

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Its Relations with the Horn of Africa

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This paper briefly describes and investigates the relationship of United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the countries of the Horn of Africa, mainly Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. With a very brief sketch of the historical and religious ties, the paper focuses on the underpinnings of the foreign policy of the UAE in the Horn of Africa. It discusses the implications of the recent noteworthy changes in the Horn of Africa, particularly due to the impact of the Yemen crisis on the UAE's relations in the region. It attempts to discern shifts in the UAE's interventions in the Horn of Africa, and explain implications suggestive of shifts in its foreign policy and relations in the region. The conclusion of the paper, in the form of recommendations, distils those areas of review regarding UAE foreign policy, and what the UAE needs to do in order to establish robust mutually beneficial relations with the Horn of Africa.

1. Historical Background

1.1. Historical, Religious and Economic Relations

The Middle East and the Horn of Africa belong to the same religious, historical, trade and migration sphere of influence. Geographic proximity to the Red Sea, historical, cultural and religious legacies, trade, the diaspora and migration, as well as security closely link the Horn of Africa with the countries of the Middle East. Three Abrahamic religions; Islam, Christianity, and Judaism bind the two regions. The holiest sites of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem are traditional pilgrimage destinations for the various religious adherents in the region. The long-standing cultural, religious, historical, economic and geographical ties between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East make such robust cooperation between these regions natural and desirable. Nevertheless, these ties have done little to foster constructive partnerships. The Horn of Africa was, and is, still the subject of global competition between Christianity and Islam, extensions of Western colonialism and Ottoman-Egyptian expansion, a US-EU led Western World and Chinese rivalry, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iranian and Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) enmity. The GCC countries have also used the Horn of Africa as a battleground for proxy wars, the expansion of extremist version of Islam and economic competition. In recent decades, countries of the GCC and the Horn of Africa have become victims of terrorism and violent extremism. Islamic violent extremist ideology has its

roots and financial source in the GCC. The Red Sea and the Nile river play critical roles in the relations between the Arab world and the Horn of Africa. For a long time, the diplomatic relations between the GCC and the Horn of Africa was and currently is characterized by mutual distrust and animosity mainly in religion and security issues.

The link with the Horn of Africa extends to trade on livestock, charcoal and other exports to the UAE and other GCC countries. Similarly, UAE exports large quantity of merchandise to the Horn of Africa. Recently, the UAE is now heavily investing in Port management, manufacturing and agriculture in the Horn of Africa. An additional bond comes from the diaspora from the Horn of Africa. The GCC countries host large business and diaspora communities as well as migrant labourers from the Horn of Africa, particularly Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

2. Foreign Policy of the UAE towards the Horn of Africa

2.1. The Underpinning of the Foreign Policy of the United Arab Emirates

The four pillars underpinning the foreign and even domestic policy of the UAE are trade, tourism, counter terrorism (and rise of Muslim Brotherhood movements), and countering Iranian regional domination. Islam is not treated as a state doctrine that dictates the policies of the UAE. In contrast, following Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf states have a sharia-led foreign policy. Saudi's foreign and domestic policy revolves around Sunni Wahhabism, the hosting the holy sites and the best interests of the ruling Kingdom. Similarly, the core of the foreign policy of Qatar and Kuwait resides in religion and the continuance of their respective monarchies and regional influence.

Nevertheless, in regional politics and relations, the UAE follows the lead of Saudi Arabia. Three issues serve as the glue between the GCC countries: fear of Iranian politics and religious sect, absolute monarchies unconditionally opposed to any democratic dispensation, and the need for their individual and collective security bolstered by the support of the USA. The UAE's alignment and alliance with Saudi Arabia, derives from the commonly shared fear of Iran (Iran is a non-Arab country and follows the Shia branch of Islam, whereas GCC countries are all Arab monarchies practicing the Sunni branch of Islam). Furthermore, the

UAE has border issues with Iran since independence, including a dispute with Iran about the ownership of islands in the Arabian Gulf (termed the Persian Gulf by Iran).

The UAE's socio-economic policy embraces globalization. Enterprisingly, the UAE also aspires to serve as a manufacturing hub by purchasing agricultural products from Africa and the rest of the world, then processing, packing and selling such products internationally.

