

U.S. President Barack Obama Accepted \$1.3 Million in Gifts from Saudis in 2014



Washington, December 11 (RHC)-- The former Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and other top officials showered the Obama family with more than \$1.3 million in gifts throughout 2014, according to the U.S. State Department.

In its annual accounting report released this week, the State Department revealed that on January 14, 2014, the American president received a "gold and silver men's wristwatch with leather band," valued at \$18,400.

The monarch gave Obama another "white gold men's wristwatch with leather band," in April with a price tag of \$67,000. The president received a "48-inch gold-plated brass replica of the Mecca Clock Tower on marble base" in March with an estimated price of \$57,000 -- roughly matching the annual income of a median American family.

On January 14, 2014, King Abdullah, who died earlier this year at the age of 90, gave Obama's wife a "diamond and emerald jewelry set including necklace, earrings, ring and bracelet," costing \$560,000. The first lady received another exquisite set of the same gifts which was worth around \$570,000.

King Abdullah did not forget Obama's daughters, sending them a "diamond and emerald jewelry set including earrings, necklace, ring, brooch, and wristwatch," along with a "Diamond and ruby jewelry set including earrings, necklace, ring, brooch, and wristwatch," priced \$80,000.

In 2014, Obama received about 30 bottles of wine, a staple of presidential gifting, plus one cognac valued at \$615. Later in the year, Saudi Arabia's minister of the National Guard, Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, gave the U.S. First Family an expensive set of gifts, including a 10-inch model palm tree made of silver and gold, set on a green marble base, a number of robes and "two bottles of perfume named for the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," collectively estimated by the State Department to be worth at \$39,915.

The report also hints at expensive gifts given to Obama's aides by Saudi officials, including a \$5,370 "white gold wristwatch with link bracelet" for National Security Adviser Susan Rice and several \$8,170 wristwatches for her male colleagues.

Under the heading "circumstances justifying acceptance," the report stated that "nonacceptance would cause embarrassment to donor and U.S. government."

U.S. law stipulates that the president must turn over everything he gets from another world leader to the National Archives or other institutions for the purposes of storage or display. However, if he wants to keep anything, he has to pay the fair market value for it and take it with him when he leaves office.

Obama enjoys a yearly salary of \$400,000 and rakes in a lot more from his books sales and investments.

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