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B U L L E T I N S

26 - 29 November



The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

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Kingdom of Bahrain



Sunday, 25 November—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, arrived in Manama on an official visit during his regional tour ahead of the G20 Summit in Argentina, starting on 30 November. During the visit, Mohammed bin Salman met with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa. The leaders discussed their solid and dynamic relations, ways to advance co-operation in several fields and regional and international developments.

Monday, 26 November—King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa launched the new AB-4 oil pipeline, connecting Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, during a ceremony, celebrating more than 70 years of their energy cooperation. This event was attended by numerous senior Bahraini and Saudi officials, including Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman. The 112-kilometres long AB-4 pipeline, with a capacity of more than 355,000 barrels of crude oil a day, replaced the previous seven decades old system and links Saudi Aramco's Abqaiq Plants to BAPCO's Refinery in Bahrain.

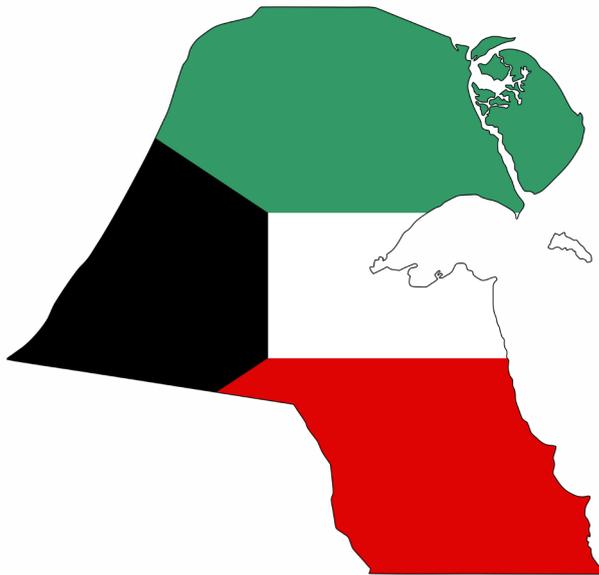
Monday, 26 November—Following its (24 November) Parliamentary Elections, King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa issued two decrees appointing new heads of the two chambers of the National Assembly. Rashid Mohammed Bu Najma became Secretary-General of the Council of Representatives, the Assembly's lower house, and Osama Ahmed Khalaf Al-Asfoor became Secretary-General of the Shura Council, the upper house. The Kingdom

will hold a run-off vote for 31 of 40 parliamentary seats on 1 December.

Monday, 26 November—The Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, which oversaw the elections, estimated a 67% voter turnout for the first round of the country's Parliamentary Election.



State of Kuwait



Tuesday, 27 November—The first Senior Officials Meeting between the European Union and Kuwait was held in Brussels, co-chaired by Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Helga Schmid, and Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Khalid Al-Jarallah. During the meeting, the EU hailed Kuwait's regional mediation efforts and non-confrontational approach. The representatives also discussed common regional challenges, including the situation in Libya, Syria and Yemen, and obstacles to the Middle East Peace Process, as well as closer cooperation in some fields, particularly clean and renewable energy, security and counterterrorism.

Tuesday, 27 November—Kuwait opened its first diplomatic mission to NATO in Brussels. During the event Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister, Khalid Al-Jarallah, expressed the keenness of his country to strengthen and deepen cooperation with NATO. In turn, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Alejandro Alvargonzález, hailed Kuwait's efforts for maintaining stability in the region and voiced NATO's desire to further enhance bilateral cooperation as Kuwait already hosts the NATO-ICI Regional Centre since January 2017.



Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 27 November—Four leading French investors and technology providers—CMA CGM, a global shipping group; EDF Renewables, one of the leading renewable energy companies; Fives Group, an industrial engineering group; and SUEZ, a global expert in the water and waste sectors—formed the French Business Syndicate to explore investment opportunities in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, Oman. The initiative will contribute to advancing the existing business ties between Oman and France.





State of Qatar

Monday, 26 November—The first delivery of a sixth of the 36 F-15 warplanes ordered by Qatar from the United States for \$12 billion in 2017 should arrive in the country by March 2021. The remained are expected to be delivered in several three-month intervals following the initial delivery.

Monday, 26 November—Qatar Airways announced it will fly more frequently to Iran and expand its destinations there starting from 01 January 2019. The decision comes as the European and other Gulf air carriers have halted flights to Iran. The company's CEO, Akbar Al-Baker, presented the new flights as an evidence of the airline's commitment to expanding Iran's 'thriving market.'





Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Wednesday, 28 November—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, concluded a round of visits to selected Arab countries—the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt and Tunisia—where he met with the leaders to discuss strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation, before heading to Argentina. On the last stop, in Tunisia, the Saudi delegation and Tunisian officials focused on key fields, such as economy; investments; and security and military cooperation to counter extremism and terrorism.

Wednesday, 28 November—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, arrived in Argentina to attend the G20 Summit of leaders of the world's top 20 economies, organised between 30 November and 1 December in Buenos Aires. On the sidelines, the Crown Prince is expected to meet with the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and the US President, Donald Trump.

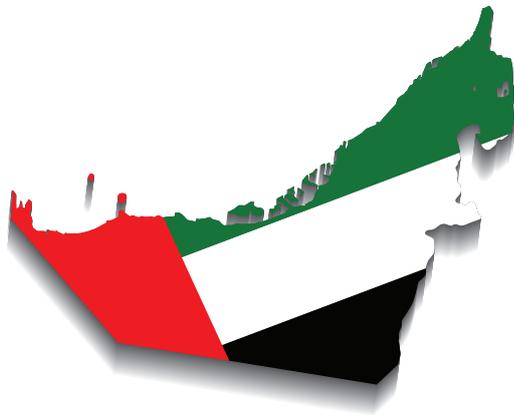
Thursday, 29 November—Saudi Arabia reportedly signed a letter of offer and acceptance with the United States to buy Lockheed Martin's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system—specifically, 44 THAAD launchers, missiles and other equipment—for \$15 billion.





United Arab Emirates

Monday, 26 November—Matthew Hedges, the British PhD student sentenced to life imprisonment for spying for and on behalf of a foreign state, was given a Presidential Pardon by the UAE's President, Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and was released from prison along with hundreds of other prisoners across the UAE ahead of the country's 47th National Day on 2 December. The United Kingdom — which denies the accusation that Matthew Hedges was in the employ of the MI6 — had dispatched Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, to negotiate Hedges release.



Tuesday, 27 November—Senior UAE officials, including Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, together with around 500 notables, attended the annual government meeting in Abu Dhabi to discuss the country's direction and progress on its way towards its 100-year anniversary in 2071. The meeting resulted in dozens of new initiatives and several strategies to be launched in the fields of artificial intelligence, culture, food security, tourism, transport, and quality of life and happiness.



The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it. We at EGIC are proud to present “The Last Thing to Read this Week” segment which contains a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important events unfolding in the countries of the Arab Gulf to help you map the region’s trends.

