The Fallacy of Soccer's Magical Bridge-Building Qualities

By: James M. Dorsey

Imagine being a pacemaker in a conflict-ridden part of the world. FIFA President Gianni Infantino saw a 2022 World Cup in Qatar with a 100% Muslim country, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, as the magic wand that would turn bitter foes into brethren. It may be a nice idea, but it is grounded in the fiction that soccer can play an unpredictable role in bringing nations together or developing national identity. The fiction is that soccer has the potential to be a driver of events, that it can spark or shape developments not necessarily in the direction that soccer is intended to go. General and soccer in particular has the power to build bridges. Neither is soccer further from the truth that sports are an aggressive sport. It is about conquering the other half of a pitch. It evokes passions and Allison to the point that the designs are often far more than just for entertainment, rather than unity.

In the Middle East, soccer tends to provide an additional battlefield. Examples abound. The 2022 World Cup, this year's Qatar Asian Cup victory against the backdrop of the Gulf state's rift with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the imprint the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the development of a modern defense force. It is about conquering the other half of a pitch. It evokes passions and Allison to the point that the designs are often far more than just for entertainment, rather than unity.

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