



MIDDLE EAST WEEKLY

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Middle East in a Week

Regarding international relations and world politics, the Middle East may be the most controversial region in the current times. On the one hand it sits on most of the world's oil reserves, while on the other hand, it inhibits the followers of the most controversial religion in the world, Islam. These matters combined have created a region filled with drastic events. Every day, there are new wars erupting in the region and every day, there are new ways through which the west and the far east try to increase their influence in the region. This region inhibits 411 million people out of which 28 % are under the age of 25 years old. This newsletter tries to give weekly updates on the important issues in the Middle East and combining them with some analysis, hopes to have a role in changing the region's situation to the better.

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EMIRATES BEING FINED FOR FLYING OVER IRAN¹

On this Thursday, the United States' Transportation Department placed a fine on Emirates Airlines for flying over Iran. This USD 400,000 fine could be cut into half if the airline does not make the same error again in a year. The department said the flights carried the code of New York-based JetBlue Airways – a sign that JetBlue could sell seats as if it were a JetBlue plane. That arrangement made the flights subject to a US ban on flying in Iranian airspace, including areas over the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. In a consent order, Emirates said it does not believe the violation deserves enforcement action but agreed to the fine to settle the matter. The main effects of sanctions are due to cooperation between the sanctioning country and its allies. The fact that Emirates Airlines agreed to this hefty fine, shows such a cooperation and dedication. Emirate has already chosen its ally in the ongoing silent war between Iran and US; and will pay the price if not chosen wisely.



THE END SEEMS TO BE IN SIGHT; PEACE AFTER A DECADE²

Sudan's officials are finally sitting down with the rebels to negotiate a peace deal. If successful, this peace deal will end a decade year old war and bloodshed. Ending Sudan's internal conflicts has been a top priority of the transition government in power since last year's removal of longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir amid a popular uprising. Both sides are due to sign the deal in full on Saturday in Juba, the capital of neighboring South Sudan, after putting their initials on the agreement at the end of last month. "This is a historic day. We hope that the signing will end the fighting forever and pave the way for development," Suleiman al-Dabailo, chairman of Sudan's Peace Commission, told the AFP news agency. The Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an alliance of rebel groups from the Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan regions, also voiced hope for lasting peace. The region is quite unstable with so many active militia groups. Therefore, a real peace deal could be a landmark on its volatile history.



SUDAN

GOVERNMENT VS REBELS

SYRIA; THE NEW VICTIM OF US SANCTIONS³

On this Wednesday, six prominent Syrians as well as 11 entities connected to the government of Syria were added to the long list of US sanctioned bodies. Those blacklisted by the US Treasury include the head of the Syrian General Intelligence Directorate, the governor of Syria's Central Bank, and Syrian businessman Khodr Taher Bin Ali, described by the Treasury as "an intermediary for the Fourth Division of the Syrian Arab Army". Some 11 businesses tied to Bin Ali spanning the tourism, telecommunications, private security and transportation industries, which the US Treasury claims generate revenue for al-Assad's government and its supporters, were also targeted in Wednesday's action. The sanctions were announced a day after the third anniversary of air attacks that killed at least 34 civilians, including children, in Armanaz, a town in the northwestern province of Idlib. "Those who continue to stand with the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad further enable its corruption and human rights abuses," said US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in a statement on the US Treasury website.



YEMEN SENTENCED TRUMP TO DEATH BY EXECUTION⁵

According to ISNA, a court in Sade located in the north of Yemen, sentenced Donald Trump as well as Salman Bin Abd al Aziz to death by execution for their involvement in killing and injuring 100 people in an airstrike on August 2018. The court was headed by judge Riad al Razami. According to the news, the court also demanded a fine of USD 10 billion from the accused people. On October 9th 2018, warplanes of the Arab coalition attacked a school bus carrying students in the Zahyan market in Sade. According to the UN's report this attack resulted in 40 deaths, 21 of which were children. Also 60 people were badly injured including 35 children. The Arab coalition involvement in Yemen's civil war has always been via airstrikes. When using such a method, one cannot avoid civilian casualties. Something which seems trivial for the Arab coalition and its western allies.



A NEW EMIR ON THE THRONE IN KUWAIT⁴

On September 30th 2020, Navaf al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah took the throne after his predecessor died at the age of 91. In an interview the newly crowned Sheikh emphasized that he will do all he can to protect Kuwait and its safety. He praised the deceased king by saying: “we will remember the honorable Sheikh’s teachings”. His predecessor was known as the architect of modern foreign policy in an oil rich country. Hence, Sheikh Navaf does have some big shoes to fill. Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, in honor of his death, wrote that Sheikh Sabah was the incarnation of moderation for Kuwait and we wish the continuance of this trend under the new government. Even though Kuwait is a monarchy and not a democracy, it has kept its people safe and provided a stable economy for them for many years. It has done so by ensuring a low inflation rate, a record low unemployment rate, and a considerably high participation rate. As for meddling in the affairs of the region, this nation usually follows the strategy of neutrality. It is somewhat similar to Switzerland on that matter which is of course thanks to its high income and low population.



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