**Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**

Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (Arabic: عبدالله بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود‎‎‎, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl Sa‘ūd, Najdi Arabic pronunciation: [ʢæbˈdɑɫ.ɫɐ ben ˈʢæbdæl ʢæˈziːz ʔæːl sæˈʢuːd]; 1 August 1924 – 23 January 2015) was King of Saudi Arabia and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques from 2005 to his death in 2015.[3] He ascended to the throne on 1 August 2005 upon the death of his half-brother, King Fahd.

Abdullah, like Fahd, was one of the many sons of Ibn Saud, the founder of modern Saudi Arabia. Abdullah held important political posts throughout most of his adult life. In 1961 he became mayor of Mecca, his first public office. The following year, he was appointed commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, a post he was still holding when he became king. He also served as deputy defense minister and was named crown prince when Fahd took the throne in 1982. After King Fahd suffered a serious stroke in 1995, Abdullah became the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia until ascending the throne a decade later.

During his reign he maintained close relations with United States and Britain and bought billions of dollars worth of defense equipment from both states.He also gave women the right to vote for municipal councils and to compete in the Olympics. Furthermore, Abdullah maintained the status quo when there were waves of protest in the kingdom during the Arab Spring. In November 2013, a BBC report claimed that, due to the close relations it had with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia could obtain nuclear weapons at will from that country.The King also had a longstanding relationship with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whom he had requested to be exiled to Saudi Arabia and spared execution by Pervez Musharraf on account of being a personal friend, following his ouster in the 1999 Pakistani coup d'état.

The King outlived two of his crown princes. Conservative Interior Minister Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud was named heir to the throne on the death of Sultan bin Abdulaziz in October 2011, but Nayef himself died in June 2012. Abdullah then named 76-year-old defense minister, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as crown prince. According to various reports, Abdullah married up to 30 times, and had more than 35 children. The king had a personal fortune estimated at US$18 billion, making him the third wealthiest head of state in the world. He died on 23 January 2015, aged 90,[15] three weeks after being hospitalized for pneumonia, and was succeeded as king by his half-brother Salman of Saudi Arabia.

Abdullah is said to have been born on 1 August 1924 in Riyadh.However, some sources state that this date is incorrect, and that he was approximately eight years older.He was the tenth son of King Abdulaziz. His mother, Fahda bint Asi Al Shuraim, was a member of the Al Rashid dynasty, longtime rivals of the Al Saud dynasty. She was descended from the powerful Shammar tribe – and was the daughter of former tribe chief, Asi Shuraim. She died when Abdullah was six years old He had younger full-sisters.

Madawi Al-Rasheed argues that his maternal roots and his earlier experience of a speech impediment led to delay in his rise to higher status among the other sons of King Abdulaziz.

**Commander of National Guard**

In 1963, Abdullah was made commander of Saudi National Guard (SANG). This post allowed him to secure his position in the House of Saud. SANG, which had been based on the Ikhwan, became a modern armed force under his command. Beginning 1985, SANG also sponsored the Janadiriyah festival that institutionalized traditional folk dances, camel races and tribal heritage.

King Khalid appointed Prince Abdullah as second deputy prime minister in March 1975, a reflection of his status as second in the line of succession to the Saudi throne. In other words, upon this appointment, Prince Abdullah became the number three man in the Saudi administration.However, his appointment caused friction in the House of Saud.[30] Then-crown prince Prince Fahd, together with his full-brothers known as the Sudairi Seven, supported the appointment of their own full brother, Prince Sultan. Prince Abdullah was pressured to cede control of SANG in return for his appointment as Second Deputy Prime Minister. In August 1977, this generated a debate among hundreds of princes in Riyadh. Abdullah did not relinquish authority of SANG because he feared that this would weaken his authority.

