplied by states such as Saudi Arabia... against the various international anti-[Islamic State] coalitions'.²¹⁰

Arguably even more serious than the Islamic State situation, however, was the increasingly likely prospect that Saudi Arabia would be formally blamed for the 11 September 2001 or '9/11' attacks on the New York World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon (in which fifteen of the nineteen hijackers had been Saudi citizens).²¹¹ In late 2014, a New York federal court ruled that the Saudi government

was no longer allowed to claim sovereign immunity with respect to a long-running class action lawsuit representing the families of the 9/11 victims.²¹² Concurrently, several former US officials submitted affidavits claiming that Saudi agents had been at the ‘center of a US-based support network that received several of the hijackers upon their arrival in the US, and provided assistance to those hijackers critical to the success of the 9/11 plot’.²¹³ Senator Bob Graham, who had previously served as the co-chairman of a joint congressional inquiry into the attacks, even made a sworn statement claiming that elements of the Saudi state had indeed been involved.²¹⁴ Further court proceedings went on to claim that ‘since 2005...the FBI has declassified hundreds of documents relating to the investigation of...a Saudi intelligence agent who provided direct assistance to several of the 9/11 hijackers in support of the 9/11 attacks’.²¹⁵

By September 2016, the situation was even more alarming for Riyadh. Both the US Senate and House of Representatives had unanimously passed an immunity-lifting bill that effectively confirmed the New York court’s original ruling.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, and equally damaging for Saudi Arabia, a member of the US government’s official 9/11 Commission had decided to come forward in what was described as the ‘first serious public split among the ten commissioners since they issued [their] 2004 report’. Speaking to the media, he noted that ‘there was an awful lot of participation by Saudi individuals in supporting the hijackers, and some of those people worked in the Saudi government’. He also revealed that the Commission had been aware of ‘at least five Saudi government officials who were strongly suspected of involvement in the terrorists’ support network’. He stated that ‘they may not have been indicted...[but] they were certainly implicated... there was an awful lot of circumstantial evidence’.²¹⁷ More cautiously, two other Commission members declared that ‘when it comes to the Saudis, we still haven’t gotten to the bottom of what happened on 9/11...lines of investigation that were pursued by Congress [were] never adequately explored by the Commission’.²¹⁸ Soon afterwards, a former FBI agent made a sworn statement claiming that ‘based on evidence we gathered during the course of our investigation, I concluded that diplomatic and intelligence personnel of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia knowingly provided material support to [two of the]

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9/11 hijackers and facilitated the 9/11 plot...my colleagues in our investigation shared that conclusion'.²¹⁹

Further compounding the problem, prior to MBS's installation as crown prince the official Saudi 9/11 strategy seemed to be backfiring. Shortly before the US Senate's first discussion of the new bill, a former Saudi ambassador to the US had taken to the local media to remind Washington that 'we buy US treasury bonds, with small interest returns, that help [the US's] economy'.²²⁰ By 2016, the language had become more threatening; Saudi officials had reportedly told US lawmakers that if US courts took any further 9/11-related action, then Riyadh would be 'forced to sell up to \$750 billion in treasury securities and other assets in the United States before they could be in danger of being frozen by American courts'.²²¹ Indeed, the Saudi minister of foreign affairs appeared to confirm this hard-line position, making it clear he was 'warning' the US that future 9/11 proceedings could cause 'an erosion of investor confidence [in the US]'.²²² Generating even more bad publicity, it was soon also reported that a covert Saudi-funded lobbying campaign had been encouraging US military veterans to speak out against the bill on the basis it might lead to other countries retaliating, and US servicemen overseas being exposed to legal action. Upon learning of the Saudi sponsorship, some of the veterans went on to publicly condemn the campaign on the grounds that it had been 'crossing the line', that they felt 'used', and that they were 'duped'.²²³

In this context, the recent confirmation from MBS and members of his team that Saudi Arabia had indeed historically supported Islamic extremist groups seems to represent a radical attempt by the unsullied new regime to draw a line under the past and to begin repairing the country's extremely poor reputation. In conversations with visiting former US officials in September 2016, for example, senior MBS advisors were keen to explain—as part of a 'new and unprecedented policy of honesty'—that Saudi Arabia's historic 'support for extremism' was a 'way of resisting the Soviet Union, often in cooperation with the United States, in places like Afghanistan in the 1980s'. Moreover, they freely conceded that their forebears had 'created a monster that had begun to devour them', and further admitted that '[Saudi Arabia] did not own up to it after 9/11 because we feared you would abandon or treat us as the enemy... and we were in denial'.²²⁴ Soon after, one of

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MBS's new ministers told journalists that '[Saudi Arabia] had 30 wasted years' as a result of being 'hijacked by... jihadists and extremists',²²⁵ while the *New Yorker's* correspondents noted how a suitably contrite MBS had 'promised to end the long-standing arrangement of Saudi domestic politics, in which the royal family and its myriad princes bought off political opposition by allowing radical Islamists to propagate their creed and even to carry out terrorist acts abroad'.²²⁶ Speaking to the media himself, MBS then acknowledged that 'yes, there are people from Saudi Arabia who financed terrorist groups... this is against Saudi law',²²⁷ before going on to add that 'Saudi Arabia is the biggest victim of the extremist ideology'.²²⁸

Though the UAE's reputation was never quite so poor as Saudi Arabia's, MBZ's rise also coincided with a significant opportunity to 'turn the page' on some of the country's darker history. In the early 1990s, the Abu Dhabi-based Bank of Credit Commerce International, which was partially owned by the ruling family, had collapsed. Following the fallout, during which a US-led international investigation concluded that the bank had been involved in money laundering, gun-running, and the financing of terrorist organizations,²²⁹ the UAE then effectively became the second-most accused state with regard to the 9/11 attacks. Not only were two of the hijackers Emiratis, but according to the FBI they and most of the other men had flown directly to the US from Dubai.²³⁰ Moreover, the 9/11 Commission and the British Parliament's Select Committee on Foreign Affairs soon reported that nearly all of the financing for the operation had flowed through the UAE using either the unregulated *hawala* system or regular bank transfers.²³¹ According to Richard Clarke, the US National Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the time, a deeply concerned MBZ called him on the day of the attacks to say '*Carte blanche*—just tell me what to do'. MBZ then persuaded his father to move fast and arrest approximately 200 Emiratis and 1,600 other UAE residents known to have been planning to travel to Afghanistan to join Al-Qaeda.²³²

Soon after MBZ's installation as crown prince—but before his accumulation of greater executive powers in 2007—the UAE's lingering post-9/11 reputation then appeared directly responsible for derailing a lucrative deal, which would have seen the Dubai Ports World company assume managerial control over several major US

ports, including those of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.²³³ With numerous mainstream US media outlets referencing the UAE's putative terror associations in reports²³⁴—and with a US congressional committee voting nearly unanimously in March 2006 to block the arrangement on national security grounds²³⁵—the episode was seen as an urgent wake-up call in Abu Dhabi. Likewise, the eventual publication of several highly critical US diplomatic cables, most of which referred to evidence of UAE terror links earlier in the decade, further strengthened MBZ's hand. One item described how 'UAE-based donors have provided financial support to a variety of terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Laskhar-e-Taiba', and contended that 'the UAE's role as a growing global financial centre, coupled with weak regulatory oversight, makes it vulnerable to abuse by terrorist financiers and facilitation networks'.²³⁶ Meanwhile, other dispatches claimed that organizations based in the UAE (and Saudi Arabia) which 'ostensibly had the support of those governments' had been financing jihadist recruitment centres in northern India to the tune of \$100 million a year.²³⁷ The US government was also concerned 'that Dubai is being used for the facilitation of the flow of Taliban funds, goods and personnel to and from Afghanistan'.²³⁸ The dispatches were emphatic: 'there is no doubt about UAE connections to Taliban finance'.²³⁹

4.5 Wider Determinants: Mentor–Mentee Relations and the Trump Factor

A further possible determinant, though a harder one to substantiate, is that the more established MBZ not only served as a role model for his younger counterpart MBS, but may at some stage have been counselling or even directly assisting him. After all, back in 2005 MBZ had already revealed to a senior US diplomat that he was 'more worried about... the collapse of the House of Saud than anything else', and that the UAE's largest neighbour could potentially be taken over by 'someone like the one we are chasing in the mountains' (in reference to Osama bin Laden). On that basis, he felt 'we have to help [the Saudi royal family] help themselves'.²⁴⁰ Additionally, in 2009 US officials recorded that 'while publicly expressing close ties with Riyadh, the UAE privately regards the Kingdom as its second greatest security threat after Iran... this is based on historic enmity... as well as deep

seated if rarely articulated anxiety about what might happen if Saudi Arabia came under a more fundamentalist regime'.²⁴¹

Following MBS's first key promotions—which MBZ appears to have predicted²⁴²—it was widely assumed that some sort of symbiotic mentor–mentee relationship, or even something more conspiratorial, had developed between the two men based on shared interests, common enemies, and burgeoning opportunities. The *New York Times*, for example, soon maintained that 'MBS...in many ways is MBZ's protégé',²⁴³ while the *Guardian's* correspondents suggested that 'MBZ... has acted as a mentor for Saudi Arabia's young and embattled crown prince, Muhammad bin Salman, during his rapid ascent to be heir to the throne'.²⁴⁴ Richard Sokolsky and Daniel DePetris styled MBZ as the 'patron of Saudi Arabia's own crown prince',²⁴⁵ and Neil Quilliam observed how 'MBZ was able to capitalize on the challenges that MBS faces within the kingdom and present him with a blueprint that appears to have appealed to his personality'.²⁴⁶ Simon Henderson, meanwhile, noted that 'they appear to have a mentee/mentor relationship, with the older MBZ viewing MBS as the future king of Saudi Arabia, who needs to be tutored by an older brother type figure'.²⁴⁷ Since then William Law has also described how 'MBZ is happy to let MBS have centre stage while he is in the wings, watching, working and manipulating', while Arwa Ibrahim has claimed that 'MBZ drives the relationship... Saudi Arabia's MBS shares his vision for the region... MBS seems to look up to MBZ's achievements as a model of success, while the latter plays an important role in supporting the younger crown prince'.²⁴⁸

Largely corroborating such views, the interview data collected for this volume seems to point to a mutually beneficial understanding between the two *de facto* rulers, and perhaps even something stronger. Notably, 93 per cent of incumbent / former citizen state functionaries and 72 per cent of other citizen stakeholders largely agreed that 'the crown princes of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia are natural allies and it is important that they work closely together'.²⁴⁹ Among the detailed responses, one Saudi interviewee described how 'MBZ is on the same page as His Highness [MBS]...they see the world the same way and have definitely been working with each other'. Another remarked that 'they are like brothers and want the same thing for their people... we are now one family'. Comparably, one Emirati interviewee said

she felt ‘a great relief that these two strong leaders have found each other and want to follow the same path forward’, while another stated that ‘[MBZ] is a wise “uncle” and a good influence on our young Saudi friend’.²⁵⁰ The broader survey data collected for this volume shows that 80 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the crown princes of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia are natural allies and it is important that they work closely together’, while only 16 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.²⁵¹

Despite supporting documentary evidence of the MBS-MBZ partnership still being a little thin, it not only seems likely in terms of domestic dynamics that MBZ played a guiding role in Riyadh’s recently hardening position against Saudi supporters of Islamist organizations,²⁵² but perhaps that he also facilitated the side-lining of MBN. Indeed, as the *New Yorker* has claimed, based on papers supplied by US officials, at one point MBN himself tried to warn King Salman that some form of UAE-sponsored *coup d’état* was in the works. He reportedly wrote a letter declaring that ‘we are facing a dangerous conspiracy...an Emirati plot has been exposed to help aggravate the differences within the Royal Court’.²⁵³ MBZ’s relationship with MBN was already known to be extremely poor; MBZ once told a group of US diplomats that MBN’s father (Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz) had a ‘bumbling manner’, which proved ‘Darwin was right’. Other US officials subsequently concluded that ‘after this [comment], there was no possibility of a relationship between MBZ and [Muhammad] bin Nayef’.²⁵⁴

It also seems probable that MBS was initially operating under MBZ’s tutelage on international relations, particularly when it came to adopting some of the UAE’s more hawkish positions. On Iran, for example, Saudi Arabia and the UAE’s joint intervention in Yemen against the putatively Tehran-linked Houthi forces—‘Operation Decisive Storm’—began within weeks of MBS’s January 2015 appointment as minister of defence and just days before his April 2015 promotion to deputy crown prince.²⁵⁵ Moreover, almost all of MBS’s subsequent statements on Iran—and especially the international Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran’s nuclear programme or ‘JCPOA’²⁵⁶—appear to have tallied extremely closely with MBZ’s earlier expressed opinions. A former US deputy national security advisor for strategic communications has since described how ‘MBS...

came to echo MBZ... they hated the Iran nuclear deal because it took the United States off a collision course with the Iranian government'.²⁵⁷ For instance, MBS pointedly used one of his biggest media interviews to stress that 'the Iranian supreme leader [Ali Hosseini Khamenei] makes Hitler look good... Hitler didn't do what the supreme leader is trying to do... Hitler tried to conquer Europe... the supreme leader is trying to conquer the world'.²⁵⁸ This bears very close resemblance to MBZ's 2009 warning to US officials that 'Iran may also unleash terrorist cells against Western interests around the world... [and] compared to pre-WWII Europe... Ahmadinejad is Hitler'.²⁵⁹

Similarly, just weeks before MBS's June 2017 installation as crown prince—and thus likely part of a transactional arrangement—MBZ appeared to have finally enlisted the support of Saudi Arabia, along with Egypt and Bahrain, in forming an international 'Anti-Terror Quartet'. The aim of the Quartet was to effectively challenge Qatar, which stood accused of being the Muslim Brotherhood's chief sponsor and of renegeing on earlier secret agreements signed with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait.²⁶⁰ Going far further than MBZ's earlier efforts to push King Abdullah into action,²⁶¹ the new Quartet promptly severed ties with Qatar, launched a diplomatic and economic embargo, and quickly issued a list of thirteen 'demands' against the alleged extremist-enabling state.²⁶² In June 2018, on the first anniversary of the crisis, Saudi Arabia then joined the UAE in staging the first ever meeting of the new bilateral 'Saudi–Emirati Coordination Council'.²⁶³ Officially described as the outcome of an agreement reached in 2016—though it reportedly began working in June 2017²⁶⁴—the new MBS and MBZ joint-chaired organization provided a means of bypassing the longstanding Gulf Cooperation Council, thereby marginalizing Qatar even further. Notably, its 'Strategy of Resolve' (based on three pillars: 'economic', 'human and knowledge', and 'political-security-military') significantly overlapped with the GCC's objectives, as did most of its specifically stated aims. In particular, it was to focus on 'enhancing integration and maintaining the sovereignty of both nations regionally and globally', 'coordination in foreign military assistance, cooperation in the maintenance of military systems... standardisation of the military industry', and 'the joint manufacturing of ammunition, light weapons, vehicles, and electronic shooting systems'.²⁶⁵