The UAE competes against Qatar's increasing global trade and influence. While Qatar will host the football World Cup, Dubai will be similarly hosting the World Trade Exposition. Furthermore, Dubai aims to become a global tourism hub by doubling the current 10 million visitors per annum. The UAE's trade in Africa has increased, but mainly in the East African Community, such as Kenya, Tanzania etc. Unlike UAE, Qatar's engagement focus more on politics and less on trade and investment. But in the political front too, UAE competes with Qatar, particularly in Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt, etc. Qatar is a small country with a big diplomatic role in the Horn of Africa. Qatar has played an even more prominent role in the mediation in Darfur, Djibouti – Eritrea, and has given direct support to states and non-state political actors in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Between 2011-2015, Qatar significantly reduced its engagement with Eritrea, as it boosted its diplomatic and economic engagement with Ethiopia.

The UAE follows a pragmatic secular foreign policy. Allying with the Saudi Arabia, UAE, in Libya and Egypt, has supported anti-Muslim brotherhood groups such as the army. In contrast, Qatar boldly supported the Islamist groups and faced harsh diplomatic excommunication from the GCC. In the late 1990s, the UAE even took measures against its own citizens, including religious clerics associated with Al-Islah, a group allied to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who were the instigators of the attempted assassination of Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. The 9/11 attack on the USA triggered a second wave of measures against Al-Islah. A third wave of measures was taken after the 2011 so-called "Arab Spring". Indicative of the non-religious motivations for such self-preserving action of the rulers, measures were not limited to the remnants of Al-Islah, but were also directed against Western think tanks and other independent organizations that were inclined to support democratization.

For security reasons, the members of the GCC are close allies of with USA. USA maintains strategic military base and access resources in the Middle East. The US Fifth Fleet maintains a permanent presence in Bahrain. UAE employs the Saudi-led GCC and security pacts with USA for countering Iranian threats. Since 2015, UAE-Israel relations have also improved significantly, as demonstrated by the GCC's willingness to allow the opening of an Israeli trade office in Abu Dhabi.

GCC, as most multilateral territorial organizations, originate mainly out of external threats and security concerns, and therefore seek collective defence arrangements. Similarly, in establishing a bulwark against Iran, the GCC seeks to counter the threat posed by Iran. The GCC has been engaged in a proxy war with Iran in Yemen, and against IS in Syria and to an extent, in Libya and Egypt. All attempts to unite Arabs failed and the Arab world settled for the League of Arab States (LAS), which is headquartered in Cairo. Due to its security imperatives, despite many intermittent challenges, the GCC survived as a relatively cohesive regional organization. The caliphate of the IS poses a threat not only to the GCC countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, and but also Iran, but not equally. While for Iran, ISIS presents threats at the level of both religion and state survival, for Saudi Arabia and the GCC, IS threatens the existence of the monarchies.

In addition to the common front fighting against Iranian dominance, GCC countries are under absolute monarchs that totally reject any form of republican democratic rule. As a result, they are resistant to any kind of democratic dispensation in the region as well as the Horn of Africa. The UAE strongly shares and supports Saudi Arabia's antagonism to any movement for democratization in the region and the Horn of Africa. The monarchs of these two countries and their GCC partners consider that any democratic dispensation in the region could dislocate the main pillars and threaten their power.

For the above reasons, the UAE is more strongly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood movement than the rest of the GCC countries. In this regard, the antagonism of UAE, to any popular democratic political processes in Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, etc., are made abundantly clear.

2.2.The UAE and the Yemen Crisis

President Barack Obama's doctrine of 'leading from behind' left the Middle Eastern countries to deal with their own peace and security challenges. Similarly, his rapprochement with Iran on the Nuclear Deal increased the real or perceived vulnerability of the GCC countries to Iranian dominance in the region. This suddenly created a leadership vacuum in the region. To fill this vacuum, a power struggle emerged between regional powers, mainly Saudi Arabia (leading the GCC), Iran and, to an extent, Turkey.¹ In addition, the Russians also sought to extend and cement their influence in the region.

