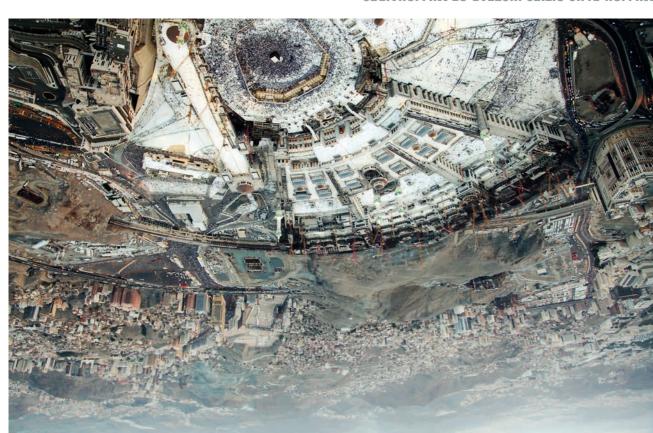
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about themselves, in the world where a lot depends on self-promotion. to talk about themselves. Such countries have little interest disputing persistent myths tries with cultures that favor self-sufficiency are not too common - and they do not like ditional one. It is not about about about acciety, in Saudi Arabia; it is about the rev-MILLION-PLUS CITIES INSTEAD OF MILLIONAIRES Coun- ative society and a closed one by global standards, or, at the very least — a very tra-

metropolitan areas and ultramodern mega-cities. al valleys and the great deserts - to have 82% of its population concentrated in urban perts are independent and are guided not only by the Sharia law rules (which can unusual - for a country with mountain ridges of more than 3,000 meters high, vast coastwith large rural populations, while KSA is known for its high level of urbanization. It is This is because the Sharia legal system provides for a «balancing" element, repreand men, respectively). Such demographic indicators are common for smaller countries ropean Christian states in the XVI-XVIII centuries, is not inappropriate for KSA. despite the high average life expectancy of about 75 years (77 and 72 years for women leading position. Its population is relatively young, with an average age of 26.4 years, is included in the top 50 largest countries of the world, and will continue occupying a the King from the dynasty of Saudi - the founders of the kingdom — currently it is the thirteenth state in the world by size, with population of more than 33 million in 2017. It the Quran and the provisions of Islamic law. The absolute power in KSA belongs to tries (and KSk in this case is an excellent example) is their social geography. KSk is the is the base of the legal system in KSk, and the organization of the state is dictated by The first thing that bewilders any person first coming into contact with the Gulf coun-

nations in the region. not comparable to either that of "old" Europe or the developing countries. The growth is supportive of entrepreneurship - the Prophet Muhammad was, among other things, million back in 1970. At the same time, the birth rate of 2.1 children per family in KSA is erterence in business affairs. In this regard the Islamic legal system is extremely ic growth in KSA: the population of the Kingdom has grown more than four-fold from 7 multi-million urban clusters that appeared as a result of the unprecedented demographdab (4 million), Mecca (1.5 million), Medina (1 million), and Dammam (almost 1 mil-

who wants to go to university has an opportunity to do so. culture in the recent years. No one saves money on education here, and almost anyone sectors, as well as electricity and partly health and education services, and even the uates each year. Saudi Arabia is a well-educated society by any standards, and such universities (of them, more than 10 are privately-owned) with more than 0.7 million grad-KSA there are about 0,5 million school teachers in a total of 36 thousand schools, 40 level of its education: KSA spends about \$45 billion a year on education, a large part of relatively young and fast-growing population. What is even more unusual is the high er. In short, the demographic situation in KSA is unlike any other in the world given its (the countries swap the leading positions several times a year) in the race for the status tralia, and Canada; in Turkey, the USA, Russia, China, and Iran the segregation is high-Contrary to stereotypes, Saudi Arabia is a country with a moderate level of social

KSA, a country full of young people living in multi-million cities, to be a very conserv- «the Islamic oil socialism», is very far from reality.

And this is being actively used.

recognition by the Islamic law of the general rules of laissez faire — state non-inyears has been democratized (as is normal for the urban environment), as well as lion). In reality, however, it is more complicated than that - we are talking about several into account long-standing traditions of local self-regulation, which in the recent by public opinion. To understand the peculiarities of this system, one needs to take Officially, it has four of these mega-cities: the capital of Riyadh (5 million plus), Jed- in the commercial law - as long as they do not contradict the Sharia), but also also take into consideration the norms of «external» legal systems - for example,

sented by the court and a developed system of legal interpretation. Sharia ex-

However, the definition of an «absolute theocratic monarchy», used for the Eu-

ally forms the foundations of the society's social and political structure. Sharia Law

a society with extremely conservative foundations. In Saudi Arabia, Islam quite liter-

olution of "conservative". KSA is a state in which modernist ideas were used to form

King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Saudi Arabia is the world's second largest producer of oil, and it usually beats Russia stratification. According to the Gini ratio (0.34), the country is comparable to Italy, Aus- 20, was largely state-owned. And by far the largest share of that was the oil industry. Despite this, more than two decades ago the economy of KSA, one of the world's top possible in KSA. partly driven by migration from other countries: KSA is one of the most attractive desti- a merchant, and so even culturally the rejection of entrepreneurship is simply im-

spending on education has been an integral part of the Kingdom's political and social zation. Then the authorities were disbanding the telecommunication and water supply However, between 2003-2013 KSA already had experience of medium-scale privatichance to surpass the capitalization of Apple, the world's most expensive company. turnover of more than \$300 billion a year, plans an IPO this autumn. And it has a which consists of international education costs for some 150,000 Saudi students. In Saudi ARAMCO, which, bringing the lion's share of revenues to the Saudi budget with In recent years, KSA has made easy decisions on privatization. One example is of the world's largest oil exporter.

A COUNTRY WITH SOLID BASE All these circumstances do not prevent as a dictatorship, which has little interest in anything beyond the oil revenues to finance alization of the political ideas on which the Kingdom is built. The image of Saudi Arabia KSA needs privalization not for the sake of money, but for the sake of reform and re-

raffic control system.







FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR

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