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As with his bellicose statements on Iran, MBS's public position on the Brotherhood—and by extension, Qatar—again seems to have been very close to MBZ's known views. In his April 2018 media interviews, MBS claimed that the Brotherhood was part of a 'triangle of evil' alongside Iran and groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. He insisted that the 'Brotherhood is another extremist organization... they want to use the democratic system to rule countries and build shadow caliphates everywhere...then they would transform into a real Muslim empire', and explained that 'one of the reasons we have a problem with Qatar is that we are not allowing them to use the financial system... to collect money from Saudis and give it to extremist organizations'. He argued that 'a person...doesn't get from normal to terrorist... he gets from normal to a little bit conservative, to a little bit extreme then more extreme until he's ready to turn into a terrorist...and the Muslim Brotherhood network, it's part of this movement'. He further contended that 'Al-Qaeda leaders, ISIS leaders, they were all Muslim Brotherhood first...this is very clear...if you see Osama bin Laden, he used to be in the Muslim Brotherhood... if you see Baghdadi the leader of ISIS, he used to be from the Muslim Brotherhood...actually if you see any terrorist, you will find that he used to be from the Muslim Brotherhood'. Making a link to Europe, he also suggested that the Brotherhood's 'main target is to radicalize Muslim communities in Europe...they hope that Europe in 30 years will turn to a Muslim Brotherhood continent, and they want to control the Muslims, in Europe...so this will be much more dangerous than the Cold War, than ISIS, than Al-Qaeda, than whatever we've seen in the last hundred years of history'.²⁶⁶

To compare, a November 2004 US diplomatic cable dispatched just a week after MBZ's succession as crown prince recorded him stating that 'we are having a (culture) war with the Muslim Brotherhood in this country', and describing how he (and his brothers) 'rarely fail to tell high-level US [government] interlocutors about the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood on moderate-thinking Emiratis'.²⁶⁷ Similarly, a January 2007 cable documenting a meeting between MBZ and the US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs recounted MBZ's strong disagreement over Washington's promotion of Arab elections and his declaration that 'the Middle East...is not California...in

the post 9/11 world in any Muslim country you will see the same result... the masses in the Middle East would tend to go with their hearts and vote overwhelmingly for the Muslim Brotherhood and the jihadists represented by Hamas and Hezbollah'.²⁶⁸ In a follow-up February 2007 cable—based on a discussion between MBZ and the commander of US Special Operations Command—MBZ again seemed keen to conflate 'Islamists' with 'jihadists', reportedly having stressed the dangers of radicalization to Emirati society and revealing that the UAE had already 'lost' some of its 'own young men...to the Islamists'. As he put it, '[the men were] recruited for jihad in Afghanistan without their even knowing what was happening... this recruitment is a greater threat than most people think...[there are] smart, intelligent, and well-spoken mullahs and imams who are successfully recruiting everywhere'.²⁶⁹ More dramatically, according to a February 2009 cable describing MBZ's comments to US officials attending an Abu Dhabi military conference, he was reported to have warned them that the Brotherhood was the UAE's 'mortal enemy' and to have reiterated his 'desire to defend his country as a counterpoint to extremists' loyalty to [the Brotherhood's] movement'. Furthermore, MBZ allegedly claimed that Qatar 'is part of the Muslim Brotherhood' and then—building on one of his earlier statements that Qatar's Al-Jazeera was 'the mouthpiece of Al-Qaeda'²⁷⁰—made 'strident remarks about Qatar's dangerous ties to extremist elements'. On this basis, the cable's author reflected that 'being labelled a Muslim Brother is about the worst epithet possible in MBZ vocabulary'.²⁷¹

In parallel—and heavily intertwined with these MBN, Iran, Brotherhood, and Qatar-related dynamics—there are increasing indications that MBZ's team may also have been pushing successive US governments to accept MBS as their natural ally and the man most capable of transforming Saudi Arabia into another US-friendly 'UAE-like' state. During the latter months of Barack Obama's presidency—which MBZ reportedly did not trust, for several reasons²⁷²—a former US official has recalled how Emirati diplomats 'started praising MBS to visitors as a visionary, a reformer, a man of energy and action, someone to be trusted and supported'. He stressed how 'implicit in this campaign was the assurance that MBS was like-minded, an extension of MBZ in strategy and outlook', and how 'with MBZ's backing, the

message seemed to be that the desert kingdom was soon going to look like Abu Dhabi, where the economy was about more than oil, women could drive, and the authoritarianism was kept conveniently out of the sight of Western visitors'.²⁷³ Though it is unclear exactly what Obama's views on MBS were during this period, at one point there was nonetheless 'talk inside the administration of finding an "MBS whisperer" who could mentor the young prince'.²⁷⁴

In any case, even before Obama's departure MBZ appeared to have begun making a determined effort to boost MBS's relationship with Donald Trump. He was undoubtedly enamoured with Trump's earlier campaign pledges to withdraw the US unilaterally from the JCPOA,²⁷⁵ and had likely identified an opportunity to place the UAE—and an MBS-led Saudi Arabia—at the heart of a new US Middle East policy. Thus, an emissary representing both MBZ and MBS had reportedly already met with members of Trump's team in August 2016,²⁷⁶ and in mid-December 2016 it is known that MBZ himself travelled to New York to meet with incoming officials, including Trump's senior adviser and chief strategist.²⁷⁷ US diplomats have since described how, by this stage, MBZ was already 'planning to use his strong relationship with the United States president to achieve his intentions' and soon began to sponsor public relations firms to promote MBS in Washington as his steadfast ally and as a superior alternative to MBN.²⁷⁸

Overall, the strategy appeared to have paid off, as within a few months of Trump's victory it emerged he was considering designating both Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Brotherhood as terrorist organizations.²⁷⁹ Soon after, Trump's May 2017 visit to Saudi Arabia—his first overseas presidential trip—focused heavily on supporting MBS's newly established 'Global Centre for Combatting Extremist Ideology'.²⁸⁰ A few weeks later he then provided initially strong public support for the embargo against Qatar, which appeared to allow the UAE and Saudi Arabia a much freer rein than they had experienced under the George W. Bush and Obama administrations.²⁸¹ In June 2017, the ousting of MBN was also seemingly US-approved, with a former CIA director later claiming that 'Muhammad bin Nayef did not go willingly... MBS reportedly cleared his removal with Washington, whether that was the White House or CIA'.²⁸²

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Since then, Trump's acrimonious March 2018 firing of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has been directly linked to anti-Qatar UAE lobbying—the UAE's ambassador to the US was reportedly aware of the plan three months in advance.²⁸³ In May 2018, Trump then announced the US's withdrawal from the JCPOA, and the imminent reinstatement of US nuclear sanctions on Iran.²⁸⁴ Following the October 2018 assassination of the high-profile dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the White House also appeared willing to endorse the shifting Saudi narrative, which quickly moved from complete denial to descriptions of a spontaneous 'fistfight' that had got out of control.²⁸⁵ Indeed, Trump first repeated suggestions that 'rogue killers' were responsible for Khashoggi's death.²⁸⁶ He then cast doubt on a 'very premature' CIA assessment of the situation that pointed to a premediated operation, while simultaneously reassuring Riyadh over US–Saudi relations. Finally, he dismissed a subsequent UN request for the FBI to launch an investigation into the death.²⁸⁷

In April 2019, Trump's press secretary confirmed that the US would begin moving ahead with the designation of the Brotherhood and would be seeking to impose sanctions on the organization in the near future.²⁸⁸ A few months later, in June 2019, it was revealed that the White House had earlier approved—without informing Congress—two nuclear technology transfer agreements with Saudi Arabia.²⁸⁹ Over the course of the rest of the year, three of Trump's six presidential vetoes—all of which survived attempted Senate overrides—protected the US's military relations with Saudi Arabia, while a fourth protected relations with the UAE.²⁹⁰ Seemingly intended to thwart such congressional scrutiny in future, especially with regard to Saudi and UAE arms sales, it soon emerged that 'senior Trump administration officials [had been] quietly discussing whether to end a decades-old process for congressional review that has allowed lawmakers from both parties to block weapons sales to foreign governments over humanitarian concerns'. As reported at the time, 'a decision by the Trump administration to block Congress from the arms sales review process would not just free up deals with Saudi Arabia... it would also effectively push through sales of Predator drones to the United Arab Emirates'.²⁹¹

Meanwhile, despite MBS's apparent new stance on Saudi Arabia's historic support for Islamic extremist groups, in September 2019

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it was claimed that the White House had been seeking to block the release of a further tranche of documents concerning allegations of Saudi state involvement in the 9/11 attacks.²⁹² In January 2020 the *New York Times*' correspondents then observed that 'Washington's efforts to keep secrets about possible Saudi connections to 9/11 have... intensified'. According to a sworn declaration made by a former FBI agent in support of the families of the 9/11 victims, FBI lawyers had warned him he risked violating secrecy laws and that 'the Trump administration did not want him to help [the families] because it could imperil "good relations with Saudi Arabia"'.²⁹³

199. Saudi Arabia's scores being 7, 7, and 7; and the UAE's being 6.5, 7, and 6. Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019: Turkmenistan', 1 January 2019; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2016: Uzbekistan', 1 January 2017; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019: Belarus', 1 January 2019; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019: Azerbaijan', 1 January 2019; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019: Saudi Arabia', 1 January 2019; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019: United Arab Emirates', 1 January 2019.
200. Saudi Arabia's ranking being 159th and the UAE's being 147th. Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2018: Me too? Political participation, protest and democracy' [date accessed: 1 July 2019], pp. 39–40; Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2016: "Revenge of the Deplorables"' [date accessed: 30 August 2019], p. 11.
201. In 2018 the liberal democracy scores (on a scale of 0 to 1) were: Saudi Arabia 0.04, UAE 0.11; Turkmenistan 0.06, Belarus 0.12, Azerbaijan 0.06. The deliberative democracy scores were: Saudi Arabia 0.06, UAE 0.12, Turkmenistan 0.05, Belarus 0.11, Azerbaijan 0.05. In 2016 the liberal democracy and deliberative democracy scores for Uzbekistan were 0.04 and 0.07 respectively. Varieties of Democracy, '2019 data' [date accessed: 24 February 2020].

4. ROUTES TO POWER: THE RISE OF MBS AND MBZ

1. The Sudairi Seven included Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud (king from 1982 to 2005), Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud (crown prince from 2005 to 2011), and Nayf bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud (crown prince from 2011 to 2012). *New York Times*, 'Man in the news: Saudi prince on space voyage – Sultan Salman Al-Saud', 19 June 1985; *Telegraph*, 'Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud', 17 June 2012; Bloomberg, 'Crown Prince Sultan's Death Starts Plan for Saudi Succession', 1 November 2011; *Financial Times*, 'Obituary: King Fahd—a forceful but flawed ruler', 1 August 2005.
2. Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud succeeded his older half-brother Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud. BBC, 'Saudi Arabia: Why succession could become a princely tussle', 23 January 2015.
3. Saudi Arabia Embassy in the US, 'Council of Ministers: Membership' [date accessed: 10 November 2019].
4. BBC, 'Saudi Arabia names Prince Salman as new defence minister', 5 November 2011.
5. BBC, 'Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince's death raises succession questions', 18 June 2012; D. Roberts, 'Saudi Succession after the Death of Crown Prince Nayef', RUSI Analysis, 19 June 2012.
6. The Descendants' Council was established in 2000 by King Fahd in order to 'solve family matters, reach consensus and try to avoid any publicly embarrassing behaviour of some family members'. Strategic Information and Developments, 'Saudi Arabia King Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud Handbook', International Business Publications, 2015, p. 44.
7. K. Ullrichsen, 'Mohammed bin Salman's uncertain future amid a new oil war and COVID-19', Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, 13 March 2020.

8. Reuters, 'As Khashoggi crisis grows, Saudi king asserts authority, checks son's power: sources', 19 October 2018.
9. *New York Times*, 'MBS: The Rise of a Saudi Prince', 21 March 2020.
10. BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019].
11. MBS reportedly worked at the Bureau of Experts for two years, but after having his promotion blocked by King Abdullah he returned to his father's office. K. Elliot House, 'Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030', Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, p. 14; *New York Times*, 'MBS: The Rise of a Saudi Prince', 21 March 2020.
12. The National Competitiveness Centre was established by the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority to monitor the performance of all Saudi sovereign investments. It was understood that Salman bin Abdul-Aziz later re-established the centre outside the authority's control. Oxford Business Group, 'The Report: Saudi Arabia', December 2008; Gulf States Newsletter, 'Mohammed bin Salman: More Visible Presence', April 2011; Bahrain News Agency, 'Prince Sultan arrives to Bahrain to attend Bahrain Grand Prix', 22 April 2012.
13. In 2011 it was also reported that MBS was predicted to take over the Riyadh Development Authority, even though it was under the control of the influential Al-Sheikh family. Gulf States Newsletter, 'Mohammed bin Salman: More Visible Presence', April 2011.
14. In 2014 MBS formally became a member of the Council of Ministers (as a minister of state). BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019]; *Saudi Gazette*, 'Leadership's trust in me is my motivation—Muhammad', 3 March 2013; S. Henderson, 'Sudden Succession: Examining the Impact of Abrupt Change in the Middle East', Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Note 63, April 2019, p. 2.
15. Reuters, 'Special Report: As a Saudi prince rose, the Bin Laden business empire crumbled', 27 September 2018.
16. *Heiratspolitik* being the practice of using marriages to build alliances with members of the old elite. For a discussion in the context of neo-sultanistic regimes see M.R. Thompson, 'The Marcos Regime in the Philippines' in H. Chehabi and J. Linz (eds.), *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p.215. For a general discussion on the important of marriage alliances in the Gulf monarchies see J. Onley and S. Khalaf, 'Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-Oil Gulf: An Historical–Anthropological Study' in *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2006, p. 194.
17. In 2008 MBS had married Sara bint Mashhur bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud. Gulf States Newsletter, 'Mohammed bin Salman: More Visible Presence', April 2011; Arab Digest, 'The Future of the Middle East' [date accessed: 11 November 2019].
18. It is understood that MBS declined the opportunity to study in the US or Britain, unlike many of his older brothers and other close relatives. K. Elliot House, 'Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030', Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, p. 14; BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019]; *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018; Bloomberg, 'The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia's Economy Off Oil', 21 April 2016.

