EXHIBIT 5

The Washington Post

Politics Analysis

What we know about what the government knows about Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance

By Philip Bump

To hear President Trump tell it, the disappearance of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi two weeks ago at the Saudi Consulate in Turkey is still a complete mystery. Speaking to reporters briefly Monday, Trump suggested that perhaps "rogue killers" were to blame for Khashoggi's disappearance, a claim that he told the Associated Press on Tuesday was not a direct representation of what Saudi leaders had told him.

"Yesterday, when I spoke with the father, not so much today, but when I spoke to the father [Saudi King Salman], it just sounded to me like he felt like [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman] did not do it," Trump said. "He did not know about it, and it sounded like, you know, the concept of rogue killers. But I don't know. I think the investigation will lead to an answer."

Trump has been insistent on the need to conclude an investigation of Khashoggi's disappearance, an investigation that includes the participation of the Saudi Arabian government.

"I think we have to find out what happened first," he said when asked about repercussions if it is discovered that Saudi agents killed Khashoggi. "You know, here we go again with, you know,

you're guilty until proven innocent. I don't like that. We just went through that with Justice [Brett M.] Kavanaugh."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, dispatched by Trump to meet with the Saudis, released a statement about those conversations Tuesday.

"During each of today's meetings," it read, "the Saudi leadership strongly denied any knowledge of what took place in their consulate in Istanbul. My assessment from these meetings is that there is a serious commitment to determine all the facts and ensure accountability, including accountability for Saudi Arabia's senior leaders or senior officials."

Answering reporters' questions from the tarmac at an airport in Turkey on Wednesday morning, he was asked whether the Saudis had indicated to him whether Khashoggi was alive.

"I don't want to talk about any of the facts," Pompeo replied. "They didn't want to either, in that they want to have the opportunity to complete this investigation in a thorough way."

Combined, the impression that's given is that the U.S. government is broadly in the dark about the details of Khashoggi's disappearance. Were that true, it would be advantageous from a foreign-policy standpoint; the country's mine-strewn relationship with Saudi Arabia could be radically upset by a revelation that the Saudi government had killed a journalist and green-card holder.

But it's hard to see how it could be true.

A week ago, The Post reported that U.S. intelligence agencies had intercepted communications among members of the Saudi government indicating that Khashoggi was being targeted. The aim, the paper reported, was to lure Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi regime and the crown prince, back to Saudi Arabia, where he would be arrested. It was Mohammed himself who ordered the operation, according to The Post's reporting.

Under certain circumstances, the government has an obligation to warn people if they are at risk of being injured or killed. It's not clear whether the intercepted communications about Khashoggi would have triggered that obligation, but the information about him had "been disseminated throughout the U.S. government and was contained in reports that are routinely available to people working on U.S. policy toward Saudi Arabia or related issues," an official told The Post.

Asked whether the government had a heads-up about a threat to Khashoggi, State Department deputy spokesman Robert Palladino said that it wasn't aware of a specific threat.

"I would say that although I cannot comment on intelligence matters, I can say definitively the United States had no advanced knowledge of Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance," Palladino said.

Did the government have knowledge that Khashoggi was at risk by entering the consulate in Istanbul?

"We had no advanced knowledge," Palladino said.

The Post also reported that the Turkish government had informed U.S. intelligence officials about audio recordings documenting Khashoggi being killed inside the consulate. The Wall Street Journal offered more information Tuesday, including a time frame of Khashoggi's alleged killing based on the audio recording and the grim detail that those present when his body was dismembered were told to listen to music to facilitate that task.

Palladino, speaking Oct. 10, didn't say whether such audio existed. On Wednesday, Pompeo similarly declined to say whether he'd heard the purported audio. Neither denied that it existed, although Trump raised questions Thursday about whether it did.

BREAKING: Trump says US has requested audio and video from Turkey relating to missing journalist, `if it exists'

— The Associated Press (@AP) October 17, 2018

Trump's "rogue killers" line — offered, he said, because of his assessment of what the Saudis knew — suggests that Khashoggi's alleged killing was a function not of the crown prince's direction but instead of undirected elements at the consulate itself. A CNN report earlier this week said that the Saudi government would admit culpability and that Khashoggi died after an interrogation by Saudi authorities. (The Journal's reporting suggests that Khashoggi died within minutes of entering the consulate.)

This is undercut severely by reporting identifying a number of the Saudis who traveled to Turkey on Oct. 2, the date of Khashoggi's disappearance, and who left that evening. Several, The Post reported Tuesday, were linked directly to Saudi security services. One of the people seen entering and leaving the country that day was Maher Abdulaziz Mutreb, whom the New York Times identified as a frequent companion or bodyguard to Mohammed during a visit to the United States this year. (That trip included a stop at The Post.)

All of this is public reporting from news organizations speaking with government officials or uncovering information from other sources. Although some details may be incomplete, it's hard to believe that the media is publishing information or details that aren't already known to U.S. intelligence agencies. Which suggests that Pompeo and Trump also know about them.

There's another underlying question: What does Jared Kushner think?

Earlier this year, the Intercept reported that Mohammed had told other leaders in the region that he had Kushner, Trump's adviser and son-in-law, "in his pocket." Mohammed denied having said that when meeting with The Post earlier this year. Kushner visited Saudi Arabia last year, with Post columnist David Ignatius reporting that Kushner and Mohammed had met until late into the night, "swapping stories and planning strategy." After he left, the two

communicated directly over WhatsApp, according to the Intercept. Shortly after the visit, Mohammed began a crackdown on the country's leadership that helped him consolidate power.

Palladino indicated in that news briefing that Kushner had spoken with Mohammed. It's not clear what he may have been told. The last State Department news briefing was Thursday. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders hasn't held a daily news briefing in two weeks.

In an interview with Fox Business network Wednesday, Trump reiterated that, the investigation notwithstanding, Saudi Arabia is an important partner in the fight against terrorism — and a country that committed to buying weapons from the United States.

He reiterated that he hopes that Mohammed and King Salman didn't know about what happened to Khashoggi, saying that would be a "big factor" in his approach to the country. Before making any decisions, he and Pompeo are awaiting the results of the investigation, in which the Saudis are taking a central role.

Philip Bump
Philip Bump is a correspondent for The Washington Post based in New York. Before joining The Post in 2014, he led politics coverage for the Atlantic Wire. Follow

The Washington Post

Coverage you want. Credibility you expect.

Subscribe to real news: Start for as low as ~~$10~~ $4 a month - that's every story for just $1 a week.

Get this offer

Send me this offer

Already a subscriber? **Sign in**