**Crown Prince and Regent**

On 13 June 1982 – the day King Khalid died – Fahd bin Abdulaziz became King, Prince Abdullah became Crown Prince the same day and also maintained his position as head of the National Guard. During his years as crown prince, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz was described as a supporter of accommodation.[31] He managed to group[clarification needed] a large number of fringe and marginalized princes discontented with the prospect of the succession being passed among the Sudairi brothers one after the other. His control of the National Guard was also a key factor to his success in becoming crown prince.When King Fahd was incapacitated by a major stroke in 1995, Crown Prince Abdullah acted as de facto regent of Saudi Arabia.

In May 2001, Crown Prince Abdullah did not accept an invitation to visit Washington due to US support for Israel in the Second Intifada. He also appeared more eager than King Fahd to cut government spending and open Saudi Arabia up economically. He pushed for Saudi membership of the World Trade Organization, surprising some.

In August 2001, he ordered then Saudi Ambassador to the US, Bandar bin Sultan, to return to Washington. This reportedly occurred after Crown Prince Abdullah witnessed brutality inflicted by an Israeli soldier upon a Palestinian woman. Later, he also condemned Israel for attacking families of suspects[dead link.

In 2002, he developed the Arab Peace Initiative, commonly referred to as the "Abdullah plan", to achieve a mutually agreed-on resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict. The initiative was adopted at the Arab League's Beirut summit in March 2002.

On the second anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Crown Prince Abdullah wrote a letter to US President George W. Bush, which ended with the following words:

"God Almighty, in His wisdom, tests the faithful by allowing such calamities to happen. But He, in His mercy, also provides us with the will and determination, generated by faith, to enable us to transform such tragedies into great achievements, and crises that seem debilitating are transformed into opportunities for the advancement of humanity. I only hope that, with your cooperation and leadership, a new world will emerge out of the rubble of the World Trade Center: a world that is blessed by the virtues of freedom, peace, prosperity and harmony."

By late 2003, after the Saudi Arabian branch of al-Qaeda carried out a series of bombings that threatened to destabilize the country, Crown Prince Abdullah, together with other decision-making elites began to deal with political concerns. One of such moves was his project to promote more tolerance for religious diversity and rein in the forces of politico-religious extremism in the kingdom, leading to the establishment of National Dialogue. In the summer of 2003, Abdullah threw his considerable weight behind the creation of a national dialogue that brought leading religious figures together, including a highly publicized meeting attended by the kingdom's preeminent Shi'i scholar Hasan al-Saffar, as well as a group of Sunni clerics that had previously expressed their loathing for the Shi'i minority.

**King of Saudi Arabia**

Royal Standard of the King

Abdullah succeeded to the throne upon the death of his half-brother King Fahd. He was formally enthroned on 2 August 2005.

**Illness and death**

The King had curtailed his activities from June 2010 with no clear explanation. Diplomats said there had been uncertainty about the extent of his health problems since Abdullah canceled a visit to France.[when?] In a television appearance in which he was seen to use a cane, King Abdullah said he was in good health but had something "bothering" him. In a visit by US diplomats to Saudi Arabia in April 2014 the Saudi King was seen connected to breathing tubes during talks, indicating increasing health problems.

From 2010 to 2012 King Abdullah had four back surgeries. The first two of the surgeries were in New York, one in 2010 for a slipped disk and a blood clot pressing on nerves in his back and a second to stabilize vertebrae in 2011. The third one was in Riyadh in 2011. And the last one was also in Riyadh on 17 November 2012.

In November 2010, his back problems came to light in the media. He had an "accumulation of blood" around the spinal cord. He suffered from a herniated disc and was told to rest by doctors. To maintain the Kingdom's stability, Crown Prince Sultan returned from Morocco during the King's absence.The King was admitted to New York-Presbyterian Hospital after a blood clot complicated a slipped disc and underwent successful back surgery. The lead surgeon was Muhammad Zaka, who probably removed the herniated disk and performed a lumbar fusion. He subsequently had another successful surgery in which surgeons "stabilized a number of vertebras". He left the hospital on 22 December 2010 and convalesced at The Plaza in New York City. On 22 January 2011, he left the United States and for Morocco, and returned to the Kingdom on 23 February 2011.