19. Reuters, ‘Special Report: As a Saudi prince rose, the Bin Laden business empire crumbled’, 27 September 2018.
20. This episode being based on the reflections of Ben Rhodes, a former US deputy national security advisor for strategic communications. It is likely that this took place during Barack Obama’s first visit to Saudi Arabia in June 2009. *Atlantic*, ‘A Fatal Abandonment of American Leadership’, 12 October 2018; *Washington Post*, ‘Saudi king greets Obama on eve of president’s address’, 4 June 2009.
21. As Karen Elliot House has claimed, MBS eventually found favour with King Abdullah after carrying out a variety of sensitive tasks (including asking a wife of the late King Fahd to vacate her palace). Bloomberg, ‘The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia’s Economy Off Oil’, 21 April 2016; K. Elliot House, ‘Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman’s Vision 2030’, Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, pp. 11–12.
22. Gulf States Newsletter, ‘Mohammed bin Salman: More Visible Presence’, April 2011.
23. Bloomberg, ‘The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia’s Economy Off Oil’, 21 April 2016.
24. *Al-Arabiya*, ‘Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman named defense minister’, 23 January 2015.
25. The PIF was reorganized under the authority of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs in March 2015. *Financial Times*, ‘Saudi king stamps his authority with staff shake-up and handouts’, 30 January 2015; Saudi Arabia Embassy in the US, ‘Vision 2030’ [date accessed: 7 April 2020]. Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Cabinet Session’, 23 March 2015. For a discussion on the PIF see introduction endnote 23 and sections 5.2, 6.1.
26. The position of deputy crown prince had been recreated in early 2014 (after decades of lying empty), when Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz was appointed deputy crown prince. However, as Michael Herb notes, previously different positions were used to signify who was next in line after the crown prince. Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz had been appointed crown prince following Salman bin Abdul-Aziz’s January 2015 succession (with MBN being appointed deputy crown prince). *Al-Monitor*, ‘The Saudi Succession Question’, 14 April 2014; M. Herb, ‘The Saudi succession and challenges facing Saudi Arabia’, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, August 2014, pp. 1–2; BBC, ‘Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz dies’, 23 January 2015; Reuters, ‘New Saudi Deputy Crown Prince marks generational shift’, 23 January 2015; *Financial Times*, ‘Saudi king stamps his authority with staff shake-up and handouts’, 30 January 2015; Reuters, ‘Saudi King Salman appoints Prince Mohammed bin Nayef as new crown prince-state TV’, 29 April 2015; BBC, ‘Saudi Arabia’s king announces new heirs to throne’, 29 April 2015.
27. Beyond King Salman (born 1935), at that time the other surviving sons of Ibn Saud were (in order of age seniority): Muqrin (born 1945); Ahmad (born 1942); Mashhur (1942); Mamdouth (born 1941); Turki (born 1934); Nawwaf (1932); Abdul-Rahman (born 1931); Mutaib (born 1931); Talal (1931); Mishaal (born 1926); and Bandar (born 1923).
28. Bloomberg, ‘The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia’s Economy Off Oil’, 21 April 2016; Reuters, ‘Saudi Arabia acts fast on succession after king’s death’, 23 January 2015.

29. BBC, 'Saudi king's son Mohammed bin Salman is new crown prince', 21 June 2017; Bloomberg, 'The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia's Economy Off Oil', 21 April 2016.
30. The memorandum warned that 'in an attempt [by MBS] to establish himself in the royal succession while his father is still alive, he could overreach with expensive measures or reforms that would unsettle other members of the royal family and the population...' *New York Times*, 'Germany Rebukes Its Own Intelligence Agency for Criticizing Saudi Policy', 3 December 2015; *Telegraph*, 'Saudi Arabia destabilising Arab world, German intelligence warns', 2 December 2015; Reuters, 'German spy agency warns of Saudi shift to 'impulsive' policies', 2 December 2015.
31. K. Smith Diwan, 'Saudi Arabia Reassigns Roles within a More Centralized Monarchy', Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 22 January 2019.
32. Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz had been appointed minister of the interior in 1975 and crown prince in 2011 (but had died in 2012). BBC, 'Obituary: Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud', 16 June 2012; *Telegraph*, 'Obituary: Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud', 17 June 2012.
33. In 1999 MBN had been appointed assistant minister of the interior, therefore working directly under his father. BBC, 'Saudi Arabia's king appoints new interior minister', 5 November 2012; Reuters, 'Saudi official denies former crown prince confined to palace', 29 June 2017; *Wall Street Journal*, 'Saudi Authorities Freeze Former Crown Prince's Bank Accounts', 8 November 2017.
34. The third and most serious assassination attempt took place in 2009 (an Al-Qaeda-linked suicide bombing). *Saudi Gazette*, 'Fourth assassination attempt against Prince foiled', 16 August 2010; *Washington Post*, 'Meet the Saudi royal family's rising star, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef', 23 January 2015; B. Riedel, 'The Prince of Counter-Terrorism', Brookings Institution, 29 September 2015; *Daily Sabah*, 'Profile: Saudi Arabia's 'prince of counter-terrorism' Mohammed bin Nayef', 22 June 2017.
35. US Department of State, 'USG–Saudi MOI Partnership (cable: 09RIYADH474_a)', 30 March 2009.
36. *Guardian*, 'France awards Legion d'Honneur to Saudi prince "for terror fight"', 7 March 2016.
37. The Allegiance Council theoretically also includes any adult sons of the king and the crown prince. *Economist*, 'The Saudi succession: When kings and princes grow old', 15 July 2010; T. Lippman, 'Saudi Arabia's Seamless Succession', Middle East Institute, 28 January 2015; Oxford Dictionary of Islam, 'Bay'ah' [date accessed: 14 November 2019].
38. As the *New Yorker* described, 'viewers of...the Saudi state news channel, witnessed a surreal scene: MBS, his face shrouded by a red-and-white checked kaffiyeh, strode up to his rival bin Nayef, theatrically kissed his hand, and dropped to his knees... before MBS could explain himself, bin Nayef declared his fidelity to his cousin: "I pledge allegiance to you, through the best and the worst"...MBS stood up and, furiously shaking bin Nayef's hand, offered his own affirmation: "we will always seek your guidance"'. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
39. *Time*, 'Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Talks to TIME About the Middle East, Saudi Arabia's Plans and President Trump', 5 April 2018.

40. According to the amended second paragraph of article 5 of the Saudi Basic Law of Governance, ‘The ruling shall be in the sons of the founder King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud and the sons of sons, and the best one shall be pledged allegiance on the Holy Quran and the Prophet’s Sunnah, and after the sons of the founder King shall not be a King and a Crown prince of one branch of the offspring of the founder King’. Saudi Press Agency, ‘A number of Royal Orders issued 2 Makkah’, 21 June 2017.
41. T. Fjærtøft, ‘The Saudi Arabian Revolution: How Can It Succeed?’, in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2018, p. 136.
42. ‘Soft coup’ is most often used in reference to non-violent changes of power in which little role is played by the military, but in which the plotters use partially or wholly illegal means. The term has mostly been associated with the work of Gene Sharp. A. Leo, ‘Some words are more powerful than guns: Interview with Nobel Peace Prize nominee Gene Sharp’ in *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2015, p. 85.
43. In 2012 Allegiance Council member Talal bin Abdul-Aziz had even claimed that they had not been consulted on Salman bin Abdul-Aziz’s succession. It has also been claimed that the Council had been unable to comment on the appointment of deputy crown princes or other earlier second-in-line positions. Reuters, ‘Saudi Prince Muqrin named second-in-line to succeed king’, 27 March 2014; P. Aarts and C. Roelants, *Saudi Arabia: A Kingdom in Peril* (London: Hurst & Co., 2015), p. 128; S. Henderson, ‘Sudden Succession: Examining the Impact of Abrupt Change in the Middle East’, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Note 63, April 2019, p. 5; *Islam Times*, ‘Saudi Allegiance council ineffective: Saudi prince Talal’, 21 June 2012; M. Herb, ‘The Saudi succession and challenges facing Saudi Arabia’, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, August 2014, p. 2.
44. *New Yorker*, ‘A Saudi Prince’s Quest to Remake the Middle East’, 2 April 2018.
45. With regard to denials one Saudi official claimed that any claims of house arrest were ‘untrue, completely false, and baseless’ and that these were ‘unfounded rumours’ started by Iran. Another official stated that ‘it’s just in the changeover period... MBS does not want to take any risks... it is not house arrest, nothing like that at all’. *Wall Street Journal*, ‘Saudi Authorities Freeze Former Crown Prince’s Bank Accounts’, 8 November 2017; *New Yorker*, ‘A Saudi Prince’s Quest to Remake the Middle East’, 2 April 2018; *Guardian*, ‘Deposed Saudi crown prince confined to palace’, 29 June 2017; CNN, ‘Saudi official denies ousted crown prince under house arrest’, 29 June 2017.
46. *New York Times*, ‘Saudi King’s Son Plotted Effort to Oust His Rival’, 18 June 2017.
47. *New Yorker*, ‘A Saudi Prince’s Quest to Remake the Middle East’, 2 April 2018.
48. According to British diplomatic correspondence from the time, Shakhbut bin Sultan had been unwilling to authorize development plans or listen to Zayed bin Sultan’s advice. It was noted, for example, that ‘[Zayed] was consistently bitter about Shakhbut, and openly so... he said that his brother has set his mind absolutely against development plans’; that Zayed bin Sultan had told Shakhbut bin Sultan that, ‘under your rule there is complete chaos, and as you are unwilling, at any time, to take advice, the only alternative is to leave things in your hands... if you are sincere in your desire to work for the people in the state, you should not only seek but also take the advice of the [British] agent’. With regard to Shakhbut bin Sultan’s eventual removal, one version (which is perhaps the most palatable to Abu Dhabi’s residents

today) is that Zayed bin Sultan confronted him personally in the ruler's fort and informed him that Britain would allow him to continue only as a figurehead ruler and that he (Zayed bin Sultan) would need to become a grand vizier—in control of the sheikhdom's finances and development projects. It was only when Shakhbut bin Sultan rejected this offer that Zayed bin Sultan informed him that a contingent of the British-organized Trucial Oman Scouts was waiting outside to lead him away. An alternative and perhaps equally plausible account is that the acting British political resident and the commander of the Trucial Oman Scouts met with Shakhbut bin Sultan in the fort and politely but firmly asked him to abdicate in the interests of his people. The bewildered Shakhbut bin Sultan was then given the opportunity to telephone Zayed bin Sultan, who was not present. Zayed bin Sultan then explained to Shakhbut bin Sultan that it would be best for him to retire peacefully and that he would be guaranteed a safe departure from Abu Dhabi with full ceremonial honours. When Shakhbut bin Sultan refused to leave the fort, the commander of the Scouts called upon the ruler's bodyguards manning the ramparts to come out with their hands up. The Scouts then courteously formed a guard of honour for Shakhbut bin Sultan as he was driven in his car to the airstrip and then put aboard an RAF aircraft bound for Bahrain and then Beirut. A. Rugh, *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). p. 78; A. Wheatcroft, *With United Strength: Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the Leader and the Nation* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2005), pp. 139–40; *Times*, 'Obituary: Glencairn Balfour-Paul', 10 August 2008.

49. In 1967, for example, Abu Dhabi's annual oil exports were already £63 million. D. Hawley, *The Trucial States* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 204.
50. By the early 1960s, with public demands for a greater commitment to rebuilding the domestic economy and improving the welfare state, British parliamentary politics was increasingly dominated by the issue of imperial retrenchment. Britain's armed forces had already been recalled from all outposts 'east of Aden' and it seemed likely a retreat from the Gulf states was imminent, especially given Britain's annual spending of £317 million on maintaining its Middle Eastern bases. The announcement came much sooner than expected, with a Westminster white paper published in late 1967 having called for a complete British extraction from the region within four years. G. Wilson, *Rashid's Legacy: The Genesis of the Maktoum Family and the History of Dubai* (Dubai: Media Prima, 2006). p. 258; J. Anthony, *The United Arab Emirates: Dynamics of State Formation* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2002). p. 25.
51. By the mid-1960s, Abu Dhabi's oil revenues were sufficient to allow it to provide 80 per cent of the budget for the British-organized Trucial States Development Fund (which was for the collective use of the sheikhdoms of the lower Gulf in treaty or 'trucial' relations with Britain). On this basis, Britain's envoy at the time noted that the centre of the lower Gulf's economy was already gravitating to Abu Dhabi and that only Abu Dhabi could sustain a federal project. G. Wilson, *Rashid's Legacy: The Genesis of the Maktoum Family and the History of Dubai* (Dubai: Media Prima, 2006), pp. 128, 138, 196–8; N. Sharabah, 'The Federal Experiment of the United Arab Emirates, 1971–1977', PhD dissertation, University of Cairo, 1980 [in Arabic].

52. As per article 52 of the UAE's constitution, Zayed bin Sultan was (nominally) re-elected as president every five years by the six other members of the Supreme Council of Rulers. Constitute Project, 'United Arab Emirates Constitution of 1971 with Amendments through 2004' [date accessed: 22 April 2020], p. 11. For a general discussion on the creation of the UAE federation see: M. Peck, 'Formation and Evolution of the Federation and its Institutions' in I. Abed and P. Hellyer (eds.), *United Arab Emirates: A New Perspective* (Dubai: Trident, 2001), pp. 145-160; F. Heard Bey, *Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Region* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2016), pp. 188–98.
53. In the late 1970s, for example, Abu Dhabi had attempted to centralize control over each emirate's hydrocarbon revenues and to ensure each emirate increased its contribution to the federal budget. Moreover, requests were made for the various emirate-level militias to be merged into a federal force. These developments eventually led to a full-blown crisis which saw Dubai, Ra's al-Khaimah, and Umm al-Qawain threatening to leave the UAE; a petition being signed by Zayed bin Sultan's supporters; and protests taking place in favour of increasing the powers of the federal government. Following Kuwaiti diplomatic intervention, the crisis was resolved after Abu Dhabi agreed to scale back its demands for federal integration (apart from the ministry of the interior, which gained greater powers) and the ruler of Dubai agreed to take on the role of federal prime minister. J. Overton, 'Stability and Change: Inter-Arab Politics in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf', PhD Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1983, p. 186; J. Anthony, *The United Arab Emirates: Dynamics of State Formation* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2002), p. 115; F. Heard-Bey, 'The UAE: A Quarter Century of Federation' in M. Hudson (ed.), *Middle East Dilemma: The Politics and Economics of Arab Integration* (London: IB Tauris, 1999), pp. 137–8; A. Wheatcroft, *With United Strength: Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the Leader and the Nation* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2005), p. 208; Middle East Economic Digest, 'UAE crisis', 1 July 1978; F. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates* (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 396–401; G. Wilson, *Rashid's Legacy: The Genesis of the Maktoum Family and the History of Dubai* (Dubai: Media Prima, 2006), pp. 386–7, 390; Peck, M., *The United Arab Emirates: A Venture in Unity* (Boulder: Westview, 1986), p. 131.
54. In her study on nationhood and state-building in the UAE, Frauke Heard-Bey has described the northern emirates as Abu Dhabi's 'unequal brothers'. With regard to banking collapses, in 1985 Ra's al-Khaimah's national bank's increasing problems required Abu Dhabi's assistance. In turn, this led to federal ministries taking over several hitherto locally provided services in the emirate. Similarly, during the 1980s Abu Dhabi had had to step in to take care of some of Sharjah's debts, but this was ultimately insufficient to prevent the 1989 collapse of four commercial banks after the Sharjah government defaulted on loans of over \$500 million. The federal Central Bank was unable to intervene, thus leaving the door open for a Saudi consortium to step in and provide a rescue package. F. Heard-Bey, 'The United Arab Emirates: Statehood and Nation-Building in a Traditional Society' in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 2005, pp. 357–75; S. Rizvi, 'From Tents to High Rise: Economic Development of the United Arab Emirates' in *Middle Eastern Studies*,

