

DEBATE

John Andrews, Contributing Editor to *The Economist* and *Project Syndicate*

We only have 10 minutes left so let us get some questions from the audience.

Memduh Karakullukçu, Founding Board member of the Global Relations Forum, Founding Partner of Kanunum, Chairman of Kroton Consulting

I want to ask Volker about Sudan. It fits in with the model I was playing with the panel this morning, but I was not clear about from the way you painted the picture it sounded as if on economic, political, international affairs, all three fronts, things are moving in the right direction. That may or may not be accurate but that is the way I perceived it. Is it because the population and the elites learned from the mistakes from others and actually are substantively delivering on the economy, the politics and all the rest of it? Or is it a shift of attitude? Knowing what has happened elsewhere, are the people more patient, tolerant and willing to allow time for all these efforts to bear fruit? Is it actually a substantive change, which would be excellent news that things can be turned around within a few years? Versus it takes time but if we change attitudes in the population then it will allow things to go in the right direction in five or 10 years.

John Andrews

Volker, hold that thought, while we take the other questions.

Hervé Mariton, Mayor of Crest, Chairman of the Franco-British Council

I have two quick questions for Madame Al-Ketbi. First, we are here in the United Arab Emirates, in a country with a large number of migrants, so how do you see this factor evolving in the 10 years to come? The situation seems stable most of the time in most parts of the region but sometimes it is a bit more difficult in other Gulf countries. Is it something that you see as decreasing in the decade to come? Is the proportion of migrants in the country going to increase and how do you see their lives? The sort of proportion you have in the population here is something we do not know in our countries and it seems something of a strange reality to us and is obviously an important factor of life in yours.

John Andrews

That is a very interesting question because basically, if you take the Gulf states other than Saudi Arabia the population is largely immigrant. For example, I think that in the United Arab Emirates the citizen population is probably about 10% and the same in Kuwait and Bahrain,

maybe a bit higher. There is a great reliance on immigrant residents, so what is the future development of society? Did I get that correctly?

Hervé Mariton

The question is correct, and it is how this is seen to be evolving in the next 10 years and whether or not it is a factor of stability. We had not talked much about Saudi Arabia and you corrected this, but we have not talked much about Qatar either, which is obviously a tricky issue in the region as well.

John Andrews

Then the third question.

Fareed Yasseen, Ambassador of Iraq to the United States

It is actually a counterpart to Mr. Mariton's question. Do you see a role for Arab diaspora's helping their home countries?

John Andrews

Excellent, good question. We have five minutes so you can start with your question, Volker.

Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan and Head of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan

Thank you, Memduh for your question. I did not want to create the impression that transition is an easy ride. Every step that has been taken in Sudan has to be negotiated between these partners in that marriage of reason and each one is a difficult negotiation. However, to your question about whether it is learning or attitude, it is never absolute, but I would tend to say it is learning. It is learning from the experiences of others, and I mentioned Syria and Libya among others, but it is also learning through marching forward on that path. They are learning both that you cannot have a half or 30% transition. You cannot build peace without having a peace agreement, but you cannot have a peace agreement without building peace and you need an economy for that. You cannot have economic recovery without reintegrating with the rest of the world and you will not be reintegrated in the rest of the world if you fall back into authoritarianism and dictatorship and defy the rule of law. Everybody realizes that these dimensions are connected and then of course, people are learning from one another while moving forward. I would conclude that on the question of cultural identity, by opening up the political scene, concluding peace agreements and integrating former rebels into government, the Sudanese are also collectively realizing what pluralistic a country they actually are and that this could actually be an advantage and needs to be preserved.

John Andrews

Ebtesam, the floor is yours for the questions about how the policy will evolve on immigrant residence in the Gulf states and the second is about Qatar and the confrontation with most of the GCC, which we hope is now properly resolved.

Ebtesam Al-Ketbi, President and Founder of the Emirates Policy Center

In the beginning, I would say in the eighties, managing that was a dilemma and there was fear and they tried Emiratization. Then the government concluded that it still needed those expats, and the native population was small while projects were growing and so you have to decide. The decision was to have immigrants and manage them and we now have 200 nationalities here and they are managed very well without any conflicts. Even what happened between the Indians and the Pakistanis in the eighties does not exist anymore. They feel they are part of this country and its stability and if there is any incident, like a woman who was killed a few years ago, then everyone is afraid for the stability of the country. The United Arab Emirates is a very stable and secure country. Of course, there is a question about salaries, etc., but still in comparison with their home countries they still find they are winners here. In the long run, the release of the latest Global Emirates campaign, shows that we are going that way, managing our indigenous population with other nationalities and this will not be reversed. We will not be going back to the eighties where we said we had to preserve our identity and should not let others come and should be in the majority; that cannot happen anymore.

I think Dr. Anwar elaborated on that but basically, I think the situation between the United Arab Emirates and Qatar is about the vision, the role and the way. The United Arab Emirates believes in the nation state, the Qataris believe in non-state actors, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, so there are two different approaches. Plus, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, Qatar has always been threatened by it and by the big countries behind it. Going back to the clash between the two countries in 1995, there was always the concern in the Qatari leadership that Saudi Arabia would always be a threat and has to be contained, either by being a troublemaker or having good relations. Previously it was not a good relationship, but I would say that following that rift, all the countries realized that it was a zero-sum game where nobody wins. That was why they came to that AIUa summit and wanted to make it a win-win situation.

John Andrews

Unfortunately, the time is up. Despite this, I would like each of you to give me your dreams for 2030 in 20 seconds.

Itamar Rabinovich, Vice Chairman of the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, former Israeli Ambassador to the US, former Chief Negotiator with Syria

A Middle East that enables its younger generation to find home a hospitable place.

Volker Perthes

A deeply economically and socially integrated region that could compete with South-East Asia.

Mona Makram Ebeid, Egyptian Senator, Advisor to the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

A young generation that will be up for competing with their Western counterparts in new technology and digitalization and in all their aspirations to be on a par with them.



Bernardino León Gross, Director General of the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy

To see young diplomats in the region designing the plans and projects that will bring peace to the region around 2030, *inshallah*.

Ebtesam Al-Ketbi

A region without conflict based on sect or ethnicity and that empowers citizenship.

John Andrews

Inshallah, it will all happen. Thank you very much, panel, I think it has been extremely good. Thank you also to the audience and I am sorry we could not take more questions.