As demonstrated in Yemen, Syria, Egypt and previously in Libya in 2011, the UAE joined coalitions led by Saudi Arabia in support of movements that actively resisted Iran's interference and influence in the Horn of Africa and beyond. The UAE remains active in the Saudi-led coalition conducting military intervention in Yemen against the Iran supported Shia Houthis. The Saudi-led coalition, including the UAE, are concerned that the Houthi movement in Yemen may turn into a Hezbollah type of organization. Far from Sunni vs Shia hostility, the Houthis are currently being supported by their former nemesis ex-President of Yemen, Ali Saleh. The UAE has formed partnerships with regional states such as Sudan and Eritrea. UAE further goes sub-national to cultivate relations with clans in Yemen that have disapproval of Iranian role in the region. Furthermore, the UAE also makes use of mercenaries from Latin America to fight in Yemen.

2.3. Horn of Africa and the Yemeni Crisis

Amidst the Saudi-Iranian proxy conflict, the Horn of Africa has become additional battlefield for dominance in addition to the ones in Yemen, Syria, Libya etc. Fundamentally, UAE foreign policy neglects the Horn of Africa as inconsequential to its security interest. Displaying a very reactive and pragmatic approach, the UAE has responded to security threats or economic opportunities in the region in a short-term and fragmented manner. For this very reason, when it comes to political and security crises in the Horn of Africa, the UAE,

¹ Steven A. Cook, Jacob Stokes and Alexander J. Brock, *Contest for Regional Leadership in the New Middle East*, Middle East Security Series, 2014; read also Christian Henderson and Dr. Robert Mason: *Egypt and the GCC: Renewing an Alliance amidst of Shifting Policy Pressure*, Gulf Research Center Cambridge.

acting as a junior partner, tends to closely follow the pattern of Saudi Arabia foreign policy directives and initiatives. The UAE's position in the recent crises in Yemen, as well as in conflicts in Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan demonstrates this position. Piracy and maritime insecurity in the Red Sea also concerns the UAE and its commercial activity in the region.

In a bid to gain diplomatic and military support from the Horn of Africa, the Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen (fighting the Iranian supported Houthi rebels) has solicited and gained varied degrees of support from states such as Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt and more recently and apathetically from Djibouti and Somaliland. In exchange for financial support, Eritrea has provided terrestrial, marine, and air support for its soldiers,² while Sudanese armed forces have also participated in the military coalition. With similar arrangements, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan have recently signed agreements with Saudi Arabia and frozen their diplomatic ties with Iran.³ With regard to the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemeni conflict, only Ethiopia maintained its stance of neutrality, and continued with its usually 'cold' diplomatic relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

3. The UAE in the Horn of Africa

3.1. UAE and Djibouti

In the Horn of Africa, the UAE has big foot prints in Djibouti through its Dubai Ports, as subsidiary of Dubai World Company and recently through its armed forces. Strategically located in Bab el-Mendeb connecting Africa, Middle East, Europe and Asia, the ports of Djibouti, Doraleh, Tajoura offered business opportunities for UAE. Since 2006, Dubai Ports and managed and invested on the Ports of Djibouti and Doraleh, making specially the latter the most modern container terminal in Africa with a portal screening container for nuclear

² Morgan Winsor, Saudi Arabia –Iran Rivalry In Africa: Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia Part Ways With Tehran As Riyadh Influence Grows, International Business Times, 07 January 2016, available from <http://www.ibtimes.com/saudi-arabia-iran-rivalry-africa-sudan-djibouti-somalia-part-ways-tehran-riyadh-2255456> (accessed 08 March 2016).

³ Habib Toumi, Saudi Arabia 'to open military base in Djibouti', Gulf News, 08 March 2016, available from <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-to-open-military-base-in-djibouti-1.1686291> (accessed 10 March 2016).

and radio-active materials. With the political fallout between President of Djibouti Mr Ismail Gelleh and Mr Abdourhman Boreh who led the Djibouti Ports Authority and brought the investment of Dubai Ports, the role of Dubai ports in Djibouti became begun to diminish. When UAE refused to extradite the Mr Boreh to Djibouti, in 2014, Dubai Port concession was terminated by the government of Djibouti. In 2015, the UAE froze its diplomatic, business and military ties with Djibouti after it protested the mistreatment of one of its diplomats at the hands of Djiboutian senior military officials. Hosting the Chinese Navy, Doraleh has put UAE in competition with the Chinese investment in higher capacity container Port (1.2 million containers) oil terminal transit shipment with railway and pipelines connectivity with Ethiopia. Exceedingly profitable, the takeover of Doraleh Port by China was painful lose for Dubai Ports and indirectly to UAE. UAE withdrew from the management of the Port of Djibouti, closed its consulate, abandoned its plan to establish military base in Djibouti. It moved to the Port of Berbera in Somaliland.