- Vol. 29, No. 4, 1993, p. 669; Oxford Business Group, 'United Arab Emirates: The Report', January 2000, pp. 71–2; J. Peterson, and R. Sindelar (eds.), *Crosscurrents in the Gulf: Arab Regional and Global Interests* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 207–8; H. Van der Meulen, 'The Role of Tribal and Kinship Ties in the Politics of the United Arab Emirates', PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 1997, p. 211.
55. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, Ra's al-Khaimah tried to gain external backing to form an autonomous state, first from the Soviet Union and then from Iraq. Then, during the Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988, Abu Dhabi had publicly backed the Arab League's supportive stance on Iraq whilst Dubai and Sharjah remained neutral, continuing to trade and maintain cordial relations with Iran (with at one point an estimated third of all Iranian imports passing through Dubai). In 1991 only Abu Dhabi and Dubai openly supported the US-led liberation of Kuwait while the other emirates remained silent, perhaps fearful of future Iraqi reprisals. F. Al-Sayegh, 'Post 9/11 Changes in the Gulf: The Case of the UAE' in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2004, p. 100; G. Wilson, *Rashid's Legacy: The Genesis of the Maktoum Family and the History of Dubai* (Dubai: Media Prima, 2006), p. 437; E. Al-Gurg, *The Wells of Memory: An Autobiography* (London: John Murray, 1998), p. 143; Peck, M., *The United Arab Emirates: A Venture in Unity* (Boulder: Westview, 1986), p. 133.
 56. This is perhaps best illustrated by a 1996 agreement between the rulers of the seven emirates to make the UAE's constitution permanent; amalgamate all emirate-level militias; confirm Abu Dhabi as the capital city; and allow federal ministries to taking over a range of hitherto locally provided services. As per the agreement, in 1997 Dubai's separate 'Central Military Command' was duly folded, as was Ra's al-Khaimah's 'Northern Regional Command'. S. Foley, 'The United Arab Emirates: Political Issues and Security Dilemmas' in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998; D. Roberts, 'Bucking the Trend: The UAE and the Development of Military Capabilities in the Arab World' in *Security Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2020, pp. 27–8; E. Ardemagni, 'Martyrs for a Centralized UAE', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 June 2019.
 57. Khalifa bin Zayed was appointed crown prince in 1971. Between 1971 and 1973 Khalifa bin Zayed was also briefly the federal prime minister, minister of defence, and minister of finance, as his father lacked suitable candidates and Dubai had yet to be properly brought on board. Between 1973 and 1977 he then served as the federal deputy prime minister. Sultan bin Zayed replaced Khalifa bin Zayed as deputy prime minister in 1990, but it was understood that his position was mainly ceremonial. Earlier he had also been chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Public Works (appointed in 1988) and chief of staff of the Union Defence Force (appointed in 1978 but having lost the position in 1982). A. Rugh, *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 89; H. Van der Meulen, 'The Role of Tribal and Kinship Ties in the Politics of the United Arab Emirates', PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 1997, p. 97; M. Pope, *Businessman's Guide to the United Arab Emirates* (Sharjah: Dar al-Fatah, 1996), p. 295; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 63, 97–8; *Gulf News*, 'UAE President Sheikh Khalifa mourns death of Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan', 18 November 2019.

58. For example, as Simon Henderson and Kristian Ullrichsen have claimed, MBZ's Sandhurst experience 'bred in him animosity toward Britain'. S. Henderson and K. Ullrichsen, 'Sudden Succession: MBZ and the Future Leadership of the United Arab Emirates', Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Note 65, July 2019, p. 4.
59. Indeed, as Zoltan Barany notes of this period (with regard to all the Gulf states), 'for the Gulf countries...two key takeaways from the Gulf War were the reliability of the United States as an ally and the US military's power and technological sophistication...' Z. Barany, 'The Formative Moments That Shaped the Gulf Arab Militaries', Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 23 June 2020, p. 16.
60. Economist Intelligence Unit, 'UAE update', January 2000; Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, 'HH's Biography' [date accessed: 16 November 2019]; *New York Times*, 'The most powerful arab ruler isn't MBS. It's MBZ', 3 June 2019; Reuters, 'White House veterans helped Gulf monarchy build secret surveillance unit', 10 December 2019; P. Salisbury, 'Risk Perception and Appetite in UAE Foreign and National Security Policy', Chatham House, Middle East and North Africa Programme, July 2020, p. 10.
61. Economist Intelligence Unit, 'UAE update', January 2000; Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, 'HH's Biography' [date accessed: 16 November 2019]; *Gulf News*, 'December 30, 1992: Mohammad becomes Chief-of-Staff', 1 September 2018; H. Van der Meulen, 'The Role of Tribal and Kinship Ties in the Politics of the United Arab Emirates', PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 1997, p. 97.
62. The UAE Offset Programme Bureau was renamed in 2012 on its twentieth anniversary (*tawazun* meaning 'balance'). *Khaleej Times*, 'UAE Offset Program renamed', 11 June 2012.
63. MBZ was appointed chairman of the UAE Offset Programme Bureau in 1992. As David Roberts notes, the new bureau gave MBZ a 'direct funding source' and allowed him to 'control the procurement policies without seeking funding from other power centers in the state...this strengthened his position in the state and allowed him to develop a wider role in society as a key statewide investor, which raised his profile'. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, 'HH's Biography: Roles and Responsibilities' [date accessed: 16 November 2019]; C. Davidson, *The United Arab Emirates: A Study in Survival* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005), pp. 127–8; D. Roberts, 'Bucking the Trend: The UAE and the Development of Military Capabilities in the Arab World' in *Security Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2020, p. 27.
64. The Dolphin Gas project was conceived in 1999 and construction began in 2002. It has been supplying Abu Dhabi since 2007 (with 2 billion cubic feet of gas per day) and Oman since 2008. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 98–9; Middle East Economic Digest, 'Dolphin Pipeline: Top Stories and Fast Facts', 16 June 2008; *Gulf News*, 'Dolphin turns on gas supply for Oman', 1 November 2008.
65. MBZ was appointed chairman of the Mubadala Development Company in 2002. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, 'HH's Biography: Roles and Responsibilities' [date accessed: 16 November 2019].
66. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), p. 98.
67. Referring to Rashid Abdullah Al-Nuami.

68. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 99–100; C. Davidson, *The United Arab Emirates: A Study in Survival* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005). p. 102; H. Van der Meulen, 'The Role of Tribal and Kinship Ties in the Politics of the United Arab Emirates', PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 1997, p. 123.
69. The decision may have taken place as early as 1999 at a meeting in Geneva attended by members of the Al-Nahyan and Al-Maktoum families. Economist Intelligence Unit, 'UAE update', November 1999; Gulf States Newsletter, 'With MBZ's promotion, Sheikhha Fatima sons take centre stage', 12 November 2003.
70. Khalifa bin Zayed succeeded as ruler of Abu Dhabi in early November 2004. He was appointed president of the UAE following a one day care-taker presidency held by Maktoum bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (the ruler of Dubai and vice-president of the UAE). It was understood that Maktoum bin Rashid had presided over an informal decision made by the other five members of the Supreme Council of Rulers that the presidency should remain in the hands of the Al-Nahyan family and should therefore pass to Khalifa bin Zayed. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), p. 102; S. Henderson and K. Ulrichsen, 'Sudden Succession: MBZ and the Future Leadership of the United Arab Emirates', Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Note 65, July 2019, p. 4.
71. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, 'HH's Biography: Roles and Responsibilities' [date accessed: 16 November 2019].
72. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 79, 102–3.
73. US Department of State, 'Scenesetter for the President's meeting with Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed (cable: 09ABUDHABI862_a)', 31 August 2009.
74. Citing Malek Dahlan, an international lawyer. BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019].
75. K. Elliot House, 'Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030', Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, p. 4.
76. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
77. BBC, 'MBS: My strange experience of teaching the Saudi crown prince', 9 December 2018.
78. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018
79. Reportedly, MBS's favourite diversion is playing the video game *Call of Duty* (a first person 'shoot 'em up' war game). *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018; BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019]; *Economic Times*, 'How Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman manages to make headlines', 19 July 2018.
80. As the *New Yorker* describes, 'according to a story that circulates in Riyadh, MBS demanded that a Saudi land-registry official help him appropriate a property... after the official refused, he received an envelope with a single bullet inside'. Writing a year later Elliot House recounted the same story but with two bullets (and with King Abdullah reportedly warning Salman bin Abdul-Aziz to keep your son on a short leash'). As Ben Hubbard has since described, 'there were two bullets in some versions of the story'. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the

- Middle East’, 2 April 2018; *New York Times*, ‘MBS: The Rise of a Saudi Prince’, 21 March 2020; K. Elliot House, ‘Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman’s Vision 2030’, Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, p. 11.
81. As the *New Yorker* describes, after making such visits MBS was able ‘in a matter of weeks, to raise thirty million dollars’. *New Yorker*, ‘A Saudi Prince’s Quest to Remake the Middle East’, 2 April 2018.
 82. BBC, ‘Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia’s crown prince rose to power’ [date accessed: 24 October 2019].
 83. His interviews with the international media have included: CBS News, ‘Saudi Arabia’s heir to the throne talks to 60 Minutes’, 19 March 2018; *Atlantic*, ‘Saudi Crown Prince: Iran’s Supreme Leader “Makes Hitler Look Good”’, 2 April 2018; *Time*, ‘Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Talks to TIME About the Middle East, Saudi Arabia’s Plans and President Trump’, 5 April 2018; CBS News, ‘MBS denies ordering Khashoggi murder’, 30 September 2019.
 84. Referring to Chateau Louis XIV near Versailles, which was sold in 2015 to an intermediary. *New York Times*, ‘World’s Most Expensive Home? Another Bauble for a Saudi Prince’, 16 December 2017; *Guardian*, ‘\$300m French chateau bought by Saudi prince linked to Leonardo purchase – report’, 18 December 2017.
 85. Referring to Leonardo da Vinci’s *Salvator Mundi*, which sold in 2017 to an intermediary. Bloomberg, ‘That Missing \$450 Million Da Vinci Painting Is Reportedly on Saudi Crown Prince MBS’ Yacht’, 10 June 2019; *Guardian*, ‘Leonardo masterpiece being kept on Saudi prince’s yacht’, 10 June 2019.
 86. Referring to the yacht *Serene*, which was purchased in 2015. *New York Times*, ‘Rise of Saudi Prince Shatters Decades of Royal Tradition’, 15 October 2016; *Independent*, ‘Saudi prince Mohammed bin Salman ‘buys £452m yacht’ but slashes public spending’, 18 October 2016.
 87. CBS News, ‘Saudi Arabia’s heir to the throne talks to 60 Minutes’, 19 March 2018.
 88. *Time*, ‘Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Talks to TIME About the Middle East, Saudi Arabia’s Plans and President Trump’, 5 April 2018.
 89. MBZ, for example, has never attended a United Nations assembly or a Davos conference. He has only ever granted one on-the-record interview to a Western journalist (the *New York Times*’ Robert Worth, as published in January 2020). *New York Times*, ‘Mohammed bin Zayed’s Dark Vision of the Middle East’s Future’, 9 January 2020.
 90. Emirates News Agency, ‘New book highlights achievements of Mohammed bin Zayed’, 25 July 2008.
 91. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince’s Court, ‘HH the crown prince quotes’ [date accessed: 29 November 2019].
 92. The Majlis Muhammad bin Zayed has gone on to host the likes of the Bangladeshi entrepreneur Muhammad Yunus (who won a Nobel prize in 2006 for ‘efforts through microcredit to create economic and social development from below’) and Microsoft founder Bill Gates, who co-chairs the philanthropic Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince’s Court, ‘Majlis Mohamed bin Zayed’ [date accessed: 29 November 2019]; Nobel Foundation, ‘The Nobel Peace Prize for 2006’, 13 October 2006; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, ‘Who we are: history’

- [date accessed: 29 November 2019]; *New York Times*, 'Mohammed bin Zayed's Dark Vision of the Middle East's Future', 9 January 2020.
93. MBZ's wedding to Salama bint Hamdan Al-Nahyan took place in 1981, with reportedly a new 20,000 seat stadium having been built for the purpose. Salama is the daughter of Hamdan bin Muhammad Al-Nahyan (a former UAE deputy prime minister) who in turn was the grandson of Khalifa bin Zayed bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan (who in the 1920s as the kingmaker and 'ruler-that-never-was' had paved the way for the sons of Sultan bin Zayed bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan—eventually including Shakhbut bin Sultan—to take power). CBS News, 'Most expensive weddings of all time: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Princess Salama' [date accessed: 25 April 2019]; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 29, 49, 96.
 94. Emirates Road was opened in 2001 and then renamed in 2013. *National*, 'Emirates Road renamed to honour Abu Dhabi Crown Prince', 2 January 2013.
 95. Bayut, 'Area guides: Mohammed bin Zayed City' [date accessed: 21 June 2020].
 96. *New York Times*, 'Mohammed bin Zayed's Dark Vision of the Middle East's Future', 9 January 2020.
 97. US Department of State, 'Scenesetter for Secretary Napolitano's visit to the United Arab Emirates (cable: 09ABUDHABI1015_a)', 29 October 2009.
 98. As Ulrichsen notes, these included many of the key 'post-1953 state builders'. K. Ulrichsen, 'Crown Prince of Disorder', *Foreign Policy*, 21 March 2018.
 99. Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz was appointed crown prince in 2005 and minister of defence in 1963. BBC, 'Tensions remain among Saudi royals, 1 August 2005; *New York Times*, 'Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz of Saudi Arabia Dies', 22 October 2011. For further details on the circumstances surrounding Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz's appointment as minister of defence see section 7.6 endnote 163.
 100. For a discussion on Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz's appointments as crown prince and as minister of the interior see section 4.1.
 101. Saud bin Faisal was a son of King Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud. He was appointed minister of foreign affairs in 1975 and held the position until April 2015, three months before his death. Al-Jazeera, 'Saudi king replaces crown prince in cabinet reshuffle', 29 April 2015; *New York Times*, 'A Legacy of Regret for a Saudi Diplomat', 17 December 2009; *Wall Street Journal*, 'Former Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal Dies', 9 July 2015.
 102. In 2015, 25.8 per cent of Saudi Arabia's population was under the age of fifteen compared to 23.8 per cent of Tunisia's population; 23.9 per cent of Iran's; and 25.6 per cent of Turkey's. World Bank, 'Population ages 0–14 (% of total population): databank comparison' [date accessed: 29 November 2019].
 103. P. Ménoret, *Joyriding in Riyadh: Oil, Urbanism, and Road Revolt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 16–17.
 104. Eighty per cent of the young Saudi men surveyed felt that 'Saudi society is changing very quickly' while 60 per cent believed 'their opinions were rarely taken seriously by older generations'. *Arab News*, 'New book seeks to understand young Saudi men', 27 November 2019; M.C. Thompson, *Being Young, Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 313–28.

