



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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QATAR FOLLOWS UP ON ITS OFFICIALS VIOLATING WOMEN PASSENGERS¹

Recently some women passengers were violated at the Qatar international airport in the name of procedural security search. Qatar says several airport officials have been referred for prosecution after forced gynecological exams were carried out on women flying to Sydney. The group - which included women from Australia, the UK and New Zealand - was checked for evidence they had recently given birth after a baby was found in a bin at Doha airport on 2 October. Qatar's government said on Friday that "standard procedures were violated". It also offered its "sincerest apology" for what the women went through. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne called the referrals for prosecution an "important step". "The statement of the government of Qatar is consistent with our expectations for contrition, accountability and determination to avoid any repeat of this disturbing episode," she said.



HEADS OR TAILS...IT IS STILL 50 CENTS²

These days the race for the oval office has occupied all the news agencies around the world. Given its 40-year conflict with Iran, this topic has also arisen the question that whether the winner of this race will affect Iran-US relations in any ways? Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, insists the result of the US presidential election "will not affect" Tehran's policy towards Washington. "Our policy... is clearly defined. It does not change with the movement of individuals," he said. "It does not matter to us who comes and goes." Donald Trump has called the JCPOA 'defective at its core' while Biden has mentioned the tendency to return to the deal. Nevertheless, the hostility between Iran and the United States does not seem dependent on the winner of this race. Ayatollah Khamenei gave a speech on Tuesday to mark the 41st anniversary of the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran by radical Iranian students, who took American staff hostage for 444 days. There have been no diplomatic relations between the US and Iran since then, and none seems to be in sight.

ISRAEL; WOLF DRESSED AS SHEEP³

On Tuesday, November 3, 2020, not long after signing several MOUs with many Arab states, the Israeli army raided the northern village of Khirbet Humsa and left 74 people homeless. Eighteen tents that housed 11 families in the northern village of Khirbet Humsa were razed late on Tuesday. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh called on the international community to intervene against Israeli troops' attempt to "displace the citizens of Khirbet Humsa and tens of similar communities from their homes and lands", pointing to the fact that Israel "chose this evening to commit another crime" as the attention is focused on the United States presidential election. Abdelghani Awada, left homeless by the operation, told the AFP news agency that the Israelis gave people "10 minutes to evacuate our homes". This is one of many heinous acts of human rights' violations done by the Israeli government over the past decades. Yet, the international community keeps turning a blind eye.



ROUHANI: THERE ARE TOUGH TIMES AHEAD!!!⁵

According to Hassan Rouhani, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the result of the US elections will have little to no importance for Iran. "We want to be respected, not subject to sanctions [by the US]. No matter who wins the US election... What we want is for the US to return to law... to return to international and multilateral accords," he said in reference to a nuclear deal Iran signed with world powers in 2015. Rouhani on Wednesday said if the next US administration chooses to change course, that could change facts on the ground, but that Iran is not holding its breath and would prepare for the worst. "We have planned based on the assumption that the methods and behaviors of the US will not return to the correct approach," he said. Such an approach seems to be the most pragmatic one at the moment. That is because the actions of Donald Trump and the behavior of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad before that has shown the absence of any certainty for this matter. As each state has changed course before, they can do again now.



OPEC TRYING ITS BEST TO PREVENT FLUCTUATIONS⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic had many externalities for nations around the world, one of which was the big shock to oil prices and consequently the main stream of income for the oil exporting countries. Algeria, which holds the presidency of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, supports a possible extension of OPEC+ supply cuts for the first few months of 2021 to avoid another collapse in prices, the country's energy minister said on Tuesday. OPEC and allies, led by Russia, together known as OPEC+, are scheduled to reduce cuts of 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd) by nearly 2 million bpd from January. Such a policy is in the hope of preventing a massive fall in oil prices which will affect many other factors on a global scale. On Monday, top managers of Russian oil companies and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak held talks on the possible postponement of an easing of restrictions into the first quarter of 2021, two industry sources said. The sources said the final oil output decision will be made by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who last month did not rule out extending deeper oil cuts for longer if market conditions warranted.



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