

Barack Obama criticised for 'bowing' to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

President Barack Obama's overture to Muslims made in a speech in Turkey has been well received in the Arab world, but he has arrived home to a growing chorus of Right-wing disapproval for apparently bowing to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia during last week's G20 summit.

By Alex Spillius in Washington
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The White House denied that the president bowed during a meeting on the sidelines of the London conference, though photographs show Mr Obama at least stooped significantly before the 84-year-old monarch.

"It wasn't a bow. He grasped his hand with two hands, and he's taller than King Abdullah," an Obama aide told Politico.com.

The Washington Times called [<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/07/barack-takes-a-bow/>] the alleged bow a "shocking display of fealty to a foreign potentate", which ran contrary to American tradition of not deferring to royalty.

"By bending over to show greater respect to Islam, the US president belittled the power and independence of the United States," the paper said in an editorial. "Such an act is a traditional obeisance befitting a king's subjects, not his peer."

"American presidents do not bow before foreign dignitaries, whether they are princes, kings, or emperors," said the *Weekly Standard's* blog.

State department protocol indeed decrees that presidents bow to no one, and has had to deal with similar controversies before, when then president Bill Clinton did a semi-bow to Japan's Emperor Akihito.

Muhammah Diyab, a commentator in a Saudi paper, approved of Mr Obama's gesture, and saw it as a clear bow. "Obama wished to demonstrate his respect and appreciation of the personality of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, who has made one of the most important calls in the modern era, namely the call for interfaith and intercultural dialogue to defuse the hatred, conflict and wars".

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/5128171/Barack-Obama-criticised-for-bowing-to-King-Abdullah-of-Saudi-Arabia.html>

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