105. *Al-Riyadh*, 'Muhammad bin Salman: This vision cannot be achieved without the youth of our homeland', 25 April 2016 [in Arabic].
106. Bloomberg, 'The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia's Economy Off Oil', 21 April 2016.
107. BBC, 'Mohammed bin Salman: How Saudi Arabia's crown prince rose to power' [date accessed: 24 October 2019].
108. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
109. K. Elliot House, 'Profile of a Prince: Promise and Peril in Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030', Belfer Center Paper, April 2019, p. 4.
110. In February 2011 Saudi Arabia announced an unprecedentedly large one-off package of salary increases, unemployment benefits, and housing allowances (with estimates of the package's value ranging from \$10.7 to \$37 billion). In December 2011 it was then announced that Saudi Arabia would raise public spending in 2012 by 25 per cent. *GlobalPost*, 'Saudi king announces \$10.7 billion in spending on social benefits', 23 February 2011; Reuters, 'Saudi king back home, orders \$37 billion in handouts', 23 February 2011; *Financial Times*, 'Saudi Arabia sets lavish spending figure', 27 December 2011.
111. In March 2011 a 'Day of Rage' had been announced with 26,000 reportedly signing up to a Facebook page (hosted by the online-only 'National Coalition and Free Youth Movement'), but nine days before the protest the page's founder had been found dead, while only one activist actually managed to get through the tight cordons in the centre of Riyadh before then being imprisoned. Meanwhile, in what has since been dubbed the 'Forgotten Uprising' and the 'New Intifada' Saudi Arabia's eastern province 'began to witness continuous, low-level unrest in an unending cycle of detentions, shootings, and demonstrations'. M. Al-Rasheed, 'No Saudi Spring: Anatomy of a Failed Revolution', *Boston Review*, 1 March 2012; *Guardian*, 'Saudi Arabian security forces quell 'day of rage' protests', 11 March 2011; A. Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), p. 206; F. Wehrey, 'The Forgotten Uprising in Eastern Saudi Arabia', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 14 June 2013; T. Matthiesen, *The Other Saudis: Shiism, Dissent and Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 197–214.
112. At the time of their ousting, for example, Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was seventy-five years of age; Egypt's Hosni Mubarak was eighty-three; and Yemen's Ali Abdullah Saleh was sixty-five. For a discussion on the youth-based opposition to such elderly rulers see *New York Times*, 'Arab Spring's Youth Movement Spreads, Then Hits Wall', 17 March 2011.
113. For a discussion on this awareness in Riyadh see *Economist*, 'Saudi Arabia Time for the old men to give way: The Arab world's most conservative monarchy must change fast or die', 26 January 2015.
114. In this context Doha may have been trying to placate Riyadh and Abu Dhabi—the principal backers of the *Tamarod* movement. For a discussion on the *coup d'état* and *Tamarod* see section 1.3 endnote 133.
115. BBC, 'Qatari emir Sheikh Hamad hands power to son Tamim', 25 June 2013; *Peninsula*, 'The time has come to open a new page in the journey of our nation', 26 June 2013.
116. MBZ was forty-three years of age when appointed crown prince in 2004 while MBS was thirty-two when appointed crown prince in 2017. World Bank, 'Population

- ages 0–14 (% of total population): databank comparison' [date accessed: 29 November 2019].
117. Though Zayed bin Sultan's exact date of birth is unknown, he was widely believed to have been eighty-six years old at the time of his death. *New York Times*, 'Zayed bin Sultan, Gulf Leader and Statesman, Dies', 3 November 2004; *Guardian*, 'Obituary: Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan', 3 November 2004.
 118. MBR became crown prince and *de facto* ruler of Dubai in 1995 after Maktoum bin Rashid (his elder brother and the *de jure* ruler) issued a decree. In early 2006 MBR formally became ruler following Maktoum bin Rashid's death in Australia. *Guardian*, 'Dubai in mourning after emir, 62, dies in Australian hotel', 5 January 2006; Government of Dubai, 'Dubai Ruler' [date accessed 29: November 2019]; C. Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (London: Hurst & Co., 2008), p. 145.
 119. Khalifa bin Zayed is understood to have suffered from a number of health issues, the most recent (and most serious) being a stroke in 2014. *Al-Arabiya*, 'UAE President Sheikh Khalifa makes rare appearance', 19 June 2018; *National*, 'Sheikh Khalifa undergoes surgery after suffering stroke', 25 January 2014; Associated Press, 'Emirates President Treated for Stroke', 25 January 2014.
 120. US Department of State, 'Scenesetter for Secretary Napolitano's visit to the United Arab Emirates (cable: 09ABUDHABI1015_a)', 29 October 2009.
 121. According to estimates based on the third quarter of 2016. *Forbes*, 'Rising Unemployment Suggests Saudi Government Reforms Are Failing', 8 December 2016.
 122. In 2015 Saudi Arabia's youth unemployment rate was 29 per cent. The year before it had been even higher at 30 per cent. World Bank, 'Youth unemployment rate: Saudi Arabia' [date accessed: 5 December 2019].
 123. For a discussion on these points see sections 1.2 and 2.2.
 124. Saudi Arabia's official budget deficit for 2015 was \$98 billion. *Guardian*, 'Saudi Arabia reveals cuts plan to shrink \$98bn budget deficit', 28 December 2015; Bloomberg, 'Saudi 2015 Budget Deficit Is \$98 Billion as Revenue Drops', 28 December 2015.
 125. *Financial Times*, 'US banks hit by cheap oil as OPEC warns of long-term low', 23 December 2015; Bloomberg, 'Saudi December Net Foreign Assets Drop More Than \$19 Billion', 28 January 2016.
 126. International Monetary Fund, 'World Economic and Financial Surveys: Regional Economic Outlook Middle East and Central Asia', 15 October 2015, pp. 17–27; *Independent*, 'Saudi Arabia could be bankrupt within five years, IMF predicts', 23 October 2015.
 127. CNBC, 'Saudi Arabia hangs on with cheap oil – but for how long?', 26 August 2015.
 128. *Telegraph*, 'Saudi Arabia may go broke before the US oil industry buckles', 5 August 2015.
 129. Although MBS himself has claimed that his regime is an 'extension' of the 'Third Saudi State' (referring to Ibn Saud's twentieth-century state—as opposed to the eighteenth-century first state, the Emirate of Diriyah, and the nineteenth-century second state, the Emirate of Najd), numerous scholars and commentators have referred to MBS's putative vision of a 'Fourth Saudi State'. In November 2017 for example, Mishaal Al-Gergawi described how 'MBS intends to have created

- the fourth Saudi state... from the role of women and religion to the speed of decision-making, oil and economic diversification, and foreign policy, he will want the country to resemble little of what we see in Saudi Arabia today'. Similarly, in March 2020 Kristin Smith Diwan noted that 'Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman refers to this era as the fourth Saudi state, so profound is the transformation of institutions and practices across ruling structures, the economy, and society'. Okaz, 'Crown Prince: We are an extension of the "Third Saudi State"', 10 February 2019 [in Arabic]; M. Al-Gergawi, 'Saudi Arabia's Populist King in Waiting', *Politico*, 22 November 2017; K. Smith Diwan, 'The Big Gamble of Mohammed bin Salman – and Saudi Arabia', Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 23 March 2020. For a discussion on the historic Saudi states see A. Shahi, *The Politics of Truth Management in Saudi Arabia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 3; K. Ulrichsen and A. Sheline, 'Mohammed bin Salman and Religious Authority and Reform in Saudi Arabia', Baker Institute for Public Policy, 19 September 2019, pp. 1–2.
130. The book *New Saudi Arabia* was written by Khalid Ahmad Taqi and published in English and Arabic in 2019. It features MBS's face on the cover and refers to the 'renaissance' taking place under his leadership. The book has been reported on by the official Saudi Press Agency and appears to have been endorsed by senior officials. Saudi Press Agency, 'Cultural / Kingdom Embassy to Lebanon celebrates the signing of the book "New Saudi Arabia"', 14 May 2019 [in Arabic].
 131. Most notably, in 1985 Saudi Arabia had tired of restricting its oil production as part of OPEC's effort to maintain high oil prices in response to an international oil glut. Deciding to increase production unilaterally they created a huge oil surplus which pushed prices down to just \$7 per barrel. This rendered many higher-cost production facilities around the world unprofitable. *Time*, 'Cheap Oil!', 14 April 1986; D. Gately, M. Adelman, and J. Griffin, 'Lessons from the 1986 oil price collapse', Brookings Institution, Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1986, pp. 237–84.
 132. The chief executive officer (and president) of Saudi Aramco at the time being Khalid Al-Falih. In January 2015 it was reported that Saudi Arabia had increased production to 9.8 million barrels per day (300,000 barrels per day above its OPEC-declared output) and in March 2015 it was then reportedly increased to a record-breaking 10.3 million barrels per day. Reuters, 'Saudi Arabia boosts crude oil production to highest level on record', 8 April 2015; *Telegraph*, 'Saudi Arabia increases oil output to crush US shale frackers', 27 January 2015.
 133. According to Thomas Covert at the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, the costs of drilling and completion services fell by more than 30 per cent from the last quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2016. *Forbes*, 'When Global Oil Prices Tanked, Shale Oil Production Didn't: Here's Why', 31 August 2016.
 134. Agence France-Presse, 'US Crude Oil Rig Count Fell by 946 Rigs in 2015', 8 January 2016.
 135. In January 2015 total US oil production was 9.4 million barrels per day; in January 2016 it was 9.2 million; and by September 2017 it was 9.5 million. US Energy Information Administration, 'Monthly Crude Oil and Natural Gas Production: US crude oil production', 29 November 2019.

136. Speaking in April 2016, for example, one of MBS's economic advisors claimed that 'during the oil boom from 2010 to 2014, Saudi spending went berserk... prior requirements that the king approve all contracts over 100 million riyals [\$27 million] got looser and looser—first to 200 million, then to 300 million, then to 500 million, and then...the government suspended the rule altogether'. Bloomberg, 'The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia's Economy Off Oil', 21 April 2016.
137. Saudi Vision 2030, 'Roadmap: Strategic Objective' [date accessed: 4 December 2019].
138. International Monetary Fund, 'Staff Discussion Note: Economic Diversification in the GCC: The Past, the Present, and the Future', December 2014, pp. 25–9.
139. MBS further justified the need for an increase in the number of foreign banks on the basis that 'most [Saudi] banks were already operating were nearing maximum credit limits'. Reuters, 'Saudi Arabia to allow full foreign ownership in retail', 6 September 2015.
140. Bloomberg, 'The \$2 Trillion Project to Get Saudi Arabia's Economy Off Oil', 21 April 2016.
141. For a discussion on late rentierism and the internationalization of Gulf capitalism see section 1.2.
142. As Daniel Moshashai, Andrew Leber, and James Savage have summarized, the 'de-petrolization' of the Saudi economy was intended to lead to a situation in which 'Saudi government finances, Saudi citizen welfare, and the fortunes of the Saudi private sector no longer rise and fall with the whims of international oil markets'. D. Moshashai, A. Leber, and J. Savage, 'Saudi Arabia Plans for its Economic Future: Vision 2030, the National Transformation Plan and Saudi Fiscal Reform' in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* [August 2018 online first view], pp. 9–10.
143. Closely tied to Saudi Vision 2030, the first Future Investment Initiative conference was announced in September 2017 and then held a month later. Hosted by the Public Investment Fund, it attracted more than 3800 delegates, including the managing director of the IMF and the CEOs of numerous multinationals. Subsequent Future Investment Initiative conferences have earned the moniker 'Davos in the Desert'. *Saudi Gazette*, 'PIF announces Future Investment Initiative', 19 September 2017; *Times*, 'Saudi Arabia: Oiling the wheels of economic change', 24 October 2017; Bloomberg, 'WEF Condemns Use of "Davos" Label One Day Before Saudi Summit', 22 October 2018.
144. Neom (a combination of the Greek word 'neo' for new, and the letter 'm' for the Arabic word *mostaqbal* or 'future') was announced at the first Future Investment Initiative conference. In close proximity to Jordan and Egypt, it is intended to be funded by the PIF, to have its own bespoke taxation and labour laws, and to be entirely powered by renewable energy. It has recently been described by a Saudi minister as the government's emblematic 'moon shot' on the basis they 'have to make it work'. *Al-Arabiya*, 'What does Saudi Arabia's mega project "NEOM" actually stand for?', 24 October 2017; Bloomberg, 'Saudi Arabia Just Announced Plans to Build a Mega City That Will Cost \$500 Billion', 24 October 2017; CNBC, 'Saudis set \$500 billion plan to develop zone linked with Jordan and Egypt', 24 October 2017; *Arab News*, 'Solar, a key option in the Saudi renewable energy strategy', 27

- October 2018; BBC, ‘Saudi tribe challenges crown prince’s plans for tech city’, 23 April 2020.
145. In a January 2016 interview with the *Economist*, MBS had already made it clear that Saudi Arabia had considerable state-owned land with touristic potential and ‘an added value other than generating income for state funds’. Building on these ideas, proponents of Saudi Vision 2030 claimed that Saudi Arabia would soon be opening up to international tourism. In parallel, with regard to increasing the number of international pilgrims, the Saudi Vision 2030 documents themselves included a ‘Hajj and Omrah Programme’ focusing on ‘allowing the best possible number of Muslims to perform Hajj and Omrah to the fullest’. *Economist*, ‘Transcript: Interview with Muhammad bin Salman’, 6 January 2016; *Arab News*, ‘Saudi Arabia launches new tourism initiatives within Vision 2030’, 17 July 2017; BBC, ‘Saudi Arabia to open up to foreign tourists with new visas’, 27 September 2019; Saudi Vision 2030, ‘Hajj and Omrah Program’ [date accessed: 4 December 2019].
 146. Saudi Vision 2030’s official over-arching economic objectives are to ‘grow and diversify the economy’ and to ‘increase employment’. Its other objectives are to ‘strengthen Islamic and national identity’; ‘offer a fulfilling and healthy life’; ‘enhance government effectiveness’; and ‘enable social responsibility’. Saudi Vision 2030, ‘Roadmap: Strategic Objective’ [date accessed: 4 December 2019].
 147. Notable examples include Kuwait Vision 2035, launched in 2010; Qatar National Vision 2030, launched in 2008; and Oman Vision 2020, launched in 1995. Kuwait News Agency, ‘Blair’s Kuwait Vision 2035 report proposed solutions to key issues’, 15 March 2010; State of Qatar Government Communications Office, ‘Qatar National Vision 2030’ [date accessed: 4 December 2019]; Sultanate of Oman Supreme Council of Planning, ‘Vision 2020’ [date accessed: 4 December 2019].
 148. The National Transformation Programme focuses specifically on Vision 2030’s economic objectives. It was approved in June 2016 and has responsibility for several earlier 2020 targets including: the creation of 450,000 new jobs; non-oil exports climbing to \$88 billion; and foreign direct investment rising to \$19 billion. Saudi Vision 2030, ‘National Transformation Program’ [date accessed: 4 December 2019]; *National*, ‘Saudi Arabia National Transformation Plan approved: A quick guide’, 7 June 2016.
 149. For a discussion on Saudi Aramco’s data transparency issues see section 2.2
 150. See for example: *Economist*, ‘My kingdom for a bourse: Saudi Aramco’s IPO is a mess’, 19 October 2017; *Globe and Mail*, ‘Saudi Arabia is privatizing the family silver, but how much is on the shelf?’, 19 June 2016; *New York Times*, ‘Saudis Moving to Reduce Dependence on Oil Money’, 1 April 2016.
 151. S. Gross, ‘The Saudi Aramco IPO is a game-changer for the Saudi economy’, Brookings Institution, 6 June 2017; Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, ‘The IPO of Saudi Aramco: Some Fundamental Questions’, March 2017, p. 7.
 152. S. Al-Karni, ‘Twitter Response to Vision 2030: A Case Study on Current Perceptions of Normative Disorder within Saudi Social Media’, PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2018, p. 109.
 153. 24 of the 25 incumbent / former Saudi state functionaries and 18 of the 23 other Saudi stakeholders agreed with the statement. Interview question #01a.