Since early 2016, Djibouti and UAE have resumed their diplomatic relations after mediation by Saudi Arabia, leading Djibouti to sever its relations with Iran. Despite official announcement of withdrawal from the management of the Ports, Dubai Ports still have significant investment and business in Doraleh Container and Oil Ports run by Horizon-a sister company of Dubai Ports).

3.2.UAE and Eritrea

Since the latter's struggle for independence from Ethiopia, the UAE has supported Eritrea. Through the Abu Dhabi Development Fund, previously directly by the government, the UAE is one of the top five aid donors to Eritrea.⁴ In 1993, Eritrea opened Embassy in the UAE and ten years later it opened a consulate in Dubai. Trade has increased significantly, and Eritrea has established Business Councils in the UAE that aim to promote increased trade between the two countries. It is estimated that there are more than 5000 Eritreans living in the UAE, most of them women.

⁴ Afkar Ali Abdulla, *Eritreans make their presence felt in UAE*, Khaleej Times, <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/general/eritreans-make-their-presence-felt-in-uae>, (accessed 12 July 2016).

The rancorous relations and diplomatic rift between UAE and Djibouti was a manna for Eritrea. As a pendulum, Eritrea swung from supporting Iran and the Houthis to leasing port of Assab as military base for UAE.⁵ With the Yemen Crisis and the beginning of the Saudi-led military intervention and bombing campaign, Eritrea has been co-opted to serve as a launching base for the Saudi-led campaign against the Houthis. Eritrea has not only made available its air space, land, air fields and maritime resources, but also ground troops for the Saudi-coalition. Eritrea has also deployed ground troops as part of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen to fight the Houthis.

Eritrea, under the embrace of Iran was, at one time, actively supporting the Houthis.⁶ Afewerki's visit to Iran in May 2008 illustrated Eritrea's side in the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In 2015, Eritrea changed its attitude by abruptly leaving the Iranian camp and joining the Saudi-led coalition. Out of desperation to end its diplomatic isolation, Eritrean leader, President Isaias Afewerki, once heedlessly oscillated between supporting Iran or Saudi Arabia. The main factor for this perfidious and desperate change of sides had everything to do with Eritrea's financial starvation and diplomatic isolation for more than a decade by its neighbours and the international community for its spoiler role in Somalia, border conflicts with Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. Significantly undermining Iran's standing in its support for the Houthis, by this unprincipled, but fortuitous change of position, Eritrea not only enhanced its diplomatic standing with the GCC, but more essentially gained some cash rewards and in-kind support.⁷ The UAE has a 30-year lease guaranteeing its usage of the port of Assab. Eritrea enabled the Saudi-led coalition to gain a militarily and economically important geopolitical and geo-economic position in the Red Sea.

⁵ Djibouti-UAE Diplomatic Crisis Brings Gulf States Closer to Eritrea, available from <http://www.madote.com/2015/05/djibouti-uae-diplomatic-crisis-brings.html> (accessed 12 August 2016).

⁶ South Front, *Saudi-UAE Military Coalition Expands into the Horn of Africa: Foreign Policy Diary*, Global Research, November 6, 2015, available from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/saudi-uae-military-coalition-expands-into-the-horn-of-africa/5487059> (accessed 12 July 2016); see also

⁷ Denis Fitzgerald, *UN Report: UAE, Saudi Using Eritrean Land, Sea, Airspace and, Possibly, Eritrean Troops in Yemen Battle*, UN Tribune, November 2, 2015, available from untribune.com/un-report-uae-saudi-leasing-eritean-port-using-eritrean-land-sea-airspace-and-possibly-troops-in-yemen-battle/ (accessed 12 July 2016).

