

# Jared Kushner defends controversial \$2bn Saudi investment

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Bernd Debusmann Jr BBC News, Washington



Getty Images

Jared Kushner worked closely with Saudi Arabia during his stint as an advisor to Donald Trump.

**Donald Trump's son-in-law and former adviser Jared Kushner has defended his business dealings with Saudi Arabia and its Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.**

After leaving the White House, Mr Kushner's private equity firm received a \$2bn (£1.59bn) investment from Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.

Mr Kushner worked closely with Saudi Arabia on a number of issues during the Trump administration.

He has denied that the investment represented a conflict of interest.

Prince Mohammed has been credited with overseeing sweeping economic and social reforms in the kingdom. He has also been accused of clamping down on dissent, and US intelligence has said it believes he ordered the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which the prince denies.

The Saudi investment into Mr Kushner's firm, Affinity Partners, took place after he left the White House. But experts have previously raised ethical questions about the deal, citing his earlier dealings with Saudi Arabia and the former president's veto of bills that would have banned weapons sales to the kingdom during its war in Yemen.

Speaking on Tuesday at a Miami summit organised by US news outlet Axios, Mr Kushner dismissed any suggestion that the Saudi investment into his firm was unethical.

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"If you ask me about the work that we did in the White House, for my critics, what I say is: point to a single decision we made that wasn't in the interest of America," he said.

He referred to the Saudi Public Investment Fund - which has previously invested in firms like Uber and Microsoft - as one of the most prestigious investors in the world. Mr Kushner was also asked about Khashoggi's murder and declassified US intelligence reports that Prince Mohammed approved the operation to kill him at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul - reports dismissed by Saudi Arabia.

- [Saudi prince 'approved Khashoggi killing' - US](#)

At first, Mr Kushner shot back at the question with: "Are we really still doing this?"

"I understand why people, you know, are upset about that," he added.

"I think that what happened there was absolutely horrific. But again, our job was to represent America, and to try to push forward things in America."

He said he has not seen the intelligence reports about the prince's alleged involvement in the murder.

"I know the person who I dealt with. I think he's a visionary leader. I think what he's done in that region is transformational," Mr Kushner said.

Looking to the future, Mr Kushner said he was not interested in returning to the White House in the event that Mr Trump wins November's presidential election.

Mr Trump is likely to be the Republican standard-bearer in a contest against Democrat Joe Biden.

"I've been very clear that my desire at this phase of my life is to focus on my firm," Mr Kushner said. "I've really enjoyed the opportunity as a family to be out of the spotlight."

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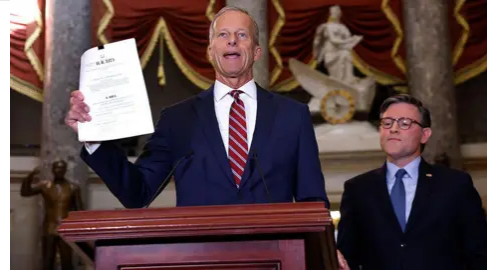


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