
Trump 'salivates' over prospect of nuclear deals with Saudis despite proliferation concerns – expert

06/04/2019



Safeguards should be introduced to curb Saudi Arabia's atomic energy plans, an expert on nuclear power issues told RT, noting that, while President Trump is 'salivating' over juicy trade deals, the world has been put in danger.

"[Saudis] already are developing certain behind-the-scenes capabilities. They are looking to expand their nuclear energy development," Peter Kuznick, the Director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University said, stressing that observers are *"frightened"* at the thought that Riyadh is inching closer to potentially obtaining nukes.

If that happens in the Middle East this could really be a disaster.

"They have refused to sign the additional protocol that was put into place by the International Atomic Agency in the late 1990s to make sure or at least make it more difficult for countries to use their abilities in developing nuclear energy to actually make nuclear weapons," he said.

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Earlier in the week, Google Earth satellite images revealed that Saudi Arabia is nearing completion of its first nuclear reactor in King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology in Riyadh. But the Kingdom cannot be trusted with keeping its nuclear ambitions purely civilian,

because Riyadh has been pointing a finger at Iran and has made it clear that it intends to match the alleged nuclear capabilities of its rival – even though the Islamic Republic's peaceful civilian atomic program is closely supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

[#Saudi](#) Arabia's 1st nuclear plant seems to be near finish-MBS stated in past kingdom would develop bomb if [#Iran](#) did,raising red flag amongst nuclear experts,uneasy that [@iaeaorg](#) has more ability to access nuclear sites in Iran than it does in Saudi Arabia <https://t.co/XgBFlwL6dc>
— Ellie Geranmayeh (@EllieGeranmayeh) [April 4, 2019](#)

While President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the international nuclear deal with Iran – to the cheers of no one besides the Saudis and Israel – his closest aides have reportedly been helping the Saudis with their nuclear ambitions. Energy Secretary Rick Perry had confirmed issuing seven authorizations to US companies, that allow them to export “*unclassified civil nuclear technology*” to Saudi Arabia. The details, however, were kept under the public radar.

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“The United States has facilitated this despite the fact that there is no bilateral pact between the US and the Saudis,” Kuznick noted.

The Trump administration is salivating over the prospect of these massive nuclear energy deals with Saudi Arabia... This is the regime that cannot even be trusted with a bone saw.

To prevent the Saudis from developing nuclear weapon capabilities, Kuznick proposed introducing international safeguards and monitoring. “*Why not have the same safeguards in Saudi Arabia that we now have in Iran?*” he suggested. “*The same degree of inspection. The same degree of surveillance. The same degree of monitoring.*”