3.3.UAE and Ethiopia

UAE investment in Ethiopia amount to USD 363 million investing in manufacturing in pharmaceuticals, aluminium, and agricultural processing.⁸ However, this are dismal compared with neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Sudan etc. Since 1991, despite calls and efforts from Ethiopia for the UAE to invest in Ethiopia, the UAE has successfully sidestepped Ethiopia. Nevertheless, in the past decade, total trade has increased from USD 123 million to USD 935 million. In the same time frame, Ethiopia's export constitutes less than 8 percent of the total tradable volume. While Ethiopia's export to UAE has increased nine fold, its import from UAE has increased eight fold.

Partly this is attributable to Saudi Arabia's previous decisions to discourage any investment in Ethiopia. Saudi Arabia's animosity against Ethiopia goes back to Ethiopia's history and even independent policy positions. As in the 1991 first Gulf War where Ethiopia took strong stand at the United Nations Security Council against the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the clear position of Ethiopia towards the Libyan civil war in 2011 brought GCC countries, and in particular the UAE and Qatar, closer to Ethiopia than they were before, but fundamentally their relationships with Ethiopia are far from being robust.

UAE's close relationship with Eritrea adds another geopolitical reason for this rather unfavorable relations between UAE and Ethiopia. Since 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea have been at war. Consequently, over the past decade, Ethiopia, with notable success, has pursued a policy of 'military containment and diplomatic isolation' of Eritrea. Ethiopia played a decisive role in the imposition of UNSC sanctions on Somalia (Al Shabaab) and Eritrea by successfully mobilizing the Horn of Africa countries, lobbying the AU and persuading the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Leading to no war, no peace stalemate, Ethiopia's policy of containment and isolation depleted the Eritrean army so much that it was reduced to being only marginally able to defend the new nation.

⁸ Investment, Trade with Middle Eastern Countries Expanding: MoFA, available <http://www.ena.gov.et/en/index.php/economy/item/1119-investment-trade-with-middle-eastern-countries-expanding-mofa> (accessed 12 August 2016).

Yemeni crisis and convergence of sources of financial support for Eritrea benefit the cash-strapped Eritrean army and the country's economy. Such support may ultimately enable Eritrea to continue to project animosity against Ethiopia. For Ethiopia, this constitutes an alliance of GCC states with its arch foe Eritrea, and a disruption of Ethiopia's policy of military containment and diplomatic and economic isolation which it had successfully pursued against Eritrea. Eritrea has used its good relations with the UAE to escape its diplomatic isolation. Protesting the lack of consultation, Ethiopia has expressed its concerns and disapproval about the agreements and financial support provided to Eritrea by the UAE and other member states of the GCC.⁹ Despite the various efforts of Ethiopia, UAE's high-level diplomatic and official state visits and consultations are yet to be conducted.

3.4. UAE and Somalia

The UAE's engagement with Somalia dates back to the early development of Somalia's coastal communities. During the first Gulf War, Somalia under General Said Barre, sided with the West and the GCC countries. This brought both diplomatic rapprochement and financial support. After 1991 and collapse of central state in Somalia, the UAE, like the other GCC countries, attracted Somalian business and trade. Most of the influential business people and political leaders lived in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The imperatives for the UAE's current interest in Somalia revolve around business interests. For long-time, UAE's keen interest in Somalia's peace and stability is primarily driven by its business and economic interests.¹⁰ Viewed through the business prism, the UAE believes a stable Somalia will be an excellent trading partner and port service provider. Increasingly, rhetoric has become reflective of a genuine interest in trade and investment relations between the UAE and Somalia, and similarly with Djibouti and Sudan. UAE also aims to avoid the rise of Muslim Brotherhood to power in Somalia. In recent years, the Yemeni crisis has also brought Somalian shift in alliance from Iran to Saudi-led GCC countries. With support from several

⁹ Ethiopia, President Warns Saudi Arabia and UAE of Consequences if Eritrea Attacks, Han, January 2, 2016, available from <http://geeskaafrika.com/2016/01/02/ethiopia-president-warns-saudi-arabia-and-uae-of-consequences-if-eritrea-attacks/13991/> (8 March 2016).