154. Seventeen of the twenty-five incumbent / former Saudi state functionaries and thirteen of the twenty-three other Saudi stakeholders agreed with the statement. Interview question #01b.
155. Selected answers to interview questions #01a and #01b.
156. Twenty of the 283 Saudi citizens surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement, twenty-two disagreed, forty neither agreed nor disagreed, eighty-nine agreed, and 112 strongly agreed. Survey question #01a.
157. Twenty-nine of the 283 Saudi citizens surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement, fifty-five disagreed, thirty-two neither agreed nor disagreed, 102 agreed, and sixty-five strongly agreed. Survey question #01b.
158. In November 2004 Brent crude oil was \$43 per barrel. Over the next several years it continued to increase, reaching \$116 in February 2013. The UAE's budget deficit in 2004 had shrunk to just \$600 million (from nearly \$14 billion the year before). US Energy Information Administration, 'Europe Brent Spot Price FOB (Dollars per Barrel)' [date accessed: 17 April 2019]; Emirates News Agency, 'UAE's federal budget for 2004 surges as deficit recedes', 11 May 2004.
159. MBZ also referred to Singapore as being ahead of Abu Dhabi. Oxford Business Group, 'Emerging Abu Dhabi', December 2006, 19.
160. The UAE's money supply was understood to have been increasing by \$50 billion a year in recent years. *Gulf News*, 'UAE Economy: update', 13 July 2008.
161. Quoting a prominent UAE-based businessman, Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Samerai. Oxford Business Group 'Abu Dhabi: The Report', December 2007, p. 54.
162. According to the official UAE census in 2005, the total population for Abu Dhabi emirate's two main cities (Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain) was 625,000 in 1995 and 900,000 in 2003. Based on these figures it seems reasonable to estimate that it had grown to nearly a million by 2004. UAE Census Higher Authority, 'Tedad 2005: Population in Main Cities' [date accessed: 5 December 2019].
163. Oxford Business Group 'Abu Dhabi: The Report', December 2007, p. 54.
164. World Bank, 'Unemployment rate: United Arab Emirates' [date accessed: 5 December 2019]; World Bank, 'Youth unemployment rate: United Arab Emirates' [date accessed: 5 December 2019].
165. M. Herb, 'A Nation of Bureaucrats: Political Participation and Economic Diversification in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates' in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2009, p. 382.
166. *Gulf News*, 'Unemployment latest data', 28 July 2008; Oxford Analytica, 'Abu Dhabi update', February 2007.
167. The UAE's original labour law (promulgated in 1980) stipulated that there needed to be a 'a special department dedicated to find adequate job opportunities for nationals...the department must assist employers in fulfilling their need of national workers whenever needed'. In 1999 a new National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority (also known as *Tammia* or 'Development') was established for the purpose of 'accelerating the employment of UAE nationals in the private sector, as a means for correcting the alarming imbalance in the labour market structure which is dominated by expatriate labour force'. Amendments to the labour law in 2002 then guaranteed citizens access to a special pensions fund and promised them 'better rights as employees' with earlier finishing times

- for women with children and a maximum number of working hours. Specific categories of jobs had also earlier been earmarked for citizens, while private sector employers in certain sectors were required to employ set quotas of citizens. Most of these initiatives proved unpopular as they were seen as pricing citizens out of the private sector. UAE Federal Law No. 8 for 1980, 'Concerning the organization of labour relations', 20 April 1980; *Khaleej Times*, 'Tanmia vows to correct labour market imbalance', 22 December 2003; Economist Intelligence Unit, 'UAE update', January 2001; *Gulf News*, 'Labour nationalization initiatives', 23 September 2004; C. Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (London: Hurst & Co., 2008), pp. 207–8.
168. Zayed bin Sultan made these remarks in 1995. G. Wilson, *Rashid's Legacy: The Genesis of the Maktoum Family and the History of Dubai* (Dubai: Media Prima, 2006). p. 528.
 169. F. Al-Sayegh, 'Post 9/11 Changes in the Gulf: The Case of the UAE' in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2004, p.111.
 170. *National*, 'UAE balance of trade: update' 26 July 2008; *National*, 'Trade Statistics', 18 July 2008; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), p. 78.
 171. The remainder being oil and liquid fuelled. *Gulf News*, 'Abu Dhabi gas plants', 31 July 2008.
 172. By 2008 the UAE's total gas consumption was already over 2 billion cubic feet of gas per day and therefore in excess of what was being supplied by the Dolphin Gas project (by 2017 it had risen to 2.6 billion cubic feet per day). US Energy Information Administration, 'Country Analysis Briefs: United Arab Emirates', January 2011, p. 5; US Energy Information Administration, 'International Energy Statistics: Dry Natural Gas Consumption: United Arab Emirates' [date accessed: 5 December 2019].
 173. Oxford Business Group 'Abu Dhabi: The Report', December 2007, pp. 54–7; US Energy Information Administration, 'Country Analysis Briefs: United Arab Emirates', January 2011, p. 5; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009).
 174. Abu Dhabi Law No. 9 for 2006, 'Concerning formation of Abu Dhabi Council for the Economic Development', 1 May 2006; Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 'About ADCED' [date accessed: 18 February 2020].
 175. Government of Abu Dhabi, 'The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030', November 2008, p. 1.
 176. *New York Times*, 'Mohammed bin Zayed's Dark Vision of the Middle East's Future', 9 January 2020.
 177. Government of Abu Dhabi, 'The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030', November 2008, p. 5.
 178. In the first instance, the plan was to increase tourism's contribution to non-oil GDP to 4 per cent by 2021. Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, 'Strategy' [date accessed: 15 December 2019].
 179. Mubadala's aerospace industry (which was to involve the servicing of engines and the manufacturing of wing parts) was to be led by a new subsidiary, Abu Dhabi Aircraft Technologies, and to follow on from an investment in Rolls Royce. *National*, 'Abu Dhabi Aircraft Technologies', 22 July 2008; Oxford Business Group,

- ‘Abu Dhabi: The Report’, December 2014, p. 162; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), p. 82.
180. Mubadala’s electronics industry (which was to focus on the manufacture of computer microprocessors) was to be led by a new subsidiary, the Advanced Technology Investment Company, and to follow on from an investment in AMD. *National*, ‘Advanced Technology Investment Company’, 9 December 2008; *New York Times*, ‘AMD to Split Into Two Operations’, 6 October 2008.
 181. Mubadala’s ship-building industry (which was to involve the repairing and manufacturing of naval and coastguard vessels) was to be led by the Abu Dhabi Ship-building Company (an entity originally established by MBZ in 1996 and then part-acquired by Mubadala), and to follow on from investments in Britain’s BVT Surface Fleet and France’s Constructions Mécaniques de Normandie. Constructions Mécaniques de Normandie, ‘Press Release: Abu Dhabi’, 21 December 2008; *National*, ‘Abu Dhabi Ship Building teams up with BVT’, 27 July 2009; C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 82–3.
 182. Mubadala’s defence industry (which was to focus initially on manufacturing integrated naval defence systems and military satellites) was to be led by new subsidiaries, including Abu Dhabi Systems Integration and Al-Yah Satellites, and to follow on from investments in Selex Sistemi Integrati (a division of Italy’s Finmeccanica) and Astrium (a division of the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company). *National*, ‘Mubadala: New subsidiaries’, 20 July 2008; Emirates News Agency, ‘Abu Dhabi Systems Integration set to expand operations in the UAE’, 22 October 2008; *National*, ‘Mubadala raises \$1.2bn for satellite project’, 6 August 2008.
 183. C. Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), pp. 80–1.
 184. The acquisition took place in May 2008. Pearl Energy held concessions for gas fields in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Mubadala Development Company, ‘Mubadala acquires Pearl Energy’, 21 May 2008.
 185. Exploration in Libya was to be in cooperation with Occidental while exploration in Algeria was to be in cooperation with Royal Dutch Shell. Mubadala Development Company, ‘Mubadala awarded exploration licenses in Libya’, 9 January 2005; Reuters, ‘UAE firm buys into Shell’s Algerian operations’, 1 April 2008.
 186. The Abu Dhabi National Energy Company more commonly being referred to as ‘Taqa’ (‘energy’).
 187. Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, ‘Taqa celebrates 10 years as an operator in the UKCS’ [date accessed 6 December 2019]; *Arabian Business*, ‘Taqa to expand further in Canada’, 30 May 2007; Bloomberg, ‘Taqa, Theolia Plan Joint Bid for Moroccan Wind Farm’, 15 June 2008.
 188. In 2008 the International Petroleum Investment Company set up a \$1 billion joint investment fund with the government of Kazakhstan for the purpose of exploiting Kazakhstani gas. Reuters, ‘UAE’s IPIC, Kazakhstan set up \$1 bln energy fund’, 21 July 2008.
 189. The proposal was first made in April 2008. Congressional Research Service, ‘The United Arab Emirates Nuclear Program and Proposed US Nuclear Cooperation’, 20 December 2010, p. 2.
 190. *Khaleej Times*, ‘25% of UAE energy from nuclear resources by 2020’, 1 December 2013; *Gulf News*, ‘Nuclear reactors’, 31 July 2008.

191. The proposed agreement was signed in January 2009 and came into force in December 2009. Congressional Research Service, 'The United Arab Emirates Nuclear Program and Proposed US Nuclear Cooperation', 20 December 2010, p. 6.
192. Nineteen of the twenty incumbent / former Emirati state functionaries and twenty-seven of the thirty other Emirati stakeholders agreed with the statement. Interview question #02.
193. Selected answers to interview question #02.
194. Twenty of the 227 Emirati citizens surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement, five disagreed, twenty-nine neither agreed nor disagreed, thirty-eight agreed, and 135 strongly agreed. Survey question #02.
195. Thirty-three of the forty-five incumbent / former citizen state functionaries and forty-six of the fifty-three other citizen stakeholders agreed with the statement. Interview question #03.
196. Selected answers to interview question #03.
197. Thirty-six of the 510 surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement, forty-six disagreed, eighty neither agreed nor disagreed, 193 agreed, and 155 strongly agreed. Survey question #03.
198. For a discussion on Saudi Arabia's historical relationship with Islamic extremism see C. Choksy and J. Choksy, 'The Saudi Connection: Wahhabism and Global Jihad' in *World Affairs*, Vol. 178, No. 1, 2015, pp. 23–34; M. Doran, 'The Saudi Paradox' in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1, 2004, pp. 35–51.
199. Referring to Stuart Levey. Congressional Research Service, 'Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues', 14 September 2007, p. 2.
200. *Los Angeles Times*, 'Saudis faulted for funding terror', 2 April 2008.
201. Lashkar-e-Taibi being one of the largest and most active Islamic extremist organizations in South Asia. US Department of State, 'Terrorist finance: action request for senior level engagement on terrorism finance (cable: 09STATE131801_a)', 30 December 2009; BBC, 'Profile: Lashkar-e-Taiba', 3 May 2010.
202. These comments were originally made by a senior Saudi official during a briefing with US officials. US Department of State, 'Terrorist finance: action request for senior level engagement on terrorism finance (cable: 09STATE131801_a)', 30 December 2009; *Independent*, 'Saudi Arabia is biggest funder of terrorists', 6 December 2010.
203. European Parliament Directorate-General for External Policies, 'The Involvement of Salafism/ Wahhabism in the support and supply of arms to rebel groups around the world', June 2013, pp. 5, 30.
204. By late 2013 the Islamic State was in control of most of the city of Raqqa and in early 2014 was understood to have solidified its grasp. In June 2014 Mosul fell to the Islamic State as did the remainder of the Raqqa governorate. *Guardian*, 'Isis insurgents seize control of Iraqi city of Mosul', 10 June 2014; *New York Times*, 'From Playground to Killing Ground: An ISIS Legacy', 18 October 2017.
205. The Islamic State of Iraq had been formed in January 2006 following a merger between Al-Qaeda in Iraq and five other Sunni insurgent groups. In April 2013, reflecting its territorial expansion into Syria, the organization was renamed the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and then in June 2014 it was rebranded again as

- simply ‘the Islamic State’. *Financial Times*, ‘Call for Sunni state in Iraq’, 15 October 2006; *New York Times*, ‘Military skill and terrorist technique fuel success of ISIS’, 27 August 2014; Wilson Center, ‘Timeline: the Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State’, 29 October 2019.
206. The US Iraq Study Group was a bipartisan panel set up in March 2006. Led by former Secretary of State James Baker, it was facilitated by the US Institute for Peace. CNN, ‘Congress forms panel to study Iraq war’, 15 March 2006; CBS News, ‘Saudi Citizens Funding Iraq Insurgents’, 8 December 2006.
 207. The Associated Press report claimed that the purchased weapons were Russian-manufactured shoulder-fired anti-aircraft *Strela* missiles and that they had been purchased in Romania. Associated Press, ‘Saudis Reportedly Funding Iraqi Sunnis’, 8 December 2006.
 208. *Independent*, ‘Iraq crisis: How Saudi Arabia helped ISIS take over the north of the country’, 13 July 2014.
 209. *Telegraph*, ‘Qatar offered to give \$1 million to Bill Clinton’s charity for his birthday’, 14 October 2016; *Independent*, ‘Hillary Clinton emails leak: Wikileaks documents claim Democratic nominee thinks Saudi Arabia and Qatar fund Isis’, 11 October 2016; Wikileaks, ‘Podesta Emails: ‘Congrats: 27 September 2014’ [date accessed: 3 December 2019].
 210. Conflict Armament Research’s iTrace weapons system was funded following EU decisions in November 2013 and October 2015. Its 2017 report also concluded that significant quantities of US purchased weapons had been in Islamic State hands. Official Journal of the European Union, ‘Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2283 of 11 December 2017 in support of a global reporting mechanism on illicit small arms and light weapons and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade’, 12 December 2017, p. 1; Conflict Armament Research, ‘Weapons of the Islamic State’ [date accessed: 21 April 2020], pp. 4, 8–9. For examples of media coverage of the report see *Independent*, ‘US and Saudi Arabia arms significantly enhanced Isis’ military capabilities, report reveals’, 15 December 2017; CNN, ‘Report details where ISIS gets its weapons’, 14 December 2017.
 211. FBI, ‘Press release: summary of Penttbomb investigation’, 29 February 2004.
 212. In September 2015 the US court restored Saudi Arabia’s sovereign immunity, but it was noted at the time that fresh appeals were expected on the basis that ‘evidence central to these claims continues to be treated as classified’. BBC, ‘US judge clears Saudi Arabia in 9/11 lawsuit’, 30 September 2015; Associated Press, ‘Judge drops Saudi Arabia from September 11 lawsuit’, 29 September 2015.
 213. New York Southern District Court, ‘Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001’, Document 2892, 15 September 2014.
 214. *Guardian*, ‘Rand Paul leads bipartisan effort to declassify 28 pages of 9/11 report’, 2 June 2015.
 215. New York Southern District Court, ‘Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001’, Document 2892, 15 September 2014.
 216. Referring to the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (Pub Law 114–222), 28 September 2016. In September 2016 both the Senate and House of Representatives passed the bill into law after overturning a presidential veto. *New York Times*, ‘Senate passes bill exposing Saudi Arabia to 9/11 legal claims’,

