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Washington always turned a blind eye to Saudi Arabia, says ex-CIA officer on Khashoggi case

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The White House is far more interested in ensuing Saudi Arabia's stability than punishing it for the murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, former CIA officer Bob Baer said.

*"We've always turned a blind eye to what's going on in Saudi Arabia – right from the very beginning,"* Baer [told](#) CNN's Jake Tapper on Tuesday. He stressed that the close ties between the nations make Washington reluctant to attack the kingdom not only with regards to the Khashoggi case but also on the issues of human rights abuses and the devastating Saudi-led war in Yemen.

Read more [Saudi intel officer in 'shock' after listening to 'appalling' tapes of Khashoggi murder – Erdogan](#)



Dissident journalist and The Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi disappeared in early October after he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Saudi Arabia claims that he was killed during a spontaneous *"fistfight,"* and has pledged to investigate his death. Turkish officials, meanwhile, insist that the Saudis dispatched a *'death squad'* to assassinate the journalist. His body still hasn't been located.

Khashoggi's murder sparked international outrage. US President Donald Trump warned that the kingdom will face a *"severe punishment"* if it had indeed put out a hit on the journalist. The US, however, chose to keep the existing arms deals with the Saudis and said it didn't believe the nation's leadership [was](#) behind the dissident's demise.

Washington is more interested in maintaining Saudi Arabia's stability than searching for the truth and criticizing Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, known as MBS, Bob Baer argued. The kingdom remains among the prime buyers of US-made arms and Washington's strategic ally in the region.

*"Saudi Arabia is a volcano right now. We don't have players there on our side [other than MBS],"* Baer, who is now an author and commentator, said. *"What worries the White House is that this country could pop."*

According to the recent New York Times report, the audio recording of Khashoggi's murder, given to the CIA by Turkey, reveals how a member of the *'kill team'* instructed a superior to *"tell your boss"* about the mission's success. The US intelligence officers believe that *"boss"* in question is MBS, the paper reported.

At the same time, Trump's National Security Advisor John Bolton, who himself [didn't listen](#) to the tape, strongly suggested that it was *"not the conclusion"* the officers [have made](#).

Bob Baer found it hard to agree with Bolton and noted that the Crown Prince *"is in control"* of all Saudi security services. *"The Saudis don't have rogue operations – ever. It has never occurred."*