¹⁰ White Paper of first expert panel on "The Business Environment, Regulatory Reform and Key Economic Sectors for Investment in Somalia", April 8, 2014 in Dubai.

think tanks, the UAE has also convened several consultative meetings for public officials and businesspersons about the stability of Somalia.

In the past decade, Dubai Ports World and other business-oriented companies have invested in several developmental and humanitarian projects. UAE leased the ports of Berbera, in Somaliland, immediately after its diplomatic row with Djibouti. Unlike Assab, which the UAE took on lease for military purposes, Berbera is purely for commercial reasons.¹¹

Close to a million members of the Somalian diaspora live in GCC countries, the biggest concentrations being in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. Concentrating on Deira, part of Dubai, close to 100,000 Somalis from the diaspora are politically and economically active in the Somalia.¹² They send remittances to their families, engage in exports (mainly livestock, meat, charcoal and fruits), and import consumer items as well as services such as aviation services and shipping operations between Somalia and the UAE. The Somalia diaspora community in the UAE has also influenced the business involvement of the UAE in Somalia.

With involvement in the management of ports of Assab, Berbera, Mogadishu, Kismayu and Djibouti, UAE aims and has already established a maritime and ports network within the Red Sea area.

3.5. UAE and Sudan, South Sudan

Sudan had rough relations with UAE (to that matter with all GCC countries except Qatar). Since 1992, where diplomatic relations froze for almost a decade until 1999, Sudan was considered the strongest ally of Iran, the arch foes of Saudi-led GCC countries. The rapprochement begun with the closure of Iranian non-diplomatic activities in Sudan in 2014. The demise of Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt led by President Morsi's also

¹¹ South Front, *Saudi-UAE Military Coalition Expands into the Horn of Africa: Foreign Policy Diary*, Global Research, November 6, 2015, available from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/saudi-uae-military-coalition-expands-into-the-horn-of-africa/5487059> (accessed 12 July 2016).

¹² Theodore Karasik, *Historical Links between the Arabian Peninsula: A Regional Response Based on Partnership*, Near East and Gulf Military Analysis, 2015.

played a role in this rapprochement where Sudan abandoned to looking to Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for inspiration. It is to be recalled that Sudanese President Al Bashir has his support base both in the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood (elements of National Islamic Front) and the military. With such position, Sudan is now ideologically also aligned with UAE and Saudi Arabia who declared Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group. Sudan also supported the 2011 Libyan uprising and even sent troops to fight against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who was supporting rebel groups in Sudan aiming to topple President Bashir. However, Sudan is still accused of ties with Islamic groups in Libya such as Ansar al-Sharia.¹³ At least tactically, Sudan under President al Basher is ready to closely work with UAE, while UAE questions Sudan's commitment to the relations.

UAE has very limited presence in South Sudan. In South Sudan, UAE traders and investors were active until the conflict that erupted in December 2013.¹⁴ The UAE has also helped in opening a South Sudan embassy in Abu Dhabi.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

UAE's foreign policy pillars are trade, tourism, counter-terrorism, and the containment of Iranian regional influence. Contrary to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait, the UAE's political economy is not fuelled by religious imperatives.¹⁵ This distinguishes the UAE from Saudi Arabia and the rest of the states of the GCC, where Islam, in its Wahhabism form, constitutes a pillar of the State. Given the tradition of tolerance to religious diversity and traditional religious teachings, countries in the Horn of Africa dread any external religious interference even those that come with business opportunities. In the Horn of Africa, the UAE's foreign policy devoid of hidden religious agenda has a superior chance of establishing a sustainable partnership with the Horn of Africa than the other GCC countries.

¹³ Sudan's Bashir in aggressive push to mend ties with UAE, February 23, 2015, available from <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article54095> (accessed 12 August 2016).

¹⁴ Sudan Tribune, *UAE investors seek to invest in South Sudan*, Sudan Tribune, May 22, 2013.

¹⁵ Ibrahim Abed and Peter Hellyer, *The Evolution of UAE Foreign Policy*, United Arab Emirates: A New Perspective, Trident Press, 2001; and Kenneth Katzman, *The United Arab Emirates (UAE): Issues for US Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 2013.

Nevertheless, to establish solid partnership, the UAE need to rethink and reset its relations with the Horn of Africa on two major fronts: economic relations and security cooperation.