- 17 May 2016; *New York Times*, ‘Congress Votes to Override Obama Veto on 9/11 Victims Bill’, 28 September 2016.
217. Referring to John Lehman.
218. The other two commissioners being Tim Roemer and an anonymous member. *Guardian*, ‘Saudi officials were supporting 9/11 hijackers, commission member says’, 12 May 2016.
219. The former FBI agent being Steven Moore (a former assistant special agent in Los Angeles), who made his statement in November 2017. *Florida Bulldog*, ‘Ex-FBI agent says 9/11 Commission misled public about hijackers who attacked Pentagon’, 14 November 2017; Yahoo News, ‘In court filing, FBI accidentally reveals name of Saudi official suspected of directing support for 9/11 hijackers’, 13 May 2020.
220. This statement was made by Turki bin Faisal Al-Saud, a former director of the General Intelligence Presidency and a former ambassador to the US and Britain. *Arab News*, ‘Mr Obama, we are not free riders’, 14 March 2016. For a discussion on Turki bin Faisal see section 5.4.
221. *New York Times*, ‘Saudi Arabia warns of economic fallout if Congress passes 9/11 bill’, 15 April 2016.
222. Reuters, ‘Saudi minister confirms warning on proposed US law on 9/11’, 2 May 2016.
223. NPR, ‘This Is Crossing The Line: Saudis Co-Opted Veterans’ Voices To Lobby Congress’, 15 December 2018; CBS News, ‘Saudis paid US veterans to lobby against law allowing 9/11 families to sue kingdom’, 11 May 2017; *Daily Signal*, ‘Veterans Claim They Were Duped Into Lobbying for Saudis’, 22 May 2017.
224. The former US officials including former US ambassador to the UN Zalmay Khalilzad. *Politico*, ‘We Misled You: How the Saudis Are Coming Clean on Funding Terrorism’, 14 September 2016.
225. Quoting Muhammed Al-Tuwaijri. *New York Times*, ‘The Prince Who Would Remake the World’, 21 June 2018. For a discussion on Al-Tuwaijri see section 5.2.
226. *New Yorker*, ‘A Saudi Prince’s Quest to Remake the Middle East’, 2 April 2018.
227. *Atlantic*, ‘Saudi Crown Prince: Iran’s Supreme Leader “Makes Hitler Look Good”’, 2 April 2018.
228. *Time*, ‘Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Talks to TIME About the Middle East, Saudi Arabia’s Plans and President Trump’, 5 April 2018.
229. By the time of the bank’s collapse in 1991 the Al-Nahyan family reportedly held \$750 million in shares (with their initial contribution in 1970 having only been \$500,000). The international investigation was led by US senators John Kerry and Hank Brown in cooperation with Price Waterhouse. *Middle East Economic Digest*, ‘BCCI investigation’, 1 February 1992; US Senate, ‘Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States Senate by Senators John Kerry and Senator Hank Brown’, 102nd Congress 2nd Session Senate Print, December 1992, pp. 102–140; Price Waterhouse, ‘Report 41 to the Bank of England’, June 1991, section 1.33.
230. According to the FBI seventeen of the nineteen hijackers had transited through the UAE. FBI, ‘Press release: summary of Penttbom investigation’, 29 February 2004; US Library of Congress Federal Research Division, ‘Country Profile: United Arab Emirates’, July 2007, p. 27.

231. *Hawala* translating as ‘transfer’ or sometimes ‘trust’. 9/11 Commission, ‘Appendix A: The Financing of the 9/11 Plot’, p. 134 [date accessed: 2 December 2019]; UK Parliament Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, ‘Fourth Report: The United Arab Emirates and the war against terrorism’, 21 June 2006, sections 142–4; *New York Times*, ‘US Sees Emirates as Both Ally and, Since 9/11, a Foe’, 23 February 2006.
232. *New York Times*, ‘Mohammed bin Zayed’s Dark Vision of the Middle East’s Future’, 9 January 2020.
233. The controversy first erupted following Dubai Ports World’s November 2005 \$3.3 billion acquisition of Britain’s Peninsula and Oriental Navigation Company, which had been the operator of these US ports. *Guardian*, ‘P&O accepts Dubai firm’s £3.3bn offer’, 30 November 2005.
234. See for example: BBC, ‘US lawmakers criticise ports deal’, 21 February 2006; *Wall Street Journal*, ‘In Ports Furor, a Clash Over Dubai’, 26 February 2006; CNN, ‘Key questions about the Dubai port deal’, 7 March 2006.
235. In March 2006 the US Congress’s House Appropriations Committee voted 62–2 to block the deal. CNN, ‘Congress declares war on ports deal’, 9 March 2006; *Los Angeles Times*, ‘House Panel Votes to Block Takeover of Port Facilities’, 9 March 2006.
236. US Department of State, ‘Terrorist finance: action request for senior level engagement on terrorism finance (cable: 09STATE131801_a)’, 30 December 2009.
237. US Department of State, ‘Extremist recruitment on the rise in southern Punjab (cable: 08LAHORE302_a)’, 13 November 2008.
238. US Department of State, ‘US–UAE cooperation against Taliban finance continues (cable: 10ABUDHABI27_a)’, 24 January 2010.
239. US Department of State, ‘The UAE and Taliban financing: our analysis and action plan (cable: 09ABUDHABI877_a)’, 3 September 2009.
240. These comments were based on a conversation between MBZ and the US’s senior advisor on Iraq, Ambassador Jeffreys. US Department of State, ‘MBZ meeting with senior advisor on Iraq Jeffreys (cable: 05ABUDHABI4308_a)’, 15 October 2005.
241. US Department of State, ‘A long hot summer for UAE–Saudi relations (cable: 09ABUDHABI981_a)’, 15 October 2009.
242. In the UAE it is widely assumed that MBZ had some sort of advance knowledge (dating back to about 2013) that Salman bin Abdul-Aziz intended to appoint MBS as minister of defence as soon as he became king. To some extent, this tallies with recent references in the British media to a 2014 ‘intelligence report’ received by MBZ that predicted ‘MBS was destined for the top’. *Telegraph*, ‘Special report: The complex relationship between Saudi Arabia and UAE that could soon shape the Premier League’, 28 June 2020.
243. *New York Times*, ‘Mohammed bin Zayed’s Dark Vision of the Middle East’s Future’, 9 January 2020.
244. *Guardian*, ‘Hedges case may signal UAE kickback against western criticism’, 23 November 2018.
245. R. Sokolsky and D. DePetris, ‘The Other Murderous Gulf’, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 October 2018.

246. N. Quilliam, 'The Saudi Dimension: Understanding the Kingdom's Position in the Gulf Crisis' in A. Krieg (ed.), *Divided Gulf: The Anatomy of a Crisis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2019), p. 122.
247. Henderson also noted that 'MBS seems to accept MBZ's counselling but probably would be horrified of the perception that he may be the junior partner'. S. Henderson, 'Meet the Two Princes Reshaping the Middle East', *Politico*, 13 June 2017.
248. Al-Jazeera, 'MBS-MBZ: A special bond between two Gulf princes', 17 March 2020.
249. Forty-two of the forty-five incumbent / former citizen state functionaries and thirty-eight of the fifty-three other citizen stakeholders agreed with the statement. Interview question #04.
250. Selected answers to interview question #04.
251. Fifty-five of the 510 surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement, twenty-six disagreed, twenty-three neither agreed nor disagreed, 190 agreed, and 216 strongly agreed. Survey question #04.
252. For a discussion on Saudi Arabia's recently hardening position against supporters of Islamist organizations see section 8.4.
253. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
254. US Department of State, 'S/P Director Haass and Chief of Staff Muhammad bin Zayid discuss Iraq, Iran, and Saudi-UAE relations (cable: 03ABUDHABI237_a)', 15 January 2003; *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
255. Operation Decisive Storm began in March 2015. In April 2015 US officials familiar with the intelligence on Yemen claimed 'it is wrong to think of the Houthis as a proxy force for Iran', while a spokeswoman for the US National Security Council confirmed that 'it remains our assessment that Iran does not exert command and control over the Houthis in Yemen'. Nonetheless, both Abu Dhabi and Riyadh have consistently made the case that the Houthis are funded and equipped by Iran. *Huffington Post*, 'Iran Warned Houthis Against Yemen Takeover', 20 April 2015; BBC, 'Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?', 30 January 2018; Reuters, 'Exclusive: Iran steps up support for Houthis in Yemen's war—sources', 21 March 2017; *Al-Arabiya*, 'Pictures: UAE presents evidence of Iran weapon links to Yemen's Houthi militia', 20 June 2018.
256. The JCPOA was agreed on 14 July 2015 between Iran, the UN Security Council, Germany, and the European Union. With Iran committing to numerous external checks and balances so that its nuclear programme would be 'exclusively peaceful', international nuclear-related sanctions were partially lifted on 'implementation day' in January 2016. European Parliament, 'Press release: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action', 14 July 2015; *New York Times*, 'Deal Reached on Iran Nuclear Program; Limits on Fuel Would Lessen With Time', 15 July 2015; US Department of the Treasury, 'JCPOA Implementation', 16 January 2016.
257. Quoting Rhodes. *Atlantic*, 'A Fatal Abandonment of American Leadership', 12 October 2018.
258. In reports from March 2018 and June 2018 *New York Times* correspondents also noted that 'several times [MBS] compared [Iran] to Hitler's Nazi regime...the

- crown prince himself uses the analogy’ and reported that MBS himself had stated that ‘delaying [action against Iran] and watching them getting that bomb, that means you are waiting for the bullet to reach your head...so you have to move from today’. *Atlantic*, ‘Saudi Crown Prince: Iran’s Supreme Leader “Makes Hitler Look Good”’, 2 April 2018; *New York Times*, ‘Saudi Crown Prince, on US Visit, Urges Tough Line on Iran’, 27 March 2018; *New York Times*, ‘The Prince Who Would Remake the World’, 21 June 2018.
259. US Department of State, ‘MBZ hosts Gulf security dinner with ISA ASD Vershbow and PMA/S Shapiro (cable: 09ABUDHABI746_a)’, 22 July 2009.
260. According to documents obtained by CNN in July 2017, Qatar had signed an agreement in November 2013 with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in which all three states committed ‘to avoid any interference in the internal affairs of other Gulf nations’ including barring financial or political support to ‘deviant’ groups such as the Brotherhood. In a follow-up November 2014 agreement (which was also signed by the UAE and Bahrain) all states were asked to commit to stabilizing Egypt and preventing media platforms from being used by groups or figures challenging the Egyptian government. With regard to a possibly transactional arrangement between MBS and MBZ, Courtney Freer has suggested that ‘MBZ managed to convince MBS to isolate Qatar, accused of supporting Islamist groups, in exchange for granting him access to Washington DC elites’. CNN, ‘Exclusive: The secret documents that help explain the Qatar crisis’, 11 July 2017; Al-Jazeera, ‘MBS-MBZ: A special bond between two Gulf princes’, 17 March 2020.
261. According to a former US official, the UAE ambassador to the US reportedly once stated that ‘conquering Qatar would solve everyone’s problems.... and King Abdullah of Saudi came pretty close to doing something in Qatar a few months before he passed [in January 2015]’. Moreover, reflecting on his time as the US deputy national security advisor for strategic communications under the Barack Obama administration, Rhodes indicated that the UAE and Saudi Arabia had already been ‘planning something’. Al-Jazeera, ‘Daniel Pipes’ pro-Israel think-tank holds anti-Qatar event’, 7 February 2019; Middle East Eye, ‘Leaked UAE emails: Saudi Arabia came close to “conquering” Qatar’, 17 September 2017; *Politico*, ‘The Full Transcript: Ben Rhodes and Samantha Power’, 15 January 2018.
262. The Anti-Terror Quartet’s severing of diplomatic ties with Qatar took place on 5–6 June 2017. Superficially sparked by a hacked Qatari news agency press release that had attributed controversial remarks sympathetic to Iran and critical of US policy to Qatar’s ruler (and follow-up allegations of a substantial Qatari ransom having been paid directly to a mixture of Iran and Al-Qaeda-linked militias), in late June 2017 the Quartet issued thirteen demands against Qatar, including a demand to ‘curb all diplomatic ties with Iran’ and a demand to ‘sever all ties to terrorist organizations, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, [the Islamic State], Al-Qaeda, and Lebanon’s Hezbollah’. BBC, ‘Qatar crisis: What you need to know’, 19 July 2017; Reuters, ‘Gulf rift reopens as Qatar decries hacked comments by emir’, 24 May 2017; *Financial Times*, ‘The \$1bn hostage deal that enraged Qatar’s Gulf rivals’, 5 June 2017; *Khaleej Times*, ‘Complete list of 13 demands on Qatar by Arab nations’, 23 June 2017; *Guardian*, ‘Qatar given 10 days to meet 13 sweeping demands by Saudi Arabia’, 23 June 2017.