On the security front the UAE needs to reformulate its foreign policy imperatives.

The UAE's sound stance on the separation of religion from foreign policy is beneficial for both the UAE and the Horn of Africa. For example, UAE's involvement in Somalia is limited to commerce, thus not regarded as competitive with the regional efforts of the IGAD or AU. Nevertheless, the UEA's blind subservience to Saudi Arabia on matters affecting the Horn of Africa's peace and security issues negates its well-considered foreign policy imperatives on trade, tourism and counter-terrorism.

In this regard, the UAE needs to work closely in partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to formulate and implement a joint IGAD-GCC dialogue on peace and development. Such a dialogue could serve as a regular consultative forum to ensure stronger cooperation between the countries of the GCC and the Horn of Africa on both the peace, security and economic cooperation. Such initiative could focus on development, labour mobility, combating transnational threats and international crimes, including piracy, terrorism, violent extremism, trans-border crimes, human trafficking, trade in narcotics, money laundering, illegal trade in arms and other threats to regional and international peace and security.

On the economic front, the UAE, with its focus on trade, investment and tourism, could build a long-term sustainable and favourable partnership.

The Horn Africa presents an opportunity for trade and investment due to the size of its population. In the Horn of Africa, the current total population of 226 million will surge to 400 million by 2050.¹⁶ This will be more than half the total population of the Sub-Saharan Africa. More than 55 per cent of this population will be young (below 20 years). Annually, 2% of the youth will be connected via mobile telephones and the Internet, adding millions of the region's inhabitants to the more technologically conversant and connected generations. With this, rise in income, and an surge of an emerging middle class is expected

¹⁶ See also CIA Country Profile for the Horn of African Region, Available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>.

to increase the overall demand for consumption.¹⁷ This is expected to increase mixed migration to various destinations within Africa and to other destinations, including the Middle East. Depending on the governance and development of the region, this population increase may create social instability (demand for jobs by the youth) or present new opportunities for development and enterprise (as the middle class expands). The United Nations estimates that the rate of urbanisation in Africa is 3.5% per year,¹⁸ the highest rate in the world, resulting in the rapid growth of urban conurbations throughout the continent. Equally, UAE and other actors could help ensuring that these trends in the Horn of Africa lead to positive developments of mutual benefits. The Horn of Africa could benefit immensely from development, investment in, and trade with the UAE and GCC countries, particularly in livestock and related products and resources as well as other areas of cooperation.

UAE needs to invest in agriculture and livestock.

The Horn of Africa has one of the largest livestock populations in the World. It also exports leather goods, oilseeds, minerals, agricultural products and flowers; and is also engaged in tourism, construction and real estate. With some investment in the agriculture, skilled labour, livestock sector, the Horn of Africa could supply the GCC countries with ample supplies of agricultural, high and low-skilled labour, meat and dairy products. With sufficient investment in industry and infrastructure (for transportation), the GCC countries could access organic meat and dairy products from nearby Horn of Africa countries. For the Horn of Africa, investment in these sectors would not only bring foreign currency that is much needed in the regional economy, but would also fundamentally create jobs for the youth and improve the livelihood of the population dependent on agriculture, livestock, and labour. As the owners of most of the livestock in the Horn of Africa are either farmers or pastoralist communities, trade and investment in these areas may eventually lift millions of families out of poverty, indirectly contributing to human security in the Horn of Africa.

¹⁷ African Development Bank, Africa in 2050, available from <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Africa%20in%202050%20Years%20Time.pdf> (accessed 24 January 2014).

¹⁸ United Nations Commission for Human Settlements (UNCHS), *Cities in a Globalizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 2001*.

For the UAE and the Horn of Africa, trained labour migration could be another area of mutually benefiting cooperation.

While avoiding the depletion of highly skilled human resources required for the development in countries of origin, labour migration could assist the governments in the Horn of Africa in their effort to reduce poverty. Clearly, while there is a brain-drain for highly skilled migrants, there is no 'labour drain' given the more than tens of millions unemployed and underemployed forces in the Horn of Africa. Most of these are ready and even eager to go to training courses of any kind. The UAE and the Horn of Africa can take the initiative to foster a stronger collaboration in skilled labour mobility including the protection of their rights.

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