263. The Saudi–Emirati Coordination Council’s first meeting was held in Jeddah on 6 June 2018. *National*, ‘Saudi–Emirati Co-ordination Council: all you need to know’, 7 June 2018.
264. According to the Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning’s spokesperson, ‘the Saudi–Emirati Coordination Council [was] set up within the context of an agreement concluded in May 2016 between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates’. In June 2018 the UAE media described how ‘Saudi and Emirati government officials from various fields worked for 12 months to identify and outline three main pillars for closer cooperation’. A second meeting of the Council was staged in November 2019. Saudi Arabia Ministry of Economy and Planning, ‘The Saudi–Emirati Coordination Council: Overview’ [date accessed: 26 December 2019]; *National*, ‘Saudi–Emirati Co-ordination Council: all you need to know’, 7 June 2018; Emirates News Agency, ‘Mohamed bin Zayed, Mohammed bin Salman preside over 2nd meeting of Saudi–Emirati Coordination Council’, 27 November 2019.
265. *National*, ‘Saudi–Emirati Co-ordination Council: all you need to know’, 7 June 2018.
266. *Atlantic*, ‘Saudi Crown Prince: Iran’s Supreme Leader “Makes Hitler Look Good”’, 2 April 2018; *Time*, ‘Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Talks to TIME About the Middle East, Saudi Arabia’s Plans and President Trump’, 5 April 2018.
267. US Department of State, ‘UAE minimizing influence of Islamic extremists (cable: 04ABUDHABI4061_a)’, 10 November 2004.
268. US Department of State, ‘U/S Burns’ January 22 meeting with Abu Dhabi crown prince and UAE foreign minister (cable: 07ABUDHABI97_a)’, 24 January 2007.
269. US Department of State, ‘Abu Dhabi crown prince presses SOCOM commander for assistance (cable: 07ABUDHABI304_a)’, 22 February 2007.
270. US Department of State, ‘UAE officials query deputy secretary Armitage on Arab media, Iraq, and Israel (cable: 04ABUDHABI1344_a)’, 28 April 2004.
271. US Department of State, ‘Strong words in private from MBZ at IDEX—bashes Iran, Qatar, Russia (cable: 09ABUDHABI193_a)’, 25 February 2009.
272. In the context of his opposition to the JCPOA, MBZ was reportedly unhappy with not being consulted by the White House prior to the negotiations, and had been particularly disappointed with Obama’s May 2016 claims that he was less likely than his predecessors to ‘axiomatically side with Saudi Arabia in its dispute with its arch rival, Iran’. Moreover, MBZ was reportedly very concerned over the speed with which Washington appeared to abandon longstanding allies such as Egypt’s Mubarak and Tunisia’s Ben Ali at the height of the 2011 Arab uprisings, and Obama’s apparent willingness to reach out to prominent oppositionists, including members of the Brotherhood. Overall, as Rhodes has described, ‘MBZ and MBS were the ascendant voices in the Gulf, and they didn’t care for Obama or his policies...he was someone to be tolerated and waited out’. *Atlantic*, ‘The Obama Doctrine’, April 2016; S. Cook, ‘Riyalpolitik and the Art of Influence in Trump’s Washington’, *Foreign Policy*, 28 May 2018; *Atlantic*, ‘A Fatal Abandonment of American Leadership’, 12 October 2018; *New York Times*, ‘Mohammed bin Zayed’s Dark Vision of the Middle East’s Future’, 9 January 2020; P. Salisbury, ‘Risk Perception and Appetite in UAE Foreign and National Security Policy’, Chatham House, Middle East and North Africa Programme, July 2020, p. 13.

273. Quoting Rhodes. *Atlantic*, 'A Fatal Abandonment of American Leadership', 12 October 2018.
274. As Hubbard describes, before the idea was eventually dropped suggested mentors included Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry. *Business Insider*, 'The Obama administration considered asking Joe Biden to mentor MBS but nixed the idea because the VP was thought to be too old', 11 March 2020.
275. On the same day the JCPOA was signed Donald Trump had stated the deal needed to be scrapped on the basis it was 'terrible'; negotiated out of 'desperation'; and that 'the Iranians are going to cheat'. In the lead up to the November 2016 election he made numerous similar statements about the deal. NBC News, 'Donald Trump Weighs in on Iran Deal', 14 July 2015; Reuters, 'Trump election puts Iran nuclear deal on shaky ground', 9 November 2016.
276. The emissary being US businessman George Nader. *New York Times*, 'Trump Jr. and Other Aides Met With Gulf Emissary Offering Help to Win Election', 19 May 2018; *Guardian*, 'Donald Trump Jr met Gulf states emissary offering election help—report', 19 May 2018.
277. The meeting is understood to have taken place on 15 December 2016 and to have included MBZ, Nader, Jared Kushner (Trump's senior advisor) and Steve Bannon (Trump's chief strategist). In order to attend the meeting MBZ reportedly had to cancel a goodbye lunch with Obama. Associated Press, 'The princes, the president and the fortune seekers', 22 May 2018; *Vanity Fair*, 'Saudi and Emirati Princes Feud Over Who Has More Control of Jared Kushner', 22 March 2018; *New York Magazine Intelligencer*, 'Beyond Russia: Understanding the New Trump Campaign Collusion Story', 20 May 2018; *New York Times*, 'Mohammed bin Zayed's Dark Vision of the Middle East's Future', 9 January 2020.
278. *New Yorker*, 'A Saudi Prince's Quest to Remake the Middle East', 2 April 2018.
279. CNN, 'Trump might designate IRGC, Muslim Brotherhood terror groups', 9 February 2017.
280. Trump's visit concluded with the inauguration ceremony for the Global Centre for Combatting Extremist Ideology, which was widely reported on. BBC, 'Trump arrives in Saudi Arabia on first foreign tour', 20 May 2017; *Al-Arabiya*, 'Global Center for Combating Extremism in Riyadh adopts unprecedented techniques', 22 May 2017; *New York Times*, 'What Was That Glowing Orb Trump Touched in Saudi Arabia?', 22 May 2017.
281. On 6 June 2017 Donald Trump tweeted that 'During my recent trip to the Middle East I stated that there can no longer be funding of Radical Ideology... Leaders pointed to Qatar—look!'; and 'So good to see the Saudi Arabia visit with the King and 50 countries already paying off... they said they would take a hard line on funding extremism and all reference was pointing to Qatar... perhaps this will be the beginning of the end to horror of terrorism!' By comparison, under the Bush and Obama presidencies MBZ's repeated requests for the US to change its stance on Qatar appeared to be ignored. In January 2003, for example, US diplomats reported that MBZ had once asked the commander of US Central Command to 'bomb Al Jazeera' and had demanded the 'reining in [of] the Doha-based Al-Jazeera satellite network prior to any military action'. In February 2009 MBZ had then reportedly asked US officials to 'review the employees of Al-Jazeera...

- predicting that 90 per cent of the staff [would be] affiliated with the Brotherhood'. More recently, reflecting on his time as the US deputy national security advisor for strategic communications, Rhodes stated of the UAE and Saudi Arabia's plans to take action against Qatar that 'we basically had to spend a lot of time trying to prevent that from happening'. *Guardian*, 'Donald Trump tweets support for blockade imposed on Qatar', 6 June 2017; US Department of State, 'S/P Director Haass and Chief of Staff Muhammad bin Zayid discuss Iraq, Iran, and Saudi-UAE relations (cable: 03ABUDHABI237_a)', 15 January 2003; US Department of State, 'Strong words in private from MBZ at IDEX—bashes Iran, Qatar, Russia (cable: 09ABUDHABI193_a)', 25 February 2009; *Politico*, 'The Full Transcript: Ben Rhodes and Samantha Power', 15 January 2018.
282. Quoting John Brennan. NBC News, 'Trump may have lost his risky bet on Saudi prince Mohammed bin Salman', 20 October 2018.
283. *Guardian*, 'Trump fires Tillerson: president swings axe after series of policy clashes', 13 March 2018; BBC, 'Emails show UAE-linked effort against Tillerson', 5 March 2018; *New York Times*, 'The Prince Who Would Remake the World', 21 June 2018.
284. The US nuclear sanctions on Iran were re-instated in November 2018. White House, 'Remarks by President Trump on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action', 8 May 2018; BBC, 'Iran nuclear deal: Trump announces US withdrawal', 8 May 2018; *New York Times*, 'Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal He Long Scorned', 8 May 2018; ABC, 'Donald Trump restores Iran sanctions, hitting oil exports over its support for militant groups', 3 November 2018; CNN, 'US officially reimposes all sanctions lifted under 2015 Iran nuclear deal', 5 November 2018.
285. Khashoggi is understood to have died inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October 2018. Initially the Saudi authorities insisted Khashoggi had left the Istanbul consulate and that they were unaware of his location, then after a fortnight they claimed Khashoggi had died in a fistfight inside the consulate, and that eighteen men were being held in connection with his death. BBC, 'Jamal Khashoggi: Turkey says journalist was murdered in Saudi consulate', 7 October 2018; *Washington Post*, 'Turkey concludes Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi killed by "murder"', 6 October 2018; *New York Times*, 'Uproar Over Dissident Rattles Saudi Royal Family', 19 October 2018.
286. A few weeks after the assassination, Trump stated that King Salman 'told me in a very firm way that they had no knowledge of it...he said it very strongly'. Trump also speculated to the media that 'it sounded to me like maybe these could have been rogue killers...who knows?' *Guardian*, 'Donald Trump says "rogue killers" may have murdered Khashoggi', 16 October 2018; BBC, 'Jamal Khashoggi: Trump suggests "rogue killers" to blame', 15 October 2018.
287. In November 2018 the CIA informed senior US officials that they had concluded MBS had personally approved of the assassination of Khashoggi (even if their assessment, which was based on Turkish audio recordings, was reportedly 'damning but still circumstantial' and based on 'available evidence as opposed to any specific smoking gun-type of evidence'). Trump initially responded by stating that the CIA assessment was 'very premature...but possible', and then issued a formal memorandum stating that 'King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman vigorously deny any knowledge of the planning or execution of the murder of Mr.

Khashoggi...our intelligence agencies continue to assess all information, but it could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event—maybe he did and maybe he didn't!...that being said, we may never know all of the facts surrounding the murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi... in any case, our relationship is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia...they have been a great ally...the US intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the interests of our country...'. Reuters, 'Exclusive: After Khashoggi murder, some Saudi royals turn against king's favorite son', 20 November 2018; *New York Times*, 'Tell Your Boss: Recording Is Seen to Link Saudi Crown Prince More Strongly to Khashoggi Killing', 12 November 2018; CNN, 'CIA concludes Saudi crown prince ordered Jamal Khashoggi's death, sources say', 17 November 2018; BBC, 'Jamal Khashoggi: CIA 'blames Saudi prince for murder'', 17 November 2018; White House, 'Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia', 20 November 2018; *Guardian*, 'Trump dismisses UN request for FBI to investigate Jamal Khashoggi's murder', 23 June 2019.

288. *New York Times*, 'Trump Pushes to Designate Muslim Brotherhood a Terrorist Group', 30 April 2019; BBC, 'White House to designate Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organisation', 30 April 2019.
289. The agreements were reportedly revealed by a US senator and took place in October 2018 and February 2019. *Times*, 'Trump sold nuclear tech to Saudis in secret after Khashoggi killing', 6 June 2019.
290. The vetoes were against Senate Joint Resolution No. 7 of 2019 (to remove US forces from Yemen and denounce the Saudi-led bombing campaign); Senate Joint Resolution No. 36 of 2019 (to prohibit the proposed sale of various defence articles and related support services to Saudi Arabia, Britain, Spain, and Italy); Senate Joint Resolution No. 37 of 2019 (to prohibit the proposed sale of various defence articles and related support services to the UAE, Britain, and France); Senate Joint Resolution No. 38 of 2019 (to prohibit the proposed sale of various defence articles and related support services to Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom). The two other vetoes, which also survived override attempts, involved the declaration of a national emergency on the US–Mexico border (House Joint Resolution No. 46 of 2019 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 54 of 2019). US Congress, Senate Joint Resolution No. 7 of 2019, 30 January 2019; US Congress, Senate Joint Resolution No. 36 of 2019, 5 June 2019; US Congress, Senate Joint Resolution No. 37 of 2019, 5 June 2019; US Congress, Senate Joint Resolution No. 38 of 2019, 5 June 2019; US Congress, House Joint Resolution No. 46 of 2019, 22 February 2019; US Congress, Senate Joint Resolution No. 54 of 2019, 10 September 2019; *New York Times*, 'Trump Issues First Veto After Congress Rejects Border Emergency', 15 March 2019; *Washington Post*, 'With vote to end US involvement in Yemen's war, House sets up Trump's second veto', 4 April 2019; *Washington Post*, 'Trump vetoes resolution to end US participation in Yemen's civil war', 16 April 2019; The Hill, 'Trump vetoes resolutions attempting to block Saudi arms sales', 24 July 2019; White House, 'Presidential Memoranda: S.J. Res. 54 Veto Message', 15 October 2019.
291. In addition, such a decision by the Trump administration was also expected to facilitate 'a refurbishment package for Egyptian attack helicopters; sophisticated

radars for Pakistan; and missiles, bombs and machine guns for Turkey, among other items'. *New York Times*, 'Trump Administration May End Congressional Review of Foreign Arms Sales', 25 June 2020.

292. Shortly after, however, the White House did agree to reveal the name of a suspected individual who was believed to have been a Saudi official. *Wall Street Journal*, 'Trump Administration Asks to Delay Release of 9/11-Related Documents', 6 September 2019; NBC News, 'US declassifies key name in Saudi-9/11 suit, but won't release it publicly', 12 September 2019.
293. The former FBI agent being Kenneth Williams. *New York Times*, 'The Saudi Connection: Inside the 9/11 Case That Divided the FBI', 23 January 2020.

5. ESTABLISHING CONTROL: POLITICAL PATRONAGE NETWORKS

1. The *sultah* ministries in this context usually understood to be the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. G. Luciani, 'Democracy vs Shura in the Age of the Internet' in A. Khalaf and G. Luciani (eds.), *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf* (Dubai: Gulf Research Centre, 2006), p. 293.
2. MBS's other full brothers include Turki bin Salman Al-Saud (born 1987), who was appointed chairman of the Saudi Research and Marketing Group in 2013 but resigned a year later; and the much younger Nayef bin Salman Al-Saud and Rakan bin Salman Al-Saud. *Al-Arabiya*, 'Saudi Research and Marketing Group appoints new chairman', 10 February 2013; *Arab News*, 'Prince Turki bin Salman resigns as SRMG chairman', 7 April 2014.
3. *Al-Arabiya*, 'Who is Prince Khaled bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's new ambassador to the US?', 23 April 2017.
4. *Arab News*, 'Princess Rima appointed Saudi Arabia's ambassador in Washington', 23 February 2019.
5. *Arab News*, 'Saudi Arabia's Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman meets Donald Trump in Washington', 7 January 2020.
6. In his July 2018 interview with *Vice*, for example, Khalid bin Salman stated that 'the situation in the world, especially in Europe, in the late 1930s, was that back then we had these expansionist ideologies and expansionist countries...we see Nazi Germany moving and taking over... we see the same expansionist concept in the region through the Iranian regime'. He also stated that 'Iran wants to export the revolution...Iran has an expansionist ideology...Iran wants other states in the region not to be partners, but to be under the Iranian expansionist project...and this is a big difference; we have Vision 2030 that is moving us forward, and they have Vision 1979 that is trying to move the region and Saudi Arabia backward'. *Al-Arabiya*, 'Transcript: Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman's interview', 27 July 2018. For a discussion on MBS's comparisons between Iran and Nazi Germany and the rationale behind Saudi Vision 2030 see sections 4.3 and 4.5.
7. Arab Digest, 'Saudi Arabia: pressures on kingdom and King', 8 March 2019.
8. The eldest of the seven other royal family members under discussion being Abdul-Aziz bin Salman (born 1960) and the youngest being Abdullah bin Bandar (born 1986).